

CGIAR Integrated Reform Proposal: Q&A

System-wide Issues

1. What is the new CGIAR system-wide governance mechanism?

Good governance across the system will be effected through greater clarity of functions, transparency, stakeholder voice, and legally binding performance contracts.

The CARD gives the opportunity for all stakeholders to have their say on the content, implementation, approach and direction of the Strategy and Results Framework. This provides the overall mandate of the system, binding together all the stakeholders in a common purpose and mission.

The Fund Council is accountable to the Funder investors which are in turn accountable to their Member States, Institutions or Boards (in the case of private sector/foundations). The Funders Summit, to be organized by the Fund Office, will receive progress and outcome reports from the Consortium and the Fund Council.

The Consortium Board will have clear decision-making authorities. The Board's three major functions will be: 1) strategy formulation, 2) oversight on management, and 3) risk management and compliance. The board is accountable to the Fund Council for delivery of the Program Performance Contracts and takes fiduciary responsibility for the use of program funds, ensuring that acceptable systems are in place at centers and partners with which it contracts. A CEO will be appointed who will execute the decisions of the Board, with support of the Consortium Office.

The Consortium CEO is accountable to the centers, and is appointed by and reports to the Consortium Board.

The Centers are responsible to the Consortium according to Center Performance Agreements and best practice guidelines.

2. What are the roles and responsibilities of the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC)?

The Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC) principal roles are to:

- *provide core scientific advice relating to system strategy, priorities and assessment of scientific quality and impacts of CGIAR-led research.*
- *conduct foresight and other studies to enable the system to respond to emerging issues*
- *facilitate partnerships for greater research and development impact and champion agricultural science and technology in order to catalyze the mobilization of global science.*

The Council will be appointed by and report to the Funder Summit and inform the Consortium Board on relevant scientific and partnership issues.

It will be responsible for providing independent scientific and technical advice and knowledge on effective networking and partnerships with actors in development and the advanced research community in order to position the CGIAR better in the international agricultural research architecture. The ISPC will work in partnership with a revitalized GFAR to fulfill its roles and make use of the biennial Conference as a platform for partner engagement and partnership cultivation.

The ISPC will advise the Consortium on the development of the Strategy and Results Framework. It will also assess the Strategy and Results Framework on behalf of the Fund Council. It will report to the Fund Council on mega-program proposal reviews, independent panels for program evaluations, and system-wide reviews. The ISPC will also organize a Science Forum every two years as part of the CARD.

3. What is the independent evaluation arrangement for the new CGIAR?

Independent evaluation will take place at various levels and be instigated by either the Fund or the Consortium. As managing for results is a responsibility of management, the Consortium will take the lead on performance management and measurement. The Fund Council will monitor the implementation of the program performance contracts and achievement of the agreed targets.

At Center Level: *The Consortium will put into place a common and strengthened performance management system (PMS) that captures key managerial and program effectiveness indicators which will allow Center Boards and Directors to manage. This PMS will include arrangements for external audit so as to ensure fiduciary compliance and risk management. The PMS will also capture progress under the Center Performance Agreements with the Consortium.*

The Consortium CEO will provide, on the basis of the PMS, an Annual Report to the Fund Council on the performance and management of the Consortium. The CEO's Report will update the Fund Council on the status of mega-programs, and on progress towards achievement of the strategic objectives through the Strategy and Results framework. This Report will include an action plan, where appropriate, to strengthen the capacity of the Consortium, to fulfill more effectively the performance contracts. This Report may eventually replace the need for 5-yearly EPMRs as currently practiced, although the CEO may commission EPMRs of Centers as and when deemed necessary.

Program Level: *"Mega-Programs" performance contracts will include a results measurement framework. This will be the basis for annual monitoring. The Consortium CEO will provide a report on progress of each program against results expected in the Annual Report to the Fund Council.*

Programs will be subject to periodic Independent Evaluation (say every 4-5 years) by the Funding Council, drawing on the advice of the ISPC. The timing of Independent Evaluations will be spaced so as to ensure that the Centers are not overloaded in any one year. Evaluations of Programs could be combined for purposes of economy and efficiency. The Fund Council will make arrangements for independent panels which would conduct the evaluations, with advice from the ISPC.

System-wide level: *An ad hoc independent evaluation arrangement will review implementation of the strategy every six years at the system level. The criteria for the system review will be established with input from the Consortium, the Fund Council and partners for tracking performance towards the accomplishment of the Strategic Objectives, and the desired programmatic outcomes and impacts defined in the Strategy and Results Framework. The Fund Council will commission the system level review, with advice from ISPC*

4. Who will be the driver of the change process after AGM08?

Following AGM08, Kathy Sierra, Chair of CGIAR, will set up and lead a small Transition Management Team (TMT), with donor, Alliance, and GFAR representatives as well as the CGIAR Director. The TMT will provide leadership and effective management during the transition phase for the new CGIAR, which will include the establishment and functioning of the Consortium of the Centers and the CGIAR Fund. CST will continue to function as a sounding board to the TMT, focusing on continuity of the CG reform process, and maintenance of its principles.

Results Framework and Mega-Programs

5. How will the Strategic Results Framework and Mega-Programs be developed and managed?

The Alliance is discussing a process for this development and is, in collaboration with GFAR, organizing plenary discussions with partners and stakeholders at the CGIAR Annual General Meeting on December 2 in Maputo, Mozambique on this very issue. Key to success will be a Framework and Programs that are designed with strong inputs from partners to ensure that they are output-oriented and driven by stakeholders needs.

6. What will happen to the current Center projects or programs that do not fit into Strategic Results Framework or Mega-Programs?

This issue will be addressed as part of the design process of the Strategy and Results Framework. In phasing out particular projects attention should be paid to ensure that results of ongoing research are not jeopardized by premature termination.

7. What will happen to the Challenge Programs (CPs) and System-wide Programs (SWEPS)?

Over time we anticipate that Challenge Programs and those SWEPS that have continued strategic importance will either be absorbed into mega-programs or supported through existing modalities if this makes more sense in particular cases.

Consortium

8. Whom will the Consortium Board and CEO be accountable to, the Fund or the Centers?

The CEO will be accountable to the Consortium Board and the Consortium Board will be accountable primarily to the Centers for the performance of its agreed functions. In essence the Centers should be viewed as the main shareholders in the Consortium. In the same way that a company is accountable to its shareholders, so the Consortium is accountable to the Centers. However, the Consortium will also have a contractual commitment to the Fund, through the performance contracts for the mega-programs and the special funding window for institutional support to the Centers.

9. Who can replace the Consortium Board and CEO if things go wrong? Who can impose sanctions on the Centers if they are not performing?

The CEO can be replaced by the Consortium Board, which is itself accountable to the Centers as noted above. The consultant on the architecture of the Consortium will be asked to advise on the issue of Board replacement, including the case of non-performance. If Centers are not performing, then the performance agreements they will have signed with the Consortium will be used to impose appropriate sanctions (e.g. withdrawal of funds).

10. Do all the Centers support the Consortium concept and the reform proposal? What are their major concerns, if any?

The Centers support the concepts in the reform proposal. They recognize the importance, however, of making the proposal work in a way that avoids excessive centralization and bureaucracy and increases research and development effectiveness. Key among their concerns is donors' commitment to the reform, and donors' willingness and ability to contribute to the Fund in a coherent way. Centers are concerned that if the Consortium is created and the Fund is not successful and attracts only minimal funding, the rebalanced partnership and the 'compact' with donors in the reform will not be achieved.

The Centers also are concerned about the overall bureaucratic requirements in performance assessment, and would like to know whether donors will rely on performance contracts or are going to require additional performance evaluation mechanisms that will end up multiplying reporting requirements for them and their scientists. This would result in an increased bureaucracy and a decreased capacity to innovate in the Centers.

11. Will the Consortium result in a centralized system that will add bureaucracy and reduce innovation by the scientists and partners?

The Alliance thinks that if we plan the Consortium well, it will do just the opposite. We are making sure in our discussions of the various aspects of the Consortium that we design mechanisms to simplify things, strengthen innovation and ensure efficiency gains in the long run..

Partnerships

12. Will the new CGIAR enable dynamic and effective partnerships, or be a “closed” and self-serving system?

The new CGIAR will have a specific focus on enabling effective partnerships. The Consortium will promote a culture of working with others for innovation and lesson learning. The common Strategy and Results Framework will be developed in close collaboration with a broad range of partners/stakeholders, and program performance contracts will explicitly include involvement of partners.

Many of the changes being proposed aim to open out the system to more effective partnership with others:

- *Funding partners from the north and south as well as stakeholder representatives are represented in the management of the new fund via the Fund Council*
- *The CARD mechanism, developed through a priori consultation and close collaboration, brings diverse voices into discussion on the key needs in agricultural research for development, building back from the identified development needs to the specific role of the CGIAR within the overall system. In this way the comparative advantages and roles of each actor can be explored and partnership developed to make the best use of skills.*
- *The new Independent Science and Partnership Council should stimulate changed behaviors within the system, work closely with GFAR networks to facilitate greater external linkage with new partners and measure the CGIAR’s success by its value to partners and intended beneficiaries as well as by scientific quality criteria.*
- *The proposed Consortium Board will be selected through processes directly involving other stakeholders.*
- *Funding for the proposed mega-programs must include support for the involvement of partners*
- *Capacity development in program partners, to the stage where national partners are empowered to continue activities independent of the CGIAR, is identified as an explicit measure of success of the system.*
- *Linkage with other development assistance mechanisms via GFAR and the CARD mechanism will embed the CGIAR’s research in the wider frame for support to agricultural development, going beyond the direct responsibilities of the CGIAR and giving the system and its partners a stronger voice in international policy.*

13. Will the Conference for Agricultural Research for Development (CARD) be a decision-making body?

The CARD plays a crucial role in recommending and formulating key areas for collective action in agricultural research to deliver against development goals. It thus establishes the ‘space’ and contexts in which the CGIAR will define its business. The processes of business definition will bring together the institutional capabilities of the CGIAR with those of its partners and the Global Forum provides the inclusive and objective platform for this to happen on global and regional scales.

The CARD provides the opportunity for the CGIAR to integrate research perspectives with development aims and so define system-level priorities and strategy and results frameworks.

Specifically the CARD will:

1. ***Bring together the perspectives of diverse stakeholders to shape and inform research policy and embed this in wider development processes, but not prescribe the specific business operation of the CGIAR.***
2. ***Make use of the neutral platform of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research to explore new themes and build ownership of agendas by others***
3. ***Work back from desired development outcomes, to ensure alignment of the programs of the CGIAR centers and their development partners with development demands, and other necessary multilateral and bilateral funding mechanisms engaged in advance of activities.***
4. ***Be the culmination of interactions and partnerships previously developed at national, regional and global levels.***
5. ***Recognize explicit needs for engagement of the CGIAR centers in developing national and regional capacities required for development success.***
6. ***Use GFAR processes of needs identification and collective actions to provide input into mega-programs.***

14. What is a re-vitalized GFAR? What is its role in the context of the new CGIAR?

The Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) is a movement for action involving all those who care about the future of agriculture and its role in development, working together to address agricultural development challenges through the generation and use of knowledge. The Forum operates at regional level through regional research fora and globally in agendas of common importance. Its governance brings together representatives of all sectors involved in agricultural research for development, from small farmers to intergovernmental bodies. The CGIAR is a key partner within the Global Forum.

GFAR is also undergoing its own processes of revitalization. Responding to innovation system priorities raised in the 2006 GFAR Triennial Conference, the guidance from two positive external reviews in 2007 and a subsequent multistakeholder planning retreat, the Forum is now focused on the strategic areas of:

- *Advocacy for research to address and understand key issues that shape tomorrow's agriculture*
- *Reorienting agricultural research and innovation systems to meet development goals*
- *Fostering innovative and strategic partnerships around the world*
- *Enabling access to agricultural knowledge for all*

A revitalized GFAR will be ideally placed to complement changes within the CGIAR by providing the multi-stakeholder environment required to make agricultural research for development a functioning reality. GFAR's stakeholders are now going through a

thorough process of self-reflection to ensure that representation of all stakeholders is strong, balanced and inclusive and that communication networks are efficient and effective.

The success of the GFAR mechanism in enabling the new CGIAR to play its most effective role in the research for development continuum will now rely on real commitments from individuals, institutions (including the CGIAR) and of resources (both financial and human), towards these mechanisms and to ensuring the value of agricultural research for development.

CGIAR Fund

15. What are the incentives for investors/donors to increase their contributions?

First, donors will be investing against “big results” while freed from micromanaging the centers. Harmonization of funding decisions among the donors under the Paris Declaration and streamlined monitoring and evaluation of the program performance will enhance individual donor’s effectiveness and efficiency in their program and investment management.

Second, one of the objectives of the reform design is to ensure that the donors will know more clearly what they are investing in—through the Results Framework and performance contracts on the Mega programs. They will also be informed in a timely and transparent way about program progress against marked milestones and independent review and evaluations. The more compelling the expected results for a specific donor, the greater the rationale for them to increase their contributions.

Third, the proposed reforms are expected to lead to a more efficient CGIAR; consequently “more bang for the buck” for each investor. This would make the CGIAR a more attractive investment vis-à-vis other investment alternatives.

16. Will the Fund allow donors to earmark their contributions to specific Mega-programs and Centers?

Yes, donors could earmark their contributions to the four windows or specific mega programs or centers. However, if every donor were to earmark their contributions to a program or a center there could be over- or under-funding of some programs or centers. Therefore there is need for a significant level of unrestricted contributions to the Fund to enable Fund managers and the Fund Council to optimize allocations. All donors are encouraged to provide unrestricted funding. If the level of unrestricted funding is low, it may be necessary to request donors providing earmarked funds to allocate a certain percentage to the unrestricted pool as a condition for participation in the Fund.

17. How will the unrestricted Fund resources be allocated across Mega-Programs and institutional support?

Allocation of the unrestricted funds among mega-programs would depend on the priorities emerging from the Strategy and Results framework and the content of the individual program proposals. Allocation between mega-programs (within Windows 1-3) and institutional support (Window 4) would depend on the speed of transformation of the Centers’ agendas to the mega-program format. Institutional support is expected to decrease over time as Centers recover full costs of programs and bilateral projects.

18. What is the relationship between the Fund Council and the Funders' Summit?

The Fund Council will be accountable to Fund investors, and will report to the Funders Summit. The Funders Summit approves the Strategy and Results Framework which is developed by the Consortium with partners. The Summit will receive progress and outcome reports from the Consortium and the Fund Council.