

AOC comments on the Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service business plans and budget projections

Background

1. Pursuant to the AOC terms of reference, article 5.i., the Assurance Oversight Committee (AOC) responsibilities include *“provision of advice to the System Management Board on the reasonableness of business plans and budget projections for the Council’s advisory functions to inform the Board’s submission to the Council of consolidated System entity multi-year and/or annual work programs and budgets.”*

Process

2. Draft versions of the IAES workplan and budget were shared with AOC in July 2024.
3. Various points of feedback from AOC members and requests for further information were transmitted to IAES via email during August-October. These comments were collated and considered by IAES, with a table of comments and responses transmitted to AOC in October.
4. On 10 October 2024, AOC and the Strategic, Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (SIMEC) met, together with the IAES Director, to discuss the IAES consolidated 2025-2027 workplan and budget. The IAES Director appreciated feedback on earlier versions of the budget and noted the changes that had been made.
5. The committees concluded that IAES should present the three budget scenarios to the System Council, with a greater articulation of the base budget to serve as a starting point and, to reflect the fiscal restraint being proposed, to link with decreasing CGIAR funding of W1 and the slightly increasing W2 funding. Recommendations were made to prioritize the workplans rather than constraining each function as the budget scenarios decrease. The description of each scenario should also include details of what is being prioritized and what would not be done as the budget moves from optimal to mid to base levels. This will assist System Council members to better understand the implications of each budget scenario and to determine what should be funded.
6. The AOC found the base level budget scenario to be adequate for the proposed prioritized workplans.