

Governance and Policy Matters

CGIAR Ethics and Business Conduct (EBC) Escalation Framework

Purpose

This document is submitted for the System Council's approval of the CGIAR Ethics and Business Conduct (EBC) Escalation Framework, following concurrence by the Integrated Partnership Board (IPB) and recommendations from the IPB's Audit, Finance and Risk Committee (IPB-AFRC) and the Assurance Oversight Committee (AOC).

The Framework establishes a harmonized approach for escalating and overseeing serious ethics and business conduct matters across CGIAR.

Background and development of the document

- The EBC Escalation Framework is a key policy deliverable as set out in the Integrated Partnership Risk & Oversight Plan (ROP), as approved at the end of 2024 by the IPB, System Council and all Centers. It was developed by an EBC policies working group drawn from Centers and the SO, which submitted an earlier version in Q2 2025 alongside four EBC policies that were approved at that time (decision reference SC22-DP4).
- Recognizing that there remained some elements of the Escalation Framework to resolve at that time, the Chairs of Center AFRCs, with the IPB-AFRC and AOC Chairs met in July 2025 to discuss these, after which a revised version was reviewed and endorsed by the IPB-AFRC and AOC. The document was subsequently circulated for a red flags review across Centers. Management from four Centers (Alliance, CIMMYT, ICRISAT and IFPRI) raised concerns, primarily related to access to information for the Integrated Partnership EBC Executive (IP-EBC Executive).
- On 5 September 2025, a call was convened between the IPB-AFRC Chair, AOC Chair, the Executive Management Director (EMD) and Center representatives to discuss the outstanding concerns and identify workable resolutions. The Escalation Framework was revised to reflect the outcomes of that discussion, which was endorsed by the Global Leadership Team during its 30 October 2025 meeting. It is confirmed that all Center DGs have indicated their comfort to proceed with formal decision making on the document.
- The Legal Functional Area Committee has been requested to develop the required data-sharing arrangements as indicated in the Escalation Framework in Q1 2026.

- On 20 November 2025, the IPB-AFRC and AOC issued a joint statement recommending that the IPB concur with the Escalation Framework and approve its submission to the System Council for approval, in line with the CGIAR System Framework and Charter. That joint statement recommends a review of the Escalation Framework no later than 31 October 2026, considering any updates required as part of the ongoing evolution of CGIAR's governance and integrated operating model.
- On 21 November 2025, the IPB concurred with the CGIAR Ethics and Business Conduct Escalation Framework and approved its submission to the System Council (decision reference IPB/M007/DP6).
- At the time of issue of this document, Center AFRCs and Center Boards are undertaking their own decision-making processes on the Escalation Framework, with completion of approvals targeted by end-2025.

Action Requested

Following concurrence of the Integrated Partnership Board, and pursuant to Article 6.2(i) of the CGIAR System Framework, the System Council is requested to approve the CGIAR Ethics and Business Conduct Escalation Framework.

<p>Document category: Working document of the System Council. There is no restriction on the circulation of this document</p>
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