

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## Evaluation of Results-Based Management in CGIAR

Apr 2017



Independent  
Evaluation  
Arrangement

## 1. Background

### 1.1. Introduction

CGIAR is a global agricultural research partnership that implements research through a network of 15 research Centers and their partners.

The 2016-2030 CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework (SRF)<sup>1</sup> guides the CGIAR research agenda through the CGIAR Research Programs (CRP). The SRF identifies three strategic goals of System level outcomes (SLOs): i) reduced rural poverty; ii) improved food and nutrition security for health; and iii) improved natural resources systems and ecosystems services.

The CRPs started their operations in 2010-12. The second phase of programs has been launched this year with a revised portfolio comprising both CRPs (agri-food systems and global integrating programs) and Platforms.<sup>2</sup>

The CGIAR Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) is responsible for System-level external evaluations of CGIAR. In the first four years of IEA's operation, evaluations of all 15 CRPs were completed<sup>3</sup>, and several thematic evaluations have been undertaken. Drawing on the results of these evaluations, IEA is in 2017 organizing evaluations and reviews that will contribute to an evaluation of the System as a whole planned for 2018. The evaluation of Results-Based Management (RBM) in CGIAR is one of these.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.2. Results-Based Management in CGIAR

The 2008 Independent External Review of CGIAR emphasized that in keeping with “universally accepted standards for good governance”, CGIAR needed to adopt RBM among other essential changes. The purpose of RBM for CGIAR was seen as: signaling priorities, motivating staff, attracting partners, and tracking progress beyond the quality of outputs to guide continuous learning and to

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<sup>1</sup> CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework 2016-2030

<sup>2</sup> For more information please see: <http://www.cgiar.org/our-strategy/second-call-for-cgiar-research-programs/>

<sup>3</sup> five were CRP-commissioned and received assistance from IEA

<sup>4</sup> The IEA's evaluation schedule is presented at its Website <http://iea.cgiar.org/evaluations/> where reports of completed evaluations can be found.

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ensure that products are “policy and program ready” for use by others to achieve the strategic objectives of Centers and the System. Subsequently, resulting from the Reform, RBM was introduced to CRP implementation. One definition from literature<sup>5</sup> applied in a development context is presented in Box 1.

Essential elements of RBM in CGIAR were defined as common results-based monitoring and

### Box 1. UN Definition of RBM

*Results-based management is a management strategy by which all actors on the ground, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of development results, ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and goals). RBM rests on clearly defined accountability for results and requires monitoring and self-assessment of progress towards results, including reporting on performance.*

*RBM is seen as a life-cycle approach starting with elements of planning, such as setting the vision and defining the results framework [...]. Once it is agreed to pursue a set of results through a programme, implementation starts and monitoring becomes an essential task to ensure results are being achieved. Finally, monitoring and evaluation provide invaluable information for decision-making and lessons learned for the future.*

evaluation framework; results-based performance agreements between the Consortium and Centers leading CRPs; and independent results-based evaluation.<sup>6</sup> Early steps included development of an SRF (first SRF was approved in 2011, second in 2015), introducing theories of change (TOC) to support impact pathways from outputs to outcomes at intermediate level and to impacts; requesting Program objectives and targets to be defined at the level of development outcomes; and setting up monitoring and reporting on achievements and progress towards outcomes. Development of these elements of an RBM approach in the CRPs has been an evolution through three cycles of CRP appraisal and approval.<sup>7</sup>

The SRF 2016-2030 CGIAR defines a results framework for the high-level goals, the SLOs, and their intermediate development outcomes (IDOs), which were designed to “enable researchers to think through the contexts in which their outputs might contribute to development outcomes”. Sub-IDOs represent a third level of outcomes nearest to CRP research results where outcomes are planned to be achieved in a relatively short time frame.

In preparation for the 2016-2030 SRF, the CGIAR Consortium (now System Management Organization) designed a quantitative accountability framework for the CRP portfolio to provide “basic building blocks for a results based management system” for implementation of RBM for the whole CRP portfolio. Targets were set at the level of SLOs, and are still being defined for IDO and

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations Development Group: Results-based Management Handbook, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Voices of Change, The new CGIAR, 2009

<sup>7</sup> Original proposals in 2010-2012, extension proposals for 2015-2016 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of CRPs in 2016 for 2017-2022.

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sub-IDO level. The SRF 2016-2030 also elaborates on impact pathways, and targets also focus areas that cut across all programs: gender, climate change and capacity, and policies and institutions. Results orientation and defining outcomes with results targets has shaped the design of monitoring and evaluation systems at CRP level.

According to the SRF 2016-2030, RBM “entails defining development outcomes in addition to understanding, and setting out on, paths to reach those outcomes – while all the time maintaining excellence in science. It also means monitoring experiences and learning from them, to improve performance over time.”

In 2014, five CRPs were funded for implementing trials in RBM<sup>8</sup> following a Consortium call. They were selected on the basis of a proposal and assessed for the detail of the RBM plan and the extent to which outcomes were to be measurable. Each CRP implemented the pilot in its own way. The CRP RBM trials, while all different, provide a first funded testing and input into the use and implementation of RBM in a research for development program. At the same time, other CRPs also started planning and implementation of different elements of an RBM system.

For the second phase of CRP implementation, all CRPs were expected to develop their RBM approach as described in the Guidance to CRP proposals.<sup>9</sup> It states “CRPs are expected to propose a RBM framework, which is described as a management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impact. This framework should describe how CGIAR’s approach to RBM is conceptualized and will be operationalized for the CRPs to demonstrate commitment to accountability and adaptive management.”

Central elements requested were:

- (i) development of a results framework describing theories of change and impact pathways for the Program as a whole and the flagship project components in detail, and
- (ii) specifying the linkages from delivery of outputs to anticipated results and risks related to results and outcomes. The Programs were instructed to prepare plans for M&E with increased focus on outcomes and adaptive management and design annual reporting of program progress, financial reporting, and performance assessment.

Most recently, work in preparing the rolling out RBM across all programs has focused on development of an integrated performance management system and set of indicators for regular monitoring and reporting on performance, particularly on results at outcome level.

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<sup>8</sup> The five CRPs were: Roots, Tubers and Bananas: Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security; Humid Tropics; Global Rice Science Partnership; and Aquatic Agriculture Systems.

<sup>9</sup> See Guidance, pg 26-29: [http://library.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/4127/CGIAR-2ndCall-GuidanceFullProposals\\_19Dec2015.pdf?sequence=1](http://library.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/4127/CGIAR-2ndCall-GuidanceFullProposals_19Dec2015.pdf?sequence=1)

### 2. Evaluation purpose and stakeholders

While RBM is new in CGIAR, it represents a major shift in research management, pursuit of results and funding of research, and implementation in research context presents both opportunities and challenges. The primary purpose of this evaluation is therefore to learn lessons from the recent experience of CGIAR in introducing and implementing different aspects of RBM, including orientation towards outcomes. The evaluation will provide evaluative evidence and lessons as an input to implementing an RBM framework in phase II of CRPs. It will explore what have been main drivers in moving towards RBM, what constraints have been experienced or perceived and what has been achieved so far in conceiving and implementing aspects of RBM in CGIAR's research context.

The evaluation will formulate recommendations to CRPs and to the System governing bodies for increasing the appropriateness and likely effectiveness of RBM when fully implemented. Ultimately, an effective RBM system should contribute to CGIAR's delivery of results from research towards CGIAR's goals, while incentivizing scientists and research managers to adjust research implementation on basis of results lessons from progress and, thereby, improving program performance.

The main stakeholders of the evaluation will be:

- CGIAR System Council: for decision making on strategic direction and fund allocation
- CGIAR System Management Board and Office: for guidance to CRPs when developing the RBM framework in the current year and next, stewardship on accountability and strategic decision making on RBM at the System level
- CRP and Center management and staff: for lessons learned to increase the effectiveness of and incentives deriving from RBM
- CGIAR Centers Boards and CRP oversight bodies: for lessons learned for oversight on RBM
- CGIAR research partners: for lessons learned for accommodating RBM in partnerships
- ISPC: for lessons learned regarding strategic issues on RBM at CRP and System level

### 3. Evaluation focus, scope and main questions

#### 3.1. Focus and scope

The evaluation will cover the System level; and CRPs - with Centers implementing research through CRPs - to assess experiences on how CGIAR has moved towards results-base strategy, how elements of RBM have been implemented up to date and how CRPs have responded to the request to set up RBM systems in phase II.

In more depth, the evaluation will systematically assess the experience from the pilot implementation of RBM. It will assess the extent to which lessons have been taken into account in planning for RMB implementation across entire programs, including the M&E design.

The evaluation will also assess drivers for and expectations of RMB, and guidance provided at the piloting phase and in preparation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase to assess how CGIAR System management is rolling-out RBM suitable for CGIAR.

It will look at the opportunities and challenges in incorporating performance information in program decision-making and adaptive management in a research context. Aspects of implementing RBM that the evaluation will cover involve data management, quality and consistency, development and use of indicators, incentives and reward mechanisms, linkages of monitoring with evaluation and impact assessment, as well as decision-making and management processes that these systems serve. The evaluation will assess the requirements that RBM sets on the monitoring, evaluation and learning systems in programs, and in terms of reporting and management, drawing specific lessons from the piloting.

The evaluation will focus on the time span from the initiation of the CRPs until to the present.

### 3.2. Evaluation questions

As this evaluation is about a strategic management approach, the criteria adopted by the IEA for evaluating research programs do not apply directly.<sup>10</sup> However, RBM is designed to enhance organizational effectiveness and impact. In the CGIAR research context, implementation of RBM also needs to take into account the key determinants of effectiveness, that research is relevant and of high quality. Given the relatively recent introduction of RBM in CGIAR, the evaluation will assess the RBM approach *per se* for the management effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and legitimacy. It will also seek for evidence on the effects the RBM is likely to have on research quality, relevance and likely effectiveness, including perceptions on these effects. While an RBM framework is still on the planning stages, CGIAR has introduced several elements of results-based strategy and management, including the SRF, target setting, performance contracts and annual performance reporting. The evaluation will consider experiences from those processes to illustrate potential effects of a fully-fledged RBM on research management practices and thinking, and issues of institutional culture.

A set of tentative evaluation questions is presented below grouped by main issues that the evaluation needs to address. The specific evaluation questions will be refined and elaborated during the inception phase by the Evaluation team in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

#### Adapting RBM in CGIAR

- What is the motivation to introduce results-based strategy and RBM in CGIAR?
- How is RBM conceptualized in the research context?
- What is RBM expected to achieve in CGIAR?

#### Learning from the RBM pilot phase experience

- To what extent did the pilots provide a representative cross-section of CGIAR research?
- Were positive experiences and shortcomings analyzed, documented and shared?
- How valuable was the RBM piloting to designing RBM across all CRPs in terms of approaches piloted and lessons used?

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<sup>10</sup> Evaluation criteria are presented in Evaluation Standards, Annex 2. <http://iea.cgiar.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Standards.pdf>

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- To what extent have the RBM experiments influenced decision-making within the program, even in small scale? What are the lessons learned?
- What can be learned from the pilots regarding factors that helped or hindered implementation of RBM in the CGIAR research context?

### Management systems supporting RBM

- Did the pilot cases yield lessons for setting up supporting systems (including M&E, data and research management processes, incentive and rewarding mechanisms) to help implement RBM?
- Are such supporting systems being appropriately designed to help implement RBM across the portfolio?
- To what extent has central guidance and support provided by Consortium Office/System Management Office facilitated successful implementation of RBM and what are the needs for continuous support?

### Introduction of RBM across CGIAR portfolio

- Have positive experiences and shortcomings from RBM pilots been analyzed for rolling out RBM across CGIAR?
- Are the instructions for phase II clear and helpful concerning RBM?
- Are the different funding modalities and their in- or inter-dependence taken into account in designing RBM?
- To what extent do the CRP proposals present detail on management, monitoring, reporting and learning that help RBM implementation?
- What are main risks associated with an application of RBM in CGIAR and how can they be addressed?
- In light of relevant RBM experiences elsewhere, and given CGIAR's research context, how can RBM serve the CGIAR's overall objectives optimally?

## 4. Evaluation approach and methods

The evaluation will be **formative**. It will assess lessons from the pilot RBM, and more broadly from other CRPs, for reflecting how results-based strategy and management are currently approached and rolled out across CRPs.

The evaluation will be largely **desk-based** relying on document review and interviews. In addition, the evaluation will draw from experiences elsewhere relying on literature, as well as the team members' own experience and that of external experts to be interviewed. It will seek to relate the CGIAR experience and requirements to those of other comparable organizations that have pursued RBM.

The evaluation will construct an **analytical framework** for how RBM can be expected to enhance research performance and delivery of results, taking into account changes necessary in management and organizational culture for implementing RBM, and risks specific to the research context. The theoretical framework will guide the inquiry of the evaluation.

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The methods applied will be **qualitative**, to a large extent, including qualitative methods and triangulation for analysis and interpreting of data and information from different evidence sources.

In summary, the **methods** used will consist of the following:

- Establishment of a theoretical framework for RBM in research context
- Desk review of internal CGIAR and external documentation on RBM (documentation on the piloting process, strategic CGIAR documents on results-based strategy and laying out the rationale for RBM, guidelines on RBM (including for monitoring, evaluation, learning and impact assessment), and extracts from completed CRP evaluations on aspects of management relevant for RBM
- Stocktaking of rolling-out RBM in CRPs (conceptualization and management mechanisms that have been implemented or are being planned for phase II)
- Interviews with CRP and Center management and researchers, staff in CGIAR System-level management and external stakeholders and experts
- Case studies to better understand selected topics (to be decided in inception period) especially relating to how RBM has been/is being rolled out

The evaluation process will ensure that in developing findings, conclusions and recommendations a representative range of viewpoints is captured from stakeholders through broad consultation. All findings are informed by evidence through triangulation whenever possible, and objectivity is pursued in the analysis of evidence and drawing conclusions.

### Main limitations to the evaluation

Given that RBM is only being introduced recently in CGIAR, the evaluation has limited material to use and will not be able to assess the effects of this approach on program performance. Furthermore, the perceptions and experiences of CGIAR stakeholders may reflect many different interpretations of RBM. The relevance of experience elsewhere on applying RBM in a research organization may be limited, and literature therefore may be limited for seeking for comparable experiences.

## 5. Organization and timing

### 5.1. Timeline and different phases

A team of two, of whom one will be the team leader will carry out this evaluation. The evaluation is scheduled to take place between March and November 2017 and it will include the following several phases as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Schedule and phases of the evaluation in 2017**

Phase	Period	Main outputs	Responsibility
Preparatory phase	Feb – Mar 2017	Final ToRs Evaluation team recruited	IEA
Inception phase	Apr/May 2017	<b>Inception Report</b>	Team leader and IEA



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<b>Inquiry phase</b>	May 2017 – July 2017	Interviews, documents reviewed, field visits if needed	Evaluation team
- Analysis of data	Jul 2017	Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data gathered	Evaluation team IEA
- Presentation of preliminary findings	Aug 2017	Presentation of preliminary findings Feedback from main stakeholders	Evaluation team IEA
<b>Reporting phase</b>			
Drafting of Report	Jul 2017 – Aug 2017	<b>Draft Evaluation Report</b>	Evaluation team
Final Evaluation Report	Sep 2017	<b>Final Evaluation Report</b>	Team leader and IEA

### Preparatory phase

During the Preparatory phase IEA, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, will collect and review key documents and define broadly the scope and issues for the evaluation, as follows:

- Finalize the Terms of Reference
- Collect preliminary documentation for desk review on RBM
- Identify existing evaluation material relevant to RBM
- Select the evaluation team leader and in consultation with her/him, the evaluation team and contract all team members;
- Liaise with evaluation stakeholders and identify mechanisms for consulting with them during the evaluation process;

### Inception phase

The inception phase is the responsibility of the Evaluation Team Leader in collaboration with IEA. The evaluation's scope, focus, approaches and methods will be refined during the inception phase. The evaluation questions will be elaborated and prioritized. The tasks during the inception phase include:

- Review of background documentation on RBM in CGIAR and other relevant organisations
- Development of an analytical framework for the evaluation and methodology
- Refinement of the evaluation questions and an evaluation matrix that identifies means of addressing the questions, including an outline of the data collection methods and instruments
- Identification of groups of interlocutors and institutions, internal and external to CGIAR, and preliminary list of interviewees
- Detailed specification of the evaluation timetable, including a plan for consultation with stakeholders, and any visits, including team meetings
- Indicative evaluation report outline and division of roles and responsibilities among the team

These elements will be drawn together in an evaluation inception report that, once agreed between the team and the IEA, will represent the basis for the team's work. Subject to the agreement of the evaluation manager, adjustments can be made during evaluation implementation in the light of experience.



## **Inquiry phase**

The inquiry phase will follow the evaluation plan as specified in the inception report. It will focus on collecting data, information and views as per the evaluation design, analysis of the evidence and formulation of preliminary findings.

## **Reporting and dissemination phase**

See 5.4.

## **5.2. Team composition**

The Evaluation will be carried out by a team of two independent experts. The Evaluation Team Leader will have demonstrated experience in leading complex evaluations and will be familiar with issues relating to program and performance management.

The team will have extensive and proven experience on issues related to:

- Institutional and program management and management for results
- RBM and Performance management
- Agricultural development and research for development
- Research management
- M&E systems

## **5.3. Evaluation governance/roles and responsibilities**

The **evaluation team leader** has final responsibility for the evaluation report and all findings and recommendations, subject to adherence to CGIAR evaluation standards. The evaluation team leader is responsible for submitting the deliverables as outlined below.

The **IEA** will be responsible for planning, initial design and management of the evaluation. An IEA Senior Evaluation Officer will manage the evaluation and an IEA Evaluation Analyst will support the team in coordination, information gathering and providing inputs to analysis.

The IEA will also be responsible for quality assurance of the evaluation process and outputs, and dissemination of the results. The IEA will take an active role in the preparatory phase of the evaluation by collecting background data and information and by carrying out preliminary analysis.

## **5.4. Deliverables and dissemination of findings**

The **Inception Report** (maximum 10 pages plus annexes) builds on the evaluation ToR and outlines the evaluation team's approach to the evaluation. It constitutes the plan for conducting the evaluation by: (i) further defining the scope of the evaluation and determining the boundaries of the evaluation; (ii) defining the main evaluation questions; (iii) outlining the methods and tools that will be used and (iv) providing a detailed work plan for the evaluation, including team member responsibilities.

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The **Evaluation Report** (maximum 70 pages plus annexes) is the main output of the evaluation. It will present the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, based on the evidence collected during the inquiry phase. The recommendations will be informed by evidence, clearly formulated, strategically relevant and targeted to specific stakeholders in CGIAR for guidance and action. The main findings and recommendations will be summarized in an executive summary.

Presentations will be given by the team leader for disseminating the report the evaluation findings to targeted audiences, as agreed with the IEA.

The IEA will interact with the System Management Board and Office for development of a response to the evaluation. The response will include an action plan for addressing recommendations that may be targeted to specific bodies of the CGIAR System. The System Council will be the ultimate recipient of the evaluation report and the response.

The evaluation report and the response will be public documents made available to the System Council. A dissemination strategy will be developed during the evaluation process