

Meeting Summary
15th System Council Meeting
8-9 March 2022

Purpose:

This document presents the formal meeting summary for the System Council's 15th meeting, as approved by the System Council on a no objection basis with effect from Friday 21 July 2022 (Decision Ref: SC/M16/EDP1).

It supplements the [SC15 Chair's Summary](#) (issued 14 March 2022) that confirmed decisions taken and agreed actions from the meeting.

Distribution notice: This document may be distributed without restriction.

Prepared by: System Council Secretariat

Introduction:

This document presents a summary of the 15th meeting of the System Council (“Council”) held on 8 and 9 March 2022 as a hybrid meeting, with physical presence for many in Montpellier, France.

By way of overview:

- **Format.** The meeting was held as a hybrid meeting over two consecutive days.
- **Agenda items.** The meeting covered agenda items within six (6) sessions set out in the table of contents on the following page.
- **Decisions**** The Council took seven (7) decisions during its meeting as initially recorded in the Chair’s Summary and reproduced in sequence in the summary.
- **Participants.** [Annex 1](#) sets out a list of meeting participants.

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Agenda Item 1: Meeting Opening

1. The System Council non-voting Chair, Juergen Voegele, opened the meeting. A quorum was present.
2. At the outset of proceedings and with deep appreciation to the Chair of the Board of CGIAR's International Potato Center ('CIP') and staff for the montage they prepared, the Chair led colleagues in a moment of remembrance in tribute to Dr. Barbara Wells, CGIAR's Global Director, Genetic Innovation and Director General of CIP, who sadly passed away on 16 February 2022.
3. The Chair welcomed participants online and in person, emphasizing that this first 'hybrid' meeting of the System Council would be managed in such a way as to ensure equal opportunity to participate for those joining virtually. The Chair welcomed new System Council voting members, alternates, and participants¹ including:
 - a. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: Ruben Echeverría
 - b. Norway: Even Stormoen
 - c. World Bank: Martien Van Nieuwkoop
4. The Chair also welcomed additional representatives of the EIARD group (Denmark, Italy and Ireland), external experts from CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council ('ISDC'), and colleagues from CGIAR's Advisory Services Shared Secretariat.
5. Decision SC/M15/DP1: Meeting Co-Chair
The System Council **appointed** Sebastian Lesch, representative from Germany (day 1) and Christophe Larose, representative of the European Commission (day 2) as the non-voting Co-Chairs for the meeting, pursuant to Article 5.2 of the CGIAR System Framework.
6. The Co-Chairs expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve in the role, noting the important nature of this meeting as a key decision moment to take forward dedicated work towards One CGIAR.
7. No declarations of interest were made on the agenda, and no items of other business were requested.
8. Decision SC/M15/DP2: Adoption of the agenda
The System Council **adopted** the Agenda, issued on 7 March 2022 (SC15-01, Rev. 2).
9. The Chair offered some framing reflections for the meeting, recalling his remarks made during a high-level event with the meeting's co-hosts (France, Germany and the European Commission), held prior to this System Council meeting. A key takeaway from that event was that 2022 is the year that CGIAR and its partners and funders, working together and guided by continued dialogue, will pivot from talking and designing to implementing and doing in a way that ensures we are a better partner locally, regionally and as a global science voice.

¹ Composition: <https://www.cgiar.org/how-we-work/governance/system-council/sc-composition/>

10. The Chair emphasized that this requires all efforts from all System Council members to carry the torch to support implementation of One CGIAR as unanimously agreed in Chengdu in November 2019. He emphasized the value of hearing all voices present in System Council proceedings including members from countries and regions of the world where the CGIAR aims to focus its efforts.
11. The Chair situated the meeting's proceedings in the current global context, noting that issues of regional and global significance often arise that fall outside CGIAR's planned Initiatives, such as maize lethal necrosis in Africa during previous years and more recently the events in Ukraine. CGIAR's ability to respond promptly, as seen from the traction in global media gained by a timely CGIAR published blog – via IFPRI – on the effects of the conflict on global food security, was cited as one such example of the value of CGIAR's standing capacity as a provider of global public goods across all aspects of food security in a changing world. It was highlighted that this is something of which CGIAR Funders and the global community should be proud – and be prepared to continue to support financially – noting that operating as if 'one' will undoubtedly ensure that such high-quality response capabilities are preserved and strengthened as a defining characteristic of CGIAR being more than the sum of its parts.
12. As set out in the [SC15 Chair's Summary](#) issued on 14 March 2022, several opening remarks were read by CGIAR's Managing Director, Institutional Strategy and Systems on behalf of the System Board Chair (who was absent from day 1 of the meeting due to an unexpected occurrence). The System Board Chair joined the meeting on day 2, contributing high-level reflections under agenda item 4.

Agenda Item 2: Leveraging advice and learning

13. The Co-Chair for day 1, Sebastian Lesch, framed the discussion, recalling that at the Council's 14th meeting, an action point was agreed for the Executive Management Team ('EMT') to present at the next meeting an overview on how the observations and learnings from the ISDC's review of the first batch of Initiatives have been taken up or will be taken up.
14. The Co-Chair highlighted the value of discussion on this topic ahead of the Council's discussion on the second batch of Initiative proposals to provide context and comfort to Funders that learnings are being effectively taken up and that there is clarity on strengthening, prioritization, funding, and oversight and reporting arrangements.
15. CGIAR's EMT Convener and Managing Director, Research Delivery & Impact, Claudia Sadoff, echoed the value of an opportunity to share information and engage in discussion on the substantive and valuable feedback received on the Initiatives and the adjustments being made in response. A presentation was shared that focused on seven key topic areas²:
 - a. **Taking up ISDC advice in Initiative design and launch** – through an initial implementation stage, ensuring business continuity where ongoing work cannot

² Presentation available at: https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2022/03/SC15-03aa_Presentation.pdf

be paused, but creating space for partnership-building with external ‘delivery, scaling and demand’ partners, team building and relationship-building across CGIAR teams, and rescaling of intended results, end-of-Initiative outcomes & activities and budgets as needed. After this implementation phase, a revised ‘Initiative brief’ (as a successor to the earlier proposal) for every Initiative would be shared, that takes up all the learnings and comprises a forward-looking document to guide delivery.

- b. **Allocation of funding across Initiatives to reflect prioritization** – recommended by design as part of an inter-related whole, with an iterative process to structure a coherent portfolio that reflects the triangulated demand of the science offer, partners’ demands and Funder preferences. A decision tree for refining allocation of funding in various possible scenarios, including annual stage-gating processes, was presented.
 - c. **Arrangements for oversight of a portfolio of research and innovation** – emphasizing the importance to the EMT and science leadership of Funder, partner and stakeholder input and feedback as part of this process. In addition to drop-in calls during the Initiative inception phase, it was confirmed that a consultancy is in motion to design, develop, and steward a revised modality for the periodic provision of oversight and advice for CGIAR research, with a proposal to be delivered in Q3 2022.
 - d. **Stage-gate processes for adaptive management of Initiatives during implementation** – annually and every three years at the end of the Initiatives, informed by new portfolio analytics transparently available on online dashboards.
 - e. **A single reporting arrangement responsive to Council needs** – with work underway by a task team assembled by the System Council’s Strategic Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (‘SIMEC’) to develop a set of common reporting parameters (content, timing, format, standards, and scope) for pooled-funded programming to satisfy the essential needs of all Council members, and clearly measure achievement against the Results Framework and planned results of the Initiatives.
 - f. **Portfolio analytics to inform adaptive management and to enhance performance and results of a coherent, cohesive body of research and innovation** – with highlights of these shared – noting that these are transparently available on publicly accessible dashboards³.
 - g. **A new Results Framework to complement the 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy, retiring the Strategy and Results Framework 2016-2030 (‘SRF’)** – with a request for a confirmatory decision of the System Council on this basis (see decision [SC/M15/DP4.](#))
16. The Managing Director, Institutional Strategy & Systems, Elwyn Grainger-Jones, shared an update on the development of a revised 2022-2024 Portfolio and Designated Financing Plan (‘2022-2024 FINPLAN’), approved during the System Council’s 14th meeting in December 2021, which decision noted that an updated 2022-2024 FinPlan would be developed and presented in Q1 2022 based on a revised budgeting exercise

³ Dashboards available at the CGIAR Performance and Results Knowledge Hub:
<https://sites.google.com/cgchange.org/performance/home>

and to reflect additional data points gained⁴.

17. He confirmed that most of the information from Funders on intended designations has now been received, with a request that remaining funding intentions be clarified at the earliest opportunity to enable a revised 2022-2024 FINPLAN to be delivered, with end-April targeted (subject to receipt of that information). It was also confirmed that CGIAR's Global Director of Business Operations and Finance is working with Centers and bilateral Funders to obtain additional clarity on bilateral funding intentions to increase the accuracy of the underlying information in the 2022-2024 FINPLAN.
18. The Co-Chair expressed thanks for the comprehensive updates provided by the EMT. Council member reflections – grouped by broad themes – included the following:

That Funders stand behind One CGIAR and strongly support progress made:

- a. Emphasis from several Funders and developing country constituencies that they continue to be fully committed to the One CGIAR reform – and of CGIAR as a System – and stand firmly behind the System Board at this critical moment.
- b. That CGIAR is at the critical stage, with only one path forward – with a call made for all CGIAR stakeholders to continue this pathway. The complexity of the reform was recognized, and support echoed for all stakeholders in continuing to tackle the challenges constructively – noting some concerns around the impact that delays in completing the operational structure changes could have in terms of reputation and staff morale;
- c. Support for any efforts that can be made, including with entities that have not taken decisions to be part of operating as 'One CGIAR', to bring all CGIAR assets into play in a more coordinated purposeful manner to solve the global challenges of our time;
- d. A reflection that CGIAR's presence at COP26 in Glasgow in October 2021, carrying the flag for food and agriculture and the role of research as if one institution and not as individual Centers, was a good demonstration of what can be achieved by working as if one institution. That is, that by bringing together all the disciplines under one umbrella, we demonstrate to the world that CGIAR's Centers are a compelling force when they come together;
- e. A powerful call to not repeat the mistakes of the past, such as a dual research management system as was undertaken with the CGIAR Research Programs ('CRPs'), where cross-CGIAR programs were run alongside a very high number of bilateral projects and the complex, high-transactional challenges in delivery that this entailed. It was highlighted that the One CGIAR portfolio approach is expressly designed to simplify and streamline, and to reverse the drop in pooled funding seen during the CRP era. It was emphasized that the integrated operational structure is essential to delivering on the 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy, and that a Center-led research model cannot effectively enable this. Stressing that while the value of the historical presence and assets of Centers should not be underestimated, a clear call was made for all CGIAR leadership to reflect carefully on the reality of the integrated research management required and to not avoid making potentially difficult changes to empower this;

⁴ Decision Reference SC/M14/DP6

- f. Emphasis on the value of a multilateral system as a key rationale for Funders' investment in CGIAR – noting that CGIAR acting as a system with space for diversity of context, of people and voices and acting in a diverse environment is highly important in order to achieve the impact sought;

Support for a strong set of CGIAR Initiatives that have undergone independent review as moderated by ISDC – and importance of clarity of 'next steps' for the portfolio to maintain momentum and support

- g. Several expressions of appreciation for the quality and rigor of the ISDC-moderated review process, noting that ISDC's observations will be taken up to strengthen the portfolio over time, while keeping a focus on a coherent and balanced portfolio;
- h. Acknowledgement of the need to consider ISDC's observations in their broad sense across the interdependent portfolio to achieve the impact sought across the impact areas, action areas, regions and globally. It was also suggested that the EMT and Science Group Directors look ahead to planning for the 2025-2027 cycle as they consider how to take forward mid-term learnings and articulate how coherence and synergies will be achieved;
- i. Appreciation for the EMT's reflections on the adaptive management approach, noting that this is important in enabling Funders to move towards pooled funding mechanisms;

Commitment to pooled funding is contingent on implementation of One CGIAR:

- j. Strong expressions of support for the overall 'One CGIAR' process, as evidenced through increased pledges to pooled funding mechanisms, moving away from Window 3 and bilateral. It was reiterated that this depends on full implementation of the One CGIAR SRG interconnected elements, and that failure to do so would be damaging to CGIAR and the individual Centers in the medium- to long-term;
- k. It was noted that Funder confidence would be enhanced by demonstrated progress on taking up ISDC's observations to strengthen the portfolio, the Technical Reporting Arrangement, and clarity on the 2022-2024 FINPLAN;
- l. A contribution from a Funder planning to return to funding CGIAR after an absence, who noted that their intensified collaboration with CGIAR is dependent on full implementation of the SRG outcomes, including participation by all One CGIAR Centers;
- m. The more integrated management approach to bilateral funding was welcomed, noting that this will continue to be important to CGIAR, emphasizing that bilateral funding should be considered as aligned to and not an alternative to operating as 'One CGIAR';

Preserve assets/relationship of the Centers

- n. A funder noted the need to balance unified governance with preservation of existing assets and stakeholder relationships at Centers, and the importance of flexibility in this regard to respond effectively to the challenge of global food security;

Support expressed from partner countries and regions, with calls made for CGIAR to do more to bring in partner and stakeholder voices

- o. An expression of support from a Council developing country constituency member for operating as ‘One CGIAR’, highlighting that the cross-CGIAR research approach embodied in the Initiatives is already clearly demonstrating coherence through dialogue across work packages. Support was echoed by another developing country constituency alternate member, expressing appreciation for the transdisciplinary approach and the impact pathway evidenced in the Initiatives, with calls made to focus efforts on maximizing the capacity available at regional and country level;
- p. Emphasis on the importance of partnerships in the Initiatives as a key part in achieving coherence in multi-stakeholder collaboration – and the essential nature of having a diversity of voices from the countries in which CGIAR operates, including among senior leadership and research staff, in order to fully and effectively realize the vision of operating as if one institution. It was noted that as long as a full range of stakeholder voices are ‘in the room’ during discussions, then once agreements are reached it is essential that all stakeholders stand by those agreements and support the path forward;
- q. A developing country constituency member conveyed the strong support of their Minister of Agriculture and expressed appreciation for the clarifications provided by the EMT on questions around governance and relationships between CGIAR and key regional bodies;
- r. A call made for the need now more than ever for diverse voices from the regions and countries in which CGIAR operates to be heard, including from government of countries that host CGIAR Centers. A particular call was made for engagement with key institutions in the African continent, including through a forthcoming high-level meeting;
- s. A recommendation for greater openness around partnership and stakeholder networks and approaches, including where issues or knowledge gaps might exist, in order to enable these to be addressed and built on most effectively;
- t. A request that a clear institutionalized host country engagement process be presented and implemented in collaboration with regional representatives and organizations;

What the world urgently needs – and Funders want – can only be delivered as ‘One CGIAR’:

- u. Several Funders reiterated the crucial and time-sensitive nature of completing the transition to operating as if one institution – with 2022 being a critical year, particularly given the evolving food systems crisis and events in Ukraine;
- v. That the portfolio once in implementation offers opportunities for greater convergence and collaboration with additional funding sources and thus potential for impact;
- w. A recommitment to concerted efforts to reach 50% pooled funding by 2024, as well as support programmatic and operational coherence and oversight by requiring that any future bilaterally funded work be in full alignment with the CGIAR research and innovation strategy, implemented through the integrated operational structure; and

- x. A call for an accelerated pathway to fully unified governance by the end of 2022 and an immediate transition of management authorities to stand up the integrated operational structure endorsed in March 2021 – and for CGIAR to not miss the opportunity to make tough decisions when required to achieve the vision set out in Chengdu.
19. The Co-Chair expressed appreciation for the reflections, which acknowledged the challenges encountered but clearly expressed the essential nature of delivering on what was agreed in Chengdu in order that continued and additional funding support for CGIAR can be obtained, and strong increased support for pooled funding heard from many in the room.
20. He noted the clear calls for enhanced host country engagement and diversity of perspectives, highlighting a particular reflection from a Funder that diverse perspectives and ‘delivering as one’ are not mutually exclusive.
21. Reflecting on the interventions shared, the EMT Convener expressed appreciation for the rich and open discussion, acknowledging particularly the perspectives shared on host country engagement and diversity of perspectives and reiterating the EMT’s commitment to these issues. It was noted that conversation on these topics is anticipated to continue as part of deliberations on the Initiatives under Agenda Item 3.

Ad hoc: The war in Ukraine and the impact on global food security

22. The Chair framed the item, emphasizing that the crisis in Ukraine will have unprecedented implications not only for the region itself but for the rest of the world. He invited Jo Swinnen, CGIAR’s Global Director, Systems Transformation and Director General of IFPRI, and Aly Abousabaa, CGIAR’s Regional Director, Central and West Asia and North Africa and Director General, ICARDA to share an update and reflections on the implications of the crisis on global food security.
23. A presentation was shared⁵ that focused on two key aspects; i) a brief overview on the state of global markets as a consequence of the conflict; and ii) consideration of the implications for CGIAR’s role and relevance in relation to the crisis.
24. Key messages included:
- a. That a particularly worrisome aspect of the impact on global markets is that prices were already very high (approaching levels seen around the 2007-8 food crisis) prior to the conflict; and that in contrast to the situation at the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic, global commodity stocks are lower at the present time (with the exception of rice) – thus increasing the potential impact of shortages;
 - b. That in addition to the challenge of a rise in commodity prices, the price of key inputs is also potentially very strongly affected by the conflict (such as fertilizer and fuel);

⁵ Available at https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2022/03/Presentation_Ukraine-FoodSecurity_SC15-Day1_8March2022.pdf

- c. That the speed with which food prices have been rising is a very challenging pattern for countries in trying to develop how to respond, in particular countries where any adjustment in the price of wheat could have significant social impact. Specific case studies were shared of response opportunities for countries' production systems;
 - d. That CGIAR's work for many years has been in key areas of agronomy relevant to these responses, however there are also important opportunities in improving resilience by looking at the food system transformation as a whole, such as more diverse and nutritious food sources;
 - e. That policy responses are hugely important in terms of avoiding export constraints, avoiding disruptions of global trade patterns, supporting consumers; ensuring farmers have access to inputs for the next planting season and putting in place the right incentives; and
 - f. That in order for CGIAR to deliver the required policy work, it is essential that research and modelling infrastructure and capacity exist on a continuing rather than stop-start basis, in order to provide accurate relevant information on a rapid basis, and is thus a clear case of a global public good that pooled funding should support.
25. The Chair underscored the importance of policy research as evidenced by the situation – and the critical need for CGIAR and others to be resourced and ready to step up immediately when crises emerge. He also echoed the message that the technologies to respond exists, and that the ability to implement these quickly enough is what is now required.
26. Additional reflections were shared by Council members, including:
- a. A call for CGIAR to work with development partners to put in place large-scale adoption of improved varieties through pharma-production clusters in order to significantly increase production;
 - b. Recognition that all countries will be affected by the crisis in some way, and that CGIAR's comparative advantage in innovation and scale-up should be built on by acting together in response;
 - c. A question raised on how easily an assessment can be made at country level, given the need to provide advice specific to countries. It was advised in response that in addition to the global research infrastructure required – local modelling, analysis capacities and data sets are also crucial – and cut across the three action areas in the 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy; and
 - d. A Funder reiterated the importance of sustained investment in policies and markets work to maintain required capacity, adding that Funders have valued the CGIAR COVID-19 hub approach that coordinated a single CGIAR response.
27. Summarizing, the Chair echoed thanks for the presentation and thoughtful discussion and invited CGIAR leadership to consider how a short-term response could be put together to address immediate vulnerabilities identified, echoing the comments by Funders of the value of a One CGIAR approach.

Agenda Item 3: The 2022-2024 Investment Prospectus

28. The Chair framed the session, recalling that at the time of the System Council's approval of the initial set of Initiatives in the December 2021 meeting, the coherence of the prospectus as a whole was in evidence, and that ISDC's review at that time rightly focused on areas of strengthening but emphasized that this did not detract from the overall high-quality of the portfolio overall. He noted that the ISDC has now reviewed the second set of initiatives as outlined in the document and guided by that advice, the System Board has recommended these to the System Council, recognizing that identified opportunities will be worked on during an inception phase.
29. The System Council was invited to reflect on this set of Initiatives, considering the range of actions the EMT has in progress as important context, and guided by ISDC's advice.
30. The ISDC Chair shared an overview of the review process and observations arising from this, highlighting that:

On the review process

- a. The review had been undertaken by 28 external reviewers (56% women and 44% men) as well as the eight members of ISDC;
- b. Each review team had considered the extent to which each Initiative proposal aligned with the cohesion of the portfolio as described in the Companion Document to the 2022-2024 CGIAR Investment Prospectus⁶;
- c. Review teams were asked to build consensus where possible and where consensus was not possible, to clearly document this in the review report;

On the 12 Initiative proposals in the second batch

- d. Some Initiatives identified divergent drivers and proposed sometimes contradictory solutions, which was particularly evident in agronomy and farming systems approaches that were proposed in Agroecology and Nature+ that sometimes appeared to be at odds with those in Excellence in Agronomy. It was added that this tension should be addressed but can be healthy if done so from an objective scientific perspective, which CGIAR is perhaps uniquely placed globally to do;
- e. Partners and the nature of partnerships are often not sufficiently detailed within the proposals, despite the mapping and depth of these relationships being evidenced in the EMT's earlier presentation to this meeting. It was advised to make clear where and how external collaborators were involved in the co-design and the project teams as it had not always been possible for the ISDC to adequately assess this;
- f. That a consistent comment made by reviewers was that they were not easily able to observe alignment between the very well-articulated development outcomes and the research questions that were being asked in order to address development outcomes;

⁶ <https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2021/10/Companion-Documents-to-2022-2024-CGIAR-Investment-Prospectus.pdf>

On the portfolio overall

- g. For the first time, a “systems approach in action” has been demonstrated, with the entire research portfolio built to deliver one overarching strategy. In contrast to the CRPs, each Initiative was fully designed to fill existing knowledge gaps, which is evident throughout the portfolio. It was added that good governance and strong oversight by the EMT and the Global Science Directors is evidenced through their full commitment to address shortcomings that naturally arise;
 - h. That the portfolio is dynamic, fit-for-purpose and resonates with Funders, having been developed through extensive consultation using co-design approaches;
 - i. That the new research directions require new capabilities, which requires time, resources and new strategic partnerships, and Funders were called on to support an integrated CGIAR on that journey; and
 - j. The achievement of all of these at a time of One CGIAR structural reform was commended.
31. The EMT Convener and the Global Science Directors added remarks, reflecting on the ISDC’s review and the inputs and questions raised earlier in the session, noting:
- a. Strong appreciation for the ISDC’s constructive review, particularly the concrete suggestions for how to improve and strengthen specific areas. It was observed that scores for the second batch suggested that some learnings for the reviews of the first batch had already been taken on board, recognizing that overall scores were slightly lower which could reflect the relative novelty of the research areas covered in the second batch;
 - b. That as advisory and oversight structures are put in place, it will be assured that the right perspectives and expertise are in the room, building on lessons from the Investment Advisory Groups;
 - c. Recognition of issues raised around focus on poverty, climate change, gender and human rights, which themes will be espoused by the impact area platforms across the Initiatives. It was added that the Her+ Initiative has a very strong gender focus, and that during 2022 the Gender platform, which is significantly larger than the other platforms and also has a significant research component will continue operation;
 - d. Reconfirmation that key issues raised by ISDC on coherence, on relationships of regional integrating initiatives and on partnerships are front and center for management and will continue to be as implementation moves forward;
 - e. That the request for a roadmap was welcomed, noting that it would be beneficial to reflect in such a document that there are different paces at which different initiatives will be moving forward;
 - f. Clarification that staffing of Initiative teams is separate to recruitment of roles in the integrated operational structure, and that until approval decisions are taken on the full set of Initiatives, their leads and co-leads continue to work in their effort to refine the Initiatives before fully staffing these once decisions are taken; and

- g. That as these initiatives get up and running, science leadership will be able to put increasing attention on cohesion and coherence, working more and more across the action areas, supported by recently formed project units on project coordination and on portfolio performance to support the smooth running of Initiatives and importantly, generating portfolio level analytics that will enable effective management of the portfolio as a complete whole.
32. The Chair shared summary reflections, i) acknowledging that guided by the ISDC's advice, the Council was comfortable that the Initiatives and the portfolio as a whole are on a good path, and ii) recognizing the commitment from management to address identified areas for strengthening. The Chair echoed the appreciation shared for the teams involved in preparation of the proposals, and to ISDC for the robust and constructive review process that it moderated.
33. [SC/M15/DP3: 2022-2024 CGIAR Portfolio](#)

Whereas:

1. The 2022-2024 Investment Prospectus was approved by the System Council at its 13th meeting in June 2021;
2. The 2022-2024 CGIAR Portfolio and Designated Financing Plan ('2022-2024 FINPLAN') was approved by the System Council at its 14th meeting in December 2021, with the System Council noting at that time that an updated 2022-2024 FINPLAN would be developed and presented in Q1 2022 based on a revised budgeting exercise and to reflect additional data points gained;
3. A subset of 19 CGIAR Initiative proposals, and the indicative funding amounts for the full 2022-2024 Investment Prospectus (as set out in the initial 2022-2024 FINPLAN) were approved by the System Council at its 14th meeting in December 2021;
4. At the time of approval of the 19 CGIAR Initiatives proposals, it was agreed that: (a) the EMT would document how the observations and learnings from the ISDC moderated external review of the 19 Initiatives have been or shall be taken up over which timetable, as relevant, whilst continuing to ensure an overall coherent and cohesive CGIAR Portfolio for 2022-2024; and (b) an updated FINPLAN would be presented based on Funder designations for the full Prospectus.

The System Council:

5. **Approved**, pursuant to Article 6.1 q) of the CGIAR System Framework, the proposals for 12 CGIAR Initiatives to commence from 1 April 2022;
6. **Acknowledged** the critical need for designations of pooled funding for CGIAR to be provided by 18 March 2022 and for bilateral forecasting to be completed by the end of March. This is in order that a revised 2022-2024 FINPLAN can be developed, with decision-making by the System Board and the System Council to be completed by end-April 2022; and
7. **Requested** that revised 'Initiative Briefs' (to replace Initiative proposal documents) be prepared following the 6-month 'inception phase' of all CGIAR

Initiatives, that build on strengthening undertaken in response to the advice of the Independent Science for Development Council.

34. [SC/M15/DP4: Retiring 2016-2030 'SRF'](#)

The System Council:

1. **Confirmed** that the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy, together with its companion document the CGIAR Results Framework, is the successor to the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework, with the latter being retired with retroactive effect from 31 December 2021, the end date of the former CGIAR Research Programs.
2. **Requested** that, as a transitional measure to future reporting on CGIAR's contribution to the Collective Global 2030 Targets, the Executive Management Team present by mid-2023 aggregated data on the aspirational intermediate 2022 targets included in that earlier Strategy and Results Framework.

Agenda Item 4: Transition to One CGIAR

35. By way of framing for the agenda item, the Chair introduced a video address to the System Council's 15th meeting from Ban-Ki Moon, 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations and Co-chair of the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens. The address highlighted that mitigating climate change is essential, yet adaptation to its ongoing effects is just as urgent. The continued partnership between CGIAR and the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens to increase financial and political commitments to elevate the resilience of smallholder farmers and to strengthen agricultural adaptation was recognized. The address also emphasized that the world strongly relies on organizations like CGIAR for research and innovation in tackling the intensifying detrimental impacts of climate change and called on world leaders to continue to channel investments to reach the funding target of \$2 billion per year.
36. The Chair expressed appreciation for the former Secretary General's powerful messages as a timely reminder of the rationale and urgency of realizing all five of the One CGIAR integrated elements, to enable CGIAR to be best placed to address the global challenges of our time.
37. The Chair turned to the System Board Chair to update the Council on progress, who shared several observations around four key themes: i) a recommitment to the Chengdu agreements including the essential fifth element of more and more pooled funding as a key driver of the change agenda; ii) the recognized need maintain appropriate pace; iii) the need for continued and coordinated engagement efforts with all host countries and NARES, building on work done to date; and iv) the well-understood need for continued and increased focus on diversity at all parts of CGIAR.

38. The Managing Director, Institutional Strategy & Systems added a more in-depth update on the key workstreams underway⁷, building on the high-level messages shared by the System Board Chair. Key messages included:
- a. That notwithstanding the importance of openness around the challenges faced in transition to operating as 'One CGIAR', this should not detract from the significant work undertaken and in progress by many staff across CGIAR who are deeply committed to fully realizing the SRG five interconnected recommendations;
 - b. That a focus has been on a lean operational structure with a strong science emphasis in terms of the proportion of scientific staff, without detracting from the important roles of staff in other business and supporting functions;
 - c. That the internal recruitment process for the next layer of leadership has been launched, emphasizing that the roles are to be distributed across CGIAR's footprint;
 - d. That a request for proposals for support from a reputed global consultancy firm has been launched, with a particular focus on delivering better services, economies of scale, better value for money and better quality in support of world-class research;
 - e. That as part of a multi-year change plan, 2022 is focused on transition into the integrated operational structure, emphasizing that the change will not be abrupt or overnight. Key workstreams in 2022 include unified engagement with Funders, partners, and stakeholders; and establishment of enabling policies, procedures, and systems; and
 - f. Emphasis that a large amount of technical and preparatory work is underway, with teams ready to make the vision of operating as 'One CGIAR' a reality, but that this requires the enabling environment including more and more pooled funding, to do so and to appoint staff to lead the required changes with senior leadership.
39. The Chair expressed appreciation for the insights into the significant underlying effort to deliver a multifaceted, multi-year, systematic change, as well as insights into areas where additional effort or a change in approach is required.
40. Opening the floor for inputs, Council member reflections included:
- a. Acknowledgement of the considerable progress made, a request was made for structured additional communication on the status of the transition, including through a suggested additional mid-year Council meeting;
 - b. The ongoing bilateral and multilateral dialogues were welcomed, and a recommendation made that recruitment, consultation and regional country engagement processes place increased focus on diversity in gender, geographies and capacities to build, reflect and strengthen the global dimension of CGIAR;
 - c. A strong call for all Center decision-makers to support and agree to arrangements to empower the integrated operational structure to ensure that progress made to date is not lost and momentum in transition can be maintained;
 - d. A statement of support for One CGIAR on behalf of CGIAR's Board Chairs, and reflections on challenges that remain to overcome, including ensuring that the

⁷ As set out in a presentation available at: https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2022/03/SC15-04_OneCGIAR-Transition-Update.pdf

- responsibilities undertaken by Directors General under the integrated operational structure and as an integral part of the One CGIAR management structure remain in compliance with Centers' host country agreements – and that increased dialogue with host countries is required to ensure that there is clarity that this will be the case. This concern was echoed by two Funders;
- e. A reflection from a Council member who also represents a Center host country, that dialogue during this meeting had already provided significant reassurance on host countries' concerns – and commitment expressed to share these assurances with fellow regional stakeholders at forthcoming meetings and engagement;
 - f. Another representative of a country that hosts CGIAR Centers noted that 11 Centers are represented in that country, and that a more streamlined approach to the relationship with CGIAR is welcomed and supported;
 - g. A call to challenge false dichotomies that may be heard such as that there can be either diversity of opinion or a unified governance; or either strong Centers or unified governance – emphasizing that these are not mutually exclusive;
 - h. That Funders stand behind the System Board and management in exercising judgment on where more dialogue will resolve an impasse, or where it is necessary to accept that some will disagree, but ultimately cannot hold up progress;
 - i. A challenge to the suggestion made that there is any contradiction between how the integrated operational structure will operate and the role of Directors General with regards to host country concerns cited, and a call to resolve any misunderstanding on this at the earliest opportunity; and
 - j. Several interventions highlighted the urgency now more than ever to deliver on One CGIAR to effectively respond to the global food crisis and issues amplified by the Ukraine conflict.
41. The System Board Chair thanked the commitment from one of the developing country constituencies to act as a champion for the model of acting as 'One CGIAR' – stronger than the sum of our parts - with regional stakeholders. The System Board Chair also reflected that whilst the extensive legal analysis was that there is no legal impediment to progressing One CGIAR unified governance, there are naturally additional operational and political considerations that are best resolved through high-level dialogue with host countries and regional leaders, meeting in-person wherever possible.
42. In response to a question raised by a Funder, it was emphasized that there is no plan for any material asset transfer from any CGIAR Center as part of the implementation of operating as if one organization. It was recalled that the concept of being stronger than the sum of our parts as 'One CGIAR', is not that a new or different legal entity is being established to take on all that was done in the past. Rather, 'One CGIAR' represents a way of working and speaking as one, purposefully leveraging the talent and brands of each Center and the Alliance and taking down internal operational barriers to operating as one leadership team and one staff with one culture – without any transfer of assets.
43. A call was made to consider how small-island states can be integrated into research activities, potentially through the existing constituency mechanisms – given that they are disproportionately affected by the issue of climate change.

44. The Chair shared some summary reflections, expressing thanks for the presentations that demonstrated the significant work done, and clearly highlighted the small number of areas where timely action is needed to succeed in delivering on the vision of operating as 'One CGIAR'. The commitment heard from management to delivering on these was recognized. Echoing the achievements represented by a strong research portfolio and Funders stepping up with additional commitments to pooled funds, it was emphasized that the time is now to undertake the detailed, thoughtful stakeholder engagement to listen to views and concerns and bring partners and colleagues along in understanding that 'One CGIAR' is not a trade-off situation and the benefits it will bring to all.

Agenda Item 5: Evaluations

45. The Co-Chair, Christophe Larose, framed the discussion, noting the need for a solid, integrated research system that is well-anchored in countries and regions to implement the research Initiatives – and that to achieve this a robust evaluation framework and policy that gives CGIAR, its partners, stakeholders, Funders, the assurance needed is required.
46. At the Co-Chair's invitation, reflections were provided by Ruben Echeverría, on behalf the SIMEC Interim Chair, on the new CGIAR Evaluation Framework (document SC15-16a) and revised CGIAR Evaluation Policy (document SC15-16b). It was noted that these were presented to the System Council with SIMEC's full endorsement, and that these had been developed through a highly consultative process by the CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat and respond effectively to the recommendations of the 2019 MOPAN assessment⁸ with regards to evaluation.
47. The Director, CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat, Allison Grove-Smith, added additional summary reflections, noting that the proposed Evaluation Framework and Policy cover a CGIAR-wide practice on evaluation with three aims: i) accountability and communicating for accountability; ii) learning; and iii) steering. Its context within relevant frameworks and approaches was emphasized, and appreciation expressed for the engagement of SIMEC and CGIAR leadership whose inputs particularly helped to ensure that the Framework and Policy aligns with the Performance and Results Management Framework⁹ process. It was added that CGIAR management will be critical partners in implementing the Framework and Policy in particular through thoughtful management response as is evidenced through the [Management Response to the Evaluation of the CGIAR Platform for Big Data in Agriculture](#) shared for System Council consideration at this meeting.
48. Following a short video presentation of the evaluation's key findings and recommendations, CGIAR's Global Director, Digital Services, Khuloud Odeh, highlighted that the evaluation's recommendations were especially timely in informing decisions

⁸ <https://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/cgiar2019/index.htm>

⁹ https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/113793/SC11-03b_CGIAR-Performance-and-Results-Management-Framework-2022-30_postmeeting.pdf?sequence=8&isAllowed=y

and plans on the design of the Digital Services team as part of the 'One CGIAR' integrated operational structure to enable it to be an effective partner to research in building, scaling and sustaining institutional digital and data capacities. It was added that the evaluation's findings confirm the Big Data Platform's central hypothesis on the need to make digital central to CGIAR's way of working to enable and accelerate impact in agriculture research for development, from developing data standards and open science infrastructure to digital partnerships, technical communities of practice, and applied digital innovation.

49. Noting that all the evaluation's recommendations were accepted (in full for eight and partially for two), with additional detail shared on how implementation of the recommendations is envisioned added by Jawoo Koo, Interim Lead of the Digital Transformation Initiative and Brian King, the Lead of the now-ended Big Data Platform. All presenters expressed thanks to the evaluation team for a collaborative learning exercise and the opportunity to engage with colleagues across CGIAR on the themes emerging from its recommendations.
50. The Co-Chair expressed appreciation for the comprehensive presentations shared and invited reflections from the Council. These included:
 - a. Appreciation that the evaluation framework is explicit its focus on accountability – noting that this is a key Funder priority – and a question raised for management on how its accountability, earning and steering focus will support a clear articulation of a strong 'One CGIAR' value proposition. Another intervention emphasized the importance of connecting ex-post learning with ex-ante analysis in planning and foresight work to improve modelling in support of such a value proposition;
 - b. A suggestion that the planned '*Guidance on integrating gender, diversity, and inclusion aspects in evaluations in CGIAR*' be brought forward to 2022 and a request for a clearly documented approach for reporting on recommendations from CGIAR's advisory bodies including a timeline for management response; and
 - c. That the clear role for management in tracking implementation of evaluation recommendations is welcomed, and a call made for program leadership to be fully resourced to take required decisions to act on recommendations.
51. Reflecting on the interventions made, the EMT Convener noted:
 - a. That discussions are timely to inform how learnings from evaluations and all sources of independent advice can be leveraged and addressed structurally – and inform future programmatic decision-making, the with the management response to the Evaluation of the Big Data Platform serving as an excellent example of this;
 - b. That for the 2022-2024 portfolio and beyond, CGIAR management will have much more information in real time than previously, with that information standardized across the portfolio for comparability and reporting. Specifically, the Project Coordination Unit and the Portfolio Performance Unit are creating a system of indicators and metrics for continuous monitoring of performance, so that One CGIAR will have a repository of information to inform management action in real time to adaptively manage the portfolio to continuously sharpen focus and work toward impact as well as outputs; and

- c. On the clear articulation of a value proposition, that data and information will be accessible to leadership and the science groups to enable them to constantly re-evaluate and create the overall narrative in collaboration with a whole of CGIAR global communications team.
52. [SC/M15/DP5: CGIAR Evaluation Framework and Policy](#)
The System Council **approved** the content of the CGIAR Evaluation Framework and Policy, pursuant to Article 6.1 k) of the CGIAR System Framework.
53. [SC/M15/DP6: Evaluations](#)
The System Council **endorsed** the Evaluation of the CGIAR Platform for Big Data in Agriculture, taking into account the Management Response, pursuant to Article 6.1 ff) of the CGIAR System Framework.

Agenda Item 6: Other Business and Meeting Close

Consent Agenda

54. The System Council Secretary introduced the item in the Consent Agenda, recalling that a consent agenda consists of items that are procedural in nature or have been through extensive prior consultation or Committee processes and require formal System Council decision, that are submitted as a group for adoption by the System Council without discussion.
55. [SC/M15/DP7: CGIAR Trust Fund](#)
The System Council **approved**, subject to the subsequent agreement by the World Bank as Trustee, the extension of the End Disbursement Date of the CGIAR Trust Fund under the CGIAR Trustee Agreement to 31 December 2030.
56. It was noted by a Funder group that for some Funders, funding would be unable to be released without a fully approved CGIAR Trustee Agreement. In response to a question raised on the timeline for that approval, it was noted by the Secretary that, as a guide, the timetable may be in the order of six to eight weeks. The Secretary added that this timetable is an indicative and not binding statement of time, given that it is important that the Trustee is able to complete all relevant internal due diligence processes, before moving forward.

Meeting wrap-up and close

57. The System Board Chair expressed appreciation to the Office of the Mayor of Montpellier for its generous provision of the Hôtel de Ville de Montpellier for the SC15 meeting.
58. The System Council Chair shared some closing reflections, highlighting that the significant progress made to date was appreciated by all, with appreciation expressed to the teams that have developed CGIAR's portfolio of Initiatives, the ISDC for its robust and constructive advice, and management in its open and transparent approach to

taking forward all sources of independent advice as One CGIAR moves forward. He called on all CGIAR stakeholders to support redoubled engagement efforts over the coming weeks to ensure that the full diversity of partners and key actors are brought on board to deliver the change to how CGIAR operates – as agreed in Chengdu – and that the world needs more critically than ever at this time.

59. The meeting was closed.

Annex 1 - Participants

Chair: Juergen Voegele, Vice President for Sustainable Development, World Bank

Co-Chairs: Sebastian Lesch, Head, Agricultural Division, Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) (on Day 1); and Christophe Larose, Head of Sector: Sustainable Agriculture, DEVCO C1, European Commission (on Day 2)

'Note: The symbols '' and '**' shown against a name below indicates that voting member/active observer is being represented at the meeting by the alternate ('*') or another delegated representative (**').*

The symbol (v) shows virtual participation. Day between brackets means attended only one day.

Note on presentation: As the meeting was held on a hybrid basis, the Chair and Co-Chairs alternated in how they took interventions from the floor and from the virtual platform. The list of constituencies by alphabetical name has thus been inverted on this occasion to reflect that inclusive approach.

System Council Voting Members (alphabetically in reverse order)	Member representative	Member Alternates & Other Delegation Members
The World Bank	Martien Van Nieuwkoop	Alternate Member - Michael Morris Other delegates: Julian Lampietti, Sarah Simons
West Asia & North Africa (voting member Iran) (v)	İlhan Aydin** (Turkey)	Alternate - Mohammad Reza Balali (Iran) Other delegates (Turkey): Aykut Ordukaya, Didem Kökden, Fatma Sarsu, Merve Altan.
United States of America	Rob Bertram	Others - Jerry Glover (v) (Day 2)
United Kingdom	Alan Tollervey (in-person day 1; virtual day 2)	
Switzerland	Michel Évéquoz	
Sweden	AnnaKarin Norling	Alternate - Philip Chiverton (v)
Sub-Saharan Africa (voting member Nigeria)	Garba Sharubutu (Nigeria) (v)	Alternate - Eliud Kireger (Kenya) Other delegates: Carolyn Minayo (Kenya) (Day 1)
South Asia (v)	Trilochan Mohapatra (India)	Alternate - S.M. Bokhtiar (Bangladesh) (Day 1)
Norway	Even Stormoen (v)	Alternate - Daniel van Gilst
The Netherlands	Wijnand van Ijssel	
Mexico (v)	Adriana Herrera-Moreno	
Latin America and Caribbean (voting member Brazil)	Pedro Machado (Brazil) (v)	Alternate - Jorge Mario Diaz Luengas (Colombia) Other delegates: Noemí Marmanillo Bustamante (Peru) (v) (Day 1); Jannette Pacheco Santos (v) (Day 2)
Japan (v)	Akiko Tejima	Alternate - Takuma Kojima Other delegates: Masa Iwanaga (Day 2), Shintaro Kobayashi (Day 2), Takashi Kato.
Germany & Belgium	Sebastian Lesch (Germany)	Alternate - Carol Durieux (Belgium) Other delegates: Stefan Kachelriess-Matthess; Sarah Schmidt (Germany)

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System Council Voting Members (alphabetically in reverse order)	Member representative	Member Alternates & Other Delegation Members
European Commission	Christophe Larose	
East Asia & Pacific (voting member China) (v)	Zhai Lin** (China)	Other delegates (China): Yu Chao, Zhu Jinjin
Canada (v)	Hong-Won Yu	Alternate -Mushtaq Ahmed Other delegates: James Breithaupt, Flora Mak (v)
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Ruben Echeverria	Alternate - Renee Lafitte (v) Other delegates: Rinn Self
Australia	Andrew Campbell	
AfDB (v)	Martin Fregene	

Non-voting Ex-officio members	Member	Member Alternates & Other Delegation Members
Chair, System Board	Marco Ferroni (Day 2 only)	Hilary Wild (v)
Center Representative 1: Convener of the Chairs of Center Boards of Trustees	Elsa Murano (v)	
Center Representative 2: Convener of the Center Directors General	Jean Balié	
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (v)	Selvaraju Ramasamy*	
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (v)	Malu Ndavi*	

Active Observers	Representative	Alternate & Other Delegation Members
Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR)	Ravi Khetarpal (v) (Day 2)	Alternate - Hildegard Lingnau
CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)	Holger Meinke (in-person day 1; virtual day 2)	

SC Secretary
Karmen Bennett , System Council Secretary & Global Director of Governance & Assurance (a.i.)

Invited guests	Representative
Trustee of the CGIAR Trust Fund (World Bank) (v)	Jane Mwebi Other delegates: Chalida Chararnsuk, Gerard Jumamil, Lewam Afework Mengesha
France	Bernard Hubert (v), Jean Albergel
CGIAR System Council's Assurance Oversight Committee	Vacant
CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA)	Karen Macours (Chair)

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Invited attendees	Representative
Denmark, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Mike Speirs
EIARD Secretary	Nienke Beintema
Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (EIARD Member)	Patrick McManus (v)
Italy, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation	Roberta Trevisi (v) (on behalf of Min. Ple, Leonardo Bencini)
CGIAR System Board	Patrick Caron, Clarissa van Heerden (v)

Additional invitees	Representative
CGIAR Executive Management Team	Claudia Sadoff , EMT Convener and Managing Director, Research Delivery and Impact
	Elwyn Grainger-Jones , Managing Director, Institutional Strategy and Systems
CGIAR Global Science Directors	Jo Swinnen , Global Director, Systems Transformation
	Martin Kropff , Global Director, Resilient Agri-food Systems
	Sonja Vermeulen , Global Director, Genetic Innovation (a.i.)

Session specific invitees		
CGIAR	Agenda items 2 and 3	Aly Abousabaa , Regional Director, Central and West Asia and North Africa (v)
CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)		Andrew Ash, Lesley Torrance (v), Magali Garcia, Nompumelelo H. Obokoh, Suneetha Kadiyala (v)
CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat	Agenda items 2,3 and 6	Amy Beaudreault , ISDC Senior Manager
CGIAR	Agenda item 4	Fiona Bourdin-Farrell , Global Director, People and Culture (v)
CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat (v)	Agenda item 6	Brian King , Big Data Platform Lead; Jawoo Koo , (Interim) Lead, One CGIAR Initiative "Harnessing Digital Technologies for timely Decision-making Across Food, Land, and Water Systems"; Svetlana Negroustoueva , Evaluation Function Lead; Karen Jay-Yina , Senior Evaluation Officer

Additional participants	
World Bank	Jonathan Wadsworth , Senior Advisor to the SC Chair
CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat (v)	Allison Grove Smith , Director, CGIAR System Advisory Services Shared Secretariat (v)
CGIAR	André Zandstra , Global Director of Innovative Finance & Resource Mobilization
	Khuloud Odeh , Interim Executive Director, CGIAR System Organization; Global Director Digital Services
	Marion Barriskell , Global Director, Business Operations and Finance
	Suzanne Ngo-Eyok , Managing Director, Africa (Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT) (v)

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Additional participants	
	Andrew Giddings , Director, Office of Ethics and Business Conduct (v day 2)
	Elise Perset , Director, Legal and Office Services
	Madina Bazarova , Acting Co-Chief Audit Executive, CGIAR (v)
	Christine Larson-Luhila , Deputy Director, Board and Council Relations (v)
	Kristina Röing de Nowina , Deputy Director, Funder and External Engagement
	Georgios Solomos , Senior Advisor, Risk Management (v)
	Roland Sundstrom , Senior Advisor, EMT's Office

Event Management Support	
CGIAR	Olwen Cussen , Board and Council Relations Officer
	Thomas Marius Müller , One CGIAR transition & System Council workflow Coordinator
	Victoria Pezzi , Meeting and Events Coordinator