

System Council Advisory Bodies Consolidated Triennial Workplan Summary Cover Note

Purpose

This document sets out the summary of the consolidated triennial workplan and budget for Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC), Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA), Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES), including its Evaluation Function, referred to collectively in System Framework as “advisory bodies.” The plan covers 2025-2027 proposed activity at a base budget scenario.

- CGIAR’s System Framework sets out among System Council functions to “establish System Council advisory bodies (including the ISDC, SPIA and the IAES) to deliver on its oversight and assurance mandate and approve their budgets and workplans which will be part of the overall workplan and budgeting process,” (6.2.g) and, to “approve in consultation with the Integrated Partnership Board, a cost-effective, multi-year evaluation plan...” (6.2.t).
- The IAES Director presented enclosed Table 1. *Decision typology and guiding questions for demand-based planning* to System Council’s 20th meeting to invite strategic input; at the same setting, IAES provided a cumulative summary report to date of progress against the 2022-2024 approved consolidated workplan.
- The 2025-2027 plan was prepared by IAES in close coordination with ISDC and SPIA chairs and vetted by System Council’s standing committees. It benefited from broad consultation with System Council members and in-depth discussion with the Strategic Impact Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (SIMEC), as well as input and guidance from System Board (May 2024). Discussions with CGIAR leadership and selected Center Directors General and Deputy Directors General for Research further informed this planning. Planning benefited also from engagement with Monitoring-Evaluation-Learning community and cross-CGIAR units (e.g., Portfolio Performance Unit and Project Coordination Unit), and assurance providers (e.g., Internal Audit).
- Following Council’s decision, IAES would proceed to support ISDC, SPIA and Evaluation Function implement 2025 activities and close the current triennium. In February 2025, the consolidated 2024 technical and financial report will be made available to System Council, and in the public domain on CGSpace and <https://iaes.cgiar.org>. IAES will publish an annual digital snapshot on iaes.cgiar.org.

- An Annex to the plan for approval summarizes scenario plans as discussed with System Council’s standing committees. With the committees’ advice to proceed with base budgets, the decision request at 21st meeting of System Council pertains to base budgets, with summary uplift budgets recorded for information in Annex 1.
- As a working practice, aligned with CGIAR’s annual planning and budgeting cycle, IAES will return to System Council in outyears for reconfirmation of the annual planning, to allow for adaptive management and ongoing tailoring to meet emergent demands for independent scientific advice and evaluative evidence.

Action Requested

The System Council is requested to approve the consolidated 2025-2027 workplan and budget of ISDC, SPIA and IAES pursuant to Article 6.2 g) of the CGIAR System Framework, and take note of the associated annex regarding uplift scenarios.

<p>Document category: Working document of the System Council. There is no restriction on the circulation of this document</p>
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Prepared by: IAES Director in collaboration with ISDC and SPIA chairs and IAES staff



Independent
Advisory and
Evaluation
Service



System Council Advisory and Evaluation Bodies (ISDC, SPIA & IAES): 2025–2027 Workplan and Budget

November 2024

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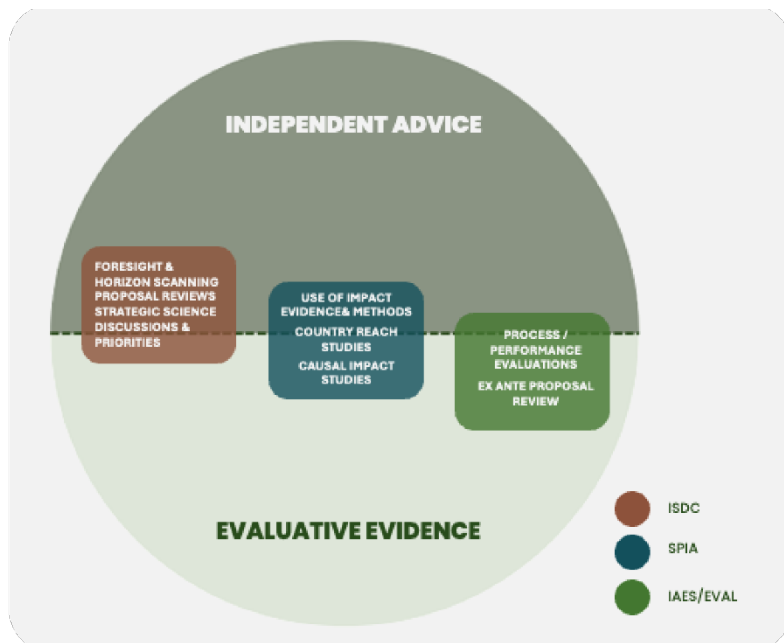
November 2024

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Introduction

Figure 1. Three complementary but distinct mandates



CGIAR’s Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC), Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA), and Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES), deliver CGIAR’s independent advisory and evaluation functions. This plan summarizes their consolidated 2025–2027 workplan and budget. System Framework establishes the overall mandate for ISDC, SPIA, and IAES.ⁱ Figure 1 illustrates the respective types of outputs for the ISDC, SPIA, and IAES Evaluation Function and their relative placement against advisory and evaluative mandates. Figure 2 sets out the respective objectives.

Underpinning these three workstreams, the overarching aim of IAES is to deliver excellent support to the two independent bodies, ISDC and SPIA, and their workplans, as well as the delivery of CGIAR’s multiyear, independent evaluation plan. This plan builds on past accomplishments, incorporates lessons from the past, and responds to the evolving needs and new demands of CGIAR. The Terms of Reference for each advisory body of the System Council set out the importance of the consultations and connections with other internal and external stakeholders, and the plan was developed consultatively. IAES prepares technical and financial [reports](#). The text box overleaf presents a summary of the 2022–24 results.

Figure 2: Objectives in 2025–27 business cycle

ISDC	SPIA	IAES EVALUATION FUNCTION
1. Portfolio reviews: Conducting comprehensive reviews of CGIAR’s research portfolio	1. Institutionalizing and scaling country-level data on CGIAR reach	1. Implementing external evaluative activities (process and performance evaluations)
2. Generate advice: Providing pertinent advice on science and research strategy	2. Expanding and deepening evidence of the causal impacts of CGIAR research	2. Issuing evaluation guidance to support the implementation of CGIAR’s Evaluation Framework and Policy
3. Forum: Implementing Science for Development forums	3. Strengthening the use of rigorous impact evidence	3. Engaging with CGIAR on process and performance evaluations
4. Consensus building and System Council consultation: To engage and foster consensus		4. Knowledge management and translation of evaluative knowledge

Results in the 2022–2024 business cycle

- Comprehensive ISDC portfolio evolution [advice](#) through moderated review of Initiative proposals (14 reviews in 2022), 2025–2030 portfolio proposals (13 reviews in 2024) and multiple reviews of Portfolio Narrative drafts
 - ISDC’s [Megatrends](#) literature review and deliberations yielded a discussion paper outlining nine implications crucial for the evolution of CGIAR’s portfolio
 - Publication of a [special issue in Agricultural Systems](#) encapsulating ISDC’s [years-long work](#) on the topic of inclusive innovation, with 17 open-access papers and an editorial
 - A [comparative advantage](#) analysis technical note that has transformed the way CGIAR assesses and communicates its comparative advantage
 - ISDC’s [Perspective piece](#) in npj Sustainable Agriculture (2023) explored interlinked concepts that ISDC has used in advising CGIAR
 - Science Forums convened by ISDC for communicating and deliberating independent science advice with internal and external groups
-
- SPIA synthesized messages from causal impact evidence at [SPIA Fest](#) and other venues
 - [SPIA Country](#) research on the reach of CGIAR innovations in Uganda, Vietnam, and Bangladesh, and dynamic evidence on the reach of CGIAR innovations in Ethiopia
 - [SPIA-commissioned accountability and learning](#) published evidence and interim reporting
 - SPIA webinars, guidelines, and matchmaking events are key channels for engagement and communicating SPIA’s independent advice and evidence
 - Under the [new 2024–2030 workplan](#), SPIA identified research consortia to dynamically track the reach of CGIAR innovations in 20 countries in out-years
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- IAES Evaluation Function completed the full cycle of [platform evaluations](#).
 - Evaluation function conducted Evaluability Assessments, which were formative and learning-focused, for Regional Integrated Initiatives ([synthesis](#))
 - Real-time learning- and accountability-focused [evaluations of three Science Groups](#) (2024) with recommendations prepared and communicated to feed into the evolving 2025–2030 portfolio. A total of 24 related knowledge products have been produced
 - Further to MOPAN (2019), advisory engagements and [recommendations](#) for the re-design of CGIAR’s Performance and Results Management System (joint engagement with internal audit), Management Response System review (ongoing), and collaborative review and commentary on technical reporting arrangements

Planning Based on Demand and Evidence

The proposed plan prepared by IAES in close coordination with ISDC and SPIA chairs, and vetted by System Council’s standing committees, has benefited from broad consultation with System Council members and in-depth discussion with the Strategic Impact Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (SIMEC), as well as input from System Board (May 2024) and discussions with CGIAR leadership and selected Center Directors General and Deputy Directors General for the Research, Monitoring–Evaluation–Learning community, cross-CGIAR business units (e.g., Portfolio Performance Unit and Project Coordination Unit), and assurance providers (e.g., Internal Audit). These consultations inspired the framing of guiding questions, which ISDC, SPIA, and IAES advice and evaluative evidence helps CGIAR decision-makers to answer (Table 1).

Table 1. Decision typology and guiding questions for demand-based planning

Decision type	Guiding question
Investment	Which are the most effective and sustainable investment propositions, and are they soundly designed ⁱ ?
Accountability	Has there been effective and efficient delivery against documented, adaptively managed plans?
Learning	What can CGIAR improve in its R4D portfolio, partnerships, and implementation?
Assurance	Are the evidence and processes used for decisions inclusive ⁱⁱ and sound?

ⁱ evidence-based, with learning from previous and ongoing work reflected

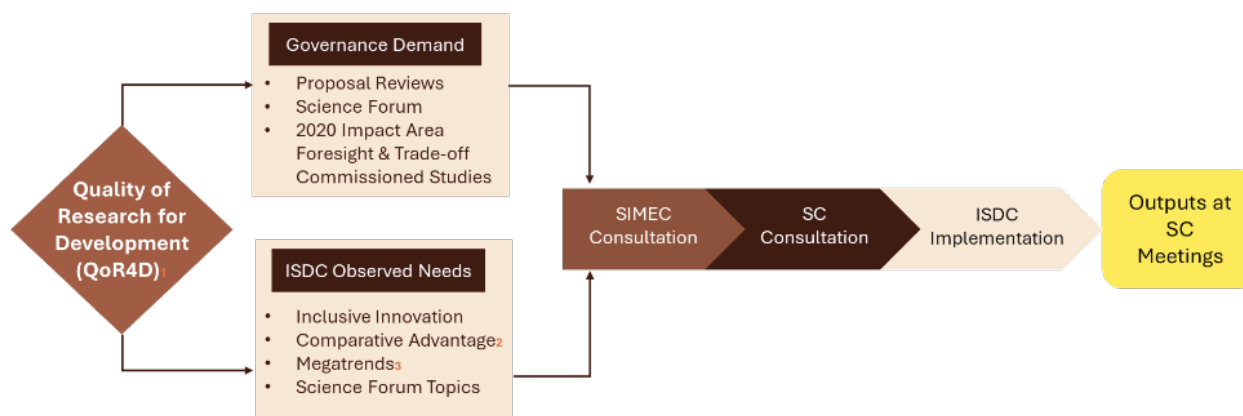
ⁱⁱ transparent, equitable

ISDC Objectives and Activities

ISDC is an independent advisory body that offers guidance to System Council on all matters relating to science for development. ISDC must be both responsive to System Council’s emerging needs, and proactive in advising System Council on new priorities. In addition to planned actions, ISDC will provide science-for-development advice as new needs arise, following adaptive management and co-design principles. The effectiveness of this approach is evident from advice given between 2022 and 2024, which CGIAR has implemented.

As an independent science advisory body, ISDC consults with SIMEC and System Council twice yearly to discuss the workplan. SIMEC provides initial feedback, which ISDC considers before finalizing plans for System Council consultation. No commissioned studies, Science Forum theme, or other advisory products are developed without these consultations. Figure 3 displays the workflow that underpins the ISDC advice pipeline.

Figure 3. ISDC Advice Initiation and Development Process



- 1. QoR4D:** QoR4D is the guiding framework that facilitated CGIAR System-wide agreement on the nature and assessment of the quality of science. It provided the basis for the criteria used to assess research proposals during ISDC’s independent review.
- 2. Comparative Advantage:** The Comparative Advantage framework uptake is demonstrated by it being a major component of the 2025-30 research proposal narratives.
- 3. Megatrends:** The Megatrends report served as a basis for prioritizing research questions in the 2025-30 portfolio research questions.

The activities envisaged under the ISDC objectives are fully aligned with ISDC terms of reference.

(i) Portfolio reviews: In the coming business cycle, consultations and CGIAR Strategy allude to a number of Portfolio review needs. First, the proposals will miss certain aspects that proponents must expand and complete in 2025, such as capacity-sharing plans. Second, if the CGIAR intends to revise project documents for the final three years of the business cycle (as implied in the 2030 Strategy), ISDC would be on standby to conduct such reviews. When the trajectory for Portfolio components has been clarified, further to the figure above, ISDC will consult System Council and SIMEC to understand the depth and breadth of proposal reviews needed.

(ii) Generating CGIAR scientific advice: ISDC will proceed with commissioned studies and outputs related to ISDC’s mandate to provide foresight and horizon scanning guidance to System Council and CGIAR. Under the base budget position, ISDC anticipates commissioning one study in the business cycle, with topics defined in consultation with SIMEC and System Council. To make advice more accessible, ISDC will deliver translational materials, including video or audio content, briefs, and infographics.

(iii) Science for development forum series: During the business cycle, ISDC will continue with the Science for Development forums. Under the base budget position, ISDC anticipates implementing one Science Forum in the business cycle. This will allow flexibility to hold Forums in conjunction with System Council meetings or CGIAR Science Weeks. The Science Forum will continue to be an independent event that aligns with ISDC’s Terms of Reference, but for accessibility, relevance, and timeliness, fit into these broader events.

(iv) Consensus building and System Council consultation: ISDC will continue with its two semi-annual face-to-face ISDC meetings, endeavoring to locate at least one per year at a CGIAR center or national partner, and continue its regular contributions at SIMEC and the Integrated Partnership Board and System Council meetings, geared toward consultation and advising. The location of meetings and travel to governance meetings provide opportunities for ISDC to engage with CGIAR governance and scientists to further ISDC’s understanding of CGIAR’s portfolio (including pooled and bilateral sources).

In 2025, ISDC is preparing for substantial member and chair turnover, with three members and the chair terms expiring in the early fourth quarter.¹ Recruitment and onboarding must occur early and preferably be staggered to prevent gaps in 50% of ISDC membership and leadership. To adequately support onboarding new members in 2025, IAES staff assigned to ISDC secretariat face a robust workload.

Examples of ISDC independent advice stemming from the Council’s observations were the 2022 work on comparative advantage as well as the work on megatrends (2023). They were initiated by ISDC based on its own assessment and without an explicit request from System Council. Both have become indispensable components of the CGIAR’s science framework. An example of requested products from System Council was the 2020 work on the Impact Area foresight study and trade-offs for the new Research and Innovation Strategy. For ISDC to fulfill its mandate, it must maintain such flexibility.

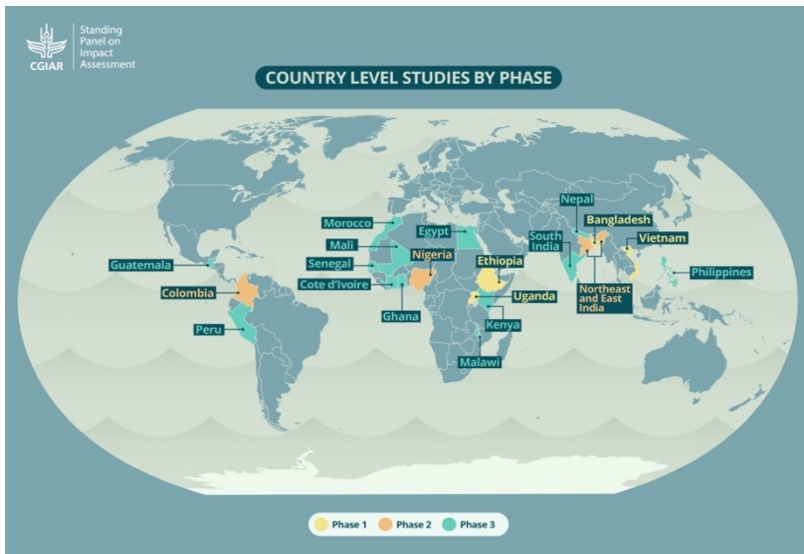
SPIA Objectives and Activities

To understand the returns to CGIAR investments, reliable estimates of the reach of CGIAR research are needed, providing the rationale for SPIA’s portfolio of country studies (**Objective 1: Institutionalizing and scaling country-level data on CGIAR reach**). Estimates of the benefit per person/community reached are also needed. These real-world impacts are not easy to predict and likely contested by different parties, so they should be empirically and independently estimated through rigorous causal impact assessment studies (**Objective 2: Expanding and deepening evidence of causal impacts of CGIAR research**).

¹ Furthermore, a 2024 member recruitment at its current trajectory will most likely result in a fourth new member starting in first quarter 2025.

The country study approach will scale both geographically and longitudinally through a) Obtaining dynamic evidence of the reach of CGIAR through longitudinal nationally representative panel surveys in the four high-priority CGIAR countries where SPIAs country studies are ongoing—Ethiopia, Uganda, Vietnam, and Bangladesh (**phase 1 countries**); b) Bringing three new high-priority countries into the program—Nigeria, India (a cluster of states), Colombia² (**phase 2 countries**)³; c) Carrying out initial scoping work (“stock-taking only”) in 13 further countries (Egypt, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Cote d’Ivoire, Kenya, Malawi, Philippines, South India, Nepal, Morocco, Guatemala, Peru) with a view to potentially scaling up activities to a data collection phase if/when the demand arises (**phase 3 countries**).

Figure 4. Country level studies by phase



Systematic evidence of the reach of CGIAR innovations and policy influences needs to be combined with **rigorous causal estimates of the impact of these innovations and policies in the five impact areas** targeted by the CGIAR Research and Innovation strategy. Rigorous causal estimates are particularly relevant for possible “big-win” innovations and policies (i.e., those with large reach) and for interventions that help CGIAR and its partners address last-mile delivery problems that may otherwise limit the potential to have impacts at scale.

For the **accountability studies**, SPIA will scope potential rigorous impact assessments by

1. Building directly on opportunities identified in the country studies portfolio;
2. Identifying opportunities in either the emerging Science Programs or large-scale bilateral projects to document the roll-out of scaling efforts with relevant administrative and/or monitoring data;
3. Scoping long-term follow-up studies, drawing on the research designs of earlier rigorous causal impact studies.

For scoping the **learning studies**, SPIA will engage CGIAR researchers in the identification of possible cases, focusing on testing common assumptions underlying the theory of change of different CGIAR innovations, with studies testing solutions to last-mile delivery problems.

SPIA will engage CGIAR and partners’ leadership in promoting a learning agenda for the System. This aims to orient the focus towards the value of learning not only from successes but also from zero- or negative results for specific innovations. **The main outcome of this engagement with different CGIAR stakeholders will be the use of rigorous SPIA evidence in portfolio decisions.** Likewise, the demonstration of the usefulness and practical implications of such evidence is expected to increase the demand for rigorous evidence among science leaders.

Although it is beyond the SPIA mandate to provide recommendations on decisions that the CGIAR needs to make, SPIA will support evidence-based decision-making by drawing key lessons from the portfolio of

² Originally, in the 2023 plan, Egypt was envisaged as a fourth new country, but due to an adjustment in the workplan and budget, SPIA will implement a stock-taking only approach in this country, as endorsed by SC20.

³ Both Phase 1 and Phase 2, studies are intended to include dynamic evidence in the long term. For Phase 2 studies, this will be introduced during the 2nd 3-year period (i.e., 2028–2030).

studies on the reach and impact of CGIAR research and combine them with rigorous evidence generated outside SPIA’s portfolio when relevant and appropriate (**Objective 3: Strengthening the use of rigorous impact evidence**). To encourage dialogue and reflection on findings from the reach and impact studies, SPIA will engage CGIAR management, science leaders, national partners, and stakeholders more broadly. A combination of seminars/discussion groups and SPIA briefs will provide the starting points for these discussions. Lessons drawn from the portfolio of learning and accountability studies will be discussed directly with the relevant CGIAR leaders. The Portfolio Performance Unit is also expected to draw on this evidence for the 3-year portfolio reporting. Country study results will be disseminated and discussed through national stakeholder events, with the participation of CGIAR science leaders active in the country, researchers, National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), Ministries of Agriculture and other relevant national partners, representatives of funders, etc. Where reach is lower than expected, discussion will focus on possible implications for adaptation of scaling strategies as well as possible complementary interventions and/or research efforts. SPIA will also selectively propose that CGIAR managers and research leaders provide management responses to findings from completed reports.

Deliverables in the Business Cycle: SPIA

While SPIA will adaptively manage to reach its objectives, over SPIA’s 2023–2030 workplan, SPIA aims to complete 20 country studies documenting the reach of CGIAR innovations and an estimated 16–20 causal impact studies. Some causal impact studies will focus on the 20 countries where country-level studies of reach are carried out. All studies will start between 2025 and 2026, running for approximately three years. Therefore, some final products/outputs will spill into the next business cycle.

IAES Evaluation Function Objectives and Activities

The IAES terms of reference (2018 with revisions) mandate IAES the responsibility for “*supporting implementation of CGIAR’s multi-year, independent evaluation plan in a manner that meets the CGIAR System’s strong need for rigorous high-quality independent evaluations to inform decision-making across the System,*” in addition to IAES’s secretariat responsibilities pertaining to ISDC and SPIA. The Evaluation Function under IAES concentrates on the implementation of a multi-year evaluation plan and associated work.

Objective 1: The bulk of the investment in Evaluation Function is directed to independent and external evaluations and evaluative activities of CGIAR’s work (what-performance/how-process), taking the form of the multiyear evaluation plan. All IAES process and performance evaluations support learning, accountability, and steering. Evaluative engagements are characterized by pre-defined types (see figure XX below).

Objective 2: This objective pertains to high-quality guidelines and method notes to operationalize and support the implementation of the CGIAR Evaluation Framework and Policy. Guidelines are aligned with industry standards and best practices from across the field of professional evaluation, adapted to the R4D context of CGIAR. The CGIAR core business and consultation with stakeholder groups point to needed guidelines and/or method notes to cover the evaluation of: Climate change-focused programming; methods in R4D settings for evaluation of sustainability and efficiency criteria; and potential practitioner method notes on the use of AI in evaluations, including ethical use.

Objective 2: In 2026, IAES Evaluation Function will assess, against the gelled CGIAR governance and management structure, revisions to be proposed to System Council and the Integrated Partnership Board regarding CGIAR Evaluation Policy.

Objective 3: Engagements within CGIAR underpin the use and utility of evaluations, as well as the support to Centers and units conducting self-evaluation. For Objective 3, a prime example is co-development and engagement with CGIAR Monitoring-Evaluation-Learning professionals, who have the potential to be an important fulcrum for Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Impact Assessment (MELIA) in CGIAR, and related activities under System Organization units related to CGIAR’s MELIA system. The evaluation function has collaborated on joint activities with MELIA colleagues around professional conferences of evaluation associations.

Objective 4: Evaluation-targeted and specific communications and knowledge management ensure that CGIAR independent evaluations are accessible, relevant, and timely for internal and external stakeholders. An external-facing core activity is collaborating with the UN Rome-based agency and GEF evaluation offices. For instance, CGIAR remains actively involved with EvalForward and Evaluation Function staff and attends regional conferences of evaluation associations.

A typologyⁱ useful to understand the CGIAR Multiyear Evaluation Plan makes use of CGIAR Evaluation guidelines, and descriptors and typologies recorded at the Rome-based agency and other evaluation offices. The timing of the external evaluations in the multi-year evaluation plan is optimized for evaluation use (Table 2). Evaluation engagements are arrayed against **predefined objects**, namely: R4D Portfolio components, e.g., science programs and accelerators; system-wide structures, frameworks, strategies, and processes; geography-specific; and, center-specific.

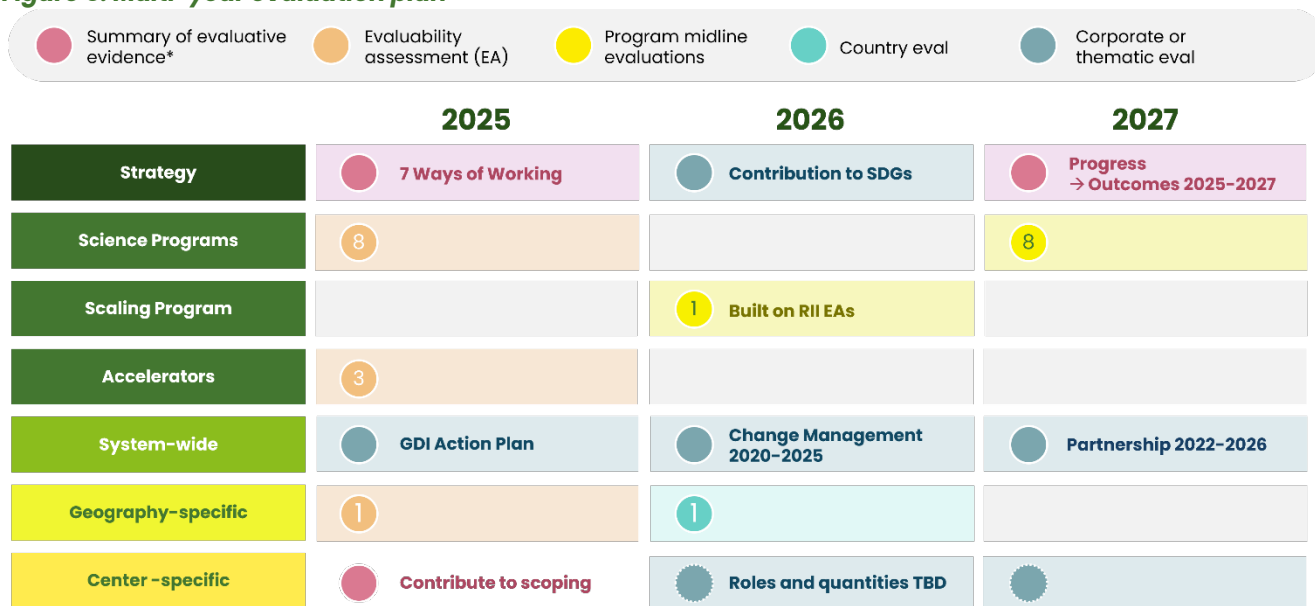
Table 2. Timing of independent evaluations to address the timing of CGIAR decisions

Item	Decision type (per Table 1)	Timing	Independent evaluative activity (and number)
Science Programs and Accelerators	Accountability	2025 Q2	Science Program + Accelerator Evaluability Assessments x 11
Research and Innovation Portfolio components	Investment	2027 Q4 2027 Q4	Science Program Midline Evaluations x 8 Summary of Evaluative Evidence x 1
2030 Research and Innovation Strategy	Learning/Assurance	2025 Q1, Q3	CGIAR 7 Ways of Working x5 (i) (summary past eval evidence)
System-wide structures, frameworks, strategies, and processes	Accountability/ Learning	2025 Q4 2026 Q3 2026 Q4 2027 Q3	GDI Action Plan Progress x1 CGIAR Change Mg't (2018-2025) x1 SDG Contribution x1 Partnership and Engagement Framework (2022/2024) x1
Country-specific results, structures, strategies, plans, and processes	Assurance/ Learning	Q4 2026	Country Evaluation Proof of Concept (1x reports)
Center-specific results, structures, strategies, plans, and Processes	Assurance/Learning	Q3 2025	Summary of Evaluative Evidence (to contribute to scoping activity)

(i) Two summaries pertaining to partnership-themed ways of working will be delivered in Q4 of 2024

Combining types, objects, and timing stated in the previous section produces an overview visual of the multiyear independent evaluation plan (MYEP), Figure 5.

Figure 5: Multi-year evaluation plan



*supporting knowledge management, learning and scoping activities

Deliverable Highlights:

- **Evaluative evidence summaries** on Seven Ways of Working and, in 2027, progress towards outcomes (pink dots)
- New **corporate evaluations** (blue dots) on implementation of GDI Framework and Action Plan (in concert with Internal Audit), Partnership and Engagement Framework (2022, 2024), Change Management, and CGIAR’s Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals
- Guided **evaluability assessments** (EAs) (first half of 2025) of all new portfolio components to build strong MELIA plans envisaged for SP mid-line evaluations in 2027 (orange dots)
- **Midline evaluations** (yellow dots) completed by late 2027 which, aligned with request from CGIAR leadership team, will be geared to assist System Council’s subsequent investment decisions in the latter half of the Portfolio (2028-2030) and provide ongoing learning and insight to directly contribute to the next CGIAR decadal strategy
- Proof of concept on geography-specific **country evaluations**, to complement CGIAR intentions to put in place country strategies (country to be defined, light blue dot)
- Given demand for **center-specific assurance activities** has been flagged strongly by some Center and governance stakeholders during the consultations, IAES Evaluation Function will participate in a broader scoping activity by harvesting evaluative evidence pertinent to Center performance
- A key input into cost-efficient evaluation will continue to be the **cleaning of CGIAR monitoring data**

Operational Support: Shared Secretariat Activities

The overarching aim of the IAES office is to deliver continuous, excellent support to ISDC and SPIA workplans and the effective delivery of CGIAR’s multiyear, independent evaluation plan. The IAES operational plan covers the staffing and long-term, cross-functional communications and support needs of ISDC secretariat, a portion of SPIA secretariat (viz., Use of Evidence Senior Officer and Program Management Senior Manager), and the IAES Evaluation Function with associated hosting and overhead costs.

IAES maintains a roster of subject matter and competitively selected experts (200+) and suite of policies, protocols and procedures that pertain to three supported workstreams, to support efficient operations free of conflicts of interest.

An important component of the IAES operational support is the provision of accessible, relevant, and timely advice and evidence. IAES deploys and tests existing and emerging practices for engagement with System Council and CGIAR’s Board(s), CGIAR Executive, scientific leadership at system and center level, and CGIAR and partners’ research and MEL+Impact Assessment (IA) teams, including:

- Active participation at System Council and its committee meetings
- ISDC chair active observer and IAES director invited observer with Integrated Partnership Board
- Quarterly meetings of the Executive Managing Director, IAES director, ISDC, and SPIA chairs
- Targeted discussions with science and center leadership
- IAES and SPIA professional team systematically interact and coordinate with, inter alia, CGIAR’s aligned assurance community, MEL+IA professionals and Impact Assessment Focal Points, including MELIA ecosystem and MELIA system planning and implementation

In addition to representation and engagement, IAES maintains a website, newsletter and LinkedIn feed to provided consolidated communication channels to shared audiences of three workstreams.

Scenario-Based Budgeting

Further to the vetting of three budget scenarios by System Council’s AOC and SIMEC committees, and following their guidance, IAES is submitting base budget scenario. This document supplies sub-totaled budget by objective per workstream (overleaf). The narrative portion of this document sets out the deliverables and quantities per objective. On an annual basis, IAES supplies detailed plan figures to System Organization for annual WI budget exercise (per Table 3). IAES operations represents collected staff costs (all personnel) with the exception of technical staff in SPIA Professional Team who do not report to IAES. IAES budgets are implemented through multiple hosts: Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT, System Organization, ILRI and IFPRI, depending on the cost location and type, and therefore subject to varying treatments per host.

Table 3: Summary 2025 Budget in 000 USD

2025 base budget	2024 Approved	2025 Requested
ISDC	1,198	755
SPIA	4,391	7,058
Evaluation Function	2,018	1,225
IAES Operations	2,110	2,117
2025 Total Request	9,717	11,155
+SPIA 2024 carryforward		1,300
Total with carryforward (i)		12,455

(i) Due to an accounting change related to the contracting entity, 2024 advances to SPIA country consortium contract holders will not be expensed until 2025. Carryforward has been applied in WI budget.

Annex 1 sketches scenarios (base, mid and uplift). With higher scenarios in outyears, ISDC would have the flexibility to implement additional commissioned advisory products and convene more than one science forum during the triennium, with more ISDC members and other external speakers present. Evaluation would add a second country-level evaluation and midline evaluation of at least one Accelerator. IAES operations would hire an evaluation analyst and full time communication staff. SPIA is not seeking uplift funding; the difference for SPIA relates to 7 rather than 8 full country studies (i.e., see summary at 20th meeting of System Council).

Budget by objective (by year, in 000 USD)

	BASE BUDGET			
	2025	2026	2027	2025–27
ISDC				
Portfolio reviews	30	0	73	103
Generating CGIAR scientific advice	370	366	378	1114
Science for Development forum series	68	90	90	248
Consensus building & SC consultation	287	265	265	817
ISDC sub-total	755	721	806	2,282
SPIA (subset of SPIA workplan 2023–2030)				
Institutionalizing and scaling country-level data on CGIAR reach	4925	5387	5074	15386
Expanding and deepening evidence of causal impacts of CGIAR research	1099	2177	2177	5453
Strengthening the use of rigorous impact evidence	431	431	531	1393
Program management (plus overheads & hosting)	603	603	638	1844
SPIA sub-total	7,058*	8,598	8,420	24,076
Evaluation Function				
Implementing external evaluative activities (process & performance)	819	760	813	2392
Issuing evaluation guidance	115	108	100	323
Engagement with CGIAR on process/performance eval	66	69	66	201
Knowledge management & translation of eval knowledge	225	225	225	675
Evaluation sub-Total	1,225	1,162	1,204	3,591
IAES Operations	2,117	2,221	2,311	6,649
Delivering operational support to ISDC and SPIA workplans, and CGIAR's multi-year, independent evaluation plan (i.e., personnel and overheads)				
IAES and supported independent bodies TOTAL	11,155*	12,702	12,741	36,598

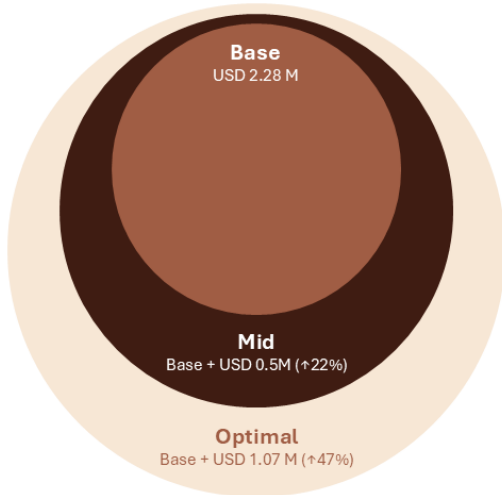
*Carryforward of 1.3 m USD applied in W1 budget, for a total of **12.5** m USD in 2025 total IAES, ISDC and SPIA.

i Functions of System Council include, to “establish System Council advisory bodies (including the ISDC, SPIA and the IAES) to deliver on its oversight and assurance mandate,” System Framework, revised 2024. Due to their mandates, this document largely refers to these as “advisory and evaluation bodies”.

ii **Evaluative evidence summaries** require a lighter touch analysis and reduced coverage compared to a synthesis, and further exploit past evaluative evidence around specific topics and for specific stakeholder groups. They have evaluative as well as a scoping purpose. / **Evaluability assessment** determines if an intervention has clear objectives and measurable results, ensuring cost-effective and actionable [subsequent] evaluations. (establishing and supporting the efficient and effective later evaluations) / **Program performance evaluation** assesses the performance and results of program-level operations. **Program and accelerator midline program performance evaluations** per this plan are a subset of this type, more limited in scope and coverage, with a real-time evaluation approach to support immediate uptake in the second half of a program cycle. **Project cluster evaluation** assesses projects that contribute to a common theme or common major component. No new cluster evaluation is planned. However, knowledge management activities will continue making use of the results of Science Group Evaluations (2024), which clustered CGIAR Initiatives. / **Country evaluations** assess the performance and results of country strategy and operations and provide recommendations to guide the preparation of the next country strategy. They comprehensively examine the results of all of CGIAR's work at the country level, including partnerships, R4D implementation, and the functioning of country office[s] and structures. / **Corporate-level evaluation** assesses (all or components of) the organizational performance and institutional effectiveness of CGIAR. They are focused on key elements of CGIAR Charter, Framework, and/or Strategy, including strategic and functional objectives, impact areas, organizational results, and core functions. A subset of corporate evaluations, **thematic evaluation** provides evidence of effectiveness, performance, and results in operations related to a thematic topic.

Annex 1: Three Budget Scenarios (3–Year View)

ISDC 3–Y Budget Scenarios



Base

Basic operations of ISDC and provision of independent scientific advice - the core of the Council's work - is catered for in this scenario. This includes ISDC remuneration, two annual face-to-face meetings as well as ISDC Chair participation in main governance events. Commissioned studies and Science Forum are not included in 2025; limited funds are included in the 2026-2027 period to cater for one of these in case of governance demand or at discretion of new Chair. The base scenario also facilitates ISDC member turnover in 2025 (overlap of members in terms of honorarium and meeting participation for a finite period) and minimum external support for portfolio reviews.

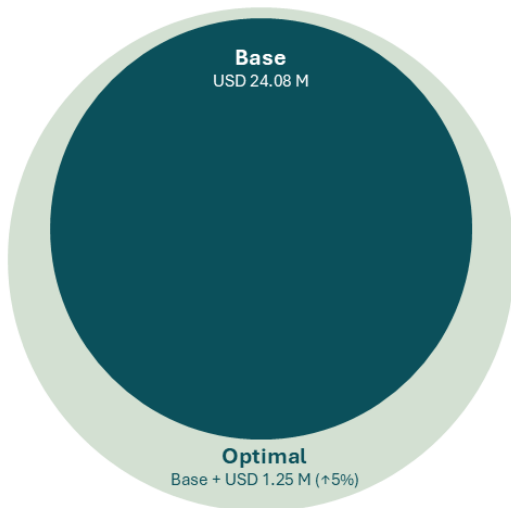
Mid

The mid scenario expands the base in terms of both "governance demand" and "ISDC observed needs" products. Some external expertise/consultancy support for commissioned research is budgeted for the triennium; ISDC would also have the resources to run a Science Forum every year, aligned to the Science Week scheduling. A trade-off between these activities is considered in terms of scale (as an example, more demanding commissioned research would result in a simpler Science Forum).

Optimal

Within the optimal scenario, there is no trade-off between commissioned studies and ISDC Science Fora. For the latter, ISDC would host an event annually, with a substantial number of external speakers and a bespoke communication campaign. In general, the optimal scenario provides for resources to outsource several event management activities, (e.g. logistics and communication) – these tasks will be covered at a more modest scale by the Secretariat in the base/mid scenario. The scenario assumes a CGIAR research portfolio stage-gating taking place during the triennium, which would benefit from a team of three reviewers per program – in line with the approach taken during the ongoing 2024 reviews.

SPIA 3–Y Budget Scenarios



Base

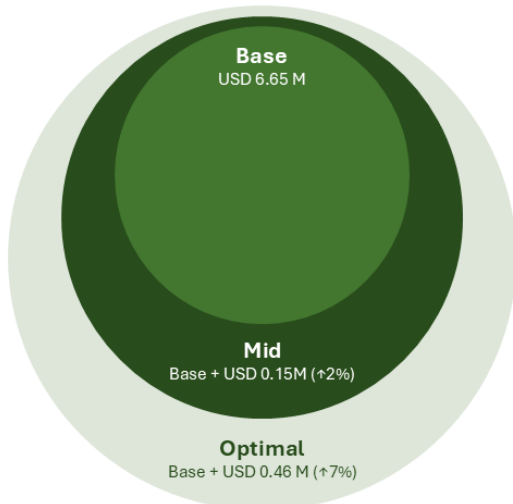
In the base investment scenario, under SPIA's portfolio of country studies (Objective 1- Institutionalizing and scaling country-level data on CGIAR reach), full country studies will be carried out in 7 countries with initial scoping work ("stock-taking only") being carried out in an additional 13 countries.*

Optimal

In the optimal investment scenario, under SPIA's portfolio of country studies (Objective 1- Institutionalizing and scaling country-level data on CGIAR reach), full country studies will be carried out in 8 countries with initial scoping work ("stock-taking only") being carried out in an additional 12 countries. Under this scenario, Egypt is included in the portfolio of full country studies.

*Does not include 1.3 m carryforward between 2024 and 2025

IAES/Operations 3-Y Budget Scenarios



Base

The base staffing charged to IAES operational budget is 2 FTEs per functional area (6), 1 FTE director-level oversight and contributions across 3 functional areas, 1 FTE admin support for three functional areas, 0.5 FTE finance support and 0.5 FTE communications support. This investment (dollar amount) is a flatline from 2024, notwithstanding expected inflationary increases (year to date 2.5% in the euro zone), and an upward revision of personnel benefit packages implemented recently by the host organization. **9 FTEs**

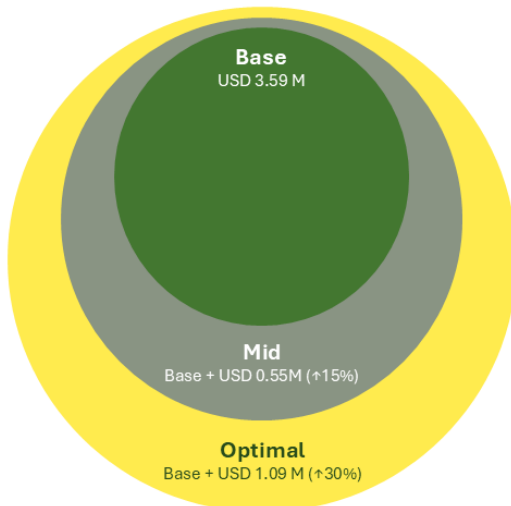
Mid

Adding an additional 0.5 FTE to the cross-cutting communications staff, to support analysis for evaluations, will provide a minimum consistency of support to analysis in process and performance evaluations. Opportunity cost for identifying and training analysts will be somewhat reduced. A split comms/analyst profile is more difficult to recruit, and the day-to-day management arrangements more cumbersome for both the IAES director and the Evaluation lead. N.B. The addition, a \$50K difference against baseline each year, would significantly decrease senior personnel transaction and opportunity costs associated with outsourcing for analyst and comms work. **9.5 FTEs**

Optimal

Adding an FTE each for locally-recruited analyst for evaluations, and knowledge management-communications profile, will address efficiently two areas where staffing is critically short and there is an overly high reliance on outsourcing. Adequacy in staffing in these competency areas will decrease burdensome transaction costs and risks of outsourcing core business functions. One person per role (analysis and communications) is a more attractive recruitment and will streamline management processes. **10.5 FTEs**

IAES/Evaluation 3-Y Budget Scenarios



Base

The base Scenario commits Evaluation Function (EF) to executing rigorous, methodologically sound evaluative exercises delivered with limited agility and adaptability. This scenario ensures that each of the main evaluative activities (largely under Obj 1) would involve a Team Lead, on average 2 Subject Matter Experts, and an evaluation analyst. Prioritized knowledge product development, with less leeway for tailoring to specific audiences, will help bring evaluative findings to user groups. Evaluation guideline development will rely on virtual and survey-style consultations, rather than face to face engagements.

Mid

The 15% increase provides for enhanced quality assurance and cleaning of monitoring data, external evaluation team size, field data collection and participation of stakeholder groups, and management of evaluative knowledge (consistent with richer data collection). Specifically, a 20% increase from the base in travel budget allows for representative coverage of CGIAR's six regions and centers. Additionally, this budget enables development and dissemination of more tailored knowledge products to diverse audiences. It includes a deeper (in person) engagement with MEL experts designated by DGs to align with CGIAR MELIA planning. Additional deliverables under a mid-level scenario would include (i) Additional (one) country evaluation in 2026 (ii) Genebank asset (or component) Evaluability Assessment in 2026 (under base budget, is merged with Breeding for Tomorrow EA) (iii) Capacity Sharing accelerator evaluation in 2027.

Optimal

The optimal budget scenario expands depth and breadth of planning, execution, and knowledge management (KM), supporting agile learning and capacity sharing for all planned deliverable under the mid-level. Optimal investment enables active engagement with stakeholders, including DGs and regional actors, ensuring timely and informed decision-making. This approach strengthens capacity sharing and professionalizes evaluation practice across CGIAR. The optimal budget enhances field engagement with more field visits, facilitated workshops, and group discussions, to engage more partners and end-users. This scenario supports the creation of additional detailed products such as briefs and synthesis reports, offering deeper analysis and broader dissemination of evaluative results to facilitate evidence-based steering and learning. Finally, optimal budget harnesses new data technologies and methodologies, which improves the quality of data and the efficiency of data collection and analysis.



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