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ISPC: Search and Selection Process

(Approved)

*Document presented for Agenda Item 6:
Nomination and Selection Process for
the New ISPC*

Submitted by:
Fund Office

ISPC: Search and Selection Process

Summary

As part of the changes in its governance structure, the CGIAR decided to establish an Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC) to provide independent advice and expertise to the funders of CGIAR research through services to the Fund Council and the Funders Forum. ISPC's specific roles and responsibilities which were described in the Framework for the CGIAR Fund was endorsed at the CGIAR Business Meeting held in Washington DC on Dec 8, 2009. The present document presents a proposal on the following: a) size and structure of ISPC, and terms of office of chair and members; and b) search and selection process for the inaugural ISPC.

It is proposed that the inaugural ISPC be composed of a chair, four (4) members, one ex-officio member serving as chair of the standing panel on impact assessment (SPIA), and at least one but no more than two (2) members of the interim ISPC. The ISPC chair would be appointed for an initial period of three (3) years, with the possibility of extension for up to a total of five (5) years, and that the position would be close to half-time. The regular members would be appointed initially for two (2) years, with a possibility of renewal up to four (4) years without further extension. The interim ISPC member(s) would serve for only one year.

The search and recruitment process for ISPC chair and members would be open, transparent, and global. A Search and Nomination Committee (SNC) would be constituted with a chair and four members selected by the Fund Council (FC) from a list of nominated reputable individuals not directly associated with any CGIAR entities/centers or programs. A fourth member would be a current FC member who would serve as the Council's representative in the SNC. The SNC would have a fixed term of three (3) years. The SNC will be administratively supported by the CGIAR Fund Office.

A set of criteria, drawn up based on the agreed roles and responsibilities of the ISPC, will be used in various stages of the selection process. It is expected that the SNC would recommend short-lists of names to the FC. To give the FC sufficient opportunity to choose from among well-qualified candidates, it is proposed that the SNC submit final shortlists of 12 to 13 candidates—respectively, a ranked-list of 3 candidates for chair, and a ranked-list of 10 for members, including 1 to 2 from among the current membership of the interim ISPC.

With a proposed launching of the process in early May, it is expected that the SNC would submit the final ranked shortlists for chair and members for the Fund Council's decision at its September 2010 meeting.

Action requested:

Fund Council's approval of the proposed a) size and structure of ISPC, and terms of office of chair and members; and b) search and selection process for the inaugural ISPC described in the document.

Background

As part of the changes in its governance structure, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) decided to establish an Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC) to provide independent advice and expertise to the funders of CGIAR research through services to the Fund Council and the Funders Forum. ISPC's specific roles and responsibilities as endorsed at the CGIAR Business Meeting held in Washington DC on Dec 8, 2009 are described in **Annex 1**. The Fund Council appoints the chair and members of ISPC and approves its program and budget.

Size and Structure of ISPC

Previous discussion on the establishment of ISPC focused primarily on the body's roles and responsibilities. The former Transition Management Team (TMT) and CGIAR Executive Council considered that the size and organization of ISPC and the selection process for its chair and members should be decided by the Fund Council.

The size and structure as well as mode of operation of ISPC are determined primarily by the scope of its endorsed tasks and responsibilities. The CGIAR's experience in the establishment of its predecessor body, the Science Council, could also provide guidance in determining the "optimum" size and structure of ISPC, although there are clear differences in the functions of the two bodies. The analysis and recommendations of the Independent Task Group (ITG) that was commissioned by the TMT to help define the roles and responsibilities of ISPC also provide an idea of an appropriate size of the body that could serve the purpose.

In consideration of the above, it is proposed that the inaugural ISPC be composed of:

- A. a chair of outstanding leadership quality and internationally recognized eminence;
- B. four (4) members of recognized excellence and expertise in agricultural science and related fields for development including experience in partnerships arrangements to conduct international agricultural research;
- C. an ex-officio member serving as chair of the standing panel on impact assessment (SPIA); and
- D. at least one but no more than two members of the interim ISPC, excluding the current SPIA Chair, who would serve as member for the first year to provide continuity for certain processes and activities.

ISPC would operate partly through standing and/or ad hoc panels as determined by the ISPC chair, focusing on specific ISPC functions. The chair of SPIA would be selected and appointed by the ISPC chair in consultation with the FC.

Terms of Appointment of ISPC Chair and Members

The ISPC chair would be appointed for an initial period of three (3) years, with the possibility of extension for up to a total of five (5) years, and that the position would be close to half-time.

The ISPC chair could function from his or her permanent home base, but would be expected to spend a substantial amount of time in FAO Headquarters in Rome, working with the ISPC support unit located there, and would also be expected to maintain close contact with the FC Chair and Executive Secretary. In discharging the ISPC's role as an intellectual bridge between the funders and the Consortium of CGIAR Centers, the Council's chair is expected to also interact with the Consortium.

The selected members would be appointed initially for two (2) years, with a possibility of renewal up to four (4) years without further extension. ISPC members would be expected to make a commitment of about 25-30 working days per year for attending at least two meetings of the ISPC (of 2-3 days each), and other meetings in virtual mode as frequently as necessary.

Search and Recruitment Strategy

The search and recruitment process for ISPC chair and members would be open, transparent, and global. A Search and Nomination Committee (SNC) would be constituted with a chair and four members selected by the Fund Council (FC) from a list of nominated reputable individuals not directly associated with any CGIAR entities/centers or programs. A fourth member would be a current FC member who would serve as the Council's representative in the SNC. The SNC would have a fixed term of three (3) years.

Nominations and applications for ISPC chair and members would be encouraged from individuals and leading scientific and development organizations, worldwide including the Consortium Centers. The call for nominations/ applications would be based on the ISPC's functions outlined in **Annex 1**. The position of chair and members would be included in the same announcement, but persons nominating candidates (as well as the applicants themselves) would be asked to specify which position(s) the nomination (or application) is for. The position announcements would emphasize the important role of the ISPC in the new CGIAR System, and the expectation that the chair and members would be eminent scientists and development experts who would serve in their personal capacity. They would encourage nominations for or applications from women and developing country nationals.

A targeted-search process and advertisements in leading science journals with a global reach would allow the net to be cast widely. Key CGIAR stakeholders, academies of science, national research councils, universities, centers of excellence, professional societies, and donors would be contacted electronically to solicit nominations. **Annex 2** provides details of the search and recruitment strategy.

Selection Process

The selection process would fully involve the SNC in the step-by-step process of short-listing and interviewing candidates, and would allow the Committee to exercise its independent judgment on the basis of the agreed selection criteria.

With the expectation that a large number of nominations and applications would be generated by the position announcements, the process would be administratively supported by the Fund Office.

Briefly, a Fund Office staff assigned as focal point for the process would help solicit nominations, place advertisements, electronically manage the nominations/applications received, screen candidates according to the agreed criteria, solicit reference letters, and forward the long lists of potential candidates and their dossiers to the SNC. The SNC would assess the documents and identify the short lists of candidates, and conduct interviews. The Fund Office staff would help arrange interviews, and the SNC chair would forward the final short lists to the Executive Secretary of the Fund Office for onward transmission to the Fund Council.

Selection Criteria

The criteria for selecting the chair and members necessarily derive from the roles and responsibilities of the ISPC (**Annex 1**). The chair and members will be selected primarily on the basis of scientific expertise and experience, including partnership-related competencies. Individuals with a variety of disciplinary and professional backgrounds will be sought, with diversity reflecting developing and developed countries, gender and skills that offer the advisory body a range of perspective and insights. The proposed criteria for selecting the chair and members of ISPC are given below. Each candidate has to meet at least two of these criteria, and all should have professional and personal attributes and language skills appropriate to the workings of the ISPC.

- Eminence in a field of biological, physical or social science, including international recognition of research achievements;
- Internationally recognized experience in agricultural science for development, knowledge of smallholder agriculture and natural resources management, and good understanding of policy dimensions in the context of sustainable development;
- Visionary with global perspective and strong ability to think strategically and analyze complex issues;
- Experience in research management and partnership, and cross disciplinary approach to scientific agricultural and natural resources research for international development; knowledge of evaluation, impact assessment, and strategic planning approaches;
- Relevant experience in working in partnership with national agricultural research institutions, universities, CSOs or the private sector;

For the position of ISPC chair, besides leadership qualities and international eminence, emphasis would be given to the ability to influence key constituencies (scientific institutions, donors, centers, national research organizations, other partners), and the ability to address complex issues in all kinds of fora.

A different approach would be followed for the interim ISPC member to be selected for the transitional year. The pool of candidates—those interested in continuing on the ISPC—is small; so the nominations would be based primarily on a targeted-search process that emphasizes a

good understanding of the new CGIAR System and the ability to help the ISPC address outstanding issues.

Short-listing

It is expected that the SNC would recommend short-lists of names to the FC. To give the FC sufficient opportunity to choose from among well-qualified candidates, it is proposed that the SNC submit final shortlists of 12 to 13 candidates—respectively, a ranked-list of 3 candidates for chair, and a ranked-list of 10 for members, including 1 to 2 from among the current membership of the interim ISPC. These short lists would be the result of a systematic process of selecting the most qualified candidates. The initial screening, as well as all subsequent steps, would be based on the agreed selection criteria. It is expected that the SNC would use a consensus-building decision process guided by its chair.

Key Dates

The search and selection process will be quite intensive and time-consuming. The various steps in the process – appointing the SNC and consultant, calling for and receiving nominations/applications, obtaining reference letters, preparing the long-lists, and arranging and conducting interviews – will depend on close cooperation and timely inputs not only from the candidates and SNC members but also from those who are not involved directly in the search process.

With the objective of having the inaugural ISPC appointed and fully operational by Jan 2011, a tentative schedule is given below:

Feb 23:	Fund Council decides on search and selection process
Mar 15-31:	FC members and participants in Funders Forum send nominations for SNC chair and members to FC Executive Secretary
April 5-16:	FC endorses SNC membership composition
May 3-7:	Launch the search and selection process; send letters seeking nominations, and place advertisements
June 30:	Complete targeted search, and receive nominations/applications
July 15:	Complete candidate dossiers, and forward long lists to SNC
July 30:	Reach consensus on short lists of candidates
Aug 2-4:	Arrange interviews of candidates on short lists
Aug 30-31:	Interview candidates (in person for candidates for chair, and by video or phone as additional options for candidates for members)
Sept 3:	Reach consensus on final ranked short lists, and send lists to FC Executive Secretary
Sept 14 -15:	Fund Council decides on the ISPC membership

Roles and Responsibilities of the Independent Science and Partnership Council

The Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC) will be a standing panel of world-class scientific experts. The Council's overarching purpose is to provide independent advice and expertise to the funders of the CGIAR through services to the Fund Council and the Funders Forum. It will also serve as an intellectual bridge between the funders and the Consortium of CGIAR Centers.

The ISPC plays a vital role for the CGIAR to strengthen science, to improve productivity and quality of science, to catalyze the partnering of CGIAR science with other institutions of international agricultural research and to support the important role of the CGIAR as honest broker in various global debates.

In providing its advice, the ISPC will ensure alignment of programs with the Strategy and Results Framework. As part of a learning organization, the ISPC will capitalize on previous evaluations and seek to provide its learning to evaluations being done by the peer review process and eventual ex-post evaluation.

ISPC's specific tasks will be:

1. Commission and oversee evaluations of the scientific quality, relevance, partnership arrangements and likely development effectiveness of the investment proposals submitted by the Consortium to the Fund Council and make recommendations concerning their investment worthiness.
2. In undertaking the role described in 1 above, the ISPC will also provide feedback and guidance to the Consortium on any areas of concern regarding the quality of the proposed research and partnership arrangements contained in submitted investment proposals and on any deficiencies in the ex ante impact assessments provided by the Consortium in support of them.
3. Provide the Fund Council and the Funders Forum with foresight advice on trends and emerging issues, as well as potential strategies of addressing them related to the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework. In undertaking this role the ISPC will act as commissioner and coordinator of any required foresight studies, drawing on expertise within the Consortium and beyond, as appropriate, to undertake them.
4. To complement the GCARD process, in consultation and partnership with the Consortium and GFAR, convene periodic high-level scientific dialogues on high priority issues that will inform the scientific deliberations among CGIAR scientists and their research partners and help catalyze partnerships of the CGIAR with other global science communities.
5. Improve strategic investment decisions and help increase the rigor and the reach of impact assessment studies within the CGIAR by commissioning, in partnership with the Consortium, ex-post impact assessment of the development effectiveness of CGIAR investments. The evaluation of the Mega Programs and system review will be undertaken

by an independent evaluation arrangement, which will in turn avail itself of the lessons learnt from the ISPC's work.

6. Provide the Fund Council with independent advice on other matters upon request.

Search and Recruitment Strategy for ISPC Chair and Members

The following multi-pronged approach will be followed. Nominations and applications for the positions of ISPC chair and members would be encouraged from individuals and leading scientific and development organizations, worldwide. Special efforts would be made to encourage women and nationals of developing countries to be nominated or to apply.

Targeted Search

The consultant, with assistance from Fund Office staff, would undertake a web-, email-, and phone-based search for potential candidates. Individuals and organizations identified by the SNC, CGIAR members, and other key stakeholders of the CGIAR System would be contacted. Members of the SNC would have an important role in this targeted search process—to take full advantage of their extensive network of contacts among scientists and development experts, worldwide.

Nominations would be sought from a list of sources culled from the contacts database of partners maintained by the Fund Office, and from similar lists of donors, centers, and other relevant organizations. Besides nominations for ISPC positions, the nominators would be asked to suggest names and contact details of other potential nominators—so that a gradually expanding list of nominators could be developed. This approach, though time-consuming and logistically challenging, is expected to yield a substantial number of qualified candidates.

Advertisements

To reach a wider pool of scientists and development specialists who may not be closely affiliated with the CGIAR, it would be necessary to advertise the ISPC chair and member positions in key journals/periodicals with wide readership in both developed and developing countries.

Announcements

Position announcements would also be electronically sent to a large number of CGIAR stakeholders--individuals and institutions--such as academies of science, national research councils, universities, centers of excellence, professional societies, and donors

On-line System for Nominations and Applications

An on-line system for submitting nomination and applications will be used. In addition, a specific mailbox would be set up for receiving nominations and applications by e-mail.