

## Management Response to the 2016 Independent External Review of the World Resources Institute

October 2016

We are grateful to IPE Triple Line for its Independent External Review of the Institute. We are pleased and humbled by the review's conclusion that WRI is a strong-performing institution with global impact, that our growth strategy is sound and well-executed, and that we are on track to achieve 90 percent of the goals in our ambitious [2014-2017 Strategic Plan: \*Scaling Our Impact in Urgent Times\*](#). We also agree that the job is not done and we remain committed to fully delivering on our plan and raising our game further. The review recommendations are in line with our own thinking and will be important ingredients as we prepare a new strategic plan to guide our work in the years ahead – a critical period for addressing the urgent global issues at the core of our mission.

Three years ago, we embarked on a new strategy focusing on greater scaling, growing our global network, expanding our expertise on big data, and enhancing our economic and political capacity for greater influence. We are pleased that the review finds WRI is “making strong progress on an ambitious global agenda at the intersection of development and the environment.” Of the 96 major statements of intent in the Strategic Plan, the review deemed 89 to be either “on track” or already achieved. We are addressing the few deemed “off track” with the objective of completion by the end of 2017. We are also pleased that the review found our research excellence and results management systems, human resources management, and external communications to be performing well. These are central to our ability to catalyze real-world change.

The review's brief report on the views of a selection of donors is helpful to us. The review reports that “all donors value their relationship with WRI highly, seeing it as a partner or even ally rather than a provider of services.” The suggestions in this section – for example, exploring diversifying our funding sources by charging in some cases for access to certain tools or services, an option we are currently piloting within our Water Program – are among the more useful parts of the report.

The review's concluding recommendations, which focus on three areas, are aligned with our own understanding of what we can do better and the challenges we face:

- **Focus on impact:** We will explore ways to build on our strong track record of results management and continue to refine and leverage the opportunities provided by our institutional matrix of programs, centers, and international offices.
- **Delivery capacity:** We will focus on increasing our support function capacity – particularly in Science & Research in our international offices, Managing for Results, and Development (fundraising) – and securing the general support revenue needed to keep pace with our programmatic growth. We will also enhance internal communications within offices and globally to continue to foster our “One WRI” approach.
- **Poverty and social development:** We will seek to make our important cross-cutting work on gender and poverty more visible in our narrative. Our work is very much people-centered but we agree that we can better elevate the profile of this work. We will also invest in our new regional office for Africa, in Addis Ababa – a central focus going forward and a key step in truly becoming the *World Resources Institute*.

Finally, we are in full agreement with the review on the crucial importance of flexible funding provided by our bilateral donors. This longstanding support of WRI has been critical in enabling the strategic, focused, and long-term approach needed to address vital environmental and development challenges and to expand our presence and influence in the developing world where the bulk of our work is concentrated. In many cases flexible funding has served as seed money to launch major new areas of work that then attracts dedicated programmatic funding. For example, flexible funding made possible the opening of WRI Indonesia, which recently received a multi-year, multi-million-dollar grant from Norway to step up the battle against the destruction of tropical rainforest and peatlands.

We are pleased that the review has identified institutional strengths while also articulating the areas where we can do better. The review provided a useful input to recent discussions with our bilateral donors and our Board and will feed into our next strategic planning process. We hope that this assessment will be useful to current supporters of WRI and to those who are new to WRI and considering supporting our work.

We are deeply grateful to our donors, who have made our work possible, and to our Board, partners, and staff who have worked so diligently to deliver on this important program of work. We are proud of what we have achieved, but we know that the job is not yet done. We remain more committed than ever to deliver in these urgent times.