Photo: G. Smith/The Alliance

CGIAR | Standing Panel on Impact Assessment

SPIA updates

Travis Lybbert
SPIA's Chair

SC22-AP4 Virtual Participation with SPIA | 5 Jun 2025

Virtual presentation? SPIA Chair ToRs

Photo: CGIAR

The Chair and other SPIA members **may be invited to join SC discussions** on relevant agenda items, as appropriate.

The SPIA Chair is appointed to work up to 50 days per year – In my case **48 days per year.**

Given this constraint, the SPIA Chair normally attends **every other SC meeting**. I attended SC 20 and SC 21 – and plan to attend SC 23.

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Guided video of SPIA website

Overview

1. **Update on SC-commissioned RoI Work**
2. SPIA Budget & Expenditure, 2025-27
3. Country Studies
4. Use of Evidence
5. SPIA Self-Evaluation & Panel nomination

Photo: CIAT- MusaNet

SC-Commissioned RoI Work: Updates

To respond to SC ask to estimate ROI of CGIAR showcase successes, SPIA has engaged **Professor Mywish Maredia** from Michigan State University, 1 May – 31 Oct.

Three deliverables: proposed approach, progress report and final report (October 31st).

Showcase Successes Emerging from SPIA Country and Causal Studies

Stress-Tolerant Varieties

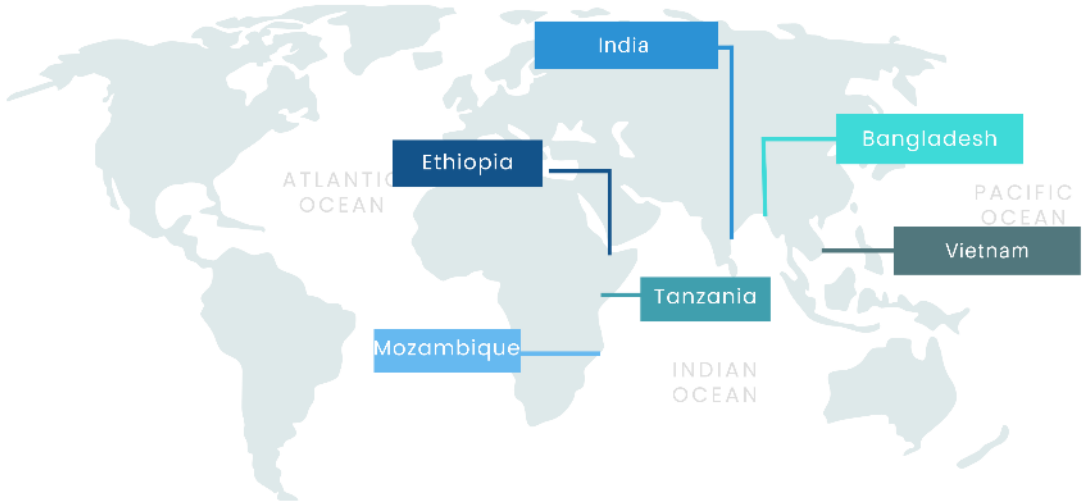
- Drought-Tolerant Maize
- Flood-Tolerant Rice

Public-Private-Partnerships for Scaling

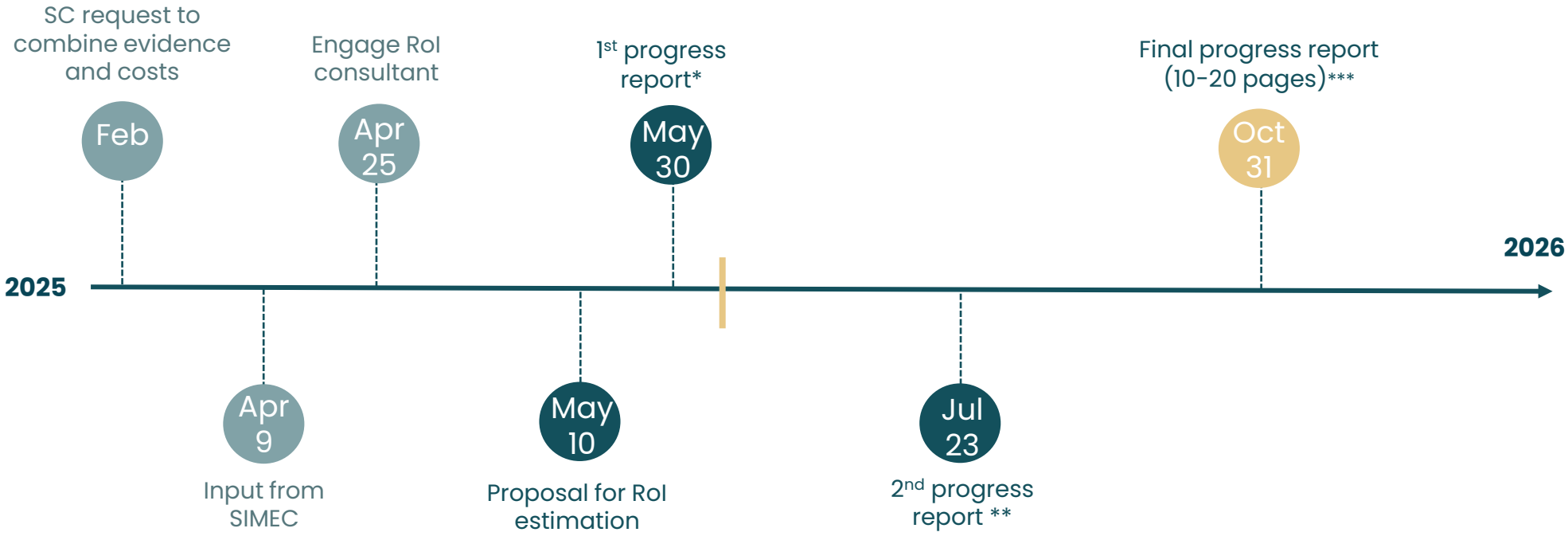
- Aquaculture (GIFT)
- Livestock (IBLI, Poultry, Forage Grass)
- Mechanization (Axial Flow Pump)

CGIAR IMPACT

COUNTRY STUDY RESULTS



SC-Commissioned RoI Work: Timeline



*Estimated benefits, impacts of the showcase successes, description of the available cost data expected to be included in the calculation of the RoI.

**Before the next SPIA meeting to facilitate SPIA input.

***For transparency about the methods used and for future reference, one annex would include meta data about the process for obtaining individual data points

RoI Work Updates*

First deliverable: Proposed approach to estimate RoI

- Generate **bounded and transparent** RoI estimates that leverage rigorous benefit and cost data while addressing uncertainty and methodological challenges.
- **Gaps in rigorous evidence base** will require **transparent extrapolation of benefits,** which opens a host of considerations and concerns.
- Cost data by **innovation, innovations line and research program** will be requested to assess RoI beyond individual success and bring a **portfolio perspective**.
- **RoI estimates alone cannot set priorities**, but identifying innovations with high returns can inform scaling decisions and prioritization deliberations.

  This exercise will be an **opportunity to document lessons related to methods and process** that can inform similar exercises in the future within the CGIAR.

*For more detailed information on RoI updates please see Annex 1.

RoI Work Progress

Benefits

Updates

- SPIA shared: Country study reports (ET, BD, VN), which provide rigorous adoption estimates*
- SPIA shared: Causal impact estimates for DT maize and FT rice from rigorous studies
- Consultant is identifying other complementary evidence and data sources for showcased innovations

Next steps

The consultant plans to **validate assumptions** that may be required with SPIA, CGIAR scientists, and relevant country partners for feedback

*Potential risk and challenges: gaps in adoption metrics, attribution complexity, heterogenous impact evidence, methodological uncertainty with projections, variation in innovation maturity.

RoI Work Progress

Costs

Updates

- SPIA facilitated identification of key researchers at 4 CGIAR centers
- Initial cost data for innovation development , adaptation and dissemination (by centers and partners) have been requested.
- Positive responses by two centers, but delays and other challenges likely*
  - ILRI: no cost data on forages - genebank contributions not precisely tracked
  - CIMMYT: cost approach for AFP shifts burden to private sector prior to 2018

Next steps

- Follow up with centers on data availability and organization
- Coordinate with NARS/NGOs to fill dissemination cost gaps, develop proxies, and document assumptions transparently

*Potential risk and challenges: lack of traceable data, attribution ambiguities among innovations sharing costs, difficulties to quantify partner dissemination costs, variation in cost reporting system across centers, time and resource constraints at centers

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SPIA Pillars

The current SPIA **workplan** entails three inter-related pillars:

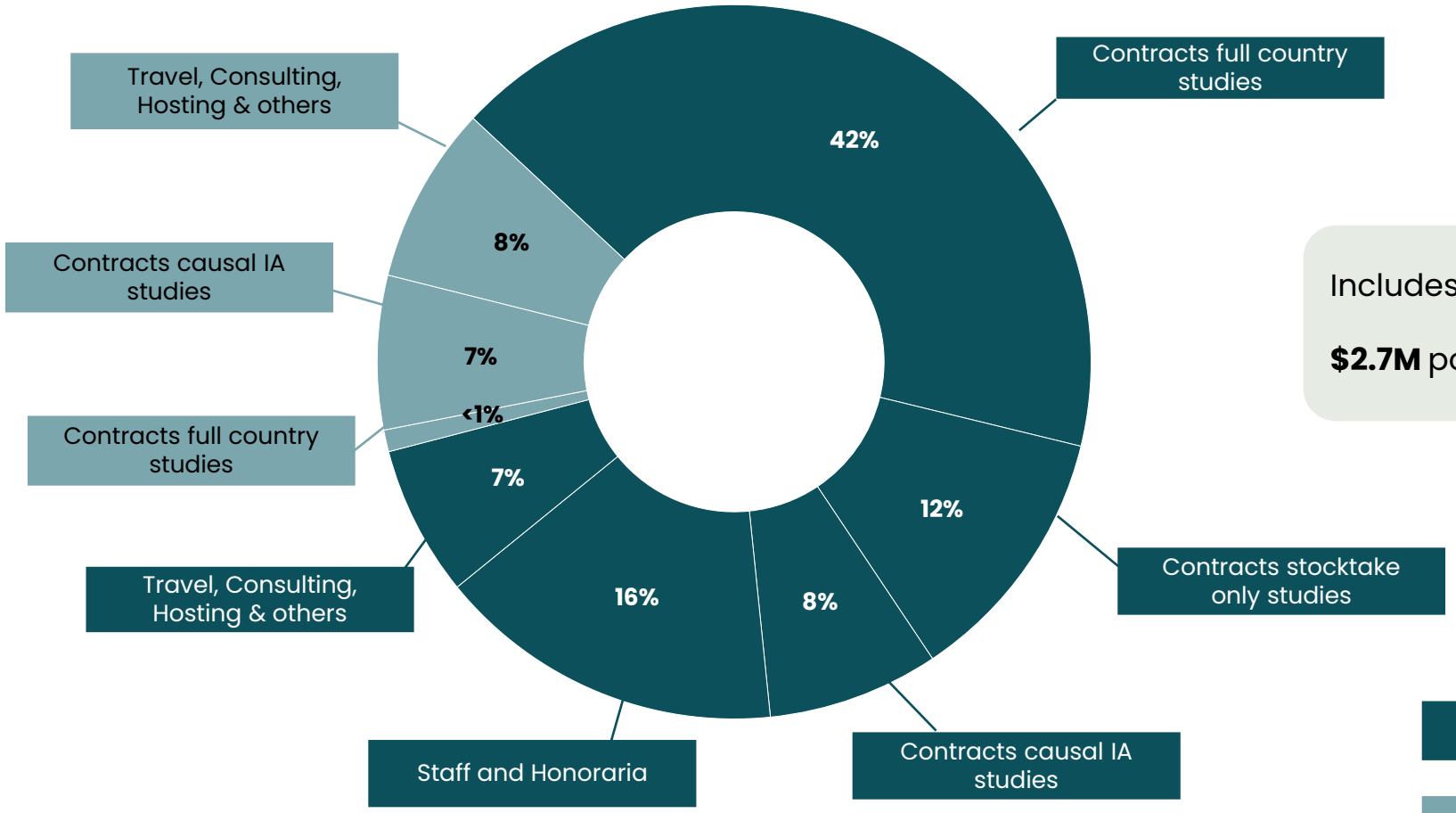
1. **Country studies**
   System level evidence of the **reach** of CGIAR innovations and policy influences in up to 20 countries.

2. **Causal Impact Assessment**
   Evidence with rigorous causal estimates relevant to identify **impact** and possible "big-win" (large-reach) innovations and policies via learning and accountability studies.

3. **Use of Evidence**
   Synthetized products that will focus on lessons from the SPIA portfolio, **engagement** of CGIAR leadership in promoting a learning agenda for the System.

SPIA Budget Overview

SC approved SPIA budget 2025-27: **$25.38M**



Includes **$1.3M** carry over from 2024

$2.7M postponed 2025 to 2026

Spent & committed (85%)

Forecast (15%)

Pillar 1: Country Studies

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Full country studies (Phase 1 and 2):

Country	Institutions	Budget
Ethiopia	University of Bordeaux / Addis Ababa University / Research Center for Inclusive Development in Africa / University of Twente	$1,247,267
Uganda	University of Arizona / Ohio State University / Makerere University / Homeland Data Services	$1,249,997
Vietnam	University of Bonn / Vietnam National University of Agriculture	$1,250,000
Bangladesh	Cornell University / Bangladesh Agricultural University / Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	$1,249,815
Colombia	Universidad de Los Andes / University of Aarhus / University of California San Diego	$1,898,400
N. India	Monash University / Foundation for Agrarian Studies	$1,859,514
Nigeria	University of Cape Town / University of Nigeria	$1,869,921

Stocktake-Only studies (Phase 3):

Country	Institutions	Budget
Kenya	CABI / KALRO / University of Nairobi / Lead Analytics	$261,015
Ghana	Cape Coast University / CSIR / Ghana Statistical Service / Ministry of Food & Agriculture / Ghana Agriculture Workers Union	$253,935
S. India	Monash University / Foundation for Agrarian Studies	$226,903
Senegal*	Mc Gill University / Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research / Gaston Berger University	$254,883
Philippines	University of Notre Dame / De la Salle University, Philippines / Lead Analytics	$264,522
Malawi	Univ. of Notre Dame / Lilongwe Univ. of Ag. and Natural Resources / Institute of Public Opinion and Research / Lead Analytics	$264,845
Morocco	University of Bordeaux / International University of Rabat	$206,903
Ivory Coast	University of Bordeaux / Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny	$219,368
Mali	Michigan State University / Institut d'Economie Rurale, Bourema Kone	$261,250
Nepal*	University of Notre Dame, Forest Action Nepal, University of Michigan, Cornell University	$261,149
Peru*	Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE)	$275,000
Egypt*	J-PAL Mena at the American University of Cairo	$250,000
Guatemala	NOT YET CONTRACTED	

How to use
The website

CS Website

* Contracts awaiting signature

Pillar 2: Casual Impact Studies

Commissioned Studies (emerging from completed country studies):

Country	Institutions	Study title	Duration
1. Uganda	Ohio State University / National Agriculture Research Organization (NARO), Homeland Data Services (HDS)	**Pilot:** Bioavailable Iron in Locally Grown and "High Iron" Beans in Uganda: Assessment and Farmer Preferences	Feb 2025 – Jan 2027*
2. Colombia	Universidad de Los Andes CIAT	**Pilot:** Measuring enhanced climate adaptation among livestock and potato farmers in Colombia	Feb 2025 - Jan 2026
3. Viet Nam	City St. George's, University of London / Mekong Development Research Institute	**Pilot:** Pesticide Use when Farmers Grow Pest-Resistant Varieties in Viet Nam	Feb 2025 - Jan 2026
4. Viet Nam	City St. George's, University of London	The Impact of an export-oriented cash crop on farmer incomes and household outcomes: Cassava in Viet Nam	Jun 2025 – May 2026*
5. India (Odisha)	University of Chicago / Tufts University / ICRISAT	Seeds of Change: Adapting to Climate Change – Study on price incentives and DNA verification technology to encourage multiplication of quality seeds of groundnuts varieties.	Apr 2025 – Mar 2027*

2025 Call for EoI: Accountability and Learning Impact Studies

- A call for EoI in January 2025 attracted **85 projects submitted** by all CGIAR centers (many in partnership with academics) covering all 5 CGIAR impact areas
- Competitive process that shortlisted 40 promising EoI in the first step. Focusing on CGIAR relevance and strong evaluation design, **15 EoIs invited for full proposals**
- The 15 full proposals are currently under review by external experts. Based on the reviewers' report and SPIA assessment, we expect to **support 4-6 IA proposals** ($1.8M-2M)

* Contracts awaiting signature

CIS Website

Standing Panel on Impact Assessment

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Photo: CIAT- MusaNet

Emergence & Timeline of SPIA Country Studies

"Shining a Brighter Light" Ethiopia report released

SC approves expansion, 2025-30

Selection of external teams

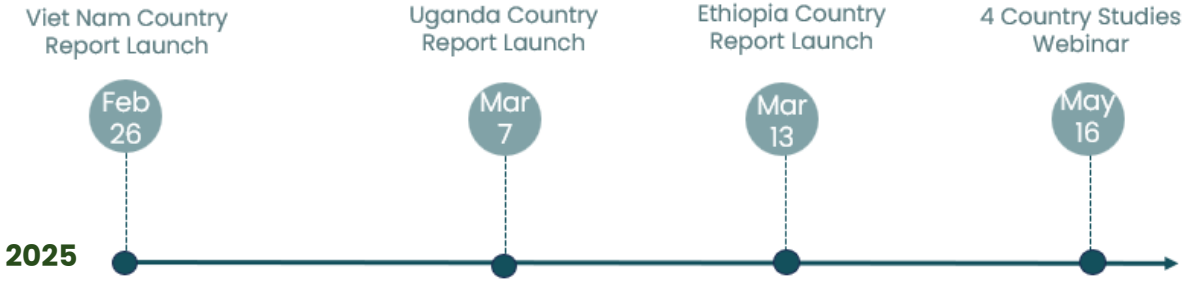
Phase 1 reports launched

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Phase 1	Ethiopia	Pilots/partnerships				Round 1			Round 2			Round 3			Round 4		
	Uganda		Pilots/partnerships				Round 1					Round 2			Round 3		
	Viet Nam							Round 1				Round 2			Round 3		
	Bangladesh								Round 1			Round 2			Round 3		
	Phase 2											Colombia, NE India, Nigeria			Round 2		
	Phase 3: Stocktake only											Egypt, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Malawi Philippines, South India, Nepal, Morocco, Peru					

Phase 1 Country Study Reports: Launch Activities

Phase 1: Ethiopia, Uganda, Vietnam, Bangladesh

Events



Media Coverage

Viet Nam Event – 26 Feb 2025
6 mentions including national TV.

Uganda Event – 7 Mar 2025
3 mentions and a press conference with national coverage.

Phase 1 SPIA Briefs

Coming Soon

"CGIAR innovations through the lens of economic transformation: Insights from SPIA country studies"

Community of Practice

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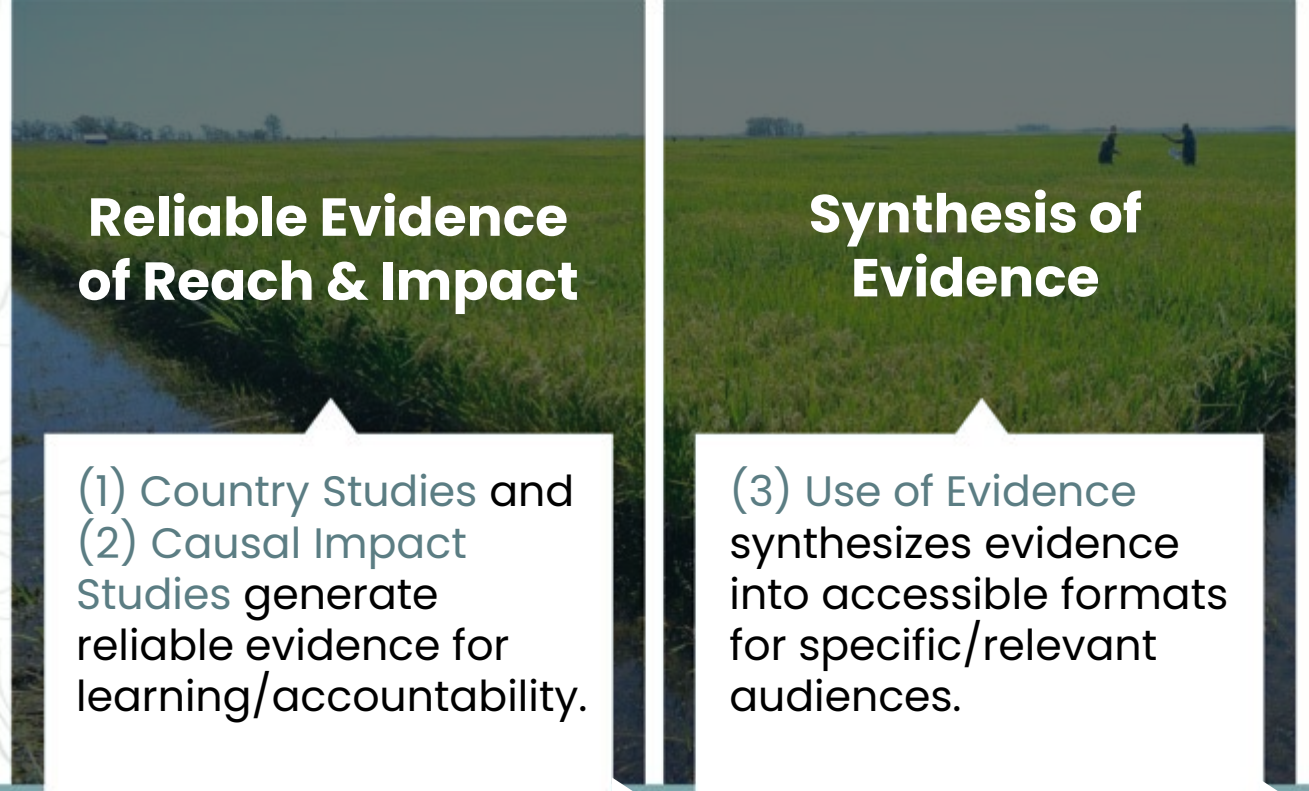

Photo: N. Palmer/The Alliance

SPIA's "Bounded" Approach to *Use of Evidence*

Reliable Evidence of Reach & Impact

(1) Country Studies and (2) Causal Impact Studies generate reliable evidence for learning/accountability.

***Foresight** uses results to **project benefits**. Modelling capacity exists w/in CGIAR. PPU uses evidence.*

Synthesis of Evidence

(3) Use of Evidence synthesizes evidence into accessible formats for specific/relevant audiences.

*SPIA does not (i) make **recommendations**, or (ii) collect data on **costs or M&E** as these are others' responsibilities.*

Stakeholder Engagement

(3) Use of Evidence shares evidence in dialogue w/ stakeholders to promote learning and enable prioritization.

*Results can be used for **advocacy, fundraising, or strategic planning**, but these are others' responsibilities.*

SPIA Mandate | **Expertise & Capacity**

Senior Officer
Use of Evidence

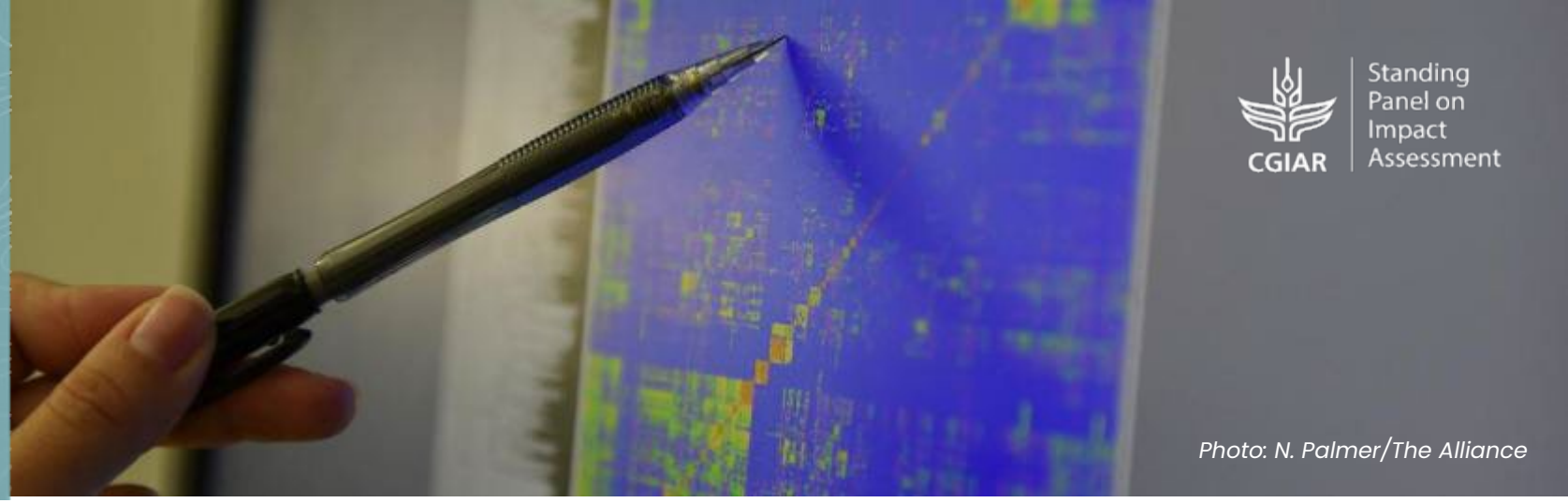

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Photo: N. Palmer/The Alliance

1. **Essential role** for ensuring SPIA's effective information flow, engagement, and application of rigorous evidence from pillars 1 and 2 of the workplan.

2. Responding to the need for better use of evidence **and knowledge management** across the system.

3. Liaising and engaging with stakeholders and decisionmakers to **extend the reach and influence** of rigorous evidence of CGIAR innovation.

4. Enabling stakeholders to **promote and apply SPIA's resources** to inform broader decision-making.

Senior Officer
Use of Evidence

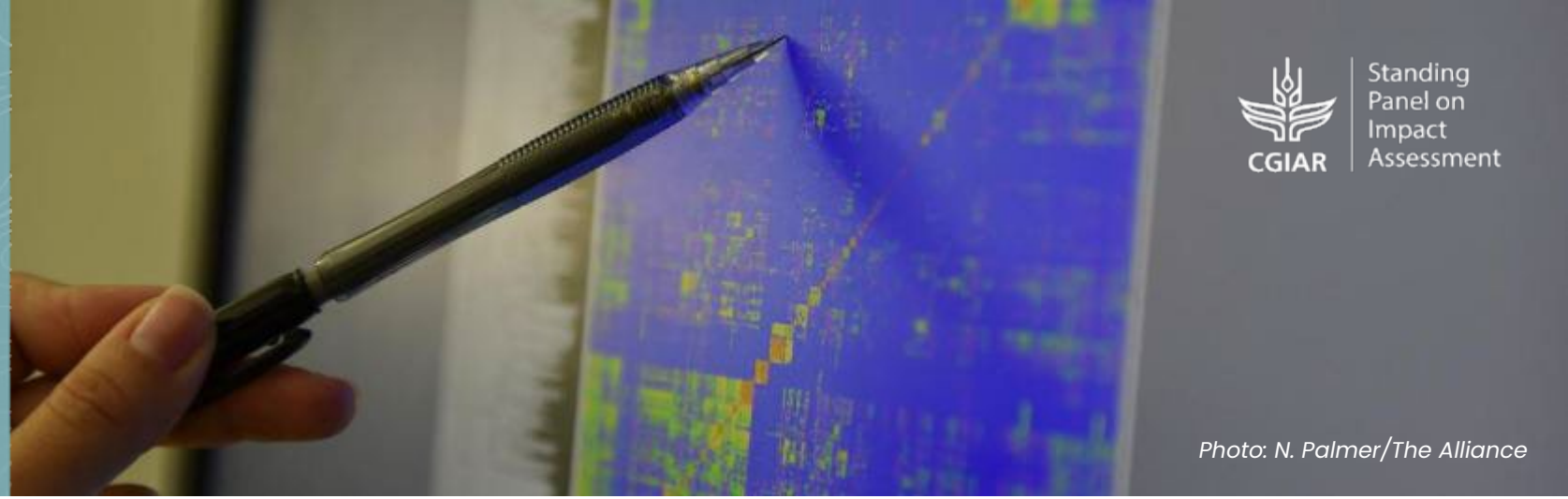

Photo: N. Palmer/The Alliance

Swetha
Ramachandran

An **impact evaluation practitioner** with **7+ years of experience** leading large-scale research and communicating evidence to stakeholders.

Has worked with UN agencies, NGOs, and academic institutions across various **African countries**, as well as in Geneva and **Washington, D.C.**

PhD in **International Development** from The Graduate Institute (IHEID) and a MS in International Economics from Johns Hopkins SAIS.

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SPIA
Self-Evaluation

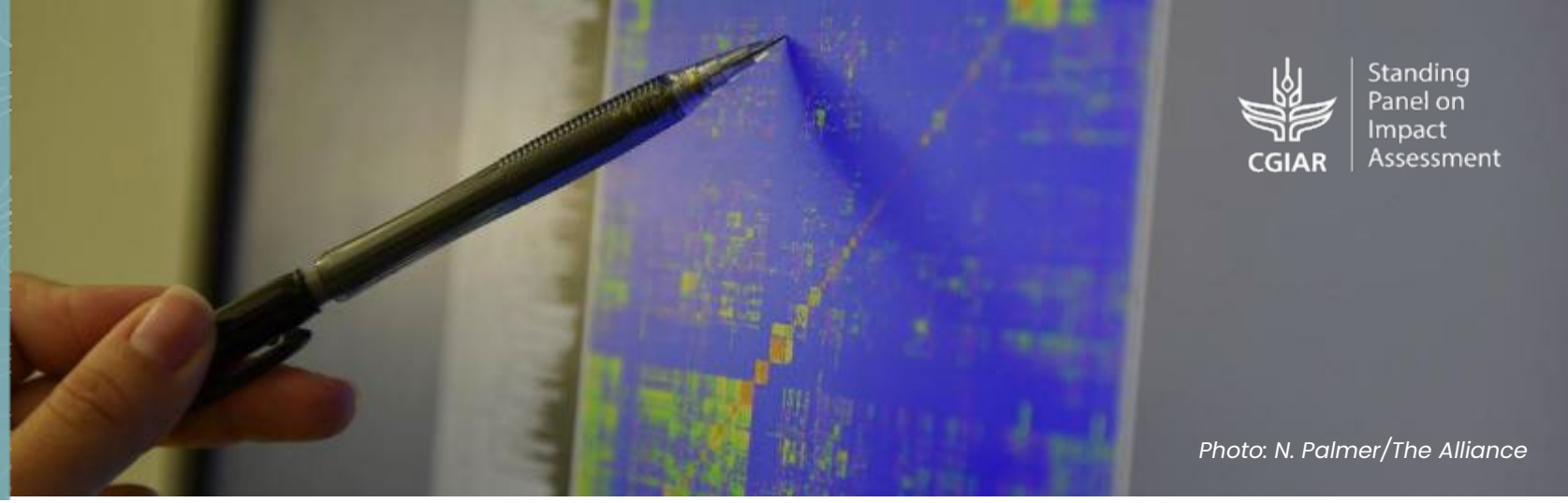

Photo: N. Palmer/The Alliance

Purpose
2024 self-evaluation of its 2019–2024 work program, using a document review and stakeholder e-survey.

Most planned outputs were delivered on time, and overall, SPIA achieved its intended outcomes.

Stakeholder Feedback
High satisfaction and support reported from SC/SIMEC members, CGIAR research leaders, and external experts.

Limitations
Low response rates among some groups implies the need for caution and limited certain insights.

Self-evaluation carried out by SPIA consultant Nancy Johnson.

SPIA Panel Nominee

Dr. Shilpa Aggarwal
Indian School of Business, India

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Associate Professor at the Indian School of Business

Development economist, whose research explores market linkages in developing countries

Ongoing research focuses on **agricultural supply chains** in India and East Africa as well as **domestic trade, microfinance, and food policy**

- Matches the need for SPIA members implied by the expanded SPIA workplan
- Proposed 1 Sep 2025 start for first 3 year term
- 7-8 Panel Members by Jan 2026


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Annex 1:
RoI Work

First deliverable : Proposed approach to estimate RoI

- Generate bounded, transparent, and credible RoI estimates using available benefit and cost data, addressing explicitly uncertainty and methodological constraints
- RoI alone may not be sufficient to set priorities but can help identify innovations that delivered high returns. In some cases, can inform scaling decisions and could be a starting point for a deeper prioritization
- Benefit estimates will be based primarily on SPIA rigorous studies that provide robust evidence on impacts of CGIAR innovations across a range of contexts. However, for innovations or places without rigorous evidence, a careful and transparent extrapolation would be needed
- Cost estimates will be compiled across three levels of aggregation: innovation level, innovation line level and program level.
- Low–high bounds on RoI will be generated to capture the inherent uncertainty in both benefits and costs: These include adoption scenarios, benefit assumptions, attribution shares and cost aggregation levels.
- In addition to RoI estimates, this study will be an opportunity to document lessons on risks, challenges and caveats that can inform similar exercises in the future

Progress to estimate RoI (benefits)

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- SPIA has shared country reports (Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Vietnam), which provide rigorous adoption estimates, including those derived from DNA fingerprinting (maize, rice). This will facilitate constructing time series data on adoption
- SPIA shared credible causal impact estimates for DT maize and FT rice. The consultant with SPIA support is identifying similar evidence for the remaining cases
- For showcase successes in India, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Kenya, representative adoption data are not yet available. The consultant is working to identify appropriate studies or data sources for these countries.
- The consultant plans to validate assumptions that may be required with SPIA, CGIAR scientists, and relevant country partners for feedback
- The consultant has identified as potential risk/challenges: data gaps in adoption metrics, attribution complexity, heterogenous impact evidence, methodological uncertainty with projections, variation in innovation maturity.

Progress to estimate RoI (Costs)

- SPIA has contacted IAFPs in the 4 centers involved in this project (CIMMYT, IRRI, ILRI, WorldFish) and through them has identified CGIA researchers responsible for the selected innovations
- Consultant has initiated requests for cost data of selected showcase innovations at three categories: Innovation development costs, Country-specific adaptation/dissemination costs incurred by CGIAR, Country-specific dissemination costs incurred by partners (NARS, NGOs) Positive responses by two centers, but no specifics when cost data will be shared
- ILRI noted not having relevant cost data and that genetic contribution of genebank has not been tracked with sufficient precision to support cost attribution. Since 2023, ILRI has begun supporting forage promotion efforts with EIAR under the SAPLING/SAAF program
- For Axial Flow Pumps, CIMMYT noted that their approach centered on shifting costs to the private sector, with the bulk of their investments made prior to 2018 under the CSISA project
- Next steps: follow up with other centers to clarify data availability and support data organization, coordinate with country-level partners (NARS, NGOs) to fill gaps in dissemination costs, develop proxy estimates for missing innovations, document assumptions/attribution decisions transparently
- Potential risk and challenges with cost data include lack of traceable data, attribution ambiguities among innovations sharing costs, difficulties to quantify partner dissemination costs, variation in cost reporting system across centers, time and resource constraints at centers