

ISC MEETING #6  
27 and 29 June 2017

DOC 3

ITEM 6 (FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION)

**Subject: Revised Terms of Reference (ToRs)  
of the Independent Steering Committee (ISC)  
of the CGIAR Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA)**

**Historical preamble**

FTA, following a decision of the then Fund Council and Consortium, changed in mid-2015 both the composition and the responsibilities of what had been until then its Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was replaced by FTA's Independent Steering Committee (ISC). The purpose of this change was to ensure that ISC had a majority of voting members who were totally independent from the participating institutions, and had no conflict of interest with FTA (nothing to gain or lose personally from ISC decisions). This is for FTA to benefit from the advice and views of a committee with no institutional bias and with only FTA's programmatic best interests as their overall objective. This is particularly important in a large global partnership program which includes different CGIAR partner Centers and non-CGIAR partners, all with diverse programmatic and financial interests.

ISC launched its first performance assessment process in March 2017; it included anonymous feedback from the BoT of CIFOR. CIFOR's BoT discussed overall results of this first assessment and requested that the ToRs of ISC be revised to take into account the results of the assessment and to include replacement rules for the independent members of the ISC.

**1. Key functions and mandate of ISC**

The ISC is accountable to, and appointed by, CIFOR's Board of Trustees as the Lead Center of FTA. ISC's mandate is given to it by CIFOR's BoT. Ultimate strategic, programmatic and fiduciary responsibility for FTA and its use of CGIAR W1+2 resources lies with the CIFOR Board of Trustees (BoT).

1. 1. The ISC has four key functions:

- A. Strategic and scientific oversight, including priority-setting, FTA work programming, planning (including contingency planning)
- B. Monitoring FTA's delivery of outputs and outcomes and internal performance review
- C. Review and assessment of CGIAR W1+2 allocations within FTA
- D. Monitoring and strengthening FTA partnerships for delivery and impact

In delivering on these functions, ISC provides CIFOR BoT with analyses, recommendations, as appropriate (see below), which rise above particular interests and single institutional perspectives to further FTA's best interests as a global and balanced research for development partnership.

1. 2. CIFOR's BoT delegates work and decisions on key functions A, B and D to the ISC, and mandates the ISC accordingly. The ISC reports to the BoT on its delegated decisions regarding A, B and D. ISC is answerable to the BoT for their follow up and implementation. If CIFOR BoT considers that a decision it delegated to ISC needs amendments, it can ask ISC to revisit the decision. If a conflict of opinion arises between CIFOR's BoT and ISC about the substance of said decision, the Chair of ISC and the Chair of CIFOR's BoT will jointly decide on the best ways and means to resolve the conflict.

1. 3. Key function C cannot be delegated by CIFOR's BoT because it has sole fiduciary responsibilities for FTA. ISC is thus mandated by CIFOR's BoT to review and assess the appropriateness of the yearly W1+2 allocations proposed by FTA Management to ISC. ISC then makes on a yearly basis a fully justified recommendation of an allocation of W1+2 for approval by CIFOR's BoT (see paragraph 2.3.).

## **2. ISC's specific responsibilities by key functions**

### *2.1. Responsibilities for function 1: Strategic directions, prioritization, scientific oversight*

To discharge these responsibilities, the ISC:

2.1.1. Works with the DG of the Lead Center to design and implement a transparent recruitment process for the FTA Director that is in the best interests of the CRP.

2.1.2. Approves the set-up and oversee the implementation of a strategic priority setting and performance based process for FTA programming and planning. Oversees the use of this process for recommending allocations W1+2 resources (see below).

2.1.3. Approves the set-up and oversee the implementation of a vetting process for the inclusion of bilateral projects into FTA to ensure coherence with FTA's strategic directions.

2.1.4. Reviews and approves the annual Program of Work and Budget (POWB) and corresponding Operational Plan prepared by FTA management.

2.1.5. Reviews and approves the annual W1+2 funded activity plan and budget of each participant partner in FTA

2.1.6. Oversees and provides guidance to the contingency plans proposed by FTA management to manage major risks, including financial uncertainties (W1+2), in the execution of the POWB.

2.1.7. Ensures that advice and direction from the relevant CGIAR System entities are considered in FTA planning and implementation.

### *2.2. Responsibilities for function 2: Monitoring FTA Performance*

2.2.1. ISC reviews the performance of all FTA partners and components and of the program as a whole, and reports to CIFOR's BoT on progress/lack of progress and associated next steps, such as commissioning specific reviews of parts of FTA. It must be noted that ISC does not review or monitor the financial performance of FTA. It does not have the necessary human and financial resources to do so.

To discharge this performance monitoring responsibility, the ISC:

2.2.2. Reviews FTA's Annual Performance Report before submission to the SMO to comment and provide guidance on it and as a means to assess the rate of performance and progress of FTA vis-a-vis FTA workplans and expected outcomes.

2.2.3. Reviews the performance of FTA FPs and participating partners, and how this is taken into account in the priority and performance based process for programming W1+2 resources.

2.2.4. Assesses the performance of the FTA director on an annual basis in close coordination with the DG of CIFOR who is the direct supervisor of the FTA director for all administrative issues

2.2.5. Assesses the performance of ISC and its Chair according to a process designed by ISC

2.2.6. Reviews and provides feedback on the rules of engagement and processes by which FP leaders and cross-cutting theme (CCT) leaders are selected, and related criteria.

### *2.3. Responsibilities for function 3: W1+2 Resource allocations*

ISC recommends to CIFOR BoT the yearly allocation of W1+2 funding across FPs, the Support platform and the MSU and the associated allocations to FTA participating institutions. The recommendation is based upon an analysis and a recommendation by the MT to ISC. The objective pursued in the recommendation to CIFOR BoT is to align W1+2 allocations with the priorities emerging from the priority setting process and upon FP performance (see above). CIFOR BoT decides the yearly allocation of W1+2 funds within FTA based upon the recommendation from ISC.

### *2.4. Responsibilities for function 4: Overseeing and strengthening the FTA partnership*

2.4.1. ISC oversees the partnership strategy of FTA, including the criteria for selecting FTA strategic partners. It can make recommendations to CIFOR Board on modifications of the set of FTA strategic partners, based upon performance review and/or strategic programmatic and impact opportunities. The ISC can recommend modification or termination of a Program Participant Agreement (PPA) if an FTA partner is in breach of its responsibilities.

2.4.2. ISC oversees the development and the implementation of partnership engagement rules of FTA's partners (engagement rules can differ across types of partners).

## **3. Composition and size of ISC**

*3.1. The ISC has a total of ten to eleven members. This includes at least 6 independent members, appointed by CIFOR BoT. The independent members must have no conflict of interest with being on ISC (not employed by any institution directly involved in FTA) and have recognized expertise in fields relevant to FTA. They are selected in their individual capacity and are not representatives of their respective governments, institutions or organizations. Independent ISC members bring state-of-the-art scientific expertise and high-level insights from diverse sectors (such as national agricultural research systems/NARS, development agencies, the private sector, civil society, farmer organizations, etc.), and broaden the perspectives and views about FTA.*

*3.2. The other ISC members all represent a specific constituency in FTA. They include:*

- The Lead Center DG, representing the Lead Center
- One representative of FTA strategic CGIAR partners: currently ICRAF and Bioversity
- One representative of FTA strategic non-CGIAR partners: currently CIRAD, CATIE, Tropenbos and INBAR.

- The FTA Director is ex-officio (non-voting) member and the Executive Secretary during ISC meetings. S/he brings the perspective of the entire CRP to ISC.

3.3. *ISC is led by a Chair selected by CIFOR BoT from amongst its independent members, who is responsible for the proper execution of the functions and mandate given to the ISC, and of the reporting to CIFOR's BoT.*

#### **4. Selection process for Independent ISC members**

4.1. *Independent members* are appointed by CIFOR BoT on the basis of a proposal from ISC, for a fixed term of three years, renewable consecutively only once.

4.2. Following an open call for nominations, candidates for independent members are short listed by the FTA director, with support of CIFOR's HR office, based on the above criteria (Article 3.1), and considering if feasible that ISC should have a balance of gender, disciplines of relevance to FTA, as well as a diversity of experiences and perspectives, including regional ones, on trees and forests.

4.3. ISC reviews short-listed independent candidates' curriculum vitae, considers the full list of candidates, and elaborates a final list of candidates. This list contains the names of the independent ISC members whose term is expiring and who are willing to apply, the case being, for a second term. The ISC Chair recommends this final list to CIFOR BoT.

4.5. Should the BoT be unable to take an appointment decision based on the short list transmitted by the ISC, it should request the ISC to submit a revised proposal.

4.6. If, within its three-year term, an independent member resigns or is unable to fulfill its mandate, the ISC proposes to CIFOR BoT a replacement following the above process. The independent member appointed as replacement will have a three-year long mandate.

4.7. The ISC Chair is appointed among the independent members by CIFOR's BoT for a three-year fixed term, renewable once. The ISC Chair ensures ISC works harmoniously and effectively, that a culture of trust and of team spirit is installed amongst ISC members, with honest communication and sharing of information, and commitment to collective action.

4.8. If, within its three-year term, ISC Chair resigns or is unable to fulfill its mandate, ISC designates an interim acting Chair amongst its members, until a new Chair is appointed by CIFOR BoT.

4.9. *Calendar of appointment.* ISC independent members, including the Chair, are normally appointed by CIFOR's BoT at its end-of-year meeting, for a start of office by 1st May of the subsequent year (or any suitable date decided by CIFOR's BoT that is posterior to the closure date of the beginning-of-year meeting of CIFOR's BoT). This ensures appropriate scheduling of appointment vis-à-vis ISC reporting to CIFOR's BoT. In will appoint one member in 2017 (to start duties 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018)

4.10. *Dispositions to ensure continuity and change amongst independent members.* In making a decision to appoint one or several independent members, including the Chair, the ISC considers the need for both change and continuity. As the need for continuity mirrors the need to ensure a certain degree of institutional memory, in deciding for reappointments proposals given the above constraints, the ISC shall consider the degree of implication of the former members, candidates for reappointment, in the work of the ISC.

4.11 *Transitional dispositions to initiate a staggering process for ISC renewal.* In December 2017, the ISC has 4 independent members, including the ISC Chair.

To initiate a staggering process (see Annex for an illustration), in December 2017, the BoT will :

- appoint two new independent members for a start of office in May 2018.
- decide on the extension for 1 year of the term of a maximum of two current independent members.
- decide on the extension for 2 years of the term of a maximum of two current independent members.

In subsequent years, the BoT will make its appointments or re-appointment decisions to ensure that the total number of independent members is at least 6 (see Annex).

## **5. Selection of Representatives of strategic partners**

- 5.1. *Each Representative is selected by her/his constituency (CGIAR Centers, non-CGIAR partners) for a period of 2 years.*
- 5.2. In selecting their representatives, the constituencies consider the overall gender balance of the ISC.
- 5.3. *The home institution of a Representative ISC member covers time and travel expenditures of the representative on ISC business (meetings and work outside of meetings).*

## **6. Rules of engagement, time commitment, and support**

- 6.1. *ISC normally meets twice a year face-to-face and as often as necessary by virtual means. Virtual meetings comprise decisions which have the same standing as those made during face to face meetings.*
- 6.2. *ISC members are committed to contribute meaningfully and constructively to the work of ISC. Lack of participation to meetings (be they face to face or virtual) or lack of feedback to internal solicitations from the Chair or FTA Director can result in the ISC Chair to recommend to CIFOR BoT the replacement of the individual concerned (be they an independent member or a partner Representative).*
- 6.3. *Expected time commitment for all ISC members, except the Chair, but including the Representatives of partner institutions to perform their duties is approx. 15-20 working days (including attending meetings) for the other independent members.*
- 6.4. *Independent ISC members, except the Chair, are not compensated for their time and work. However, an amount of USD 350 per day for meeting days plus one reading day per meeting will apply.*
- 6.5. *Expected time commitment for the ISC Chair is not less than 30 working days for the Chair. Given the specific workload, the Chairperson will receive a consultancy contract with CIFOR with a rate and number of days decided by by FTA MSU and Cifor HR commensurate to workload and experience.*
- 6.6. *CIFOR will cover ISC meeting travel expenditures for independent members only and as per its policy.*
- 6.7. *All expenditures related to ISC operations are reported to CIFOR's BoT.*

## **7. Observers**

ISC welcomes observers and can call upon resource persons from within or outside the CGIAR for specific questions.

## **8. ISC Decision making**

ISC operates by consensus. When consensus cannot be reached on a decision or recommendation to CIFOR BoT, the Chair of ISC will provide a balanced report of the differing views to CIFOR BoT for their final decision.

## **9. Conflict of interest and absence of organizational capture**

- 9.1. *Independent members comply with ISC's conflict of interest policy and are requested to sign a declaration of absence of conflict of interest.*
- 9.2. *Members representative of FTA partners have the responsibility to represent the range of perspectives of their constituency (CGIAR and non CGIAR) and not just their own institution's interests. They convey to ISC meetings a synthesis (if possible agreed upon among partners ahead of*

a meeting) of the views of the partners they represent. They thus have the responsibility to circulate information as appropriate prior, after and in-between meetings and request inputs from their constituency ahead of ISC meetings, based on the proposed agenda.

## **10. Downstream and upstream relations**

*10.1. ISC's Chair reports to the BoT of the Lead Center on ISC's activities and their outcomes and makes recommendations to the BoT for decisions (see articles 1 and 2). Appropriate time (for example no less than two hours) is dedicated to FTA during each biannual CIFOR BoT meeting. In her/his reporting, ISC Chair ensures adequate information is given to CIFOR's BoT about internal ISC's processes and ways of operation.*

*10.2. CIFOR's BoT can request ISC to undertake specific tasks within its mandate. It does so considering induced ISC and FTA management workload and available resources.*

*10.3. ISC can request the FTA Director and management to take necessary actions as a result of its key functions. In mandating the Director and the MSU, it considers induced workload and available resources.*

*10.4. Minutes of ISC meetings are prepared by the FTA Director, approved by the ISC and posted online.*

**Annex : Illustration of staggering process to appoint independent members.**

Yellow: current four members (May 2017), whose term will be extended from 1 to 2 years.

Green: first batch of new members (seats number 5 and 6 appointed end 2017, etc.)

Blue: second batch of new members (seats number 5 and 6 appointed end 2010, etc.)

