

ISC workshop with FP leaders – 28-29 June 2017

FOR DISCUSSION

(PAPER NO. 4a)

DRAFT 21 JUNE 2017

Subject: Cover note for the Terms of reference, rules of engagement and selection process for FP leaders and CCT leaders within the CGIAR Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA)

Issue

FTA is a research-for-development partnership, carried out by CGIAR Centers and Partners in support of the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework and supported by the CGIAR Trust Fund and/or bilateral sources contractually aligned to such program.

In view of recent changes in the System, in particular concerning the rules set by donors for funding CRPs, this note proposes modifications of the terms of reference (ToRs) for FP leaders, and rules of engagement (RoE) between FP leaders, their employer and FTA.

- **Participants are invited to provide feedback in particular :**
 - **on the draft ToRs and RoE for FP leaders (Paper 4b)**
 - **on the introduction of such ToRs and RoE for CCT leaders (Paper 4c)**
 - **on proposed minimal time requirements for the positions.**
 - **on the proposition to introduce competitive calls amongst program partners for the selection of FP leaders and CCT leaders.**

- **The ISC is invited to discuss the proposal and to advise on how the selection of the new leader of FP 4 shall be carried on.**

It is also proposed that a revision of the ToRs of management team be launched once the above is agreed and ToRs of the ISC are revised.

Request from the ISC

A while ago ISC was going to discuss the **rules of engagement and ways of selecting FP leaders and cross-cutting theme (CCT) leaders** (and related criteria). Budget issues and the complex proposal submission process took precedence. The time has now come to discuss such rules to clarify them in view of the evolving demands on FP leaders and CCT leads.

Background and current situation

Donors have been requesting information on results produced at the FP level, in particular results produced using W1-2 funds, and are increasingly intending to allocate their W2 funds in an earmarked manner. This change in funding has repercussions for the responsibilities of FP leaders and other functions within all CRPs, including FTA.

In FTA phase 2, budget is attributed first to FPs (see paper 1 on priorities), and then ventilated into the different partners into a FP. If the current requests of donors for FP earmarking are granted- which is highly likely- this increase the importance of accountability at FP level.

Just as the FTA program director, **Flagship program leaders** currently do not have formal administrative/hierarchical oversight on the scientists involved in the FP (except when the FP leaders are research team leaders in their center and that some of the FP staff is situated within their team). To facilitate the discharge of the responsibilities of FP leaders, there is a need to clarify collective rules of engagement.

Cross-cutting theme leaders lead the different clusters of the Support platform. Although perhaps less prominent externally to FTA than the FP leaders, the CCT leader position is very important and pivotal internally to FTA, given the very integrative function of CCT all across FTA. They are also programmatic leaders, just as FP leaders, which entails the same constraints and requirements as depicted in the paragraphs above.

FP leaders and CCT leaders only exert these functions in FTA for part of their time, and FTA funds also cover only part of their time¹. Currently, there is no benchmark as to what this represent, and how time is to be supported by the program.

There are therefore three main questions to address:

1. What are adequate ToRs for FP/CCT ?
2. How are FP/CCT leaders selected?
3. What are the engagement rules for centers/partners providing a FP leader to FTA, including:
 - how the FP leader ToRs are reflected in the ToRs of the scientist,
 - what percentage of time a FP leader dedicates the function,
 - how does this influence the evaluation process of the staff member?

Proposed revised Terms of reference and rules of engagement

Currently, the the FP ToRs serve as reference for the work of incumbent, but they contain important elements that define some (but not all in their current version) of the engagement conditions between the program, the staff concerned and the employer of the staff.

It is therefore proposed that the ToR document be expanded as a “Terms of reference and rules of engagement” document, in order to serve as a reference document between (i) the staff, (ii) the program, (iii) the employer of the staff (see Paper 4b for FP leaders, and Paper 4c for CCT leaders).

Selection process

It furthermore is proposed that:

¹ This is similar to all other CRPs, at the exception of CCAFS, for which FP leaders are fully hired by the program and report for 100% of their time to the CRP director.

- Flagship Leaders are appointed by the Lead Center DG, based on a recommendation by the FTA Director, after a competitive process amongst program participants and partners, and in consultation with the Management Team.
- CCT leaders/research coordinators are appointed by the FTA Director, after a competitive process amongst program participants and partners, and in consultation with the Management Team.

In both cases, there would be a competitive process, including interviews.

At the time of application to the positions, the candidature shall be sponsored by the employer of the staff, with an explicit sign-off on the ToRs and rules of engagement stated in a cover letter by the employer.

End-of –appointment performance evaluation

The text above retains, as in the existing ToRs, the reference to an end-of-appointment “performance evaluation, to take place involving inputs from the employer², the Flagship team members, the Management Team and the Steering Committee as a basis for extension or reassignment of the appointment.” The way this is drafted suggests that this is a standalone, FTA-specific evaluation (and not the evaluation from the employer).

- **Participants are invited to provide feedback on how FP leaders should be evaluated, in particular, whether a 360° process is to be put in place in FTA, and to how this evaluation would link to the staff evaluation by the employer.**

Situation of current incumbents

For current incumbents, employers (ICRAF and CIFOR) would be notified of the changes of ToRs and Rules of engagement, and requested to send a letter/mail expressing their concurrence and endorsement of the currently installed FP leader under the newly defined rules of engagement.

The case of CCT leaders

There are currently no ToRs for CCT leaders (gender, capacity development, MELIA, Data). The current CCT leaders have been selected by the FTA management team, each one through different ways, mainly by cooptation from phase 1. It is proposed that ToRs for CCT leaders/research coordinators be created

- **Participants are also invited to give views on the draft ToRs for CCT leaders/research coordinators**

Implication for FTA management bodies

The discussion on the ISC ToRs and on the rules of engagement of FP leaders might have repercussion on the way governance is exerted in FTA, this might have consequence on the ToRs and composition of the Management Team (Annex 2).

- **It is proposed to request the Director and the Management team to reflect on possible implication of the changes to be decided on the desired roles and composition of the MT.**

² The ToRs in the FTA full proposal used the ambiguous term “host center”. We have substituted it here by “employer”, as a staff member may be employed by one center but by physically “hosted” in another center.

Annex 1. Current FTA Flagship leader job description (FTA full revised proposal 31 July 2016)

Selection, supervision and financial support

The Flagship Leader will serve as an active member of the FTA Management Team (MT) and report to the FTA Director for the proportion of time spent on component coordination. (This could be understood as a 'dotted line' relationship, with the FTA Director providing input to a performance evaluation conducted by the line manager at the host Center). The cost of coordination, including administrative support within reason, will be covered by the FTA management budget following approval by the ISC.

Roles of the Flagship leader

In close collaboration with the Flagship team, the other Flagship leaders and the FTA Director, the Flagship Leader facilitates, coordinates and/or leads the following functions:

Research animation, coordination, planning and reporting

- Provides scientific, conceptual and methodological leadership/coordination, balancing two windows of research that go beyond a narrowly defined Results-Based Management (RBM) approach across all participating centers.
- Acts as focal point of communication between the MSU and the scientific team contributing to the Flagship.
- Facilitates and welcomes contributions to the planning and execution of the Flagship research agenda and impact pathways from across Participating Centers and partners.
- Organizes scientific retreats, workshops, etc., whenever deemed appropriate.
- Monitors progress on impact pathways in consultation with the Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment team.
- Provides consolidated reports as and when requested by the CRP Director.
- Contributes to CRP-level coordination and integration.

Portfolio management, fundraising and budgeting

- Provides inputs to the FTA Director for annual budget development and the allocation of Windows 1 & 2 (W1/W2) funds.
- Develops criteria for the evaluation of bilateral projects to qualify for 'bridging' W1/W2 funds.
- Informs the FTA director about the development of new bilateral projects and prepares the elements for evaluation by the MSU of the relevance of these new projects for FTA.
- Provides inputs to the FTA Director and the Centers' management teams for the continuous monitoring of funding levels and the assessment of funding needs.
- Facilitating communication on proposal development and fundraising opportunities and encouraging partnering among centers.

Required qualifications

- Recognized competence in relevant scientific disciplines and familiarity with policy arenas and practitioner communities relevant for impact
- Excellent interpersonal skills with a proven track record of facilitating participation in collaborative endeavors
- Good research management record.

Term of appointment and evaluation

The Flagship leader will be appointed for an initial period of two years.

At the end of the appointment period (or upon request of one of the parties as necessary and appropriate), a performance evaluation will take place involving inputs from the host center, the Flagship team members, the Management Team and the Steering Committee as a basis for extension or reassignment of the appointment.

Annex 2 – Current ToRs of the FTA Management Team

The Management Team (MT) is composed of a maximum of 10 members:

- Flagship leaders
- Strategic partners (Tier 1) not leading a Flagship.

The MT meets monthly via video conference, and meets in person at least twice a year in parallel with the Independent Steering Committee (ISC) meetings and/or science meetings. The MT interacts with the ISC at the regular meetings of the ISC. The agenda will be managed by the MT, but the FTA Director and SC can request the inclusion of specific topics.

The MT can invite observers and or resource persons as and when required.

The MT operates by consensus.

The MT reports to the FTA Director, who is the chairperson.

When consensus cannot be reached, the ultimate decisions remain with the Lead Center because of its overall fiduciary responsibility for the program or, if the Lead Center is against the consensus, with the ISC.

The MT dispute resolution process consists of inviting an independent facilitator to help Participating Centers work through the specific ‘sticking point’ issue(s).

Responsibilities

- Propose direction and strategy for the FTA program for consideration by the ISC
- Implement active portfolio management and manage project inclusion in FTA, priority setting and scientific quality for flagship and crosscutting themes
- Provide analyses of the FTA portfolio, including new bilateral projects as well as W1/ W2 activities, to the ISC for confirmation of inclusion in the FTA portfolio
- Recommend the proportional distribution of Window 1 and Window 2 funds to the ISC
- Prepare the inputs for the annual Program of Work and Budget, and Report
- Ensure complementarity and coherence across Centers, CRPs and partners through strategic planning and facilitation
- Plan for and promote outcomes and impact through the development and management of a research program that interfaces appropriately with key stakeholders on the impact pathways
- Take into account advice and direction from the Consortium Board, Fund Council and ISPC in flagship and crosscutting theme planning and implementation
- Facilitate integration across flagships and in sentinel landscapes as well in as cross-CRP partnerships

- Monitor internal progress (how the program is doing in its activities, outputs, outcomes and impact)
- Manage alignment of the flagships and the crosscutting themes; ensure that the latter are considered at the beginning of research projects rather than in the middle or at the end
- Ensure coherence and equity in decision-making within and across flagships and crosscutting themes
- Organize and maintain foresight on prospective or emerging issues
- Coordinate and organize FTA processes or events whenever needed, e.g. information sharing, access to documents, annual science meeting, etc.