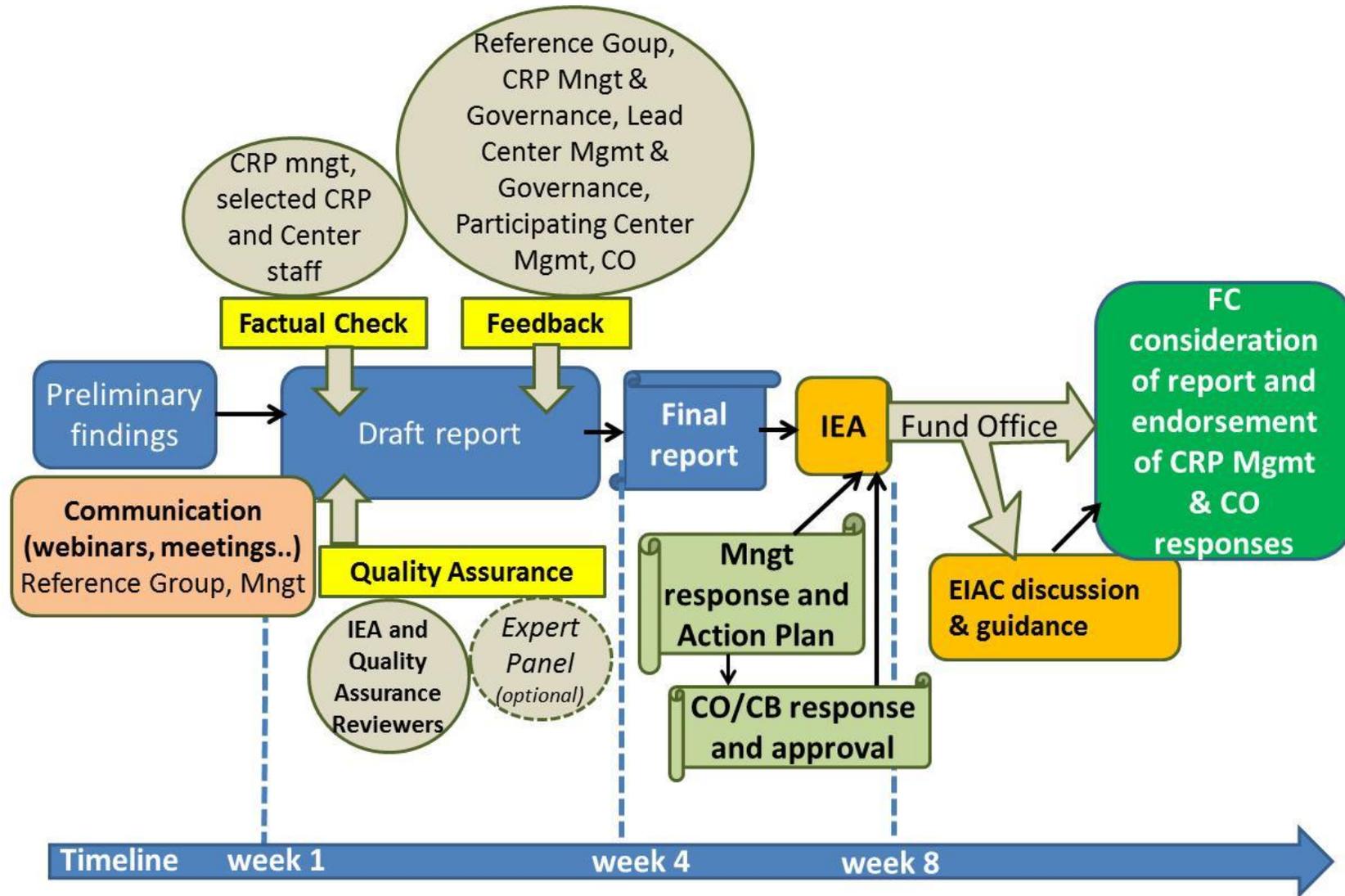## Background

The Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) is responsible for independent external evaluations of the CGIAR CRPs and institutions. As detailed in the CGIAR Policy for Independent External Evaluations, the evaluations managed by IEA are conducted by independent teams, and serve to reinforce accountability, learning and support to decision-making while enhancing coherence, efficiency and transparency throughout the CGIAR.

IEA is guided by the CGIAR Policy for Independent External Evaluations approved by the Fund Council and Consortium as part of the Common Operational Framework, as well as the Standards for Independent External Evaluations developed by the IEA. Whereas the Policy provides the principles, framework and foundation for the IEA and the evaluations, the Standards provide the interpretation of the principles, modalities and common operating frameworks for the implementation of evaluations in CGIAR.

One essential step in the completion of evaluations is to clearly define and establish a formal process and procedures through which the CRP evaluations commissioned by the IEA are finalized and submitted, formally responded to, recommendations agreed, follow-up actions clearly defined and lessons learned captured. The process through which the evaluation report is finalized, considered for action and formally considered and endorsed is described below with reference to key official CGIAR documents, including:

1. **CGIAR Policy for Independent External Evaluation** (accessible online)

2. **CGIAR Standards for External Independent Evaluations** (accessible online)

3. **Terms of Reference: Fund Council Evaluation and Impact Assessment Committee** (accessible online)

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CRP Evaluations: Process for Finalization, Feedback and Decision-making

Reference Goup, CRP Mngt & Governance, Lead Center Mgmt & Governance, Participating Center Mgmt, CO

CRP mngt, selected CRP and Center staff

Factual Check

Feedback

Preliminary findings

Draft report

Final report

IEA

Fund Office

FC consideration of report and endorsement of CRP Mgmt & CO responses

Communication (webinars, meetings..) Reference Group, Mngt

Quality Assurance

IEA and Quality Assurance Reviewers

Expert Panel (optional)

Mngt response and Action Plan

CO/CB response and approval

EIAC discussion & guidance

Timeline   **week 1**   **week 4**   **week 8**

Summary Table: CRP Evaluation report review, finalization, and approval – process and responsibilities

	Evaluation output shared	Action by	Purpose	Timing	Requested Action
	Preliminary Findings	Communication with selected stakeholders always including CRP management, CRP researchers, and CRP governance	Exchange views on the areas where the likely conclusions and recommendations will focus for improving factual accuracy and addressing potential misunderstandings	Towards the end of the inquiry phase	Preliminary results validated, and Evaluation Team Leader proceeds with drafting report
1 wk	**Early draft report**	IEA	Quality Assurance	One week	IEA reviews draft report for QA purposes and circulates draft report for comments.
3 weeks	**Draft report**	Quality Assurance peer reviewers	Quality Assurance	Two weeks (concurrent with expert panel + factual check +feedback)	Provide additional quality check (meeting IEA and international standards) through the IEA on the evaluation draft
	Draft Report	Expert Panel (*optional*)	Expert review of evaluation report for additional geographic or development focus	Two weeks (concurrent with QA peer reviewers + factual check +feedback)	Comments by expert panel members on findings and recommendations are compiled by Panel Chair and shared with IEA and Evaluation Team Leader
	Draft Report	CRP Management Selected CRP Staff Selected Center Staff, Consortium Office & Fund Office	Fact Check	Three weeks (concurrent with QA peer reviewers + expert panel + feedback)	Ensure draft report undergoes a final fact check prior to finalization of report. Comments and feedback to be sent to IEA
	Draft Report	CRP Management, CRP Researchers, CRP Governance, Lead Center Management, Lead Center Governance, Participating Center Management, Selected Stakeholders, & Consortium Office	Feedback and Commentary Opportunity to start drafting management response and action plan (see below)	Three weeks (concurrent with QA peer reviewers + expert panel + fact check)	Provide comments and feedback prior to finalization of report. Comments and feedback are compiled by IEA and shared with Team Leader for action/response. The final comments matrix, including the response to each comment may be shared with the stakeholder groups.

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	Evaluation output shared	Action by	Purpose	Timing	Requested Action
	Draft Report	IEA to circulate to Fund Council Evaluation and Impact Assessment Committee (EIAC)	For information purposes only	NA	For information purposes only
3 weeks	Final Report	IEA to circulate to Fund Council Evaluation and Impact Assessment Committee (EIAC)	In preparation for EIAC review of final evaluation	NA	For information purposes only. Final report will be made public on IEA website 2 weeks following circulation to EIAC.
	Final report	CRP Management (including oversight and approval from CRP and lead Center governance)	CRP management response to the evaluation and proposed action plan to respond to the findings and recommendations	Three weeks	CRP management responds to the findings and recommendations of the evaluation and provide their action proposals, specifically stating if they reject any recommendation (and propose no action) and also if they are proposing actions additional to those indicated in the report. The management response and action plan are to reviewed and approved by CRP governance prior to finalization
	Final Report	IEA to Fund Office	IEA to provide Fund Office with Final Report in preparation for Fund Council formal submission	NA	No action required
2 weeks	Final report + CRP management response	Consortium Office	Consortium review and approval of evaluation report (especially as it relates to system-level, and to Consortium Office) + review and approval of management response and action plan	Two weeks	Provide response to the evaluation report from the system-level/ Consortium perspective
	Final Report + CRP management response and action plan + Consortium response + Evaluation Brief	Fund Office to submit to Fund Council Evaluation and Impact Assessment Committee (EIAC)	Fund Office will submit evaluation documents to EIAC to provide advice and guidance on the evaluation report and related responses as part of its	In advance of Fund Council meeting	For EIAC to discuss evaluation report and related responses and action plan, and provide guidance to the Fund Council on a position regarding the CRP Management and Consortium responses

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Evaluation output shared	Action by	Purpose	Timing	Requested Action
		reporting to the Fund Council		
Final Report + CRP Management response + Consortium response + Evaluation Brief	Fund Office to submit to Fund Council	To formally submit the evaluation package to the Fund Council	In advance of Fund Council meeting	For Fund Council consideration of the final evaluation report and endorsement of CRP Management and Consortium responses

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Detailed description process and procedures

OUTPUT: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Who: CRP management, CRP researchers, CRP governance, and other selected stakeholders
Preliminary findings of the CRP evaluation are to be shared with selected CRP stakeholders (for example CRP management, CRP researchers, and CRP governance) through appropriate communication channels (for example face-to-face meetings, webinars, etc).

Purpose: Share initial findings, exchange views, improve factual accuracy and understanding of the issues and to ensure transparency. This allows for the selected stakeholders to discuss with the evaluation team the general findings, exchange views and clarify any relevant points. CRP management may also want to learn about the preliminary findings at an early stage for internal management purposes.

Timing: As early as possible prior to initiating the draft report process.

OUTPUT: DRAFT REPORT

The draft report undergoes the following reviews prior to circulation: (i) quality assurance, (ii) fact check, and (iii) stakeholder feedback (as described below).

Prior to circulation, the draft report will be reviewed by the IEA Evaluation Manager for quality assurance purposes.

Quality Assurance

Who: IEA
The primary quality assurance responsibility lies with the IEA Evaluation Manager who contributes to the development of the Inception Report, supports the evaluation throughout the process and comments on early drafts of the evaluation report.

(a) Who: IEA; Quality Assurance External Reviewers
The primary quality assurance responsibility lies with the IEA Evaluation Manager. In addition, IEA is establishing an external quality assurance system, made up of external independent peer reviewers for each evaluation to provide additional quality assurance feedback and guidance to the IEA evaluation managers on (i) the draft inception report and (ii) the draft report. The peer reviewers will be selected from a wide range of experts in the evaluation community including academia and (to the extent possible) evaluation experts of well-resourced evaluation functions in development agencies

Purpose: Ensure that the Evaluation Report meets international evaluation standards

Timing: Quality Assurance peer reviewers receive the draft report and provide comments and feedback to IEA within 2 weeks.

(b) Who: Expert Panel of 4-5 research scientists and experts (*optional*)
The establishment of an Expert Panel to review the evaluation is an optional step which IEA can decide to utilize depending on the CRP report, subject matter, and related recommendations. If selected by IEA to be included for the CRP evaluation, the Expert Panel would aim to include perspectives and contributions from high caliber experts of particular fields, or those who can

provide an additional geographic or development focus, and who would otherwise not have had the time to fully contribute to the evaluation. The expert panel is selected by IEA and composed of 4-5 research scientists and experts in development who are tasked with critically reviewing the draft report and providing comments on the soundness of the analysis, in particular the relevance of the conclusions and recommendations.

Led by the Panel Chair, the Expert Panel should focus on relaying both specific and general comments to the evaluation report. The general comments and feedback are discussed among the Expert Panel, the IEA, and the Evaluation Team Leader.

Purpose: Provide expert views on the overall findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Timing: Upon submission of draft report to the expert panel, the process is scheduled to be completed within two weeks.

Fact Check

Who: CRP management, selected CRP staff and selected Center staff, Fund Office and Consortium
The draft report will be shared with CRP management for distributing among relevant CRP/Center staff, as well as to Consortium Office and Fund Office for providing factual check and corrections on their respective areas before the report is finalised.

Purpose: Ensure that evaluation findings are based on correct facts prior to wider circulation of the draft.

Timing: Upon submission of draft report to CRP management, factual corrections will be sent to IEA within three weeks. This process will occur concurrently with the feedback process (below).

Feedback

Who: CRP Management, CRP Researchers, CRP Governance, Lead Center Management, Lead Center Governance, Participating Center Management, Consortium Office, and other stakeholders as appropriate
Internal stakeholders of the CRP will be asked to review the draft report for comments. IEA may also circulate the draft to a wider group of stakeholders (e.g. CRP partners) depending on nature of findings. IEA staff with the Evaluation Team Leader will compile comments from the feedback and factual check process in a comment matrix, identifying (1) comment source, (2) issue raised, and (3) response/ action taken. The comments matrix is prepared to document transparently the feed-back and comments received and how they were addressed by the Team Leader. The matrix may be circulated to selected internal stakeholders for information.

Purpose: Ensure that the results of the evaluation are thoroughly considered by stakeholders with an opportunity for feedback to be taken into account in finalizing the evaluation.

Timing: Occurs at the same time with factual check review; both processes should be completed within three weeks.

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OUTPUT: FINAL REPORT

The Evaluation Team Leader and IEA will carefully consider the input provided to the draft evaluation report during the quality assurance, factual check and feedback reviews, and make any necessary revisions to the report. The final evaluation report will then be circulated for formal responses from both (1) the CRP management and the (2) Consortium Office and Board (as described below); as well as (3) the Fund Council Evaluation and Impact Assessment Committee (EIAC) for information purposes and in preparation for the EIAC review of the evaluation reports.

Management Response and Action Plan

(a) Who: CRP Management

One of the most important mechanisms to ensure that the findings and recommendations of the evaluation are being addressed is to request a formal management response and action plan to the evaluation report. As such, the CRP management response is considered one of the essential components for an effective, and complete, evaluation.

IEA will officially submit the final report to CRP management who will draft a management response to the evaluation. The CRP management response will comment on the utility of the report and illustrate CRP management's position on the evaluation. It will also include an action plan in response to the recommendations and evaluation findings.

The management response will contain both an overall response to the evaluation as well as responses by recommendation, addressing each recommendation in the order presented in the evaluation report. This includes:

(1) statement on whether the recommendation is accepted fully, partially, or rejected;
(2) expected action to be taken;
(3) responsible party or unit for follow-up action, and
(4) time-frame for implementation.

In the case of a partially accepted or rejected recommendation, reasons need to be indicated. The CRP management response and action plan are to be reviewed and approved by CRP Governance and Lead Center Governance prior to finalization and submission.

In providing the management response, CRP management will complete the following **Management Response Matrix/Action Plan**.

Evaluation Recommendation (numbered)	Management Response to the Recommendation	Management Follow up			
		Action to be taken (each action should have a reference number)	Who Responsible for Action	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation?
Recommendation 1 – copied from evaluation report, abbreviated if necessary	Accepted in full, Partially accepted or Rejected Provide brief explanatory comment for partial or complete rejection	List action(s) Insert	Insert (institutional not a person)	Insert	Yes or No If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?

Purpose: Ensure that there is a transparent record of how the CRP management has considered the recommendations and findings and intends to implement them through a clear action plan.

Furthermore, the management response allows highlighting how lessons from the evaluation findings will be addressed and whether there are any financial implications.

Timing: Upon receipt of final report, the CRP management response will be due within three weeks.

Consortium Response to Evaluation Report and CRP Management Response

(b) Who: Consortium Office/ Consortium Board

IEA will submit the final report and CRP management response to the Consortium Office, which will prepare a response for the Consortium Board approval. As the Consortium Board is the responsible entity for accountability for program performance to the Fund Council, they would review the evaluation report and the CRP management response and provide a response on the evaluation recommendations, management response and action plan. Their response should include an overall comment on the evaluation including acceptance or not of any recommendation specifically addressed to the Consortium. Furthermore, in their response, the Consortium Board will need to address those recommendations in particular that the CRP management has only partially accepted or rejected. The response will also provide a system-level, cross-CRP perspective of the evaluation and the proposed management action plan.

Purpose: Ensure the findings and recommendations from the evaluation, and the proposed management response and action plan, are considered by the Consortium Board given its fiduciary responsibility for CRPs and its role of reporting to the Fund Council on CRP performance. The purpose is also to add a wider system-level, strategic perspective to each evaluation.

Timing: Upon receipt of Evaluation Report and Management Response, the Consortium Board response will be due within two weeks.

OUTPUT: FINAL REPORT WITH CRP MANAGEMENT RESPONSE & CONSORTIUM RESPONSE

The IEA will submit the following: (1) final evaluation report, (2) CRP management response, and (3) the Consortium Board response, to the Fund Office for distribution to the Fund Council Evaluation and Impact Assessment Committee (EIAC) and the full Fund Council. The documents will be accompanied by an Evaluation Brief prepared by the IEA summarizing the main elements of the evaluation and management response.

Fund Council review and consideration

(a) Who: Fund Council Evaluation and Impact Assessment Committee (EIAC)

The EIAC was established by the Fund Council to serve as the essential interlocutor at the working level between the Fund Council and the IEA on evaluation matters (and with SPIA on matters of impact assessment). As a standing committee of the FC, comprising designated Fund Council members, EIAC provides advice on evaluation and impact assessment matters. Upon receipt of the final evaluation package and brief, the evaluation is considered by EIAC members before the next FC meeting. EIAC will review the report, and carefully consider the findings, conclusions and recommendations as well as the CRP management and Consortium responses. EIAC discussion on the report and related responses should include the presence or input of the (1) IEA; (2) Evaluation

Team Leader (for any clarification or to elaborate on any recommendation); and (3) a Consortium representative (to speak on behalf of the CRP management and Consortium responses). This would help ensure that any advice made by EIAC (for Fund Council endorsement) takes into consideration the perspectives of all key parties.

Purpose: Provide an opportunity for more in-depth consideration by interested Fund Council members through EIAC, based in part on discussion with those producing and commenting on the evaluation report. This will enable the evaluation report, the CRP management response and the Consortium response to be more fully considered by Fund Council members.

Timing: In advance of the Fund Council meeting at which the evaluation report and related responses are to be considered.

(b) Who: Fund Council

Upon transmission by the Fund Office, individual Fund Council members will review the final evaluation report and prepare to make a formal position on the CRP management and Consortium responses. The Fund Council discussion on the evaluation report will include representation of IEA and Consortium to provide clarification.

Purpose: As the final step of the process, the Fund Council considers the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the final evaluation report and the CRP management and Consortium responses, and provides a decision that may include endorsement of the evaluation recommendations, specific reactions, action plans and proposed follow-up.

Timing: The Fund Council discussion on evaluation will normally occur at a Fund Council meeting.

FOLLOW-UP IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Who: CRP Management

CRP Management should produce a follow-up report, in coordination with the Consortium, every one or two years which will include a matrix on progress in the implementation of the action plan until the progress is complete (see table below). The follow-up report should follow the format below, and be reviewed and approved by CRP Governance, Lead Center Governance, and any other unit or component responsible for the actions in the action plan. Progress reports will then become a component of the CRP annual progress reports, with a copy of the matrix sent to IEA. IEA will keep a central tracking matrix of the recommendations made by various evaluations and their implementation.

Progress in Implementation of Action Plan Response to the Evaluation (Title)			Date of Action Plan		Date of Report
Number Given to Action in the Management Action Plan	Action to be taken (as originally described)	Who Responsible for Action	Original timeframe (start-finish)	Revised timeframe (start-finish)	Progress on Action
1	Action 1 – Copied from original Action Plan	Copy from original or insert if revised	Copied from original Action Plan	Insert	Insert brief summary of progress including comments/ explanations on very good or poor progress

LEARNING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Beyond the report approval and management process, IEA is committed to ensuring that the lessons learned go beyond the drafting of the report. For this reason, IEA adopts the following:

- Upon initiation of the evaluation process, IEA will identify key meetings and venues in which the Evaluation Team and IEA members can participate, for information exchange and to provide updates on the evaluation
- At key points in the evaluation process, IEA will seek to organize information sharing events, such as webinars and news items to share through its various communication channels. Webinars would be targeted to specific groups and stakeholders (as shown in the evaluation process graph above).
- All evaluation reports, management responses, action matrices and follow-up reports will be posted on the IEA website.
- Whenever possible, IEA will highlight experiences and lessons from evaluations in any of its online communications and updates to IEA audiences.
- Evaluation report will be disseminated widely to partners and other stakeholders. This is to ensure that the lessons learned are captured beyond the actual CRP and those formally involved.
- IEA will also seek to capture the lessons related to the evaluation process for benefitting future evaluations – including methods, approaches and techniques used in CRP evaluations.
- In addition, the lessons will also be shared with the Evaluation Community of Practice (ECOP) which is facilitated and supported by IEA to strengthen capacity and share information across the CGIAR.

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