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# **SEO Status of “REPO.MEL.CGIAR.ORG”**

## **Final Report**

**27th July 2019**

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Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) is multi-center and multi-CRP online platform for integrated management, monitoring, and reporting of projects, from planning to budgeting, risks' assessment, knowledge sharing and more. MEL creates synergy between research and development partners, bridging competences in a results-oriented platform. MEL allows saving resources and time, reducing paperwork, facilitating administrative steps, quickening project related communications and enabling near real-time data collection to inform decision-making.

*MEL is the result of the synergic efforts by CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals (GLDC), CGIAR Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas (RTB), CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-food Systems (FISH), International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), International Potato Center (CIP), WorldFish, World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), ICARDA GeoAgro and is powered by CodeObia, iMMAP, DSpace and Amazon Web Services (AWS).*

For more information, please visit:

Main website: <https://mel.cgiar.org>

YouTube channel: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIe4a86Rp-hcTt5C\\_x4YkHg/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIe4a86Rp-hcTt5C_x4YkHg/videos)

Guide: <https://cgiarmel.atlassian.net/wiki/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=8552452>

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## Revision History

| Version | Date      | Originator(s)                           | Reviewer(s)     | Description        |
|---------|-----------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1.0     | 27-9-2018 | Valerio Graziano,<br>Vincenzo Calicchio | Enrico Bonaiuti | Structure, content |
| 2.0     | 27-7-2019 | Valerio Graziano                        | Enrico Bonaiuti | Content, language  |

Contents

Introduction..... 1

1. Overall Reporting Strategy Steps..... 2

    1.1 Target..... 2

    1.2 Team Members and Responsibilities..... 2

2. SEO Status of “REPO.MEL.CGIAR.ORG” ..... 3

## Acronyms

|        |                                                                 |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| AWS    | Amazon Web Services                                             |
| CIP    | International Potato Center                                     |
| CRP    | CGIAR Research Program                                          |
| CTA    | Call to Action                                                  |
| FAIR   | Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable                   |
| FISH   | CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-food Systems                |
| GLDC   | CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes                         |
| ICARDA | International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas |
| ICRAF  | World Agroforestry Center                                       |
| IITA   | International Institute of Tropical Agriculture                 |
| MEL    | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning                             |
| R4D    | Research for Development                                        |
| RTB    | CGIAR Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas             |
| SEO    | Search Engine Optimization                                      |
| SSL    | Secure Sockets Layer                                            |
| UI     | User Interface                                                  |
| URI    | Uniform Resource Identifier                                     |
| URL    | Uniform Resource Locator                                        |

## Introduction

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the set of web practices aimed at making a URL and related content easily visible and navigable, in order to obtain a good positioning in the results of search engines queries. SEO-friendly practices combine front-end and User Interface (UI) managing skills, to create websites easy to navigate for both users and search engine bots, which need to find good quality content right away and in an organic fashion. Applying SEO and SEO-friendly practices is responsibility of a webmaster.

SEO is increasingly relevant as search engines are the most common way to navigate the web and draw attention to online content. SEO for non-profit, Research for Development (R4D) organizations such as ICARDA is essential to ensure and boost the Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability and Reusability (FAIR) of its knowledge, for enhanced Knowledge Sharing (KS).

Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning ([MEL](#)) has undertaken the FAIR principles and as such a SEO status analysis of its main Open Access repository, [MELSpace](#), has been issued.

Two analysis sessions have been carried out, in order to correctly assess the managing practices of MELSpace over time and identify the strategic measures needing implementation. The total time span of the activity has been 10 months, encompassing the following activities:

|                                                |                                   |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <a href="#">27<sup>th</sup> September 2018</a> | First Scan and Preliminary Report |
| <a href="#">27<sup>th</sup> July 2019</a>      | Second Scan and Final Report      |

The work carried out aimed at ensuring that ICARDA Open Access repository MELSpace is SEO efficient for enhanced FAIRness.

## **1. Overall Reporting Strategy Steps**

The task strategy has been drafted on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and then finalised on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018, prior to the start of the activity on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The planning required a total of 3 days, including document finalisation as part of the general programmatic activities.

The primary tasks were to:

1. Identify areas of analysis for SEO.
2. Carry out the analysis in two steps.
3. Examine the results based on DSpace and online academics practices (i.e. DOI use).
4. Produce final report.

### **1.1 Target**

The URL target of SEO analysis is <http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/> and related subpages.

### **1.2 Team Members and Responsibilities**

The team members and related roles are hereby listed:

- 1) Valerio Graziano: Learning & Open Access Officer.

## 2. SEO Status of “REPO.MEL.CGIAR.ORG”

### 1) The website is not updated to SSL certificate

The SSL certificate is a main factor of positioning according to Google’s algorithm. The site already appears as “not safe” and this is negatively impacting the online visibility of the repository open content. For new users, the missing certificate is also a discouraging factor from navigating the site

#### Recommended actions:

- a) To implement the SSL certificate, then to update the URLs of the website to https:// in order to avoid being penalized by Google for double indexing.
- b) Update the Google Search Console, with a new profile based on https://, then specifying the status for all four possible versions as follows:

http:// (existing)  
http://www. (not existing)  
https:// (main version)  
https://www. (not existing)

- a) Update the sitemap with the new URLs.
- b) Update robots.txt with the new URLs.
- c) Update the external links (e.g. on.cgiar.org and icarda.org).
- d) Create a new view in Google Analytics.
- e) 301 redirecting from URLs http:// to https://

### 2) There is no active Google Analytics tracking

Google Analytics tracking is not active and provides no data.

#### Recommended action:

- a) Revise the tracking code, which might not have been properly insert.

### 3) The website is duplicated

The website is entirely duplicated at <http://54.229.19.198:8080/>. Such practice negatively impacts the positioning on Google.

#### Recommended actions:

- a) Set <http://54.229.19.198:8080/> as NoIndex and NoFollow.

#### 4) The website pages have missing or incomplete metatags

This is how the home appears:

| Tag/Location     | Content                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| URL              |  <a href="http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/">http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/</a> |
| Page Title       | DSpace Home                                                                                                                                           |
| Meta Description | Not found                                                                                                                                             |

This is how the handles appear:

| Tag/Location     | Content                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| URL              |  <a href="http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/handle/20.500.11766/6960">http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/handle/20.500.11766/6960</a> |
| Page Title       | Mali Focus Group Discussions Data: Dataset                                                                                                                                                            |
| Meta Description | Not found                                                                                                                                                                                             |

#### Recommended actions:

- Home metatags shall contain all useful references to be found online, as the name of the repository (i.e. "Repo MEL CGIAR") and information on the content.
- Handles metatags shall have the following structure:

TITLE: title + brand (Repo MEL CGIAR)

DESCRIPTION: info on the content + hook from the title + author + date

#### 5) Sitemap not found

Usually the sitemap URL is "https://repo.mel.cgiar.org/sitemap.xml"

#### Recommended action:

- The sitemap shall be created and sent to Google Search Console.

## 6) Robots.txt shall be enhanced

Robots.txt is essential for a good positioning with Google. By deindexing the filters, uninteresting content, soft 404, duplicate contents can all be avoided substantially, facilitating the work of Google bots, for a better positioning.

### Recommended action:

- a) Insert the "disallow" filter for all code lines dedicated to:

User-agent: \*

Then insert:

Disallow: /\*filtertype=

Disallow: /\*type=

Disallow: /\*filter=

Disallow: /\*show=

etc...

Repeat for all filters used within the website.

- b) Optimize URLs by useful filters (i.e. authors) from

<http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/browse?type=author&value=Abadi%2C+Amir>

to

<http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/author/abadi-amir>

## 7) Outward link structure

The footer's links are in "follow" mode, loosing "juice" (potential SEO) toward external websites.

### Recommended action:

- a) Set the footer's links in "nofollow".
- b) Edit the anchor text on top from:

"DSpace Home"

to

"Home"

## 8) Improvable pagespeed

The pagespeed is acceptable to the user.

### Recommended action:

- a) Enhancements suggestions can be found at this link <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/?url=http%3A%2F%2Frepo.mel.cgiar.org%2F&tab=mobile>

## 9) Menù structure

As of now, the only archive is "Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Repository".

### Recommended action:

- a) To link the archive URL to the left menu, so to avoid a double step through <http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/community-list>. In case <http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/community-list> is deleted, redirect it toward the home in order to keep the almost 39,000 entry links existing.

## 10) URL Structure

The URL structure is the very basis of every SEO strategy. The present structure is largely improvable and presents no SEO-friendly URLs.

### Recommended actions:

- a) "Category" pages, as follows, are in this shape:

<http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/handle/20.500.11766/181>

while they should be changed into

<http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/biodiversity>

in this way the content shall be immediately visible to bots and users, enhancing positioning and navigation experience.

This is much more true for the handles, which now appear as follows:

<http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/handle/20.500.11766/8172>

while they should be changed into

<http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/handle/a-study-of-banana-seed-supply-and-variety-diversity-in-bbtd-infected-areas-in-burundi>

so the URL shall contain the title and no parameter, character or symbol meaningless for bots and users.

b) It is essential that all handles are inside <http://repo.mel.cgiar.org>, for the SEO strategy to work.

## **11) 404 Errors**

Actually 120 soft errors are present and due to the lack of “disallow” instruction applied to the filters in the robots.txt. 444 pages results as “not found”.

### **Recommended action:**

- a) 404 impact positioning negatively, to avoid being penalized a redirecting to the home is to be set whenever a 404 occurs.

## **12) Contact US**

In terms of user experience, it is good practice to highlight the contacts.

### **Recommended action:**

- a) To provide hook for “contact us” aside the “login” button, in addition to keeping the one in the footer.

## **13) International SEO**

The website is confusing as the language changes partially for the label on the website, seemingly at random.

### **Recommended actions:**

- a) To set the website in one fixed language.
- b) For all alternative repository versions in languages different from the main one, apply the tag “hreflang” to clearly indicate to the bot the different versions.

## 14) Structured Data

Structured data are essential to feed the bot with metadata on the content and also to structure a citation for Google to use as result, the so-called rich snippet. Better information for the users also means more clicks in SERP, optimizing positioning in the medium and long run. Best information can achieve “result 0”, for the best SERP positioning.

### Recommended actions:

- a) To implement structured data as by following schema <http://schema.org/ScholarlyArticle> following the indications in “schema.org” and ResearchGate example <https://www.google.es/search?q=land+surface+water+index&og=land+surface+water+index&aq=chrome..69i57j69i61.3677j0j1&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> found for the query "land surface water index".  
  
[https://search.google.com/structured-data/testing-tool?hl=it#url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.researchgate.net%2Fpublication%2F249960735\\_Land\\_Surface\\_Water\\_Index\\_LSWI\\_response\\_to\\_rainfall\\_and\\_NDVI\\_using\\_the\\_MODIS\\_vegetation\\_index\\_product](https://search.google.com/structured-data/testing-tool?hl=it#url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.researchgate.net%2Fpublication%2F249960735_Land_Surface_Water_Index_LSWI_response_to_rainfall_and_NDVI_using_the_MODIS_vegetation_index_product) at this link the test tool for structured data for Google Search Console can be accessed.
- b) The following visual/structural enhancements to the handles are suggested:
  1. Eliminate the “views” section (not useful to the user).
  2. Move the thumbnail on the bottom, add more images as content if possible, such as the thumbnails of the related content.
  3. After the title, insert the main author, his publications (linked), additional citations (with link), partners (with link), reference to other collections (with link), citations (linked).
  4. Make the “view/open” link as a button/CTA.
  5. Eliminate the URI as it links to the same page and is not useful to the users.

## 15) Links profile

The links profile is currently good.

### Recommended action:

- a) To differentiate the links profile involving external websites within the agricultural and research sector, so to obtain good traffic and good links from trusted sources in an ordered, natural way.

## 16) Link Building

The website currently has 25659 external links. Most of them come from related trusted dominions, with the exception of picswe threat present decontextualized links. However, picswe does not present a threat, since the links from it are coming from many several URLs and no harm comes from it.

| Links Sources        | Links Number |
|----------------------|--------------|
| cgiar.org            | 24.529       |
| picswe               | 297          |
| http://54.229.19.198 | 211          |
| agroknow.com         | 130          |
| lcarda.org           | 116          |

The most linked pages are the followings:

| Content with More Links                            | Links Number |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/                         | 21452        |
| http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/handle/20.500.11766/179  | 719          |
| http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/handle/20.500.11766/8405 | 380          |
| http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/handle/20.500.11766/6685 | 45           |

The most used anchor texts are the followings:

| Anchor Texts            |
|-------------------------|
| melspace                |
| thumbnail               |
| icarda                  |
| more repo mel cgiar org |