

# CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA) 16th Meeting of the Independent Steering Committee (ISC)

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Online meeting

## *Meeting minutes approved by the ISC*

### Participants

#### ISC members:

Anne-Marie Izac (ISC Chair), Florencia Montagnini, Linda Collette, Susan Braatz, Richard Muyungi, Robert Nasi (for part of the meeting), Rene Boot, Stephan Weise, Vincent Gitz.

**Day 1 observers:** Monika Kiczakajlo, Alexandre Meybeck (MSU).

**Presenters:** Fabio Ricci (FTA communication's coordinator), Federica Coccia (FTA MELIA coordinator), Karl Hughes (ICRAF), Jean-Charles Rouge (CIFOR), Brian Belcher, Rachel Claus, Rachel Davel (Royal Roads University).

**Day 2 observer:** Alexandre Meybeck (MSU).

## Executive Summary and recommendations

The ISC met over two sessions of 3 hours over two days to discuss the following issues:

- FTA's 2020 POWB and final W1W2 allocations
- Preparation of the POWB 2021
- FTA impact assessment work
- FTA communication, including and FTA Highlights publication
- Initial feedback from FTA's External Review
- FTA post- 2021

The ISC took the following decisions and produced recommendations:

1. POWB 2020: The ISC thanked the director and management team for the preparation of the final POWB 2020 given the final CGIAR allocations that enabled to fund 50% of T3. The ISC will recommend to the CIFOR Board the approval of the revised POWB 2020 and related allocations (Table 5 as finalized<sup>1</sup>), including the program of work supporting the TPP on agroecological transitions. It invited the director to propose to the ISC a specific meeting to present and discuss the TPP in fuller details.

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<sup>1</sup> Including its erratum

2. POWB 2021: The ISC noted that its previous guidance for the orientations of the POWB 2021 is still standing. It took note of the proposal for the contingency planning tiers in view of the latest 2021 funding estimates from the SMO. The ISC recommended that due consideration be given to the concerns of some strategic partners on the first version of the 2021 W1W2 allocations and related plans of work, and looks forward to receiving the full 2021 POWB for endorsement.
3. Communications: The ISC recommended to FTA leadership to further target its communication activities towards the various categories of actors identified in the ToC. In line with this, the ISC also recommended that the highlights publication should precisely target different audiences by publishing as stand-alone chapters on important global issues, as well as through the main product of some 32 pages, well-illustrated, targeting policy and decision makers. Particular attention should be given to the selection of the topics to ensure they are demand driven instead of supply driven.
4. Impact assessment: The ISC acknowledged the progress made on the FTA integrative impact studies. The five studies need to move together and be completed in 2021. The ISC recognizes that there is a rich amount of data that can come out of project documents, but these integration studies should go further in order to produce new insights on the program-level impacts, not just projects or FPs. They should also show impact in the areas of climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as of biodiversity and resilience/sustainable production. ISC requested that the studies look beyond particular country cases to identify impacts at global level to address global challenges, especially through national and international policy impact pathways. This could require a greater involvement of some scientific leaders in FTA. Once impacts are documented in a credible way, forward looking scenarios could frame projections of future impact, using transparent methods to extrapolate on the basis of available evidence.
5. External review: The ISC expressed its unanimous appreciation for the work done by the external reviewers on the draft external review of FTA. The ISC chair will send ISC's appreciation to the review team. It is a report of great value going forward, for the last year of the program in 2021 and for the partnership beyond 2021.
6. Post 2021: The ISC highlighted the need to continue the work of FTA after the closure of the program in order to address global challenges and capitalize on the legacy of the FTA partnership. ISC recommended to the MT to explore possible options to do so. Stephan Weise and Rene Boot provided useful suggestions on a strategy to build on the current momentum. They will consult their constituencies on this issue.

A meeting of the ISC could take place at an appropriate time in the first quarter of 2021 to further discuss options and overall strategy for the post 2021, as well as to review 2021 workplan including the use of the French W2.

## Detailed minutes of the meeting

### 1) FTA's 2020 POWB

Robert Nasi presents an up-date on the CIFOR-ICRAF merger. The merger transition plan is being implemented with currently the merging of operational units (including resource mobilization, MELIA, communication) and the preparation of joint policies including for human resources. Everything is going according to plans, with some delays on geographical organization due to covid. There is one single management team. It is for the Common CIFOR-ICRAF Board to decide on final organization, including with GLF and Resilient Landscapes. This will be done at the end of 2021.

The ISC Chair stressed that the objective of this session was to discuss the proposal of the Director and Management team in order to then submit the proposal with ISC's recommendation, to the Lead center Board.

Vincent Gitz presented the proposal<sup>2</sup>. At this point in time (end of the year), knowing the final instalments of W1-W2, we can adjust and finalize the budget of the year. It appears that in 2020 we can disburse all Tier 1 and 2, and half of Tier 3. The MSU worked with FPs and CCTs leaders to select the activities to be retained, mostly those that are the most advanced. The remaining ones will not be funded but can be inscribed in the POWB of 2021. In this proposal, **50% of T3 is being funded for each FP**, representing activities involving in different ways contributing partners. Another modification to the initial POWB is the addition of W2 from France for a dedicated earmarked workplan on agroecology.

Susan Braatz, pointing to a clear, and very well put together proposal, asked for clarification on the **partner funds** in Table 6. Vincent recalled that these are unrestricted coordination funds for partners not leading a FP, intended mostly to cover staff time involved in reporting, planning, preparing and attending FTA MT meetings etc. The director proposes to maintain that allocation for next year.

Chair: By comparison with previous years when the reverse occurred, in this final POWB for 2020 it is important to have no **carry-over**, or a small one, because of new rules from the SMO.

Robert Nasi asked Vincent if we have information on the new CGIAR rule on carry forward.

Vincent Gitz: We had the objective at the beginning of the year to allocate all the W1-W2 money, and this is what we did. But partners may not have spent all the funds received, especially what came late, for instance the new W2 for agroecology, resulting in some activities not fully implemented. SMO is introducing a new rule. Carry-overs (program and/or partner levels) will be considered as advances for the following year (2021) allocations. This would occur unless some yet unspecified conditions are met in the 2021 POWB. These to be defined conditions are likely to include whether CRPs can demonstrate that the carry overs are justified by a workplan. We still don't know the specifics. However, with our activity and output/deliverable-based workplans, coupled with regular monitoring of delivery (traffic-light) and with the financial reporting by partners on spending rates that the lead center is collecting, FTA should be well positioned to prove that carry overs are justified by concrete activities.

The ISC then discussed the **2020 workplan on agroecology**. Susan Braatz noted that this program of work included two projects that seem a bit far from FTA: livestock and crop integration and mechanization in Ethiopia and Uganda. The director explained that the creation of the TPP on agroecological transitions is the result of the development of the operational priority on agroecology, that indeed now goes beyond agroforestry and involves a range of partners. Not all of their projects are specifically linked to trees. The secretariat is in FTA but the TPP itself is - intentionally- not branded. The Chair mentioned the importance to also integrate forests and the ecosystem services they provide. The director proposed to organize a specific meeting with the ISC to present this work, that covers various scales: plot, farm, landscape ecosystems services, and value chains. This proposal was supported by Linda Collette. It is important that it does not affect negatively the realization of the FTA program.

The Chair thanked the director and management team for the preparation of the final POWB 2020 based upon the final CGIAR allocations that enabled to fund 50% of T3. The Chair stated that she recommends approval of the final allocations for 2020. This is because these allocations were arrived at through a process of prioritization of activities, taking into account the upcoming closure of all CRPs, and also reflecting the guidance provided by ISC. All ISC members were in agreement.

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<sup>2</sup> Also, a small technical erratum was submitted by electronic means between day 1 and day 2 of the meeting (no change in activity / and deliverable but change of implementing partner: ICRAF instead of CIFOR for approx. USD 20k).

The ISC will therefore recommend to the CIFOR Board the approval of the revised POWB 2020 and related allocations (Table 5 as finalized<sup>3</sup>), including the program of work supporting the TPP on agroecological transitions. ISC invited the director to propose to the ISC a specific meeting to present and discuss the TPP in fuller details.

## 2) POWB 2021

The Chair introduced the item pointing to the fact that the POWB 2021 is still a draft and is a living document. The ISC already made a recommendation on relative priorities for 2021 at its previous meeting. FTA is asking for final guidance for the finalisation of the POWB. The deadline to submit it to the SMO is 31<sup>st</sup> January. The narrative workplan will be submitted to the ISC at the beginning of January.

Vincent Gitz presented the main points of the POWB 2021. It follows the previous recommendations of the ISC. Figures are still provisional and under review by the MT. The first point is available resources. We will not have much carry over, that is by design. There has been a change in the W1-W2 relinking rules that is leading to less W1 than expected in 2021: FTA has raised a complaint about this. The SMO estimates that 2021 W1-2 funding (what they call the “disbursement target”) will be at 90% of the finplan. FTA’s contingency planning is inscribing the remaining 10% in T3. According to the SMO, the main uncertainty for 2021 is with funding from the UK, FCDO (ex DFID), while other donors seem firm in their commitments. Uncertainties will be as usual managed through our Tiers system: T1 is almost certain, T2 very likely and T3 is unlikely. This year we created a special tier between T1 and T2 to cover programme closure and final reporting in 2022. Activities in 2021 will be mainly final publications, synthesis, bringing program results to next users and impact assessments, except for the agroecology priority where it is expected that activities will go on until 2022 as part of a 3-year workplan.

A discussion ensued on the **agroecology workplan**. The Chair asked whether we are sure that the donor will go on funding the TPP after 2021, if CIFOR-ICRAF leaves one CGIAR? The director replied that it is part of a 3 years funding from France, who will have to figure out the appropriate funding channel for 2022. Some other donors, like Devco, will also go on funding activities under the TPP after 2021, in the form of bilateral projects. Stephan Weise suggested that the TPP is not really part of FTA, that it could become a non-CRP bilateral project, not to impact FTA. Robert Nasi recalled that it is a political decision of France to channel it as W2 in order to have a seat on the council. Vincent suggested that there may be a pathway in between identifying it separately in the CGIAR finplan not to impact on the rest of FTA, as it is done in A4NH for the Covid-hub. Stephan Weise supported this option.

Susan Braatz asked about Table 2 where FP3 and FP4 seem to be penalized because they have underperformed in terms of **delivery**. Vincent explained that the process is not new: we look every year at delivery. We told FPs a year ago that 2021 will be the last year and all activities need to be delivered and all resources spent before end of the year 2021, hence the importance of delivery and that this would be a factor in calibrating forward workplans, as FPs with a substantial backlog would have difficulties to add too much on top of it. The rule was discussed and agreed in the MT.

René Boot stated that, even though he did not have the time to check with other non CG partners, he was a bit disappointed, on behalf of his institution, by the **distribution of the allocations**. It appears that Tropenbos and others have had a significant reduction in their 2021 allocation, without apparent reason. The ISC Chair explained that this needs to be discussed with the director. As a general rule when partners are not satisfied/do not understand their allocation and related workplan choices, the issue must first be discussed with the director to determine what is happening and what is the root of the problem. This should lead to an agreement as satisfactorily as possible for all parties. VG stressed that the figures presented are preliminary

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<sup>3</sup> Including its erratum

and that we are now having this discussion in the MT and with FP leaders. VG will have this discussion with FP3 as he also wanted to understand why the engagement of Tropenbos has been reduced. The director and Rene Boot will ensure that they have a further clarifying discussion. They will inform ISC of the outcome.

The chair, noting that the guidance that ISC provided is still standing and was applied, asked based on this guidance, about activities that are going to be closed earlier than at the end of next year. Vincent said that adjustments have been made, especially in the prioritization within Tiers. Some activities at risk of not completion will be discontinued and replaced with synthesis (even if done on a basis less comprehensive as originally foreseen). The ISC guidance was in line with the completion of the 3 year work plans (2019/2020/2021) of the operational priorities, for which 2021 is the third and last year. Because of this, 2021 was already foreseen in all FPs as a year of wrap-up, synthesis, and closure, and the ISC recommendations have strengthened the original orientations for 2021 in that regards. For instance, no new stream of research will be initiated by W1W2 funds, and priority will be given, due to funding constraints, to these areas where synthesis are possible (given the richness of available results) and most are the most promising. We will also have to ensure that the guidance is also reflected in the distribution putting the ISC priorities in Tier 1 and 2, as Tier 3 is at this stage unlikely.

**The Chair concluded the discussion**, noting that ISC's previous guidance for the orientations of the POWB 2021 is still standing. The ISC took note of the proposal for the contingency planning tiers given latest 2021 funding estimates. The ISC looks forward to receiving the full 2021 POWB for endorsement and recommended that due consideration be given in the 2021 POWB to the concerns of all strategic partners.

### 3) Update on FTA communication

Vincent Gitz summarised the background paper. Communication and outreach are part of FTA's impact pathway for uptake by next users. In each project there is outreach. At program level one of the important communication tools is the FTA website. The number of page views has almost doubled in 2 years. This year most of FTA events, another important mean of communication and outreach, went digital. This has allowed us to reach different categories of actors. Next year we have important global milestones: WFC, UNFCCC COP26, CBD COP15.

**A discussion ensued on the targeted communication approaches vis-a-vis separate categories of stakeholders.** The chair asked about the type of communication FTA developed to reach donors and environmental NGOs. In the background document there was nothing on donors and environmental NGOs, but FTA needs to communicate with all the key stakeholders in the Impact Pathways. Richard Muyungi pointed out the importance to consider the needs of new partners; for instance the Green Climate Fund, of which he is a board member. Our outputs could cross-influence each other. Vincent explained that with donors we have a specific approach, tailored made. So, it is more like targeted communication, for instance W2 donors were invited to the FTA Science Conference and are also often invited as panel members in events we organize. We have, in addition, specific individual lines of communication with donors. For some donors like Netherlands, or potential new donors like Japan or the UK, there are targeted documents that we prepare just for them.

In 2021 there will be the Highlights publication. And we want to have in 2021 a dedicated moment with the donors who are "friends of what we do". Vincent said that environmental NGOs are more partners rather than targets of communication, most know us through bilateral contacts but we must do better towards ensuring that they can get a good comprehensive picture of FTA's results. The Chair's point is therefore a good point to work upon in the future. For the Green Climate Fund, FTA is now a key partner, at the same time we advise the GCF about the design of its programs, and we support countries to present proposals: there is for instance a key proposal led by Sri Lanka, with substantial involvement of FTA, that was just approved by the GCF.

Linda Collette asked whether FTA promotes options regarding **One-Health and relations with covid 19**. The director answered that this is part of the items that we are going to put to the fore. We are also involved in the CGIAR covid hub. VG is a member of its management team and leading its working group on building the resilience of food systems. One health is an important component of it. Amy Ickowitz is part of the research team from FTA looking at cross-over risks, land use, wild meat, etc. So key FTA's research themes have emerged as primary focii for the Hub, which is a plus. In addition, Robert Nasi and CIFOR organized a very successful webinar on COVID-19 and what it means for wild meat. Robert Nasi mentioned that there is a bit of CG political sensitivity as one-Health is part of the CRP A4NH. At the same time, Vincent is leading one of the working groups of the covid hub. Also we had an event in GLF on this. We are ready to communicate more on this, but we need to carefully frame what we have produced and the authorship of it. Vincent acknowledged the importance not to upset the CG dynamics, but we need to make sure, if FTA scientists are contributing, that FTA's role is properly acknowledged.

Susan Braatz **asked about data and tools to assess the effectiveness of the effort** to reaching different target groups in communications. Are we properly designing and targeting events to specific audiences? Do we have the means to measure and understand which audience is predominantly following which event? How specific are our data and efforts in terms of communications targets and how much thought there is given to this ex-post or ex-ante? Are we choosing specific media and tools for specific target groups and audiences? Are we comparing how they perform? Will there be any impact assessment of the communications programme? Vincent Gitz: these are all very good remarks – our stakeholders expect targeted communication and we aim at this definitely : it is in the strategy and we will try to take it on board in our workplan, noting there are also limitations on resources. Rene Boot asked about Table 1 and the total views of website, whether we have statistics from other CRPs? Fabio Ricci explained that the statistics have not been shared with us, but FTA can ask other CRPs.

Stephan Weise suggested that FTA **undertakes a specific effort to adding value in 2021** to some key publications that are in the pipeline, key outputs that are coming out in 2021 that would need a special lift (e.g. a twitter storm, etc.) to give them a high altmetric scoring. We would need to identify the strategic outputs and we should throw them out there with a concerted effort.

**In conclusion**, the ISC recommended to program management and leadership to further target communication activities towards categories of actors identified in the ToC, using appropriate means. The role of communication in bringing about significant impact will then become clearer and this will strengthen the ToC at program level.

#### 4) Impact studies

The Chair introduced the topic by stressing that this is a follow up on the recommendations made by ISC to FTA during the impact assessment joint workshop (ISC-FTA leadership) in 2019. The Item started by a 20 minutes presentation by Jean-Charles Rouge and Karl Hughes, FTA MELIA team, to present the state of the FTA integrative studies. The objective of these integrative studies is to generate coherent impact narratives on the results FTA has produced to address 5 challenges. They use a theory-based evaluation approach, in 4 steps.

- Step 1- Project mapping
- Step 2- Develop overarching ToCs
- Step 3- Evidence collation and identification of gaps
- Step 4- Impact estimation

A discussion followed the presentation, starting with a round of comments. What follows is a synthesis of points and arguments made around key issues discussed both in the discussions on day 1 and at the beginning of day 2.



## **a) Overall Scope of the study**

The Chair was concerned that the 5 challenges selected do not explicitly include the contribution of trees to climate change (CC) adaptation and mitigation, to improving the water cycle, to improving livelihoods and health to biodiversity preservation. Challenges should be big global challenges: it is a question of spatial and temporal scale. The studies should demonstrate FTA's contributions to addressing global issues. Is it possible to arrive at global figures?

Karl Hughes: the need to work out new targets – that we then called “challenges” – was that the original CGIAR high-level targets were not fit for purpose. We needed a better results framework. And if we can, we need counterfactuals. On nutrition, FTA work has been more scale related (scaling practices, technologies, germplasm developed pre-FTA). Having a counterfactual here is much more appropriate.

Vincent Gitz explained the rationale of the selection of the “challenges”. The five presented here are not the full list of FTA challenges. The impact areas mentioned by the Chair are also critical, and we considered this when selecting the 5 studies. In this regard, the first 3 challenges (deforestation, restoration of degraded lands, and sustainable land management) are important proxies to find out how in the end how FTA development will influence climate change adaptation, mitigation, biodiversity. Addressing what is done against these three challenges allows to understand how much carbon is being stored, biodiversity preserved, water better managed or preserved. Also, together with challenges 4 and 5, to understand how we are helping forest and people adapt to climate change. Therefore, the way the answer to these challenges is being crafted needs to take into account that there should be a future development on biodiversity. The 5 challenges are only a first layer, and clusters within those are detailed enough to allow us to determine the influence on other parameters and variables. Vincent explained that the need to reconstruct ToCs was because the ToCs of FTA were flagship-based and these were not interconnected. Need to reconstruct interconnected ToCs: these interconnections were already present in the overall ToC of FTA but at a level not detailed enough to guide work effectively.

## **b) Beyond partial data on place-based research toward assessing global-level impact**

Chair: There is a need to better scale the analysis and how projects results translate at global level (and at least at national level). How to go from one scale to the other credibly? How do you address in year 9 methodological issues that should have been addressed in year 1 of FTA (when IA was not considered part of the core agenda of FTA).

Florencia Montagnini: answers are very spotty on the nutrition challenge. Some thousand farmers here and there. But no overall view of what is happening. Also, maybe some of these projects may be part of the legacy. But there is a need to reflect actual outcomes and not just numbers of hectares and people affected.

Richard Muyungi: Agree that challenge 1 is well documented. We should be able to better report our addressing these challenges. How has our work contributed in addressing challenges? Results are being mentioned at country level rather than at the global level. This is a problem, because challenges are global. Results should be extrapolated and brought out. There is a need to report better – and bring results at global level. What is needed is to identify the issues with a global recognition and potential global impact. Identify the issues where a significant change has been made at global level. The presentation was very much focused at national level, missing global effects. The team needs to broaden their perspective.

Susan Braatz: Another layer is key, it is the enabling environment for long term impacts of research. What are we learning about the research to policy link? Is there any evaluation of the impact of FTA on strengthening research capacity in countries? Need to look more at the enabling environment, enabling conditions.

Brian Belcher: In each of the challenges one of the impacts we are looking at is the research pathway – we are looking for that kind of evidence. The questions of the ISC are good ones and they highlight contradictions we need to face in doing these studies. The first part of these studies is to look for concrete evidence – mostly qualitative. We need better ToCs – it is hard to do evidencing unless you have strong ToC. We also need more focus – many of the projects we are looking at were not connected and therefore not coherent even though they deal with the same issues. Integration, as defined here in terms of overall coherence should be done at the beginning and be constantly monitored and adapted if needed. Then, we will focus on what these will mean in terms of future impact (and for these we need to make big assumptions). This will help us in designing future portfolio.

Karl Hughes: Having a good narrative about how FTA is tackling the challenges is relevant and powerful. We could reconfigure some of the challenges to make them more policy relevant.

Jean Charles Rouge: The policy pathways will be further investigated in the next part of the study.

Robert Nasi: what was done is still too much a project-based evaluation. A serious consolidation is needed – and it cannot be done by MELIA only. This is a work in progress – the final product should be different. External audiences do not care too much about ToC; they care about the significance of the results produced by FTA.

Vincent Gitz: As we look back to our ToCs, there are 2 big kind of impact pathways – technical pathways where we can measure adoption rates and understand the necessary conditions and hypothesis for adoption, and then policy related pathways (national and international/global). We need to combine these two narratives. We did not start FTA with a precise methodology to craft all of this. Now the learning enables us to do this step. This is a research question in its own right, that not only FTA, but many other R4D programs not only in the CGIAR, are facing. A question for FTA is what is realistic to continue undertake and finalize for next year?

Richard Muyungi: It is challenging to translate projects into global impacts. There are two ways of looking at how they do. Butterfly effect – Effect that can be seen beyond that project. There are examples of projects that have consequences recognized globally (biodiversity of global relevance, etc). Reflecting impact of a sum of projects at global level is difficult, but we can look at commonalities across projects. Show projects that have been effective – bring together numbers from different projects.

Stephan Weise: The question is whether it should be more project oriented or more (global) outcome oriented. Currently the document is very project focused. It is necessary to try to go one step further, towards what would happen if a certain policy is adopted, what it would mean in terms of outcomes.

Robert Nasi: Fully agree with Stephan. There is a fundamental difficulty to have MELIA people go further. This detailed evidence should serve as a basis to build broader narratives.

Florencia Montagnini: It would be nice if they could produce a clear table with outputs and outcomes.

René Boot: The difficulty is that they start with an elaborated discussion of the methodology. Need to focus on results. Be careful not to mix methodology and results or you lose the reader. Methodology is the background for a narrative with results.

Chair: On the Policy Impact Pathway: FTA has been progressing in terms of impact in its policy work. Good information about this is provided in the narrative of Challenge 1. The analysis is convincing and shows that FTA has contributed to policy changes in different parts of the world over time in a significant manner. This is the kind of things we had in mind during the IA workshop in Rome. This provides a very good foundation to move forward. MELIA should work on this and include more scientists (but not the ones directly involved in the work). One



recommendation could be that FP leaders could be asked to set aside time and resources to contribute to impact assessment along the lines established by MELIA. It is a very important but huge piece of work.

### ***c) On the adoption of innovations, and how to learn lessons from successes and failures***

The ISC Chair recalled her experience as director of research at ICRAF 1996 to 2003: you need adoption before you can have impact, but a key issue in those years was that farmers were not adopting agroforestry innovations right away. Farmers were not adopting, because the benefits of agroforestry systems took time to come into fruition, whereas the costs of adoption were immediate as well as medium and long-term. From the narrative on Malawi (fertilizer trees was then called alley-cropping) it appears that today, only the well-to-do farmers were the ones adopting – this is an unintended side effect of the work. It is important to be transparent and recognize our own limitations in what we are trying to achieve. For instance, if adoption in Malawi (fertilizer trees) is still only done by well off farmers, then perhaps we should recognize that our options are not responding to the needs of the worst-off farmers, after many years of research investments. And we should draw appropriate conclusions. When you initiate a piece of research you should design up front how you will assess your impacts and when, given the length of time before the results on the ground appear. IA work can provide us with the type of information needed to move forward, including to decide whether to continue working in certain areas. Drawing lessons from unintended side effects of our work, from situations in which progress no longer seems possible is often highly productive and is one of the way in which sciences progress.

Stephan Weise: counterfactuals and approaches for the 2 challenges presented are different. The nutrition challenge is very focused on adoption, rather than the extent to which the methods are being picked up by next users and partners.

Karl Hughes replied that the scaling of complex agroforestry interventions now needs to involve behavioral sciences.

Chair: We have been working on the same types of options for years, but we do not have clear messages about these. Perhaps that some linkage in the specific ToC are missing, most probably the policy linkages. MELIA should identify the cases where the work of FTA has addressed global issues and document as well as they can the impact of FTA in the global policy arena, including the significance of the policies to which FTA has contributed. This will require really focusing on outcomes and impacts and their significance. The focus on sound credible methodology is good and is necessary but it is not sufficient in and of itself in a context where we need to have very clear and credible messages about the real world significance of FTA's work and results. MELIA might need some support from principal scientists to identify the most promising key issues.

### ***d) On ex-post and ex ante impact assessment***

Florencia Montagnini: we want to really come across with what FTA has accomplished. What do we want to show? What can be learned? This includes projections into the future.

Stephan Weise agreed on the need to look more forward. We have this impact doing this in this place; there is scope to reach more, based on some criteria, with a set of assumptions. This would allow us to state that we have done this, so far this with this impact, and this is relevant for other situations characterized as follows, with a total potential impact of X. Looking backwards, what are the learnings of how we should set ourselves up differently in the future?

Vincent Gitz: the terms of reference of this MELIA work were clearly to look back. We need to document our impact (from past work) at scale. Starting with 5 challenges that should bring us to understand where there was a change attributable to FTA. We need to clarify, from what we did,

what works/worked/is working and what is not. We can then add on this, to look forward: what are the impacts going forward of research already done, and what would be the forward impacts of additional research. But to do this we will need a broader team, involving principal scientists.

Stephan Weise: agree that it is a different exercise than what was requested of MELIA.

Chair: We would like the studies to be more analytical, and not to forget what has not worked and what we learned from that. We can come back to this as part of the discussion on the highlights publication. We definitely need to identify lessons learned for the future of research on trees and forests.

Vincent Gitz: these points are well taken. What is difficult is to give credible evidence on impacts on the ground. Once they are documented in a credible way, together with their assumptions, we can try to make projections. Methods need to be elaborated to make extrapolations from available evidence.

### **e) Conclusion**

The Chair concluded acknowledging the great progress made by MELIA on the FTA integrative impact studies. The 5 integrative studies need to move together and be completed in 2021. The ISC recognizes that there is a rich amount of data that can come out of project documents, but these integrative studies should go further and provide insights on program-level impacts, going beyond just projects or FPs. They should also show impact in the areas of climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as of biodiversity preservation as these are recognized global challenges. ISC requested that the studies look beyond particular country cases to identify impacts at global level in addressing global challenges, especially through national and international policy impact pathways. This might require stronger involvement of FP leaders/some principal scientists. Once impacts are documented in a credible way, forward looking projections of potential future impact could also be made with clear methods for extrapolating from available evidence.

### **5) Highlights publication**

Vincent Gitz presented the proposal. The objective is to display some of the main achievements and key track record of FTA, changing narratives, bringing changes in policies and on the ground since 2011. It will be around 10 chapters of 10 to 20 pages each. The audience is primarily some of our decision makers in these areas, in research for development, in development, including our donors. We are now discussing with the MT the list of topics. These papers will be prepared by principal scientists. The ISC could have a review role or be an editorial committee. The objective is to have a first draft end of April.

ISC members discussed the issue of the audience and the objectives of the publication. The ISC Chair said the audience was vast and the objectives needed to be clarified.

Stephan Weise cautioned about doing just another book that no-one will read. If this is for decision makers, then we can make something flashier like a picture with 3 paragraphs. We need to make sure the document goes all the way down to impacts, and can also say something about future potential for our work. The “so what” is critical: we are doing R4D so we need to make sure we are talking to the development community, and the potential additional impact that our work is bringing to development.

Susan Braatz: From the background document, I thought about a 32 pages publication with a lot of pictures, translated in at least 3 languages, to show that the program makes a difference. What Vincent is describing is different and also important for the legacy.

Linda Collette: We can make first the document described by Vincent, of which will be drawn the document described by Susan. Both documents are useful. The selection of topics will be key.

Florencia Montagnini: Agrees that we need two documents: one with all the evidence, and then a flashy one. Policy briefs are useful, backed up with good publications. There could also be tables with the key outputs and outcomes.

Susan Braatz: The chapters should be stand-alone so that they can be pulled out, used and promoted by others.

René Boot: We need to map the audience. What are our stakeholders? Infobriefs are useful.

Richard Muyungi: The aim is to look to what we have done. We need to reflect on who needs that? How to package the information? Need to identify the key messages important for forests, trees and agroforestry. It should not be a scientific paper, otherwise we will miss the decision makers. Need to be policy relevant and to include success stories.

Vincent Gitz: What we see in the discussions towards One CGIAR is that most people do not understand what is the kind of change that a program of 10 years working on complex issues can bring. CRPs have not done enough on showing this key dimension and value added. For FTA, working on tree and land use systems, and on policies, the time dimension is even more important and there is a value added in bringing together what we have done over a decade. We have tested it on the restoration chapter, still a draft. This discussion is extremely useful. It shows that we need 2 products:

- A 32 pages publication
- A longer document of 10 to 12 modular and independent chapters, containing key messages and recommendations on key issues.

Chair: recognizes that the document has been interpreted differently by members. In the document there are examples of various topics for inclusion; they are not all of the same level. How do you plan to identify the topics included? A focus on the significance of impacts seems essential.

Vincent Gitz: On the choice of the topics, they are key issues the program has been tackling; This list is being currently discussed in the MT. Need also to take into account the relevance for the future. The list of themes could be reviewed by the ISC. We will also precise the spin off products.

**In conclusion**, the ISC recommended that the highlights publication should target different audiences by being published as stand-alone chapters on important global issues, as well as through a spin-off product of 32 pages well illustrated targeting decision makers. Particular attention should be given right now to the selection of the topics.

## 6) External review

Vincent Gitz briefly explains the process and which stage we are at. Vincent has shared with the ISC the draft review report that the Independent review team prepared. It is not a full-blown evaluation like the one done in phase 1; it is focusing uniquely on quality of science and effectiveness. One of the reviewers knows well FTA as he conducted the 2014 external evaluation. We were initially quite skeptical given the short time allocated to it. But in fact, there is a lot of useful findings and also useful recommendations.

The Chair explains that incidentally, this draft report is just available at the same time of this ISC meeting, for factual comments by FTA. Therefore, she thought that it was appropriate to ask the ISC to read the document, even in draft form, in order to have a first discussion about its recommendations. The Chair opens the floor for comments.

Florencia Montagnini notes that it is still a draft, but is more than a desk review, with use of data and interviews. It is a very good document, a good background to FTA, an important contribution.

René Boot: wants to highlight two recommendations: n° 3 on the need to communicate in developing countries and n° 6; these are very useful.

Susan Braatz: It would be useful to have a broad picture of FTA and how it fits in the global picture. A global programme working on global issues with different partners. It could be brought at the beginning of the executive summary. Section 2.3 is a list of bullet points extracted from Annex 5. Annex 5 is in fact very useful and these points in 2.3 would deserve to be more visible. Recommendations are good; however, some of them are too vague, giving the what to do, but not the how to do it.

Chair: It is a very good report. Something that can be used to talk with donors; in the glossy highlights document there could be quotes from it. The report's recommendations are useful and FTA management should look at how to implement them. Recommendation 4 is a very helpful opening for the post 2021; shows how important it is to have scientists working together, deciding on use of resources together, looking for resources together. Recommendation 6 can already be used by MELIA. She hopes that the CG will also use the CG level recommendations.

**In conclusion**, the ISC expressed its unanimous appreciation for the work done by the external reviewers on the draft external review of FTA. It will send its appreciation to the review team. It is a report of great value going forward, for the last year of the program in 2021 and for the partnership beyond 2021.

## 7) FTA post-2021

The Chair introduced the topic making reference to the background document prepared by the director, recalling key elements of the history of collaborative research in the CGIAR, from mega-programs to CRPs. When the CRPs were created in 2011 they were constrained by a decision of the DGs that on-going work in the Centres should not be stopped and that there should be a very smooth transition to the creation of the CRPs. The creation of the megaprograms was because the donors considered that an accumulation of diverse small projects was not sufficiently effective and they wanted the CGIAR to organize itself in a few big programs addressing global issues. But the decision of the DGs meant that CRPs took on board all the research done before the creation of the CRPs, in their respective areas. Now the situation is different. As the one CGIAR is not going to continue CRPs, we are, in a very real sense, free from such constraints. What comes after FTA phase 2 can be built from the ground, between partners.

Stephan Weise: We know the importance of FTA work, we know we have a strong partnership and that there are opportunities to continue this engagement. But we need a renewal of the agenda. What to drop and what new things to bring on board? What is the role of CIFOR-ICRAF within the One CGIAR? They are not part of the development of One CGIAR. Under these circumstances if there is value in putting part of the agenda in the One CGIAR it should be done by a center that is part of One CGIAR. May be the Alliance can become a conduit so that parts of the FTA agenda are not lost to One CGIAR. Should be looking at developing an initiative, of which CIFOR-ICRAF could be partners, with other one CGIAR centers. There will be a mechanism for this put in place in January 2021. For instance, how to build something on carbon sequestration, on tree genetic resources, or on land restoration. But we can't promote FTA, nor call it FTA, as one CGIAR donors do not want to hear about CRPs anymore, this would be the kiss of death.

René Boot: There are 2 options. The first one is to maintain a link with One CGIAR. Netherlands has put efforts to support One CGIAR. At the same time NL felt sad that CIFOR-ICRAF is not on board of one CGIAR and wonder how the issues of FTA will be addressed by One CGIAR. This concern is shared by some other countries. NL has strict constraints for funding : to be eligible for funding, the initiatives will need to be well integrated in the agenda of One CGIAR. This could be a funding route and the one CGIAR could partner with CIFOR-ICRAF and other partners like Tropenbos in implementation. However, it is very difficult to have our topics issues well integrated in the One CGIAR agenda. The other option is to build a partnership outside the one CGIAR. In

which case it will have to compete with other international actors such as WRI. We need to know what the funding strategies of the partners are. Most of our funding is bilateral. Are we going to compete among partners? Rene agrees with Vincent: we have 6 months to get organised. One thing we can do is examining how what we do could link to EU programs on climate change, reducing deforestation, green deal. Would the EU want to work with a broad partnership? The choice between the 2 options really depends on how current partners see their own funding strategy.

Stephan Weise: The 2 options are not necessarily mutually exclusive. We need to bring in donors to push the agenda inside the One CGIAR because this agenda is donor driven. Then, there can be resource mobilization by the partnership outside the CG.

Chair: What Rene and Stephan propose is very useful. When is the subject matter of the set of new initiatives going to be discussed by the CG?

René Boot: What I understood is that the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the new initiatives will be available in December. Netherlands, Germany, Sweden will look at what is on the table and then decide on a way forward. Bioversity and CIAT could push FTA issues.

Vincent Gitz: we need to recognize that CIFOR-ICRAF were never at the heart of what the CG is doing. Our funders are in fact different from CG donors; even in the same country they are different departments, units. 90% of what FTA is doing is bilateral. Who are these donors? Are they sensitive to the fact that we are a partnership? It is a broader set of donors (climate, environment, forest) than the one of the CG, which is mainly agriculture. The issues for which we are funded are not very present in the strategy of One CGIAR that is focused on SDG2. None of the initiatives in One CGIAR will be big enough for what we are doing. The board of CIFOR-ICRAF considers the partnership a key asset and considers that it has a certain responsibility towards it: whatever happens, we will have to work with One CGIAR and the modalities for that will need to be coined.

Susan Braatz: Talking to the donors is crucial. There are transactions costs in maintaining a partnership (including evaluation and learning). If donors find these costs too high, we need to find other means like informal ways or integrating costs in overheads of the partners; none of which is realistic. On the other hand, a lot of the transaction costs are initial ones, these have been incurred now, and the gains from these investments would be lost if the momentum is not kept.

René Boot: Concerns about transaction costs are mostly linked to the CGIAR bureaucracy.

ISC Chair: The issue of transaction costs was high on the agenda of the Centres and donors in 2011. Complaints about it have decreased. Stephan Weise: Agree with the Chair.

Vincent Gitz: We need to make the case of the value addition of the FTA partnership. We can now focus on some issues where the partnership adds value, for instance circular bioeconomy, issues where we are more credible with a partnership. There could be different sets of partners depending on issues. It might mean different ways of working depending on the situations. In some cases we would be linking with One CGIAR when it is part of its mandate, in other cases we would work without One CGIAR. We can answer calls. We can also prepare spontaneous proposals and go together to see donors. It is not the moment right now, as the discussion between donors is exclusively focused on One CGIAR, but in 6 months it may be different. The 2 options of Rene are complementary.

Chair: it will require a very good intelligence of what donors want, which we may not have right now.

Vincent Gitz: The strategy is good. There are one CGIAR groups working on programmatic issues. I was excluded of this process by the CGIAR management because I am a staff of

CIFOR. Nevertheless, I have exchanged with Juan Lucas Restrepo, who is involved, on issues of interest to us.

Stephan Weise: there are also questions about the future of the agroecology TPP as it started as a France-CGIAR initiative. Vincent Gitz: this is why we are organizing a meeting about it, and establishing a contact group with all the CG centers involved.

Chair: The external review team asked me what ISC is doing on the post 2021. I replied that our programmatic oversight role implies that we must ensure that the program closes down in a responsible and effective manner, vis-a-vis our partners and scientists, as well as in terms of the legacy of the partnership. If there is a feeling inside the ISC that we should share our perspectives we could do it. Considering the 2 options just discussed is a very good pragmatic suggestion. On the one hand the partnership could continue along the pathway in the CG, and on the other hand it could progress along other pathways outside of oneCGIAR.

Stephan Weise will discuss with Juan Lucas and up-date him. René Boot will do the same with the Netherlands Ministry of foreign affairs.

Vincent Gitz: Currently the One CGIAR discussions on future CGIAR research initiative and funding priorities are restricted to the one CGIAR centers. This means that for what FTA is concerned, only the Alliance of Bioversity/CIAT is involved. Would be important to find ways to bring the perspectives of all FTA partners in One CGIAR. Proposes a meeting of the ISC end February or beginning of March.

**In conclusion**, the ISC Chair highlighted the need to continue the work of FTA after the end of the program in order to address multiple global challenges and recommended that the MT explores possible funding strategies to do so. Stephan Weise and Rene Boot will consult their constituencies on the feasibility for them of remaining partners post 2021. A meeting of the ISC could be organized end February or beginning of March to monitor these issues.