

Membership of CGIAR’s Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA)

Purpose

This document presents the background, decision request and rationale related to membership of SPIA as outlined in the document following this cover note, namely a nomination by the SPIA Chair to extend the membership of Dr. Kyle Emerick and Dr. Rachid Laajaj as member and special initiative member respectively, for an additional three-year term with effect from 1 January 2023.

This proposal has been consulted with and supported by the System Council’s Standing Committee on Strategic Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation (SIMEC).

Action Requested

The System Council is therefore requested to consider and, if thought appropriate, to approve the:

- Appointment of **Dr. Kyle Emerick as SPIA Standing Panel Member** for an additional three-year term with effect from 1 January 2023 unless otherwise decided by the System Council;
- Appointment of **Dr. Rachid Laajaj as a Special Initiative Member** for an additional three-year term with effect from 1 January 2023 unless otherwise decided by the System Council.

Special notice on ‘Consent Agenda’ status of this document

This item is presented to the System Council according to Article 7.1(a) of the System Council’s Rules of Procedure, permitting a ‘consent agenda’ consisting of items that require formal System Council decision but are submitted as a group for adoption by the System Council without discussion.

Further to the rules of procedure, **should a System Council member or Active Observer wish to remove an individual item from the Consent Agenda, that request should be communicated to the Secretary of the System Council by close of business Paris time on 26 October 2022.**

Document category: Working document of the System Council

There is no restriction on the circulation of this document

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SPIA Chair nomination for extension of a SPIA Member and a SPIA Special Initiative Member

Background

1. The CGIAR System Council approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) of CGIAR's Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA) with effect from 4 October 2018 (Decision Ref: SC/M6/EDP2) ¹.
2. As set out in Section 4 of the SPIA ToRs, the panel will consist of three standing members and up to three additional "special initiative" members who "provide strategic guidance in the delivery of the SPIA workplan as necessary."
3. According to the ToRs, "the additional standing and special initiative members of SPIA will be identified by the SPIA Chair based on role specification, criteria and key competencies desired for SPIA members, as approved by the System Council, with those persons identified by the SPIA Chair, in consultation with SIMEC, being confirmed by the System Council."
4. In line with the above procedures, a candidate for standing member, Kyle Emerick and a candidate for special initiative member, Rachid Laajaj, were presented to System Council on 22 November 2019 and were approved on a no-objection basis on 9 December 2019 (decision SC/M9/EDP1²), for a three-year term commencing on 1 January 2020 and ending on 31 December 2022.
5. According to the ToRs, "SPIA standing members, including the Chair, will serve an initial three years, with the possibility of renewal up to three additional years without further extension.³ To the extent possible, membership terms will be staggered to ensure a gradual refreshing of members".
6. At the 14th System Council held on 15-16 December 2021, the System Council approved the workplan and budget of SPIA as part of the 2022-2024 Workplan & Budget for CGIAR's Advisory Services (decision SC/M14/DP4)⁴⁵. The approved budget ceiling includes honorarium payments for the SPIA members and special initiative members.

¹ <https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/TOR-SPIA-Approved-4Oct2018.pdf>

² <https://www.cgiar.org/how-we-work/governance/system-council/system-council-decision-register/>

³ The SPIA ToRs do not specifically specify the appointment duration for the special initiative members

⁴ https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2021/12/SC14_4a-Advisory-Services-2022-2024-MYP-1.pdf

⁵ <https://www.cgiar.org/how-we-work/governance/system-council/system-council-decision-register/>

7. SPIA now wishes to extend the membership of Kyle Emerick and Rachid Laajaj as member and special initiative member respectively, for an additional three-year term until 31 December 2025.

Decision requested

8. On the recommendation of the SPIA Chair, appoint Professor Kyle Emerick and Professor Rachid Laajaj for an additional three-year term with effect from 1 January 2023.
9. Appendix 1 provides a brief biography of Kyle Emerick and Rachid Laajaj and describes their roles in SPIA.
10. The rationale for requesting the extension of Kyle Emerick is:
Professor Emerick has various roles as standing member of SPIA. He oversees the portfolio of learning studies on digital tools that aim at providing rigorous evidence of impacts of CGIAR-developed tools and answer questions about complementary interventions and heterogeneity. The portfolio of studies is expected to be completed in 2023 and a synthesis of findings by 2024. Professor Emerick has closely supported the work of the National Data Systems team, with special focus on the work in Vietnam and starting activities in Bangladesh this year. SPIA has completed the stocktake of CGIAR innovations in Vietnam and is working with the National Statistics Agency to design a large data collection to measure reach of CGIAR innovations. The work in Vietnam also contemplates expanding the measurement agenda in the SPIA country work. The work to be initiated in Bangladesh will benefit from Professor Emerick's extensive experience in this country. Likewise, Professor Emerick has contributed to the mandate of SPIA to enhance the impact assessment capacity of the CGIAR. He is leading the series of webinars that SPIA organizes monthly to support the design of rigorous impact assessments of CGIAR innovations, targeting particularly early career researchers in the system. The One CGIAR community stands to gain a great deal from Professor Emerick's continued technical leadership, to support the generation of independent evidence of CGIAR reach and impacts and to enhance the impact assessment capacity of the system.
11. The rationale for requesting the extension of Rachid Laajaj is:
Professor Laajaj's primary role as special initiative member for SPIA is overseeing a portfolio of studies to causally identify whether scaling strategies, specifically adapted to the characteristics of CGIAR innovations, can lead to a more sustained adoption. This set of studies was commissioned in 2021 and is expected to be completed during 2023. Maintaining continuity in oversight of this portfolio is crucial to ensure that we deliver strong evidence and a coherent interpretation and communication of the results. We expect Professor Laajaj to lead the synthesis on the early findings from the four studies in 2024. More recently, Professor Laajaj has been leading the support that SPIA is providing to One CGIAR initiatives. By exploiting the network of external researchers of SPIA, two matchmaking events have been organized under his steering to facilitate partnerships between CGIAR initiatives and academic researchers to design rigorous impact evaluations that will answer relevant research questions of the

initiatives. SPIA expects that Professor Laajaj will continue to lead several of the activities to support the strengthening of CGIAR impact assessment capacity .

12. With requested appointment renewals, the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment would continue to have a broad thematic and geographic composition, as well as a good gender mix, and staggered term ends, as shown in the following table:

Name	Institution	Role	Specialty	Gender	Term end ⁶
SPIA Standing Members					
Karen Macours	Paris School of Economics, France	Chair	Impact evaluation, development	F	30/09/2023
Kyle Emerick	Tufts University, USA	Member	Agricultural Development, Climate Change adaptation	M	31/12/2025
Sujata Visaria	Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong SAR	Member	Development economics, value chains in emerging markets	F	30/06/2024
SPIA Special Initiative Members					
Travis Lybbert	UC Davis, USA	Member	Agriculture, markets	M	30/06/2025
Kelsey Jack	UC Santa Barbara, USA	Member	Natural resources management	F	30/06/2025
Rachid Laajaj	University of Los Andes, Colombia	Member	Impact evaluation, AR4D and technology adoption	M	31/12/2025
Monica Biradavolu	QualAnalytics	Member	Sociologist, mixed methods impact assessment	F	30/06/2024

⁶ These dates are for the end of the current term. Sujata Visaria and Monica Biradavolu are serving their first terms and are thus eligible for extension.

Appendix 1

Current SPIA member proposed by SPIA Chair for a three-year extension

Kyle Emerick - Associate Professor in Economics, Tufts University, USA

As a standing member, Kyle Emerick works closely with the chair on the implementation of SPIA's TORs.

The key criteria considered for selection of the candidate included:

- track record in capacity building for impact assessment;
- proven ability to work with and engage social and biophysical scientists to identify opportunities for studying CGIAR impacts and design strong studies;
- excellent publication record, demonstrating methodological innovation and rigor in establishing impact of CGIAR innovations;
- a broad understanding of the work of CGIAR and the challenges involved both in establishing impacts of AR4D and in the use of such impact evidence for policy making.

While other candidates were strong in some of these criteria, Prof. Emerick is strong in all four areas. He holds a PhD in Agricultural and Resource Economics from the University of California, Berkeley and has published extensively on the economics of agricultural development.

Current SPIA special initiative member proposed by SPIA Chair for a three-year extension

Rachid Laajaj - Associate Professor in Economics, University of Los Andes, Bogota, Colombia

Rachid Laajaj leads a set of learning-oriented studies under SPIA Objective 2.2 (Coordinated sets of impact assessments on recent innovations) on how diffusion strategies adapted to the characteristics of CGIAR innovations can enhance and sustain uptake.

The key criteria considered for selection of the candidate to lead this set of studies included:

- expertise in the analysis of agricultural technology adoption and the factors that enhance or constrain uptake at scale;
- expertise and a track record in rigorous evaluation of the impacts of agricultural innovations;
- familiarity with agricultural research for development (AR4D) processes and the contributions of social and natural scientists;
- a broad understanding of the work of CGIAR and the different types of innovations developed by different centers and programs.

While other candidates were strong in some of these criteria, Prof. Laajaj is strong in all four areas. He holds a PhD in Agricultural and Applied Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has published extensively on agricultural development and human capital in developing countries.