



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Water, Land and
Ecosystems

LED BY:
IWMI
International Water
Management Institute

CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems

Management Response to CAS Review Recommendations

CGIAR Research Program 2020 Reviews: Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE)

WLE Management Committee
3/16/2021

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



Response from the Management Committee

We are pleased to report the Management Response to the WLE specific recommendations of the *CGIAR Research Program 2020 Reviews: Water, Land and Ecosystems* (hereafter referred to as the Review).¹ The Review, conducted by Sarah Humphrey and Christo Fabricius, made 13 recommendations; however, WLE will respond to only those five addressed directly to the CRP.

- 5 recommendations for WLE (Section 3.6)
- 8 recommendations for the CGIAR (Section 3.7)
 - 3 recommendations related to integration
 - 3 recommendations related to geographic focus
 - 2 recommendations related to people and assets

The WLE Management Committee (MC) greatly appreciates the time and effort invested by the review team and wishes to thank them for their valuable recommendations.

The MC response to recommendations is summarized in Table 1. Three of the five recommendations were accepted by the MC and actions will be reported in the 2021 Annual Report.

Table 2 lists the 8 recommendations for the CGIAR system.

¹ CRP 2020 Review: WLE. 2021 Jan 28. [accessed 2021 Feb 10]. <https://cas.cgiar.org/evaluation/crp-2020-WLE>.

Table 1: Summary of Responses

Number and Short Title	Recommendation (full text)	Management Response 2019	Action to be taken	Timeframe	Who is responsible for action	Additional funding required to implement recommendation?
Recommendation 1: Showcase the role of WLE	Showcase the role of WLE and of CGIAR as thought leaders and providers of integrated solutions through participation in relevant global events, including the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, the IPBES Nexus Assessment, and the UN Climate Summit(COP 26), working in collaboration with other CRPs (CCAFS, PIM, A4NH) as appropriate	Accepted in full	Building on existing commitments, WLE flagships will continue to showcase research results and innovations by intensifying participating in relevant global events	Ongoing through 2021	All flagships will contribute to this recommendation (see indicative list below).	No additional funding required. All funding for related activities will be drawn from existing FP budgets.
<p>Current and future activities by Flagship:²</p> <p>FP1 will work closely with the UN decade on ecosystem restoration and will strengthen partnerships with key global change agents. Specific activities include (but not limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDL will contribute to the technical report and policy document on the role of integrated land-use planning and integrated landscape management for the Land Degradation (LDN) target of the UNCCD. The findings will be presented at the UNCCD COP; • Contribute to the Global Land Outlook2 which is compiled by UNCCD; • Contribute to a technical guide on integrating Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure (VGGT) in LDN, led by FAO; <p>FP2 will continue its involvement with the Stockholm World Water Week and will co-lead the water and food themes. Other specific activities include (but not limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LWS is directly involved in the design of the Stockholm World Water Week 2021 and 2022 (Science Program Committee, the convening of sessions etc.); • Contribute to the Global Landscape Forum (convening a LWS synthesis session on watershed work in Ethiopia and India); • Co-contribute to UNFSS preparatory process (see below under FP4); <p>FP4 will contribute to strengthening our understanding on the role of water for the upcoming UNFSS process, outlined at https://foodsystemsdialogues.org/. Specific activities include (but are not limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global dialogue on water and food systems (led by UN-Water, coop with FAO, IFAD and WFP) in April 2021; co-organisation of national/regional dialogues on water and food systems in Central Asia, Egypt, Pakistan and Southern Africa; • Multiple session submissions to the Stockholm World Water Week, supported by various national and regional dialogues, including with other CRPs (e.g Fish and Rice). • Participation in at least ten events focused on addressing the climate crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic; <p>FP5 will continue to contribute to the UN Food systems summit (UNFSS), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD 2021), and the Climate COP26. Specific activities include (but not limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions with indicators and databases to the Food systems dashboard and the Food Systems Countdown report, led by John Hopkins University and GAIN • Launch of the Innovative Food Systems Innovations Portal, together with GAIN and other partners that host and facilitates the exchange on game-changing solutions, and directly linked to the UNFSS website; • Rapid Evidence Review on agriculture and biodiversity for UK FCDO nature and climate campaign that feeds into several policy events in 2021 (CoSAI will is also contributing); • Position papers to CBD and participation in SBSTAA; 						

² Examples provided here are indicative; WLE and its flagships will also participate in other global events.

Recommendation 2: Harness the capacity of underrepresented researchers	Lead the way within CGIAR on harnessing the capacity of underrepresented researchers (e.g., women, social scientists, young and emerging researchers), pioneering innovative research ethics procedures, and promoting co-created transdisciplinary research that catalyzes systemic change.	Accepted in full	WLE Senior Researchers will actively mentor junior staff and interns. Opportunities will be made available for junior staff to participate in conferences and proposal writing.	Ongoing through 2021	All flagships will contribute to this recommendation (see indicative list below).	No additional funding is required. All funding for related activities will be drawn from existing FP budgets.
<p>WLE Flagships already support young and underrepresented researchers in many ways. Some examples include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FP1 supported a junior female social science researcher to publish a paper based on FP1 and FP5 joint project activities. • FP2 supported Ph.D. students to publish peer-reviewed articles on shallow groundwater work in Ethiopia in 2020; hired a junior researcher in Ethiopia to lead a complex WLE project (P510). • FP3 made an interdisciplinary approach a pillar of its Resource, Recovery and Reuse subprogram in 2020, including five postdoctoral researchers from diverse disciplines – engineering, business, economics, health, agriculture, and social studies. • FP4 supported a junior African female researcher to lead a WLE funded project and supported female and male interns from diverse backgrounds working on innovative earth observation approaches; FP4 also supports junior researchers in the development of research designs, such as dissertation supervisors and through internships. • FP5 is developing a series of interactive learning modules engaging underrepresented researchers, including social and young scientists. • WLE Management: WLE actively supports young and underrepresented research in all levels of CRP management and has a gender balanced staff within the MC, PMU and ISC. 						
Recommendation 3: Analyze WLE results and learning	Synthesize and analyze WLE results and learning at the outcome level, including with reference to the WLE “theory of action, “to serve as a documented program legacy.	Accepted in full	WLE Flagships and/or the PMU commissioned a number of synthesis products in 2021. WLE Outcome/Impact Case Reports are produced each year specifically to synthesize outcome level results and learning.	Ongoing through 2021	The PMU and all flagships will contribute to this recommendation (see indicative list below).	For the PMU, 80K has been allocated for a learning workshop, a meta-evaluation and a commissioned research paper. For the Flagships, no additional funding is required.
<p>WLE Flagships/Programme Management Unit (PMU) will commission a number of synthesis/learning products this year, including (but not limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMU will conduct a learning workshop on how to measure impact for integrated projects at the landscape level; it will commission a meta-evaluation on policy influence (multi-CRP activity); it will commission a paper on placed-based research. • WLE Flagships will commission a large number of synthesis products in 2021. These products are numerous and are regarded as both ‘legacy’ products for the CRP (what we have learned in Phase 2 of the CRP), and as thought pieces designed to position WLE research within the new One CGIAR. \ 						
Recommendation 4: Strategic Reviews	Undertake a strategic review of i) WLE’s externally-oriented capacity development work with a view to identifying lessons and potential gaps, including in the context of strategies for upscaling and/or exiting from individual interventions; and ii) WLE’s partnership engagement and strategies with a view to identifying	Not accepted – WLE is in its final year during a pandemic. At this late stage, the MC is not in a position to implement a strategic review of its capacity development work or partnership	None	NA	NA	NA

	<p>lessons and potential gaps or opportunities, including in the context of strategies for upscaling and/or exiting from individual interventions, in preparation of the transition to One CGIAR. Consideration should be given to (1) the engagement of next users in project design and (2) collaboration with partners who can help to magnify WLE learning, including knowledge brokers with extensive networks such as IUCN.</p>	<p>engagement in the current context.</p>				
<p>Recommendation 5: One CGIAR opportunities</p>	<p>Undertake an appraisal of WLE projects and expertise to better define WLE's capacities, strengths, opportunities, and possible gaps in contributing to One CGIAR global challenges.</p>	<p>Partially accepted – WLE is developing synthesis products that feed into One CGIAR Initiatives. While WLE will not explicitly produce a formal appraisal, our collective learning will be documented through a variety of scholarly and communications products as well as the advancement of WLE goals and activities in a series of One CGIAR Initiatives.³</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Ongoing through 2021</p>	<p>All flagships and the PMU will contribute to this recommendation</p>	<p>NA</p>

³ At the time of writing, a finalized list of synthesis products was still under construction. We feel it is also important to note that partner CGIAR Centers who will not be part of the One CGIAR reform process are also contributing to WLE's documentation process.

Table 2: Recommendations to the CGIAR System

These recommendations were made to the CGIAR. No response from the WLE MC is warranted.

Number	Domain	Recommendation
1	Integration	Continue to support integrated approaches on water, land, and environment in the context of the SDGs, and build a System-wide understanding of the need to transform agricultural practices to maintain ecosystem services and ensure that contributions to improved livelihoods and well-being are sustainable.
2		Develop appropriate incentives to encourage researchers and Centers, including agri-food system Centers, to engage in interdisciplinary and systems research, while recognizing that an expectation of financial incentives to collaborate may be counterproductive and that willingness to collaborate needs to be based on a shared vision.
3		Develop guidance for integration of social sciences into action research projects with a view to developing an understanding of factors required for sustaining solutions.
4	Places	Identify a handful of place-based programs in priority river basins, city regions, or transboundary landscapes where the triple challenge of achieving sustainable food production, enhancing human well-being, and conserving ecosystem services can be addressed. This may comprise an integrated, transdisciplinary, and multiscale approach, drawing on WLE's key strengths: co-creating integrated, field-tested solutions at local, landscape, and national scales with local implementation partners.
5		Strengthen country coordination structures as a facility for all CG Centers/CRPs to explore integrated solutions at local, landscape, and relevant subnational or national scales while ensuring coherent engagement with national stakeholders.
6		Develop a suite of practical and ethical guidelines to promote engagement across CGIAR of local partners (NGOs, NARSS/NARESs) and local communities as collaborators in project design and implementation.
7	People and Assets	Develop a capacity development strategy for junior and emerging scientists in CGIAR. This may, for example, include assessing the feasibility of capacity development grants for emerging and women researchers from developing countries; launching a program to develop the scientific writing capacity of emerging researchers who publish fewer than two papers in a three-year cycle; and issuing diversification grants to recruit young, female, and developing-country interns with complementary skills and qualifications.
8		Develop an asset management strategy for CGIAR services, facilities, and platforms to provide for large-scale uptake of solutions, including establishing the conditions for and limits of W1 investment in such facilities (e.g., infrastructure facilities such as the ICRAF soil lab or information facilities such as SADMS).