

CGIAR Secretariat's Comments on the Governance and Management Aspects of the Report of the Third EPMR of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

The CGIAR Secretariat expresses its appreciation to the CIFOR EPMR Panel for its report. The Review Panel makes six out of 17 recommendations and ten out of 17 suggestions on governance and management, which the CGIAR Secretariat fully supports. We are pleased to note from CIFOR's response that the Center agrees to all recommendations.

While we appreciate the results, we thought that the review could have been more thorough, discerning, and analytic in its approach.

Board Issues

We congratulate the CIFOR Board for having been regarded by the EPMR Panel as an example of a "high-performing Board". The Panel attributed the strong performance to the members' individual and collective skills and capabilities. Effective Board functioning is also attributed to the highly satisfactory information delivery and logistical support provided by Center management to the Board.

The Panel, nevertheless, made a specific recommendation concerning the procedures on Board's consideration of audited financial statements. It also recommended the appointment of a member with financial management and accounting expertise. We fully support these recommendations.

Board size is one issue that we thought the Panel should also have considered. The current CIFOR charter allows a total of 17 members including the Director General. The Center has currently a total membership of 14, which, in our view, is still on the high side. We suggest that CIFOR revisit this issue.

Management Issues

Among aspects of Center management that were reviewed, the ones where the Panel found some deficiencies were in capacity building of CIFOR staff, long-term research data management, and institutional records management. We agree with the Panel that policies, standards, and procedures should be developed and put in place for these areas.

We commend the Center for prudent management of its financial resources. As observed by the Panel, financial indicators indicate that CIFOR is in good financial position. The Center has also maintained a level of unrestricted funding that is much higher than most of the CGIAR Centers.

Recommendation

The CGIAR Secretariat recommends endorsement by ExCo of the CIFOR EPMR recommendations.