

Meeting Summary of 2nd CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board Meeting (IPB-002) 25 November 2024 (Virtual)

Agenda Item 1: Opening and Agenda

1. The IPB Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.
2. The Secretary announced the Board members and participants on the call. A quorum was confirmed.
3. In her opening announcements, the Chair noted that that Ramesh Chand was now officially an IPB member following resolution of an administrative issue with his host country and that the newly appointed Chief of Staff of the EMD's office, Micheline Ayoub, was a participant in the meeting.
4. **Decision IPB/002/DP1:** Pursuant to article 6.1f of the Rules of Procedure, the Integrated Partnership Board adopted the agenda, as set out in document IPB-002-01a.
5. There were no declarations of interest on the agenda.
6. **Decision IPB/002/DP2:** Pursuant to article 6.3a of the Rules of Procedure, the Integrated Partnership Board approved the summary of the meeting of 13 November 2024.

Agenda Item 2: 2025-2023 Portfolio

7. The EMD introduced the discussion, emphasizing that this session was not a detailed review of the Portfolio, previously shared with the Board, but an opportunity to provide updates, share an overview of the Independent Science for Development Council's (ISDC) review of the Portfolio and its Programs and Accelerators, and seek the Board's concurrence and approval for submission to the System Council.
8. She reminded members of the extensive materials previously shared with the Board, including:
 - 2025-2030 Portfolio Narrative.
 - Program and Accelerator proposal documents (shared initially on 2 October, updated on 15 November with budget figures).
 - Intended management arrangements for the Breeding for Tomorrow and Genebanks Science Program.
 - ISDC Review of Program and Accelerator proposals.
 - ISDC feedback on the Portfolio Narrative (shared on 15 November).
 - A preliminary Management Action Plan in response to the ISDC review.
9. Highlights from the EMD's presentation:
 - Portfolio Overview: Aligns with CGIAR's strategy for food, land, and water systems transformation. Consolidates funding into eight Science Programs, one Scaling for Impact Program, and three Accelerators, addressing CGIAR's five impact areas.

- Strategic Focus: Developed through 25 listening sessions, leveraging CGIAR's comparative advantages and partner demand.
 - Theory of Change: A unified approach aligns with impact areas, supported by ISDC's megatrend analysis. Outputs aim for measurable outcomes across five areas.
 - Preliminary Ambitions by 2030: Reduce hunger for 182M people, lift 31M out of poverty, and avoid deforestation of 20M hectares.
 - Budget Needs: Doubling current funding to \$4B over three years, followed by \$2B annually.
 - Partnerships: Central to scaling impact, bridging knowledge and implementation gaps.
10. The Chair of ISDC explained ISDC's role as an advisory body to the System Council, providing oversight through proposal reviews, studies, and impact analysis. Operating independently, the ISDC Chair, as an Active Observer on the IPB, fosters collaboration to enhance system coherence and strategic alignment. He highlighted the system-wide impact of ISDC's advice, with tools like the Quality of Research for Development (QoR4D) framework ensuring research proposals align with CGIAR's strategic goals.
11. Summary of ISDC's feedback:
- Review Process: Rigorous evaluation of 13 proposals for relevance, scientific credibility, and effectiveness.
 - Strengths: Improved clarity, integration of listening sessions, and solid foundation for impactful science.
 - Improvements Needed:
 - Scientific Detail: Proposals lacked specifics on methodologies.
 - Risk Management: Gaps in risk frameworks and assumptions.
 - Comparative Advantage: Overstated strengths; recommends unbiased external evaluations.
 - Inclusion: Insufficient focus on youth, indigenous knowledge, and opportunity crops.
 - Accountability: Need for baseline data and SMART objectives.
 - Inception Phase Recommendations:
 - Resolve gaps in risk management, MELIA, and comparative advantage.
 - Develop robust risk frameworks and clarify funding integration.
 - Enhance scientific detail and promote a cultural shift toward systems approaches.
12. The Chair of ISDC emphasized the ISDC report as a practical tool to enhance the Portfolio, with its critical comments aimed at supporting, rather than hindering, organizational progress. He highlighted significant advancements in the Portfolio's structure and expressed confidence that these improvements establish a strong foundation for delivering high-quality science.
13. The Practice Lead, Program Delivery outlined progress in operationalizing the Portfolio, emphasizing the importance of addressing ISDC and governance feedback during the inception phase while maintaining momentum. Interim leadership teams are in place, transitional teams are preparing preliminary 2025 work plans, and key leadership roles will be advertised by early December. The approach balances empowering incoming science leaders with meeting critical deadlines. The CGIAR Global Science Team is forming, with program and Accelerator inception reports targeted for Q2 2025, and the inception phase launching on January 1.

14. He drew the Board's attention to the proposed 2025 Window 1 and 2 budget allocations, initial Center allocations, and ongoing development of detailed work plans. He stressed the need for a robust Portfolio-wide inception plan to address ISDC and governance feedback, including prioritization, partnerships, and MELIA frameworks. Key next steps include securing System Council approval in December and finalizing allocations to ensure a seamless transition into the operational phase.

Key discussion areas

15. The Board commended the progress made in refining the Portfolio and praised the ISDC for its thorough analysis, acknowledging its identification of key areas for improvement. Additional reflection themes included:

Funding, Governance, and Strategic Alignment

16. Bilateral and Pooled Funding Integration: Members emphasized the need for bilateral funding to align more effectively with the Portfolio framework, noting the disproportionate focus on core funding and insufficient clarity on Window Three and bilateral contributions. They called for better integration to inform budget and portfolio design. They also stressed the need to foster collaboration and reduce competition among Centers for pooled funds. They further noted the need for clear accountability and emphasized the importance of clarifying roles and streamlining governance arrangements. *Management Response*: The Practice Lead, Program Delivery explained that management arrangements include integrating bilateral funding through unified reporting and collaboration mechanisms, supported by the Global Leadership Team, with further refinements planned during the inception phase.
17. Budget Allocation and Oversight Concerns: Members raised concerns about how program design might affect budget allocation, particularly regarding partner participation. They also highlighted the need for robust criteria for resource allocation and emphasized addressing surge scenarios early to align priorities effectively. Additionally, members stressed the need for coherence between programmatic monitoring and budget oversight, noting the persistent challenge of siloed approaches. *Management Response*: The EMD highlighted the need for flexibility and adjustments during the inception phase to address these issues. She committed to further developing accountability mechanisms that integrate these considerations.
18. Governance Efficiencies and Hard Calls: A member highlighted the need for clearer accountabilities within CGIAR's management structures, particularly for addressing challenges when things go wrong. They questioned the necessity of certain overlapping positions across teams, suggesting potential efficiencies to streamline governance arrangements. *Management Response*: The EMD affirmed that CGIAR's governance structures are designed to provide clear accountabilities, including roles for the EMD, Chief Scientist, and Deputy Director Generals overseeing implementation at the center and country levels. However, she acknowledged that further clarification might be necessary to enhance operational clarity and efficiency.

Partnerships and Collaboration

19. Strengthening Partner Engagement: Members emphasized the need for robust mechanisms to involve partners in genuine co-design during implementation, highlighting that listening alone does not suffice. They stressed the importance of aligning strategies with stakeholder needs through thorough demand-side analysis, particularly for scaling impact and other domains. Members also underscored the challenge of balancing urgency with a commitment to deeper collaboration, especially given the compressed timelines. *Management Response*: The EMD confirmed that partner collaboration would be prioritized in the inception phase.
20. Elevating Partnership Strategy and Vision: Members highlighted the need for a comprehensive partnership strategy that aligns seamlessly with CGIAR's scientific priorities. They advocated for a forward-looking vision of partnerships that includes comparative analyses, capacity strengthening, convening global networks, and engaging in science diplomacy. Members emphasized that partnerships should extend beyond co-design and engagement to reshape CGIAR's mission and strengthen its role in addressing global challenges effectively in the 21st century. *Management Response*: The EMD affirmed the importance of partnerships as a central pillar of CGIAR's strategy and supported the role of the proposed Science and Partnership Committee in advancing this vision.

Scientific Priorities and Strategic Approaches

21. Leveraging Centers' Strategies: Members recommended leveraging existing Center strategies and comparative analyses, such as those developed by IFPRI, to avoid duplication and enhance alignment with the CGIAR portfolio. They emphasized the importance of including independent perspectives in assessing comparative advantage and balancing current strengths with long-term strategic intent. *Management Response*: The ISDC Chair acknowledged the value of Center-level strategies and committed to integrating relevant analyses into the broader portfolio strategy where appropriate. The EMD also highlighted the need for objective comparative analysis to avoid internal biases and align operations with future priorities.
22. Expanding Crop Diversification: Members stressed the importance of addressing micronutrient deficiencies through a more diversified crop portfolio, including alternative crops, livestock, fruits, vegetables, and post-harvest crops, especially given climate change impacts and the global significance of these crops in countries like India. They also supported prioritizing integrated systems such as crop-livestock-forestry models, noting that these approaches enhance resilience, efficiency, and environmental stewardship while aligning with sustainability goals. Members cautioned that without strong cross-program engagement, these priorities risk being overlooked. *Management Response*: The EMD noted that while staple crops have traditionally dominated CGIAR's focus, there is growing recognition of the need to expand into neglected and underutilized crops (NUCs) and other species, including fish and livestock. She committed to strategic discussions on integrating diversified systems into the Portfolio and acknowledged the importance of cross-disciplinary strategies to achieve systemic impact.

23. Program Prioritization and Impact Logic: A member emphasized the importance of aligning program prioritization with a clear causal logic for achieving impact, particularly in determining where to focus efforts between traditional and opportunity crops. They also underscored the need for coherence among programs like sustainable farming, sustainable animal and aquatic foods, and multifunctional landscapes. *Management Response*: The EMD emphasized that strategic discussions on comparative advantage are essential, including leveraging external assessments to avoid internal biases. She noted the need for CGIAR to balance current strengths with exploring areas of future strategic importance, even when these lie outside traditional comparative advantages.

24. Prioritizing Modern Approaches and Opportunity Crops: Members suggested that the Portfolio could benefit from greater emphasis on youth engagement, orphan and opportunity crops, and transformative themes such as AI and digital innovation. They emphasized the importance of aligning with global trends and donor interests and proposed strategic discussions to ensure the Portfolio remains forward-looking and responsive to emerging opportunities. *Management Response*: The EMD acknowledged these concerns and emphasized the importance of modernization. She committed to addressing novelty and aligning CGIAR's approach with global trends during the first year of implementation, including prioritizing opportunity crops and leveraging transformative innovations.

25. Strategic Intelligence for Breeding Priorities: A member recommended prioritizing strategic intelligence over market intelligence for defining breeding priorities, to better integrate climate models, geopolitical insights, and sustainability considerations. *Management Response*: The EMD agreed and clarified that CGIAR's market intelligence approach already incorporates sustainability, adaptation, and broader strategic considerations.

26. Gender as an Accelerator: Members questioned the classification of gender equality as an "Accelerator," suggesting it may be more appropriate as a target or goal. They noted that while gender equity is a fundamental principle, its framing as an Accelerator could be clarified to reflect its role in driving impactful outcomes. *Management Response*: The EMD clarified that gender equality was framed as an Accelerator due to its potential to expedite impactful outcomes but agreed that further narrative refinement and gender-disaggregated data are necessary. She emphasized that gender is both a principle and a catalyst for systemic change, which requires robust integration into the Portfolio's design.

27. Balancing Output and Input Focus: A member highlighted the systemic bias toward output-focused initiatives, calling for greater emphasis on input-side challenges such as reducing agrochemical use and promoting conservation agriculture. *Management Response*: The EMD acknowledged the importance of addressing input-side challenges and suggested incorporating these elements into the strategy during the inception phase.

Strategic Communication and Framing

28. Strategic Communication for Resource Mobilization: A member suggested exploring the addition of a strategic communication note or investment case to reinforce key messages and align them with the Portfolio's priorities. This approach could strengthen the narrative for resource mobilization efforts, ensuring messaging reflects current achievements and strategic

direction with depth and clarity. They emphasized the need to address this early in the next year to maximize its impact and accelerate engagement.

Risk and Resource Management

29. Addressing Risk Assessment Red Flags: Members emphasized the importance of robust risk assessment mechanisms during the design phase, particularly in identifying and addressing significant concerns. They stressed linking programmatic monitoring with resource allocation to establish a cohesive oversight framework and emphasized the importance of coordinating with IAES and other assurance functions to ensure an integrated approach to risk monitoring and response across the portfolio. *Management Response*: The EMD acknowledged that risk management is a critical area requiring further attention, particularly during the inception phase. She reiterated the commitment to refining accountability structures and ensuring effective risk assessments.
30. Risk Management in Agriculture: A member underscored the need to elevate risk management in agriculture to a higher status, shifting from reactive, fragmented approaches to proactive, integrated strategies. They questioned what tools and strategies the Portfolio would provide to help farmers, policymakers, and value chains navigate escalating challenges such as climate shocks and market volatility. They emphasized that a proactive focus on risk management is essential to support resilient agricultural systems and called for embedding these priorities across programs. *Management Response*: The EMD acknowledged the need for a stronger focus on risk management and committed to incorporating relevant strategies into the portfolio during the inception phase. She highlighted ongoing efforts to develop tools and frameworks to address these challenges systematically.

Evaluation and Metrics

31. Impact Ambitions and Nutrition Indicators: Members emphasized the critical importance of refining impact indicators for clarity, alignment with strategic goals, and distinguishing between CGIAR's contributions and external dependencies. They stressed that robust metrics are essential for oversight, resource allocation, and building a compelling investment case for mobilization. Members noted the need to accelerate this work over the next year, ensuring that these indicators address nutrition, attribution versus contribution, and broader strategic ambitions. *Management Response*: The EMD emphasized the importance of refining indicators and metrics to ensure clarity and alignment with nutrition and broader strategic goals. She advocated for extending the inception phase to six months to allow sufficient time for these refinements.
32. Integration of Evaluation Insights: Members highlighted the absence of insights from the 2022–2024 evaluation period in the proposal for the next five years and questioned the rationale for this omission. They suggested these insights could enhance the Portfolio's development and coherence. *Management Response*: The EMD explained that the compressed timeline limited the integration of past evaluations but emphasized that these learnings would guide ongoing and future refinements.

33. Sequencing of ISDC Engagement: A member inquired about the frequency and sequence of ISDC's engagement with the CGIAR System Organization and whether further engagement during the inception phase would ensure concerns are addressed. *Management Response*: The EMD expressed openness to deeper engagement with the ISDC during the inception phase.

Sector-Specific Recommendations

34. Conflict Zones and Feasibility: A member highlighted risks and feasibility issues related to CGIAR's work in conflict zones, including duty of care and cost implications. *Management Response*: The EMD recognized the reservations expressed by ISDC regarding conflict zones but emphasized the potential impact and demand for CGIAR's work in these areas. She noted that this is a strategic issue requiring further discussion, particularly in balancing risks with opportunities driven by donor and partner interest.
35. Sustainable Farming and Landscapes Integration: A member noted ISDC's recommendation to merge sustainable farming and landscapes programs to foster innovation and coherence. They emphasized integrating farming, animal and aquatic foods, and multifunctional landscapes programs for a cohesive, evidence-based approach. *Management Response*: The EMD acknowledged the need for strategic alignment across programs and emphasized that further discussions and refinements would address these integration challenges during the inception phase.
36. Strategic Role of Genebanks: A member emphasized the critical role of data and information assets, advocating that they should be given the same status as gene banks within CGIAR's strategy. They highlighted that leveraging these assets is crucial for advancing artificial intelligence, predictive models, and digital transformation in agriculture. *Management Response*: The EMD noted the importance of data and models as assets and confirmed their inclusion alongside gene banks in CGIAR's asset strategy. She acknowledged that data is increasingly valuable in addressing agricultural challenges and committed to elevating its strategic importance within CGIAR.
37. Addressing the Water Systems Research Gap: Members highlighted a significant research gap in water system projects within CGIAR's focus on transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis. They emphasized the importance of stepwise changes in resource efficiencies, particularly in water, and suggested making these changes more explicit in the strategy. *Management Response*: The EMD acknowledged the need for greater emphasis on water systems and highlighted the water roadmap developed by CGIAR centers, led by IWMI. This roadmap has already been approved by several Center Boards and will be presented during the inception phase to guide the integration of water system priorities into the Portfolio.

Session outcomes

38. The Vice Chair emphasized the portfolio discussion as a critical milestone in a long-term process, commending the collaborative efforts of writing teams, DGs, and the ISDC, and noting its positive global assessment. He recommended
1. Strengthening integration, coordination, and conflict resolution to prevent silos,

2. Creating incentives for better coordination and future readiness, and
 3. Aligning partnership and scientific strategies into a unified vision for capacity building, global networks, public goods stewardship, and science diplomacy.
39. The EMD emphasized CGIAR's flagship role in genetic breeding, particularly in staple crops, while supporting underutilized species. She highlighted market intelligence integrating sustainability and adaptation, the importance of assets like gene banks, data, and infrastructure, and robust risk management. She called for accelerating gender-focused initiatives, deepening partnerships, and long-term planning, suggesting a subset of IPB members discuss these topics further.
40. The Chair commended progress, emphasizing science as CGIAR's core business and the need to refine the submission by addressing IPB feedback and minimizing distractions. She recommended packaging feedback for the System Council to ensure alignment and a well-thought-out inception phase. She summarized reflections and invited a motion for adoption.
41. Members supported the proposed decision, underscoring the need for clear strategies to address risks and establish priorities during the inception phase. They emphasized that successful implementation relies on measurable progress in these areas over the next year.
42. **Decision IPB/M002/DP3:** Pursuant to article 8.2t of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, the Integrated Partnership Boards concurred with the Program and Accelerator proposals that make up CGIAR's 2025-2030 science and innovation Portfolio and approved their submission to the CGIAR System Council for approval.

Agenda Item 3: CGIAR Window 1 & 2 Budget for 2025

43. The Deputy EMD presented the 2025 budget highlights, recognizing the team's contributions and outlining the collaborative budget development process. This included engagement with the Global Leadership Team (a new step for 2024), stakeholder input, and prior reviews by the AFRC. The budget aligns with key priorities, including closing the current portfolio, launching the new portfolio, enhancing partnerships, and advancing operational excellence. It supports CGIAR's goal to raise \$2 billion annually by 2030.
44. Key presentation highlights included:
- **Business Functions:** Fully funded by CSP (2% internal tax) for the first time since 2019, eliminating the need for additional Window 1 funds.
 - **Funding Modalities Group (FMRG):** Successfully reintroduced Window 2 for 2025.
 - **Two Budget Scenarios:**
 - Baseline: \$344 million (conservative estimate).
 - Surge: \$442 million, reflecting enhanced external engagement strategies.
 - **System Entities' Budgets:** Reduced from \$60M to \$55M, primarily due to restructuring.
 - **Science Programs and Accelerators Funding Allocations:** Based on 2024 initiative and platform mappings, refined for the 2025 portfolio.
 - **Progress Funding Models,** confirming:
 - Successful reintroduction of Window 2.
 - No CSP increase following consultations.

- A pending USAID allocation query under internal discussion, with no impact on the overall funding model.
45. Sr. Director Financial Planning provided an overview of the 2025 budget, emphasizing alignment with CGIAR's goals and key budget changes:
- Science and Innovation:
 - \$288.7M allocated to Science Program and Accelerators.
 - Carryover reduced to \$28.2M (conservative) from prior averages of ~\$45M, with final results from Centers expected in early 2025.
 - Reduction in the Office of the Chief Scientist's budget from \$22.5M to \$15M due to restructuring.
 - Business Functions: Significant reductions following recent restructuring.
 - Governance/Independent Functions: SPIA's budget increased to expand activities from 4 to 20 countries, partially funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, with additional donors sought.
 - Special Projects: Newly categorized as a separate line item to better monitor expenses related to science, digital transformation, MELIA, and other initiatives.
 - System Entities' Budget: Reduced from \$60M to \$55M, reflecting restructuring of business functions and science management.
 - Science Programs and Accelerators Allocation: Based on 2024 initiative and platform mappings, refined for the 2025 Portfolio.
 - Funding Model Updates:
 - Reintroduction of Window 2 and adjustments to Window 1 were approved.
 - Center Cost Sharing Percentage (CSP) rates remain unchanged following consultations with Centers' Director Generals.
 - A pending query from USAID regarding crop and geography allocations is under internal discussion but does not alter the overall funding model.

Key discussion areas

46. Carryover: A member inquired about the carryover of \$32M from last year asking if this was typical-sized amount. *Management Response:* Sr. Director Financial Planning noted that carryovers (~\$45M on average) are typical in CGIAR's Portfolio. The 2024-2025 carryover is a conservative estimate. Future portfolios aim to minimize carryovers through improved long-term planning.
47. Implications of US Administration Change: Members raised concerns about potential impacts of the US administration change on CGIAR funding and global positioning strategies. They highlighted the importance of securing contributions, maintaining continuity despite political transitions, and preparing to leverage compensatory global responses to shifts in US policy. *Management Response:* The Deputy EMD stated that budget scenarios account for potential impacts, and CGIAR is actively engaging with USAID, Congress, and key stakeholders to secure 2025 contributions. The EMD added that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is assisting with analysis, and CGIAR teams are strategizing in Washington. Efforts include meetings with staff and Senate representatives to maintain continuity during transitions of political appointees, ensuring key collaborators remain in place. CGIAR is also preparing to capitalize on potential global compensatory responses to US policy shifts.

48. Decreased Donor Relations and Communications Funding: A member expressed concerns about reduced funding for donor relations and communications, questioning whether efficiency gains would suffice to strengthen these functions. *Management Response*: The Deputy EMD explained that the reductions reflect a shift towards an integrated external engagement team, consolidating donor relations, advocacy, and business improvement. While resources are limited, efforts are underway to optimize these functions, with plans to reassess and strengthen them further in 2025.
49. Uncertainties in Budgeting: Members noted the challenges and uncertainties in CGIAR's budgeting, with only 10% of the base (\$34M) assured, impacting organizational effectiveness. They asked how funding was allocated to programs and accelerators, specifically how much supports new versus existing or carried-over work, and how this reorients CGIAR relative to the previous portfolio. *Management Response*: The EMD explained that most funding is allocated for continuity (80%), while the remaining 20% supports growth and new initiatives. CGIAR aims to grow its funding pipeline through resource mobilization and partnerships to address discrepancies. — The Chair stressed the need for transparency and unity in addressing concerns like the 80:20 rule, encouraging open discussion to ensure consistent messaging and agreement.
50. Genebank Funding: A member requested clarification on the 0.5% increase in the cost share percentage (CSP) for Genebanks and its relation to the Crop Trust Endowment Fund. *Management Response*: The Deputy EMD clarified that funding for Genebanks integrates contributions from the Crop Trust, earmarked donor contributions (Window 2), and Window 1 to fill gaps, as required by treaty obligations.
51. Budget Allocation by Crops and Regions: A member suggested providing a breakdown of budget allocation by crops and regions, acknowledging the complexities in doing so. *Management Response*: The Deputy EMD acknowledged the request and indicated that while the current allocation model prioritizes continuity and surge scenarios, further refinements for more detailed reporting could be considered in the future.
52. Governance Budget Increase: Inquired about the increased governance budget, questioning whether it relates to the expanded Integrated Partnership Board (IPB) and how it compares to other areas. *Management Response*: Management attributed the increase to expanded governance functions, including enhanced integration under the IPB structure and related strategic activities.
53. **Decision IPB/M002/DP4**: Pursuant to article 8.2u and 8.2x of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, the Integrated Partnership Board:
1. concurred with the 2025 financial plan and allocation of unrestricted funding for CGIAR Research and other activities, and approved submission to the System Council for approval; and
 2. concurred with the approach to financing the 2025 CGIAR System activities, including administrative costs, and approved submission to the System Council for approval.

Agenda Item 4 – Strategic Assets

54. The EMD introduced the session, highlighting that while CGIAR Centers receive funding, the lack of unrestricted core funding makes it increasingly challenging to maintain critical assets.

55. Sr. Director, Fac. Mgt. presented findings from the commissioned asset study, supported by the Senior Advisor. Key presentation highlights included:

- **Background and Objectives:**
 - The study was designed to address challenges in asset sustainability and align assets with CGIAR's 2025-2030 portfolio.
 - Assets include tangible (research stations, labs) and intangible (data models, germplasm collections) resources that require maintenance and investment.
- **Challenges Identified:**
 - Rising costs, aging infrastructure, tighter funding regulations, and reduced unrestricted funding (down from 85% to 15%) create a \$70-\$80M annual funding gap.
 - Full cost recovery often fails to cover life-cycle costs, particularly for continuously funded assets like long-term trials.
- **Study Methodology and Findings:**
 - Data from 13 Centers mapped 3,000+ assets into 230+ bundles, with 155 identified as critical. Of these, a quarter require significant upgrades.
 - Centers submitted 38 investment cases totaling \$200M, with prioritization narrowing it to 18 top-priority cases valued at \$100M.
- **Proposed Solutions:**
 - Full Cost Recovery: Harmonizing recovery approaches to maximize efficiency.
 - Alternative Funding Models: Exploring tailored solutions, such as low-interest loans for infrastructure or endowments for long-term funding needs.
 - Optimization and Efficiency: Consolidating, outsourcing, or decommissioning non-strategic assets while prioritizing critical ones.
- **Next Steps:**
 - Allocate true asset costs to portfolio budgets.
 - Address funding gaps via alternative financing or Center compromises.
 - Implement the roadmap to sustainable asset management.

56. The Senior Advisor that achieving meaningful progress takes time and encouraged Centers to continue improving recovery practices, given the lack of unrestricted funding. The EMD underscored the importance of integrating asset strategies within One CGIAR and fostering shared use of facilities to enhance efficiency. She cited ILRI's gene editing platform, which supports multiple breeding programs, as a best practice. The session aimed to align understanding of asset challenges and proposed solutions ahead of the System Council.

Key discussion areas

57. **Institutional Reserves and Strategic Infrastructure Funding:** A member asked if institutional reserves are being used for strategic infrastructure funding and about strategies for improving accessibility and funding beyond traditional models, especially for future strategic assets. *Management Response:* The Sr. Director, Fac. Mgt. highlighted the Global Asset Repository's role in enhancing asset visibility and shared use, citing ICARDA's effective use of partner

facilities. She stressed the importance of exploring innovative infrastructure funding models. The Sr. Advisor clarified that institutional reserves (currently 95 days) are intended for short-term operational needs and are unsuitable for infrastructure funding.

58. Next-Generation Technologies and Outcome-Based Financing: A member proposed integrating next-generation technologies, such as AI and advanced modeling, to reduce reliance on costly infrastructure and suggested exploring outcome-based financing for upgrades. *Management Response*: The Sr. Director, Fac. Mgt. noted that many proposals already leverage AI and digital tools, supported by CGIAR's digital and data enabler, and emphasized the importance of exploring innovative funding models. The Sr. Advisor supported adopting digital tools but cautioned that agriculture remains field-based, limiting the replacement of physical assets. He warned that outcome-based financing poses risks due to limited reserves and requires cautious implementation.

Agenda Item 5 – Gender in CGIAR's Research

59. The Director – GENDER Platform provided an overview of gender and youth research in CGIAR. She emphasized the importance of addressing both gender (inclusive of men and women) and age, considering life-cycle dynamics. The presentation framed gender inequalities as “wicked problems,” complex and deeply entrenched in societal norms.
60. This presentation underscored the evolving role of gender and youth research in addressing entrenched inequalities and driving systemic change through actionable, interdisciplinary solutions. Highlights included:
- CGIAR's Three Entry Points for Gender Research:
 - Centers: Centers employ Gender Researchers with varying levels of expertise. Coordination across centers ensures balanced support and knowledge sharing.
 - Science Programs: These programs integrate gender considerations into research initiatives and create pathways for change.
 - Accelerator: Previously known as the platform, the accelerator ensures CGIAR delivers impactful gender research and solutions by supporting cross-cutting efforts across centers and programs.
 - Research Framework:
 - Focus Areas:
 - Individual Level: Examines choices, bargaining power, and capacities, such as the impact of livestock vaccines on women's workloads and benefits.
 - System Level: Addresses access to and control over resources, governance, and systemic gender norms, such as stereotypes limiting women to roles like poultry farming rather than cattle management.
 - Key Goals:
 - Shift from filling evidence gaps to developing actionable, scalable solutions.
 - Enhance collaboration between science programs and centers for broader impact.
 - Innovations in the New Gender Accelerator:
 - Priorities:
 - Develop cutting-edge research for scalable solutions.
 - Build capacity and methods to create enabling conditions for sustained impact.

- Leverage existing data and insights to drive action rather than merely gather evidence.
- Integration:
 - Deepen collaboration with science programs to ensure research impacts people's lives directly.
 - Expand the focus on youth as a research area, exploring the transitional nature of youth and its intersection with poverty and generational shifts.
- Youth Research:
 - CGIAR aims to establish youth as a distinct research domain, addressing gaps in understanding youth dynamics, particularly young men's challenges in relation to poverty.
- Key Event: The Director – GENDER Platform extended an open invitation to participants to CGIAR's global conference on gender, food, land, and water systems (October, South Africa), emphasizing collaboration in advancing GDI goals.

61. Developing Technologies to Reduce Women's Drudgery: A member emphasized the importance of CGIAR scientists developing technologies that reduce the physical burden on women in agriculture. He highlighted the transformative impact of mechanization, such as seed drills replacing manual wheat sowing, and called for innovations addressing labor-intensive processes like manual rice transplantation, which causes severe physical strain and health issues for women. *Management Response*: The EMD acknowledged the importance of the points raised, noting opportunities for further dialogue on this critical topic.

Agenda Item 6 – Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion in CGIAR's Workplaces

62. Ms. Shrinagesh provided a progress update on GDI's 2022-2024 action plan and outlined the next phase (2025-2027):

- GDI Progress:
 - GDI's visibility increased through a "sandwich approach" of top-level sponsorship and grassroots engagement.
 - Training on inclusive leadership and respectful workplaces reached 23% of CGIAR staff (~2,500 individuals).
 - New policies introduced include flexible work arrangements, pay parity guidelines, and inclusive holidays.
 - 340 staff participated in mentoring programs to foster inclusion.
 - Workforce and engagement data informed the 2025-2027 GDI action plan, with a focus on measurable progress in gender representation, especially in leadership.
 - Insights highlighted CGIAR's diverse workforce (10,000 staff across 73 countries) with growing representation from the Global South and the need for strengthened career pathways to address staff separations.
 - Mental health initiatives provided 2,500 counseling sessions, demonstrating CGIAR's commitment to staff wellbeing.
- Next Steps:
 - Embed GDI principles into performance management, job descriptions, and recruitment processes to reduce structural biases.
 - Tailor workplace policies to meet multigenerational needs while aligning with local regulations.

- Set measurable gender representation targets in leadership and science with center collaboration, identifying this as a “game changer” for CGIAR.

Meeting Close

63. There being no further business, the Chair thanked members and closed the meeting.

Participants

IPB Members

Lindiwe Sibanda	Voting Member and Chair
Patrick Caron	Voting Member and Vice Chair
Alice Ruhweza	Voting Member
Celso Moretti	Voting Member
Clarissa van Heerden	Voting Member and Chair of AFRC
Dhesigen Naidoo	Voting Member
Enrica Porcari	Voting Member
Jessica Fanzo	Voting Member

Mauricio Lopes	Voting Member
Nicholas Austin	Voting Member
Rachel Chikwamba	Voting Member
Ramesh Chand	Voting Member
Segenet Kelemu	<i>Apologies</i>
Shenggen Fan	Voting Member
Ismahane Elouafi	Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member and EMD

Active Observers

Eliud Kireger	Active Observer System Council
Ruben Echeverria	Active Observer System Council
Holger Meinke	Active Observer ISDC

Roel Merckx	Active Observer General Assembly
Mark Smith	Active Observer General Assembly

Invited Guests

Guillaume Grosso	Deputy EMD	All sessions
Elbert Hidding	Head of Internal Audit ai	All sessions
Allison Grove Smith	Director IAES	All sessions
Roland Sundstrom	Practice Lead, Program Delivery	All sessions
Micheline Ayoub	Chief of Staff	All sessions
Luis Felipe Mendes	Sr. Director Financial Planning	2-4

Gail Amare	Sr. Director, Fac. Mgt., Security & Administration	4
Albin Hubscher	Consultant Bus. Ops & Finance	4
Nicoline de Haan	Director – GENDER Platform	5-6
Lavanya Shrinagesh	Lavanya Shrinagesh (Director, GDI and Culture)	5-6

Secretariat Team

Michiel Roovers	IPB Secretary
Christine Larson-Luhila	AFRC Secretary

Victoria Pezzi	Meeting & Events Coordinator
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