

Terms of Reference of FTA's Independent Steering Committee (ISC)

Approved by the ISC, 6 February 2016, and by the Board of Trustees of CIFOR (FTA Lead Center), 14 April 2016

Introduction

FTA has drawn lessons on its governance and management from Phase I and, in keeping with the recommendations of the IEA and CO, has changed both the composition and the responsibilities of its Independent Steering Committee (ISC). This is to ensure that FTA ISC has a majority of voting members who are independent, so that FTA can benefit from the advice and views of individuals with no institutional bias and with only FTA's best interests as their overall objective.

Steering Committee Composition

Size: 8 members (7 full, 1 ex-officio)

- 3 representatives of the strategic participating partner institutions (1 from the Lead Center, 1 representing all the other CGIAR centers, 1 representing all the non-CGIAR partner institutions)
- 4 independent members
- Ex-officio (non-voting): FTA Director

Independent members are:

- selected in their individual capacity and do not have a conflict of interest in being a ISC member (i.e. they do not represent or work for any of the institutions involved in the FTA partnership)
- short listed by the FTA director following nominations from current ISC members; the short list is discussed by the ISC and selected members are proposed by the ISC to the Lead Center Board of Trustees (BoT)
- appointed by the Lead Center BoT for a fixed term (2 years), renewable once.

Independent members are individuals known internationally and respected for their professional expertise in fields relevant to FTA. The overall ISC should comprise, to the extent possible, a balance in gender, discipline and geographic representation.

The Chair is chosen among the independent members, nominated by the ISC and appointed by the Lead Center BoT for a 2-year fixed term, renewable once.

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

Participating partner members are:

- representing the whole range of respective strategic partners (CGIAR and non CGIAR) and not their own institutional interests
- they must request inputs from other partners ahead of ISC meetings based on the proposed agenda in order to convey to ISC meetings a balanced joint perspective
- the representatives actually sitting in the ISC meetings are chosen by his/her constituencies (CGIAR Centers, non-CGIAR partners) for a period of 2 years

Reporting

The Chair of the ISC reports to the BoT of the Lead Center, CIFOR.

Minutes of ISC meetings are prepared by the FTA Director and approved by the ISC members via email. They are publicly available, once approved.

Responsibilities

1. Strategic planning, oversight and monitoring

Review the set of participating partners and make recommendations about possible changes to the Lead Center Board based upon performance criteria set by FTA.

Review and comment upon the strategic directions proposed by the FTA Director. Actively oversee the overall FTA portfolio to ensure overall coherence with these strategic directions, including by supporting (or not) proposals to include bilateral as well as Windows 1 and 2 (W1+2) projects in the FTA portfolio based on analyses provided by the Management Team (MT).

Approve the annual Program of Work and Budget prepared by the MT based on inputs provided by the flagships and crosscutting themes. Once agreement is reached, the ISC proposes its approval to the Lead Center BoT.

Commission and approve FTA's management response to external reviews (CCER, IEA) upon proposition from the MT or the Lead Center BoT.

Provide guidance to the MT in developing and updating the FTA research strategy including programmatic priorities.

Ensure that advice and direction from the Consortium Board, Fund Council and ISPC are considered in FTA planning and implementation.

Work 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. Performance review

Assess FTA performance based on traffic light and annual reports, and conduct other reviews against work plans, making corresponding recommendations to the Lead Center BoT.

Review the performance of the FTA participating centers and recommend changes to the Lead Center BoT when justified.

Assess the performance of the FTA director on an annual basis in close coordination with the DG of the lead Center who is the direct supervisor of the FTA director and report accordingly to the CIFOR BoT.

Assess the performance of ISC and its Chair according to a process designed by ISC and report accordingly to the CIFOR BoT.

3. Resource allocation

Propose the yearly allocation of W1+2 funding across FTA participating institutions to the Lead Center BoT based on recommendation by the MT and its assessment of partners' performance.

Facilitate agreement among FTA partners on equitable mechanisms, processes and decision criteria for funding allocations among FTA participating centers.

4. Decision making

The ISC operates by consensus.

When consensus cannot be reached, the Chair of the ISC will provide a balanced report of the differing views to the Lead Center BoT, because of its overall fiduciary responsibility for the program. The BoT will then make a decision. In the event that the Lead Center is against the consensus of the ISC, CIFOR's BoT will report this to the Consortium Board/Board of the CGIAR.