



## Terms of Reference for an external evaluation of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health November 18, 2014

### 1. Background to the evaluation

In the CGIAR, agricultural research for development is implemented by 15 research Centers and their partners through CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs). The Strategy and Results Framework (SRF), approved in 2011, determines the CGIAR's comparative advantage in the context of international agricultural research and sets four high-level goals for the CGIAR research in the CRPs, termed System-Level Outcomes (SLOs): reduction of rural poverty, increase in food security, improving nutrition and health, and more sustainable management of natural resources. An update of the SRF, forthcoming in early 2015, will elaborate on intermediate level development outcomes (IDOs) through which CRPs contribute to SLOs and which include targets for outcome-oriented planning. Thus, the SRF provides the broad rationale and content for CGIAR research and the framework for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the CRPs.

The Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) of the CGIAR, located in Rome, is responsible for external evaluations of the CRPs. As decided by the CGIAR Fund Council, in agreement with the CGIAR Consortium Office in November 2013, the IEA is responsible for the evaluation of 10 CRPs over 2013-2015. The five remaining CRPs will conduct CRP-Commissioned External Evaluations (CCEEs) following the same general terms of reference for the IEA-managed evaluations, but with commissioning and management done by the CRP. The evaluation will follow the general guidelines established by IEA for this group of CCEEs, as well as seeking to meet evaluation standards. This includes using the CGIAR evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and quality of science. IEA will provide guidance<sup>1</sup>, technical backstopping, and quality assurance at different points in the process.

One of the CRPs to conduct a CCEE in 2014-2015 is the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH). A4NH, led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) with headquarters in Washington, D.C., is made up of 11 participating CGIAR centers-- Bioversity, CIAT, CIMMYT, CIP, ICARDA, ICRAF, ICRISAT, IITA, ILRI, IRRI, and WorldFish—as well as external partners.

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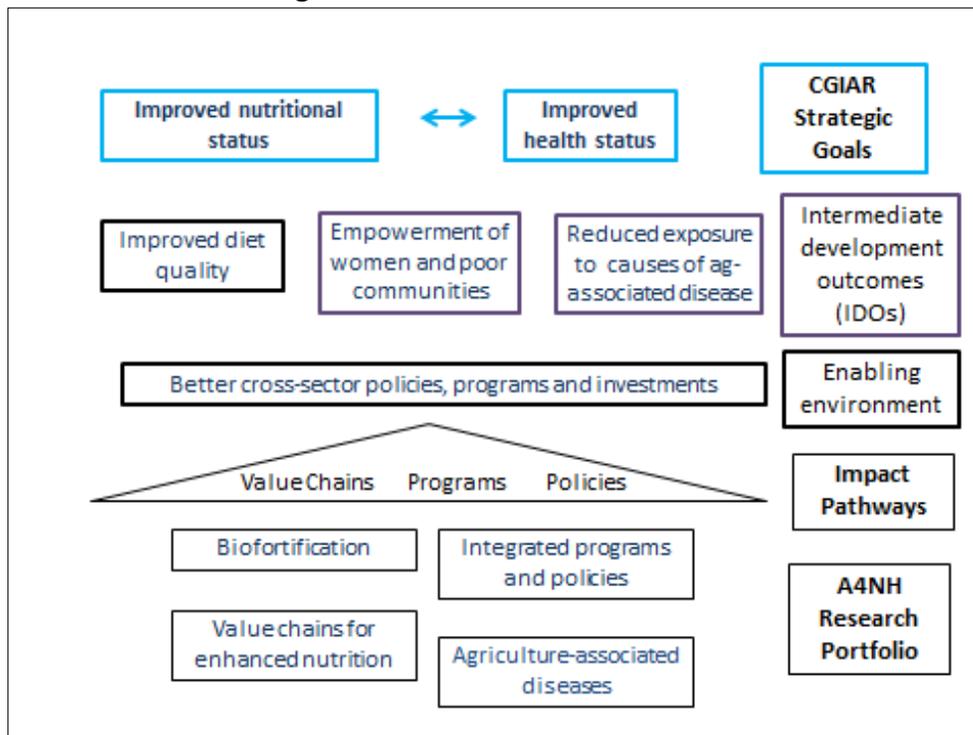
<sup>1</sup> <http://iea.cgiar.org/publication/g2-guidance-crp-commissioned-external-evaluations-ccees>.

A4NH has four research themes (referred to in CGIAR as Flagships):

- **Value Chains for Enhanced Nutrition** focuses on opportunities to improve nutrition along value chains to increase the poor’s access to and demand for nutritious foods
- **Biofortification** aims to improve the availability, access, and intake of nutrient-rich staple crops
- **Agriculture-Associated Diseases** addresses food safety issues along the value chain, as well as control of zoonotic diseases and the better management of agricultural systems to reduce the risk of human diseases
- **Integrated Programs and Policies** addresses integration among the agriculture, nutrition, and health sectors at both the development program and the policy levels.

As shown in the A4NH results framework (Figure 1), A4NH research in the above-mentioned themes and related activities contribute to the CRP’s strategic goals<sup>2</sup> of improving nutrition and health status of the poor, and especially women and children, in developing countries through three IDOs—improved diet quality, reduced exposure to agriculture-associated disease and empowerment of women and poor communities.

**Figure 1. A4NH results framework**



<sup>2</sup> The A4NH strategic goals are expected to map to the SLOs, once the latter are defined in the revised CGIAR SRF.

Budgets by Flagship and by research area within Flagships are presented in Table 1. A small program management unit provides overall leadership, administrative and financial management for A4NH, and support for cross-cutting issues such as evaluation and gender. A4NH is managed by the [planning and management committee](#) and governed by the [independent advisory committee](#). More information can be found at <http://www.a4nh.cgiar.org/>.

**Table 1. Flagships, research areas and average annual budgets<sup>3</sup>**

Flagship	Average Annual Budget 2012-14 (% W1 & 2)	Percentage	Research areas	Average Annual Budget 2015-16 (% W1 & 2)	Percentage
Biofortification	\$41.0M (20.9%)	52.3	Biofortification	48 (20%)	46.1%
Value chains for enhanced nutrition	\$6.6M (57.6%)	8.4	Value chains and healthy diets	8 (50%)	7.7%
			Nutrition sensitive-landscapes	5 (50%)	4.8%
			Food safety	15 (50%)	14.4%
Agriculture-associated diseases	\$11.6M (43.5%)	14.8	Agricultural disease risk	5 (50%)	4.8%
			Integrated programs	18 (25%)	17.3%
Integrated programs and policies	\$13.8M (22.8%)	17.6	Cross-sectoral processes	5 (35%)	4.8%
			<b>Total A4NH</b>	<b>\$78.4</b>	

## 2. Evaluation focus

### 2.1 Evaluation purpose and clients

The overarching objective of this evaluation is to assess the design and implementation of the A4NH CRP and to make recommendations in order to enhance the contribution that A4NH is likely to make towards reaching the CGIAR SLOs, especially SLO2 on improving nutrition and health.

As for all CRP evaluations, the purpose of the evaluation is to provide essential evaluative information for decision-making by CRP governance, management, funders and partners on issues such as extension, expansion and structuring of the CRP and adjustments in some aspects of the program. Specifically, the results of the evaluation are expected to provide inputs for the 2<sup>nd</sup> call of CRP proposals for funding to the CGIAR Fund Council in 2016

<sup>3</sup> Based on CRP extension proposal (Apr 25, 2014); 2015-2016 estimates based on basic rather than expanded budget scenarios.

contributing both to program proposal development and generating evaluative information for the appraisal of the proposal.

The main stakeholders of this evaluation are the management of A4NH, all participating Centers, partners associated to the Program, the CGIAR Fund Council, and the Consortium Board (Table 2). IFPRI as the lead Center is a key stakeholder in the evaluation. Stakeholders will be consulted throughout the evaluation through interviews, surveys, site visits, and oversight group membership for some of them.

**Table 2. A4NH CCEE stakeholders**

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Role in the CCEE</i>	<i>Interest in the CCEE</i>
<b>Internal Stakeholders</b>		
CRP Director and management	Primary client. Commission and manage CCEE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accountability for performance</li> <li>2. Learning for improvement of the CRP</li> <li>3. Increasing the likelihood of future financial support</li> </ol>
CRP Governance	Primary client. Informants (selected) Advise and ensure CCEE results are followed up on	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accountability for its governance role</li> <li>2. Learning for improvement of its governance role</li> <li>3. Learning for improvement of the CRP</li> </ol>
CRP Researchers	Informants (selected)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Having a voice</li> <li>2. Improving their participation</li> <li>3. Improving CRP quality</li> </ol>
Lead center board and management	Informants Chair the CCEE Oversight group, where appropriate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accountability for its hosting, fiduciary responsibility and research contribution.</li> <li>2. Improving its lead role in the CRP</li> </ol>
CGIAR Fund Council	Important client but no direct participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accountability for its role</li> <li>2. Prioritization of future CRPs</li> <li>3. Learning how CRPs can be made more effective</li> </ol>
CGIAR Consortium Office	Important client but no direct participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accountability for its role</li> <li>2. Prioritization of future CRPs</li> <li>3. Learning how CRPs can be made more effective</li> </ol>
Board and management of participating centers	Participate in the CCEE oversight group (selected)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accountability for their contribution</li> </ol>
<b>External Stakeholders</b>		
Donors	Informants (selected)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decision making for resource allocation</li> <li>2. Learning for improved donor performance within the CGIAR</li> </ol>
Research partners	Informants (selected)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To be given a voice</li> <li>2. Accountability for contribution</li> </ol>
Development partners	Informants (selected)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To be given a voice</li> <li>2. Accountability for contribution</li> <li>3. To increase CRP development impact</li> </ol>
Beneficiaries e.g. farmers and policy makers	Informants in country missions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To be given a voice</li> <li>2. To make CRP research more relevant</li> </ol>
IEA	Support and quality assurance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensuring accountability of the CRPs</li> <li>2. Learning from individual CRP</li> <li>3. Synthesizing learning across CRPs</li> </ol>

## 2.2 Evaluation scope

The evaluation will be both summative and formative. A4NH was formally launched in 2012, and its first phase ends in 2014. Large parts of the CRP, however, build on past work in the CGIAR. Evaluation of aspects of this work relevant to the CRP can therefore be summative and look at the extent to which contributions to outcomes (IDOs) and impacts (SLOs) were achieved or are on track to be achieved. Evaluation of new research areas and the overall programmatic approach is formative, taking into account the four Flagship research areas as well as the cross-cutting areas partnerships, capacity building and gender. The evaluation will also look at the extent to which lessons from past research, evaluations and experiences regarding results have been taken into account in the current program design and implementation.

The evaluation will cover all research projects of A4NH and all processes related to its implementation. To this end, it is important to bear in mind that while some A4NH research projects are fully funded through the unrestricted funding channels (Windows 1 and 2), most projects are based on project-specific bilateral grant contracts between the implementing centers and donors that effectively bypass those unrestricted channels. The A4NH evaluation may examine all activities under the CRP, including those funded bilaterally. Pre-CRP activities may be examined for context, used as a baseline where data permits, and/or looked at in more detail in cases where the CRP has closely continued previous research work.

The evaluation will examine relevant activities, outputs and systems of A4NH partners (see Evaluation Questions 2.1-2.4) to the extent practical. The methodology will be proposed in the inception phase.

The evaluation will build on and insofar as possible avoid duplicating the work of other relevant evaluations, including for example the 2012 Evaluation of Harvest Plus, the 2014 Gender Review of Harvest Plus, the ongoing Evaluation of Food Safety research, and DFID's forthcoming Mid Term Evaluation Of Human Development Research Program Consortia (which includes part of A4NH work), as well as wider CGIAR reviews and evaluations including the 2014 Mid Term Review, the 2014 Review of CRP Governance and Management, and other CRP evaluations. Evaluation management will coordinate with other ongoing CCEs to ensure exchange of relevant evaluative information.

## 3. Evaluation questions and criteria

Within the overarching question of whether A4NH is appropriately positioned and configured to attain its objectives and help the CGIAR deliver on the SLOs, the evaluation will focus on four main evaluation questions (listed below). The questions were initially developed during a facilitated workshop of the A4NH Planning and Management Committee and revised based on consultations with internal and external stakeholders. Further refinement is expected during the inception phase of the evaluation.

**EQ1 Is A4NH on course to achieve its planned outputs, outcomes and impacts, including the CGIAR's SLOs and IDOs? Why or why not?**

*Sub questions*

- 1.1 Have different partners in the CRP (Flagships, Centers, etc.) delivered planned outputs and immediate outcomes?
- 1.2 Have there been significant unplanned outputs and/or outcomes?
- 1.3 What factors have helped or impeded delivery in different areas? (see also EQs 2 and 3)
- 1.4 Are the A4NH Flagships and their individual research lines based on impact pathways/theories of change which are plausible and well-evidenced?
  - a) What evidence is there that planned outcomes will lead to sustainable impacts?
  - b) How are risks being identified and managed?

**EQ2 Have the CRP structure and systems (as currently operating within the wider CGIAR reform) added value to agriculture, health and nutrition research by the CGIAR and its partners? Have the benefits of the new structure outweighed the costs? (see also EQ4.1)**

*Sub questions*

What have been the effects of the CRP (as currently operating with CGIAR systems) on...

- 2.1 Impact orientation of the research by the CGIAR and partners?
  - a) Focus on contributing to impacts at scale, including alignment with CGIAR SRF
  - b) Addressing gender and equity issues
  - c) More appropriate partnerships for achieving impact
  - d) Capacity development
- 2.2 Coordination of research and development across the CGIAR and partners?
  - a) Planning, priority setting, sequencing and resource allocation
  - b) Resource mobilization
  - c) Achieving a critical mass in key research areas
  - d) Information sharing and learning
  - e) Synthesis of research results
  - f) Capacity development of CGIAR and partners
- 2.3 Performance management within the CGIAR and partners?
  - a) Planning and budgeting
  - b) Monitoring and reporting
  - c) Evaluation
  - d) Performance management systems of individuals and teams
- 2.4 Maintaining or improving science/research quality and innovation in research by the CGIAR and partners?
  - a) Quality standard setting
  - b) Review processes
  - c) Data management
  - d) Publication policy
  - e) Innovation

- f) Addressing gender and equity issues in research
- g) Capacity development
- 2.5 What have been the costs and any negative effects for the new A4NH structure?
  - a) Amount, stability and timeliness of funding for different lines of work
  - b) Realism and stability of expectations and demands on researchers
  - c) Administrative overheads and transaction costs
  - d) Any other unexpected negative effects

### **EQ3 Does A4NH have the right resources, systems and approach to partnerships to deliver on its objectives?**

#### *Sub questions*

- 3.1 Does the CRP (as currently operating within CGIAR systems) have effective and efficient management and governance systems?
  - a) Management and governance structures and their operation
  - b) Human resource management
  - c) Administration, including contracting and financial flows
- 3.2 Is the CRP selecting, developing and managing partnerships appropriately to achieve objectives and sustain benefits?
  - a) Appropriateness and use of the CRP Partnership Strategy  
<http://www.a4nh.cgiar.org/files/2012/07/Summary-of-A4NH-Partnership-Strategy.pdf>
  - b) Appropriate consideration of capacity development in partnerships

### **EQ4 Is the scope and focus of A4NH relevant and appropriate?**

#### *Sub questions*

- 4.1 Within the changing national and international context and architecture for ANH, how has A4NH added value to date? How could its structure and focus be improved to increase its value-added?
- 4.2 Is there an appropriate balance within and among the three main areas of work of A4NH?
  - a) International research on agriculture, nutrition and health – the A4NH “niche” (scope and focus of the four Flagship research areas, and balance between them)
  - b) Improving what the rest of the CGIAR does to attain the Nutrition and Health SLO (including Capacity Development)
  - c) Improving national and international policy and practice on agriculture, nutrition and health
- 4.3 Within the CGIAR, has the exclusive focus of A4NH on the Nutrition and Health SLO been appropriate? What are the implications for how A4NH should position itself in future with regard to the new Strategic Results Framework?

These main evaluation questions address the six standard evaluation criteria (Table 3). They also address the three crossing cutting issues – partnerships, gender and capacity development - identified in the IEA-managed CRP evaluations mentioned above (Table 4).

**Table 3. Mapping of main evaluation questions to CGIAR Evaluation Criteria\***

Criterion -> Evaluation Question	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Impact	Sustainability	Quality of Science
EQ1 Is A4NH on course to deliver its planned outputs, outcomes and impacts? Why or why not?			1.1 1.3	1.2 1.4	1.4	
EQ2 Has the CRP added value to agriculture, health and nutrition research by the CGIAR and its partners? Have the benefits of the new structure outweighed the costs?		2.5 2.3 2.2	2.2	2.1		2.4
EQ3 Does A4NH have the right resources, systems and approach to partnerships to deliver on its objectives?		2.3 3.1	3.2		3.2	
EQ4 Is the scope and focus of A4NH relevant and appropriate?	4.1 4.2 4.3		4.1	4.1		

\*Color coding: Primary focus of at least one sub-question, as numbered; Will also be addressed under this question

**Table 4. Coverage of cross-cutting issues in main evaluation questions**

Evaluation Question	Partnerships	Gender	Capacity development
EQ1 Is A4NH on course to deliver its planned outputs, outcomes and impacts? Why or why not?	Program monitoring system includes information on all 3 issues for all projects mapped to A4NH		
EQ2 Has the CRP added value to agriculture, health and nutrition research by the CGIAR and its partners? Have the benefits of the new structure outweighed the costs?	Included in impact orientation and coordination	Included in impact orientation, coordination and performance	Included in impact orientation and coordination
EQ3 Does A4NH have the right resources, systems and approach to partnerships to deliver on its objectives?	Partnership strategy is a key area of focus	Several assessments of gender capacity in A4NH and partner centers have been conducted	Included in partnership strategy
EQ4 Is the scope and focus of A4NH relevant and appropriate?	Linked to ability to deliver on SLO2	Focus of work on improving capacity of other CRPs to achieve nutrition objectives	Focus of work on improving capacity of other CRPs to achieve nutrition objectives

## 4. Evaluation approach and methodology

### 4.1 Approach and methods

The summative and accountability oriented components of the evaluation will draw, to the extent possible, on existing evaluations, studies, adoption and impact assessments, records and other data for conducting meta-analysis of available evaluative information and assessing the achievements from past research. This approach will be complemented by other means such as gathering information during site visits and stakeholder interviews.

The forward-looking component will review, *inter alia*, program design and processes, gender mainstreaming, governance and partnership aspects as well as other innovative modalities of work introduced with the Reform. For instance approaches that use benchmarking with other comparable programs, lessons and good practices in research and management established elsewhere, and information from primary contacts will be selected.

A4NH works mainly in Africa and South Asia. A4NH does not have target countries or sites, so locations for field visits will be selected in order to see work on the ground and to take advantage of opportunities to interact with key partners and stakeholders. The plan for sites visits will be finalized in the inception phase.

The evaluation process will ensure that in developing findings, conclusions and recommendations there is broad consultation among stakeholders for capturing a broadly representative range of viewpoints. The evaluation team should ensure that the findings are informed by evidence. This implies that all perceptions, hypotheses and assertions obtained in interviews will be validated through secondary filtering, cross checks by a triangulation of sources, methods, data, and theories.

Specific methods and approaches to address the evaluation questions, and data collection tools, will be finalized as part of the inception report. For EQ4, an expert panel may be used to address issues of scope and relevance.

### 4.2 Quality assurance

In order to ensure technical rigor to the CCEE, the following quality assurance mechanisms will be implemented during the evaluation exercise. The IEA will provide feed-back at different milestones, including evaluation terms of reference, team recruitment, inception report and evaluation report. A Quality Assurance Panel (QAAP), to be constituted by IEA, will independently provide a statement on the quality of the evaluation at its completion.

## 5. Conduct of the evaluation

### 5.1 Evaluation timing

The evaluation process started in September 2014 and is scheduled to end in October 2015. A tentative schedule is provided in Table 5.

**Table 5. Preliminary schedule of key steps in the evaluation process**

Phase	Period	Main outputs	Responsibility
<b>Preparatory Phase</b>	Sep 2014	Initial design workshop (9/10-11) <b>Initial ToR</b> developed Evaluation team leader recruited	A4NH
<b>Inception Phase</b>	October 2014 to January 2015	Full evaluation team recruited <b>Inception Report</b>	A4NH and Evaluation team leader
<b>Inquiry phase</b>	January-April 2015	Various reports and analysis products as defined in inception report	Evaluation team
Presentation of preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations	May 2015	Presentation of preliminary findings Feedback from main stakeholders	Evaluation team
<b>Reporting phase</b>			
Drafting of Report	June 2015	<b>Draft Evaluation Report</b>	Evaluation team
Final Evaluation Report	July 2015	<b>Final Evaluation Report</b>	Evaluation team
Management Response	Oct 2015	Management Response	CRP Management

### 5.2 Evaluation roles and responsibilities

The Evaluation will be conducted by a **Team of Independent External Experts** combining evaluation and subject matter expertise. The Evaluation Team is responsible for submitting the deliverables. The Team Leader - a senior-level evaluator – will be involved in selecting team members and will have final responsibility for the inception and evaluation reports and all findings and recommendations, subject to adherence to CGIAR Evaluation Standards.

**A4NH** is responsible for planning, designing, initiating, and managing the evaluation. It will take an active role in the preparatory phase of the evaluation by collecting background data and information and by carrying out preliminary analyses on A4NH. An Evaluation Manager (EM),

supported by an Evaluation Analyst (EA), will provide support to the evaluation team throughout the evaluation. **Both the EM and the EA will follow CGIAR evaluation standards, for example protecting the independence of the evaluation team and the confidentiality of informants.** They will play a key role in catering for the evaluation team's information needs providing documentation, data and information on all A4NH activities as well as access to staff and partners and stakeholders. They will facilitate arrangement of site visits. **A4NH management** is responsible for giving factual feed-back on draft reports, approving the final version of the report, and preparing the management response to the final report. It assists in dissemination of the report and its finding and lessons and it acts on the accepted recommendations. The A4NH **Independent Advisory Committee (IAC)** is responsible for ensuring that proposed follow up actions are undertaken.

While the evaluation is coordinated with the CRP management, IFPRI as the lead Center is a key stakeholder in the evaluation. It hosts the visits to the Center and its leadership and Board are expected to make themselves available for consultations during the evaluation process.

An **Oversight Group** will be set-up to work with the EM to ensure good communication with, learning by, and appropriate accountability to primary evaluation clients and key stakeholders, while preserving the independence of evaluators. The Group can be thought of as a 'sounding board', giving views and inputs at key decision stages in the evaluation design and implementation process. The Group may also play an important role in leading evaluators to key people and documents. It will be composed of approximately 10 representatives of A4NH internal and external stakeholders, including a representative of the IEA, and chaired by a member of the A4NH governance body, the IAC. The Group is expected to review and debate draft documents and to provide comments at key stages of the evaluation, in particular on the evaluation questions, the evaluation TOR, the inception report, and any major case study reports as well as the draft final report.

### 5.3 Evaluation team

The Evaluation Team will be led by an experienced evaluator of complex, international programs who has an academic background in agriculture and nutrition, an understanding of the international debate on the key issues related to A4NH, and a good knowledge of the relevant international institutions and mechanisms. The team leader will be supported by a small team with expertise in key areas relevant to evaluation, organizational performance and learning, and/or disciplines relevant to A4NH. The team members should not have engaged with the CRP, participating Centers or key partners in any way that would present an actual or perceived conflict of interest and team members will be required to sign declarations regarding conflict of interest. The working language is English.