

Call for Proposals: External Mid-Term Review of the

UK-CGIAR Centre

CABI invites qualified organisations and consortia to submit proposals to conduct an independent external mid-term learning review of the [UK-CGIAR Centre](#) which aims to support global food security by bringing together scientists from the UK and the CGIAR to form impact-focused research collaborations.

Purpose:

The review will assess performance of the first phase of the Centre and provide evidence-based recommendations to inform decision-making, programme adaptation, and future donor investments. The review will apply the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria.

Scope:

The review will focus on two of the most advanced implementation projects from the portfolio and the overall functioning of the Centre, assessing progress, impact, innovations, use of research and learning and making recommendations for strengthening the Centre.

Key Deliverables:

- Inception Report
- Draft Review report
- Final Review report
- Presentation to UK-CGIAR Board

Summary Timeline:

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| ○ Proposal submission | 10 th August |
| ○ Contracting of successful team | 24 th – 31 st August |
| ○ Learning review period | September-November |
| ○ Draft report | 30 th November |
| ○ Final report | 15 th December |

Budget:

Offers in the region of £100,000

Qualifications:

Gender-balanced team with senior evaluator with 10+ years' experience, strong agriculture/ development/ MEL background, excellent written and oral communication skills in English; local expertise in the review regions.

How to Apply:

Submit a proposal, budget with justification and evidence of experience across the required regions to c.rowley@cabi.org by 10th August 2026

Questions regarding submissions can be sent to a.mckay@cabi.org and c.rowley@cabi.org

Context:

The UK-CGIAR Centre was set up in 2023 by FCDO to address two key problems:

The Problem	The Solution
Valuable research by UK Institutes not having sufficient impact in global agricultural practice	Support global food security by bringing together scientists from the UK and the CGIAR to form impact-focused research collaborations
The CGIAR doesn't have systematic access to valuable UK research outputs	A creative approach to commissioning to ensure CGIAR has full access to the best of British agricultural science and the provision of funding to support it

The solutions above were transformed into three primary objectives for the Centre.

- Strengthening local impact of research
- Strengthening relationships between UK and CGIAR
- Alignment with CGIAR Science priorities

After three years of operation the UK-CGIAR Centre has established its governance structure, identified priority research areas, and commissioned and selected three rounds of projects which are now underway. As the first round of projects are reaching completion and further commissioning rounds may be available it was agreed at the Centre Board meeting of 2nd June 2026 that an independent learning review should take place to:

- i) test and validate the solutions to the problem identified by FCDO and their corresponding objectives to see whether they are still relevant and if so, to what extent they are being achieved.
- ii) assess the processes, tools and procedures put in place to deliver the objectives, to consider to what extent they have proved to be fit for purpose and where improvements should be made for future funding rounds.

The UK-CGIAR Centre Secretariat is implemented by CABI, which manages the day-to-day operation of the Centre programme. It acts as a central hub, liaising between the four core members of the Centre: FCDO, CGIAR, BBSRC (representing UKRI), and CABI. The review team will be reporting directly to the Secretariat which has developed this call in collaboration with the UK-CGIAR Board.

Objectives

The midterm review will be undertaken to:

1. Assess the short-term progress made toward achieving the Centre's original 2022-23 objectives, assessing attribution to the extent possible.
2. Assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the Centre's design, partnership model and commissioning process.
3. Document best practices, lessons learned, challenges and recommendations.

4. Identify key enablers, constraints and unanticipated effects that have supported or limited progress against the Centre’s objectives.
5. Provide targeted recommendations to strengthen the Centre’s performance against clearly defined metrics of success including:
 - The quality and relevance of commissioned science in priority thematic areas
 - The effectiveness of UK–CGIAR and local partner collaborations
 - The effectiveness and credibility of the commissioning process
 - The sustainability of the Centre and its scientific outcomes, including financial and institutional sustainability of the Centre’s partnership and funding model, joint funding applications by the partners, as well as the prospects for sustained use, uptake, and scaling of innovations generated by funded projects, and the conditions needed to support this. In this context, the review may explore partners’ perceptions of the potential relevance and applicability of the CGIAR Scaling Approach, which is currently being introduced and is not yet in use across projects.

There are two aspects to the work of the Centre that the consultants will be asked to review:

- a) Performance of the active Projects funded by the Centre (possibly including field visits if the reviewers consider this necessary/ with any field visits to be proposed and justified by the review team as part of their methodology) that provide the science innovations and contribute to the impact on local farmers and communities. Each project has an individual results framework, aligned with that of the CGIAR Programme to which it is mapped. The review will focus on how these projects contribute to the Centre’s original objectives and partnership model, rather than on detailed scientific outputs.
- b) the Centre’s Secretariat, Board and Programme Management structure that decides the Research Area priorities, commissions and selects the projects, promotes and provides oversight of the portfolio. The Secretariat has a Theory of Change and logframe, which will be made available to the review team.

Methodology:

Reviewers will be expected to present a mixed-methods methodology which will include (but may not be limited to)

- Document review
- Key Informant Interviews
- Field visits to at least two project teams

The successful reviewers will develop their own questions to be shared for validation with the UK-CG Centre, the questions should reflect the OECD framework and themes captured below:

CRITERIA	SUGGESTED REVIEW QUESTIONS ¹
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the central design assumption valid; that leveraging the comparative advantages of UK science, CGIAR, and in-country partners generates additional value for FCDO, CGIAR, the UK, and national partners? Are we working in the best thematic areas and with the best scientists, specifically in areas where the UK has a clear global advantage? Do the results framework, assumptions, Centre design and funded projects continue to meet the objectives established for the Centre i.e :

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support global food security by bringing together scientists from the UK and the CGIAR to form impact-focused research collaborations 2. A creative approach to commissioning to ensure CGIAR has full access to the best of British agricultural science and the provision of funding to support it
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Centre align with FCDO and BBSRC strategic priorities? • Does the Centre align with CGIAR science priorities and administrative structures? • Does the Centre’s approach to funding support, match and strengthen other funding mechanisms?
Impact	<p>What impact is the Centre having with regards to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening relationships between UK and CGIAR To what extent are the relationships sustainable and integrated within the CGIAR Science programmes. Does this need to be improved and if so how/ what improvements are needed, and how can these be achieved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diversity of leading UK and relevant CGIAR partners? ○ Taking into account the limited funding, what design approaches can be applied to ensure equitable partnerships (and being clear what the limitations are to this). How have partnerships been developed thus far and how can these be improved? Fund management – efficient, effective and fair? <p><i>At this early stage please also consider where possible evidence of progress on the following objectives:</i></p> 2. Strengthening local impact of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Areas – appropriate and priority? • Commissioning process – appropriate and effective? • Cross cutting areas – Climate, Gender, Disability and Youth • Pathways to Impact – clear and achievable? 3. Alignment with CGIAR Science priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Science Programme alignment ○ Minimum additional procedures and structures ○ Support to CGIAR approaches, tools and WoW
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the commissioning process (including the use of bibliometrics and working, in the main, through established partnerships) been the most effective and cost-efficient way of identifying and supporting the best science in the most important thematic areas? • Are there alternative, more systematic or evidence-based approaches that should be considered? • What internal and external factors have influenced the ability of the Centre to meet expected results and targets? • How do we know the Centre is working in the best thematic areas with the best scientists, areas where the UK has global advantage. That assumption is central to the rationale for the centre. Is the Centre drawing in the best UK science in the most important areas where there is the greatest synergy and added value? Has the Centre been systematic enough in finding areas for research? • What key successes should be replicated, or key improvements made to the implementation, to maximize the results?

Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were Centre activities carried out in a timely manner and with effective use of resources? • Are there any lessons learned regarding the investments made by the Centre? Are there any emerging cost-effective alternatives? • How well has the Centre been managed and MEL data used to make programmatic decisions?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which Centre activities and benefits are likely to be sustained, or not, past the Centre's lifespan and why? • What additional strategies can be put in place to strengthen the sustainability of the Centre's interventions?

Travel required:

Travel may be required if reviewers consider it necessary to ensure the review fulfils its objectives. If so there are projects in Kenya and Ethiopia that are at an advanced enough stage to provide valuable information. If reviewers do consider this necessary the Centre will ensure that project teams and interviewees are informed and ready to receive the Reviewers however the Review team will be expected to manage its own logistics including flights, hotels etc where necessary. Project teams may be able to provide guidance and advice to the review teams on the logistics for their field visits.

Interviews

Reviewers will be expected to speak to implementing partners from all eight ongoing projects (PIs and leads of implementing partners, some of which can take place in situ during the field visits) and the Secretariat – approximately 30-35 interviews total.

Reviewers will be expected to develop written questions for:

CGIAR Programme staff, UK-CG Board and Science and Impact Advisory Group (SIAG)

Deliverables

The reviewers will need to provide the following outputs over the course of the process:

DELIVERABLE	DESCRIPTION	DUE DATE
Draft Inception Report (4-5 pages)	<p>The Inception Report should describe the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the project based on project documents and literature review • Finalized methodology • Communication protocol • Finalized timeline • Data collection tools for qualitative data collection • Limitations 	Week 2
Final Inception Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalized version addressing all UK-CG Centre feedback 	Week 3
Draft Outline	<p>Draft detailed outline that provides a breakdown of how the results and findings will be reported. Report should include at least following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of Acronyms and abbreviations • Table of Contents • Executive Summary • Background of Centre and Review • Methodology and Implementation 	Week 4

DELIVERABLE	DESCRIPTION	DUE DATE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results and Findings • Recommendations • Annex: Table of key program indicators with midterm values • Annex: Results Framework • Annex: Scope of Work for the evaluation • Annex: Inception Report for the evaluation • Annex: Final Survey Instruments (if applicable) 	
Draft midterm report	The report should be submitted in English and accessible to those with disabilities, addressing all the review objectives and questions listed in the scope of work.	Week 12
Validation workshop	Representatives of projects visited and others where key learnings have been gained hear the findings and confirm the accuracy	Week 13
Presentation on Findings	Presentation should include an abbreviated list of the midterm findings that can be presented to relevant internal and external stakeholders	Week 14
Final version of the midterm report	Electronic copy of the final review report should be submitted in English in both Microsoft Word and PDF. The final version should be free of personally identifiable information	Week 15
Learning Brief	A short (2-4 pages) non-technical summary of the midterm findings, easily understood by non-experts based on feedback received at the presentation	Week 16
Final Data Collection Tools	Electronic copies of all clean and final English-version of data collection tools	
Final Cleaned Data & analysis	Clean and final English versions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data sets in approved format • Quantitative secondary data sets in approved format • Qualitative transcripts, field and interview notes, complete list of key informant interviews in Microsoft Word • Analysis files, as applicable 	

The following documents will be provided to the review team

- Bibliometric analyses
- Governance documentation
- Documents that informed the development of the Centre
- Commissioning documentation
- Funded projects documentation
- Review of previous initiatives (e.g. GCRF) that may have valuable learning that can be applied
- The Secretariat Theory of Change and Logframe
- The CGIAR Results Framework

Proposal Requirements

Interested organisations should submit a proposal including the following:

1. Proposed approach including interpretation of the TOR, methodology including sampling, work schedule, ethical considerations and clearance, and implementation plan outlining the key activities. (10 pages max)

2. Proposed budget, in pounds sterling, including a breakdown of the budget: number of days per activity, justification, value for money case. The budget should include only those costs that can be directly attributed to the activities proposed, with explanation of budget line items. (3 pages max). See in annex a list of non-eligible costs.

3. Evidence that the organisation can deliver the work / has previously worked across both the geographic regions required. Please provide up to 3 relevant examples of previous reports including information regarding the funder (experience of reviewing FCDO funded projects will be highly valued), project size and geographical coverage.

4. Details of ethical, safeguarding approaches, data protection and GDPR compliance approaches, including any potential risks and mitigation measures. (3 pages max)

5. CVs of proposed review team (2 pages max per team member). Please clarify the role each team member will play and not generic CVs of the organisation's leadership.

6. Upon a review of the submission, CABI may require additional documentation to fulfil due diligence requirements. Requests for this will be made on a case-by-case basis, and a timeframe for turnaround agreed.

Proposals that do not meet these criteria will not be considered. All documents must be submitted by email to: a.mckay@cabi.org and c.rowley@cabi.org by close of business (UK time) 10th August 2026.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The proposal will be assessed in terms of quality of the technical approach, feasibility to deliver the work in the timeline and countries proposed, and the proposed budget.

- Technical approach and work plan, methodology (40%)
- Team capacity and experience, competency (25%)
- Approach to gender, inclusion, ethics, safeguarding and risks (10%)
- Overall budget and cost realism (25%)

Annex 1:

Please see here a (non-exhaustive) guide to costs that are not eligible to be included in the budget.

- **Capital and asset costs:** No purchase of land, buildings, vehicles, furniture, or major equipment, and no depreciation or capitalisation charges.
- **Core/overhead costs:** No general organisational overheads, head-office rent, utilities, insurance, or staff time not directly working on the review.
- **Contingencies, profit, and financing:** No contingency lines, profit margins or mark-ups, interest, exchange-rate losses, or bank charges.
- **Statutory and non-review costs:** No statutory audits, routine legal/accounting fees
- **Out-of-scope costs:** No new primary data collection or field visits beyond the two approved projects, and no implementation of recommendations such as new systems, software, or follow-on studies.