Turning evaluations into actions:
Review of CGIAR's Management Response System to Independent Evaluations

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About CGIAR

CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food-secure future dedicated to transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis.

CGIAR System (CGIAR) = all CGIAR Centers + the CGIAR System Organization + CGIAR Funders + System Council and its advisory bodies

CGIAR's global network of **Research Centers**

AfricaRice — Africa Rice Center

CIFOR — Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

ICARDA — International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)

ICRISAT — International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

IFPRI — International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

IITA — International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)

ILRI — International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

CIMMYT — International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)

CIP — International Potato Center (CIP)

IRRI — International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)

IWMI — International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

Alliance Bioversity & CIAT — The Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)

World Agroforestry — World Agroforestry (ICRAF)

WorldFish — WorldFish

Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service — CGIAR

Review of CGIAR's MR System: Methods

Review of CGIAR Management Response System to Independent Evaluations

Authors: S. Hofer, D. Leibovici, M. M. Molinari

IAES: Ibtissem Jouini

May 2025

Benchmarking Study mapping existing MR structures, processes, and review methodologies, exploring best practices in implementation, oversight mechanisms, and tracking systems to support evaluation uptake **[LINK]**

Document Review & Analysis assessing the implementation status of recommendations from the seven evaluations (2021-2024).

Semi-structured interviews mostly online with key stakeholders.

Case Study analysing alignment of the MR action plans with the recommendations and uptake of recommendations related to digital & data.

Expert review of the MR action tracker from the digital perspective, design & data modelling and integration in the knowledge management system.
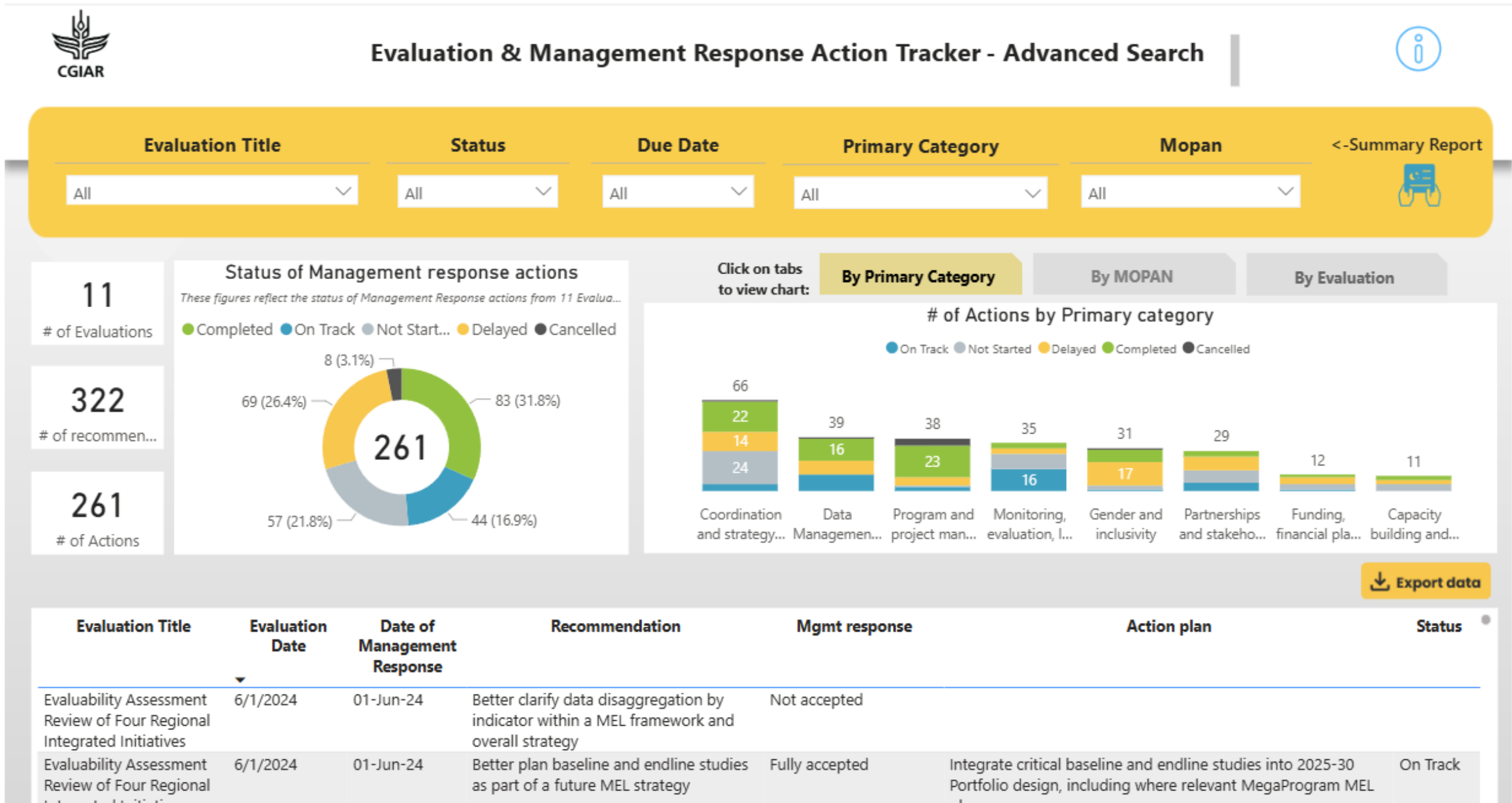
Online Survey mapping evaluation management practices in international research and development organizations [LINK]

Workshop to refine recommendations: to discuss the key measures/actions as potential actions plans for the MR.
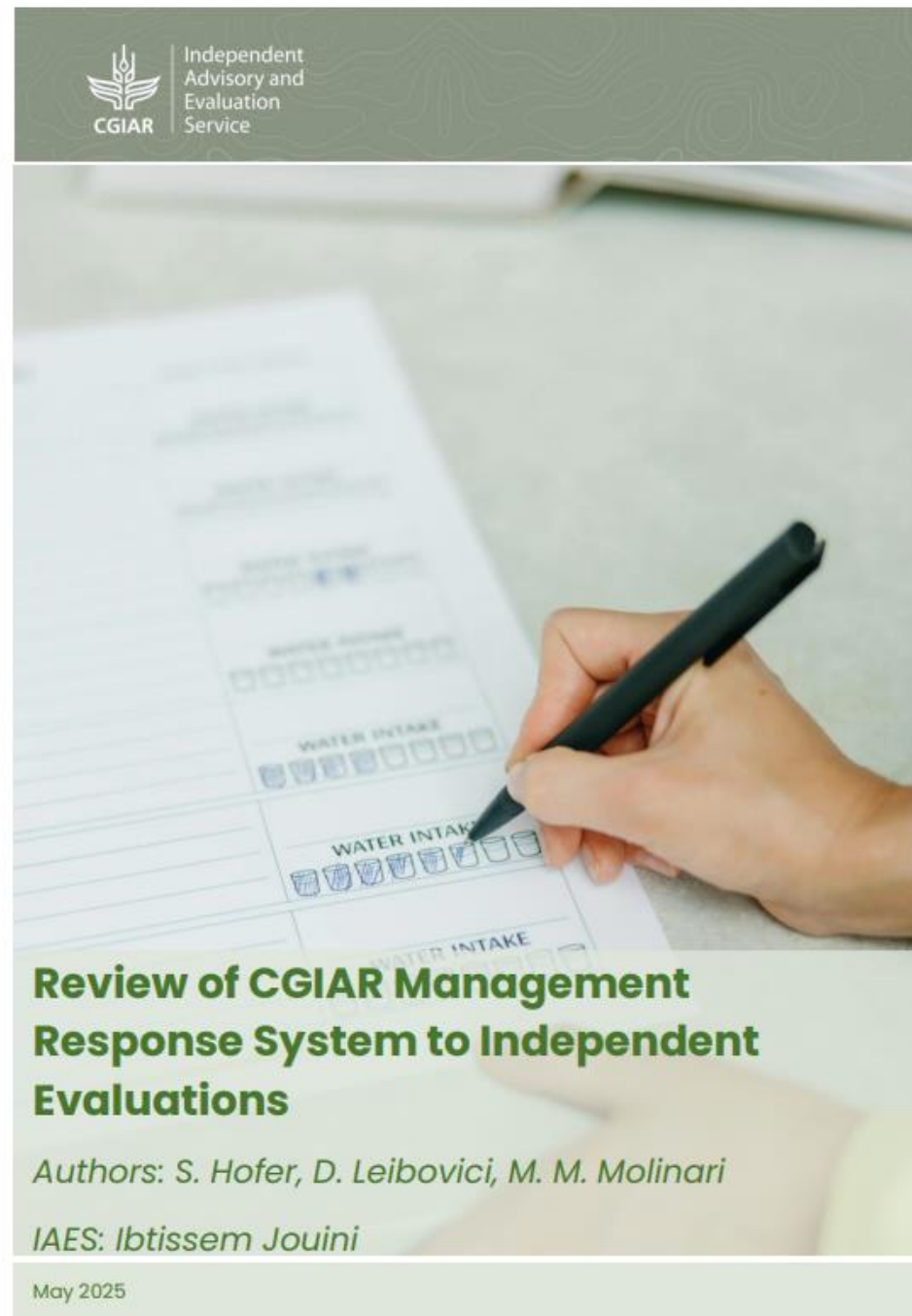
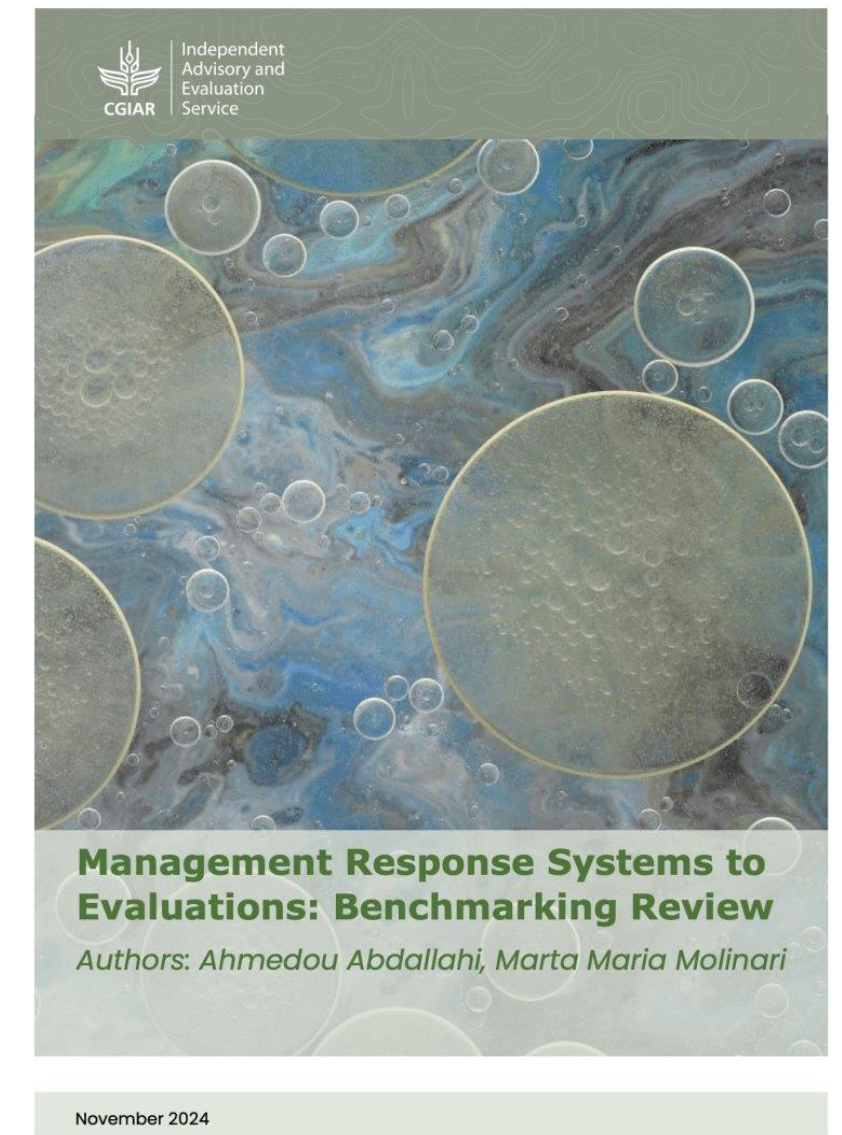# MR Tracker: Maintained by CGIAR Management

Benchmarking Study: Common Challenges and Effective Practices

Challenges

- Insufficient resources for MR implementation.

- Fragmented tracking systems.

- Low engagement from staff and management.

- Weak integration of MRs into strategy and learning cycles.

- Variable quality and clarity of recommendations and action plans

Effective Practices

- Use of structured action plans to operationalize recommendations.

- Clear accountability mechanisms that assign roles and monitor follow-up.

- Independent validation of implementation progress (e.g., UNDP, GEF).

- Emphasis on co-ownership and stakeholder involvement (e.g., UNITAR).

Management Response Systems to Evaluations: Benchmarking Review
Authors: Ahmedou Abdallahi, Marta Maria Molinari

November 2024

MR System Review : Key Findings

✓ Moving parts within the organization, such as **leadership changes and restructuring complicated the implementation of recommendations.**

✓ The MR template promotes specificity; some MR actions remain vague; lack of harmonization in phrasing the recommendations in evaluation reports; the **high volume of recommendations, and the uncertainty about future operational contexts.**

✓ Reporting on MRs is limited to reporting on its implementation status only. The **absence of feedback loops and insufficiently elaborated dataset led to limited evidence** on how implementation of recommendations informed decision-making or the design of new programs.

Mapping Evaluation Management Practices: Results on MR and Tracking

Online survey:

66 responses from UN agencies, government entities, research organizations, donors and implementers.

60% are senior evaluation managers with 8+ years of experience.

- **76%** develop a MR for all evaluations; standard in UN agencies and multilaterals, but only 25% in donor organizations.

- About **50%** complete the MR within **one month**; faster in governments, UN agencies, and multilaterals.

- Just over **half publish MRs**; 90% in UN agencies vs. 30% in governments/research orgs, rare in donors.

Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service

Mapping Evaluation Management Practices in International Research and Development Organizations

Irene Toma, Ibtissem Jouini and Daniela Maciel Pinto

September 2025

Key Takeaways :

1. A robust MR system ensures that evaluations contribute directly to **organizational change and learning**.

2. Key stakeholders and governance bodies must be actively involved in all phases to help **connect evaluations with high level decision making.**

3. **Formal structures and tools** strengthen MR processes - written guidelines, tools, tracking systems support implementation and follow-up to ensure that MR actions are not lost, especially during institutional transitions or staff turnover.

4. Staff and managers need **support & training** to engage meaningfully with MR systems.

5. Embedding MR systems in a **culture of learning requires deliberate efforts**: accessible formats, participatory methods, and leadership support.

Even high-quality and rigorous evaluations are not used unless **uptake is actively encouraged and facilitated**.

Explore Hub
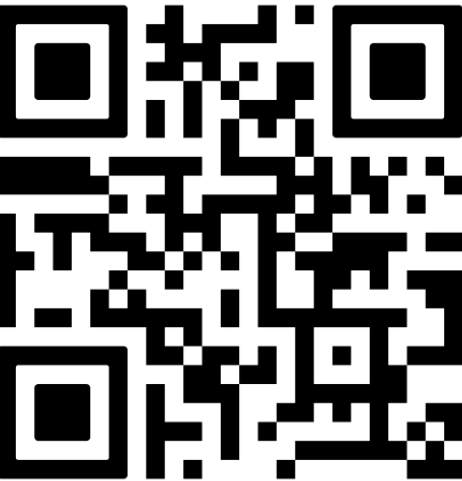
MANAGEMENT ENGAGEMENT AND RESPONSE (MER) RESOURCE HUB – LEARNING FOR STEERING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Welcome to the Management Engagement and Response (MER) Resource Hub, your guide to effective management engagement for evaluations and management response within CGIAR. The MER processes help to enhance the use of evaluative evidence, thereby strengthening learning pathways and accountability and driving improvements. Explore guidelines, tools, and insights.

Thank you!