

International Workshop
State of Foresight in the CGIAR
University of Aberdeen, 9-10 May 2018

Background

The landscape of agricultural research for development is evolving rapidly. The world faces new, more complex, and more interrelated challenges, such as achieving food security in the face of climate change; meeting the growing global demand for agricultural commodities while reducing deforestation, biodiversity loss and water scarcity; creating meaningful employment for a rapidly growing youth population; and producing not only more food, but more nutritious food, in rapidly globalizing agri-food markets serving increasingly urbanized populations. There is pressing need to respond to these new challenges and develop new solutions.

In this context, the ISPC is conducting a comprehensive foresight exercise to inform the strategy of the CGIAR, and to provide context and emerging insights as a basis for system level prioritization of research. Building on its long-term work on Strategy and Trends, the ISPC has initiated an independent foresight assessment in 2017, starting with a brainstorming workshop (*April 2017, Naples-Italy*)¹, with a group of international experts and strategic thinkers on how the futures may look like around grand challenges, global trends and likely disruptions on food and nutrition security (horizon 2050); and how the world is prepared to address them to reach the SDGs and beyond. The outcomes of the workshop will be edited for publication in a book on “Global Agri-Food Systems to 2050– Threats and Opportunities” (to be published in 2018).

The next steps for the ISPC foresight will include a follow-up workshop with CGIAR foresight practitioners and key stakeholders on participatory scenario analysis to inform the CGIAR Research Strategy. Foresight work is currently carried out at various Centers and Research Programs (e.g. Global Futures and Strategic Foresight, which is led by IFPRI but includes all 15 Centers and links with most CRPs) with a diversity of approaches, and at disparate scales. The aims of the proposed workshop are to take stock and synthesize the recent foresight activities and findings in the CGIAR, and discuss the conclusions of the independent foresight assessment led by ISPC in 2017 and their implications for the R4D strategies of the CGIAR.

Objectives:

- i. to take stock and synthesize the recent foresight activities and findings in CGIAR research
- ii. to discuss the outcomes (synthesis) of the independent foresight assessment led by ISPC in 2017 on the futures of global agri-food systems, and how they relate to the state of foresight in CGIAR
- iii. to agree on major drivers and trends that must be considered in developing scenarios for CGIAR foresight work at system level – taking into account current CGIAR foresight work and the ISPC independent foresight exercise.
- iv. to develop an initial plan for CGIAR system-wide work on foresight.

Expected outputs of the workshop:

- Summary of current state of foresight capacity and focus in the CGIAR
- Group consensus on the key drivers and trends that must be considered in developing participatory scenarios for the CGIAR system
- Plan of action for taking forward foresight work in CGIAR system including next steps in planning the CGIAR system scenario building workshop in November.

¹https://ispc.cgiar.org/sites/default/files/pdf/ispc_workshop_report_global_agrifood_systems.pdf