Independent
Science and
Partnership
Council

CGIAR

ISPC WORK PLAN AND BUDGET 2017

OCTOBER 2016

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The Independent Science and Partnership Council of the CGIAR (ISPC) provides advice on science and partnership strategies to donors that can enhance their capacity to support effective agricultural research programs for development. The following document presents the ISPC Work Plan and Budget for 2017 (WPB_17) for consideration by the System Council, in support of this agenda.

The ISPC welcomed a new Executive Director in 2016 (March), and three new members were added to the Council (in May and August) to strengthen the ISPC's coverage of natural resource management, foresight, priority setting, and partnership issues. Substantial time was devoted in 2016 to the review of 13 CRP-II proposals and three cross-cutting platforms. The ISPC also organized a Science Forum in April 2016 on the topic: "Agricultural research for rural prosperity: rethinking the pathways". Other activities included an exploratory study towards a framework for unlocking transformative agricultural innovation, finalization of studies on agricultural growth corridors and strategic partnership, and the delivery of impact assessment capacity building and methodological guidance under the SIAC program.

The continuing evolution of the CGIAR System, including the nature and scope of the ISPC, is reflected in the proposed ISPC work program for 2017. In the absence of finalized TORs, we used the draft TORs. These were developed by the science working group of the transition team. We expect to receive formal ToRs in February.

WPB_17 is organized around five work streams:

• **Foresight and Prioritization** – provides advice to the SC to support decisions on the strategic direction of the CGIAR, cutting edge and emerging developments in technologies and methodologies, and CGIAR research priorities;

• **Independent Program Review** – provides ex ante advice on the quality and relevance of CGIAR research –and may also need to include monitoring of implementation of "must haves";

• **Science Dialogue** – engages partners in identification, design, implementation, and communication activities to contribute to the improvement of the quality and relevance of CGIAR science, and underpins both the program review and foresight functions.

• **Agri-food system Innovation and Partnership** - provides advice on innovation and impact processes and modalities – including the central role of partnership;

• **Impact Assessment** – provides advice on ex post impact assessment methodologies, informs donors about the actual impact of CGIAR research, and works to change the culture of CGIAR to integrate impact assessment (IA) in a coordinated way through capacity development and by providing guidance on IA strategies.

These clusters are built upon past work streams of the ISPC, with some adjustments and additions to reflect changes in the tasks we are being called upon to deliver in the new CGIAR system, and also to enhance the focus and efficiency of the work streams.

The ISPC WPB_17 includes increased emphasis on building foresight and prioritization capacity in order to respond to greater demands for ISPC work and guidance in these areas. The Council will remain active on independent program review albeit at a considerably lower level of effort than that of 2016. The work stream on science dialogues builds upon past work on mobilizing science, expanding it to encompass the exchange and communication of science narratives with a broad range of stakeholders. Greater emphasis has been given to work on innovation and impact

processes, including the central role of effective partnerships, reflecting the increased importance of bridging research to impact in the new CGIAR system and the need for a system-wide approach. The work on assessing impact will see the delivery of a major set of outputs from the first phase of the SIAC project on impact assessment methods, capacity building and results and these will be synthesized to provide insights on system performance, as well as provide support to impact assessment improvements in the system. In addition work on developing SIAC Phase II will be included in the work stream.

The main outlines of the work plan and budget were discussed with the ISPC council during the ISPC 14 closed meeting held September 12-14, 2016. In addition, the open meeting held on September 14-15 included sessions focusing on the ISPC role and work plans in the areas of foresight, prioritization, impact assessment and quality of science. The feedback obtained during the ISPC 14 meeting has been integrated into the current plan.

The ISPC budget request for 2017 is USD 3.52 million, all of which is requested from CGIAR Funds.

For further information about the Council and its previous work, please visit http://ispc.cgiar.org/.

ISPC MANDATE AND THEORY OF CHANGE

The mandate and functions of the ISPC have been under review since the Mid-Term Review Panel (MTR) of the CGIAR reform process (Beddington et al 2014) recommended that *"the responsibilities of the ISPC should be elevated to empower it to be proactive in terms of providing strategic guidance, foresight analysis and assessing and reporting on quality of research results across the system."* A Task Force (TF), constituted in 2015 at the request of the CGIAR Fund Council, subsequently considered how the empowerment and strengthening of the ISPC recommended by the MTR might be carried out.

Simultaneously with the work of this TF, a Transition Team was preparing a Transition Plan on the creation of a new System Council (SC) and CGIAR System Office (SO) to replace the then Fund Council, Consortium Office (CO), and Fund Office (FO). As a result, the TF found it difficult to identify key actions in the absence of detailed remits of the proposed System Office and System Council. Although the caveated recommendations of the TF were well received, they were, pending the finalization of the transition process, not endorsed.

Notwithstanding these various difficulties, the latest versions of the ISPC's new Mandate and Terms of Reference (ToRs) (Charter of CGIAR System Organization, June 15, 2016) integrate a number of MTR and TF recommendations.

ISPC Mandate
"Independent Science and Partnership Council" or "ISPC" means a standing panel of experts appointed by the System Council to serve as an independent advisor to the System Council on science and research matters, including strategies for effective partnerships along the research for development continuum. The ISPC is functionally independent from the System Organization and the organization hosting the ISPC Secretariat."

It is our current understanding of the ISPC's role that has informed the recently renewed ISPC Vision, Mission, Goals and Theory of Change statements as follows:

- **Vision:** Our vision is that of the CGIAR—A world free of poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation.

- **Mission:** To help strengthen the quality, relevance, and impact of CGIAR research to provide solutions to poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation, as articulated in the CGIAR System-Level Outcomes.

- **Goals:** To provide independent scientific, research, and partnership advice to the CGIAR System Council, and leadership to the CGIAR scientific community to develop, support, and implement research that contributes to the System-Level Outcomes and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ISPC Theory of Change

The ISPC provides the CGIAR System Council with independent advice on science, research, and partnership strategies, to enhance the Council's capacity to make evidence-based decisions in support of effective agricultural research programs for development. It is the System Management Board, supported by the System Council, that implements the independent scientific advice from the ISPC.

The ISPC provides the CGIAR scientific community with leadership on science, research, and partnership strategies to develop, and implement research that contributes to CGIAR System-Level Outcomes and to the achievement of the SDGs. It does this by drawing upon expertise across the CGIAR System, but conducts its own analysis of the information obtained to maintain the independence of its advice.
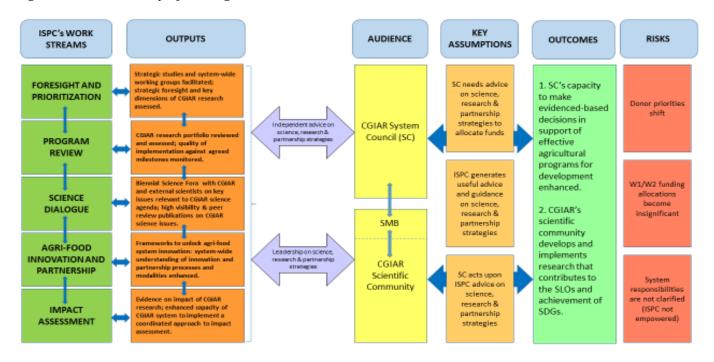
Figure 1: ISPC Theory of Change

Our key priorities for the WPB_17, informed and aligned by this understanding, are presented in the following sections.

FORESIGHT AND PRIORITIZATION

One of the key roles of the ISPC is providing advice on trends and emerging issues affecting agricultural research, as well as the identification of potential strategies to address those that are relevant to the CGIAR. To enhance the ISPC's role on foresight and prioritization, the Task Force (ISPC Task Force Report, 2015) for strengthening the ISPC discussed possible strategies and options for upgrading its capacity in this area, following up on the recommendations of the MTR. In the latest version of the ISPC's ToRs (Charter of CGIAR System Organization, June 15, 2016) this role in a system-wide strategic foresight exercise to inform the SC in the revision of the SRF and to contribute to identifying relevance and prioritization of CGIAR research, has been confirmed.

Plans for 2017:

1. Strategic foresight

Providing Strategic Foresight at the System level will be an important role of the strengthened ISPC (ISPC Task Force Report, 2015). The ISPC is expected (Charter 2016) to "lead on foresight activities on ongoing trends and risks in science and in the field of agricultural research for development. Such foresight activities shall include inputs from Center-conducted foresight activities, program studies and knowledge of new science and regional developments". To design a process to coordinate and enhance coherence among the different system entities for coordinating the foresight work streams in the CGIAR, the ISPC will convene a System-wide working group on foresight, to foster a System perspective, and to play a 'brokerage' role in CGIAR foresight. The strategic foresight exercise will inform the SC in the revision of the SRF and contribute to the relevance and prioritization of CGIAR research.

Activities/Outputs:

1.1.   Prepare a Concept Note on foresight, including an overview of foresight in the CGIAR (what's going on, who's doing what, mapping out recent and ongoing activities on foresight, topics, levels of hierarchy etc.). Timing: 2016 to be finalized in 1st quarter 2017;

1.2.   Initiate and coordinate Stage 1. Independent Foresight Assessment. Commissioning background papers on key topics and global trends (c. 10 papers). Timing: First quarter 2017;

1.3.   Convene a first workshop with authors of the independent foresight assessment and selected partners and stakeholders. (In coordination with University of Naples, April 2017);

1.4.   Initiate at least one Strategy & Trends study (Topic TBD based on deliberations of the WG); Timing: Third quarter 2017;

1.5.   Prepare and publish an ISPC paper on the status of foresight in and outside the CGIAR and its recent evolution (since the 2008 food crisis).

2. Prioritization

In November 2014 the Fund Council asked the ISPC to take on a role of prioritization. The Task Force supported this role and it was developed further by the Science Working Group which

operated as part of the transition process to develop draft terms of reference for the ISPC as follows:

"lead and advise on prioritization of the portfolio of CGIAR Research programs, based on insights from scientific foresight exercises and impact assessments, among other sources"

The issue of prioritization has been the subject of much discussion and analysis over recent years. Likewise, the role of the ISPC in system-level prioritization has also been the subject of much discussion. These discussions about system level prioritization are being held against the backdrop of debate on funding the new CGIAR research portfolio The ISPC 14 meeting of September 2016 included a panel discussion focused on the key elements of an ISPC work stream on prioritization. The outcome of that discussion indicated the need for system-wide consultation on prioritization in order to assess what has already been done, what is currently ongoing and what more needs to be done. In addition, the discussion at ISPC 14 indicated the need for expert analysis of some key issues, which would require the development of background and strategy papers.

To this end, the ISPC 2017 work stream on prioritization is built as the first of a two year program that involves a series of studies, workshops and consultations in order to develop a recommendation to the System Council in 2018 on prioritization approaches for CGIAR. The work stream consists of developing a set of strategic studies in 2017-2018 and using these, together with outputs from other ISPC work streams, to support system-wide dialogue and consensus on the CGIAR prioritization approach.

Activities/Outputs:

2.1.   ISPC Strategic study on developing system level prioritization consisting of the preparation of a set of background papers on:

- Approaches for assessing and updating comparative advantage of the CGIAR system (2017);
- Linking foresight results to prioritization (planned for 2018 using outputs from foresight work stream);
- Designing an efficient and flexible funding mechanism for allocating W1/W2 resources;
- Accounting for research program maturity in prioritization;
- What does a good SRF look like? Lessons learned from assessing CRP impact pathways;

2.2.   Inputs to System Council workshop scheduled for May 2017 focusing on impact pathways and prioritization (travel for participants);

2.3.   Joint workshop/FEWG, FAWG, System Council (on margins of fall SC meeting).

3. Quality of research

The quality of the research (QoR) conducted by the CGIAR System is perhaps the most important determinant of the effectiveness of the organization in realizing its objectives, and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals. In the new CGIAR System, increased importance has been given to ensuring that the agricultural research of the System contributes to development outcomes under the framing of AR4D. QoR in the CGIAR context is related not only to the excellence and rigor of research (Quality of science – QoS), but also to the relevance of the research to the System Level Outcomes (SLOs) of the CGIAR which includes the alignment of the research questions with delivery of the SLOs, the feasibility of uptake and evidence of demand for the outputs by

users who can deliver impact and the ability to respond timely and effectively to new emerging development challenges.

A special Task Force for strengthening the ISPC recommended expanding the remit of the ISPC to ensure that science quality is consistent across the System. Development of system-level agreement on the definition, assessment and measurement of QoR is an important element to support system-level prioritization. It was recommended that the ISPC should be tasked with ensuring effective dialogue and exchange of information on QoR and future science direction in the CGIAR. In the proposed new terms of reference for the ISPC, it is tasked with leading and facilitating development of criteria for science quality, relevance and performance for CGIAR research. As a first step in responding to this challenge, the ISPC has called for the establishment of a System-level Working Group on QoR, which includes both science quality and relevance (QoR WG). The overall goal of the QoR WG is to improve system-wide coherence, linkages and coordination with respect to QoR.

There are three main questions that need to be answered on the QoR:

1) What is quality of research (including relevance and efficiency) in the context of delivery of R4D research results and how can the appropriate balance between science quality and relevance be achieved in designing a framework for the CGIAR?

2) What does a framework for QoR in the CGIAR encompass? How we can actually measure this CGIAR-tailored QoR? What is the set of methods, metrics and objective criteria to evaluate performance and behavior of scientists, the programme, and the system? How can QoR be incorporated into metrics used in the evaluation of the portfolio?

3) How to facilitate the adoption of QoR standards throughout the System?

Activities/Outputs:

3.1 A white paper on Quality of Research in the CGIAR: current understandings, definitions, criteria and indicators being used for assessing science quality within CGIAR institutions and system units; and comparison with other relevant institutions outside the System;
3.2 Identify relevant expertise from across the CGIAR system (SC, SMB, CRPs, Centers, IEA, ISPC), selected donors and external experts and convene the WG, to be co-ordinated by the ISPC: 1st quarter 2017;
3.3 Coordinate the activities of the WG on Quality of Research for developing a common framework for assessing QoR in the CGIAR, and identifying future plans and strategies for strengthening Qor in the CGIAR;
3.4 Final Report of the WG, with the common framework on QoR and recommendations on the way forward: 2nd quarter 2017.

INDEPENDENT PROGRAM REVIEW

The ISPC plays an important role in providing advice to the System Council for science quality and relevance through the independent review of science proposals for CGIAR Research for strategic relevance, rigor and credibility, capturing synergies across CGIAR Research, coherence to the SRF and by recommend actions and priorities for funding to the System Council. It also provides the System Council with recommendations concerning science quality in the CGIAR System, including periodic analysis of the System portfolio with respect to duplication, omission, and areas of comparative advantage.

Plans for 2017:

The review of the 2017-2022 second call for CRPs, carried out in two stages, was finalized in 2016. In 2017, however, the ISPC will continue its role in independent review of science proposals for CGIAR Research for strategic relevance, rigor and credibility, capturing synergies across CGIAR Research, coherence to the SRF through the provision of commentary to System Council on the progress on CRP 'must-haves', site integration and annual research program performance.

Example Activities/Outputs for processes yet to be finalized by the SMB/SC:

1.1. Contribute (with the SMO), to the design of a mechanism and agree criteria and indicators for the systematic monitoring of CRP annual reports;

1.2. Monitoring the response of CRPs to *major* ISPC comments and recommendations and site integration; including potentially reviews of GLDC and CRPs with new leadership and Flagships to be resubmitted in 2017;

1.3. Review of SMO's assessment of the CRPs' annual research progress reports (Phase1);

1.4. Evaluation of the ISPC Review Process – Synthesis & Lessons learned. Publication of cross-CRP analysis (ToC, Gender, CD, Partnership, Integration, etc.);

1.5. Study on System-level issues related to the recruitment and retention of staff in disciplines key to delivery of the CRPs (e.g. Social sciences).

AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIP

The ISPC serves as an independent advisor to the System Council on science and research matters, including strategies for effective partnerships along the research for development continuum. As such it plays an important role in providing advice to the System Council on the scientific credibility and investment worthiness of program proposals, as well as aspects of CGIAR policy. This relates not only to the QoR, discussed earlier, but also includes ISPC's role in providing a basis for understanding how and why agricultural research can, and has led to development impacts, focusing also specifically on partnerships and modalities that will help move the CGIAR work towards contributing to specific implementation and impact pathways.

The CGIAR's ability to contribute to development impact needs to be grounded not only in an understanding how this process works, but also on developing and adopting practices that enable it to do so. The creation of the scientific basis to link innovation practice with development impact is thus of particular importance to the CGIAR as a science organization, and critical to the ISPC's role in providing advice on AR4D science and partnership strategies.

Plans for 2017:

To improve agri-food system innovation, the broad prescription is that research and technology needs to be better coupled with market and policy changes that allow ideas and solutions to be deployed. Agri-food sector players, however, continue to grapple with questions on how to implement this prescription. In particular on how to arrive at a mode of innovation that matches the ambition of transforming the performance and sustainability of the sector, both now and in the challenging years ahead.

The ISPC's recent work in this area has focused on the development of a framework to better understand the relationship between different innovation configurations (partnerships, networks,

and practices) and pervasive impact. It assumed that the identification of broad patterns of practices and partnership associated with innovation and impact could form the basis of a framework to better explain how impact takes place, and point to tools and practices that increase the likelihood of innovation and impact.

Insights from this work thus far, however, suggest that (i) 'innovations systems' as a concept and policy framework cannot usefully be scaled down to local contexts; (ii) much greater attention needs to be given to developing political alliances between the public and private sector at a macro level; and (iii) major agricultural research organizations not only have a role in the science-informed brokering of such alliances, but also need to engage in addressing the policy failings in the wider enabling environment.

Work in 2017 will focus on testing our findings and draft frameworks through an expanded range of case studies, the additional use of documented quantitative economic impact assessment, the further elucidation of how political economy and governance relate to impact, and the identification of practical mechanisms that can drive the desirable changes in organizational strategy and priorities.

Activities/Outputs:
1.1. Case studies - Expansion of evidence base to test the draft findings and framework developed during the exploratory phase: Additional use of documented quantitative economic impact assessment, and accounting for potential contradictions;
1.2. Framework revision / reframed analysis, including:
    – Political economy and governance issues;
    – Partnership strategy for AR4D within the contours of the current CGIAR System;
1.3. Reference group meetings – CGIAR and other sector actors: Representatives from public, private and civil society organizations actively involved in the further development, use, and promotion of draft mechanisms and tools, and the alignment of policies and process around key agri-food system innovation challenges;
1.4. Tool identification, development, adaptation, including the benchmarking of innovation capacity and performance;
1.5. Wider dissemination – Implications for agricultural research and partnership strategies – production of specific dissemination materials.

SCIENCE DIALOGUE

One of the ways the ISPC provides assurance to the System Council on science quality and relevance is through convening and brokering science discussions including both non-CGIAR experts and scientists from within the CGIAR System. The ISPC has utilized the holding of a biennial Science Forum to catalyze discussion and to convene scientific groups external to the CGIAR around important issues and to foster partnerships that best complement the expertise of the CGIAR and its partners on research initiatives and for development impacts. The ISPC will continue to facilitate a dialogue with the main suppliers of international agricultural research as part of a process of continuously assessing the position of the CGIAR in a new and changing landscape of agricultural knowledge and innovation systems.

Three SFs have been organized to date by the ISPC, focusing on research and partnership issues related to each of the three SLOs. An evaluation of the SF reflected that the SFs have evolved since their inception in line with experience and the lessons learned. The insights and recommendations from the SF are expected to contribute to the further development of the CRPs

and their design, in shaping the next SRF, and to result in positive changes (increased amount and better targeting) of donor support to the CGIAR.

Plans for 2017:

1. Dissemination of the SF16 outcomes
A Forum entitled "*Agricultural research for rural prosperity: Rethinking the pathways*" was held in April 2016, co-hosted with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). For each of the Science Fora, the ISPC has both published immediate post-Forum summaries and briefs of some of the key lessons (and this is in progress for the most recently completed SF16), and also developed more detailed special issues of journal publications using key papers which can inform CGIAR research and the specialist field at large.

Publishing papers from the Forum in a special edition of a peer-reviewed journal is important, both to raise awareness of development issues among parts of the international scientific community, which are not working on agriculture for development, and also to draw attention to the high-quality research that the CGIAR is conducting. The aim of the SF16 special issue is to explore the pathways through which agri-food systems research (including research on agricultural practices, natural resource management, human nutrition, and institutional and policy research) can have practical impacts on poverty. Building on recent evidence and lessons learnt (meta-analyses and case studies), this set of papers intends to yield insights to inform improvements in the design of agricultural research which seeks to reduce poverty, including identification and strengthening of strategic partnerships, developing processes for action learning and adaptive management, and implications for priority-setting.

Activities/Outputs:
1.1. Co-author the introductory and concluding papers;
1.2. Co-edit the proposed special issue;
1.3. Special issue of research papers growing out of SF16, to be published in late 2017. A proposal has been submitted to the journal Agricultural Systems.

2. Setting the scene for Science Forum 2018
The ISPC will begin preparatory work for Science Forum 2018 (SF18) in the second/third quarter of 2017. The ISPC seeks to identify SF topics that: i) cut across the interest of several of the CRPs/Centers and are related to the SRF; ii) have a strong potential for benefits across regions; iii) relate to fields with recent scientific developments that have a strong potential for development impact; and, iv) represent areas in which the CGIAR must build more effective partnership, to accelerate progress in achieving its goals. To maximize the SF utility a participatory and inclusive process involving key stakeholders and partners will be set in place to select the theme of future Science Fora. Outputs from the ISPC's work streams, in particular foresight, program review and impact assessment are expected to guide consultations towards a topic that meets the requirements of the CRP portfolio and the SRF.

The ISPC will also continue to explore opportunities to organize these Fora jointly with other scientific organizations, to engage the scientific resources of these organizations to address the challenges facing agri-food systems, and to facilitate the building of operational linkages and partnership.

Activities/Outputs:
2.1. Solicit views, perspectives and advice from key stakeholders on the theme and session topics to define theme and focus of SF18;

2.2. Establish and facilitate SF18 Steering Committee;

2.3. Commission background and issues papers;

2.4. Organize expert consultation on SF18 theme and focus areas;

2.5. Establish process for selecting themes of future Science Fora.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The system-level impact assessment activities of the ISPC are carried out by its Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA). Through SPIA's work, ISPC plays a direct role in helping donors (as the key ISPC stakeholder) understand whether and how agricultural research leads to development outcomes and impacts, thereby increasing donor confidence in the System. In addition, through the provision of credible, high-quality impact assessments (IAs) that can inform CGIAR priority setting, and direct engagement in IA capacity development, SPIA's work strengthens the IA function/role in the system. For the period 2013-2017, CGIAR funders have committed substantial additional funding for a program to Strengthen Impact Assessment in the CGIAR (SIAC), managed by SPIA. The outputs from SIAC are aimed at (a) developing and institutionalizing a strong IA culture within the CGIAR, such that *ex post* impact assessment is regarded as an essential part of prudent research management for accountability purposes and as an input to *ex ante* strategic planning; and (b) generating credible evidence about the nature and extent of realized impacts across the broad range of CGIAR research investments to guide future investments in the CGIAR.

The SPIA activity budget identified in this 2017 Workplan and Budget request (Tables 1 and 2) is partly directed towards the fulfilment of the SIAC program, and partly towards planning for a "second phase" of SIAC. In 2017, SPIA will focus on: (a) reviewing, synthesizing, publishing and communicating results from SIAC (2013-2017); and (b) developing a proposal for a Phase-II of SIAC, with a focus on a series of integrated data collection exercises for establishing baselines on adoption for the Phase 2 (2017-2022) of CRPs. The plan is to present a proposal to the System Council in the Fall of 2017.

The SIAC program is divided into four distinct objectives and the 2017 funds requested through the ISPC Work plan and Budget are specifically highlighted, in addition to an overview of the expected activities and other management costs for which funds are already secured.

1. SIAC Objective 1: Develop, pilot and verify innovative methods for collection and assembly of diffusion data
The objective is to develop a robust set of methods for routinely tracking adoption of CGIAR-related technologies in a cost-effective manner. Such information is a prerequisite for achieving the highest quality assessment of outcomes and impacts.

Plans for 2017:

1.1. Michigan State University (MSU) to summarize its work on alternate methods for collecting adoption data (Activity 1.1 and 1.2). Output: Externally reviewed overview document.

1.2. SPIA to host a workshop with the Excellence in Breeding platform to develop a manual for gold-standard implementation of varietal adoption surveys. Output: Best practices document on DNA fingerprinting and extraction methods.

2. SIAC Objective 2: Institutionalize the collection of the diffusion data needed to conduct critical CGIAR impact evaluations

The objective is to compile and make accessible the best available information on outcomes that are plausibly attributable to CGIAR research outputs, and on a large-scale. This is where the SIAC program can contribute a key benchmarking function for the CRPs.

Plans for 2017:

2.1. MSU to complete data cleaning, analysis, and synthesis of the varietal release and adoption data for 130 crop-by-country combinations (Activity 2.1) and review and critique the approach, and present findings from the current round, plus the results from previous work. Output: Varietal release and adoption dataset; summary report.

2.2. Work on nine case studies using a range of methods to estimate adoption of priority natural resource management (NRM) technologies in a number of countries continues through June 2017 (Activity 2.2). Output: NRM technology adoption dataset; nine case studies summarizing methodology and results; and summary paper by consultant, reviewing and critiquing the studies.

2.3. Inventory of 126 Policy-Oriented Research (POR) outcomes (93 derived from Science Council's Performance Management System (2006-2010); 33 derived from Center and CRP 2011-2014 annual reports) to be verified that information for claimed outcomes is accurate and provides substantial supporting information. Output: Validated POR outcome inventory online.

2.4. Work with the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Study – Integrated Surveys of Agriculture (LSMS-ISA) team, NARS partners and statistical agencies to introduce new questions, modules or survey rounds into existing national surveys (Activity 2.4).

2.5. In Uganda, with the LSMS-ISA, (a) integrate DNA fingerprinting into a large-scale experiment on maize production data collection methodology and (b) integrate protocols for collecting data on agricultural technologies into the nationally-representative Annual Agricultural Survey (Activity 2.4). Output: Paper on analyzing the determinants of low genetic purity in farmers' maize plots; CGIAR technologies represented in new nationally-representative open-access data set (Annual Agricultural Survey).

2.6. Scope out plans for a diffusion and impact data collection system for Ethiopia and Tanzania under a new phase of SIAC funding from 2018 to establish baselines for Phase-II of CRPs, that includes in-country planning meetings and consultations with CRPs and other potential research partners and designing and piloting of sample frames and data collection protocols. Output: New modules introduced in existing survey rounds; plan developed for data collection systems in Ethiopia and Tanzania.

3. SIAC Objective 3: Assess the full range of impacts from CGIAR research

While work under Objectives 1 and 2 pave the way for future *ex post* impact assessment studies, Objective 3 activities are focused on carrying out impact assessments of CGIAR research outputs along the entire chain of causation – from research investments to the SLOs. Since such causal chains are long and complex, SPIA focuses on specific parts of the causal chain, where feasible.

Plans for 2017:

3.1. The portfolio consists of (1) five case studies measuring the impact of CGIAR research on health and nutrition (Activity 3.0); (2) seven adoption and impact studies of 'successful' CGIAR research outputs adopted at scale and over the long term (Activity 3.1); (3) three randomized control trials to help understand linkages and mechanisms from technology adoption to impact (Activity 3.2); and, (4) four studies using quasi-experimental methods to assess the impact of under-evaluated areas of CGIAR research (Activity 3.3). Reports to be peer reviewed and finalized through 2017. Output:

Externally reviewed impact study reports; Impact Briefs (up to 19 in number) based on these reports; presentation and discussion of these studies in the large 'end of SIAC conference' in May 2017.

3.2. Drawing on version 3.0 of the InSTePP Returns-to-Research Database (a global compilation of the returns to research evidence, 1958-2015), Univ. of Minnesota-led team undertaking a formal analysis of new data on returns to agricultural research to develop a series of briefing notes and technical reports (Activity 3.5). Output: Briefing note updating rates of return; Peer-reviewed technical reports on returns to agricultural research.

3.3.   A 2nd synthesis report "What do we know about the CGIAR system-level outcomes? Evidence from the past 10 years" drafted by SPIA and expert consultants drawing on findings from studies funded under SIAC Objective 2 and 3 and other literature, and discuss state of the evidence for a range of archetypal impact pathways between investments in CGIAR research and the CGIAR SLOs (Activity 3.5). Output: 2nd synthesis report and accompanying brief.

4. SIAC Objective 4: Support the development of communities of practice for ex-post impact assessment

CGIAR can benefit from a structured attempt to support the existing capacity and encourage external collaborations on *ex post* impact assessment. Information-sharing and regular interaction are key to enabling dialogues that can raise standards of impact assessment in the CGIAR, and ensuring individuals have the skills they need.

Plans for 2017:

4.1. Four pilot IA reports, an outcome of the Virginia Tech and CIP/CIFOR capacity building collaboration, to be externally reviewed in early 2017. Two additional case studies based on ICRISAT data (VDSA/VLS data and Zimbabwe-conservation agriculture), an outcome of the Univ. of Illinois and ICRISAT collaboration, also to be reviewed (Activity 4.2). Output: Six impact case studies externally reviewed through the External Review and Quality Rating System.

4.2. Form partnership with Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) to offer a training on survey design and computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) to encourage rapid adoption and scale-up in the CGIAR. (Activity 4.3). Output: Workshop on CAPI and survey design to CGIAR IA scientists.

4.3. Organize a 4-day conference (Activity 4.3) on diffusion and impact assessment activities in the CGIAR to: (1) discuss lessons learnt from SIAC Phase-I; and, (2) engage with the CGIAR community, donors, academic collaborators, and other institutions to discuss IA strategy development at the institutional level, and contextualize SPIA's vision for CGIAR's IA, strategy to directly feed into the development of a proposal for a new program of work starting in 2018. Output: 4-day conference in May 2017; inputs on CGIAR and SPIA IA strategy to feed into Phase-II proposal development.

4.4. Online IA external review and quality rating system open to submissions (IA studies) from CGIAR Centers and CRPs (Activity 4.4)1. SPIA to begin random audits of impact

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[1] The system is intended as a key mechanism for ensuring high quality assessments of impact (and hence credibility) by the CGIAR, and also for giving Center- and CRP-based economists the leverage they need to argue more effectively for required resources for implementing more impact studies.

claims and the associated studies, publishing commentaries on impact claims on the http://impact.cgiar.org website to motivate submissions, and SIAC outputs peer reviewed. Output: Externally reviewed SIAC outputs; audited impact claims.

4.5. The IMPACT website to be maintained (Activity 4.5). A discussion board to facilitate knowledge and information exchange between CGIAR IA scientists. Light moderation of the board continues. Communications strategy developed for ISPC (and SPIA) in 2016 will be implemented. Output: See section on Communications of this WP&B.

5. SIAC Management and oversight

The SIAC program is governed by a Program Steering Committee (PSC) whose primary functions are to provide strategic guidance in terms of overall direction and provide a quality-control function on the decision-making and output of the commissioned activities and reviewing expenditures against budgets. Technical and administrative support to the PSC is provided by the SPIA/ISPC secretariat which provides hands-on leadership for managing Objective 2 and 4 activities, and assists in coordinating activities under Objectives 1 and 3.

Plans for 2017:

5.1. Oversee the completion of all sub-contracts for studies under the current SIAC grant, ensuring technical outputs and data files are published, and that the findings are summarized and communicated effectively.

5.2. Close the books on SIAC Phase-I, and provide a full financial and technical report to donors.

5.3. SIAC Phase-II proposal development: SPIA to work with a range of partners and consult with key CGIAR stakeholders, e.g., SC, SMB, SMO, CRP IA Focal Points, MEL Community of Practice, IEA, to develop a detailed proposal for a Phase-II program of work. One such dialogue is planned during the CGIAR Science Leaders Meeting in Montpellier in early 2017 (attended by CRP Directors and DDGs Research). The IEA-managed internally commissioned external evaluation report (targeted for publication in Dec 2016) will also inform the proposal development. Central to the proposal will be a focus on a number of key geographies for the CGIAR in which SPIA will collect detailed, nationally or regionally representative data that will allow tracking changes in agricultural technologies over time, with clear links to the work of the CRPs operating in those geographies. Output: Full SIAC Phase 2 (2018-2022) proposal developed and submitted and (hopefully) approved by ISPC in September and SC in November.

ISPC OPERATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

The ISPC welcomed a new Executive Director in 2016 (March), and three new members were added to the Council (in May and August) to strengthen the ISPC's coverage of natural resource management, foresight, priority setting, and partnership issues. The ISPC now operates with a Chair and seven members (which includes *ex officio* the Chair of SPIA). One further addition to the ISPC is expected before the end of 2016 and the selection process by an independent Selection and Nomination Committee is ongoing. One ISPC member resigned in September, due to time pressures. Council members are appointed in their individual capacity contracted to the Council for stipulated periods of times. ISPC Secretariat staff are employed by the FAO.

Communication

Currently, communication related issues for the ISPC are handled by part time commitments of two of the professional staff with short-term consultant support. The ISPC website (http://ispc.cgiar.org/) is hosted on the CGNet server, and there is a yearly maintenance contract in place for the website. These service providers are also carrying out a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for the ISPC website to increase the visibility of ISPC publications.

In response to the recommendation by ISPC Task Force (September 2015) to adopt a more proactive knowledge management strategy to increase its reach and influence, the ISPC is in the process of hiring a knowledge management expert. This expert will review the current ISPC knowledge management strategy and processes, and contribute to an ISPC communication strategy including suggestions for specific knowledge products and processes, as well as staffing requirements.

Plans for 2017:

Activities/Outputs:
1.1. Review ISPC's communication needs and opportunities in light of its new TORs and Theory of Change;
1.2. Review ISPC's current outreach and knowledge-management efforts;
1.3. Survey existing ISPC products/channels of dissemination;
1.4. Survey current and potential ISPC audiences/clients (ie, System Council; CRPs, SMB, SMO, Centers, and agriculture/science researchers) on their current use of ISPC products/channels and identify unmet needs and future opportunities;
1.5. Report on identified gaps and opportunities and develop an updated ISPC communication strategy (including product development and dissemination, interactions with key stakeholders) with a timeline and milestones;
1.6. Enumerate staffing/resource requirements to effectively implement the strategy.

TABLE 1: ISPC 2017 BUDGET BY EXPENSE ITEM COMPARED WITH 2016 BUDGET, 2016 PROJECTED & 2015 ACTUALS

COMPARATIVE ISPC BUDGET Table				in US$000
EXPENSE ITEMS	2015 Actual	2016 Budget	2016 Actual (projected)	2017 Budget
Council				
Honoraria (Chair and Office)	130.0	160.0	159.0	95.0
Honoraria (Council and Panel Members)	215.0	250.0	250.0	290.0
Sub-Total	**345.0**	**410.0**	**409.0**	**385.0**
Workstreams				
Foresight and Prioritization [1]	56.0	208.0	56.0	185.0
Independent Program Review	86.0	180.0	165.0	105.0
Science Dialogue [2]	147.0	200.0	251.0	125.0
Agri-food system Innovation and Partnership [2]	22.0	30.0	91.5	175.0
Impact Assessment	682.0	500.0	500.0	530.0
Sub-Total	**993.0**	**1,118.0**	**1,063.5**	**1,120.0**
Personnel Costs (Secretariat/Office)				
Professional staff	1,305.0	1,460.0	1,374.0	1,465.0
Administrative support	224.0	205.0	181.0	200.0
Long term Consultant	152.0	95.0	120.0	130.0
Short term Consultant	45.0			
Sub-Total	**1,726.0**	**1,760.0**	**1,675.0**	**1,795.0**
Number of staff (Full Time equivalent)				
Professional staff	7.0	8.0	7.0	7.0
Administrative Support	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Number of Consultants	2.0	3.0	1.75	1.5
Total FTE	11.0	13.0	10.75	10.5
Travel				
Travel and Per diem (Chair, Council and Panel Members	141.0	170.0	80.0	110.0
Travel and Per Diem (Office/Secretariat)	77.0	100.0	79.0	45.0
Sub-Total	**218.0**	**270.0**	**159.0**	**155.0**
Operating Expenses				
Meetings and Trainings	120.0	35.0	22.0	20.0
Communication (web services, publication etc.)	40.0	26.0	13.0	25.0
Miscellaneous operating expenses	50.0	25.0	15.0	20.0
Sub-Total	**210.0**	**86.0**	**50.0**	**65.0**
Overhead Charges				
TOTAL	**3,492.0**	**3,644.0**	**3,356.5**	**3,520.0**
Additional funds to support TF recommendations	59.0	240.0	89.0	
GRAND TOTAL	**3,551.0**	**3,884.0**	**3,445.5**	**3,520.0**
FINANCING				
Total From the CGIAR Fund	2,298 +263	3,884.0	3,884.0	3,520.0
Total From FAO *(including carry over funds of 2014)*	1,350 +480	0	0	
GRAND TOTAL	**4,391.0**	**3,884.0**	**3,884.0**	**3,520.0**

Works streams / Outcomes	Costs in USD 000
Foresight and Prioritization – provides advice to the SC to support decisions on the strategic direction of the CGIAR, cutting edge and emerging developments in technologies and methodologies, and CGIAR research priorities	742
Independent Program Review – provides ex ante advice on the quality and relevance of CGIAR research –and may also need to include monitoring of implementation of "must haves".	477
Science Dialogue – engages partners in identification, design, implementation, and communication activities to contribute to the improvement of the quality and relevance of CGIAR science, and underpins both the program review and foresight functions.	458
Agri-food system Innovation and Partnership - provides advice on innovation and impact processes and modalities – including the central role of partnership	597
Impact Assessment – provides advice on *ex post* impact assessment methodologies, informs donors about the actual impact of CGIAR research, and works to change the culture of CGIAR to integrate impact assessment (IA) in a coordinated way through capacity development and by providing guidance on IA strategies.	1,246
Total	**3,520**