

**TO:** Frank Rijsberman  
CEO CGIAR CONSORTIUM

**FROM:** SYSTEM LEVEL PRIORITIZATION PROCESS WORKING GROUP - KAREN BROOKS, MARIANNE BANZIGER, BRUCE CAMPBELL, AND LUIS SOLÓRZANO

**SUBJECT:** DESIGN PROCESS FOR DEFINITION AND PRIORITIZATION OF SLO– IDOS

**DATE:** NOVEMBER 27, 2012

**CC:** SIRKKA IMMONEN (ISPC FOCAL POINT)

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## **RATIONALE**

The CGIAR has undertaken a comprehensive reorganization and has adopted a Strategic Results Framework (2011) that defines four system-level outcomes: reducing rural poverty, increasing food security, improving nutrition and health and the sustainable management of natural resources. The outcomes at present are expressed in qualitative terms. For purposes of implementation, the outcomes must be mapped to observable and measurable parameters linked to activities within the research portfolio and against which progress can be monitored.

Drawing on the SRF Action Plan and the ISPC's White Paper (Strengthening the SRF through Prioritization), the Consortium is now undertaking an iterative process at two levels to prioritize activities and determine how best to gauge progress. Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) are being defined at the CRP level. The issue of how best to prioritize and to gauge progress at the system level is the subject of the process defined in this memo.

Following upon the September 2012 meeting of Science Leaders of the CGIAR in Montpellier, France, the Consortium appointed a Working Group (SL Working Group) to design a process to establish priorities at the system level, informed by feasible impact targets for CGIAR research. The SL working group is chaired by Karen Brooks (CRP2 director) and includes CRP directors (Marianne Banziger and Bruce Campbell), the Consortium Office (Luis Solórzano) plus participation of experts as needed. The ISPC (focal point Sirkka Immonen) provides advice and clarifies the intent of the ISPC White Paper but is not a member of the group for decision-making.

Concurrently, a second Working Group was appointed to refine and harmonize IDOs and impact pathways/Theories of Change at the CRP level (CRP-IDOs Working Group). This group is chaired by Patrick Dugan and the two working groups (SL and CRP-IDOs) will work in parallel with coordination through flows of information and face to face working sessions as needed.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SL-IDOs WORKING GROUP

The System Level Prioritization Process Working group has been tasked to:

- Think through the iterative process of prioritization at the system level, including the inputs (data, modeling, advice) required for such a process, the interaction with the CRP level prioritization process, as well as the engagement and consultation of key stakeholders.
- Establish a timeline and key milestones in the process.
- Develop Terms of Reference for key inputs to the process to be commissioned by the Consortium.

The deliverables from the working group are expected to be:

- A System Prioritization Process design memo; and
- Terms of Reference for key inputs to the process to be commissioned by the Consortium.

This document fulfills the first deliverable (A System Prioritization Process Design Memo).

## PROCESS DESIGN

A process outlined below is divided into three phases each with specific milestones and deliverables (Slide 1). Detailed products, coordination and process flows are illustrated in Slide 2 and articulated as follows:

**Phase I:** As input to the CGIAR Consortium for development of the SRF Action Plan, the ISPC prepared a White Paper on Strengthening the SRF through Prioritization (**I.2**). In its report the ISPC recommends specification of CRP IDOs at appropriate scale and focus together with impact pathways linking CRP research results in aggregate to the four SL IDOs (**I.3**).

During the September 2012 meeting of CGIAR Science Leaders in Montpellier, the Consortium appointed two Working Groups to tackle this challenge (**I.4**):

- (i) a Working Group (SL Working Group) to design a process to clarify the theory of change at the system level and recommend how best to measure progress toward meeting the System Level Outcomes and to guide prioritization of investments across the portfolio (**I.5**);
- (ii) a Working Group (CRP-IDOs Working Group) to refine and harmonize IDOs and impact pathways/Theories of Change at the CRP level (**I.6**).

The Consortium requested the ISPC to produce a White Paper on Theory of Change (TOC) and Impact Pathways at the System Level. In addition, the ISPC is asked to

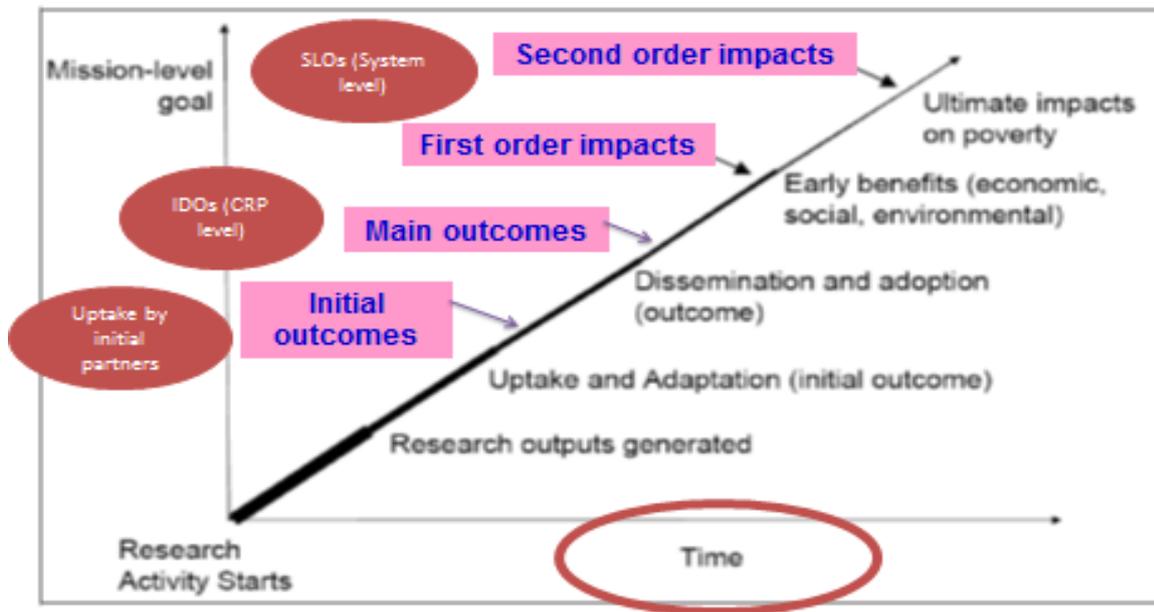
review and provide feedback on the preliminary CRP IDOs (I.4). The SL working group is requested to contribute to the TORs for the ISPC White Paper on Theory of Change (TOC) and Impact Pathways at System Level (I.5).

Several milestones for phase I have already been accomplished; i.e., the appointment of the Working Groups, this Memo outlining the process, a first draft of TORs for the ISPC and basic framing of the TORs for additional analysis to be commissioned (described in Phase II below).

**Phase II:** During this phase the ISPC will produce the paper on the theory of change and impact pathways to recommend how best to measure progress, and accordingly how to prioritize activities at the system level. The ISPC document will clarify the complex and multiple impact pathways through which research can contribute to impact. A key component of this assessment will be evaluation of the certainty of the science underpinning understanding of the linkages, and accordingly elaboration of the limits of present knowledge about causal relationships. If there are significant differences in the manifestations of impact pathways in different regions, the paper will address these differences. The ISPC will develop the white paper under its own independent mandate, and will call on the expertise it needs to complete this paper, which may include contributions from both inside and outside the CGIAR. The paper will be subject to a peer review that will include, among others, the SL working group.

The Working group on CRP-IDOs will continue to refine and harmonize the initial set of IDOs (II.3 (Figure 1)). The Consortium will also request the ISPC to review the CRP level IDOs portfolio as a whole in terms of their congruence with the evolving thinking on measurement at both system and CRP level (II.4) and subsequently provide feedback to the CRPs IDOs working group (II.5).

## Initial uptake – IDOs - SLOs



Based on TORs developed by the SL working group (I.7) the Consortium will commission two additional and separate pieces of work by CRP-2/PIM to define broad system-level target domains:

- (i) an *ex ante* impact assessment of promising pipeline technologies identified by the Centers to assess their contribution broadly to the system-level outcomes; and (II.6)
- (ii) Mapping of the present portfolio of research under way in the CG system and planned under the current funding cycle of the CRPs (II.7).

A third analysis effort (II.8) will focus on the CG system's work on farming systems and natural resource management. This work is not at present well captured in the various modeling exercises, but must nonetheless be well considered in the system-wide priority-setting process. The SL working group will undertake additional discussions to clarify how best to identify specific pathways through which activities addressing NRM contribute to SLOs, and with which external partners to seek collaboration. These additional discussions will result in TORs for this work to be commissioned over the same time frame as the two tasks noted above.

The Consortium together with commissioned groups will compile these work streams (i.e., the ISPC white paper and comments on the draft CRP IDOs, the preliminary results of the modeling of promising technologies, the preliminary results of mapping

of present work of the CG system, and the output of the NRM study) in summary form for a scoping report in March - April 2013 (II.9). The analyses will be expected to be completed later in the year. Preliminary recommendations based on the three commissioned studies will be included in interim reports (II.9).

The two work streams (SLO and working group for CRP-level IDO's) will remain in close contact and share relevant information regularly.

**Phase III:** During Phase III (Slide 2) the Consortium will facilitate a participatory process with key CGIAR stakeholders (III.1) to characterize the “demand” for CGIAR research from the side of the stakeholders (investors / donors, regional agricultural research organizations, national governments, etc.). This exercise aims to align the priorities of diverse CGIAR stakeholders into a single set of priorities at System level that could be thought of as the ambition level of the outcomes (and associated impact) the CGIAR aspires to have. Where achievement of results requires commitments of partners, these commitments will be made explicit. Representatives of key partner organizations will be included in the stakeholder consultations, and the aspirations will be understood to be jointly owned. The system level outcomes are long term, to be achieved beyond the time frame of the periodic commitments of resources to the CRPs. Nevertheless, the CRPs will define impact pathways that relate their work (research outputs, outcomes and partnerships) in the relevant time periods to the ultimate objectives sought at the system level. Negotiation of IDOs at the CRP level and selection of IDOs at the SL level will take place in three steps.

In the first (III.1), the ISPC and Consortium will jointly convene a meeting planned as back-to-back with the ISPC meeting at CIAT in Cali, late March 2013, at which the ISPC could present and discuss its white paper as well as its review of CRP IDOs with the CRP leaders. After this meeting the CRPs will incorporate feedback from the ISPC and produce a revised/validated version of their IDOs (III.2). At this meeting a provisional set of SL IDOs will be proposed and their congruence with the CRP level IDOs validated.

The second discussion will be convened by the Consortium and will bring together the CRP leads for the two working groups (SL and CRP IDOs) with donors and external stakeholders to discuss the indicators and suggest targets to be referred back to the Science Leaders for comment and/or agreement (III.3).

CRPs leaders will be able to incorporate feedback directly from the ISPC meeting and from the donor and stakeholder groups to negotiate with the Consortium the final CRP IDOs, work-plans and budgets for the 2014 Management Update (III.4).

Two synthesis products from the combined work streams are the final report of refined and aligned CRP IDOs (III.5) and the Consortium's submission of a 2014 Management Update to the Founders Forum (III.6).

The final step will be the approval by the Funders Forum of a CGIAR 2014 Management Update (III.7) that has been developed by way of a participatory process including the Science Leaders, Funders, and main users of the CG's work (III.8).

This process will set the stage for some CRPs to start piloting the Performance Management System in 2014-2015 (III.9).

## **FINANCING**

The work of the task forces (process design, SLO level indicators, and CRP IDOs) will be financed through a combination of allocations from the Consortium and assignments of additional tasks under CRPs.

The commissioned studies requiring extension of activities already initiated under CRP-PIM will be financed under that CRP (II.6).

Additional work on NRM will be costed once the scope is clarified. This work will initially be covered by a small amount of CO funding to explore interest from potential donors.

CRPs are expected to cover travel expenses to attend the meetings.

The CO will cover venue expenses for the meetings and the coordination and engagement with the donor/stakeholder group.