



CGIAR

INDEPENDENT SCIENCE FOR
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Update from the Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)

24th Meeting of CGIAR System
Council (Item 12)

Lesley Torrance, ISDC Chair

11 June 2026



Agenda

- ISDC introductions
- Enhancing ISDC project
- AI for Independent Science Advice project
- Discussion

ISDC Members



Lesley Torrance

ISDC Chair

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



Magali Garcia

ISDC Member

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



David R. Just

ISDC Member

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



Erin Lentz

ISDC Member

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



New ISDC Member

Bhavani Shankar

ISDC Member

Professor and Co-Director at the Institute for Sustainable Food, University of Sheffield , UK



New ISDC Member

Glenn Fitzgerald

ISDC Member

Honorary Principal Fellow, The University of Melbourne, Australia



Ingrid Fromm

ISDC Member

Senior research Associate and lecturer, International Agriculture, Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland



Vacant

Recruitment for new member begins in July. Nompumelelo Obokoh resigned after accepting a job with the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Enhancing ISDC Advice

Assessing Awareness,
Perceptions, and Use of ISDC
Advice Across CGIAR



Expected Outputs and Value

Thanks in advance for participating in the interviews and the survey!



- Findings to identify opportunities to strengthen ISDC's advisory role
- Improve alignment with stakeholder needs
- Enhance uptake of advisory products
- Strengthen feedback and learning mechanisms within CGIAR



Overall aim: Ensure ISDC continues to **deliver timely, rigorous, and actionable scientific advice** that supports effective research prioritization and development impact.

AI for Independent Science Advice:

Assessing the Role of Large
Language Models in ISDC
Advisory Processes



Expected Outputs and Value

Exploratory, case study-based approach to assess the role of LLMs across two core ISDC advisory functions:

1. Strategic document advice/reflection (2026, Quarter 1/2–SC24 pre-read “Closing the Loop,” with case study to follow)
2. Scientific proposal reviews* (2026, Quarters 3/4–SC25 pre-read)

Case studies will culminate in a final technical note synthesizing learning with recommendations for future ISDC use (Quarter 1 2027)



Collectively, the outputs will provide an **evidence-based foundation for future decisions on the role of AI in strengthening the effectiveness, efficiency, and coherence of ISDC’s independent scientific advice.**



Thank you



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