



Independent
Advisory and
Evaluation
Service

Evaluation Management Response

Evaluation title: Evaluability Assessment Review of Four Regional Integrated Initiatives

Date of MR: 23 April 2024

Person-in-charge for Follow-up to Management Response: Portfolio Performance Unit (PPU)



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Overall response to the evaluation:

Management thanks the team involved for delivering this Evaluability Assessment Review of four Regional Integrated Initiatives. Management acknowledges the utility of conducting an early-stage evaluability assessment of on-going initiatives to both (a) improve MELIA practices and make the initiative more evaluable, and (b) inform the type of evaluation to be conducted in due course.

Management shares three key observations that inform its response to this Evaluability Assessment:

1. On Relevance and Applicability:

The Evaluability Assessment provides evaluand-and context-specific recommendations for improving future evaluability of the four Regional Integrated Initiatives (RIIs). The CGIAR Portfolio 2025-30 concept does not include RIIs as framed in the 2022-24 Portfolio, meaning that evaluand-specific recommendations are not able to be taken forward by the four RIIs. Instead, and to value the investment in ongoing learning provided through this Evaluability Assessment, Management is approaching the recommendations from a broader applicability perspective as they apply in the 2025-2030 context.

To ensure that investments in learning are optimized, Management considers that further efforts should be made to validate the relevance of pre-approved evaluations against the CGIAR context and adjust plans as necessary.

2. On Recommendations:

The Evaluability Assessment contains 105 RII-specific recommendations, 9 near and 9 long-term recommendations, and 6 'implications for other RIIs, RAFS and CGIAR as a Whole'. Management considers that the 9 long-term recommendations (#s 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 15) are within the remit of CGIAR Management to act upon and form the basis of this Response. Management considers that recommendations grouped in the



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Evaluability Assessment as “For the near-term in preparing for evaluation” (#s 1,2, 3, 4, 6, 12, 16, 17, and 18) are aimed at the practice of an evaluation team and are therefore not appropriate for management to respond to. It is not clear what if any response to the 105 RII-specific recommendations, or the 6 implications is required.

Management is committed to learning from evaluations. It forms part of Management’s core mandate and is seen as an opportunity for CGIAR to become even more effective. Management understands that recommendations provided through evaluations, including evaluability assessments, require a Management Response which can include Actions to be implemented. To ensure that key signals are not lost in the noise, Management requests that further thought be given to capping the maximum number of recommendations from each evaluation to provide the space and clarity needed for Management to act meaningfully on these critical inputs from independent evaluations. As of this Management Response, there are over 220 active recommendations from 7 evaluations completed between 2021 and Q1 2024.

3. On Responsibility:

The CGIAR Structure is evolving to meet strategic goals and operational needs. In this context Responsibilities for implementing Actions may change and Management will update its internal tracking tool accordingly. The ‘Responsible’ content of this Management Response is therefore indicative rather than definitive.



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RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:					
Recommendation 5 (copied from the Evaluation Report): <i>Develop a comprehensive MEL framework.</i>					
Management Response		Fully accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/>	Not accepted <input type="checkbox"/>
Management Response (commentary):		It is right that MEL plans are use-focused and that those uses include but are not limited to evaluation.			
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:					
Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
Integrate right-sized MEL planning into MegaProgram design.	PPU, PCU, MP teams	2024-2025	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Recommendation 7 (copied from the Evaluation Report): <i>Further define indicators as part of a developed MEL framework, particularly at RII level</i>					
Management Response		Fully accepted <input type="checkbox"/>		Partially accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not accepted <input type="checkbox"/>
Management Response (commentary):		Good indicators are SMART indicators.			
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted: RII level not applicable.					
Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
Review the existing CGIAR Results Framework and guidance provided to MegaProgram teams to ensure that core indicators are SMART.	PPU	2024-2025	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	



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Recommendation 8 (copied from the Evaluation Report): <i>In identifying data to be collected as part of the MEL framework, ensure there are specific uses and users for it</i>					
Management Response		Fully accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/>	
Management Response (commentary):		It is right that data collection is use-focused and that uses and users of data are clearly identified in planning and optimizing data collection.			
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:					
Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
Ensure that uses and users of data are integrated into the design and optimization of MegaProgram MEL frameworks.	PPU & D&D	2024-2026	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Recommendation 9 (copied from the Evaluation Report): <i>Provide MEL staff with a lead role in reviewing ToCs as part of “pause and reflect” workshops at Initiative level, and/or RII-wide efforts, e.g., ToC development for RII</i>					
Management Response		Fully accepted <input type="checkbox"/>		Partially accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Management Response (commentary):		While the exact modality of their engagement will need to be defined, MEL staff have a key role to play in Theory of Change design and optimization.			
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted: Reference to Initiative, RII not applicable.					
Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
Strengthen MEL staff role in Theory of Change design and optimization.	PPU, PCU, MP teams	2024-2026	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	



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Recommendation 10 (copied from the Evaluation Report): <i>Better plan baseline and endline studies as part of a future MEL strategy</i>					
Management Response		Fully accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/>	Not accepted <input type="checkbox"/>
Management Response (commentary):		Baseline and endline studies provide critical reference points to understand progress against stated objectives.			
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:					
Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
Integrate critical baseline and endline studies into 2025-30 Portfolio design, including where relevant MegaProgram MEL plans	PPU, PCU, MP Teams	2024-2025	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Amount TBC. If available funding does not match ambition, reduce ambition until they match.
Recommendation 11 (copied from the Evaluation Report): <i>Further refine results statements and end-of-Initiative outcomes, providing greater specificity in their formulation.</i>					
Management Response		Fully accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/>	Not accepted <input type="checkbox"/>
Management Response (commentary):		Realistic and well-defined results statements are a core component of an effective MEL framework.			
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:					
Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
Pay special attention to the formulation of results in MegaProgram MEL plans and	PPU, PCU, MP Teams	2024-2025	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	



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provide guidance and capacity to support development as needed					
Recommendation 13 (copied from the Evaluation Report): <i>Develop a nuanced stakeholder analysis that supports sound development of a MEL framework</i>					
Management Response		Fully accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/>	Not accepted <input type="checkbox"/>
Management Response (commentary):		Developing a MEL framework that integrates pooled and non-pooled funding for the 2025-2030 Portfolio will require stakeholder analysis and input.			
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:					
Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
Ensure that stakeholder analysis informs the development of the next Technical Reporting Arrangement and MegaProgram MEL Plans	PPU, PCU, MP Teams	2024-2025	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Recommendation 14 (copied from the Evaluation Report): <i>Better clarify data disaggregation by indicator within a MEL framework and overall strategy</i>					
Management Response		Fully accepted <input type="checkbox"/>		Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/>	Not accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Management Response (commentary):		The current CGIAR Results Framework provides for the collection of disaggregated data and the four RIIs included in this evaluability assessment report against that Results Framework as evidenced by the data available through the CGIAR Results Dashboard and individual RII reports.			
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:					
Management Follow-up					



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Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Recommendation 15 (copied from the Evaluation Report): <i>Consider refining change pathways at individual RII level, RII portfolio, or country level, if Initiatives are funded beyond three years</i>					
Management Response			Fully accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/>	Not accepted <input type="checkbox"/>
Management Response (commentary):			Greater consistency in defining impact pathways will provide stronger building blocks for quality Theories of Change and MEL. Given time constraints a stepwise process will likely be required to integrate these key concepts.		
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:					
Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
Identify core impact pathway building blocks and to the extent possible integrate these into MegaProgram MEL planning and delivery	PPU, PCU, MP Teams	2024-2025	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	