JUNE
2021

MEL
monitoring
evaluation and
learning

ICARDA MEL PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Dear Readers,

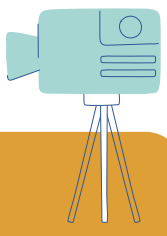
It is our pleasure to bring you the latest edition of the ICARDA MEL Performance Overview! This edition comes at an exciting time with the transition to One CGIAR underway. To better understand the role of MEL in the transition to One CGIAR, we sat down with Marc Schut, Strategic Advisor of Innovation, Scaling, and Stage-gating for One CGIAR.

"We are about science, but science for impact"
As we transition to One CGIAR there is a revived focus that the science we conduct must ultimately aim to achieve impact. The more we become impact-oriented, the more systematic Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) becomes important and routine, and must be integrated in a manner which is enabling and not burdensome. MEL tools such as impact pathways or theories of change can help determine how science contributes to results & impact.

"MEL can help tell us what we prioritize"
MEL is very important because out of all of our innovations, only a few will achieve impact at scale. Given limited resources, MEL can help tell us what we prioritize and change, or what we can repurpose if we see it does not work. Such decisions on which innovations are carried forward require evidence with clear criteria to support and justify decision-making. Furthermore, information collected through routine MEL practices can support demand-supply alignment, fundraising, reporting, and give an "early warning" to course-correct an existing project or innovation.

"The Scaling Readiness Approach can help monitor the readiness of innovations across One CGIAR"
Scaling Readiness uses a standardized, evidence-based approach to assess the readiness of innovations for scaling, providing a tool to ensure that the innovations selected by One CGIAR for scaling have been tested and validated. The focus on "innovations" is broad enough to cover the wide spectrum of CGIAR activities and focus areas. Scaling Readiness can support portfolio management, keeping track of multiple innovations using same principles and metrics, informing decision-making on which innovations to prioritize and strategies to advance the readiness and use of innovations towards impact at scale.

Keep reading for the latest MEL news and metrics!



Check out the new video about the MEL team & what we do!

GO TEAM!

TEAM SPOTLIGHT

SOIL, WATER & AGRONOMY (SWA)

Position: SWA Team Leader

Name: Vinay Nangia

SWA Commodities: Barley, Wheat, Forage, Legumes

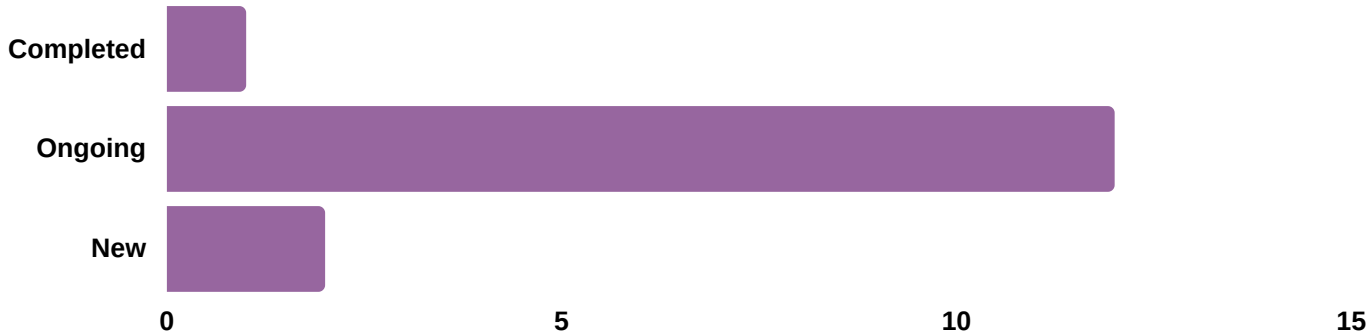
SWA Objectives:

- Sustainable use and management of scarce water and land resources
- Building resilient integrated crop-livestock farming systems
- Scaling-up proven technological packages
- Gender equality and youth
- Team development

Agro-ecosystem (primary): Rainfed
Agro-ecosystems (secondary): Agro-pastoral; Desert; Agropastoral
Methodologies: Closing yield gaps; Agri risk management

To be showcased in the next edition of MEL Performance Overview, please ensure all your team information is provided in MEL. You may find the SWA team's project completion status below with a total number of projects equal to 15.

Project completion status in MEL (2020 - 2021)



Disclaimer: *MEL uses group function, meaning, there are instances where a project may have more than one agreement number (for example, jointly funded projects, CRP activity agreement, Multi-year country contribution). Therefore, the number of projects maybe lower than the total count of agreements.*

INNOVATION SPOTLIGHT

SUPPLEMENTAL IRRIGATION

Supplemental Irrigation is a climate-resilient practice increasing the yields of rainfed crops and it is destined for drylands to compensate for uneven rainfall and stabilize dryland farming to increase income. Effectively, it enables farmers to tackle climate variability and drought through better water management and modern technologies, in turn helping to close the yield gap. For this result, the innovation includes:

- **Training** on water management through modern irrigation, farmers learn to efficiently use water as a public good.
- **Incentives** are provided to encourage farmers to adopt drip irrigation and other modern technologies.
- **Field trials** where farmers are provided with the right tools to increase crop productivity and yields and help feed their families.

RESULTS OF THE INNOVATION:

- Farmers increased their **water productivity.** On-farm water productivity was 2.5 kg/m3 under deficit SI, compared to 0.3-1.0 kg/m3 under rainfed conditions and 0.75 kg/m3 under full irrigation. Using a cubic metre of water at the optimum time and with SI's management package, a farmer could produce 2.0–3.5 more kilograms of grain than by rainfed production alone.
- SI increased the **productivity of rainfed crops.** Indeed, field trials have shown massive (up to 400%) increases in wheat and barley yields with small quantities of SI.
- A cost-benefit analysis showed that the wheat growing gross margin sustained a positive momentum over 10 years, with supplemental irrigation responsible for about one-third.
- The high adoption of this practice and resulting **productivity gains** have **increased farmers' per-hectare incomes** by 35-50 per cent.
- The innovation showing the success of SWA team has been chosen in the CGIAR 50 campaign.

2021 marks **50 years** of **OneCGIAR** with ICARDA innovations!

1 — April — EXTRA EARLY **BIOFORTIFIED LENTILS** FOR SOUTH ASIA

2 — May — PROMOTING **CACTUS PEAR** AS A MULTIPURPOSE CROP TO ENHANCE THE LIVELIHOOD OF POOR FARMERS IN THE DRY AREAS

3 — June — **COMMUNITY-BASED SHEEP AND GOAT BREEDING PROGRAMS** IN LOW INPUT AFRICAN LIVESTOCK SYSTEMS

4 — July — **SUPPLEMENTAL IRRIGATION**: A CLIMATE-RESILIENCE PRACTICE FOR SUSTAINABLE DRYLAND AGRICULTURE

5 — July — TRANSFORMING IRRIGATED WHEAT-BASED PRODUCING SYSTEM USING **MECHANIZED RAISED-BED TECHNOLOGICAL PACKAGE**

6 — August — **COMMUNITY-DRIVEN IN SITU CONSERVATION** OF NON-TROPICAL DRYLAND AGROBIODIVERSITY

7 — October — DEVELOPMENT AND OUT-SCALING OF HIGH YIELDING AND HEAT-TOLERANT **WHEAT VARIETIES** IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

INNOVATION SPOTLIGHT

SCALING READINESS

A scaling readiness assessment of the **Conservation Agriculture System (CAS) in Moldova was** conducted by Murat Sartas, Boris Boincean, Mihail Rurac, and Akmal Akhramkhanov.

From a collaborative effort, between Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia, and Europe (SKiM) project, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Near East and North Africa (NENA), and Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States (CEN) teams and critical stakeholders of conservation agriculture in Moldova, this scaling readiness assessment was produced.

KEY FINDINGS

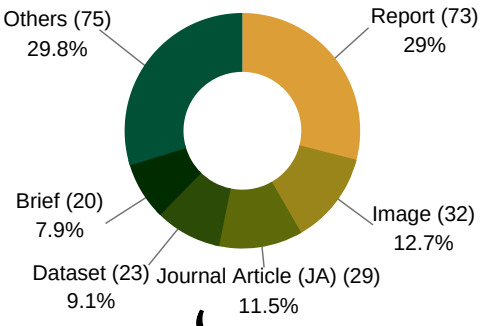
- Scaling of CAS involves **changes across multiple dimensions/sectors/domains/actors** which are referred as **complementing innovations.**
- Policy innovations have high readiness scores indicating that **the policy domain has favorable enabling environment for promoting and adopting CAS** compared to the products and services domain. This is considered as great advantage as changes in policy domain are usually complex and lengthy in time.
- On the other hand, the use level of innovations in the Moldova context is moderate (use levels not exceeding 6 out of 9), meaning that the **existing knowledge of the implementers about the CAS might be limited beyond the farmers/enterprises** involved in dedicated projects.
- To facilitate CAS scaling there is **need to work on products and services domain that have the lowest readiness and use scores**. Those include farmer field schools, short champion benefit stories, factsheet of economic benefits, and applied tools and equipment courses. These could be promptly addressed by tailored investment programs and projects.

Soon in MELSpace !

Photo: Selectia Research Institute of Field Crops, Dorin Ceban.

TRENDING TOPICS MAR-MAY 2021

THE 5 MOST PUBLISHED INFORMATION PRODUCTS



252 INFORMATION PRODUCTS

Data can be exported from MEL – Knowledge Evaluation
https://mel.cgiar.org/reporting/reportslist

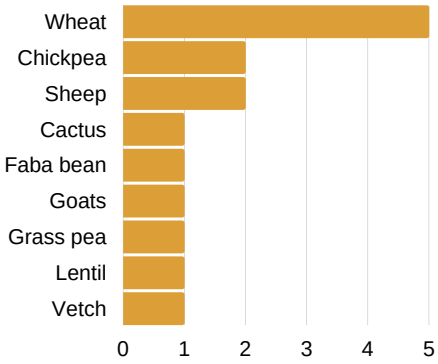
29 ISI
18 OA

16 JA indexed in the Web of Science and **not reported** in MEL

13 JA reported in MEL

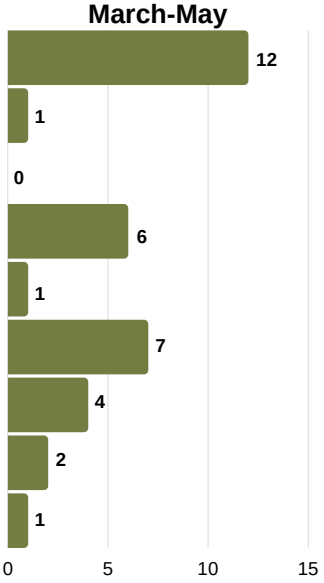
Don't forget to report your journal articles in MEL!

by most published commodities



by Teams

# Team members	Team	# ISI publications from March-May
15	Breeding and Scalling Improved Varieties of dryland cereals and pulses - BREEDING	12
4	Farming with Alternative Pollinators - FAP	1
2	Geo BigData Driven Digital Augmentation for Sustainable Agro-ecosystems - GeoAgro	0
5	Genetic Resources, conservation, characterization, and use - GRS	6
3	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning - MEL	1
18	Resilient Agrosilvopastoral Systems - RASP	7
8	Social Economy and Policy Research - SEP	4
3	Seed systems, International Nurseries and seed Health - SINH	2
4	Soils, Waters and Agronomy - SWA	1



Note: The number of Team members corresponds to the active International recruited staff (IRS) including seconded and CIM experts as of May 2021. Data source: ICARDA's HR Department.

Note: Publications were counted based on the authors' affiliations to the new Team structure, taking into account collaborations between Teams.

TRENDING TOPICS MAR-MAY 2021

JOURNAL ARTICLES WITH HIGHEST ALTMETRICS SCORES

- **New World Cactaceae Plants Harbor Diverse Geminiviruses |** https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/13173
- **Tick Infestation and Piroplasm Infection in Barbarine and Queue Fine de l'Ouest Autochthonous Sheep Breeds in Tunisia, North Africa |** https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/12505
- **Botanical Composition and Species Diversity of Arid and Desert Rangelands in Tataouine, Tunisia |** https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/13035

HOW TO INCREASE MY ARTICLE'S ALTMETRICS SCORE?

Tweet about it

Write a blog

Cite it in a Wikipedia page

Get in the news

Click here for full details on how scores are calculated

INFORMATION PRODUCTS MOST VIEWED

- **Managing rangelands: promoting sustainable native shrub species: Fire Bush: the multipurpose sand dune stabilizer (2014) | 168 visits |** https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/3275
- **Approaches to Total Factor Productivity Measurements in the Agriculture Economy (2015) | 51 visits |** https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/4389
- **Outcome Story Toolkit: Guidelines and Template (2015) | 48 visits |** https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/3237

INFORMATION PRODUCTS MOST DOWNLOADED

- **Survey data collected for 3 case study pilot water users' associations (WUAs) of Fergana Valley (2015) | 73 downloads |** https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/3169
- **Landscape management and governance, Il Ngwesi Group Ranch-Laikipia, Kenya (2015) | 54 downloads |** https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/3701
- **Sediment yield data used for SWAT modeling (2015) | 49 downloads |** https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/3158

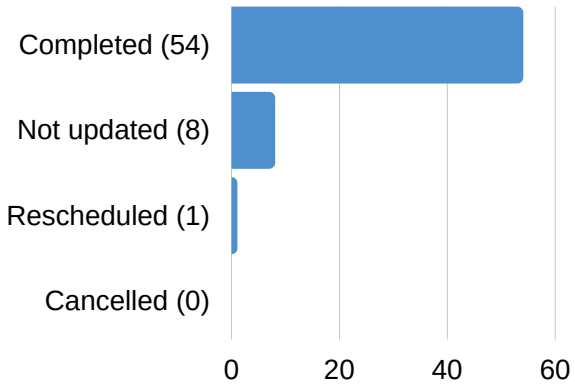
Note: Altmetrics scores refer only to information products published in March-May 2021, whereas the most viewed and downloaded are the most viewed and downloaded in March-May 2021 among all published information products in MELSpace.

MELSpace offer information products in other languages.
Browse at repo.mel.cgiar.org

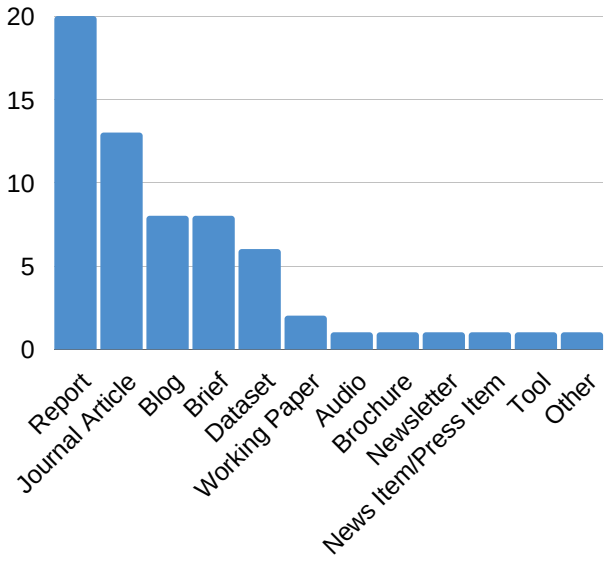
TRENDING TOPICS MAR-MAY 2021

DELIVERABLES IN MEL

by Status



by Type



Please **remember to update (upload, cancel or postpone) your deliverables in MEL** or contact the responsible colleague in your team for support.
When the reporting is concluded, please **don't forget to mark the deliverable as completed.**

Completed deliverables

***by* Team** **and** ***by* Sub-Team**

- **14** Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning - MEL
  - **1** Knowledge Management - KM
  - **11** Monitoring & Evaluation - M&E
  - **2** Data Curation - DC
- **13** Breeding and Scalling Improved Varieties of dryland cereals and pulses - BREEDING
  - **3** Bread Wheat - BW
  - **9** Legumes - LG
  - **1** Biotech - BT
- **12** Resilient Agrosilvopastoral Systems - RASP
  - **2** Rangeland Ecology and Forages - REF
  - **7** Restoration Initiative on Dryland Ecosystems - RIDE
  - **3** Small Ruminants - SR
- **8** Soils, Waters and Agronomy - SWA
- **3** Social Economy and Policy Research - SEP
- **2** Farming with Alternative Pollinators - FAP
- **1** Communications - COM
- **1** Capacity Development - CDU
- **0** Genetic Resources, conservation, characterization, and use - GRS
- **0** Geo BigData Driven Digital Augmentation for Sustainable Agro-ecosystems - GeoAgro

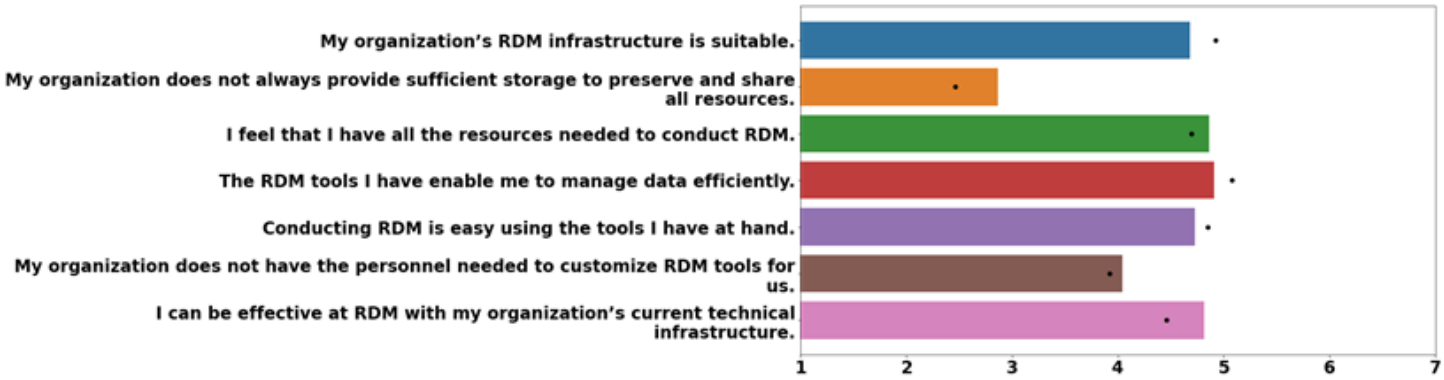
TRENDING TOPICS MAR-MAY 2021

DATA MANAGEMENT PRACTICES & MEL USAGE

Mixed-Method Research on Data Management (RDM) Practices and MEL Usage

Principal investigators: Sebastian Feger, Cininta Pertiwi, Enrico Bonaiuti

Scientists largely acknowledge the value of research data management (RDM) to enable reproducibility and reuse. But, several RDM practices, including documentation, preservation, and sharing, are not sufficiently rewarded within the traditional academic reputation economy. Recent work shows that emerging RDM tools can offer new incentives and rewards. But, the design of such platforms and scientists' commitment to RDM is contingent on additional factors, including policies, training, and personal motivation. To date, other studies on this topic focused on investigating only a few RDM components within a given environment. In contrast, we conducted several studies within the CGIAR, and in particular ICARDA, to provide a more accurate account of RDM commitment drivers. In one study, we surveyed researchers (n = 23) to explore and validate a conceptual RDM commitment model. Another study focused on qualitative explorations (n = 13) of motivation, training, and infrastructure, with particular regard to MEL service usage.



The bar plots represent rated agreement of all 23 responses to statements related to infrastructure suitability. The markers represent mean values of respondents who specifically indicated working at ICARDA (13) or WorldFish (1). All items reported are based on a 7-point Likert scale (1: Strongly Disagree; 4: Neutral; 7: Strongly Agree).

Participating scientists stressed that they received little or insufficient training in research data management as part of their formal academic education. Our informants further recorded a more positive attitude towards the suitability of sharing and reporting platforms at ICARDA/CGIAR (see figure above). Nevertheless, study participants also discussed several barriers and opportunities related to the adoption of platforms like MEL. In particular, ICARDA and CGIAR researchers and data managers emphasized the importance of the One CGIAR reform process to push the boundaries and usability of future platforms.

We will openly publish the full paper on MEL once it has been fully peer-reviewed and accepted by corresponding academic institutions and keep you updated.

TRENDING TOPICS MAR-MAY 2021

INNOVATION AS A KEY DRIVER FOR ONE CGIAR IMPACT

We interviewed Marc Schut, Senior Innovation and Scaling Scientist with Wageningen University, IITA and RTB, in his new role as Strategic Advisor on Innovation, Scaling, and Stage-gating for One CGIAR. Marc is also one of the founding fathers of the Scaling Readiness approach, which is used by One CGIAR as a framework for organising its innovation portfolio. We discussed with Marc how a focus on state-of-the-art "innovation" could support One CGIAR to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The key challenge is to put in place the key building blocks, of an ambitious and impact-oriented One CGIAR Research and Innovation strategy 2030, to co-design the internal change process, and to be progressive, cost-efficient, and realistic at the same time. One thing is clear and that is that business-as-usual is no longer an option. Four main areas were covered.

1. What innovation means in the new One CGIAR

When talking about innovation in the context of CGIAR, we think about technologies such as seeds, breeds, machines, crop management techniques. However, there are many examples of good CGIAR technological innovations ending up "on the shelf", often because too little investment was made in understanding what enabling market, finance, behavioural and policy innovations the effective use of the technological innovation would require. A prerequisite for having an impact is to understand interdependencies between technological and non-technological innovations (which is referred to as innovation packages). It can help us to think about what research and partnerships are needed to improve an innovation package and its readiness to scale.

2. CGIAR Initiatives to foster and embed innovation for impact

One CGIARs Research and Innovation Strategy is operationalized through different thematically oriented and Regionally Integrated Initiatives. The former often addresses a specific development challenge (e.g., climate changes) or field of research or innovation (e.g., digital innovation). They bring together experts to understand the challenges and develop the best solutions to address them. Whilst, the latter can put solutions into context creating enabling conditions for the use of innovations. Together the two types of initiatives can ensure generic scientific advancements as part of innovative design and testing, as well as contextual adaptation to ensure impact.

3. Stage-gating to ensure a "healthy" CGIAR innovation portfolio

Stage-gating – a key concept in One CGIAR -, acknowledges that innovations go through a process from an idea to a proven product, technology, service, or institutional arrangement that is proven to work in real-life conditions. Along the process, some innovations may not reach the reality phase, helping to prioritize those that do. Stage-gating supports decision-making and prioritization to ensure that the CGIAR innovation portfolio remains "healthy", meaning the innovations within the portfolio:

- **Are diverse in terms of maturity or scaling readiness;**
- **Address different SDGs and SDG targets;**
- **Can be re-oriented if they do not work;**
- **Span across different geographies;**
- **Address the needs of different groups of beneficiaries (e.g. gender, age).**

Documentation and tracking of the portfolio across all CGIAR Initiatives is crucial for evidence-based decision-making, monitoring, and prioritization within and across CGIAR Initiatives.

TRENDING TOPICS

MAR-MAY 2021

CGIAR QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA)

The second round of Quality Assurance (QA) is completed ✓

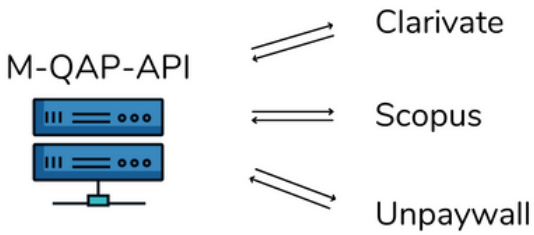
After CGIAR Research Program (CRP) and Platform Annual Report submission at the end of April 2021, May and June are invested in the Quality Assurance (QA) assessment, a process involving CRPs and Platforms. Each CRP and Platform undergo an assessment on eight reported indicators: (1) Contributions to SLOs targets, (2) Policies, (3) Outcome Impact Case Reports (OICRs), (4) Innovations, (5) Milestones, (6) Capacity Development, (7) Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Impact Assessment (MELIA) and (8) Peer-Reviewed Papers. The assessment is conducted in two rounds by a group of evaluation experts and was completed on June 18th.

The QA process takes place in the QA platform, established last year and improved this year, which is hosted within the CGIAR Level Agricultural Results Interoperable System Architecture (CLARISA) web service. This platform enables systems like MARLO, MEL and others to communicate with each other, and collect, standardize, and aggregate information in the language needed for System-Level reports.

Finally, quality-assured data on these topics will feed the Annual Performance Report sections and will also serve the CGIAR Results Dashboard, offering an overview of the results achieved by the CRPs and PTFs in research for development.

M-QAP-API: a novel tool to support Quality Assurance (QA) on peer-reviewed publications

For the 8th indicator assessed above on 'Peer-Reviewed Papers', a new tool is being used this year for the QA process: the M-QAP-API, which stands for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Quality Assurance Processor. This tool automates and facilitates the assessment of peer-reviewed publications for the ISI and Open Access (OA) status. It does so by employing Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to extract publication metadata from Web of Science™ (WoS), Scopus®, Unpaywall, Altmetric, and F.A.I.R metric from GARDIAN.



The use of this tool allows saving time and resources and standardizes the process of verifying the ISI and OA status, previously manually assessed. Moreover, the use of a benchmark academic database of reference such as WoS allows a consistent, reliable, replicable retrieval of data which brings values to the overall process and reduces errors and misinterpretations.
The M-QAP-API has been designed by the ICARDA MEL team with the financial support of the CGIAR System Organisation (SO) and it has been piloted with the collaboration of the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT to support existing processes in CLARISA and other Management Information System (MIS) platforms such as MEL and MARLO.

Read more about this tool at https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/13115

TIPS & TRICKS

VIDEO MAKING

Videos can serve as exciting, visual tools to engage your audience and explain concepts. To support your future video-making endeavors, the MEL team has reflected on their lessons learned and generated a "video toolkit" with helpful video management resources.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. **Get feedback from diverse groups**: your colleagues, the Comms team, a family member... especially if your audience is the general public, this will help ensure your concepts are clear to everyone!

2. **Take time to gather permissions**: ensure you have permission to use all footage, photos, and logos within your video

3. **Utilize existing content, sparingly**: Prior institutional videos and photos can be a great starting point to gather content, but ensure that your video content isn't too repetitive of past videos or within itself

4. **Ensure a detailed, precise storyboard:** a storyboard is the primary "draft" of your video on paper. Clearly define length of each item and sound.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

The toolkit contains:

- An excel template to help you collect and organize feedback
- Draft e-mails for requesting permissions and a spreadsheet to track permissions recieved
- Links and information on where you may access stock video footage and photos
- Storyboard template