



**Agenda Item 11**

For Information

Issued: 21 May 2025

## ISDC June 2025 Progress Update

### Purpose

This pre-read provides the Independent Science for Development Council's (ISDC's) 2025 progress update.

### Action Requested

The System Council is requested to read and reflect on ISDC 2025 workplan update to discuss and ask questions during the ISDC Chair intervention at SC22.

**Distribution notice:**

This document may be shared without restriction.

Prepared by: ISDC Secretariat with the input of ISDC Chair and Vice Chair.

## ISDC June 2025 Progress Update

This Progress Update documents key outcomes, outputs, and activities of the Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) from January through June 2025.

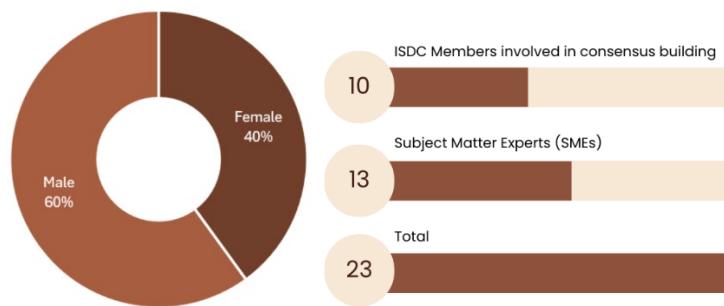
### Workstreams of ISDC Workplan 2025

The primary focus for 2025 is the review of the Inception Reports that will be delivered to System Council (SC) in early August 2025. In addition, up to five new members and a new chair will begin their ISDC terms this year, marking a significant transition in the Council's composition. To support this transition and streamline onboarding, ISDC launched an internally designed interactive e-learning platform—[ISDC 101](#).

#### Inception Report Review

The priority output upcoming in July-August 2025 is the external review of the 2025-30 Portfolio Inception Reports that was requested by SC21 in Berlin. ISDC has participated in SC drop-in calls (March and May), provided feedback to the Chief Scientist Office on the Report template, and developed a downscaled and simplified review approach specifically tailored for the Inception Report reviews. ISDC will have its first in-person meeting in late July in Edinburgh, Scotland hosted by The James Hutton Institute. The meeting's objective is to build consensus and finalize the ISDC's Inception Report Review. ISDC will receive the Inception Reports on 30 June and the timeline for the external review is therefore condensed into three weeks. One previous external Subject Matter Expert (SME) member of the original 2024 proposals will assess each Inception Report to retain continuity, consistency, and existing knowledge. Each reviewer will work directly with the same ISDC member as before in generating the final review. This will be the basis for the ISDC report. ISDC also will welcome its three new members to the consensus building session.

#### Inception Report Reviewer Demographics



#### ISDC 101 e-Learning Portal and Membership Transition

Continuing from 2024, the Strategic Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (SIMEC) secretariat has managed the recruitment of up to five new ISDC members (including a chair). Four members will reach their term limit in October 2025 and the Chair's term will close 20 September 2025. Because of the new ISDC memberships, the ISDC secretariat created an online learning portal called [ISDC 101: The Nuts & Bolts of the CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council](#). This self-paced class takes only 45 minutes to complete and is interactive with videos, quizzes, and further learning. Although the original intent was for ISDC members, all involved saw the value in a broader audience that included new members of Integrated Partnership Board (IPB), SC members, and CGIAR leadership (e.g., the new Chief Scientist). The course makes the ISDC induction process simpler and faster, reducing workload and improving the learning experience.

ISDC welcomed new member Erin Lentz, Associate Professor of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin, on 1 April and will welcome Bruce Lankford, Emeritus Professor at the University of East Anglia, and Ingrid Fromm, Research Associate, International Agriculture Bern University of Applied Sciences, on 1 July. Membership start dates were purposively staggered. The selection process for a new Chair and/or member has commenced.

### **Meetings and Communication**

The ISDC Chair and Vice Chair presented the Council's progress report during the March 2025 System Council (SC) drop-in calls (morning and afternoon session, respectively). ISDC members also attended the May SC drop-in call. In addition to these engagements, the Chair delivered a presentation at the SIMEC M34 meeting in April 2025 and attended the IPB meetings in February, April, and May. Five ISDC members attended Science Week; the Chair and Vice Chair were panelists during the plenaries.