

CGIAR Center External Reviews: International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Annexes

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JUNE 2026



INDEPENDENT ADVISORY
AND EVALUATION SERVICE

INDEPENDENT SCIENCE FOR
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

CENTER
EXTERNAL
REVIEW



Citation: CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES). 2026. CGIAR Center
External Reviews: International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Annexes. Rome: IAES.

<https://iaes.cgiar.org/evaluation/publications>

Photo credits: Ariyal Beel, Dhaka, Bangladesh (Shutterstock). Ariyal Beel is the largest remaining wetland close to Dhaka, Bangladesh. It is home to many flora and fauna. Locals seen here collecting Nymphaeaceae flower.

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Annex 1. Statement-Level Findings, Implications, and Signals/Context

The implications presented below for each statement document statement-level material generated through the Panel's assessment. They are retained in this annex as traceability and follow-up context that may help IWMI interpret possible responses in specific institutional areas. Chapter 3 of the review report presents the synthesized cross-statement findings, while Chapter 6 presents the final Center External Review (CER) recommendations and shows how they map to the main synthesized findings.

Statement 1. Strategy

The center implements an up-to-date strategy responsive to global demands and challenges, situated within the broader priorities of CGIAR integrated partnership, and frames the center's comparative advantages.

A.1. Key Findings and Evidence Sources

Table 1. Key findings and evidence sources - Statement 1

Category	Key findings	Evidence sources
Key institutional strengths	1. Strategic framework: Effective adoption and utilization of the 2024-30 Strategy as a roadmap for institutional growth.	• Self-Assessment Report (SAR). Chapter 1 SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. Interview feedback suggests the 2024–30 Strategy is viewed as a clear, relevant, and participatory framework aligned with global water priorities and CGIAR goals. While praised for its collaborative development and regional adaptability, some respondents emphasized the need for sharper strategic focus, better alignment between structure and strategy, and increased agility to address changing, complex global challenges. • Staff and partner surveys. Survey results indicate highly successful engagement with the 2024–30 Strategy across both internal and external stakeholders, with over 95% of staff and 87% of partners provided positive feedback regarding the clarity of the Strategy, and 93% of all respondents stated that the Strategy effectively guides their decision-making processes.

2. CGIAR Alignment: Demonstrated by the concurrent launch of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Strategy 2024–30 and the CGIAR Water Systems Integration Roadmap 2024–30, alongside the mapping of IWMI results to the five CGIAR Impact Areas.	• SAR. Chapter 1 SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. Interview feedback suggests that IWMI maintains a critical position within the CGIAR Integrated Partnership, successfully aligning its 2024–30 Strategy with broader CGIAR priorities and Impact Areas. Beyond basic alignment, there was respondent feedback stating that IWMI acts as a positive, collegiate team player that drives a systems-oriented approach across the CGIAR integrated partnership, highlighting the necessity of water science and innovation amid climate change. • Staff survey. 98% of respondents stated that the IWMI 2024-30 Strategy aligns with the CGIAR 2030 Strategy. • CGIAR Results Dashboard 2022-25: All IWMI's results for 2023 and 2024 are fully tagged to at least one of CGIAR's five Impact Areas. Currently 9% of IWMI's results have not yet been tagged to an Impact Area, which likely stems from standard delays in data finalization processes.
3. Global influence and contextual alignment: Strong strategic communications and a deep commitment to global water security, with close alignment to national, regional and global needs and priorities, and evolving water security challenges. More moderate explicit alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	• SAR. Chapter 1 SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. Interview feedback suggests that IWMI is increasing the relevance of its mandate by aligning its 2024–30 Strategy and research agenda with global water, climate, and national, regional and global development priorities. Supported by a robust global footprint and strengthened by high-level connections, the Institute focuses on water security, stakeholder engagement, and addressing critical research gaps amidst evolving donor demands. By directly including local stakeholders and country networks, IWMI's strategic direction remains broadly sound, catering effectively to national needs, real vulnerabilities, and climate risks. Despite positive views on strategic intent, stakeholders emphasize caution regarding strategic agility and the need for periodic recalibration. Stakeholders question whether assumptions from a 2023–24 Strategy can remain valid under rapidly changing geopolitical and funding conditions, urging IWMI to focus on niches where it can make a meaningful difference, rather than trying to cover all problems. • Staff and partner surveys. 97% of staff survey respondents state there is alignment between the 2024-30 Strategy and SDGs, and 100% of partner survey respondents stated that there is alignment between IWMI's strategy and that of their organizations. Additionally, 93.8% of surveyed partners confirmed that IWMI's outputs are highly relevant to real-world development problems. • CGIAR Results Dashboard 2022-25. While 97% of staff survey respondents state there is alignment between 2024-30 Strategy and the SDGs, this alignment is not explicit in the Strategy document and IWMI's 2025 results are aligned to just four SDGs (1, 2, 5, 6).

	4. Comparative advantage: As the only CGIAR center dedicated entirely to sustainable water management, IWMI increased its convening power to proactively position water security as a cross-cutting imperative that touches every aspect of global development.	• SAR. Chapter 1 SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. While it is uniquely positioned due to its integration of water and food systems—with energy being less central—informants suggest that IWMI should project itself as a ‘thought’ institution to avoid losing its uniqueness within the CGIAR space, noting that International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) is likely its only true peer. An external respondent also questioned whether other CGIAR centers sufficiently leverage IWMI’s unique comparative advantage, noting that some centers still independently pursue water-related agendas rather than drawing on IWMI’s specific expertise.
Priorities for improvement	5. Theory of change (ToC) development: Enhanced rigor and practical application of the institutional-level ToC; development of rigorous nested Strategic Program (SP) ToCs.	• SAR. Chapter 1 SAR and annex documents. • Interviews: Interviewees reported an evolution in ToCs. At the project level, ToCs and results frameworks guide data collection. This data is then reviewed during project-level Pause and Reflect sessions to assess underlying assumptions, examine milestone progress, and make strategic adjustments to activities. Historically, project-level ToCs were disconnected from the center-level ToCs. This fragmentation prevented project-level impacts from feeding into institutional-level outcomes, especially since program-level ToCs did not exist. While the development of institutional- and SP-level ToCs is currently addressing this gap, the lack of a unified narrative, and the presence of multiple overlapping frameworks, resulted in a mixed logic. There is a clear demand for country-level training to build capacity regarding IWMI’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Impact Assessment (MELIA) system, platforms, institutional and SP-level ToCs, and their associated indicators.
	6. Evidence-based metrics: Established data-driven indicators and targets to ensure measurable progress.	• SAR. Chapter 1 SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. Previously, project-level indicators were aligned with CGIAR-level indicators, which sometimes did not make sense. Present efforts seek to align project indicators directly with MELIA metrics. Significant effort over the past year has gone into aligning the institutional MELIA framework and indicators so they feed directly into CGIAR-level impact. As of 1 January 2025, a mandatory tracking system requires all projects to define their MELIA indicators in a specific tab at the start of the project. Standardizing indicators and collecting data against them is intended to improve IWMI’s institutional visibility and its ability to use data for strategic changes. However, because the centralized MELIA platform is still being populated and requires more work to align data with indicators, IWMI currently uses data captured from project-level indicators that feature clear, measurable results dictated by donors. There is a clear demand for country-level capacity building, as regional offices require training on the associated indicators, platforms, and institutional and SP-level ToCs.

7. MELIA optimization:

Improved collation and strategic use of MELIA data to foster organizational learning and adaptive management.

- **SAR.** Chapter 1 SAR and annex documents.
- **Interviews.** IWMI aims to have its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) platform fully populated and operational within the next 12 months. Once the MELIA system matures and the platform is fully operational, it will provide managers with a single window to access a comprehensive range of data. Currently, the MELIA system remains in its early, experimental rollout stages and is not yet a mature feedback system and not yet used or fully accessible to all researchers. While intensive effort over the past year focused on populating the MEL platform, staff understanding remains largely limited to reporting basic outputs, and some researchers view MEL tasks as a burden. External observers note that IWMI's MELIA work is primarily focused on setting standards and looking for compliance, and risks performing more as a project management tool than an evaluation system.
- **Staff survey.** Only around 60 percent of the respondents agreed that IWMI use foresight and MEL information in decision making.
- **Partner survey.** Weak response to IWMI MELIA-related systems, with less than 16% of respondents stating that they have access to MELIA system data.
- **Field site visit.** Discussion with MELIA Hub researcher.

B.1. Implications Mapped to Key Findings

Table 2. Implications mapped to key findings - Statement 1

Implications	Key findings number
1. Maximize IWMI's impact via strategic visibility and science-based leadership: IWMI should continue to elevate its strategic visibility within the CGIAR Integrated Partnership, and beyond, by actively promoting its unique science-based water management research and innovation.	2,3,4
2. Move beyond mapping: IMWI should strengthen its recent efforts in the development of institutional and nested programmatic ToCs to transition from purely visual diagrams to logic narratives that detail the "how" and "why" of change, ensuring the causal pathways are grounded in evidence, and include feedback loops and non-linear pathways, allowing them to serve as "living documents" that account for evolving real-world complexity in the global water sector.	5
3. Revisit outcome and impact indicators: Ensure they are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART), and consider reducing the total volume of outcome and impact indicators to eliminate operational burden and prioritize high-value, measurable metrics.	6
4. Establish learning loops: Move beyond simple compliance reporting, create a formal internal process where MELIA data is reviewed and used to inform resource reallocation and strategic adjustments.	7

- 5. Streamline data collation via an elevated MELIA framework:** Establish the new MELIA framework strictly as an elevated institutional evaluation system, rather than an operational project management tool. This strategic positioning will drive centralized evaluation data collation across all Strategic Programs, simultaneously minimizing duplication of project-level data while sharpening the precision of institutional reporting on outcomes and impact for adaptive management, organizational learning, accountability and resource mobilization.

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C.1. Signals and Implementation Context

Table 3. Signals and implementation context - Statement 1

Signal/implementation context	How to handle
ToC formulation at the SP and country level is advancing, with further work on Country Roadmaps and nested SP ToC expected in 2026.	The Panel acknowledges these activities as ongoing and may provide useful context for follow-up on the full development of nested programmatic and country ToCs. Do not treat as formal Statement 1 findings.
Development of the MEL platform is underway and is expected to be fully populated by the end of 2026 or early 2027.	The Panel acknowledges these activities as ongoing and may provide useful context for follow-up on the full execution of the MEL platform. Do not treat as formal Statement 1 findings.

Statement 2. Scientific Outcomes

The center's scientific and technical outputs demonstrate high quality and high relevance both to scientific progress and prioritized development outcomes.

A.2. Key Findings and Evidence Sources

Table 4. Key findings and evidence sources - Statement 2

Category	Key findings	Evidence sources
Key institutional strengths	1. Strong and diverse output portfolio: Broad mix of scientific, technical, policy-facing, capacity-sharing, data, dashboard, forecasting, and digital/analytical outputs.	• SAR. Chapter 2 SAR and annex documents. • CGIAR Results Dashboard 2022-25. Results data include 1,423 Knowledge Products, 421 Innovation Development records, 99 unique Innovation Use records, 88 unique Policy Change records, and 5,530 Partnership records. • Science-Metrix evidence. Strengthens the publication component, including 970 full-count IWMI publications for 2021-25. • Interviews. Multiple key informant interviews and focus group discussion evidence support the quality and breadth of output types.

2. Comparatively mature publication, dissemination, repository, and Open Access systems: Established pathways for publication approval, dissemination, Open Access, repository deposit, and selected knowledge-product processing.	• SAR. Chapter 2 SAR and annex documents —IWMI policy, workflow, and governance documents (Research Quality approval flow chart, Publications Workflow, Research Report and Working Paper procedures, 2020 Publications Strategy and Publications Committee arrangements, Open Access Policy). • Interviews. Interview evidence from staff with RQA and research ethics responsibilities helped clarify.
3. Broad policy-facing engagement: Policy briefs, policy-support tools, technical inputs, policy-dialogue examples, and recorded policy-change pathways.	• SAR. Chapter 2 SAR and annex documents—policy-influence examples, Annex 57, supplemental package country policy-change results. • CGIAR Results Dashboard 2022-25. Policy change records. • Science-Metrix/Overton evidence. Provides policy-document citation visibility. • Staff Survey. Evidence supports positive internal views of IWMI’s policy relevance and stakeholder engagement. • Partner Survey. Evidence supports external recognition of IWMI’s policy/advisory engagement and partner-facing relationships. • Interviews. Interview evidence and focus group discussion evidence support the breadth of policy-facing pathways.
4. Extensive collaboration and technical output generation: Collaboration across publications, partner-linked outputs, capacity-development activities, policy-facing work, and digital/data-science products.	• SAR. Chapter 2 SAR and annex documents. • CGIAR Results Dashboard 2022-25. Partnerships and output/pathway records. • Science-Metrix evidence. Where directly applicable to publication collaboration. Collaboration profile: 78.8% international co-publications, 10.9% domestic interinstitutional co-publications, 6.3% public-private co-publications, 6.4% NGO co-publications and 8.5% IWMI-only publications. • Interviews. Interview and focus group discussion evidence showing collaboration across scientific, technical, policy-facing, data, dashboard, tool, training, communication, and implementation-related outputs. • Staff and Partner Survey. Confirmed positive views of collaboration and partner-facing relevance. 94.7% of staff survey respondents agreed that IWMI engages partners effectively in project co-design and 96.5% agreed that it engages partners effectively to share research results. Additionally, 96.9% of surveyed partner respondents positively rated IWMI’s promotion of effective collaboration for research outputs.

	5. Selected evidence of uptake, operational use, and applied relevance: Examples of policy-facing use, applied tools, operational platforms, and user-oriented products.	• SAR. Chapter 2 SAR and annex documents. • CGIAR Results Dashboard 2022-25. Policy changes and innovation use records. • Interviews. Interview evidence provides concrete anonymized examples of use by government and regional users (e.g., applied tools, operational platforms, planning support, modelling, remote-sensing products, databases, water-management applications). Focus group discussion evidence identifies concrete uptake examples. • Staff and Partner Survey. Evidence supports positive views of relevance, collaboration, and partner-facing value. For example, 95.6% of staff survey respondents agreed that IWMI knowledge is used in policy dialogue.
	6. Greater institutional consistency across output areas: Uneven institutionalization beyond the better-documented publication, repository, dissemination, and Open Access systems.	• SAR. Chapter 2 SAR and annex documents—IWMI policy, workflow, and governance documents. SAR evidence shows that: capacity development was largely shaped at project level during the review period; the institutional CapDev strategy now under development provides a positive post-2025 strengthening signal; SAR evidence recognizes widespread policy engagement while pointing to the need for more systematic planning, tracking, and institutional capture. • Interviews. Interview evidence supports differentiated quality and approval arrangements by output type, active data-stewardship questions, digital-tool sustainability concerns, fragmented internal systems, and uneven or sometimes ad hoc impact-capture methods; focus group discussion evidence supports the view that quality support is real but uneven. • Staff and partner survey. Evidence supports concerns around impact tracking, knowledge management, implementation, scaling, communication, and practical uptake.
Priorities for improvement	7. More systematic evidence on uptake and downstream outcomes: Limited systematic evidence on uptake, reuse, institutional adoption, sustained use, downstream outcomes, and longer-term contribution.	• SAR. Chapter 2 SAR and annex documents—SAR recognizes that policy engagement is widespread and often effective, but not always systematically planned, tracked, or captured as institutional evidence, and identifies the need to link policy dialogue more clearly to impact assessment and learning. • Interviews. Interview evidence cautions against using citations, co-publication, policy mentions, or other proxy indicators as evidence of use or impact. Focus group discussion evidence points to post-project follow-up gaps, short project cycles, and difficulty demonstrating impact after project closure. • Staff survey. Evidence points to internal concerns around impact tracking, knowledge management, and applied-impact incentives. • Partner survey. Evidence points to the need for stronger translation into implementation, scaling, communication, and practical uptake.
	8. Improved disaggregation and beneficiary mapping: Incomplete disaggregation and	• SAR. Chapter 2 SAR and annex documents—SAR identifies future consolidated analytics through the MEL Platform, including on trainings, persons trained, and other disaggregation, as a positive institutional strengthening direction for disaggregation and evidence traceability. SAR states that 2020-25 publication

beneficiary mapping across several output areas.	metadata were not disaggregated by affiliation and country and required an AI-assisted approach for collaborator analysis. • Interviews. Interview evidence and focus group discussion evidence show that users, governments, partners, and communities are involved in selected projects, while participation patterns, beneficiary reach, follow-up evidence, contribution roles, and stakeholder representation are not consistently captured across output areas.
9. Stronger stewardship and governance systems for datasets, digital tools, dashboards, operational products, and selected capacity-sharing materials: Evolving stewardship, governance, lifecycle, maintenance, and handover arrangements for non-publication outputs.	• SAR. SAR Chapter 2 (Indicator 2.1.4 on technology; SAR Chapter 2 background on digital innovation); Annex Document 54, Water Data Science at IWMI/Digital Innovation Overview, show that digital innovation became a major component of IWMI's scientific contribution and that digital, analytical, software-driven, dashboard, and decision-support products became an important part of the output portfolio. The SAR also identifies future innovation-governance work covering validation, readiness-to-scale assessment, digital sustainability planning, and post-project maintenance funding. • Interviews. Interview and focus group discussion evidence support the need for stronger stewardship, lifecycle management, maintenance, handover, and post-project continuation arrangements for selected non-publication outputs.

B.2. Implications Mapped to Key Findings

Table 5. Implications mapped to key findings - Statement 2

Implications	Key findings number
1. Strengthen/expand quality, approval, and governance pathways across output types. Build on IWMI's comparatively mature publication, repository, dissemination, and Open Access pathways by extending proportionate review, approval, accountability, and institutional capture arrangements to other major output types, including tools, datasets, dashboards, operational products, and capacity-sharing materials. This should recognize that different outputs require different levels of review and stewardship rather than imposing one uniform model.	2, 6, 9
2. Strengthen evidence systems for uptake, operational use, institutional adoption, downstream outcomes, and longer-term contribution. Track selected priority outputs beyond production and dissemination, with attention to use, reuse, institutional adoption, sustained use, and downstream contribution. This should be selective and proportionate, focusing on outputs and pathways where strategic value, learning value, risk, or expected contribution justify follow-up, rather than creating uniform tracking requirements across the full portfolio.	3, 5, 7
3. Strengthen/continue development of disaggregation, beneficiary mapping, inclusiveness tracking, and evidence traceability across output areas. Build on emerging institutional strengthening efforts, including MEL platform-related analytics, to make it easier to show who participates,	4, 8

who benefits, where outputs are used, and how reach varies by region, stakeholder group, gender, partner type, and output category. This should be developed proportionately and linked to decision-use, learning, and evidence traceability.

4.
Strengthen stewardship and lifecycle management for datasets, digital tools, dashboards, operational products, and capacity-sharing materials.
Define proportionate responsibilities for validation, documentation, versioning, maintenance, handover, sustainability, data protection, intellectual asset management, and post-project continuation. Where relevant, use the institutional innovation-governance protocol under development as implementation context.

6, 9
5.
Expand / strengthen use of the strong output base to reinforce agenda-setting and flagship knowledge products.
Use IWMI’s strong and diverse output base to develop more synthesis, flagship, and agenda-setting products that draw together its scientific, policy-facing, data, digital, and technical work and increase global visibility. This should build on existing strengths rather than an absence of high-quality outputs.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

C.2. Signals and Implementation Context

Table 6. Signals and implementation context - Statement 2

Signal/implementation context	How to handle
Institutional CapDev strategy under development following the absence of an operational institution-wide CapDev strategy during the review period.	Use as context for follow-up on CapDev strategy. Do not treat as review-period performance evidence.
Institutional innovation-governance protocol under development for technology and innovation outputs.	Use as context for follow-up on institutional innovation-governance protocol for technology and innovation outputs. Do not treat as review-period performance evidence.
Workflow and knowledge-management streamlining, including ticketing arrangements introduced in 2025.	Use as context for on-going implementation of workflow and knowledge-management streamlining, including ticketing arrangements. Do not treat as review-period performance evidence.

Statement 3. Partnership

The center participates strategically and effectively in its partnership ecosystems, inside and outside of CGIAR.

A.3. Key Findings and Evidence Sources

Table 7. Key findings and evidence sources - Statement 3

Category	Key findings	Evidence sources
Key institutional strengths	1. Local partner involvement: IWMI engages local partners, including local researchers, implementing actors, and other country-level stakeholders, in ways that support contextual relevance and local grounding.	• SAR. SAR chapter 3 and 5 and annex document; additional explanation provided by the statement lead; give details on the extent of the involvement, and proof of processes taking place. • Interviews. Interviews with management, partners in various countries, including the host country, confirm local partner engagement. There was very limited criticism regarding the involvement of junior local experts mainly involved in data collection, which are not included in the analysis. • Staff and Partner Surveys. For example, 96.5% of staff survey respondents state that IWMI collaborates effectively with external partners and works well with other CGIAR centers. However, despite the positive response about the existence of strong partnerships, staff survey results are explicit about the difference between intention and implementation, quoting lack of funds as a limitation to involving partners. Additionally, partner survey results indicate strong partner confidence in IWMI's partnership model and collaborative value, strong alignment between IWMI's strategy and the respondent's organization; however, IWMI should do more to support implementation, scaling, and sustained uptake. Both staff and partner survey results suggest increasing strategic private sector engagement.
	2. Host-country engagement: IWMI maintains significant cooperation in Sri Lanka with government and non-government actors.	• SAR. SAR chapter 3 and 5 and annex document; additional explanation is provided by the statement lead. • Interviews. Interviews were undertaken with management, partners in various countries, including the host country. A high-level representative of the host country suggests that other ministries should also be advised by IWMI. • Staff and partner surveys. • Field site visit.
	3. Practical partnership niche: IWMI is recognized for problem-based, practical engagement in a specific water research-for-development niche.	• SAR. SAR chapter 3 and 5 and annex document; the additional explanation is provided by the statement lead. • Interviews. Interviews with management, as well as with partners in various countries, including the host country; (financial) partners confirm the unique proposition of IWMI. • Staff and partner surveys.

	4. Improved funder-facing proposition: IWMI's offer to funders appears to have become more convincing over the review period.	• SAR. SAR chapter 3 and 5 and annex document; additional explanation is provided by the statement lead; Tripling its budget in five years is a convincing indicator of this finding. • Interviews. Interviews with management, as well as with partners in various countries, including the host country. • Staff and partner surveys.
Priorities for improvement	5. Country partnership milestones: Country partnership arrangements do not consistently include clear milestones, end goals, or transition pathways.	• SAR chapter 3 and 5 and annex document; additional explanation is provided by the statement lead. Country level arrangements are Memorandum of Understandings, allowing the institute to operate, describing fields of work. There are no agreed milestones or a defined point on the horizon where the work is done. • Interviews. Interviews with management, key funders and host country key persons; these confirmed the document findings, and an absence of defining exit-points so far. A positive reaction to the question being considered came from the funder-side.
	6. Partnership feedback and learning systems: Partner information management, application of partnership policies, partner satisfaction feedback, and learning from partnerships require further strengthening.	• SAR. SAR chapter 3 and 5 and annex document; additional explanation provided by the statement lead. Inconsistency of learning and feedback systems are recognized. • Interviews. Interviews are conducted with management, as well as with partners in various countries, including the host country, with confirmation of what was reported. There is a reported lack of responsiveness, also by funders. • Staff and partner surveys.

B.3. Implications Mapped to Key Findings

Table 8. Implications mapped to key findings – Statement 3

Implications	Key findings number
1. Define clearer milestones and transition pathways in country partnerships. The country level is where IWMI holds a distinct comparative advantage, driven by deep place-based relationships and long-term institutional social capital. To maximize these assets, IWMI and its national partners should co-develop clear performance milestones, robust feedback loops, and explicit exit or evolution strategies for long-term engagements.	5
2. Further strengthen partnership feedback and learning systems. Improve partner information management, consistent application of partnership policies and methods, partner satisfaction feedback, and use of partnership evidence for learning and adjustment.	6

3. **Strengthen institutional-development support for national partners.** Where country partnerships involve longer-term institutional roles, develop a clearer approach for supporting national institutes and partner systems, including capacity, handover, and long-term institutional strengthening. 1, 2, 5
4. **Sharpen IWMI's partnership value proposition.** Present IWMI's practical niche, added value, and partnership role more clearly to strategic partners and funders. A clearer value proposition could help IWMI position larger-scale propositions to major finance mechanisms, including support for the development and sustained capacity of national water institutions. It could also help IWMI assess suitable access routes for such opportunities, such as center-specific accreditation, including for the Green Climate Fund, or engagement with existing and emerging donors and funding sources. 3, 4

C.3. Signals and Implementation Context

Table 9. Signals and implementation context - Statement 3

Signal/implementation context	How to handle
Observations and some evidence suggest that IWMI is transforming its implementing structure with more involvement of implementing partners in the post-2025 period.	Use as context for follow-up on country partnerships, institutional-development support, partner learning, and operating-model questions. Do not treat as review-period performance evidence.
Some funder interview evidence points to a need for clearer communication of IWMI's distinctive contribution and goal, while also recognizing IWMI's unique niche.	Use as a qualitative signal mapping to the strategic recommendation on thought leadership, synthesis role, and distinctive value proposition. Do not treat as a formal Statement 3 finding.

Statement 4. Impact

The center contributes to impact, deploys its convening power and engages with evidence-driven scaling strategies in complex development systems

A.4. Key Findings and Evidence Sources

Table 10. Key findings and evidence sources - Statement 4

Category	Key findings	Evidence sources
Key institutional strengths	1. Proactive collaboration for impact: Early engagement with	• SAR. Chapter 4 SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. Interviewees state that IWMI is undergoing an institutional shift from an output-focused culture to an impact-oriented culture, a transition that is heavily supported by a growing management consensus. Researchers are increasingly expected to design projects with impact in mind from the very beginning rather than as an afterthought.

	end users, co-innovators, and partners, and increased focus on scaling partnership.	Impact-orientated project design processes are viewed as strong because key end-users are actively included from project planning through to development, implementation and dissemination. To embed this impact culture, the institute now invests significantly in hiring specialized personnel—including impact assessment, scaling, and MEL specialists. • Staff survey. Approximately 95% of respondents stated that projects engage partners in co-design; 92% of respondents stated that both designing for impact is IWMI's highest priority, and project designs consistently articulate a credible, collaborative and context-specific pathway to impact. • Partner survey. Approximately 97% of respondents positively rated IWMI on leveraging partnerships for greater impact.
	2. Policy engagement: Effective use of knowledge products and modeling tools to drive policy dialogue.	• SAR. Chapter 4 SAR and annex documents. • Staff survey. Approximately 96% of respondents said that IWMI generates relevant knowledge that is used in policy dialogue. • CGIAR Results Dashboard 2022-25. 88 unique policy change entries for IWMI. Stage 1 (research taken up by next user) accounts for nearly 75% of these entries, while Stage 2 (policy enacted) represents the remaining 25%. No entries reached Stage 3 (evidence of impact).
Priorities for improvement	3. Rigorous impact evidence: Moving beyond pilot and trial data toward large-scale, ex post quantitative impact studies that demonstrate cumulative long-term results, and can be used for accountability, adaptive management, learning and resource mobilization.	• SAR. Chapter 4 SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. IWMI currently lacks a solid body of institutional-level impact assessment results. It is just beginning to track progress and gather evidence at the institutional scale, meaning the institute is not yet as good as it could be at collating and using impact evidence. Tracking policy change and defining meaningful outcomes for governance-oriented work require considerable extra effort and longer time horizons than typical short project cycles. Operational constraints also hinder the impact agenda; a reliance on project-level metrics creates a gap because targets are not aggregated into broader program and institutional goals. • Staff survey. Results indicate that there are gaps in tracking progress toward impact and evidence generation systems. • CGIAR Results Dashboard 2017-21 and 2022-25. Overall IWMI's performance history for tracking and reporting evidence at the outcome and impact level is limited over the review period. Also, the number of duplications and missing data highlight quality assurance processes and procedures

4. Closing the communication gap:

Improving the narrative and messaging beyond outputs and activities to better articulate how research leads to long-term impact at scale.

- **SAR.** Chapter 4 SAR and annex documents.
- **Interviews.** IWMI needs to move beyond simple reporting to collect data across all project sizes. This data aggregation is required to communicate and provide evidence of how the institute has transformed agricultural systems. Because systems to capture impact stories beyond a project's life cycle are not in place, evidence of real impact cannot be captured or used (such as the Islamabad rainwater harvesting regulation change that occurred five years post-project).
- **Field site visit.** Discussion with IWMI management confirms this finding.

B.4. Implications Mapped to Key Findings

Table 11. Implications mapped to key findings - Statement 4

Implications	Key findings number
1. Accelerate targeted fundraising and allocate a ring-fenced internal budget to launch systematic <i>ex post</i> longitudinal impact assessments. This will fill the impact evidence gap, providing a necessary evidence base for institutional accountability, while strengthening long-term adaptive management and learning.	1, 2,3
2. Capture and communicate impact at scale. Strengthen institutional communication mechanisms to systematically capture and communicate transformation of IWMI's research outputs and activities into evidenced social, economic and environmental impacts.	2, 3, 4

C.4. Signals and Implementation Context

Table 12. Signals and implementation context - Statement 4

Signal/implementation context	How to handle
ToC formulation is advancing, with further work on Country Roadmaps and nested SP ToCs are underway. Concurrently, guidelines and standard operating procedures are being created to systematically embed impact thinking at the proposal and design stages. Finally, work on the MEL platform—introduced to strengthen institutional alignment and improve outcome and impact monitoring—is expected to be fully populated by the end of 2026 or early 2027.	The Panel acknowledges these activities as ongoing institutional developments that may provide useful context for follow-up. Do not treat as formal Statement 4 findings.

An updated communications strategy will be finalized in 2026. It will guide how IWMI effectively captures and communicates its research impact to target audiences.

The Panel acknowledges this activity as ongoing and may provide useful context for follow-up. Do not treat as a formal Statement 4 finding.

Statement 5. Management Quality

The center is a good place to work and a good actor: it is an efficient and ethical steward of human, natural and financial resources.

A.5. Key Findings and Evidence Sources

Table 13. Key findings and evidence sources - Statement 5

Category	Key findings	Evidence sources
Key institutional strengths	1. Diverse and committed workforce: IWMI has a diverse, multidisciplinary, and international workforce, with generally positive staff perceptions of workplace culture.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. Interviews with management including scientific leads, as well as interviews with partners in the various locations; IWMI was described by staff as a holistic structure, quoting the facilities such as maternity leave, but also the care being taken of existing staff during a recent restructuring. • Staff survey; showing a generally positive staff (also in the IWMI surveys from 2024 and 2025). There was a stressed climate-group in the 2024 IWMI survey.
	2. Broadening disciplinary capacity: IWMI has strengthened social and political science capacity, broadened the disciplinary base of its teams, and changed the type of data and information being processed and generated.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. Interviews with management including scientific leads and scientists. The shift from mostly quantitative data to a mix of quantitative and qualitative was confirmed by all.
	3. Administrative and fiduciary systems: IWMI has comparatively strong administrative and fiduciary processes supporting institutional operations.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents, including the additional annexes as well as the explanation shared by the statement lead for the rating of the various sub-questions. • Interviews. Interviews with management, including statement leads, scientific leads, researchers and those involved in the fiduciary system. Interviews showed that the systems being installed, both in administration and in staff management, lack substance.

Priorities for improvement	4. Place-based relationships and institutional social capital: IWMI benefits from established relationships and trust in countries and locations where it operates.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents, including the statement lead written explanation of the evaluation. • Interviews. Interviews with both staff and partners in the various locations confirm the close links between staff and between staff and the partner country system. • Staff survey.
	5. Operational support systems: IWMI has been strengthening policies, procedures, knowledge management, IT systems, and physical and digital infrastructure to support institutional operations.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents, including the additional annexes as well as the explanation shared by the statement lead for the rating of the various sub-questions. • Priorities/addendum evidence. • Interviews.
	6. Managing institutional transition: Concurrent changes in IT, knowledge management, policies, systems, and infrastructure create implementation and staff-engagement risks.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents. • Priorities/addendum evidence—the documents show a lot of new/updated systems coinciding in 2025-26. • Interviews. Interviews with staff and with management. • Staff surveys, including earlier staff surveys undertaken by IWMI.
	7. Institution-wide quality-management consistency: Quality-management arrangements are not yet consistently institutionalized across all relevant functions and output areas.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents. • Priorities/addendum evidence. • Interviews. Interviews with management at various locations, including statement lead; this confirmed the awareness of the necessity of a quality management system, and it was announced preparations for such a system is underway.
	8. Matrix management effectiveness: The matrix model is not yet functioning consistently, with evidence of workload pressure, unclear authority, and coordination challenges.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. Interviews with staff and with management both in headquarters and in the country offices; Both management and staff indicated the advantages of the model, allowing for a more diverse working package and a broader availability of staff, also profiting from the experience in other country practices. However, part of the management was not happy with the hierarchical confusion that arises. There were also observations that the system can create stress for those not in control of budgets, and that it may lead to hedging of work. • Staff survey evidence.

B.5. Implications Mapped to Key Findings

Table 14. Implications mapped to key findings - Statement 5

Implications	Key findings number
1. Strengthen change management for institutional modernization. There is a major change process ongoing, both in the instruments and procedures, as well as in the overall way of working (through implementing partners). Whilst coherence is there, the risk of overstretching the absorption capacity of the team is clearly there. Engage staff actively in changes to IT, knowledge management, policies, procedures, and infrastructure so that modernization supports institutional effectiveness.	5, 6
2. Develop a proportionate institution-wide quality-management approach. The growth of IWMI comes with larger organizational distances between decision and result, more delegation, and larger amounts of procedures and processes. What used to be done informally now needs formalization. This also requires a more structured system for keeping the quality of the institute in check. Strengthen quality-management arrangements across relevant institutional functions and output areas without prematurely prescribing a specific certification model.	7
3. Review and adjust the matrix management model. The complex agenda of IWMI requires an effective system for involving staff and keeping all locations functioning. The matrix management model is the logical answer, but signals of anomalies were picked up. Identify where the matrix creates unclear authority, workload pressure, or coordination costs, and adjust management arrangements accordingly.	8
4. Strengthen role clarity, incentives, and accountability in the operating model. Clarify responsibilities and accountability where individual, project, partner, and institutional priorities may not align. There are two specific issues to be addressed in the delegated implementation: the principal-agent problem and worry of not reaching individual scientific ambitions. The principal agent problem, where the implementation is done by another actor, introducing the risks linked to differences in information and differences in interests. This will require an increased level of supervision and coaching by the IWMI staff. The shift towards working via implementing partners must also have implications for the actual content of the work: the staff that currently has scientists with a deep knowledge of their domain would seek continuation of that work if possible. The challenge will be in the transition, where part of that specific work is likely to be done by others. Managing the transition also needs to address individual scientific ambitions.	6, 8

C.5. Signals and Implementation Context

Table 15. Signals and implementation context - Statement 5

Signal/implementation context	How to handle
Observations and some evidence suggest that IWMI is undergoing a broad institutional modernization process, including changes to IT, knowledge management, policies, procedures, and infrastructure.	These developments may provide useful entry points for follow-up on change management, staff engagement, and institutional effectiveness. Monitoring these changes should reveal their effects and effectiveness. Do not treat as a formal Statement 5 finding.
Evidence and observations point to possible tensions in IWMI's operating model as it works increasingly through implementing partners. In social science terms, this can be understood as a principal-agent issue: IWMI may remain accountable for quality, ethics, administration, and results, while implementation is carried out by partners with their own incentives, information, and operating constraints.	This may provide a useful entry point for follow-up on the importance of clear roles, training, regular exchange, supervision, and feedback mechanisms. Do not treat as a formal Statement 5 finding.
In conjunction with the organizational systems being introduced, IWMI has indicated movement toward stronger institution-wide quality-management arrangements, including possible reference to ISO 9000-type standards, which may be useful implementation context.	This may provide a useful entry point for follow-up on institution-wide quality-management arrangements. Do not treat as a formal Statement 5 finding.
Observations and some evidence suggest that IWMI is increasing its engagement with, and use of implementing partners as part of its evolving operating model.	This may be relevant for the CER cross-statement discussion of partnerships, delivery capacity, research roles, and uptake pathways. Do not treat as a Statement 5 finding.

Statement 6. Governance & Enablers

The center's governance and leadership, and enabling environment at global, regional and national scales, foster the center to pursue its mission, now and in the future.

A.6. Key Findings and Evidence Sources

Table 16. Key findings and evidence sources - Statement 6

Category	Key findings	Evidence sources
Key institutional strengths	1. Governance. The overarching Governance Framework aligns with international practice. An engaged and functional Board led by a well-connected Board Chair, provide proper oversight, and Management is recognized as dedicated and capable.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. Interviews with Board, Audit Committee, senior management and internal audit staff. • Staff, partner and small-medium enterprise (SME) surveys. • Field site visit.
	2. Ethics and risk. Risk governance and leadership are supported by strong ethical frameworks and effective change management. Strengthened ethics and risk architecture.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. Interviews with Board, audit committee, senior management and internal audit staff. • Staff, partner and SME surveys. • Field site visit.
	3. Good practice toward staff retention. Communication, change management consultation, and diversity policy and practices are significant predictors of the likelihood of IWMI staff to recommend IWMI as a good workplace.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. • Staff survey. The staff surveys provided a clear steer to this conclusion, with good, positive responses to relevant questions. • Field site visit.
Priorities for improvement	4. Staff over-extension. Organizational capacity to deliver the Organizational Growth Strategy (OGS) without staff being over-extended.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. Interviews with Board, audit committee, senior management and staff. • Field site visit. • Interviews. Interviews with staff and partners provided a clear steer to this conclusion.
	5. Stakeholder representation. Degree of stakeholder representation in IMWI's governance structures, and accountability more broadly.	• SAR. SAR and annex documents. • Interviews. • Staff survey. The surveys provided a clear steer to this conclusion. • Field site visit.

6. **Second- and third-line assurance mechanisms.** Need further development–cascaded and digitized risk management, Internal Audit function overdue External Quality Assessment (EQA), multiple donor audits are time consuming and overstretch staff.

- **SAR.** SAR and annex documents.
- **Interviews.** Interviews with internal audit staff; senior management and staff survey.
- **Field site visit.**

B.6. Implications Mapped to Key Findings

Table 17. Implications mapped to key findings - Statement 6

Implications	Key findings number
1. Align Human Capital Accounting with growth. There is a need to assess whether there is sufficient organizational capacity given recent growth and the need for further change. This could take the form of a formal workforce review, or more formal ongoing consideration and monitoring by management, reinforcing the thinking that is currently taking place.	4
2. Risk management needs further cascade and embedding. Risk management needs embedding across the institute, building on the progress made over the last five years. The lack of a risk management application creates a hindrance to real-time management of enterprise risks, and a technical solution could usefully be considered. This does not have to be costly, and some organizations make use of bespoke SharePoint systems to meet this need. The Internal Audit function requires an EQA in line with the Global Internal Audit Standards™ which mandates these at least once every five years. One is planned for 2027, but this could usefully be accelerated to demonstrate conformance with the Global Internal Audit Standards™.	6
3. IWMI should prioritize strengthening strategic clarity, internal communication, and knowledge management systems. Ensure that organizational goals are clearly understood and consistently translated into practice across all levels. In addition, IWMI should enhance impact measurement and learning systems by improving evidence generation, tracking progress, and embedding adaptive feedback mechanisms, while also strengthening partnerships through clearer strategy, better resource alignment, and expanded engagement with the private sector. Sustaining a trust-based and inclusive organizational culture, supported by transparent leadership and stronger governance representation, will be critical to maintaining staff engagement and overall institutional effectiveness.	3, 5

C.6. Signals and Implementation Context

Signal/implementation context	How to handle
Ethics, audit, and assurance strengthening • Director of Ethics, and Director of Audit who was appointed for Audit Asia in 2025, which covers the tripartite (IWMI, IRRI and WorldFish) plus WorldVeg. • Ethics and Business Conduct function strengthened, with policy documents developed, training packaged, and proactive and reactive mechanisms being put in place. • Key policies and procedures reviewed and in the process of being finalized and approved. • Internal Audit external quality assessment planned for 2027.	These are recognized as ongoing or emerging institutional developments that may provide useful context for follow-up. Do not treat as a formal Statement 6 finding.
Risk, structure, and partner-assurance systems under development • External consultancy commissioned in 2025 to explore potential organizational-structure and matrix-management adjustments. • Further cascade and embedding of risk management identified, including supporting software for enterprise risk management. • Partner monitoring and partner-risk management identified as increasingly important as more funding flows through partners.	These are recognized as ongoing or emerging institutional developments that may provide useful context for follow-up. Do not treat as a formal Statement 6 finding.

Annex 2. Traceability from Synthesized Findings to Recommendations, Statement-Level Implications and Implementation Context

This annex is a non-exhaustive navigation aid. It shows how the strategic recommendations relate to the synthesized findings and helps identify related statement-level implications, context, and relevant implementation signals or entry points. Unlike the compact traceability table, it includes broader statement-level connections where they help identify areas for follow-up across IWMI systems, functions, and processes. The implementation signals are not additional recommendations or required actions; they indicate existing or emerging institutional processes that may provide entry points for management consideration.

Table 18. Management oriented navigation aid

Strategic recommendation	Synthesized finding basis	Related statement-level implications and context	Relevant implementation signals/entry points
R1. Strategic learning and adaptive management	F1. Strategy and strategic learning F2. Outputs, use and impact	Strategic alignment, theory of change (ToC), Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Impact Assessment (MELIA), contribution tracking, and adaptive learning (S1); output-use and uptake evidence gaps (S2); impact evidence and continued-benefit tracking (S4).	Strategic Program and country ToCs; Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning (MEL) platform rollout; impact-design SOPs.
R2. Evidence base for sustained contribution and impact	F2. Outputs, use and impact	Uptake, reuse, institutional adoption, and sustained use of outputs (S2); <i>ex post</i> evidence, continued benefits, and impact tracking (S4); contribution tracking and MELIA links (S1).	MEL platform rollout; impact-design SOPs; CapDev strategy; communications strategy.
R3. Consolidate systems without losing adaptability	F3. Systems and practices	ToC and MELIA systems still embedding (S1); output governance, stewardship, and quality assurance consistency (S2); customer/constituent relationship management (CRM), partnership methods, and partner feedback systems (S3); scaling and impact-system documentation (S4); digital, Knowledge Management (KM), policy, risk, assurance, and governance systems still embedding (S5, S6).	MEL platform rollout; innovation-governance protocol; CapDev strategy; KM/workflow streamlining; ticketing arrangements; ethics, audit and assurance strengthening; risk systems embedding.
R4. Institutional capacity to sustain growth and manage transformation risks	F4. Absorptive capacity and quality-control risks	Organizational Growth Strategy and scaling capacity (S1); quality and stewardship pressures from a larger output portfolio (S2); partnership coordination and institutional memory (S3); workforce, workload, systems and enabling capacity (S5); and leadership, prioritization and institutional capacity to manage complexity (S6).	Organizational Growth Strategy implementation; institutional modernization; partner-dependent delivery; Matrix/structure review.
R5. Operating model fit for next phase	F5. The Matrix Model	Limited or indirect links to output systems (S2); Matrix Model, hierarchy clarity, non-project time, and workload stress (S5); dual reporting, role ambiguity, accountability, and continuity (S6).	Matrix/structure review; partner-dependent delivery; institutional modernization.
R6. Partnerships as strategic architecture	F6. Partnerships architecture and evolution	Partner, global and regional positioning (S1); collaboration evidence as a supporting signal (S2); local partnerships, CGIAR engagement, CRM, typologies and partner-learning gaps (S3); scaling through strategic partnerships (S4); implementing-partner delivery shifts (S5); stakeholder representation, partner risk and accountability (S6).	Partner-dependent delivery; partner monitoring and risk management; partnership systems; distinctive-contribution messaging.
R7. Quality and lifecycle governance	F7. Quality, digital, data, and lifecycle systems	Limited strategic links (S1); tools, datasets, digital outputs, stewardship, and quality assurance beyond publications (S2); partner intelligence and institutional memory risks (S3); documentation and	Innovation-governance protocol; KM/workflow streamlining; ticketing arrangements; quality-

		follow-up for scaling and sustained use (S4); IT fragmentation and KM transition (S5); quality assurance beyond publications, data stewardship and partner risk (S6).	management arrangements; partner monitoring and risk management.
R8. Global thought leadership and distinctive value proposition	F1. Strategy and strategic learning		R8. Global thought leadership and distinctive value proposition

Legend: OGS = Organizational Growth Strategy; ToC = theory of change; KM = knowledge management; CRM = customer/constituent relationship management.

Annex 3. Findings Aligned to Review Criteria

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
1. Relevance In the sense of both relevance to development context (e.g., country priorities, and policies), and relevance to the specific domains and progress of science.	Q1a. How does the center ensure that its research contributes to the advancement of science?	1. Strategy	Q1.1.1. To what extent does the Strategy ensure that IWMI's science-based solutions for water insecurity are aligned with the needs, priorities, and policies of clients, and global, regional and national partners?	Triangulated evidence from the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and annexed documents, the staff survey, and interviews confirm that the 2024–30 Strategy effectively aligns IWMI's research portfolio with the needs of national, regional, and global stakeholders. By focusing on three strategic areas —Mitigating Water Risks, Overcoming Global Inequalities, and Managing Water Sustainably—IWMI ensures its science-based solutions directly address global water challenges.
	Q1b. How does IWMI align its priorities-to the practical needs of the development sector?	2. Quality and relevance of scientific outcomes	Q1.2.1. To what extent are development needs and policy priorities explicitly reflected in the framing of IWMI's outputs (problem definition, objectives, and identification of intended users)?	IWMI's outputs are generally framed around recognizable development needs and policy priorities. This is visible across policy-facing work, capacity-sharing activities, decision-support products, forecasting systems, dashboards, datasets, digital tools, water accounting, irrigation mapping, and other applied outputs. SAR and annex/source evidence link these outputs to water, agriculture, climate, food systems, resilience, groundwater, irrigation, disaster risk, and related policy or operational challenges.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
				CGIAR Results Dashboard 2022-25 records add a broader portfolio view, showing knowledge products, innovation development records, policy-change pathways, and partnership records. Survey results point in the same direction: staff, partners, and small-medium enterprise (SME) respondents generally view IWMI's outputs as relevant, technically credible, and responsive to real-world challenges. Interviews and focus group discussion notes add practical details. Respondents described outputs shaped by government requests, country-level needs, stakeholder consultations, implementation problems, and user demand. Intended users and applied problems are often visible in output design. At the same time, user orientation is better evidenced in selected examples than through a consistently documented approach across all output categories.
			Q1.2.2. How are IWMI's outputs taken up and used within relevant scientific domains?	IWMI's outputs show strong uptake within scientific domains, especially through publications, citation visibility, thematic concentration, and publication-level collaboration. Science-Metrix evidence strengthens this part of the assessment by adding publication, citation, thematic, and collaboration evidence. For use beyond scholarly domains, the assessment rests more heavily on CGIAR Results Dashboard data, SAR/source evidence, interviews, focus group discussion notes, and surveys. These sources show policy-facing engagement, operational tools, and selected applied use, but with less consistent tracking across the portfolio than is available for publications and scientific visibility. The resulting judgement is positive but differentiated. Scientific-domain uptake is well supported. Policy, operational, and institutional use is visible through selected examples and stakeholder evidence but not tracked with the same consistency across output areas.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
			Q1.2.3. To what extent are IWMI's outputs tailored to different contexts, and what evidence from these outputs indicates areas of comparative advantage?	IWMI's outputs show tailoring to geographic, institutional, and thematic contexts, especially where country offices, regional programs, partner institutions, or government counterparts are directly involved. Interview evidence points to country-level adaptation, ministry engagement, stakeholder-informed design, and outputs developed around specific operational needs. Areas of comparative advantage are visible in water data science, irrigation mapping, water accounting, forecasting, groundwater systems, digital applications, early-warning support, climate and water-risk analytics, and applied water-management tools. Science-Metrix adds thematic evidence in areas close to IWMI's mandate, while CGIAR Results Dashboard records show breadth across technical and policy-facing output types. Contextual tailoring is not equally visible across all outputs. Some products are clearly linked to users, institutions, and country contexts; others are recorded mainly as publications, tools, dashboards, or knowledge products, with less detail on how they were adapted to specific users or settings.
		3. Partnerships ecosystems	Q1.3.1. How does IWMI develop and implement its partnership policies, and to what extent are they aligned with country priorities and needs?	IWMI's recent partnership policies were developed with an inclusive, multi-stakeholder consultation process involving IWMI staff and a broad array of national, regional and international partners and other key stakeholders, ensuring alignment with national development priorities and the IWMI Strategy 2024–30. The ongoing creation of specific country strategies—such as the Nepal and Pakistan Country Strategic Roadmaps shared with the review panel—aims to formalize alignment with national policies, even though the foundational government agreements currently lack defined goals or milestones.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
			Q.1.3.2. To what extent do IWMI's partnership types and modalities address gaps in its comparative advantage along the agricultural research-for-development continuum?	A review of the SAR and annexed documents highlights that IWMI places partnership at the core of its strategy. Survey and interview evidence indicate that IWMI effectively leverages an array of partner types and modalities to fill research, policy influence, and delivery gaps along the agricultural research-for-development continuum. To address these gaps, IWMI is transitioning from simple consultations to co-designing solution packages with local partners. This approach builds strong, demand-driven relations with governments, regional actors, and donors across multiple nations. Within this spectrum, IWMI's comparative advantages include its international research team, trained staff, and deep local roots, which enable timely technical support and on-the-ground capacity building. However, to optimize scaling and impact, some interviewees recommend expanding collaborations with the private sector and INGOs to improve visibility. They also suggest strengthening integration within the CGIAR and improving coordination with national research organizations. IWMI is encouraged to intensify collaboration beyond irrigation agencies into ecology and environmental sciences, while strengthening partnerships with local universities. The IWMI- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) Memorandum of Understanding serves as a strong example of intentional institutional partnership development, facilitating greater project-level collaboration, funding, and global water sector positioning (review of SAR and relevant annex document).

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
2. Coherence The center aligns with other institutes/actors in the same sector or context, both within the federated partnership (e.g., alignment with CGIAR-wide strategy) and across different organizations.	Q2a. How does the center align programmatically with other institutes and actors within the federated CGIAR partnership? Q2b. How does the center align with networks beyond and outside of CGIAR in the sector(s) pertinent to the center strategy?	1. Strategy	Q2.1.1. To what extent does IWMI participate in CGIAR MELIA systems in place during the five years, and how does IWMI collect and contribute to Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment and Foresight (MELIAF) with external to CGIAR partners?	From 2020-25, IWMI's MELIA functions were largely driven by individual projects or CGIAR programs. However, both the SAR and interviewees stated that there were gaps in evidence of contribution to outcomes and impacts, noting that CGIAR Managing Agricultural Research for Learning and Outcomes (MARLO) and PRMS indicators do not fully capture the institute's specific needs, alongside inconsistency in CGIAR monitoring demands over time. To address this, IWMI is investing in strengthening its own complementary performance framework to enhance institutional accountability and build a more robust evidence base for impact. Interviewees note that IWMI aims to have its internal MEL platform fully populated and operational within the next 12 months, providing managers with a single window for comprehensive data access. Currently, however, the system is in its early, experimental rollout stages and does not yet function as a mature feedback system, and less than 16% of partner survey respondents state they have access to IWMI's MELIA system. Furthermore, despite intensive data-population efforts over the past year, interview evidence suggests that some researchers' experience is limited to reporting basic outputs, with several viewing MEL tasks as a burden. Finally, an external observer noted that IWMI's MELIA work primarily focuses on setting standards and compliance, risking performing more like a project management tool than a genuine evaluation system.
		3. Partnerships ecosystems	Q2.3.1. How are work and available capacity (including funds) of partners prioritized when there are overlapping networks of partners? Q2.3.2. How are conflicting priorities handled?	IWMI's two-stage proposal development and approval workflow uses a strict but fair system across all organizational levels to assess partner capacity and resolve conflicting priorities. The first stage provides operational advice by evaluating ground-level practicalities and resource availability when overlapping partner networks exist. Any remaining overlaps or conflicting priorities are then formally resolved in the second stage by the Funding Opportunities Review Team, which acts as the centralized gatekeeper for final decision-making to secure overall project quality.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
3. Legitimacy Research is conducted ethically and with the participation of relevant stakeholders. Adherence to normative frameworks are considered here.	Q3. To what extent does IWMI conduct its research and governance in an ethical, inclusive, and accountable manner, consistent with relevant normative frameworks?	2. Quality and relevance of scientific outcomes	Q3.2.1. To what extent are relevant ethical standards and normative frameworks reflected in, and enforced through, IWMI's research processes?	IWMI has formal research ethics, publication, authorship, Open Access, and research-quality arrangements that support ethical research practice and institutional accountability. Policies, procedures, workflows, and approval pathways provide the strongest part of this evidence. Interviews also confirm that research ethics and research-quality functions are active, with training and guidance being taken through research groups and internal processes. For Statement 2, quality and ethics arrangements need to be described by output type. Journal articles go through external peer review by journals and internal checks by project, research group, and/or program leadership for approval, compliance, and institutional capture. Several non-journal outputs follow other pathways involving research-quality review, publication processes, Research Publications Committee procedures, or specific approval arrangements. This gives IWMI a credible base of ethical and quality-related systems. The main area requiring continued attention is consistency of application across output types, teams, geographies, datasets, digital tools, and operational products. Interviews raised active institutional concerns around data stewardship, sensitive information, personally identifiable information, retention, deletion, and dataset review.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
			Q3.2.2. To what extent are different stakeholder groups engaged in IWMI's research processes (design, implementation, dissemination)?	Stakeholder engagement is visible across IWMI's research processes. The reviewed material shows collaboration with governments, research organizations, CGIAR entities, national partners, regional bodies, civil society actors, private-sector or SME partners, and implementation partners. Partner and SME survey responses are generally positive on collaboration, mutual respect, responsiveness, and practical relevance. Interviews and focus group discussion notes add examples of stakeholder consultation, co-design, ministry engagement, local partner roles, field access, validation, and user-oriented dissemination. These accounts support the finding that stakeholder engagement often influences design, implementation, and dissemination. The remaining issue is traceability. The evidence does not show participation patterns, beneficiary reach, and stakeholder representation with the same clarity across all output areas. Collaboration is extensive, but disaggregation, beneficiary mapping, inclusiveness tracking, and evidence on equitable participation remain incomplete in several parts of the portfolio.
		3. Partnerships ecosystems	Q3.3.1. To what extent are partner contributions recognized?	Partner recognition extends beyond traditional scientific publication authorship; for instance, collaboration with NGOs through blogs or videos often provides visibility in channels that local partners highly appreciate. A specific example includes a joint blog published in The Hindu, which successfully generated high visibility for all involved parties. The current institutional-level theory of change (ToC) does not yet address partner recognition clearly—although the Implementation Roadmaps in the Nepal and Pakistan Roadmaps do. Furthermore, applied work such as action research and policy development represent valuable outputs that do not fit into standard, scientific publication-focused recognition logic.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
		5. Good place to work and good actor	Q3.5.1. How does IWMI manage trade-offs inherent in the stewardship of human, natural, and financial resources?	Management demonstrates a highly constructive focus on strengthening systems infrastructure, improving the delivery model, and attracting vital funding. Complementing these efforts, the Board plays a positive, supportive role in guiding management and ensuring stability; this is explicitly demonstrated by its creation of an <i>ad-hoc</i> group to rapidly navigate operational exposures stemming from sudden funding cuts. Evidence highlights a highly positive interplay between the Board and management resulting in a collective commitment to constructive institutional development, risk mitigation, and the success of IWMI's strategy.
			Q3.6.1. To what extent does the Board of Governors ensure integrity is embedded into the IWMI's oversight, structures, ethical framework, assurance and reporting mechanisms?	Governance structures are well grounded in legal instruments (the IIMI Act and IWMI Charter). Risk Governance and leadership are supported by strong ethical frameworks, ethics oversight, and audit functions have been reinforced, including tripartite arrangements.
		6. Leadership and governance	Q3.6.2. To what extent does IWMI have a coherent ethics and risk management framework, and how is it applied in practice?	Survey results were very positive in respect of IWMI having a strong ethics and values framework that also supports research. Ethics and risk management were further strengthened with the recent appointments of Director of Ethics and the new Director of Audit, recently appointed for Audit Asia, which covers the tripartite plus WorldVeg.
			Q3.6.3. To what extent do researchers, admin staff and external partners participation improve decision making	Mechanisms that put in place include the All-Staff monthly meetings and the resuscitated Staff Consultative Council (SSC). However, governance and leadership are constrained by gaps in stakeholder representation, inclusiveness in governance structures, and perceived accountability. There was some evidence indicating staff hesitation in giving upward

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
			and accountability in IWMI's governance?	feedback, and that some staff are not confident leadership will act on feedback.
			Q.3.6.4. How does IWMI leadership practices including clear communication, responsiveness to accountability and effective change management impact the success of the governance systems?	IWMI enhanced internal communications over the five-year period. This supported effective governance and employee engagement. Given the volume of organizational change in this period, effective communications and change management has been vital in helping to overcome resistance and gain staff buy-in. Change management capability developed over the same five-year period, which helped address key risks and ensure appropriate delivery of change Initiatives. Accountability arrangements need further embedding.
4. Scientific credibility High scientific standards in research design, methods, and analysis and high-quality outputs.	Q4a. What is the quality of internal mechanisms to assure high scientific standards? Q4b. To what extent do the internal mechanisms consistently applied? Q4c. How is this reflected in the rigor of outputs and their contribution to	2. Quality and relevance of scientific outcomes	Q4.2.1. To what extent are adequate internal mechanisms in place to assure high scientific standards?	IWMI has functioning mechanisms to support scientific standards, especially for publications, research reports, working papers, Open Access, repository deposit, and selected knowledge products. Publication-related pathways are comparatively mature, with review arrangements, internal checks, repository capture, and publication-processing procedures. Interview evidence clarifies that there is no single quality pathway for all outputs. Journal articles are subject to external journal peer review, with internal checks by project, research group, and/or program leadership before submission or institutional capture. Research reports, working papers, briefs, technical reports, and selected knowledge products may follow research-quality, Publications, Research Publications Committee, or other approval pathways depending on the output type. The assessment is positive for several major output categories. It is less settled for datasets, digital tools, dashboards, operational products, and some capacity-sharing materials, where institution-wide arrangements for quality, approval, validation, stewardship, and lifecycle management are still less consistently evidenced.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
	advancing scientific knowledge and informing practice?		Q4.2.2. To what extent are IWMI's quality assurance mechanisms applied consistently across research outputs, teams, and geographies?	Quality assurance is clearer for publication-related outputs than for many non-publication outputs. Journal articles have external peer review and internal leadership checks. Research reports, working papers, selected briefs, and some technical products have documented or described review and processing arrangements. For digital tools, datasets, dashboards, operational products, capacity-sharing materials, and some project-level outputs, the picture is more uneven. Interviews, including the most recent former senior management interview, support the observation that publication procedures were stronger than procedures for non-publication outputs, and that non-publication quality control was uneven or being revitalized. This sharpens the assessment that the systems are differentiated, and consistency across output types remains a work in progress.
			Q4.2.3. To what extent do IWMI's research outputs demonstrate scientific quality and contribute to advancing scientific knowledge and informing practice?	IWMI's research outputs make a strong contribution to scientific knowledge through publication production, scientific visibility, thematic concentration, citation evidence, and publication-level collaboration. Science-Matrix evidence strengthens this part of the judgement. The contribution to practice is supported by a different set of sources. SAR/source material, dashboards, policy examples, interviews, focus group discussion notes, and surveys show policy-facing engagement, practical tools, operational platforms, capacity-sharing outputs, and user-oriented products. These sources provide documented examples of uptake, operational use, and applied relevance. The overall assessment is positive. The scientific contribution is more systematically evidenced through publication and bibliometric material. Practice-oriented contribution is visible and credible, but evidence on sustained use, institutional adoption, and downstream contribution remains less complete across the portfolio.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
5. Efficiency The center achieves its objectives in the most cost-effective manner, using resources wisely. It pursues areas of its greatest comparative advantage.	Q5. How have the centers adjusted their strategic priorities and operational practices in response to fluctuations in funding availability over the past five years?	1. Strategy	Q5.1.1. To what extent are resources allocated in proportion to strategic priorities?	Discussions during the field site visit highlighted the fact that allocation of resources at IWMI is a complex interplay between its 2024–30 Strategy and a funding model that is largely project-based and funder-driven. Nevertheless, interview evidence suggests that IWMI maintains strategic alignment through its two-stage proposal development and approval workflow process, although the precise proportionality of funds for the Strategic Programs is largely shaped by the specific interests of external funders. Detailed financial data mapping to the Strategic Programs, through to the Strategic Focus Areas and the four Transformational Levers, is not publicly reported on the CGIAR Financial Dashboard or in IWMI financial statements.
			Q5.1.2. To what extent are strategies adjusted to reflect fluctuations in funding availability from different sources over the past five years?	From 2020-25, IWMI saw rapid growth in finances. As the funding environment shifted significantly following the withdrawal of USAID support, the institute developed a Resource Mobilization Pivot Action Plan to guide decisions that strengthen IWMI’s capacity to mobilize diverse partnerships and finances aligned with its Strategy.
		5. Good place to work and good actor	Q5.5.1. How does the center adjust its operational practices in response to fluctuations in funding availability over the past five years?	IWMI proactively adjusted its operational practices through cost-optimization strategies, partnership model shifts, and strategic funding diversification to manage recent financial fluctuations. For example, IWMI shares its administrative and fiduciary staff with WorldFish and partly with IRRI, a model that successfully optimized operational costs while increasing service quality. In addition, despite a significant increase in its budget over the review period, the Institute intentionally shifted its delivery model to work increasingly through local implementing partners. This strategy reduces IWMI’s financial exposure in the event of further funding withdrawals from the development arena. Furthermore, the Institute adopted an explicit policy to lower its proportion of CGIAR Trust Funds, as the administrative costs associated with managing these specific funds were deemed too high. Finally, IWMI is actively investing in updated IT systems to streamline workflows and

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
				enhance institutional knowledge management, aiming to directly boost current staff productivity and efficiency.
			Q5.5.2. How has quality of the working conditions been influenced by the fluctuations in funding availability?	During the review period, IWMI's grant revenue was USD 24.2 million. By 2025, the budget grew to USD 48.5 million, an increase of approximately 100%. At the same time, IWMI staff numbers increased from 248 (IWMI 2020 Annual Report data) to 565 in 2025 (SAR data), which is an increase of 114%. However, in 2025, there was a withdrawal of US funds, as well as other budget contractions. Interview data indicates that despite these funding cuts, management successfully maintains a supportive, non-hierarchical culture and adheres to risk-averse protocols to protect the institution's reputation. Nevertheless, recent funding volatility forced a shift toward diversifying funding sources and adopting more demanding operational systems. For some respondents, this has created a major pressure point via a 220-day billable target, leading to instances of increased workplace tension, accelerated staff turnover and reduced morale. While experiences vary across the institute, some respondents report that remaining staff must work across multiple projects within IWMI's Matrix system, which significantly increased their workloads.
6. Effectiveness In the sense of both delivery against stated institutional strategies effective in the five years covered, ToC, set of targets (center and CGIAR targets to which the center is ascribed), as well as demonstration of the potential of research to achieve intended	Q6a. What factors contribute to the center's relative progress in its strategic areas over the past five years? Q6b. Which specific strategy domains see	1. Strategy	Q6.1.1. To what extent does IWMI's Strategy ensure institutional decisions are underpinned by a sound ToC aligned with specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) targets?	As noted in the SAR and confirmed by discussions with management during the field site visit, the institution-level Theory of Change (ToC), the Strategic Programs contribution matrices, and the programmatic ToCs were developed after the 2024–2030 Strategy was finalized. Nevertheless, there is strong alignment between the 2024–2030 Strategy and the institutional ToC, suggesting that the Strategy was underpinned by an implicit change logic, if not an explicit ToC. Regarding SMART targets, interview data indicates that a mandatory tracking system implemented on 1 January 2025 requires all projects to define their MELIA indicators at inception. No aligned targets currently exist against these indicators, as populating the MEL framework is ongoing. Moving forward, IWMI could: (a) strengthen current ToCs by adding logic narratives that detail the "how" and "why" of change, ensuring causal pathways are grounded in evidence and incorporate feedback loops and

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
outcomes and impacts, i.e., readiness to scale.	the most significant advancements, relative to other domains and (any) established targets?			non-linear pathways; and (b) decrease the total volume of outcome and impact indicators to reduce operational burden, prioritizing the development of high-value, SMART-compliant indicators and targets.
			Q6.1.2. To what extent does IWMI's Strategy ensure strategic areas are geared toward contributing to CGIAR's five impact areas?	Interview feedback suggests that IWMI maintains a critical position within the wider CGIAR, successfully aligning its 2024–2030 Strategy with broader CGIAR priorities and impact areas. Similarly, 98% of survey respondents stated that the IWMI 2024–2030 Strategy aligns with the CGIAR 2030 Strategy. Finally, data from the CGIAR Results Dashboard 2022–2025 show that all IWMI's results for 2023 and 2024 are fully tagged to at least one of CGIAR's five Impact Areas, while 91% of 2025 results are currently tagged.
			Q6.1.3. To what extent does IWMI's Strategy ensure strategic areas are geared toward contributing to the SDGs?	Alignment with the SDGs is not explicit in the 2024–2030 Strategy, and IWMI's 2025 results are aligned to just four SDGs according to the CGIAR Results Dashboard 2022–2025. Nevertheless, interview feedback suggests that IWMI is increasing the relevance of its mandate by aligning its 2024–2030 Strategy and research agenda with national, regional, and global development priorities in water security, biodiversity and climate change. Similarly, 97% of staff survey respondents state there is alignment between the 2024–2030 Strategy and the SDGs.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
		2. Quality and relevance of scientific outcomes	Q6.2.1. To what extent are output production processes institutionalized and used to support quality and consistency in outputs?	IWMI has institutionalized processes for several output categories, especially publications, dissemination, repository deposit, Open Access, research reports, working papers, and selected knowledge products. These systems support production, review, institutional capture, and dissemination. The clearest evidence concerns publication and knowledge-product systems. Dashboard records also show that IWMI tracks a wide range of knowledge products, innovation development records, policy-change pathways, and partnership records. Staff and partner survey responses reinforce a generally positive picture of research quality, collaboration, and relevance. Institutionalization is less even across capacity-sharing materials, technology outputs, datasets, digital tools, dashboards, and operational products. Some practices function at project level, while institution-wide arrangements for quality, stewardship, maintenance, and handover are less consistently established.
			Q.6.2.2. To what extent are IWMI's outputs positioned for use by intended users, and what evidence exists of their uptake and application?	IWMI positions many outputs for use through policy engagement, dissemination channels, partner collaboration, capacity-sharing activities, digital platforms, operational tools, dashboards, forecasting products, and applied technical support. Surveys and interviews indicate that many stakeholders perceive IWMI's outputs as relevant and useful. The evidence includes examples of uptake, operational use, policy-facing application, ministry demand, partner use, and practical relevance. Dashboard records add innovation-use and policy-change pathway data. Together, these sources support the finding that some outputs move beyond production and dissemination. The main weakness is follow-through evidence after output delivery. Innovation-use records have classification gaps, policy-change records are concentrated in earlier stages, and interviews point to follow-up, maintenance, scaling, and long-term use as recurring challenges. The judgement is therefore balanced: IWMI has credible examples of uptake

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
				and application, but still needs stronger evidence systems for reuse, institutional adoption, sustained use, downstream outcomes, and longer-term contribution across the portfolio.
		3. Partnerships ecosystems	Q6.3.1. To what extent do IWMI's partnership policies and processes ensure that IWMI research is designed and implemented with a diversity of skills?	IWMI is advancing a new Partnership and Funder Engagement Policy to foster systematic and impact-oriented collaborations, aligned with its 2024-30 Organizational Growth Strategy and 2023 Partnership Strategy Action Plan. A 2025 analysis by the IWMI Partnerships Working Group indicated strong alignment with the CGIAR draft partnership strategy, prompting the institute to investigate a formalized Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for improved partnership knowledge management. These Initiatives, along with increased inclusion of social scientists, enhance research design and implementation, although a formal theory of change is needed to guide partner roles and service delivery options.
		4. Impact	Q6.4.1 To what extent is IWMI's research designed and implemented to ensure contribution to CGIAR's five Impact Areas?	Meetings held during the field site visit and interview data confirm that IWMI is transitioning to an impact-oriented culture. Research is increasingly designed to include end-users—such as governments, local farmers, the private sector, civil society, and technical teams—from inception. This approach ensures co-design and stakeholder engagement to drive technology uptake and sustainability. However, some interviewees note that while this structure aims to support CGIAR impact areas, actual contributions are hindered by funding restrictions, shortfalls, and uncertainty. For example, a lack of dedicated scaling funding can confine successful Initiatives to small pilot scales. Additionally, impactful science is threatened by the unexpected withdrawal of funds and annual budget pressures. Abrupt project closures, rushed proposal cycles, and late-year budget confirmations create an unstable environment that undermines the delivery of long-term impacts.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
		6. Leadership and governance	Q6.6.1. To what extent do IWMI's governance practices, structures and core processes support leadership that is aligned with international standards and good practice?	The overarching governance framework—encompassing structures, meetings, oversight mechanisms, subcommittees, and senior leadership responsibilities—aligns with recognized international best practices. The framework is maturing. There is clear separation of governance and management roles.
7. Impact Benefits of the center's work will continue after the funding or support ends, due to actions of scaling up and scaling out. The center is contributing to broader, longer-term (positive) effects on the target	Q7a. What evidence exists of the center's impact on social, environmental and economic outcomes (published over the past five years)?	1. Strategy	Q.7.1.1. To what extent is IMWI's performance being tracked using impact indicators and SMART targets within a robust and well-resourced MELIAF framework?	SAR and interview data confirm IWMI's ongoing efforts to align project indicators directly with newly developed outcome and impact metrics. Over the past year, the MELIA Hub focused on standardizing indicators and data collection to enhance institutional visibility and strengthen strategic decision-making. Effective 1 January 2025, a mandatory tracking system requires all projects to define their MELIA indicators in a dedicated project module. However, because the centralized MEL platform is still being populated and the traceability of the outcome and impact indicators needs further testing, specific targets against these indicators have not yet been developed. Moving forward, IWMI should prioritize the development of high-value, SMART-compliant indicators and targets.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
population/environment.	Q7b. What are the key historical and contextual factors that shaped these results? Q7c. What evidence exists that the center contributed to the five Impact Areas in the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy?	4. Impact	Q7.4.1. To what extent does credible evidence of adoption, policy change, and longer-term social, environmental or economic impact of IWMI's science and innovations exist? Q7.4.2. What key historical and contextual factors enable or inhibit the level of adoption, extent of policy change, or the scale of social, economic or environmental impact evidenced in IWMI's impact assessments?	CGIAR Results Dashboard data indicate that IWMI's performance history for tracking and reporting evidence at the outcome and impact level was limited over the review period. Regarding policy change; analysis of the CGIAR Results Dashboard (2022–25) identifies 88 unique policy change entries for IWMI. Stage 1 (research taken up by next user) accounts for nearly 75% of these entries, while Stage 2 (policy enacted) represents the remaining 25%. No entries reached Stage 3 (evidence of impact). Triangulated data from the SAR, staff surveys, interviews, and management meetings confirm a deficit in institutional impact assessment results. This gap is driven by the high cost of large-scale evaluations, standard project cycles that fall short of long-term impact horizons, and a lack of flexible funding to assess Initiatives post-closure. Consequently, interviewees noted that significant post-project innovation adoption often goes unrecorded. Furthermore, while IWMI maintains four specialized impact assessment staff, their complete allocation to active projects prevents them from tracking these vital post-project metrics. To address this, the institute is actively seeking to build a credible body of empirical impact assessments to guide strategic management decisions and learning. While a planned collaboration with the CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment is derailed by funding cuts, IWMI should proactively secure dedicated impact assessment financing from donors, targeting legacy projects with clear evidence of post-project uptake.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
			Q7.4.3. To what extent does IWMI provide evidence of its contribution to CGIAR's five Impact Areas?	CGIAR Results Dashboard data (2022–2025) confirm that IWMI's results are tagged to one or more of the five CGIAR Impact Areas. Reflecting IWMI's core mandate, 2024 data indicate that contribution levels are notably higher for Impact Area 1 (Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation) and Impact Area 2 (Environmental Health & Biodiversity) than for Impact Area 3 (Gender Equality, Youth & Social Inclusion) and Impact Area 4 (Nutrition, Health & Food Security). With respect to poverty reduction (Impact Area 5), over half of IWMI's documented results were classified as "S ignificant" (meaning the result made a significant contribution to Impact Area 5, even though the objective was not its principal focus). Conversely, only 7% were designated as "P rincipal" (meaning the result was principally designed to meet Impact Area 5 objectives, which were fundamental to its formulation). Notably, while the CGIAR Impact Area tagging system signifies a qualitative contribution, quantitative data on the exact level of contribution is not provided.
			Q7.4.4. To what extent does IWMI uses rigorous impact assessments in decision-making?	As noted above, triangulated data from the SAR, staff surveys, interviews, and management meetings confirm a deficit in institutional impact assessment results due to the high cost of rigorous, large-scale assessments, the fact that impact tracking requires longer horizons than standard project cycles, and a lack of flexible funding to assess Initiatives post-closure. The Institute is actively seeking to build a credible body of empirical impact assessments to guide strategic learning and decision-making.
8. Sustainability The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to	Q8a. To what extent is the center positioning, both as an organization	4. Impact	Q8.4.1. To what extent does outcome and impact evidence show that uptake and benefits of IWMI's research outputs have, or are	The sustainability of uptake and benefits of IWMI's research outputs have, or are likely to continue, long-term at scale cannot be assessed because rigorous and robust uptake and benefits of IWMI's research outputs is not available.

Review criteria	Key review questions	Statements	Sub-questions	Findings
continue. This criterion also focuses on continuation of benefits and highlights the multidimensional nature of sustainability.	and in its research outputs of the past five years, to provide lasting benefits?		likely to continue, long-term at scale?	
	Q8b. What strategies has the center adopted to improve its market positioning and increase its chances of securing sustained and increased funding for its research?	6. Leadership and governance	Q8.6.1. How is the center defining and maintaining its market positioning (i.e., toward sustained and increased funding)?	IWMI holds a strong reputational and strategic market position. Globally and within CGIAR, addressing water scarcity is increasingly recognized as an urgent prerequisite to achieving the broader priorities of the CGIAR Integrated Partnership and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In line with its rapid financial growth from 2020-23, IWMI launched a 2024–30 Organizational Growth Strategy to help guide its expansion and underpin its broader 2024–30 Strategic Vision. As an internal roadmap, this operational foundation defines the Institute’s growth pathway, detailing resource mobilization targets and institutional system upgrades. IWMI aims to double total funding by 2030 through increased funder diversification, while reducing W1/W2 funding to 20% of total secured revenue. In response to the recent shift in the funding environment—marked by the withdrawal of USAID support—the Institute developed a Resource Mobilization Pivot Action Plan to strengthen its capacity to secure diverse partnerships and aligned financing. Moving forward, to continue to attract and sustain broader donor support, IWMI needs to increase its visibility on all major global water and agriculture platforms.

Annex 4. Consolidated List of Participants in the Recommendations Refinement Workshop and the Validation Meeting

The following is a consolidated list of participants who contributed to the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Center External Review (CER) process through two key events in 2026. The first event, the validation meeting, took place in person on 15 of May 2026 in IWMI headquarters in Colombo, Sri Lanka following the field visit, with IWMI staff based elsewhere participating online to validate the emerging findings and recommendations. The second event, held with the IWMI Board Task Force, took place online on 25 May 2026. Table 4 indicates whether each participant joined the workshop, the Validation Meeting, or both. In total, 24 individuals participated across the two events, including ten women and 14 men.

Table 19. Consolidated list of participants in the recommendation's refinement workshop and validation meeting

#	Name	Gender	Affiliation/CGIAR center	Participation
1	Allison Smith	F	IAES Director	Attended both meetings
2	Anne Heese	F	IWMI, Head of Human Resources	Validation meeting
3	David Molden	M	IWMI, Board Task Force	Refinement Workshop
4	Deborah Templeton	F	External Consultant, IAES	Attended both meetings
5	George de Gooijer	M	External Consultant, IAES	Attended both meetings
6	Henk Ovink	M	IWMI, Board Task Force	Refinement Workshop
7	Ian Overton	M	IWMI, Country Manager, Sri Lanka	Validation meeting
8	Imtiaz Khan	M	IWMI, Board Task Force	Refinement Workshop
9	Inga Jacobs	F	IWMI, Mata-Strategic Program Director	Online – Validation meeting
10	Johan Gély	M	IWMI, Asia Director for Research Impact	Validation meeting
11	John Simaika	M	Senior Researcher & Research Ethics Coordinator (IRB)	Online – Validation meeting
12	Lili Delwaide	F	IWMI, Advisor to the Director General	Attended both meetings
13	Mark Smith	M	IWMI, Director General	Attended both meetings
14	Mark Thomson	M	IWMI, Director – Business Strategy and Delivery	Validation meeting
15	Marta Maria Molinari	F	IAES, Evaluation Function	Attended both meetings
16	Mohsin Hafeez	M	IWMI, Strategic Program Director	Validation meeting
17	Olatundun Janet Adelegan	F	External Consultant, IAES	Attended both meetings

#	Name	Gender	Affiliation/CGIAR center	Participation
18	Olcay Ünver	M	External Consultant, Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES)	Attended both meetings
19	Olufunke Cofie	F	IWMI, Africa Director for Research Impact	Online – Validation meeting
20	Rachael McDonnell	F	IWMI, Deputy Director General	Validation meeting
21	Richard Golding	M	IWMI, Board Task Force	Refinement Workshop
22	Rodrigo Ordóñez	M	IWMI, Global Communications Lead	Validation meeting
23	Syon Niyogi	M	IWMI, Chief Operating Officer	Validation meeting
24	Vidhisha Samarasekera	F	IWMI, Strategic Program Director	Online – Validation meeting

Total: 24; F/M: 10/14

Annex 5. Panel Members Biographies and Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Panel Chair

Dr. Olcay Ünver is an internationally recognized expert in water governance and sustainable development. He is Professor of Practice in Environmental and Resource Management and Senior Global Futures Scientist at Arizona State University. He led the United Nations World Water Assessment Program (WWAP) and directed the UNESCO Program Office for Global Water Assessment, overseeing preparation of the United Nations World Water Development Reports. He later served as Vice-Chair of UN-Water and led FAO's global water portfolio, contributing to international work on water governance, land and water management, and food security. His work includes concept design and lead authorship of key chapters in FAO's flagship State of Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture (SOLAW) report. Dr. Ünver is co-author of the 2024 book Sustainable Development and Water Security: Towards Achieving a Water-Secure World and received the International Water Resources Association's Crystal Drop Award in 2023.



Subject Matter Expert /Panel Members

Deborah Templeton is currently an Independent Researcher with a background in research evaluation and impact assessment. She has a PhD in Agricultural Economics from University of New England, Australia, and was awarded the D.H. Drummond Thesis Prize for Economic Studies 2002. Deborah spent her early career at the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics in Canberra, Australia. In 2000, she joined the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) in Canberra as a Senior Economist. From 2005-2008, she was the Impact Assessment Specialist at the International Rice Research Institute in Los Baños, Philippines. She then returned to ACIAR and managed the Impact Assessment Program for a further five years. Since then, she has undertaken numerous consultancies with ACIAR and CGIAR. Deborah is currently a board member of the Fingal Valley Neighborhood House and is actively involved in the Health Service Access Improvement Plan funded by the Tasmanian Department of Health.



Professor Olatundun Janet Adelegan is an accomplished economist with over three decades of experience across academia, multilateral development institutions, intergovernmental organizations, and the not-for-profit sector in Africa, North America, Europe, and Asia. She holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and four master's degrees in business administration, Economics, Education (HAMK University, Finland), and Evaluation (University of Saarland, Germany). A Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, she currently serves as a Visiting Professor at Aalto University, Finland, and Vice President of UN Women Suomi in Helsinki. Her career includes roles at the International Monetary Fund, where she managed technical assistance for Mauritius, Zambia, and The Gambia, and as Director of Capacity Building at WASCAL in Ghana, coordinating regional climate and development programs across West Africa.



George de Gooijer has over 40 years of experience working on the governance of water, climate and the environment. His focus developed towards identifying and facilitating the change of multi-actor processes. He has experience as a diplomat, as a project leader and manager in local and national government and as a researcher. He also worked over 20 years as an independent advisor. He worked in over 30 countries, with West Africa as the dominant location of work. In recent years most of his work was on reviews/evaluations and supporting local governance processes in Africa. Mr de Gooijer was trained in sanitary engineering, toxicology and public health at Wageningen University, the Netherlands.



John Chesshire, CFIIA, is the owner of JC Audit Training Ltd, and has over 26 years' experience working in senior roles in the internal audit, governance, risk management, and business improvement fields. He is a former Chief Assurance Officer and Head of Internal Audit, an Independent Internal Audit Committee Chair, and a member of two other Audit Committees in the international charity and the defense sectors. John is an expert internal and external reviewer. He works extensively with NATO, OECD, IFAD, Institutes of Internal Auditors, ACCA, Higher Education, Charity, Government and private sector clients across the world.



Evaluation Analyst

Marta Maria Molinari has been an Evaluation Analyst Consultant with the Independent Evaluation Function of CGIAR's IAES since 2023. She was a research analyst under the 2024 Science Groups Evaluations umbrella, in the [Resilient Agrifood Systems \(RAFS\) Science Group](#) team, in the [2025 Review of CGIAR Management Response System to Independent Evaluations](#) and in the [2026 Evaluability Assessment of CGIAR's Portfolio 2025-2030](#). Previously, she worked at the Food and Agriculture Organization's Office of Evaluation (OED) on country and thematic evaluations, including Sustainable Development Goal 14. Molinari holds degrees in Political Science, Development Cooperation, and Development Economics from Sapienza University, Roma Tre University, and Tor Vergata University, respectively.



S/ N	Conflict of interest statements	Olçay Ünver	Deborah Templeton	Olatundun Janet Adelegan	George de Gooijer	John Chesshire	Marta Maria Molinari
		Independent Consultants					Evaluation Analyst
1	During the last two years, have you participated in the design or implementation of a CGIAR research activity, Initiative or Program contributing to the CGIAR 2030 Innovation and Research strategy?	No	No	No	No	No	No

S/ N	Conflict of interest statements	Olçay Ünver	Deborah Templeton	Olatundun Janet Adelegan	George de Gooijer	John Cheshire	Marta Maria Molinari
2	During the last two years, have you been actively employed by a CGIAR center/One CGIAR or a public/private research entity which is a collaborator/competitor of CGIAR?	No	No	No	No	No	No
3	Are you aware whether a relative, close friend, close colleague or someone with whom you have financial ties is participating in the implementation of an activity, Initiative or program contributing to the CGIAR 2030 Innovation and Research strategy (or has done so during last two years)?	No	No	No	No	No	No
4	During the last two years, have you been involved in the activities of the CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES)?	No	No	No	No	No	No
5	Do you hold financial investments with the private sector/industry that represent more than 50% of your annual earnings and/or receive more than 50% of your annual research funding from the private sector (in sectors relevant to CGIAR Impact Areas)?	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	Due to the nature of work and products for CGIAR IAES, it is incumbent on the individual to consider and volunteer any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. Please use this space to declare any other information needed for IAES on its behalf and on behalf of the independent bodies it supports to assess and manage real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest that have not been covered in the preceding questions.	No	No	No	No	No	No
7	Please declare if any project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate: Cites your research; Names researchers with whom you have active collaborations, recently published joint papers or are in regular email correspondence; Includes work with which you are actively competing, or could be perceived to be competing, for limited funding; Names any of your past or current students as active participants: or Presents any features similar to those listed above that might present a potential/perceived/real conflict of interest.	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	I declare that the information provided on this statement is true and complete.	Dated: 7 August 2025	Dated: 13 September 2025	Dated: 8 August 2025	Dated: 16 December 2025	Dated: 2 September 2025	Dated: 18 November 2025



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