



Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight (MELIAF) Policy

**Advancing Results-Based Management (RBM) at
ICARDA**

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Acronyms

BoT	Board of Trustees
CGIAR	Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers
CIPE	Country Innovation Portfolio Evaluation
CoP	Community of Practice
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDGR	Deputy Director General for Research
DG	Director General
FTE	Full-time equivalent
IA	Impact Assessment
ICARDA	The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
MAP	MELIAF Advisory Panel
MC	MELIAF Committee
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MELIAF	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight
MQA	MELIAF Quality Assurance
MR2E	Management Response to Evaluation
MSS	MELIAF Support Supervision
MT	MELIAF Team
MtE	Meta-evaluation
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PfE	Performance evaluation
PGEM	Partial and General Equilibrium Model
PrE	Process Evaluation
SEPR	Social, Economy and Policies Research
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRP	Strategic Research Priority
SRPE	Strategic Research Portfolio Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
TREM	Trend Regression and Estimation Model

1.0 Introduction

The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) undertakes research-for-development to provide innovative, science-based agricultural solutions aimed at improving the livelihood resilience of rural dryland communities. ICARDA is a member of the CGIAR, a global research partnership for a food-secure future dedicated to transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis. Both ICARDA and CGIAR had a long history of designing and implementing MELIAF activities aimed at generating evidence that strengthens decision-making, improves project implementation, and demonstrates impact. This policy is published to clarify ICARDA's approach to MELIAF, harnessing existing and applicable policies and procedures and entrenching industry best practices.

1.1 Definition of Key Terminologies

In this section we present the operational definitions of the terminologies that are core to the understanding of this policy.

1. **Deliverables** is a specific, time-bound indicator of progress toward an output. It is proof of the completion of an activity or a set of activities.
2. **Evaluation** is a structured, systematic and objective assessment of the design, implementation, and results of an on-going or completed project, program, initiative, policy, or operational modality. Evaluations generate findings, conclusions and recommendations that are verifiable and based on qualitative and/or quantitative data.
3. **Foresight** a structured exploration of plausible future scenarios based on current trends and data. Foresight helps anticipate challenges and opportunities, guiding long-term strategy, resource allocation, and innovation planning.
4. **Impact** is a durable change in the condition of people and their environment brought about by a chain of events or change to which research, innovations and related activities have contributed. Impact may be positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended.
5. **Impact assessment** is the assessment of whether there is a durable change in the condition of people and their environment brought about by a chain of events or change in how a system functions to which research, innovations and related activities have contributed.
6. **Learning** is the process of explicitly capturing experiences and knowledge in such a way that different stakeholders can use them to take corrective actions and proactive planning.
7. **Monitoring** is the continuous and systematic observation and recording of programme progress, by regularly examining deliverables and performance indicators.
8. **Outcome** is an intermediate change resulting from use or effects of an output. Outcomes manifest as changes in behaviour, knowledge, skills, attitudes, relationships, status or utility.
9. **Output** is a tangible product or service aimed at generating knowledge, technical/material or institutional advancement through implementation of one or more activities.

1.2 Institutional Set-Up of MELIAF at ICARDA

The Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment and Foresight (MELIAF) is an institutional responsibility, strategically positioned under the Office of the Deputy Director General for Research (DDGR). MELIAF at ICARDA is operationalized through the institutional set-up elaborated in the sub-sections below:

1.2.1 Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning Team

The Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning (MEL) team has the mandate to conduct monitoring, evaluation (Process Evaluations, Performance Evaluations, Country Innovation Portfolio Evaluations, and Strategic Research Portfolio Evaluations), learning activities, foresight assessments (TREMs component) and quality assurance activities.

1.2.2 Social, Economy and Policies Research Team

The Social, Economy and Policies Research (SEPR) team conducts impact assessments and foresight assessments (both TREMs and PGEMs components) to evaluate and provide credible evidence needed to co-design and develop future-informed and demand-driven innovations that lead to sound and sustainable transformation of dryland agrifood systems.

1.2.3 MELIAF Team

The MEL team and SEPR team shall collectively be referred to as the MELIAF team (MT). The MELIAF team shall design, implement, conduct quality assurance, and report on MELIAF activities. The MELIAF team shall uphold ICARDA's commitment to results-based management, continuous learning, and forward-looking research.

1.2.4 MELIAF Committee

The MELIAF committee (MC) shall be the guardian of the MELIAF policy. The MC shall meet to review the plan of work and results of the work of the MELIAF team at least thrice annually. The MELIAF Committee shall be appointed by the ICARDA DDGR. The MC shall comprise of permanent and non-permanent/rotational members. The permanent members shall include: 1) The ICARDA DDGR (Chair); 2) 2 members of the MEL team; and 3) 2 members of the SEPR team. The latter two permanent members, once appointed, will serve until such a time that their appointment is rescinded by the DDGR. The non-permanent/rotational members shall include: 1) up to 2 research team leaders (SRP leads); and 2) up to 2 country coordinators. The non-permanent/rotational members shall be appointed by the DDGR for a period of one calendar year. The selection of research team leaders and country coordinators for appointment to the MC shall depend on the DDGR's opinion on the (potential) contribution of the research team or country to the on-going or forthcoming MELIAF plans of work/activities. Decisions of the MC shall be by simple majority vote by the permanent members.

1.2.5 MELIAF Advisory Panel

The MELIAF Advisory Panel (MAP) shall provide the MC strategic guidance on Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight (MELIAF) activities. The MAP shall comprise of:

- a) One member of the ICARDA BoT, appointed by the ICARDA BoT Chair.
- b) One member of the CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES); appointed by the ICARDA DG.
- c) One member from a strategic CGIAR centre, who is a member of the CGIAR MELIA Community of Practice (CoP); appointed by the ICARDA DG, and
- d) A MELIAF professional from a non-CGIAR institution; appointed by the ICARDA DG.

Members will serve 3-year terms, renewable for another 3 years. The terms of service shall be on voluntary basis, without payment, except for travel and per diem that may accrue during the discharge of their duties. The MAP shall convene twice a year, with the DDGR joining as an ex-officio member and other members of the MELIAF Committee as observers. Decisions of the MAP shall be by simple majority vote by members present.

1.3 Objectives of the MELIAF policy

The MELIAF Policy provides a unified institutional framework to guide how ICARDA plans, monitors, evaluates, learns from, and anticipates the results of its research-for-development (R4D) investments. The policy aims to enhance ICARDA's effectiveness, accountability, credibility, and strategic foresight. The objectives of the MELIAF policy are to:

- 1) Promote transparency and consistency of results measurement and reporting.
- 2) Promote a culture of learning and adaptive management.
- 3) Enhance the quality, availability, and timeliness of results data.
- 4) Enhance the utility of data in decision-making at strategic and operational management levels, including proposal/business development.
- 5) Bridge the gap between Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) and Impact Assessment (IA) and introduce Foresight (F) studies and projections to form a coherent MELIAF function.
- 6) Strengthen the understanding of the mandate of the MELIAF team at ICARDA.

1.4 Guiding Principles for MELIAF

The following core principles shall underpin all MELIAF activities:

1. **Impartiality:** MELIAF processes shall always be impartial, providing objective guidance to the design and implementation of interventions.
2. **Transparency:** MELIAF activities shall always be conducted in a transparent manner and shall, as conditions permit, entail data triangulation and clear feedback loops.
3. **Participation:** MELIAF processes will always be conducted in a manner that enhances the participation/collaboration of stakeholders.
4. **Coherence:** Each MELIAF activity will be designed to ensure that it contributes to the broader accountability and learning efforts of ICARDA.

1.5 Target audience of the MELIAF Policy

This policy is intended to guide all stakeholders involved in ICARDA's research-for-development efforts, ensuring a shared understanding of MELIAF expectations, responsibilities, and practices.

The M&E policy is directed towards all ICARDA stakeholders, especially:

1. ICARDA staff members and consultants who design monitoring systems, frameworks and tools.
2. ICARDA staff members and consultants who commission or carry out evaluations.
3. ICARDA staff members and consultants who develop proposals for funding.
4. ICARDA staff members and consultants responsible for planning the measurement and reporting of results to donors and other stakeholders.

5. ICARDA staff members and consultants responsible for corporate activities and for reporting to ICARDA BoT on institutional performance.
6. ICARDA Senior Management Team (SMT) responsible to steer ICARDA operations.
7. Partner institutions contracted by ICARDA to implement research and development work on behalf of or in partnership with ICARDA.
8. The general public that has an interest in learning about RBM at ICARDA.

Elaboration on specific stakeholders and their role in implementing this MELIAF policy is provided in section 8.1.

1.6 MELIAF Tools and Frameworks

ICARDA employs a set of standardized tools and frameworks to ensure consistency, quality, and coherence in the design, monitoring, evaluation, and strategic foresight of its research and development initiatives. The key MELIAF tools and frameworks are listed below:

1. **Logical Framework/ Results Framework:** A logical framework is a management tool used to improve the design of interventions through the systematic identification of activities, outputs, outcomes and impact, based on their causal relationships. Performance indicators, means of verification and assumptions associated with the results logic are also presented in the logical framework/results framework. A template of the logical framework is presented in annex 1.
2. **Performance Indicators:** A performance indicator is a quantitative or qualitative variable that represents an approximation of the characteristic, phenomenon or change of interest. Indicators are used to assess organizational or research performance.
3. **Theory of change (ToC):** A theory of change is a visual map and related narrative presenting the sequence of outputs, outcomes and the relevant assumptions and causal logic that explain how desirable change is expected to evolve. A theory of change is a combination of multiple impact pathways, from activities to impact.
4. **Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment and Foresight Plan (MELIAF Plan):** A MELIAF plan refers to a document that operationalizes the MELIAF Policy at Program- or Project-level. It describes the set-up and functioning of the Program or Project MELIAF system. The MELIAF Plan incorporates the logical framework, indicators, theory of change, among others. ICARDA MELIAF team developed a template¹ that can be adopted and customized by program and project teams.
5. **MEL Platform²:** The MEL Platform is a collaborative online platform designed to support integrated project planning, management, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. The MEL Platform is a flexible, adaptive tool tailored for monitoring, evaluation, and learning in agricultural research and development. It brings together robust project management tools,

¹ <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/11995>

² <https://mel.cgiar.org>

FAIR-aligned data repositories, and community-oriented knowledge sharing—all under an integrated, interoperable system.

6. **Foresight Models:** Foresight models are tools used to explore plausible future scenarios potential effects of interventions before they occur, thus facilitating long-term planning, investment prioritization, and risk management. Foresight models enable ICARDA to anticipate future challenges, identify emerging opportunities, and align research and innovation with evolving needs in dryland agricultural systems.

2.0 Monitoring

Monitoring is the continuous examination of the status of results and if there is need for adjustments or action, and how this should be done. Monitoring often entails the use of management systems to track the status of activities, associated deliverables and the resultant outputs. Monitoring at ICARDA entails:

1. The use of the MEL Platform to record key information about projects, the expected results, associated performance indicators, workplans, among others.
2. Routine reporting of tasks and deliverables to the MEL Platform and continuous appraisal of the reporting status.
3. The design of output tracking systems using data collection forms (capable of capturing sufficiently disaggregated data), indicator summary sheets or tracking tables.
4. Centralised repository/space for systematic and continuous management of monitoring data.
5. Routine reporting of output results using appropriate performance indicators. Performance data will go through a quality assurance workflow, before it is aggregated for institution-level reporting and made widely accessible through an interactive dashboard.

3.0 Evaluation and Impact Assessment

Evaluation and impact assessment are core functions of MELIAF that ensure ICARDA's research and development activities are relevant, effective, efficient, and contribute to meaningful, long-term change. Evaluations provide evidence for learning and accountability, while impact assessments generate scientifically robust estimates of the changes attributed to ICARDA's interventions. Evaluations at ICARDA will be designed to provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process. The types of evaluations are described in sections 3.1 and 3.2.

3.1 Types of evaluations based on thematic scope

The types of evaluations defined based on thematic scope are described in subsections 3.1.1 to 3.1.5.

3.1.1 Process evaluations

Process evaluation (PrE) is a systematic assessment that examines how a program or entity operates. It examines operational modalities, organizational management arrangements/practices, procedures, criteria, programmatic approaches, instruments, and mechanisms, that is, how well they are designed,

implemented, and how these potentially affect the achievement of the intended results. The CGIAR Evaluation criteria applicable to Process evaluations are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: CGIAR Evaluation Criteria Applicable to Process Evaluations

CGIAR Evaluation Criteria	Elaboration
Efficiency	How well resources are used
Coherence*	Compatibility with other processes and standards
Quality of Science	Scientific credibility and legitimacy of processes
Effectiveness	The extent to which the processes under review contribute to achieving stated objectives

* Main/Dominant criterion

3.1.2 Performance evaluation

Performance evaluation (PfE) is the assessment of progress toward the achievement of outputs and outcomes by gathering and comparing performance data with the stated targets and reporting back on a predetermined schedule, to inform decision-making. The CGIAR Evaluation criteria applicable to Performance evaluations are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: CGIAR Evaluation Criteria Applicable to Performance Evaluations

CGIAR Evaluation Criteria	Elaboration
Relevance	Alignment with stakeholder needs and priorities
Effectiveness*	Achievement of intended objectives and results
Coherence	Consistency and synergy with other interventions
Efficiency	Optimal use of resources and timely delivery
Quality of Science	Scientific credibility and legitimacy
Sustainability	Continuation of benefits over time

* Main/Dominant criterion

3.1.3 Impact Assessment (Impact Evaluation)

Impact Assessment (IA) is the systematic identification of the long-term effects (positive or negative, intended or not) on individuals, households, institutions and/or the environment, caused by a program or project. Impact assessment estimates the causal effects of an intervention's outputs on the long-term behaviour and system-level changes in a phenomenon of interest. Impact assessments therefore are focused on the impact criterion of the evaluation criteria but could include any of the others. Impact assessments shall utilise rigorous methods and scientifically robust sample sizes to estimate the causal effect of the program or project. The CGIAR Evaluation criteria applicable to Impact assessments are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: CGIAR Evaluation Criteria Applicable to Impact Assessment

CGIAR Evaluation Criteria	Elaboration
Impact*	Whether an intervention has had significant, transformative and long-term effects
Sustainability	Whether benefits continue over the long-term
Effectiveness	If the intervention led to desired outcomes
Relevance	If the impacts addressed priority needs

* Main/Dominant criterion

3.1.4 Country Innovation Portfolio Evaluation

Country Innovation Portfolio Evaluations (CIPE) examine whether the innovations (co-)developed and/or promoted by ICARDA meet/met the objectives of their development, including the realization of the envisioned outcomes, relevance to the needs of the intended communities and whether the benefits from the use of the innovations continue after the end of the project or program. CIPE shall utilise small sample survey approaches and qualitative methods to track a portfolio of innovations in a country, in representatively selected locations, over a period of time. The CGIAR Evaluation criteria applicable to Country Innovation Portfolio Evaluation are provided in Table 4.

Table 4: CGIAR Evaluation Criteria Applicable to Country Innovation Portfolio Evaluation

CGIAR Evaluation Criteria	Elaboration
Effectiveness*	Achievement of innovation objectives
Relevance	Alignment of innovations (and associated benefits) with country needs and priorities
Sustainability	Continuation of innovation benefits after intervention is ended

*Main/Dominant criterion

3.1.5 Strategic Research Portfolio Evaluation

Strategic Research Portfolio Evaluation (SRPE) are conducted to determine whether ICARDA's strategic research areas remain relevant to the global and country agri-food systems development agenda and the appropriateness of the ICARDA results framework. SRPE synthesize relevant information from the evaluations listed above, needs assessments, internal reviews, internal and external studies. The CGIAR Evaluation criteria applicable to strategic Research Portfolio Evaluation are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: CGIAR Evaluation Criteria Applicable to Strategic Research Portfolio Evaluations

CGIAR Evaluation Criteria	Elaboration
Relevance	Alignment with global/country agendas
Effectiveness	Extent to which research undertaken has contributed to the achievement of research portfolio objectives
Quality of Science	Scientific credibility of strategic research approaches
Coherence	Alignment of strategic research areas with broader research and development efforts
Impact	Contribution of ICARDA research to significant changes in agri-food systems
Sustainability	If and how ICARDA research is leading to lasting benefits

3.1.6 Meta-evaluation

An evaluation that combines, or aggregates findings from two or more of the above evaluation types shall be referred to as a meta-evaluation (MtA). Evaluations designed to evaluate the quality of the above evaluations and their adherence to established good practices in evaluation shall also be referred to as Meta-evaluations.

3.2 Types of evaluations based on timing

Evaluations can be conducted before, during and after the completion of an intervention. The evaluation types defined based on the timing as described in sub-sections 3.2.1 to 3.2.3.

3.2.1 Formative evaluations

Formative evaluations take place before or during implementation with the aim of improving the design and performance of an intervention. Formative evaluations ensure that a program or program activity is feasible, appropriate, and acceptable before it is (fully) implemented. Formative evaluations could either be baseline evaluations or mid-term evaluations:

3.2.1.1 Baseline evaluations

Baseline evaluations are initial assessments conducted before an intervention or project to establish a starting point or benchmark, allowing for the measurement of progress and impact over time.

3.2.1.2 Midterm evaluations

Midterm evaluations are structured assessments conducted during (preferably in the middle of) a project or program to assess progress, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments to ensure successful completion. Midterm evaluations help determine if a project or program is on track, if its objectives are still relevant, and if the planned activities are effective.

3.2.2 Endline/terminal evaluations

Endline/terminal evaluations are final assessments of a project or program, conducted at the end of its implementation, to determine its effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, and to identify lessons learned. The main goal of endline evaluations is to provide a comprehensive assessment of a project or program's performance, including its strengths and weaknesses, and to make recommendations for future actions.

3.2.3 Impact assessment

Impact assessments are conducted after an intervention has been completed (often 5 years or more) and are used to substantiate claims of sustained results.

3.3 Use of Evaluation Design Matrices

To ensure that evaluations place emphasis on responding to evaluation questions, each evaluation conducted at ICARDA is conceptualised through the use of an evaluation design matrix. A template of the evaluation design matrix is presented in Annex 2: Evaluation Design Matrix.

3.4 Management response to evaluation

Management Response to evaluation (MR2E) is a formal mechanism that helps foster greater ownership over the process of change contributing to improved organizational effectiveness, learning, and accountability.

1. To ensure that ICARDA systematically addresses the recommendations from evaluations, the MELIAF function shall embrace a management response system, which systematically presents the evaluations' recommendations, whether they were accepted or not (with reasons), the planned actions in response to the recommendations, responsible persons and timeframes for action.
2. The MELIAF function will regularly examines the implementation status of accepted recommendations and provide status reports to the DDGR.

3. The paper-based MR2E tracking template is provided in Annex 3: Management Response to Evaluation.
4. The evaluation process management functions in the MEL Platform shall entail recording all deliverables generated during evaluation, evaluation recommendations, management response and actions, quarterly tracking of management actions through a dashboard and automated reminders for outstanding actions, and the retrieval of the recommendations to support corrective measures and planning.

4.0 Learning

ICARDA programmes and projects shall explicitly process experiences in such a way that different stakeholders can learn from them so that they can be used for adaptive management and planning. Learning and adaptive management comprises of:

1. **Operational processes-related** lessons learned, which captures day-to-day learnings as they arise,
2. **ToC-based** learning, which is more of a periodic, reflective process that focuses around revisiting the ToC.
3. **Project review** and adaptive planning workshops

The details of the processes are provided in the MEL Plan template: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/11995>. Lessons learned shall be routinely recorded in the MEL Platform, referenced to support adaptive planning of output and outcome, in project proposals and reports.

5.0 Foresight Assessments

Foresight at ICARDA will be conducted using two types of models:

5.1 Trend Regression and Estimation Models (TREMs): These shall comprise of trend regression models based on historical data, as well as advanced statistical trend-smoothing estimation models such as exponential smoothing and Holt's and Brown's linear trends. These models provide timely insights into how the future will look in terms of trends if nothing changes. The limitation of these models is that it cannot simulate possible future scenarios and thus cannot provide options for alternative investments and prioritisation. Where such considerations are key, the models described in section 5.2 will be utilised.

5.2 Partial & General Equilibrium Models (PGEMs): ICARDA utilises the models, databases and systems-level metrics developed or coordinated by the CGIAR Foresight Initiative³ to analyse anticipated trends and evaluate policy trade-offs. The models span multiple Impact Areas with more possible trade-offs, as food, land, and water systems are integrated, with shared challenges and risks. Some of these models are economic models, while others simulate crop growth, livestock, future production and trade dynamics, and future global and national water cycles under different climate change and management scenarios.

³ <https://foresight.cgiar.org/overview-of-foresight-models/>

ICARDA mainly utilises the International Model for Policy Analysis of Agricultural Commodities and Trade (IMPACT)⁴, developed in the early 1990s to explore the long-term challenges facing policymakers in reducing hunger and poverty in a sustainable fashion. The IMPACT model has been expanded and improved repeatedly to respond to increasingly complex policy questions and the state-of-the-art of modelling. Currently, IMPACT is a network of linked economic, water, and crop models. At its core is a partial equilibrium multi-market economic model, which simulates national and international agricultural markets. The links to water and crop models support the integrated analysis of changing environmental, biophysical, and socioeconomic trends, allowing for in-depth analysis on a variety of critical issues of interest to policymakers at national, regional, and global levels⁵.

6.0 MELIAF Quality Assurance (MQA)

The ICARDA MELIAF shall conduct quality assurance and internal consistency checks by conducting MELIAF support supervision (MSS), that achieves the same objectives as the CGIAR mandated evaluability assessment but with the former taking on a peer review approach. The institutional MELIAF team shall conduct MSS at project-level, whereas an external consultant shall conduct MSS at institutional level. MSS constitute assessment of:

1. MELIAF system (MELIAF plans, MELIAF tools and frameworks [section 1.6]);
2. MELIAF workplans & budgets
3. Human capacity for MELIAF implementation
4. MELIAF information systems
5. Data verification and validation (Indicator documentation, cross-checking reported data and its aggregation)

The details of the processes are provided in section 6 of the MEL Plan template: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/11995>.

7.0 Dissemination and Use of MELIAF Data/Results for Planning & Reporting

The MELIAF team will undertake deliberate dissemination activities (

⁴ <https://www.ifpri.org/project/ifpri-impact-model/>

⁵ <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/148953>



Table 6) to ensure that MELIAF approaches and results are well understood, adopted and used to inform decision-making across ICARDA, its partners, and external stakeholders. The principal tool will be an interactive dashboard with a cross-comparable indicator set (ICARDA indicators and associated relevant indicators) for tracking outputs, outcomes, and impacts across projects and programs. It is envisioned that insights drawn from such an interactive dashboard and other dissemination activities will inform planning, in addition to facilitating reporting.

Table 6: MELIAF Dissemination Activities

Audience	Dissemination Approaches
ICARDA staff	MEL dashboard, MEL newsletter, webinars
ICARDA BoT	MEL dashboard, DDGR's BoT reports and presentations
Donors and Partners	MEL dashboard, ICARDA annual report, presentations at events, and social media posts
Policy makers	MEL dashboard, Presentations at events, policy briefs and media outreach

8.0 Implementation of the MELIAF Policy

The responsibility to implement the MELIAF policy lies with a broad range of stakeholders and mandating elements of the MELIAF is a necessary pre-requisite for long-term results-based management and enhanced success of interventions.

8.1 Stakeholder Roles in MELIAF

The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the MELIAF policy are elaborated in the Table 7.

Table 7: Stakeholders in MELIAF Processes and their roles

Stakeholder	MELIAF Activity	Roles and Responsibilities
DG	Cross-cutting	1. Appoint the MELIAF Advisory Panel members
MELIAF Advisory Panel	Cross-cutting	1. Provide independent assessments of MELIAF work conducted at ICARDA 2. Provide independent strategic guidance on the MELIAF plans of work and budgets
SMT	Cross-cutting	1. Provide oversight, ensure institutional alignment, allocate resources 2. Make recommendations to the DDGR on case studies that potentially contribute to commission Research and Innovation Strategy Evaluation
DDGR	Cross-cutting	1. Oversee the implementation of the MELIAF Policy 2. Provide progress reports to ICARDA BoT
	Evaluation	3. Commission Research and Innovation Strategy Evaluations 4. Enforce the implementation of post-evaluation action plans
	MQA/MSS	5. Initiate MSS at ICARDA institutional level
	Learning	6. Organize annual Research and Innovation Strategy or SRP-specific review workshops 7. Ensure that lessons learned are utilized to modify plans of work and budget across the research portfolio
	Foresight	8. Champion the advancement of foresight analyses and benefit projections and the use of the resultant results for long-term strategic planning and reporting
	Dissemination	9. Create opportunities for the MELIAF team to disseminate information on MELIAF approaches and results.
MELIAF Committee	Cross-cutting	1. Develop and harmonize MELIAF plans of work, taking into account the independent feedback from the MELIAF Advisory Panel

Stakeholder	MELIAF Activity	Roles and Responsibilities
		2. Review and approve key institution-level MELIAF tools and frameworks 3. Compile comprehensive MELIAF reports for the ICARDA DG and BoT
MEL Team	Cross-cutting	1. Leading the participatory review of the MELIAF policy 2. Design, implement, and support MELIAF processes, validate data, interpret & disseminate results for decision-making 3. Advise project-level staff on designing and implementing monitoring, evaluation and learning systems 4. Report to the DDGR on key indicators.
	Monitoring	5. Continuously develop monitoring processes, instruments and standards. 6. Configure new projects on the online MEL Platform (mel.cgiar.org), capacitate project teams for regular usage and reporting and track reporting status 7. Develop and advise project staff on development of routine data collection forms, indicator tracking tables, and dashboards
	Foresight	8. Conceptualize, develop and maintain foresight models (TREMs component) 9. Generate, collate and make available- output data and results from evaluations for use in the calibration and as inputs to the foresight models
	Evaluation	10. Set operational evaluation guidelines and quality control for all types of evaluations 11. Manage or conduct Process Evaluations, Performance Evaluations, Country Innovation Portfolio Evaluations, Institutional strategy Evaluation, and Strategic Research Portfolio Evaluations
	Learning	12. Design and implement institutional learning processes 13. Facilitate the use of lessons learned for adaptive planning and management
	MQA/MSS	14. Initiate and conduct project-level MSS
	Dissemination	15. Disseminate information on approaches and results of MEL & F
SEPR	Evaluation	1. Conduct impact assessments
	Foresight	2. Conceptualize, develop and maintain foresight models and tools (both TREMs and PGEMs components)
	Dissemination	3. Disseminate information on approaches and results of IA & F
PGU	Cross-cutting	1. Champion the use of mandated MELIAF tools, frameworks and results in proposals 2. Support the allocation of funds for MELIAF 3. Invite the MEL team to review and make input to proposals and reports
	Foresight	4. Utilize foresight results in proposal writing
Finance team	Cross-cutting	1. Ensure that there is explicit allocation of funds to MELIAF in conformity with the MELIAF Policy
Internal Audit	Evaluation	1. Collaborate with the MEL team in conducting process evaluations
Country Managers	Cross-cutting	1. Ensure that projects in their country of responsibility comply with the MELIAF Policy

Stakeholder	MELIAF Activity	Roles and Responsibilities
		2. Conduct annual follow-up on key performance indicators related to in-country projects and partners
	Evaluation	3. Provide input to evaluation ToR 4. Undertake follow-up of evaluation recommendations 5. Provide input to and facilitate Country Innovation Portfolio Evaluations
	Learning	6. Lead the capturing, documentation and dissemination of operational processes-related lessons learned
	Foresight	7. Provide constructive criticism and feedback (relevant trends and drivers of food systems, policy demand) towards the advancement of foresight models related to their jurisdiction
	MQA/MSS	8. Follow-up on recommendations of MSS conducted on projects in country of jurisdiction and provide updates to the DDGR
	Dissemination	9. Facilitate in-country dissemination of information on MELIAF approaches and results
Research Team Leaders	Cross-cutting	1. Ensure that projects mapped to their Strategic Research Priority (SRP) comply with the MELIAF Policy 2. Coordinate with project managers and research teams to report against the ICARDA Strategy Indicators, ICARDA POWB, and Institutional Strategy
	Evaluation	3. Provide input to evaluation ToR 4. Undertake follow-up of evaluation recommendations 5. Coordinate and make input to Research and Innovation Strategy Evaluation that include their Strategic Research Priority (SRP)
	Learning	6. Lead the capturing, documentation and dissemination of ToC-based lessons learned through routine ToC review 7. Organize annual SRP review workshops
	Foresight	8. Provide constructive criticism and feedback towards the advancement of foresight models within their respective thematic scope
	Dissemination	9. Facilitate the MELIAF team to disseminate information on MELIAF approaches and results to thematic area researchers and policy makers
Project Managers	Cross-cutting	1. Allocate funds for MELIAF activities 2. Plan & monitor project using M&E tools/best practices, data collection, report results 3. Coordinate the project team to report project deliverables in MEL and performance indicators including those aligned to the ICARDA 2030 Research Strategy Indicators
	Evaluation	4. Provide input to evaluation ToR 5. Undertake follow-up of evaluation recommendations (For mid-term evaluation)
	Learning	6. Lead the capturing, documentation and dissemination of ToC-based lessons learned through routine ToC review 7. Organize annual project review workshops
	Foresight	8. Provide constructive criticism and feedback towards the advancement of foresight models (for eligible projects- see <i>Table 8</i>)

Stakeholder	MELIAF Activity	Roles and Responsibilities
	MQA/MSS	9. Facilitate the MEL team in conducting project-level MSS
	Dissemination	10. Facilitate the MELIAF team to disseminate information on MELIAF approaches and results to project team and project partners
External Consultants	Evaluation	1. Undertake evaluations according to the ToRs
	MQA/MSS	2. Conduct MSS at ICARDA institutional level

8.2 Mandating MELIAF Budget, Tools, Frameworks and Activities

Budget allocation for MELIAF is a strategic investment with profound implications for the success and sustainability of programs. Explicit budget allocation for MELIAF is a demonstration of a commitment to results-based management (RBM), accountability and a culture of learning and improvement. Whereas there are a number of factors that influence budget allocation to MELIAF, such as complexity and scale of the project/program, quality of available data and associated need for primary data, among others, it is a good practice to systematically and explicitly invest in MELIAF by means of a mandated percent of overall project/program budget. Reputable international development organizations allocate 3-7% of total budget to MELIAF⁶. **ICARDA projects and programs shall allocate 5% of overall budget to MELIAF activities.**

Whereas uniform application of MELIAF tools, frameworks and activities may seem appealing, ICARDA implements projects/programs of varied sizes (by budget) and as such, the use of some MELIAF tools and frameworks and associated activities would be cumbersome for smaller projects. Based on an analysis of projects implemented at ICARDA, it is prescribed in this MELIAF policy, that projects/programs adopt MELIAF tools, frameworks and processes based on the project value ranges (Table 8).

Table 8: Tier-based determination of required MELIAF tools, frameworks and activities

Project budget range (USD)	MELIAF Activity	Mandated MELIAF Budget, Personnel, Tools, Frameworks or Activities
<400,000	MELIAF Budget	5% of total budget (Range: USD 0- 20,000)
	Cross-cutting	Project Manager also acts as MELIAF Focal Point
	Monitoring	Project tasks, activities and deliverables tracked on the online MEL Platform
	Evaluation	None
	Foresight	None
	MQA/MSS	None
400,000 – 1,000,000	MELIAF Budget	5% of total budget (Range: USD 20,000- 50,000)
	Cross-cutting	Logical Framework A Project staff other than the Project Manager acts as the MELIAF Focal Point (with 25% FTE allocated to MELIAF activities) and is co-supervised by a member of the ICARDA MELIAF team
	Monitoring	Project tasks, activities and deliverables tracked on the online MEL Platform Output indicators monitored
	Evaluation	None
	Foresight	None

⁶ <https://www.evalcommunity.com/donors-and-nonprofit/budget-allocation-for-monitoring-and-evaluation-me/>

Project budget range (USD)	MELIAF Activity	Mandated MELIAF Budget, Personnel, Tools, Frameworks or Activities
	MQA/MSS	None
1,000,001 – 2,300,000	MELIAF Budget	5% of total budget (Range: USD 50,000- 115,000)
	Cross-cutting	Logical Framework, ToC A Project staff other than the Project Manager acts as the MELIAF Focal Point (with 50% FTE allocated to MELIAF activities) and is co-supervised by a member of the ICARDA MELIAF team
	Monitoring	Project tasks, activities and deliverables tracked on the online MEL Platform Output indicators monitored
	Evaluation	Baseline, endline/terminal Internal evaluations
	Foresight	Foresight model (TREM) Model documentation
	MQA/MSS	Annual MSS
>2,300,001	MELIAF Budget	5% of total budget (> USD 115,000)
	Cross-cutting	Logical Framework, ToC, MELIAF Plan Dedicated Project MELIAF Officer (100% FTE) co-supervised by a member of the ICARDA MELIAF team
	Monitoring	Project tasks, activities and deliverables tracked on the online MEL Platform Output indicators monitored
	Evaluation	Baseline, mid-term, endline/terminal evaluations External evaluations Impact assessment (<i>budgeted separately</i>)
	Foresight	Foresight model (Either TREM, PGEM, or both)
	MQA/MSS	Annual MSS

8.3 MELIAF Processes for Projects Led by MELIAF Team

In cases where projects are led by either MEL or SEPR team and the project needs to implement a MELIAF Activity mandated to the same team, it will obtain the peer-review support of the complementary team, within the ambits of the MELIAF Committee, and the peer review report/opinion provided to the DDGR every 6 months or as may otherwise be determined by the DDGR.

9.0 Related Documents, Guidelines and Tools

Document title & link	Publication date
CGIAR Evaluation Policy	March 2022
ICARDA Data collection, handling and storage arrangements 2024-2030	December 2024
ICARDA Indicators Reference Manual	December 2024
ICARDA MEL Plan template	October 2022
MELIA Glossary	November 2021
Terms of Reference: Evaluability Assessments of CGIAR's Portfolio 2025-30	March 2025

Annex 1: Logical Framework Template

Result level	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Impact					
Outcome 1					
Outcome...					
Outcome n					
Output 1					
Output 2					
....					
Output m					

Annex 2: Evaluation Design Matrix

Results (Impact/ outcome/ output/ activity)	Key evaluation question/ criteria	Evaluation sub- question	Indicator	Data source(s)	Data collection method	Data collection tool	Method of analysis	Limitations/risks

Annex 3: Management Response to Evaluation

Evaluation Title							
Evaluation type							
Project/Program							
Evaluation completion date							
Recommendations and Responses						Tracking	
No.	Recommendation	Management Response <i>[Accepted/ partially accepted/ Not accepted]</i>	Action planned	Responsible	Due date	6 months review	12 months review
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
Overall Response to the evaluation							
Name							
Designation							
Signature							