

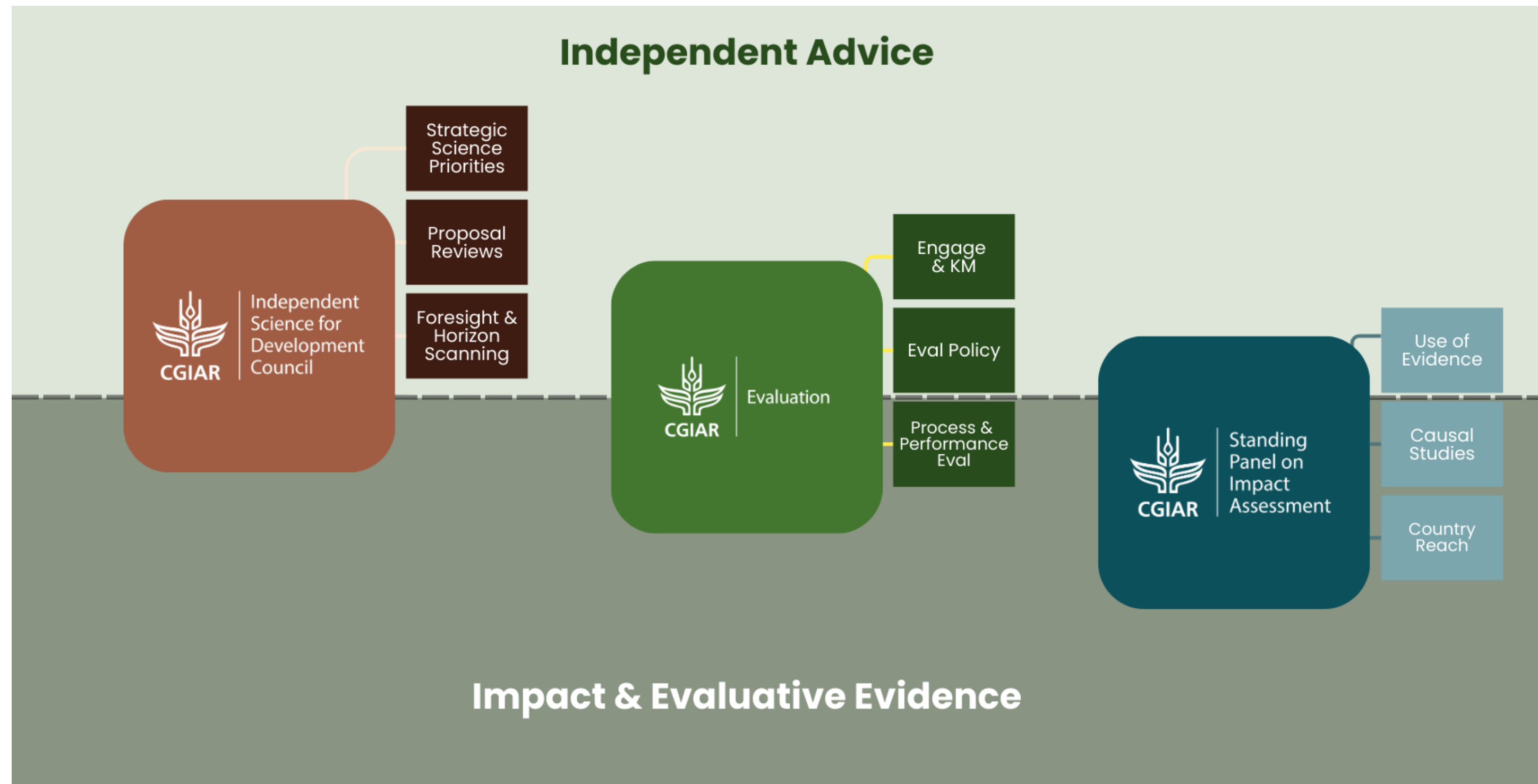
6th CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board (IPB) Meeting

Allison Grove Smith
Director
Independent Advisory and
Evaluation Service

Lesley Torrance
Chair
Independent Science for
Development Council

September 2025

PROVIDE: INDEPENDENT ADVICE AND EVALUATIVE EVIDENCE



IAES is secretariat for ISDC and SPIA, and through its Evaluation Function implements CGIAR's multi-year, independent evaluation plan – supporting three distinct mandates



WHAT FOR? – HELPING CGIAR ANSWER BIG QUESTIONS

Decision Type	Guiding Questions
Investment	Which are the best investment bets, and are they soundly designed?
Accountability	Has there been effective and efficient delivery against documented, adaptively managed plans?
Learning	What can CGIAR do better in its portfolio and organizational implementation?
Assurance	Are the evidence and processes used for decisions inclusive and sound?



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New ISDC Chair



PROFESSOR LESLEY TORRANCE

- Honorary Fellow, James Hutton Institute.
- Emeritus Professor of Biology, University of St Andrews, UK.
- Former Executive Director of Science at the James Hutton Institute, with responsibility for science strategy, leading Scottish Gov't funded science programmes on crop and ecological sciences and impact, and capital planning.
- Over 35 years' research experience in plant sciences and sustainable crop production; leading many international projects with previous collaborations in China, Malawi and Kenya, as well as across Europe.
- Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) and elected member of RSE Council, Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology; and previously Board Member, Dundee Science Centre.
- ISDC Member for six years.

MEMBERS



Lesley Torrance, Chair

Honorary Fellow at the James Hutton Institute & Emeritus Professor of Biology at the University of St Andrews, UK

Focus: Plant pathology, cell and molecular crop and ecological sciences

Start date: 1 October 2019; 21 September 2025 (chair)



Ingrid Fromm

Research Associate and lecturer, International Agriculture, Bern University, Switzerland

Focus: Food systems, value chains, and their role in economic, environmental, and social development.

Start date: 1 July 2025



David R. Just

Susan Eckert Lynch Professor of Science and Business at Cornell University, USA

Focus: Agricultural and development economist

Start date: 1 January 2023



Erin Lentz

Associate professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas, Austin, USA

Focus: Food security; humanitarian information systems; gender, nutrition, and agriculture linkages; U.S. food aid and assistance policy.

Start date: 1 April 2025



Nompumelelo H. Obokoh, Vice Chair

CEO, South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP), South Africa

Focus: Plant Biotechnology.

Start date: 1 July 2021



Magali Garcia

Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Engineering, Universidad Mayor de San Andres, Bolivia

Focus: Bioclimatology, climate change and ecosystem management.

Start date: 1 July 2021



Bruce Lankford

Emeritus Professor of Water and Irrigation Policy at the University of East Anglia, UK

Focus: agriculture, irrigation, and water resource management.

Start date: 1 July 2025



Bhavani Shankar

Professor of Food Systems, Nutrition & Sustainability, University of Sheffield, UK.

Focus: improving access of disadvantaged communities to nutritious foods.

Start date: 1 January 2026



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Photo: N. Palmer/The Alliance

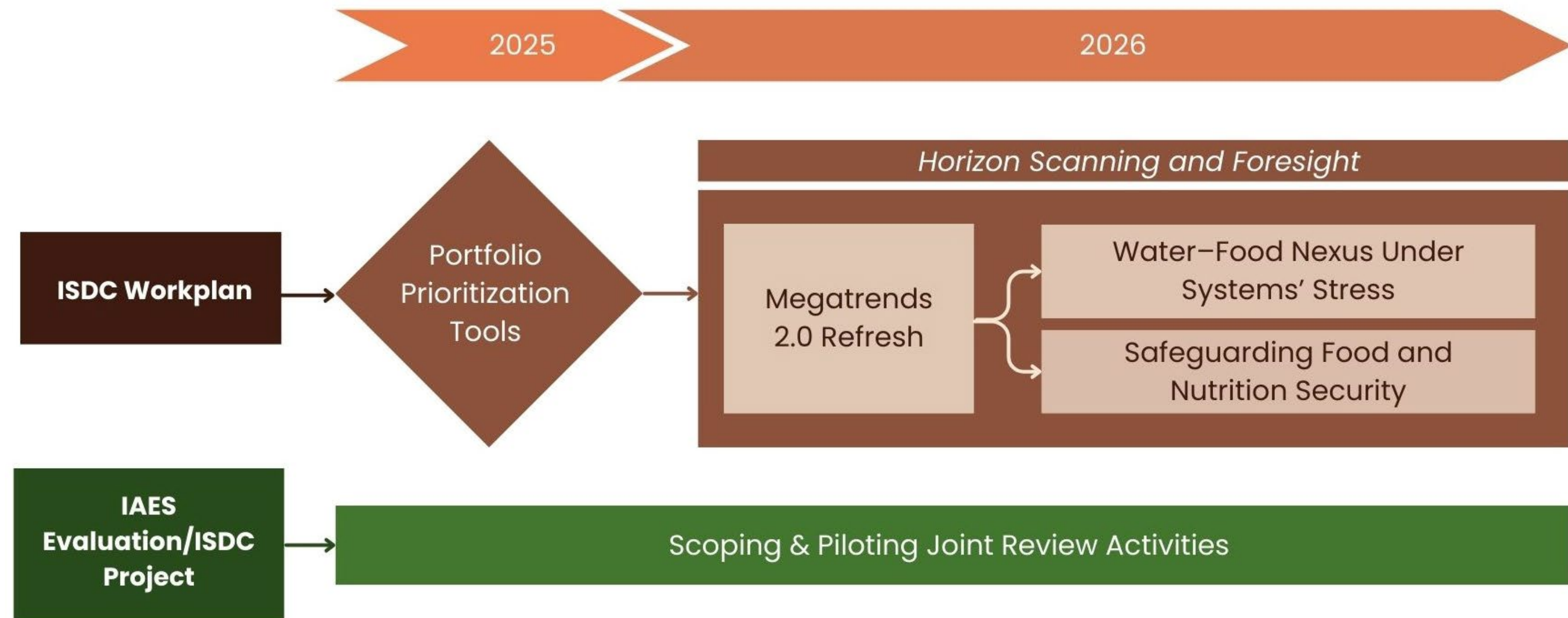
RECENT MILESTONES

- **6 August 2025:** ISDC transmitted [its review](#) of the 2025–2030 Portfolio Program and Accelerator Inception Reports (IRs), commissioned by the System Council.
- **10 September 2025:** Findings were shared in joint drop-in sessions with the Integrated Partnership Board, System Council, and CGIAR Management.

CURRENT PRIORITIES (REMAINDER OF 2025)

- **Portfolio Prioritization Tools**
 - Development of a practical “kit” of tools to support System Council and CGIAR leadership making evidence-based prioritization decisions across the Portfolio.
- **Onboarding of New Membership**
 - Smooth integration of the new Chair and members (50% rotation).
 - Ensuring continuity of advisory functions while benefiting from the refreshed expertise base.

ISDC WORKPLAN 2025–2026





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Photo: N. Palmer/The Alliance

ISDC 2026 FOCAL OUTPUTS

- **Megatrends 2.0 Refresh (M2R):** Conduct light-touch update to Megatrends Report (ISDC, 2023), following developments in past 3 years, implementing any revisions to ISDC's Megatrends advice and conclusions (e.g., implications for CGIAR and scientific priorities).
- **Horizon Scanning:** Develop member-led horizon scanning on key topics, integrating M2R insights to identify emerging risks, opportunities, and knowledge gaps.
- **Advisory & Review Functions:** Participate in steering joint review activities developed with IAES (e.g. following Center Review scoping); deliver range of outputs (briefs, infographics, audio/video explainers) to ensure System Council, Integrated Partnership Board, and other stakeholders receive accessible, relevant and timely advice; and, respond to new arising *ad hoc* review requests from System Council.



Evaluation

BOARD ACTION ITEM IPB/M001/AP3

- **Action Point IPB/M001/AP3 (October 2024): a high-level summary of lessons learned from recent evaluation reports and management responses (MRs).**
- **Coordination and Collaboration with Chief Scientist Office**
- **Confirmation of progress per:**
 - 28/08 verbal updated, Science Group Evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations: 88% accepted, and of these >80% actioned (Agenda item 07 decision item).
 - Ongoing Evaluability Assessments systematically assess whether past recommendations and open actions are being addressed.
- **Value the openness** to discuss sensible approaches to retrospectively and logically close past recommendations.
- **Technical reporting arrangement**
 - Tailored knowledge products and mapping to Gates Foundation MELIA-F grant (climate, Kenya brief, etc.).

N.B. IAES summary memo to follow the completion of Item 07.



BOARD ACTION ITEM IPB/M001/AP3

Management Response System Review – 3 recommendations (Q1, 2025)

1. **IAES/Evaluation Function adjustments** – contextualize; formulation and number of recommendations,
 - With suggestions to *"report annually on the uptake of recommendations"* from the IAES.
 - Provide clearer indications on actors to whom recommendations addressed.
2. CGIAR distribution of responsibilities for **tracking actions** under new structure (structure as of Dec 24)—end to end digital system.
3. **Learning culture enhanced** through streamlined processes and reduced fragmentation across centers, to leverage independent evaluation insights.

Blog, Patrick Caron
and Ibtissem Jouini

SCAN TO READ



SCAN TO READ



Other resources – benchmarking:

Mapping Evaluation Management Practices in International Research and Development Organizations (Toma, Jouini and Pinto, 2025)

With a section of recommendations, 8–10, on Use, Management Responses, and Tracking of Evaluation.



Evaluation

IAES EVALUATION FUNCTION ONGOING PROJECTS

STRATEGY-LEVEL LENS

- **Ways-of-Working (WOWs) Summaries & Webinars**
 - Capturing learning about 2030 Strategy's WOWs in support of 2025–30 portfolio.
 - Systems Transformation
 - Multiple Transformation Pathways
 - Partnerships + regions/countries/landscapes
 - Innovative Finance
 - Risk Management & Resilience
 - Digital Revolution
- **Outputs: reports, briefs, webinars, summary report & video**
 - 5 reports
 - 6 briefs
 - 5 webinars **alongside key internal champions**
 - Summary report + video (Nov 2025).





Evaluation

IAES EVALUATION FUNCTION ONGOING PROJECTS

PORTFOLIO-LEVEL LENS

- **Evaluability Assessment (EA) Activity**

- Assessing 13 CGIAR 2025–30 programs and accelerators to **lay strong foundations** for accountability and future evaluation.
- 13 initial 4-page EA reports completed.
- Framework updated to add **cost-efficiency**.
- Updates shared with System Council (SC22) and ISDC Inception Report reviewers.
- FAQs published across CGIAR channels.
- Full EAs progressing across 7 domains x 13 programs and accelerators.

- **Upcoming activities:**

- Preliminary results at margins of MELIA-F Convening, Nairobi, Oct 2025.
- Final EA reports due 31 Oct 2025.
- Synthesis to IPB and SC23, in Nov 25.





Evaluation

IAES EVALUATION FUNCTION ONGOING PROJECTS

CORPORATE-LEVEL LENS

- **Culture & Engagement Review (with Internal Audit)**
 - Joint review of CGIAR's Gender, Diversity & Inclusion (GDI) Action Plans (2020–24, 2025–27).
 - FOCUS: *coherence, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, risk.*
 - 12 review questions across 5 themes.
 - IAES-Eval Function & Internal Audit lead; GDI team.
- **Outputs:**
 - Short review report (≤ 5 recommendations.).
 - Corroborated evidence → 2025–27 Action Plan.
 - Governance summary brief (in EN/ES/FR).

To be delivered for endorsement Nov 2025, with the expectation of management response actions from January 2026.

**+ ONGOING SCOPING ACTIONS THROUGH GEOGRAPHIC
AND CENTER-LENSES**



Evaluation

IAES EVALUATION FUNCTION 2026 FOCAL OUTPUTS

- **Independent Evaluations:** Finalize scoping and potentially pilot reviews and evaluations through geographic and Center lenses; **multi-stakeholder convening to revisit multi-year evaluation plan through 2030** with all stakeholders, under new funding scenarios.
- **Framework & Policy Update:** Light-touch recommendations to revise the Evaluation Framework & Policy (2022) to **bring up to date with CGIAR's governance structure, 2025–2030 Portfolio, and stronger linkages with the Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment & Foresight (MELIA-F) framework.**
- **Knowledge Translation & Engagement:** Produce graphics, videos, and tailored briefs of evaluation findings; capacity sharing with CGIAR's **revived MEL-COP**; contribute to global initiatives such as Eval4Earth and the Global Evaluation Initiative.



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SIMEC REVIEW OF ADVISORY BODIES – ISDC, SPIA and IAES

- Underway: SIMEC-led review of ISDC, SPIA, and IAES underway – looking at alignment, agility and efficiency.
- December 2025: SIMEC review proposal for the System Council to consider at its 23rd meeting.
- Next steps: Results are already informing outyear planning, including work prioritization.





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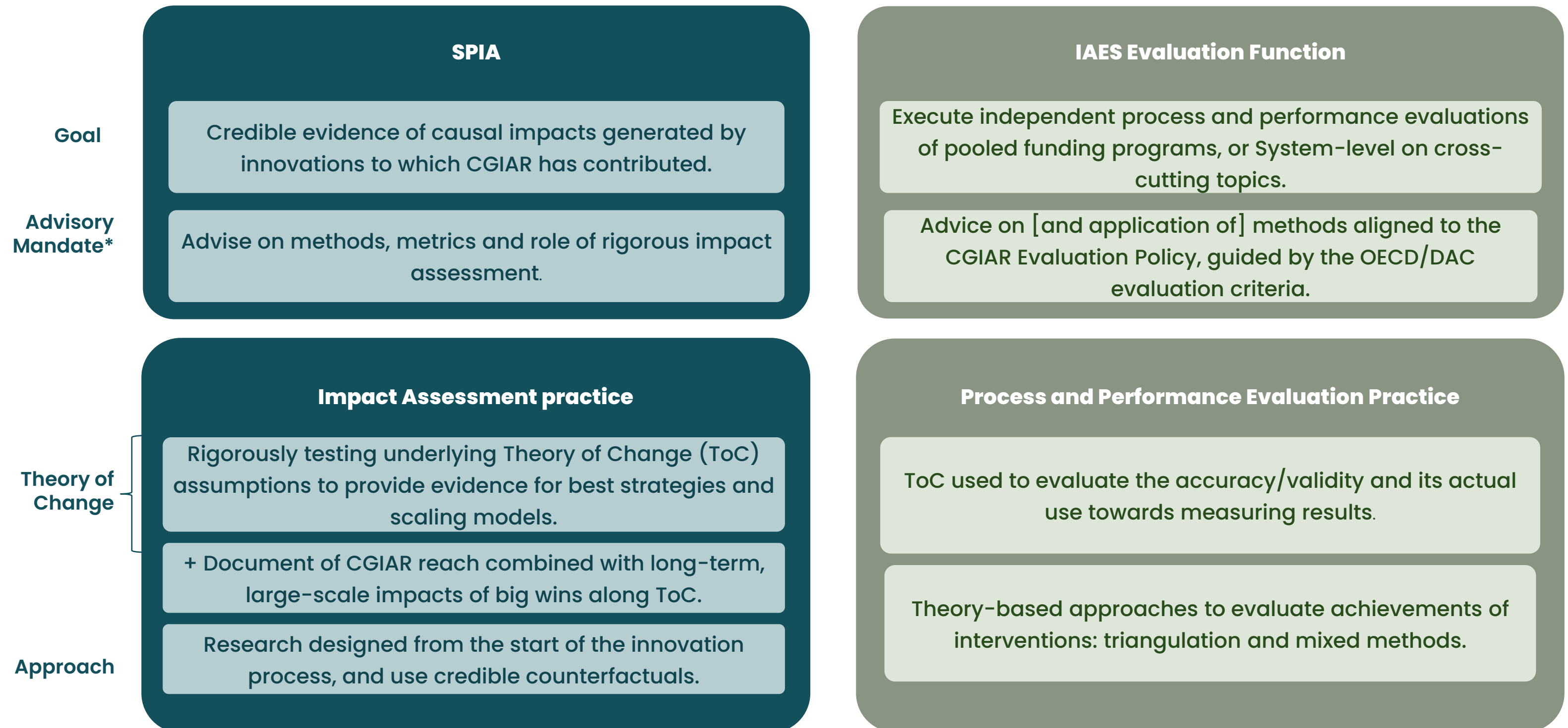
EVALUATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN CGIAR



Standing
Panel on
Impact
Assessment



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**terms of reference of SPIA and IAES elaborate full mandates*