

Terms of Reference for the Nominations Panel for Appointment Process of ISDC Members

Background

1. The [Terms of Reference \(TOR\) for the Independent Science for Development Council](#) ('ISDC') were approved by the CGIAR System Council on 4 October 2018.
2. The TOR set out the membership of ISDC as follows:
 - 4.1 *ISDC will consist of up to eight (8) standing members, which number can be reviewed by the System Council based on need and required expertise coverage, one of whom serves as ISDC Chair. The role specification and key competencies desired for ISDC members, as well as those specific to the ISDC Chair will be approved and reviewed periodically by the System Council to ensure that they represent the optimal guidance on capacities required.*
 - 4.2 *ISDC members [including the Chair] will serve an initial three years, with the possibility of renewal up to three additional years without further extension. To the extent possible, membership terms will be staggered to ensure a gradual refreshing of members.*
3. Pursuant to the section on appointment process in the ISDC TOR, ISDC members are appointed by the System Council based upon a merit-based, open and competitive selection process that includes the following elements:
 - a. A broad call for applications and nominations, including a visible public element as part of that call;
 - b. Review and consideration of applications and nominations by a nominations panel; and
 - c. The search and nominations process will be undertaken according to the administrative policies of the CGIAR System Organization and be managed by the System Management Office under the overall oversight of the nominations panel. For the avoidance of doubt, the CGIAR System Organization has no decision-making role in regard to the selection of ISDC members.

Purpose and mandate

4. These terms of reference for the 2026 Nominations Panel for Appointment Process of ISDC Members ('nominations panel') outline the purpose, mandate, membership and operation of the nominations panel and will take effect upon approval by the System Council.
5. The purpose of the ISDC Nominations Panel ('nominations panel') is primarily to review and consider the applications and nominations submitted as part of the broad call for applications and nominations for identifying suitable candidates for:
 - a. Two ISDC member vacancies arising in 2026/2027
 - b. A short list that may be used for future appointment processes.
6. In carrying out its function, the nominations panel will:
 - a. Work in accordance with the applicable administrative policies of the CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service Secretariat and System Organization;
 - b. Oversee the System Organization's support to the appointment process.

Membership

7. The nominations panel will be comprised of **not less than four persons and not more than six persons**, with:
 - a. **At least two System Council members** appointed by the System Council Chair, one of whom shall be the SIMEC Chair or her/his delegate;
 - b. **Up to two science leaders appointed by the System Council Chair**, one involved in the delivery of research outputs in a development context and/or one associated with major science bodies working across a range of disciplines; and
 - c. **Up to two persons fully external to CGIAR**, with a preference for at least one of those persons to be a highly experienced individual involved in innovation from a sector beyond agriculture.
8. The membership of the nominations panel will be as diverse as possible and demonstrate CGIAR's strong commitment to ensuring gender equality and diversity in all facets of its work.
9. The membership of the nominations panel will be approved by the System Council through electronic means.
10. The nominations panel will be chaired by the person appointed under paragraph 7(a), namely the SIMEC Chair or the SIMEC Chair's delegate.

11. The nominations panel may seek the views of the ISDC Chair during the screening process, including on the skills, experience and expertise needed to support the effective functioning of the ISDC. To preserve the independence of the appointment process, the ISDC Chair will not serve on the nominations panel, participate in its deliberations, or have any decision-making role in the selection or recommendation of candidates.

Operation

12. The nominations panel will carry out its work in line with the agreed steps and timeline for the ISDC appointment process. The panel is expected to submit recommended candidates for ISDC vacancies arising in 2026/2027 to the System Council for decision by no later than 30 September 2026. To the extent possible, the nominations panel may submit its recommendations earlier, provided this does not compromise the integrity of the process or the identification of an appropriately diverse pool of candidates.
13. Specifically, the nominations panel will:
 - a. Review key resource materials, including:
 - i. System Council-approved terms of reference for the ISDC;
 - ii. System Council-approved Competency Framework for ISDC Members; and
 - iii. Call for nominations and applications for ISDC vacancies.
 - b. Receive applications and nominations for ISDC appointments by a deadline that allows sufficient time for screening, interviews, reference checks, and submission of recommended candidates to the System Council for decision by no later than 30 September 2026;
 - c. Review candidates against agreed criteria¹ and seek views of the current Chair of the ISDC during the screening process to develop a shortlist of recommended candidates;
 - d. Carry out interviews (virtual) and consider reference checks on the shortlist of candidates as indicated in the nominations process timeline by mid-July 2026.
 - e. In developing its recommendations for ISDC vacancies, propose start dates that align with current member term-end dates and support appropriate staggering of members' terms;
 - f. Present recommended candidates to the System Council for electronic no-objection decision over a two-week-period by no later than 30 September

¹ The criteria are based on System Council approved Competency framework for ISDC Members.

2026, including a brief assessment of each candidate's fulfillment of the selection criteria and ability to perform the relevant ISDC duties; and

- g. Provide documentation of the nomination panel's work and any lessons learned to the System Council Secretariat to support future appointment processes.
14. The nominations panel will at all times respect the privacy and personal reputation of potential candidates and work within an appropriate framework of confidentiality. Panel members must complete conflict of interest and confidentiality declarations before beginning their work.
 15. The nominations panel will seek to make its decisions by consensus. Recognizing that the role of the nominations panel is to propose the best possible candidates for the ISDC Member positions, where consensus cannot be obtained, the majority view of the nominations panel will prevail.
 16. While it is difficult to calculate the exact time involved, the work of the nominations panel is estimated to require no more than approximately 4–5 full-time equivalent days, with actual time contributions set out according to a timeline developed by the nominations panel Chair in consultation with the other panel members. For those members serving as 'fully external to CGIAR', an honorarium of up to USD 5,000 will be made available to persons not otherwise fully remunerated through another organization, or where the use of the person's time requires compensation to their affiliated organization.