

ISDC Engagement Guidelines for Investment Advisory Group Participation

Updated June 2021

Background

The One CGIAR Investment Advisory Groups (IAGs) serve an advisory role to the System, working closely with Science Group Directors to provide guidance to the Executive Management Team (EMT). Their aim is to advise on the research and innovation [portfolios](#)¹ within the three Action Areas of the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy, which benefited from [comments](#) by the Independent Science for Development Council ([ISDC](#)) during its drafting.

According to the IAG Terms of Reference (ToR), the Groups will act in two phases: launch and established.

- “In the **launch phase**, before the recruitment of the Science Group Directors, the IAGs will fill in for the Science Group Director roles on an interim basis, working with an Interim Technical Team to advise the Executive Management Team.
- In the **established phase**, the Science Group Directors will convene the IAGs as their primary consultation body to provide active advice on the portfolio of science and innovation work.”

Given ISDC’s expertise and accountability, many System Council (SC) members encouraged inclusion of ISDC in IAGs. ISDC’s participation could, however, raise potential criticism as its involvement in multiple stages of research design may create perceptions of coaching. To prevent any conflict of interest (Col) and address perceptions of IAG involvement, guidelines on ISDC contribution to IAGs were adopted to maintain ISDC’s ability to provide an independent assessment of CGIAR Initiatives in the full proposal stage.

In June 2021, IAGs moved into the established phase and ISDC participation ceased to prevent Col. Additionally, as Initiative proposals are developed, the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA) may provide technical assistance. Since the SPIA Chair Karen Macours is an ex-officio member of ISDC, Dr. Macours will recuse herself from ISDC activities that involve Initiative proposal reviews.

Representation

IAG membership consist of four SC funders, two SC regional representatives, and two external subject matter experts (one [ISDC](#) and one external expert). ISDC chair Holger Meinke served as a resource person across IAGs to facilitate coordination within ISDC. To avoid Col, IAG membership did not overlap with the membership of the Initiative Design teams. Each ISDC member had an alternate ISDC representative, to ensure consistency of presence in the meetings during a busy period in the academic year and many time zones involved. ISDC members participated in their capacity as members of ISDC, not independent agents, meaning some IAG business may be vetted in confidence with other members of ISDC.

¹ See IAG TOR in Annex 6, p. 31.

ISDC Representation

Systems Transformation	Resilient Agri-Food Systems	Genetic Innovation
Nighisty Ghezae	Suneetha Kadiyala	Lesley Torrance
Chris Barrett, Alternate	Andrew Ash, Alternate	Holger Meinke, Alternate

Participation Goals

- Serve as a resource for SC members participating in IAGs
- Offer independent scientific expertise and external accountability to SC
- Provide guidance that stemmed from the ISDC-related 2020 foresight and trade-off recommendations

IAG Terms of Reference in Launch Phase and ISDC Role

The following table proposed ISDC's role within each IAG [advice area](#) to prevent possible or perceived Col in the delivering of rigorous, independent, and strategic advice to One CGIAR. The table strictly confers to ISDC serving an active role on the scientific content of the process. ISDC's involvement past the Launch Phase was ceased in June 2021. All interaction was tracked by the Advisory Services Shared Secretariat for transparency and accountability.

Advice Area from IAG ToR	Active	Observer
Workplan to achieve Investment Plan: Working with the IAG Interim Technical Team to identify, allocate and resource the areas of work needed to develop the Investment Plan within the timeline agreed with the System Board		X
Identification and sequencing of CGIAR Initiative concepts in the Investment Plan: Triangulation of evidence across global significance, regional relevance and investor preference to achieve a set of credible and legitimate prospectus of CGIAR Initiatives, sequenced according to a robust logic		X
Delivery against Impact Areas: Challenge function to the Action Area to interrogate and improve performance across the full set of Impact Areas, and to navigate key trade-offs where relevant	X	
Integrated systems approach: Vision and practical guidance on how to build integration and holistic thinking within and among proposed CGIAR Initiatives, including with the other two Action Areas and wider strategic partnerships	X	
Strategic partnerships: guidance on most strategic alliances for impact across the Action Area and in linking with key priorities from global to national levels, helping to find synergies across CGIAR Initiatives	X	
Elicitation of new research ideas: Informing the bottom-up crowdsourcing and top-down priority-setting processes that frame the elicitation of research ideas, including advice on use of specific deliberative and technical tools for priority-setting, plus guidance to the Interim Technical Team in implementation	X	
Targeted calls for Initiative design: Providing EMT with specific principles and parameters for targeted calls		X
Initiative Design Team composition: Recommendation on the leader of an Initiative Design Teams, and suggestions of possible members of those teams		X
Advice and guidance to Initiative Design Teams: Regular interaction with Initiative Design Team lead and members to advise on all aspects of the emerging design, and to keep oversight of the fit with the overall scope of the Action Area		X
Presentation of Action Area within an Investment Plan: Guiding the Interim Technical Team on preparation of the synthesis of the Action Area for the Investment Plan for presentation to System Board and System Council		X
Internal learning and systematic uptake of lessons: Ensuring that the Action Area is responsive to both internal learning and external signals, including from the EMT, System Board and System Council, the CGIAR Advisory Services, CGIAR evaluations, and external sources of knowledge and inspiration	X	
Review of Investment Plan within a business cycle: Where needed, consideration of in-cycle revisions to the Investment Plan, based on internal learning and external events		X