



CGIAR
BETTER DIETS
AND NUTRITION

Science Program | Annual Technical Report 2025

Better Diets and Nutrition



Asma Begum lives in a slum in Kamrangirchar, Dhaka. She cooks street side as she does not have kitchen space in her room.
Credit: UN Women/Mohammad Rakibul Hasan.

Author: Better Diets and Nutrition Science Program

Title: Annual Technical Report 2025: Better Diets and Nutrition Science Program

Suggested citation: Better Diets and Nutrition Science Program. 2026. *Annual Technical Report 2025: Better Diets and Nutrition Science Program*. Montpellier, France. CGIAR System Organization.



© 2026 CGIAR System Organization. This publication is licensed for use under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) (CC BY 4.0).

Disclaimers

This publication has been prepared as an output of the Better Diets and Nutrition Science Program. Any views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and are not necessarily representative of or endorsed by the CGIAR System Organization.

Boundaries used in maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of CGIAR concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city, or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Borders are approximate and cover some areas for which there may not yet be full agreement.

CGIAR uses [artificial intelligence \(AI\)-assisted tools](#) within its reporting workflows to support evidence synthesis and draft preparation. All published content is reviewed, validated, and approved by responsible human authors prior to release.

Acknowledgements

This work is part of the Better Diets and Nutrition Science Program. We would like to thank all funders who supported this research through their contributions to the [CGIAR Trust Fund](#).

Collaborating Centers



Contents

1. Overview for 2025	3
2. Annual progress	6
3. Partnerships	15
4. Adaptive management	17
5. Key result story	19

CGIAR Technical Reporting 2025

This 2025 Annual Technical Report forms part of CGIAR's first reporting cycle under the [System Council-approved 2025–2030 Portfolio](#). It is grounded in the [CGIAR Research and Innovation Strategy Program/Accelerator proposals and Plan of Results and Budget \(PORBs\)](#) that establish each Program's and Accelerator's scope and objectives. It aligns with the [Performance and Results Management Framework \(PRMF 2022–2030\)](#), and the [Technical Reporting Arrangement \(TRA 2025–2030\)](#).

A [Program inception report](#) was developed in 2025 to document initial Program design, scope, and implementation arrangements. This report provides important context for interpreting early progress and implementation choices reported in this Annual Technical Report.

This report presents pooled ([Window 1/Window 2, or W1/W2](#)) results alongside mapped Window 3 (W3) and bilateral results. All pooled (W1/W2) results undergo [quality assurance](#) according to established standards. W3 and bilateral results are quality-assured at Center level and reviewed by Programs/Accelerators.

All data presented in this report reflect the status as of 30 March 2026 and draw on quality-assured results in the [Results Dashboard](#), unless otherwise stated. While every effort has been made to ensure data accuracy, note that further refinements are taking place and updates will be available via the CGIAR Results Dashboard.

1. Overview for 2025

Program title	Better Diets and Nutrition
Program director	Inge D. Brouwer
Start–end date	2025-2030
Centers involved	Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, CIMMYT, CIP, ICARDA, IFPRI, IITA, ILRI, IRRI, IWMI, WorldFish
Targeted Impact Areas	Nutrition, Health and Food Security
Geographic focus	Global, regional (Continental Africa, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, West and Central Africa, East and Southern Africa) and Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Viet Nam
Mapped W3/bilateral projects	The detailed list of W3/bilateral projects mapped to Better Diets and Nutrition is available on pages 10-16 of the 2025 Plan of Results and Budget .
2025 budget	US\$33.8M (W1/2: US\$15.1M; W3/bilateral: US\$18.7M)

About the Program

Within the CGIAR Portfolio, Better Diets and Nutrition challenges traditional ways of thinking about how to remake food systems to improve diets. Rather than focusing on solutions related to production, technology, and efficiency alone, this Program views consumers as the strategic entry point for systemic change. Food systems transformation is viewed as an opportunity to improve diets and nutrition by changing deeper, system-wide issues that prevent people from being able to eat in ways that are both good for their health and the planet. The Program targets five constraints to sustainable healthy diets: accessibility, affordability, availability, desirability, and agency. Through rigorous, transdisciplinary research and strategic partnerships across 15 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, it co-generates actionable evidence and builds joint capacities to scale equitable, inclusive solutions — contributing directly to CGIAR's broader goal of healthier, more sustainable food systems for all.

Executive summary

Globally, more than three billion people cannot afford a healthy diet, and diet-related diseases are among the leading causes of death and disability. Better Diets and Nutrition responds to this challenge by placing consumers at the center of food systems change. Operating across 15 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America with a 2025 budget from all sources of funding of US\$33.8 million, the Program targets five interconnected constraints to sustainable healthy diets: accessibility, affordability, availability, desirability, and agency (see Box 1). It is organized into six Areas of Work: Consumers and Food Environments (AoW1), Market Systems (AoW2), End-to-End Approaches (AoW3), Biofortified and Health-Enhancing Staples (AoW4), Multisectoral Systems (AoW5), and Transformative Leadership (AoW6). AoW5 was not yet active in 2025 and will not be mentioned in this year's report. This year's report focuses on results achieved with pooled funding (see Figure 1) and the key result story illustrates how sustained research partnerships can generate government ownership and lasting institutional change.

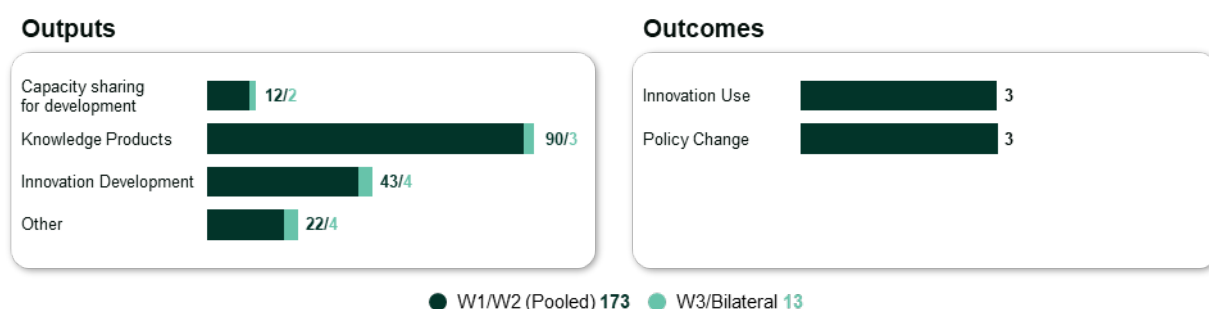


Figure 1: Better Diets and Nutrition's 2025 results overview, by funding source and result level and category. Based on data accurate as of 30 March 2026.

Definition of a sustainable healthy diet

A dietary pattern that promotes all dimensions of individual health and well-being; has low environmental pressure and impact; is available, accessible, affordable, safe, desirable, and equitable; and is culturally acceptable (based on FAO and WHO 2019).

Principles of a healthy diet (based on FAO/WHO 2024)

1. **Nutrient adequacy.** Sufficient quantity of energy and nutrients (macronutrients and micronutrients) to cover requirements, without excess.
2. **Macronutrient balance.** Balance of energy-yielding macronutrients carbohydrates, proteins and fats.
3. **Diversity.** Diets composed of a diverse range of foods derived from distinct healthy food groups. Dietary diversity between and within food groups reflects a greater probability of meeting nutrient requirements.
4. **Moderation.** Limited intake of foods and nutrients that are associated with risks of non-communicable diseases NCDs when consumed in excess (e.g., processed meat, sugar-sweetened beverages, salt, trans fats).

Plus, diets can only be healthy if food and beverages are safe.

Barriers to sustainable healthy diets

1. **Accessibility.** Many cannot regularly and conveniently access diverse, nutritious and safe foods.
2. **Affordability.** Low incomes and high food prices make healthy diets unaffordable.
3. **Availability.** Insufficient year-round availability of nutrient-rich foods limits access and raises costs.
4. **Desirability.** Changing consumption patterns, poor marketing practices, lack of convenience, and other factors deter people from choosing healthy foods.
5. **Agency.** People need the power and ability to make positive decisions about their food and engage in shaping food system policies.

Box 1. Important terminology in Better Diets and Nutrition.

AoW1 on Consumers and Food Environments demonstrated that activities along the Program's policy pathway are leading to outcomes. In Viet Nam, a participatory process engaging stakeholders across 14 government departments led to the formal approval of [Son La Province's implementation plan](#) for food systems transformation — including, for the first time, specific objectives on overweight and obesity. This result shows how sustained technical engagement by in-country staff can translate national policy commitments into subnational action. In Ethiopia, the inter-ministerial steering committee endorsed a new monitoring and evaluation framework for the national food systems transformation pathway, with diet-related indicators mainstreamed into the Ministry of Agriculture's planning. On the evidence side, researchers developed a novel vendor neighborhood methodology in Kenya, [mapping over 2,000 food vendors](#), while a [policy assessment](#) in Viet Nam identified five priority reform areas. Studies from Ethiopia, Viet Nam, and Uganda examined micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) as entry points for improving diet quality.

AoW2 on Market Systems is building the evidence base needed to shift commercial incentives toward nutritious foods. In Uganda, follow-up research with [20 milk collection centers](#), drawing on more than 14,000 samples, strengthened the case for quality-based pricing. In Nigeria, a randomized controlled trial (RCT) demonstrated that cool transportation significantly increased revenues and profits for vegetable marketers, with cooling accounting for approximately two-thirds of the benefit — a finding with direct implications for cold-chain investment policy. In Bangladesh, an RCT with over 1,500 households found strong farmer demand for a profit-sharing livestock finance model, prompting the private sector partner to expand its services to approximately 30,000 farmers. A report on [Africa's agrifood trade](#) found that African countries typically trade less fruit and vegetables (F&V) than expected for their income level, pointing to untapped opportunities for trade policy to support healthier diets.

AoW3 on End-to-End Approaches is testing whether integrated demand- and supply-side interventions can shift consumption of perishable nutrient-rich foods. In Tanzania, 2,611 households across 33 villages were enrolled in the longitudinal evaluation, with baseline findings revealing [substantial gaps in F&V](#) and vitamin B12 intake among women of reproductive age. A [review of 284 dietary interventions](#) confirmed that multicomponent, food-specific strategies were most likely to produce significant dietary improvements, directly informing the Program's design. On the supply side, 48 improved vegetable varieties were released in Benin and Tanzania, while in Sri Lanka, four production hubs were established, and cultivation guides were co-authored with the Department of Agriculture. Results from the end-to-end evaluations in both countries will provide critical evidence on whether this integrated approach delivers dietary change at scale.

AoW4 on Biofortified and Health-Enhancing Staples laid the groundwork for a strategic shift. The [Framework for Embedding Nutrition into Breeding Pipelines and Processes](#), developed with the Breeding for Tomorrow Program, provides a tool for integrating nutrition objectives across the full breeding lifecycle. A cross-CGIAR consultation built consensus to shift from stand-alone delivery projects toward consumer-centered approaches embedded within food systems. [Consumer research](#) in the Philippines revealed that snack occasions may be more effective entry points for promoting healthier rice than main meals, offering actionable guidance for product development.

AoW6 on Transformative Leadership secured a high-profile political commitment. At the [Nutrition for Growth Summit in Paris](#), CGIAR pledged to identify and release 25 evidence-based food system solutions by 2030, a commitment drafted by Better Diets and Nutrition. The team also contributed to CGIAR-wide processes to revise impact indicators for nutrition, positioning Better Diets and Nutrition to shape how the entire Portfolio measures its work on diets.

This first annual report also identifies areas requiring attention. Progress on consumer-oriented innovations fell short of targets, partly due to disruptions in the development funding landscape. Looking ahead to 2026, priorities include formalizing the Biofortification Coordination Team, accelerating resource mobilization for consumer-oriented solutions, strengthening the Program's narrative, and deepening the Program's theory of change (ToC) through country-level studies. Better Diets and Nutrition's first year confirms that its foundational elements are in place; the task now is to build on them with the coherence and scale the challenge demands.



A street merchant carrying baskets of fruit on her bicycle in Hanoi, Vietnam.
Credit: Shutterstock

2. Annual progress

2.1. Progress along the theory of change

In its first year, Better Diets and Nutrition effectively delivered on its strategic targets (see Figure 2). The reported results addressed global and regional issues, but also country-specific issues in the Program's focus countries (see Figure 3).

Area of Work (total results)	Indicators	Met Annual Target	Achievement
● AoW1 Consumers and Food Environments (72 results)	12	8	84%
● AoW2 Market Systems (34 results)	7	5	87%
● AoW3 End-to-end Solutions (54 results)	12	9	91%
● AoW4 Biofortified and Health-enhancing Staples (12 results)	3	3	100%
● AoW6 Transformational leadership (15 results)	7	5	79%
Total (187 results)	41	30	88%

● **On track**
(≥80% of target achieved)
● **Moderate**
(50–79% of target achieved)
● **Behind**
(less than 50% of target achieved)

Ratings are based on annual target achievement of standard indicator categories within the theory of change (ToC). AI-generated ratings were reviewed and adjusted as needed by the Accelerator, with any updates accompanied by justifications.

Figure 2: Better Diets and Nutrition's AoW progress against 2025 indicator targets. Based on data accurate as of 30 March 2026.

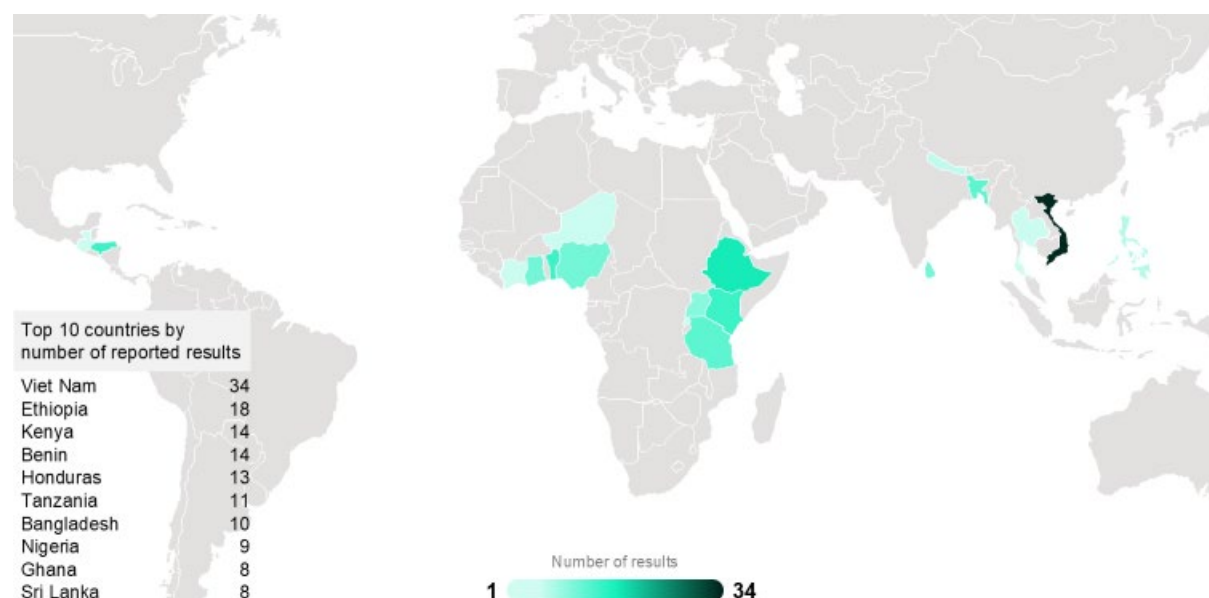


Figure 3: Geographic focus of 2025 results, with top ten countries by result count. Based on data accurate as of 30 March 2026.

Enabling policy environments within focus countries

The Program's policy pathway emphasizes government actions that create conditions enabling food system actors — from consumers to farmers — to adopt practices that overcome barriers to sustainable healthy diets, while increasing policy coherence and coordination within and across countries. The target actors are policymakers, government ministers, and civil servants.

This year's key result (Section 5) demonstrates how Food System Profiles have evolved through participatory processes to support the [Ministry of Agriculture in Honduras](#) in implementing its national action plan for food systems transformation at the municipal level.

In Son La Province in Viet Nam, a participatory process engaging 14 government departments and civil society organizations resulted in food systems training for more than 90 [provincial stakeholders](#), a provincial food system profile, and formal approval of its [Provincial Implementation Plan](#) for food systems transformation — including objectives on overweight and obesity — with investment strategies and a monitoring framework as next steps. A [learning note](#) documents the model for replication. Both results illustrate how sustained technical engagement by Country Coordinators can translate national policy commitments into subnational action.

Testing innovations along the value chain

The innovation pathway emphasizes testing technologies and practices that add value and increase efficiency along the value chain for sustainable nutritious foods, helping overcome consumer barriers to healthy diets.



Figure 4: Top 2025 peer-reviewed publications by Altmetric attention score. The Altmetric attention score is a high-level measure of the quality and quantity of online attention the publication has received. The scoring algorithm takes various factors into account, such as the relative reach of the different sources of attention. The score is not a measure of research quality. Based on data accurate as of 30 March 2026.

Engagement with food system actors creates conditions that enable them to use solutions, which reduce post-harvest loss and waste, improve food safety and food quality, increase access to finance, and increase production. Target actors include consumers, retailers, processors, traders, and producers. Key 2025 results include:

- In Tanzania, [reusable plastic crates](#) reduced tomato weight loss from 1.9 to 1 percent. In Nigeria, an RCT showed cool transportation significantly increased sale prices and profits for tomato marketers, with cooling accounting for 66 percent of the benefit.
- In Kenya and Viet Nam, preliminary findings from a slaughterhouse intervention suggested practice changes can reduce microbial contamination in pork, though results were not consistent across all groups. Research continues with the Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods Program.
- Researchers completed the first phase of development of a food safety experience scale. The scale will capture the subjective food safety experiences and concerns of consumers and how consumers respond to these concerns in choosing their diets.
- In Bangladesh, an RCT with 1,517 households found 39 percent of farmers preferred a livestock profit-sharing finance model over a conventional loan; the financial services partner subsequently expanded to approximately 30,000 farmers.
- Forty-eight improved varieties of seven vegetables were released in Benin and Tanzania, supported by demonstration plots, farmer field days, and GAP packages in both countries and in Sri Lanka.

Almost half of the first year's results were knowledge products. The visibility of some 2025 publications demonstrates a high level of public engagement and interest in the topics Better Diets and Nutrition works on, in several cases, alongside other Programs such as Policy Innovations (Figure 4).

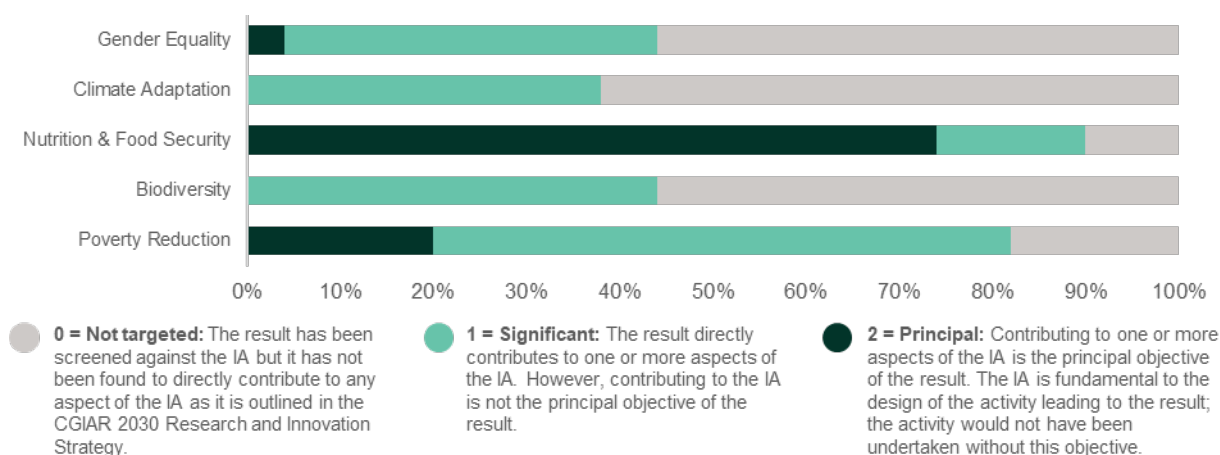


Figure 5: Contribution of innovation results to Impact Areas. Based on data accurate as of 30 March 2026.

Taken together, these results highlight meaningful first-year progress across both ToC pathways. Sustained policy engagement has supported governments in translating national commitments into concrete action, while innovation efforts are generating evidence on practical solutions to improve food safety, efficiency, and access to nutritious foods — with promising models emerging for scaling across contexts. As expected, the reported results make a significant contribution to CGIAR's Impact Area on Nutrition, Health, and Food Security (Figure 5).

2.2. Area of Work progress

Area of Work 1: Consumers and Food Environments (72 results) **84%** (12/15 with targets)

AoW1's strategy is to leverage government policy and public sector tools to shape food environments and consumer choices toward sustainable healthy diets alongside other development goals like reducing social inequities and poverty and minimizing negative impacts on the environment. The primary policy entry point in the countries where AoW1 works is their national action plans for food systems transformation (see Figure 6).

HIGH LEVEL OUTPUTS (3)

- 01 Policy options and engagement that support effective management of national action plans and other policy processes, for food systems transformation in support of sustainable healthy diets 2/2 indicators met annual target
- 02 Suite of solutions focused on consumers that promote consumption of sustainable healthy diets co-developed, tested, and scaled with technical support and country engagement 1/3 indicators met annual target
- 03 Suite of solutions focused on vendors that promote employment opportunities and the sale of sustainable nutritious foods co-developed, tested, and scaled with technical support and country engagement 1/2 indicators met annual target + 2 no target

On track (≥80% of target achieved) **Moderate** (50–79% of target achieved) **Behind** (less than 50% of target achieved)

Ratings are based on annual target achievement of standard indicator categories within the Theory of Change (ToC). AI-generated ratings were reviewed and adjusted as needed by the Accelerator, with any updates accompanied by justifications.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (4)

- 01 Decisionmakers, through new governance mechanisms, align priorities across the public sector and private sector and civil society that support food systems transformation for sustainable healthy diets 0/1 indicators met annual target
- 02 Government actors implement and enforce consumer-oriented solutions that change consumer desirability and agency to improve the consumption of sustainable healthy diets and/or limit the consumption of unhealthy food 1/1 indicators met annual target
- 03 Government actors implement and enforce MSME and informal actor-oriented solutions that overcome constraints inhibiting the affordability and accessibility of sustainable nutritious foods, help grow demand for sustainable nutritious foods and grow decent employment among MSMEs selling those foods. 1 no target
- 04 Policymakers enact policies and regulations, through the FST-NAP and other policy processes, that align with evidence and recommendations 1/1 indicators met annual target

Figure 6: AoW1 progress against 2025 ToC indicator targets. Based on data accurate as of 30 March 2026.

National policy outcomes and engagement

In addition to the results described in Section 2.1 from Viet Nam, another significant policy outcome was achieved in Ethiopia. Through sustained technical engagement with CGIAR, the inter-ministerial steering committee endorsed a new monitoring and evaluation framework for their national food systems transformation pathway. The Ministry of Agriculture has already mainstreamed the indicators including those related to sustainable healthy diets into their planning process.

Better Diets and Nutrition supported national partners from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Honduras, and Viet Nam to participate in the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) Stocktake, co-organizing a [side event](#) on nutrition-sensitive food systems investment, and engaged in regional COP30 preparatory events to link climate and healthy diet agendas with [Viet Nam's Ministry of Agriculture and Environment](#).

Manuals for [subnational food system profile](#) development, [issue prioritization](#), and [stakeholder dialogues](#) were developed for Viet Nam in partnership with three national institutes, and a [profile development](#) manual for Ethiopia with two national partners. The Viet Nam manuals supported the Son La Provincial Implementation Plan.

In Bangladesh, the Program co-convened a [high-level stakeholder consultation](#) with the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit to generate prioritized recommendations across five pillars in the country's first national plan of action for food systems transformation, which is expected to be endorsed in 2026.

The Government of Ethiopia's new national food systems training manual was incorporated into the co-developed training of trainers (ToT) program on food systems transformation. The ToT program will continue to expand and evolve in Ethiopia, but also in Viet Nam and [Bangladesh](#) in 2026 with combined resources from CGIAR and a bilateral investment.

Evidence on consumers, food environments, and vendors

The Program generated a substantial body of evidence to characterize food environments and consumer behavior across multiple countries. In Kenya, researchers developed and applied a novel [vendor neighborhood methodology](#) mapping 1,192 urban and 894 rural vendors to assess food diversity disparities between Nairobi and Makueni County, with an accompanying, openly available [dataset](#). In Viet Nam, a [policy assessment](#) using the INFORMAS Food Environment Policy Index identified [five priority reform areas](#) for the government.

Research on MSMEs examined the role of food vendors as entry points for improving diet quality, with studies published from [Ethiopia](#), [Viet Nam](#), and [Uganda](#), and a synthesis of evidence from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam was promoted around [Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Day](#).

Challenges

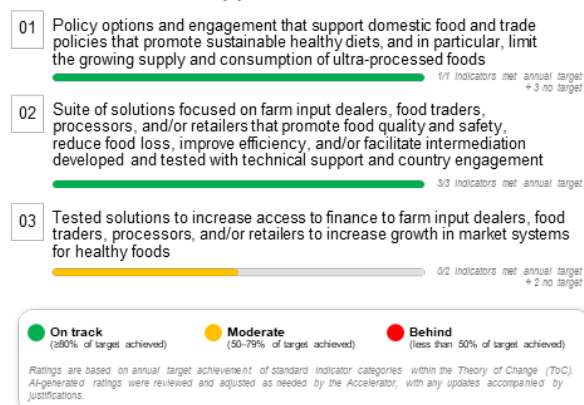
The first year of AoW1 started with plans to start and/or continue work on four consumer-oriented innovations. Two studies in Bangladesh never started due to changes at USAID. Another study in Ethiopia did not start because the bilateral donor asked the implementing partner to change the project scope, which was no longer relevant to AoW1. The ongoing work in Viet Nam stalled due to slow institutional change. These unanticipated changes partially explain why AoW1 did not meet any of its targets for innovations in development. This implies that resource mobilization for the work on consumer-oriented innovations needs to accelerate in 2026 and subsequent years, to be able to realize the envisioned outcomes by 2030.

Area of Work 2: Market Systems (34 results)

87% (7/17 with targets)

AoW2's approach is to catalyze innovation in food markets and value chains to improve access to sustainable healthy diets and align commercial incentives with sustainable healthy diet outcomes. AoW2 seeks to improve market efficiency, reward food quality, reduce food safety risks, expand access to finance for nutrient-dense foods, and understand the role of international trade in improving diet access (see Figure 7).

HIGH LEVEL OUTPUTS (3)



INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (6)

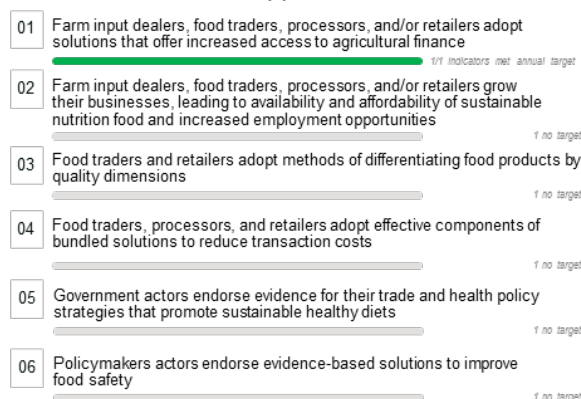


Figure 7: AoW2 progress against 2025 ToC indicator targets. Based on data accurate as of 30 March 2026.

Innovations to reduce food loss, improve quality, and reduce transaction costs

A central focus in 2025 was generating rigorous evidence on innovations that reduce postharvest losses and improve quality incentives for nutritious foods such as milk and vegetables. In Uganda, [follow-up research with 20 milk collection centers](#) examined how price signals influence sourcing behavior and investment in quality, using data from more than 14,000 milk samples collected through a network of 75 milk analyzers. This work, conducted in partnership with Uganda's Dairy Development Authority, builds the evidence base for quality-based pricing systems. A parallel [review of Ethiopia's dairy sector](#) identified a low-productivity, low-quality equilibrium driven by weak regulatory enforcement and limited quality-based pricing — setting the stage for future intervention design.

In Nigeria, results of an RCT on refrigerated cool transportation for vegetables found that sales prices, revenues, and profits significantly increased for marketers with technology access, with approximately 66 percent of the gain attributable to cooling rather than transportation alone. The finding has direct implications for cold-chain investment policy. Another study on reusable plastic crates for tomato farmers, drawing on data from 1,704 farmers, found that while long-distance sellers were more likely to adopt the technology, high acquisition costs and limited rural availability were barriers.

Expanding access to finance for food market actors

In Bangladesh, an RCT with 1,517 households across 105 villages tested a bundled livestock finance and insurance product for female smallholder cattle farmers. Results showed 39 percent of farmers preferred a profit-sharing model over a conventional loan, signaling strong demand for risk-sharing instruments. The agri-fintech partner [WeGro](#) applied these lessons to expand its agricultural finance products to approximately 30,000 farmers, demonstrating how targeted research with private sector actors can catalyze more equitable financial models in underserved markets.

Strengthening the evidence base for policy and trade

Broader macroeconomic issues also shape food availability for consumers. [Africa's agrifood trade: The state of play](#) reported that production gaps filled by imports exist for all major product groups considered (cereals, animal source foods [ASF] and F&V). The report estimates the expected value of trade (imports and exports) for countries at different levels of GDP per capita. By that measure, the report finds that African countries typically trade less F&V than would be expected, but more ASF than would be expected.

Challenges

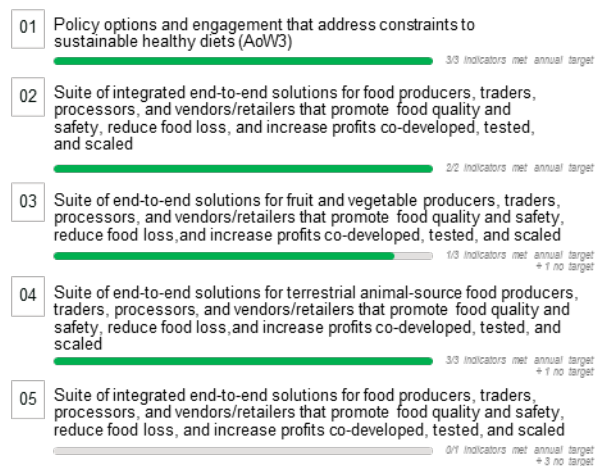
The key challenge faced in the first year has been the transition from completing the research conducted under the previous CGIAR Portfolio to building a research plan focused on markets between the farm and retail environment. In 2025, the AoW met or exceeded delivery targets for two of the three High Level Outputs (HLOs); for the HLO on increasing access to finance, one of the two missing deliverables did not yet meet a quality target by the reporting deadline (but since has), and the other one was based on a workshop held late in the year and the deliverable was not finished in time to report. This is being addressed through milestone-setting and closer tracking by the AoW Lead.

Area of Work 3: End-to-end Solutions (54 results)

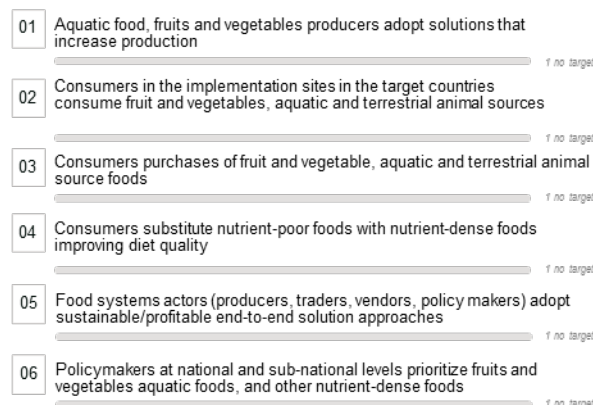
91% (12/23 with targets)

AoW3 aims to transform food systems toward healthier diets — from demand through food environments to supply — to improve the desirability, affordability, accessibility, and availability of perishable, nutrient-rich foods (see Figure 8).

HIGH LEVEL OUTPUTS (5)



INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (6)



On track (≥90% of target achieved) **Moderate** (50–79% of target achieved) **Behind** (less than 50% of target achieved)

Ratings are based on annual target achievement of standard indicator categories within the Theory of Change (ToC). AI-generated ratings were reviewed and adjusted as needed by the Accelerator, with any updates accompanied by justifications.

Figure 8: AoW3 progress against 2025 ToC indicator targets. Based on data accurate as of 30 March 2026.

Progress in Tanzania and Sri Lanka

The **end-to-end approach** is being fully implemented and evaluated in **Tanzania** and **Sri Lanka**. Substantial **formative research** on demand-side activities informed the design: a review of **284 interventions** found that multicomponent and F&V-specific strategies were most likely to produce significant dietary improvements. Synthesized findings from scoping reviews across five countries confirmed inadequate F&V intake well below WHO recommendations. These findings were presented at the **23rd International Congress of Nutrition in Paris** and shared through the **Colorful Revolution Webinar Series**.

In Tanzania, data collection for the longitudinal evaluation baseline survey was carried out in 2023 with a follow-up survey in 2024. Baseline data collection in Sri Lanka also took place in 2024. In 2025, the team spent significant time cleaning and analyzing these large datasets, synthesizing learnings, and drafting knowledge products, which will be reported in 2026.

Baseline findings from Tanzania documented **dietary intake and nutrient adequacies among women of reproductive age**, revealing substantial gaps in F&V consumption linked to micronutrient deficiencies. Other findings such as low vitamin B12 intake highlight the needs for aquatic and/or ASF in diets, as well. Additional analysis of the data reported the **associations between diet quality and obesity risk**, showing that higher diet quality was protective against morbid obesity in women aged 30–49 and findings on **energy and macronutrient intake**.

Supply-side interventions continued in both countries. Seventeen improved varieties of four vegetables were released in Tanzania, grounded in **research on farmer, trader, and consumer variety preferences**. In Sri Lanka, four production hubs were established across two districts, with farmer field days, vendor linkages, and technical guides on four key crops.

A co-design process involving multiple stakeholder and community workshops identified priority demand- and food-environment interventions. In 2025, community nutrition facilitators piloted interventions in the Arusha and Kilimanjaro Regions of Tanzania, with scale-up planned for 2026 pending government approval. Other interventions piloted include home visits, SMS messages, and vendor engagements.

Benin

AoW3's ambitions in Benin were scaled back in 2025 due to limited funding, with work closing out in 2026. Results include 31 improved vegetable varieties released, demonstration plots, farmer field days, packages of good agronomic practices, and published studies on reducing tomato loss and waste.

Challenges

HLO achievement varied significantly. The F&V HLO met or nearly met all three targets, drawing on results from Benin, Tanzania, and Sri Lanka. Both terrestrial ASF HLO targets were met through joint work with Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods; no aquatic food HLO targets were met. Limited funding, reliance on bilaterally funded activities, and the complexity of establishing new partnerships introduced coordination and timing constraints that affected the small team's ability to finalize results for 2025 reporting.

Area of Work 4: Biofortified and Health-enhancing Staples (12 results)

100% (3/25 with targets)

CGIAR and its partners have released more than 450 biofortified crop varieties across Africa, Asia, and Latin America prior to the 2025-2030 Portfolio. The AoW4 agenda builds on understanding consumption patterns and drivers of food choice to generate evidence to influence, develop, and upgrade value chains for biofortified and health-enhancing crops; promote their sustained adoption; and scale nutrient-dense varieties and products to promote consumption by diverse consumers (see Figure 9). The aim is to make 10 biofortified and health-enhancing staples and 3 underexplored opportunity crops a market and consumer success (see Figure 10).

HIGH LEVEL OUTPUTS (5)

- 01 Framework for embedding nutrition into breeding pipelines and processes. 2/2 indicators met annual target
- 02 Policy options and engagement that address constraints to sustainable healthy diets (AoW4) 5 no target
- 03 Suite of solutions for producers and processors that address constraints to sustainable healthy diets co-developed, tested, and scaled with technical support and country engagement 4 no target
- 04 Suite of solutions for traders and vendors that address constraints to sustainable healthy diets co-developed, tested, and scaled with technical support and country engagement 4 no target
- 05 Suite of solutions to support consumers awareness, preference, affordability and utilization of biofortified and health-enhancing crops in their diets 1/1 indicators met annual target + 3 no target

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (6)

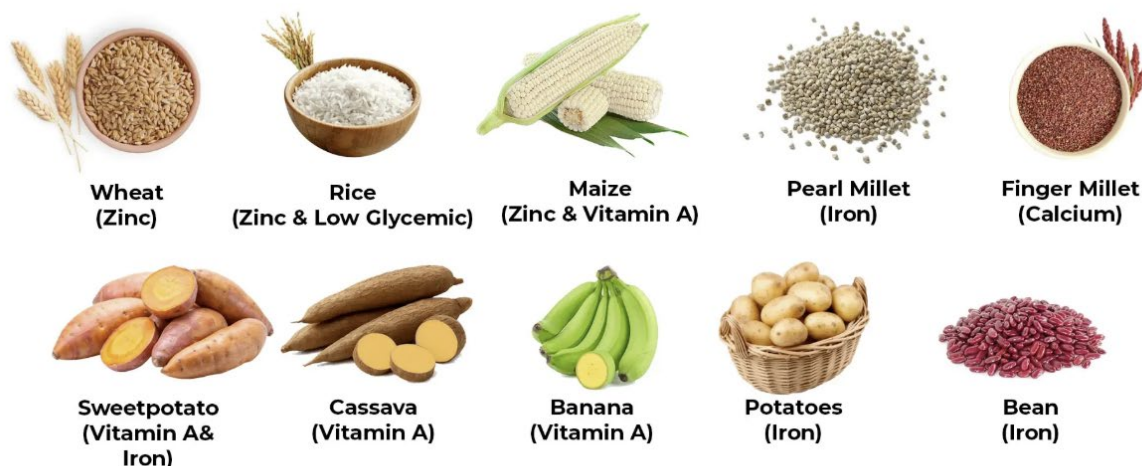
- 01 CGIAR-NARS product design researchers include traits for biofortified and health-enhancing crops for incorporation into breeding programs 1 no target
- 02 Policymakers implement protocols to measure quality assurance, and monitor nutritional content and product quality for biofortified and health-enhancing crops into existing protocols 1 no target
- 03 Policymakers integrate biofortified and health-enhancing crops into national policies 1 no target
- 04 Processors use biofortified and health-enhancing crops as raw materials or ingredients for commercial products 1 no target
- 05 Producers and processors adopt and scale biofortified and health-enhancing crops 1 no target
- 06 Traders and vendors include biofortified and health-enhancing crops, raw materials or products derived from biofortified or health-enhancing crops in their inventories 1 no target

● **On track** (≥80% of target achieved)
 ● **Moderate** (50-79% of target achieved)
 ● **Behind** (less than 50% of target achieved)

Ratings are based on annual target achievement of standard indicator categories within the Theory of Change (ToC). All generated ratings were reviewed and adjusted as needed by the Accelerator, with any updates accompanied by justifications.

Figure 9: AoW4 progress against 2025 ToC indicator targets. Based on data accurate as of 30 March 2026.

BIOFORTIFIED AND HEALTH-ENHANCING STAPLES



UNDEREXPLOITED OPPORTUNITY CROPS



Figure 10: The goal of AoW4 in Better Diets and Nutrition is to make these 10 biofortified and health-enhancing staples and three underexplored opportunity crops a market and consumer success.

A new framework to embed nutrition in breeding

The headline achievement of 2025 was the development of the [Framework for Embedding Nutrition into Breeding Pipelines and Processes](#), a classification and design tool for integrating, categorizing, and tracking nutrition objectives within CGIAR breeding pipelines. Developed in close collaboration with the Breeding for Tomorrow Science Program, the framework is operationally realistic for breeding programs and actionable for nutritionists and scaling teams, enabling transparent and consistent prioritization of nutrition across the full innovation lifecycle — from discovery and product profile development through variety release and scaling.

The framework was one of the outputs from a cross-CGIAR consultation to build consensus on the next phase of biofortification. The meeting brought together a transdisciplinary group of participants representing 11 CGIAR Centers, one national agricultural research system, and one private sector partner engaged in iron bean processing. The group identified structural weaknesses in earlier biofortification models, including an overreliance on nutrient concentration targets rather than bioavailability and retention, and delivery models treated as stand-alone projects rather than embedded systems.

Participants agreed that CGIAR needs a Biofortification Coordination Team linked to national systems to align strategy, mobilize resources, and embed biofortification within broader food, health, and climate agendas — building on the HarvestPlus legacy. This group will be formalized under Better Diets and Nutrition in 2026 to advance Biofortification 2.0, a consumer-first approach to food system change.

Building the evidence base and investment case

Published [consumer research](#) from the Philippines surveyed 600 middle-class urban consumers to examine willingness to pay for low glycemic index rice. Critically, the findings suggest that snack occasions, rather than main meals, may serve as more effective entry points for promoting healthier rice, offering actionable guidance for both breeding programs designing target product profiles and nutrition education initiatives.

On the methods side, AoW4 researchers published a revised approach to quantifying the [health impact of biofortification and industrial fortification](#) using relative estimates to bridge data gaps in the disability-adjusted life years framework. Such approaches and evidence can be used to strengthen the investment case for biofortification.

Challenges

In 2025, Better Diets and Nutrition laid the structural and evidential foundations for AoW4 — a cross-CGIAR framework, a convened community of practice, consumer preference evidence, and refined impact quantification methods. Advancing the biofortification agenda requires stronger coordination across multiple Programs and with key stakeholders. A Biofortification Coordination Team led by Better Diets and Nutrition will be established in 2026, with a blueprint currently in development.

Area of Work 6: Transformative Leadership (16 results)

79% (7/22 with targets)

Lack of leadership, coordination, institutional capacity, and technical capacity in diets and nutrition can hinder the successful implementation of the different approaches in Better Diets and Nutrition. AoW6 is the Program's engine for consolidating evidence, tools, and insights and channeling them into strategic regional and global platforms and policy processes (see Figure 11).

HIGH LEVEL OUTPUTS (5)

- 01 Regional food systems transformation coordination mechanisms disseminated
1/2 indicators met annual target + 2 no target
- 02 Regional, continental FS leadership development events to promote BDN outcomes for FST
4 no target
- 03 Synthesized knowledge products across AoWs and disseminated
1/2 indicators met annual target + 1 no target
- 04 Targeted capacity-sharing events addressing evidence to policy actions and strategic engagement to influence food systems thinking to promote positive transformative change among different stakeholders including CoPs.
1/1 indicators met annual target
- 05 Task force that guides the CGIAR Portfolio along pathways that lead to credible impacts on nutrition, health, and food security
2/2 indicators met annual target + 2 no target

● On track (≥80% of target achieved)
 ● Moderate (50-79% of target achieved)
 ● Behind (less than 50% of target achieved)

Ratings are based on annual target achievement of standard indicator categories within the Theory of Change (ToC). AI-generated ratings were reviewed and adjusted as needed by the Accelerator, with any updates accompanied by justifications.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (6)

- 01 CGIAR Research Programs and Accelerators apply diet-centred approaches to foster nutrition sensitive agricultural principles for better diets and nutrition
1 no target
- 02 Global multilateral networks incorporate systems thinking to diets and nutrition in global convergence agendas across the food systems, nutrition, climate and biodiversity nexus
1 no target
- 03 International and regional stakeholder coalitions/platforms (UN, networks like SUN, CAADAP, ASEAN etc) actively position diets and nutrition as cross-cutting issues in global and regional discussions; including cross-sectoral discussions on climate and biodiversity agendas
1 no target
- 04 International and regional stakeholder coalitions/platforms (UN, networks like SUN, CAADAP, ASEAN etc), CoPs, and CGIAR SP/A build a shared food systems transformation agenda that maximizes shared benefits and minimizes tradeoffs on diet and nutrition impacts
1 no target
- 05 National government and NGO use evidence in regional and international discussions on FST pathways to increase coherence in and across countries to support better diets and nutrition
1 no target
- 06 National government and NGOs jointly implement regional co-ordination mechanisms and networks with the goal of improving diets and nutrition
1 no target

Figure 11: AoW6 progress against the 2025 ToC indicator targets. Based on data accurate as of 30 March 2026.

Elevating program evidence in global forums

The [EAT Stockholm Food Forum](#), the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Paris, and the Delivering for Nutrition in South Asia conference provided opportunities for AoW6 to engage international and regional stakeholders in discussions about approaches at multiple levels to build shared agendas around food systems transformation and its linkages to diets. A Learning Session at the [Delivering for Nutrition in South Asia](#) conference featured the distinct approaches being used in Better Diets and Nutrition and concrete examples for the researchers, policymakers, and non-governmental organizations in attendance.

A defining moment came at the [Nutrition for Growth Summit in Paris](#), where CGIAR committed to identifying and releasing 25 evidence-based food system solutions by 2030, a pledge drafted by the Better Diets and Nutrition team. This high-profile political commitment, registered in the global [Nutrition Accountability Framework](#), signals CGIAR's ambition and positions it as a credible driver of systemic change. Complementing this, the Program's Director joined the [UN Nutrition Steering Committee](#), opening a direct channel to embed CGIAR evidence into agenda setting and policies, approaches, and positions on diets and nutrition for the entire UN system.

Strengthening CGIAR-wide coordination on diets and nutrition

AoW6 also seeks to change approaches and positions on diets and nutrition within CGIAR. The team contributed their technical expertise in diets and nutrition metrics in the CGIAR-wide process to revise the impact indicators that will shape how the entire Portfolio reports on nutrition outcomes. This work amplifies Better Diets and Nutrition's own 2030 outcome and is expected to lead to coherence across the new Portfolio on how to credibly measure, report, and communicate CGIAR's work on diets and nutrition.

The proposal for Better Diets and Nutrition mentioned that it would launch a cross-CGIAR working group on diets and nutrition to create awareness of the plausible impact pathways CGIAR's agriculture research for development can take to address diets and nutrition challenges. The working group was discussed in a session with other Programs at CGIAR Science Week, but formally convening it was paused so AoW6 could focus its coordination efforts on its impact indicators.

Challenges

This AoW did not have a direct precedent in the previous Portfolio, although it embraces the purpose of the CGIAR Nutrition, Health, and Food Security Impact Platform (2022-2024). Therefore, there was less of a legacy from which to report and the inception phase required more time and effort to establish and coordinate internal and external contributions and engage in partnership building. Clarifying roles and responsibilities of individuals and institutions alongside a number of staff and leadership changes presented some coordination challenges. The Program supported engagement in several significant international and regional food systems, diet and nutrition meetings, but it has been challenging to fully document the influence. It is likely that this year's report does not provide a comprehensive picture of the results achieved. Lastly, the team invested time in developing a ToC for this new AoW but recognizes that it still needs to be refined. This effort will continue in 2026 with technical support from the Program's MELIA Focal Point.

3. Partnerships

Better Diets and Nutrition is a partnership-intensive Program. Its ToC depends on co-ownership with government actors, national research systems, and specialized technical partners — not as delivery mechanisms, but as co-designers of evidence and co-implementers of change (see Figure 12). In 2025, this philosophy was evident across the Program's focus countries, where partnerships enabled results that no single institution could have achieved alone.

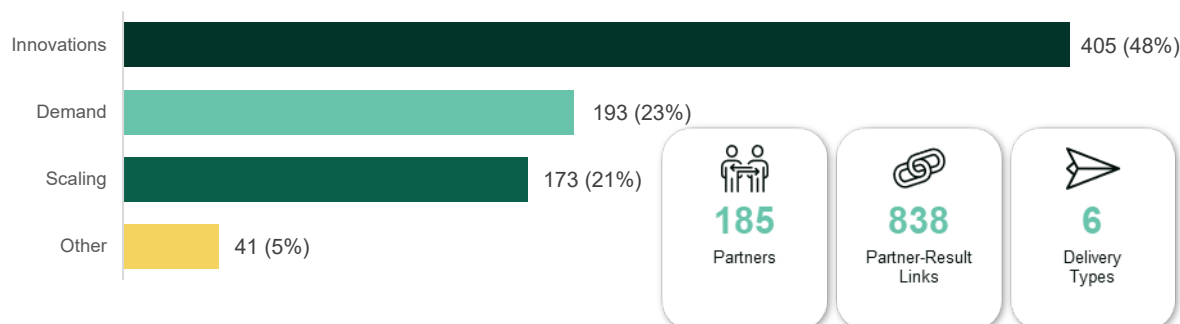


Figure 12: Partner contributions to 2025 Better Diets and Nutrition results, by delivery type. Based on data accurate as of 30 March 2026.

Embedded country partnerships: The Country Coordinator model

The Program's most distinctive partnership mechanism is its network of full-time, in-country Country Coordinators, who maintain trusted relationships with government and civil society partners over multi-year periods in seven countries (Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Viet Nam). In 2025, this model produced tangible policy outcomes in Viet Nam (see Box 2) and Ethiopia described in other parts of this report.

Subnational food systems transformation in Viet Nam

Viet Nam illustrates how sustained, multi-actor partnerships translate into policy outcomes. Over several years, the Program's Country Coordinator, working alongside the National Institute of Nutrition, the Institute of Strategy and Policy for Agriculture and Environment,¹ and the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences, supported the subnational implementation of the national food systems transformation plan. In 2025, this collaboration produced a toolkit for facilitating subnational food systems processes, food system profiles for Son La and Dong Thap provinces, and ultimately the formal approval of Son La's Provincial Implementation Plan. The Program also supported the development of Viet Nam's first national project implementation plan for the food systems agenda and provided technical inputs for early warning indicators on climate and nutrition. This trajectory — from co-designed tools to subnational policy approval to national plan development — demonstrates how the Program's partnership model generates policy outcomes, not just knowledge products. The Program's engagement with COP30 further positioned Viet Nam's food systems agenda within the global climate conversation, with Program evidence on ultra-processed food consumption and obesity included in regional preparatory discussions.

Staff from the World Vegetable Center serve as Country Coordinators in Tanzania and in Benin. In both countries, the Program's partnership with the World Vegetable Center has enabled effective partnerships with other in-country collaborators, like the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute and the Benin Ministry of Agriculture, supporting supply-side interventions of the end-to-end approach for vegetables.

In Sri Lanka, the Department of Agriculture co-implemented good agronomic practices (GAP) demonstration plots, training farmer groups who will serve as peer trainers in subsequent seasons. The Department also co-authored technical cultivation guides for extension officers on four specific vegetables.

In Bangladesh, the Country Coordinator supported the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit within the Ministry of Food and the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council to train the first cohort of expert trainers in a co-designed ToT program on food systems transformation. The ToT program will expand and evolve to largely partner-led delivery in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam in 2026 with combined resources from CGIAR and a bilateral investment.

There will be more reportable results from the Philippines in next year's report. The Food and Nutrition Research Institute is leading secondary analysis of nationally representative dietary data to examine nutrient gaps and identify opportunities to fill those gaps.

¹ This is the new name for the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Strategic global partnerships: specialized expertise and reach

The Agriculture, Nutrition, and Health Academy (ANH Academy) continues to serve as a strategic platform for Better Diets and Nutrition to disseminate methodologies and approaches developed and/or tested by the Program. In 2025, members of Better Diets and Nutrition delivered two Learning Labs at the annual conference on RCTs of [complex interventions](#) and [shop-along methods](#).

Wageningen University and Research (WUR) continues to lead the ToT program on food systems transformation and collaborate on several ongoing pieces of research on consumers and food environment in Ethiopia, Ghana, Tanzania, and Viet Nam. A WUR doctoral student, co-supervised by Program researchers, completed her dissertation on the Diet Quality Questionnaire (DQQ). A Learning Lab on DQQ was also offered at the ANH Academy by partners of Better Diets and Nutrition from WUR.

The end-to-end evaluations in Tanzania and Sri Lanka utilize expertise from several academic partners, including, but not limited to, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Wayamba University, and the University of California, Davis. The post-harvest activities within the overall approach have been designed and implemented by Applied Horticultural Research in collaboration with University of Sydney, WUR and the World Vegetable Center. Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition is supporting the co-development activities for the food environment and demand side interventions in both countries using their human-centered design approach, which will be ready to report on in 2026.

In the framework of the Netherlands-CGIAR partnership, Better Diets and Nutrition benefits from four senior experts from WUR in the Senior Expert Program (SEP) funded by the Netherlands-CGIAR Partnership. The SEP grantees wrote their proposals in 2024 at the time when the proposal for Better Diets and Nutrition was still being drafted. In the Program's first year, it became more apparent that their proposed research is not well-aligned with the ToC and objectives of Better Diets and Nutrition. A series of discussions at the start of 2026 will rectify this and ensure that the work addresses knowledge gaps in the Program on consumer-oriented solutions, engagement with MSMEs, and policy and governance issues in food systems transformation.

Cross-CGIAR Portfolio linkages

Better Diets and Nutrition made deliberate efforts in 2025 to build coherence across the wider CGIAR Portfolio. The reported results included the Framework for Embedding Nutrition into Breeding Pipelines and Processes, described in Section 2 under AoW4, and contributions to processes to select new indicators for CGIAR to measure and report nutrition outcomes and impacts, described in Section 2 under AoW6. Both results are actions the Program has identified to mitigate risks to its success by 2030, which is explained more in Section 4.

Toward 2030: Partnerships as a scaling mechanism

In 2025, a bilateral donor made an investment to re-design and expand a [retail-level F&V intervention](#), originally co-designed by the CGIAR Initiative on Sustainable Healthy Diets with the University of Ibadan, one of this year's reported outcomes. The intervention, now with gender-transformative activities and stronger links to local policies, will be implemented in two states in Nigeria. In Bangladesh, a financial services firm expanded its agricultural finance products to approximately 30,000 farmers, building on risk-sharing models developed and tested through CGIAR-supported research. These examples, plus this year's key result story (Section 5) reflect the Program's ToC in practice. Partnerships that begin with co-design and evidence generation create the conditions for partners to assume ownership and scale results independently.

4. Adaptive management

Evidence and learning

Better Diets and Nutrition made strong progress toward planned 2025 annual targets. However, progress on consumer-oriented and food environment innovations has lagged, partly due to significant shifts in the development funding landscape. This necessitates adjustments in approach, including reconsidering how consumer-oriented and food environment innovations are framed and pursued. Individual consumer-oriented solutions alone are unlikely to influence demand and consumption of healthy diets; achieving this requires broader packages of interventions supported by appropriate budgets. Across multiple AoWs, efforts have focused on identifying innovations that are either in design or already being implemented by like-minded partners in focus countries, with whom Better Diets and Nutrition can collaborate on evaluation, provided they meet established criteria.

The Better Diets and Nutrition budget is also not sufficient to support implementation of such comprehensive intervention packages, nor is large-scale implementation considered CGIAR's comparative advantage. As noted in prior annual reports, identifying suitable innovations has been challenging. Potential solutions must meet defined criteria: they should be feasible, have a plausible ToC toward sustainable healthy diets, and demonstrate potential to be scalable and transformative, addressing systemic challenges rather than isolated issues.

The 2026 adaptive management cycle offers an opportunity to address targets that were not met, including those outside planned innovations, to ensure that 2026 innovation targets are clearly measurable and achievable.

CGIAR's prioritization process

The 2026 planning and prioritization process introduced a new unit of planning, namely, package of deliverables (PoDs). The PoDs require a new approach to managing AoWs, different from the method used in 2025. Therefore, as part of the 2026 adapt cycle in Q1-2, the Program is revising the PoDs to describe in more detail what the 2026 plans are and the associated key performance indicators (KPIs). Taken as a whole, the PoDs provide the opportunity to better describe the 2026 plans to partners in a way that complements the list of KPIs in the Plan of Results and Budget.

Looking ahead to the next planning and prioritization process, the Program will refine knowledge gaps for each AoW and will be active in sharing this resource with participating CGIAR Centers so that Center submissions are relevant to the Program's ToC. For example, AoW4 received the most PoDs in the 2026 process, yet many of them were production-oriented or did not focus on consumers, or other relevant target groups in our ToC.

Geographical scope

Responding to recommendations from many separate stakeholder groups that the Program should narrow its geographical focus, the inception phase report clarified the 15 countries where pooled funding would be used for focused research and fieldwork. As work started in 2025 before the inception report decisions on geography, this year's report still show results outside the 15 countries, and unbalanced reporting between countries, for example with many results in Tanzania and Ethiopia, and very few reported results from the Philippines and none from India.

With data from the projection of benefits exercise and the 2026 planning and prioritization process in Q4, the geographic scope of most AoWs was reduced to fewer countries than described in the proposal with seven Tier 1 (Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Philippines, Vietnam and Honduras) and four Tier 2 countries (India, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda). This requests for further consolidation of BDN work in these countries with decision on the importance of in-country presence of Country Coordinators (presently only five of the seven Country Coordinators, an important model mentioned in several places in this year's report, are present in Tier 1 countries; none are in Tier 2). A limited budget combined with a broad geographic scope risks spreading resources too thinly to achieve meaningful impact. Further decisions are needed on the minimum viable funding level per country to achieve tangible results.

Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) review and feedback

Feedback during the inception phase reinforced concerns raised during the Program proposal stage that the Program lacks a coherent narrative. While the overall goal or mission may be clear, the steps and pathways to achieve it are not sufficiently articulated or convincing to stakeholders. We recognize that the explanation of the different approaches, as well as the current organization of the Program across AoWs, is not adequate. Addressing this will require sustained and intensive consultation with national partners. While this process was intended to begin in 2025, it has been deferred to 2026 due to several factors.

During the inception phase, the ToC was also significantly revised and expanded. The updated ToC outlines two synergistic pathways: policy interventions to create enabling environments, and innovations to improve affordability, accessibility, availability, desirability, and agency for healthier food choices. It incorporates new assumptions, clarifies actor roles, and highlights the importance of capacity sharing in accelerating change. The revised ToC also provides greater clarity on consumer agency, motivations, and the structural barriers influencing food choices.

Evaluability Assessment

Following recommendations from the evaluability assessment related to the Program's intervention logic, the Program commissioned the development of country-level ToCs for Kenya and Ethiopia to strengthen evaluability and improve its ability to assess progress toward outcomes and impact. These processes will help clarify the roles of key actors, ensure that Program outputs, objectives, and outcomes are better aligned with national contexts, refine indicators, and strengthen the articulation of impact pathways linking research outputs, partnerships, policy engagement, and expected food system outcomes. They will also inform Program design and measurement by identifying gaps in activities, partnerships, and data needs, while reviewing key assumptions underlying Program pathways.

In early 2026, the draft ToCs will be circulated within the Leadership Team, alongside guidance to address remaining gaps in activities, partnerships, and pathways to impact. In parallel, practical guidance is being developed to strengthen internal capacity and enable Program staff to document country-level ToCs in additional priority countries.

The Evaluability Assessment also highlighted the importance of strengthening documentation of research activities and outputs to support assessment of research quality and Program performance. In 2026, the Program will develop guidance on the application of the Quality of Research for Development (QoR4D) framework within Better Diets and Nutrition. Adherence to these principles will be monitored through a simple internal checklist. Strengthening documentation and alignment with QoR4D principles will support more consistent monitoring of progress, facilitate learning across activities, and enhance the credibility of reported results and evidence on Program performance.

Risk management

The overall risk profile for the Program remained unchanged for 2025. Risk levels for Risk #1 (Frequent staff turnover among mission-critical partners) and Risk #4 (Inability to identify appropriate incentives for food system actors to adopt solutions) increased, reflecting first-year implementation experience and evolving global and national contexts in the focus countries. In contrast, the risk level for Risk #5 (Misaligned priorities and resource allocations across the CGIAR System for diets and nutrition) decreased, due to mitigation measures in place by year-end and a reassessment of the risk. Mitigation actions across risks were reviewed and updated accordingly.

Read Better Diets and Nutrition's [Risk Register](#), which includes the top five submitted risks for 2025 and related actions and controls to manage those risks.

5. Key result story

Strengthening subnational food systems planning in Honduras

Municipal food system profiles are helping decisionmakers in Honduras prioritize actions for sustainable healthy diets.



A Honduran Ministry of Agriculture official listens to a farmer's comments on the food system profile of the municipality of Balfate, Honduras.
Credit: 2025 Óscar Martínez, Alliance Bioversity-CIAT.

Experts focused on transforming food systems have created a range of guides to support the development of food system policies and programs. These resources emphasize that a comprehensive, participatory assessment of the entire food system is a crucial first step — one that moves beyond production and food security to encompass challenges across the agriculture, nutrition, health, and economic sectors. Since 2020, CGIAR has worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG) in Honduras to develop and use Food System Profiles as a tool in their national and subnational policymaking. By the end of 2025, SAG invested in developing 20 Municipal Food System Profiles to help decisionmakers prioritize actions and investments to strengthen local food systems.

Food systems in Honduras face challenges such as vulnerability to climate shocks, food insecurity, unhealthy diets, and limited coordination sectors. While national food systems transformation strategies exist to address these concerns, decisionmakers at the subnational level often lack the evidence and analytical tools needed to fully understand local food system dynamics. Without localized data and a diverse group of stakeholders to make sense of the evidence, municipalities struggle to prioritize and implement transformative actions aimed at improving access to sustainable healthy diets.

To help address this gap, researchers from the CGIAR Better Diets and Nutrition Program partnered with national stakeholders to strengthen evidence-based food systems planning in Honduras. Building on earlier CGIAR-funded work, this effort aimed to generate actionable food systems evidence and support national and municipal actors in translating commitments made through the UNFSS into local action.

The foundation for this work began in 2020, when researchers from the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, in partnership with the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture, developed [Sustainable Food System Profiles](#) for Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Honduras. The profiles introduced a participatory framework that engages stakeholders in the process of identifying and analyzing key food system dimensions including supply chains, food environments, and consumer behavior, plus data on the drivers of food system outcomes, like shifting demographics, economic development, and changes in diets and consumer behavior. Rather than simply compiling data, the profiles synthesize critical existing information for a limited number of key food system indicators (just 30), prioritized by and interpreted with a group of stakeholders selected to represent diverse sectors and actor types, into short documents that provide a holistic overview of the food system and identify hotspots of unsustainability. An [online dashboard](#) supplemented the published profiles.

In Honduras, these resources were incorporated into government-led activities in the lead-up to the UNFSS in 2021. Since then, the methodology has been applied at both national and subnational levels in [Viet Nam](#) and [Ethiopia](#), with additional methodological guidelines published for each country in 2025 based on experiences with local and provincial authorities. In Viet Nam, the profiles have become a key resource supporting the subnational implementation of the country's National Action Plan on Food Systems Transformation towards Transparency, Responsibility, and Sustainability by 2030.

Building on this experience, the approach was adapted for use at the municipal level in Honduras. In 2023, SAG, which leads the country's UNFSS engagement, partnered with the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT to lead this process in two municipalities with local food system actors from the public and private sector and civil society.

Two [Municipal Food System Profiles](#) were published in 2024, alongside [practical guidelines](#) in Spanish on how to develop them. In 2025, independent of CGIAR financial support, SAG invested in advancing this effort by developing profiles for 20 additional municipalities. Better Diets and Nutrition provided training for SAG staff and their consultants on the methodology and continue to provide in-kind mentoring and technical support as the profiles are finalized.

The primary users of the profiles are municipal governments, local offices of national ministries, and development organizations, who can use the evidence to guide food system policy and investment decisions. National agencies like SAG also benefit from localized insights that complement country-level food system transformation strategies. Through collaboration with diverse stakeholder groups, the process of developing the profiles has strengthened coordination while enhancing capacity for evidence-based decision-making.

The development and expansion of municipal food system profiles in Honduras demonstrates growing government ownership of the approach and its value for guiding policy and investment decisions. As similar efforts continue in other countries, the methodology offers a pathway for more practical, coordinated and evidence-driven actions at the local level, supporting food systems transformation toward sustainable healthy diets.

“ The Municipal Food System Profiles are tools that provide a comprehensive overview and strategic orientation. They specify and describe the characteristics of a territory and its people in relation to the components of a food system, identifying capabilities, opportunities, and key weaknesses. These insights help promote equitable, competitive, and resilient livelihoods, and can be used to promote and strengthen food and nutrition security and human development, applicable at the community, municipality, region and country levels, and can be periodically updated.

*Wilmer Escobar, Food and Nutrition Security Officer,
PROINORTE Project, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG) of Honduras*

Contributing Center: Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

Contributing external partners: Honduran Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

