



CGIAR  
SCALING FOR  
IMPACT



Technical Report

# GESI-Responsive Scaling Framework: Pathways, Partnerships, and Operational Guide for Innovation Uptake

Erin McGuire, Ashley Mutiso, Ojongetakah Enokenwa Baa,  
and Karen Nortje

April 2026



# Acknowledgments

This work was undertaken as part of the **CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I) Program**. We would like to thank all funders who supported this research through their contributions to the CGIAR Trust Fund ([www.cgiar.org/funders/](http://www.cgiar.org/funders/)).

We extend our sincere appreciation to our partners, stakeholders, and collaborators whose expertise, insights, and commitment have contributed significantly to shaping this work. Their contributions have been instrumental in advancing CGIAR's ambition to scale proven innovations across food, land, and water systems, fostering impact that is inclusive, sustainable, and transformative.

We also recognize the continued support and collaboration of national and regional partners, whose engagement ensures that the solutions developed are responsive to local needs, strengthen innovation systems, and contribute to building more resilient agrifood systems.

To learn more about the CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I) Program, please contact: [scaling@cgiar.org](mailto:scaling@cgiar.org)

## About CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I) program

Scaling for Impact (S4I) is a CGIAR program (2025–2030) that tests, refines, and scales innovations in food, land, and water systems. It works to align those innovations with stakeholder needs to achieve transformative impact.

Website: <https://www.cgiar.org/cgiar-research-portfolio-2025-2030/scaling-for-impact/>

## About CGIAR

CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food secure future.

Visit <https://www.cgiar.org/cgiar-research-portfolio-2025-2030/> to learn more about the initiatives in the CGIAR research portfolio.



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## SUGGESTED CITATION

McGuire, Erin, Ashley Mutiso, Ojongetakah Enokenwa Baa, and Karen Nortje. 2026. *GESI-Responsive Scaling Framework: Pathways, Partnerships, and Operational Guide for Innovation Uptake*. International Water Management Institute (IWMI).

## PHOTOS

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# Executive Summary

This strategy report outlines a coherent approach for embedding Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Responsible Innovation (RI), and Responsible Scaling (RS) considerations across Areas of Work 2 and 3 within the Scaling for Impact (S4I) program. These recommendations are built from recent consultant reports, workshops, surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions.

The Scaling for Impact program places significant emphasis on gender equality, social inclusion, and responsible scaling, referencing these concepts repeatedly and integrating GESI considerations into its program outputs, with explicit targets for marginalized groups across its 2030 outcomes. The Area of Work 2 (AoW-2) offers a natural entry point for GESI, RI, & RS by examining how innovations transition into thematic flagships, while Area of Work 3 (AoW-3), the Enabling Environment Lab, focuses on the systemic and structural barriers that prevent innovations from scaling equitably. Together, the two areas emphasize that scaling is not only a technical exercise but also a social process shaped by power, context, and institutional incentives.

The framework presented draws on RI and RS principles, demonstrating how tools, decision-making prompts, and integrated methodologies can be used to strengthen equity and inclusion throughout the innovation lifecycle, design, testing, adaptation, and long-term use. They highlight practical opportunities for CGIAR to institutionalize inclusive approaches in Science Programs, including harmonizing tools, embedding GESI in MEL systems, expanding Innovation Packages and Scaling Readiness (IPSR) to consider inclusion, and strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration. The report also outlines how donors, private sector actors, and Communities of Practice (CoP) can influence scaling narratives, and how new collaboration models can deepen South–South learning, peer exchange, and locally grounded innovation design.

While the preliminary aspects of the report focus on recommendations and why these recommendations are important, the latter half of this report provides operational guidance on actionable requirements for Areas of Work 2 and 3 within the Scaling for Impact (S4I) program and its partners. The 17 Solution Tracks approved for 2026-2028 serve as the primary entry point for piloting and institutionalizing these requirements. This report highlights that the responsible scaling framework and its operational guide provide a sustainability approach for 2026 and beyond to ensure inclusivity is tracked and measured for adaptive outcomes. Each track must complete mandatory GESI-responsive scaling checkpoints at defined stages in their scaling pathway, with results feeding directly into AoW3 indicators for system-level learning and course correction.

This report underscores that meaningful GESI integration is not a single milestone but an ongoing, adaptive process requiring institutional commitment, shared accountability, and equitable partnerships. With clearer mandates, stronger evidence, and growing internal momentum, CGIAR is well-positioned to mainstream GESI, RI, and RS as core components of its research and impact agenda.

# Acronyms

AR4D - Agricultural Research for Development

AoW2 - Area of Work 2 - Pathways to Scale in Agrifood System

AoW3 - Area of Work 3 - Enabling Environment Lab

BOA - Bank of Agriculture

CGIAR - Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GALS - Gender Action Learning Systems

GESI - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

IPSR - Innovation Packages and Scaling Readiness

MEL - Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

MELIA - Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Impact Assessment

PPU - Portfolio Performance Unit (at CGIAR and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)

PRMP - Performance and Results Management Program

Pro-WEAI - Pro - Women's Empowerment in Agricultural Index

RI - Responsible Innovations

RS - Responsible Scaling

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

S4I - Scaling for Impact Program

TRA - Technical Reporting Arrangement

WEAI - Women's Empowerment in Agricultural Index

# Introduction

Rural women make up a large percentage of the agricultural labor force, yet their work is often unpaid and unrecognized around the world. At the same time, the youth are decreasingly participating in agricultural activities in rural areas. As a result, rural women and youth are not gaining access to the information, tools, voice, and technologies they need to strengthen self-sufficiency and participate in commercial food production. Their vulnerability also heightens household exposure to shocks and stresses, often reflected in reduced agricultural output, income instability, and poor nutritional outcomes. An intersectional lens reminds us that while these groups remain priorities, individuals within these groups will have different landscapes of opportunities and challenges. Further, people marginalized by disability, geography, socio-economic status, ethnicity, or other structural and intersecting barriers also experience limited access and amplified risks. Building a more inclusive system, therefore, requires understanding these overlapping forms of disadvantages and ensuring that innovations and scaling pathways respond to the needs of all groups who are routinely left behind. On the macro level, this undermines the overall resilience of agri-food systems in the region, as sidelining such a large number of the population limits the system's capacity to adapt, innovate, and address increasing population and climate pressure.

RI dimensions, such as anticipation, inclusion, reflexivity, responsiveness, legitimacy, and knowledge, and RS principles, such as social differentiation, power and inclusion, institutional fit, and adaptive learning, are critical to developing processes that are most effective and impactful. Further, Gender, Equity, and Social Inclusion (GESI) matters for CGIAR, both as a driver of efficiency and as a core requirement for achieving impact at scale. When gender and social inclusion are integrated from the beginning, innovations are more relevant, uptake improves, and scaling pathways become more sustainable. This strategy brief outlines integration pathways, collaboration models, practical recommendations, and enabling environments for Areas of Work 2 and 3 of the Scaling for Impact Program of the CGIAR. Area of Work 2 – Pathways to Scale in Agrifood Systems (AoW-2) uses discussions and transition criteria for moving activities into thematic flagships (e.g., seed systems, mechanization, irrigation, animal and aquatic foods) as a natural entry point for responsible scaling reflections.

According to Altshul (2025), Area of Work 3 (AoW-3), the Enabling Environment Lab, focuses on identifying and addressing systemic barriers that prevent innovations, from AoW-2 and other initiatives within the CGIAR network, from scaling effectively. It supports essential changes in policy, market systems, and institutional capacities, while also confronting normative and social barriers that hinder inclusive scaling. AoW-3 emphasizes that innovation can only drive meaningful social transformation when it is inclusive, especially for marginalized groups whose needs are often overlooked. Creating equitable enabling environments is central to this mission.

This report recommends activities aimed at developing enabling environments for impact within CGIAR priority communities, such as GESI integration pathways, collaborative frameworks, systems-based and GESI-informed monitoring and evaluation indicators. It also identifies areas where CGIAR has both the mandate and the internal capacity to implement elements of these strategies. At the same time, the report acknowledges that several actions cannot be undertaken by CGIAR alone and will require coordinated efforts with other stakeholders, particularly upstream actors. Overall, the report outlines recommendations to strengthen collaborative, systemic, and evidence-based approaches across the research and innovation ecosystem.

# Integration Pathways + Methods

## Responsible Scaling Framework

This report builds on the analysis presented in *Integrating responsible scaling into the CGIAR scaling mechanisms – A system landscape and opportunity report, with GESI integration recommendations* (CGIAR, October 2025), which mapped CGIAR’s [current scaling landscape and identified critical entry points for embedding social differentiation and inclusion](#) into ongoing processes. That earlier work traced the full scaling pathway - from initial innovation design and preparation through implementation, sustained use, and long-term adaptation - and overlaid a GESI lens, critical to responsible innovation and scaling. What emerged was a Responsible Scaling Framework (Fig. 1) with six areas of consideration that, without re-inventing scaling processes or tools, can inform both micro-processes of individual research and project-level decision-making and the macro-processes that shape institutional incentives, governance, and system-wide scaling practices.

The six responsible scaling domains are as follows -

1. **Problem Framing & Equity Objectives:** What goals are being pursued, who decides on them, and who stands to benefit or face risk from them?
2. **Context & Social Differentiation:** Who are the intended users and non-users, and how do gender, age, wealth, geography, or disability shape access? What are potential non-intended users?
3. **Power, Legitimacy & Inclusive Partnerships:** Who holds decision-making authority, and how inclusive and accountable are the partnerships?
4. **Evidence & Data:** What types of evidence, disaggregated by gender and other factors, are required to understand the ability to use and benefit from innovations?
5. **Innovation Packaging & Mitigating Measures:** What policies, services, cultural traditions, and market mechanisms are needed to support inclusive scaling and protect vulnerable groups?
6. **Risk Management, Monitoring & Adaptive Learning:** How will risks, unintended effects, and learning processes be monitored and used to adapt the strategy?

We use this same framework (Figure 1) to guide our AoW2 and AoW3 recommendations. This allows us to ensure literature-backed areas of inquiry that can provide structure and guide practical pathways forward.

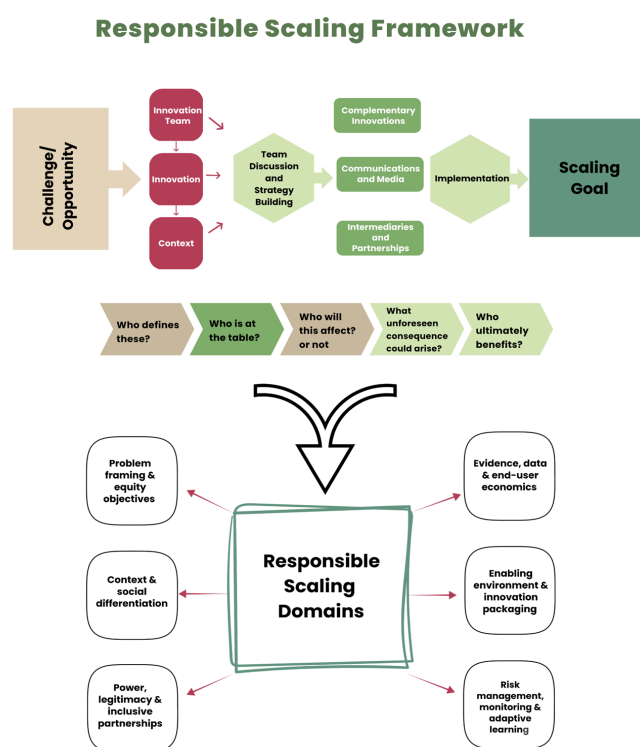


Figure 1: Showing a framework designed to support responsible scaling outcomes. Source: Authors

## Data Sources

To develop these recommendations, we drew on both desk review and primary data sources, including the Systemic Context and Opportunity Mapping Report, which identified inclusive scaling entry points, challenges, and opportunities within CGIAR frameworks, and the Putting Responsible Scaling into Action Workshop Report, which explored how responsibility and inclusion can be embedded into the core of agricultural innovation. We also incorporated insights from key informant interviews with CGIAR and Wageningen University & Research responsible scaling experts, as well as feedback from GenderUp facilitator surveys and focus groups, which shed light on the practical application of GESI-oriented scaling tools. Finally, the analysis drew on key CGIAR consultant reports relevant to responsible innovation and responsible scaling, ensuring that the recommendations reflect both system-level perspectives and practitioner experience.

## Recommendations and Mechanisms

Our recommendations informed by the six responsible scaling domains identified through the Responsible Scaling Framework and are organized in a key summary by AoW2 and AoW3 frameworks. Each domain contains three to four practical considerations relevant to AoW2 and AoW3. Within each domain, we also outline mechanisms for implementation - specific activities, processes, or existing CGIAR infrastructure that can support or operationalize of AoW2 and AoW3.

The Scaling for Impact Program (S4I) serves as the overarching platform through which multiple implementation pathways can be activated, providing both convening power and methodological leadership across CGIAR. S4I supports cross-program integration, fosters shared learning, and helps translate global evidence into locally grounded scaling strategies. As noted, this report draws on a set of implementation mechanisms that function as the operational pathways through which responsible and inclusive scaling recommendations can be adopted across CGIAR. These mechanisms - comprising existing and emerging structures, tools, roles, and processes - enable responsible scaling principles to move from conceptual guidance into routine practice. Together, they distribute responsibility across the system and create the institutional conditions needed for consistent, meaningful uptake of the recommendations that follow.

For example, Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Impact Assessment. (MELIA) within the CGIAR System offers a platform for embedding responsible scaling and GESI considerations into monitoring, evaluation, learning, and adaptation processes from inception onward. The report also references system-level mechanisms such as CGIAR Systems Annual Reporting, such as the portfolio performance unit (PPU) and the central reporting system is the performance results management system (PRMS), which can help standardize social differentiation data and strengthen accountability, and IPSR and IPSR+, which offer an institutional entry point for embedding an inclusion dimension into innovation packaging, readiness assessment, and scaling strategy development. Altshul (2025) recommends different levels of possible of RI+RS consideration, using light, medium, and more robust integration that varies from one-pagers to fully developed videos to increase on the go capacity development.

Further, the Gender Accelerator, along with gender specialists and local tool developers, strengthens alignment with emerging GESI tools, such as the (forthcoming) "Responsible Scaler," a Responsible Innovation and Scaling Process + Toolkit, developed through S4I, provides harmonized guidance and lighter-touch prompts that support teams in integrating RI and RS principles across the innovation lifecycle. South x South Collaborative networks set up by the CGIAR ensure that locally led evidence informs scaling decisions. Communities of Practice, including the Scaling CoP and GESI-focused networks, support peer learning, diffusion of practical insights, and iterative adaptation. Additional mechanisms highlighted throughout the report include locally led research and evidence generation using frameworks such as RBET, cross-functional collaboration between MELIA, stakeholder engagement, and design-thinking practitioners, and partner co-creation approaches, decision support tools such as [GALS4GTR](#) for multi-country scaling strategies that incorporate contextual variation from the outset. Together, these mechanisms anchor the practical pathways through which the recommendations in each domain can be integrated into CGIAR's everyday research, management, and scaling processes.

# Responsible Scaling Considerations

## Domain I: Problem Framing & Equity Objectives

Effective responsible scaling begins with how problems are defined and whose priorities shape the innovation agenda. Decisions made at this early stage determine not only which challenges are pursued but also whose needs, risks, and aspirations are centered or overlooked. For CGIAR, strengthening equity within AoW2 and AoW3 requires ensuring that gender and social inclusion considerations are built into the foundational logic of innovations, from the articulation of objectives to budget planning to upstream decision-making. This domain focuses on how to establish shared, inclusive, and equity-driven goals that guide the entire scaling pathway, enabling innovations to be designed from the outset for relevance, fairness, and meaningful impact.

**Consideration I: Inclusive innovation from the start:** Integrate gender and social differentiation at the inception phase so innovation design reflects real contextual dynamics. Early engagement helps teams identify whom to involve, who may benefit or be excluded, and what structural barriers must be addressed. Embedding responsible scaling principles—such as gender equity, do no harm, sustainability, and co-design—from the outset strengthens risk identification, improves innovation packages, and builds strong foundations for inclusive uptake. This is also critical to appropriately allocate resources.

**Consideration II: Build upstream capacity and create inclusive decision-making spaces:** Scaling outcomes are shaped by upstream decisions about which innovations advance, how strategies are designed, and whose priorities drive them. Strengthening capacity among upstream actors—funders, program leads, and institutional decision-makers—and creating more inclusive, horizontal decision-making spaces helps address structural biases, broaden participation, and ensure scaling strategies reflect diverse user needs and power dynamics. This leads to more equitable and context-responsive scaling pathways, from innovation to curation.

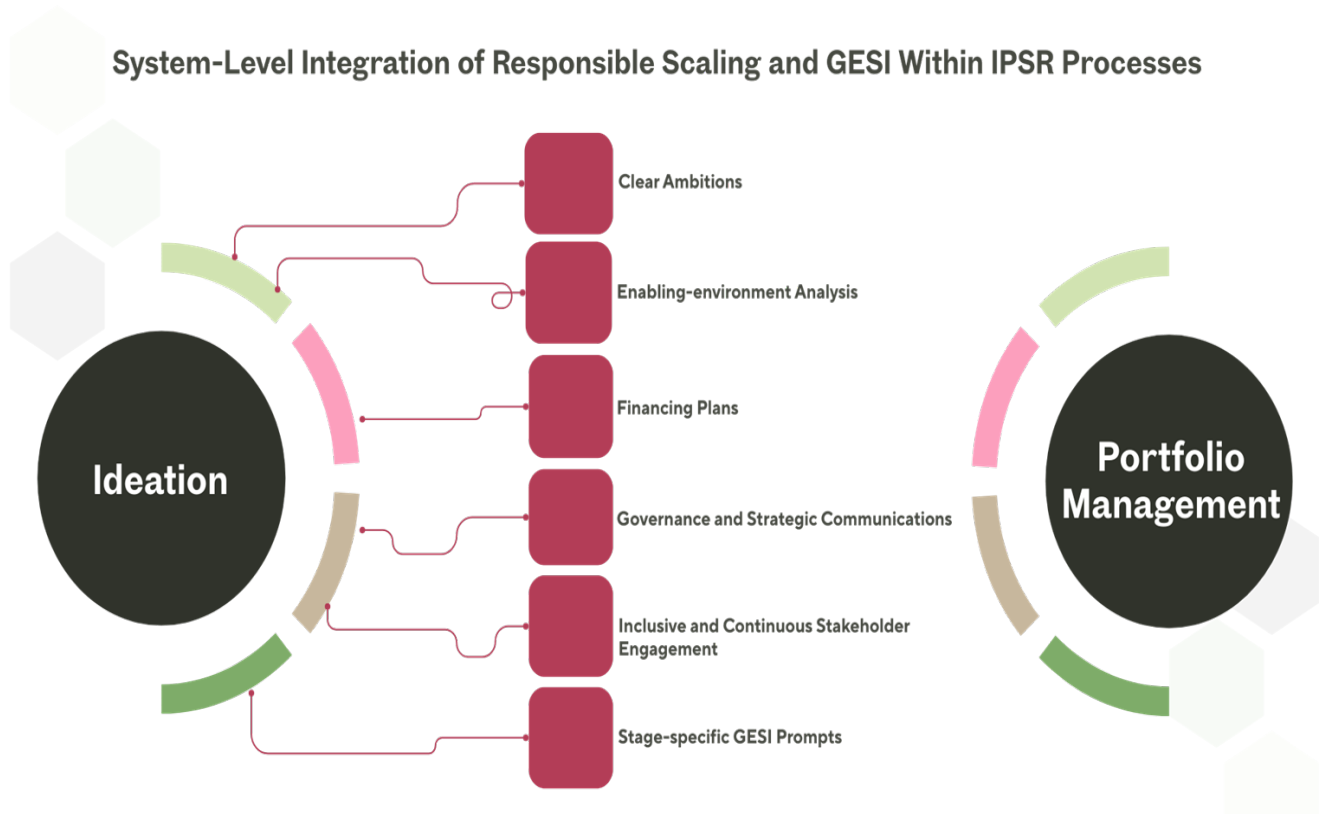


Figure 2: Diagram showing IPSR from innovation to curation. Source: Authors

## **Domain II: Context & Social Differentiation**

Responsible scaling depends on understanding the lived realities of the people and systems innovations aim to influence. This includes recognizing how gender, age, wealth, geography, disability, and social identity shape access, use, and benefits. Differentiation across intended and unintended user groups helps anticipate who may gain, who may be excluded, and what barriers may emerge as innovations scale. This domain includes recommendations that strengthen CGIAR's ability to gather, interpret, and act on contextual evidence so that scaling pathways are socially responsive and locally grounded.

**Consideration III: Incorporate more robust end-user and landscape data into Innovation Profiling:** Strengthen Innovation Profiling by front-loading evidence on user demand, economic and market conditions, and context-specific validation. An Innovation Platform for Scaling Readiness, with responsible innovation tents integrated, will create more informed decisions by ensuring a solid evidence base - comparative advantage, user data, and sustainability pathways - is in place before scaling strategies are developed.

**Consideration IV: Generate and share evidence co-created with communities:** Use participatory evidence to ensure innovation design and scaling pathways reflect locally defined needs and priorities. Co-created evidence improves relevance, legitimacy, and long-term impact by grounding decisions in social differentiation and lived experience. This is deeply reflected in AoW1 in the S4I strategy document.

**Consideration V: Adopt different levels of engagement to improve design quality:** Provide teams with adaptable engagement options tailored to their resources and contexts. Even small, well-timed steps can strengthen reflection, improve design decisions, and enhance inclusiveness. Structured feedback after each level of engagement helps teams learn and adapt. Evaluate whether institutions and systems can support inclusive pathways by examining power relations, differentiated impacts, and learning capacity early in the design process. This helps prevent inequities from being amplified during scaling and supports more equitable, context-aware outcomes.

**Consideration VI: Assess institutional fit early by examining power dynamics, social differentiation, and adaptive learning capacity:** RS emphasizes that social differentiation, power contexts, institutional readiness, and adaptive learning mechanisms shape outcomes. When these dimensions are overlooked, scaling can unintentionally reinforce inequities, benefiting those with greater influence while sidelining women, youth, and other marginalized groups (McGuire et al., 2024a; Wigboldus et al., 2016). Tools such as GenderUp offer a practical mechanism for identifying these dynamics early and embedding them into responsible scaling pathways.

### **Domain III: Power, Legitimacy & Inclusive Partnership**

Scaling is inherently a social and political process shaped by power relations, institutional norms, and the legitimacy of partnerships. Who participates in decisions, whose knowledge is valued, and how responsibilities are shared directly influence whether scaling processes reinforce existing inequities or contribute to more inclusive outcomes. Within CGIAR, strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration, supporting locally led leadership, and fostering equitable partnerships are essential for responsible innovation and scaling. This domain brings together considerations that address power asymmetries and promote inclusive, accountable, and context-responsive collaboration across research teams, end users, and partner institutions.

**Consideration VII: Systematize end-user partners and strategic alliances:** Enabling multi-country innovation strategies co-created with diverse partners, including end users, local organizations, long-term development actors, and others, strengthens responsible scaling from the outset by embedding contextual variation rather than assuming a one-size-fits-all pathway. Using the Responsible Innovation and Scaling Process and Toolkit (S4I) supports this approach by grounding strategies in contextual knowledge and responsiveness, while reducing the risk of reproducing inequities across geographies.

**Consideration VIII: Build and maintain locally led capacity:** Strengthening long-term, locally led scientific and field capacities will ensure that end users and local partners serve as co-creators rather than beneficiaries, enabling more grounded and scalable GESI integration across innovation pathways. Research programs should also measure themselves by their local engagement.

**Consideration IX: Strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration by integrating social scientists and complexity perspectives into core research teams:** According to Cullen et al. (2023), strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration, bridging social and biophysical sciences, embracing complexity science, embedding adaptive learning, and elevating marginalized voices as co-creators is essential for more equitable scaling. This requires addressing long-standing power imbalances that privilege biophysical sciences and limit the participation of women scientists, farmers, and other marginalized actors, reinforcing dominant Western paradigms. Without structural shifts, including policy changes that support interdisciplinary collaboration, social science will remain constrained to an auxiliary role.

*This domain connects significantly with cross-cutting considerations, described later, on capacity strengthening and enabling environments.*

## **Domain IV: Evidence & Data**

Evidence drives decision-making throughout the scaling pathway, yet not all forms of knowledge carry equal weight. For responsible scaling, data systems must not only measure outputs or adoption but also capture diverse user experiences, social differentiation, and the contextual factors that influence uptake and benefit. This includes valuing locally generated evidence and integrating qualitative insights that illuminate risk, agency, and lived realities. This domain focuses on strengthening CGIAR's capacity to generate, interpret, and use inclusive evidence - ensuring that end users' perspectives meaningfully shape both program adaptation and the narratives shared with donors and partners.

**Consideration X: Balance qualitative and quantitative insights:** Quantitative metrics show trends, but qualitative data reveals lived experience and the factors shaping inclusion or exclusion. Donors should support mixed-methods approaches that track shifts in power and participation, not just adoption. MELIA teams can combine narrative evidence with measurable indicators - co-created with communities - to ensure GESI insights meaningfully guide decisions.

**Consideration XI: Advancing evidence on the implications and impacts of responsible innovation and scaling:** Further research is needed to assess how the application of RI and RS principles influences the effectiveness of AR4D. Key questions remain to be fully explored, including whether and how attention to “for whom” innovations are designed affects adoption patterns, distributional outcomes, or overall system performance. Empirical work is also required to determine whether innovations generate broadly shared benefits or produce uneven gains that reinforce existing disparities. Strengthening the evidence base on unintended consequences—and the mechanisms through which they emerge—can support the development of more intentional approaches to risk identification, mitigation, and monitoring. Building this knowledge systematically would inform CGIAR's ability to design, test, and scale innovations in ways that are both effective and equitable.

**Consideration XII: Re-defining transformation narratives:** Help donors shift their narratives by clearly documenting and communicating community-validated, context-specific indicators through MELIA systems. Donors often expect flexibility but lack visibility into why locally driven adaptations differ from initial assumptions. By working with communities to define and validate what meaningful transformation looks like, CGIAR can generate grounded evidence that shows how context-specific decisions strengthen responsible scaling. Making this process visible helps donors understand and value locally led pathways and the ethical, adaptive choices that enable sustainable impact.

## **Domain V: Innovation Packaging & Mitigating Measures**

Even the most promising innovations will not scale equitably without the right policies, institutions, services, and partnership structures to support them. Responsible scaling requires clear attention to the broader ecosystem—how innovations fit within local systems, what institutional adjustments are needed, and how risks or unintended consequences can be anticipated and mitigated. Packaging innovations with the complementary services, institutional arrangements, and enabling conditions they require is therefore essential. This domain outlines recommendations that strengthen system readiness, harmonize tools and processes, and guide teams in designing innovation packages that are viable, inclusive, and tailored to real-world constraints.

**Consideration XIII: Create a harmonized, integrated, responsible innovation and scaling approach, with a modular approach that includes practical, light-touch guidance:** Instead of introducing new tools, CGIAR should focus on helping teams use existing ones more effectively through simple, well-timed guidance. Alignment across GESI tools, shared learning, and clear instructions can reduce duplication and make integration easier. GESI + scaling tools are currently used in fragmented ways at different stages of the innovation cycle. A harmonized approach that links ambition setting, design, diagnostics, and impact assessment would improve coherence and learning. Integrating a unified methodology across CGIAR processes ensures social safeguards, prioritizes empowerment outcomes, and makes responsible innovation practices more accessible through lighter, user-friendly formats.

**Consideration XIV: Package innovations with the appropriate social and contextual arrangements:** Innovations rarely fail because of technical issues - they fail because the surrounding ecosystem is not prepared to support them. Packaging innovations with the necessary institutional arrangements, partnerships, training, finance, extension services, and market access ensures they can function in real-world systems. This approach encourages teams to reflect on context-specific enabling conditions, trade-offs, and long-term sustainability. Tools like Scaling Readiness, Scaling Scan, and GenderUp support this systemic perspective by helping identify barriers and dependencies that must be addressed for inclusive scaling. Additionally, scaling effort should consider analysis of local institutions, resource flows, policies, and partnerships. Combining this with stage-specific GESI prompts helps teams identify power dynamics and inclusion needs early in the process. Applying these elements consistently across programs reduces gaps in attention to social and institutional factors and strengthens system readiness for scale

**Consideration XV: Embed GESI into IPSR through an integrated approach:** IPSR processes should incorporate GESI considerations in a systematic way that extends beyond women to include youth, people with disabilities, pastoralists, and other underrepresented groups. Integrating intersectional analysis into IPSR workshops helps surface bottlenecks, identify risks, and design strategies and mitigation measures that respond to diverse needs. Routine GESI reflection points ensure that inclusion becomes a consistent part of how CGIAR plans for scaling, and how unintended consequences are avoided.

## **Domain VI: Risk Management, Monitoring & Adaptive Learning**

Scaling inevitably involves uncertainty, trade-offs, and the potential for unintended consequences. Responsible scaling, therefore, depends on continuous learning, inclusive monitoring, and systems that can detect and respond to risks as innovations evolve. This includes mixed-method evidence, empowerment-focused indicators, and adaptive MELIA practices that track not only whether innovations expand but also whether they do so equitably and without harm. This domain introduces recommendations that reinforce monitoring, learning, and adaptive action across CGIAR programs, ensuring that scaling pathways remain responsive, safe, and aligned with the values of equity and social inclusion throughout their lifecycle.

**Consideration XVI: Useful RI & RS data collection across CGIAR projects:** Harmonizing innovation reporting across pooled and bilateral projects can improve accountability, transparency, and comparability. Embedding RI and RS indicators into reporting systems enables CGIAR to track who benefits, how risks are managed, and whether scaling remains inclusive and socially responsive. Through CGIAR Systems' annual reporting, these efforts help ensure innovations deliver impact that is effective, equitable, and contextually grounded.

**Consideration XVII: Use outcome-oriented, empowerment-focused indicators:** Evaluation should go beyond counting outputs to assessing whether innovations strengthen agency, shift power relations, and enable lasting change. Drawing on frameworks like RBET, programs can co-define empowerment and resilience indicators with communities and communicate results through learning stories that capture real transformations.

**Consideration XVIII: Establish regular peer-learning spaces:** Create regular peer-learning spaces, such as Scaling Coffee chats, RI&RS-informed IPSR workshops, thematic events, peer exchanges, and internal brown-bag learning sessions, to strengthen cross-functional collaboration and support practical application of responsible innovation and scaling. These informal and semi-structured exchanges help teams share real examples, troubleshoot challenges, deepen trust, and more effectively integrate GESI and responsible scaling principles across research and implementation. **Facilitate South–South knowledge exchange.** Supporting structured South–South exchange can enhance the contextual relevance and adaptability of tools and strategies, reducing reliance on externally driven models and improving responsiveness to diverse implementation settings.

## Cross-Cutting Enablers

**Consideration XIX: Leadership's role in shaping enabling conditions and innovation packaging:** Leadership plays a critical role in shaping the institutional conditions under which scaling occurs across the CGIAR system. Strategic commitment from senior leaders influences how organizational priorities are set, how resources are allocated, and how accountability mechanisms incorporate gender and inclusion objectives. Leadership also determines whether enabling conditions, such as coherent policies, resources, and supportive institutional arrangements, are established and maintained to guide responsible scaling. System-level guidance can align centers, initiatives, and partners around shared expectations for inclusion, risk mitigation, and evidence use. Leadership engagement is therefore essential for ensuring that scaling strategies are embedded within organizational governance, are informed by consistent analytical frameworks, and are supported through routine monitoring and learning processes.

**Consideration XX: Capacity strengthening across institutional and field levels:** Capacity strengthening should be systematic, sustained, and integrated into program design from the outset, particularly in relation to gender and social differentiation, which remains an empirically documented gap across CGIAR initiatives. Institutional capacity requires that researchers and technical staff understand not only how to apply GESI tools but also the conceptual rationale for doing so, ensuring that gender and inclusion considerations are embedded in research design, proposal development, and monitoring systems. Field-level capacity similarly requires equipping implementing partners and facilitators to apply GESI approaches in context-specific and methodologically consistent ways. Strengthening linkages between institutional GESI initiatives and the broader CGIAR GESI community can expand peer learning and increase the availability of GESI expertise. When these capacities are supported through early planning, dedicated resources, and clear decision-making authority, GESI integration becomes a routine component of program delivery and scaling processes rather than an add-on activity. CGIAR consultant reports on responsible scaling have repeatedly called for light touch and robust capacity strengthening.

**Consideration XXI: Enabling environments for interdisciplinary collaboration:** Effective scaling requires institutional conditions that support equitable collaboration between social and biophysical scientists. Organizing interdisciplinary work in ways that address structural power asymmetries and promote joint decision-making can improve the coherence of innovation design and subsequent scaling strategies. Such environments facilitate methodological complementarity, strengthen analytical rigor, and enable adaptive learning processes that reflect both technical and social system dynamics.

**In sum:** Taken together, these considerations synthesize key insights from the RI & RS literature and provide the conceptual grounding needed to guide practical action. They highlight the systemic, institutional, and methodological shifts required to ensure that scaling processes are inclusive, analytically rigorous, and responsive to diverse user needs. Building on this foundation, the following Areas of Work Pathways to Scale and Enabling Environment Lab translate these principles into operational strategies, activities, and outputs. The intent is to move from high-level reflection to implementable pathways and system interventions that equip CGIAR and its partners to design, evaluate, and institutionalize responsible and equitable scaling processes across regions.

## Practical Recommendations for AoW-2 and AoW-3

### AoW-2: Pathways to Scale

**Introduction:** At the most recent CGIAR Scaling Conference in Nairobi (2024), researchers, practitioners, and facilitators convened to explore how IPSR and GenderUp could be integrated into a unified, system-wide approach to responsible and inclusive scaling. The workshop marked a pivotal moment in a dialogue that has been evolving for more than four years across CGIAR centers, the Scaling Readiness/IPSR community, and GenderUp networks. Participants emphasized the need for practical mechanisms to embed gender, social differentiation, and “Do No Harm” considerations into the earliest phases of scaling design, rather than treating them as downstream checks. The discussions reflected growing enthusiasm and alignment around the idea that combining IPSR’s structured system diagnostics with GenderUp’s user-centered risk profiling can meaningfully strengthen CGIAR’s capacity to design and evaluate pathways that deliver equitable and effective impact. This momentum now provides a foundation for advancing an integrated approach to scaling that is analytically rigorous, demand-driven, and capable of supporting diverse innovation users across regions.

**Goal:** To create cohesive, evidence-based, and GESI-responsive scaling pathways across regions. AoW-2 provides the methodological and analytical architecture for identifying system entry points, co-designing pathways, evaluating performance, and refining innovation bundles to ensure responsible, effective, and context-sensitive scaling. This section specifically addresses integration with IPSR.

#### CoA-2.1 — Network and Diagnose

**Objective:** Strengthen CGIAR’s capacity to identify scaling opportunities through multi stakeholder networks, diagnostic tools, and system-level analyses. This CoA focuses on mapping innovation systems, identifying entry points, and applying early-stage diagnostics to generate the foundational evidence required to design scalable innovation pathways.

#### Activity 2.1 — Develop curation systems that integrate responsible scaling diagnostics

This activity will establish a CGIAR-wide curation system that embeds responsible scaling diagnostics into the identification, classification, and prioritization of innovations for pathway development. The system will incorporate methods for developing typologies that differentiate innovations based on scaling potential, risk profiles, user groups, enabling-environment requirements, and evidence maturity - mirroring IPSR’s current quantitative approaches. This work will create a coherent diagnostic backbone for the Scaling for Impact program, enabling teams to make evidence-based decisions about where and how to intervene within complex system dynamics.

#### Expected Outputs

- Curation system for responsible scaling, integrated with IPSR diagnostics
- Innovation typologies and evidence profiles
- Strengthened communities of practice grounded in GESI and scaling
- System-level diagnostic reports to guide pathway prioritization

## CoA-2.2 — Pathway Co-Design

**Objective:** Co-design tailored scaling pathways for innovation bundles and packages by integrating participatory design and appreciative inquiry approaches. This CoA supports structured collaboration between CGIAR teams, regional partners, and scaling hubs to create user-centered, context-responsive, and evidence-driven pathways.

### Expected Outputs

- Finalize scaling method that helps teams systematically build scaling plans, building off the Responsible Innovation Scaling Workshop held in Nairobi 2023.
- Co-designed scaling pathways for prioritized innovation bundles
- Integrated IPSR–GenderUp design processes
- Examine the relative merits of regionally tailored scaling strategies compared to rapid, broad-based scaling approaches.

## CoA-2.3 — Pathway Evaluation

**Objective:** Evaluate pathway performance using qualitative, quantitative, and systems-level frameworks to understand pathway effectiveness, distributional outcomes, and unintended consequences.

### Expected Outputs

- Systems-evaluation products and learning briefs
- “Do No Harm” risk profiles integrated into pathway decisions
- Evidence-based recommendations to inform adaptation and refinement

## CoA-2.4 — Refine, Adapt, and Amplify

**Objective:** Iteratively refine innovation bundles *for whom*, adapt pathways based on evaluation findings, and amplify promising approaches across regions. This CoA ensures that learning loops remain active, innovations evolve responsively, and high-potential models are expanded and institutionalized.

### Expected Outputs

- Develop indicators to be used within CGIAR central reporting
- Refined responsible scaling pathways based on evaluation evidence
- Amplification strategies for regional and cross-center uptake

## AoW-3: Enabling Environment Lab

**Goal:** Strengthen the policy, market, and social conditions necessary for equitable and effective scaling by identifying systemic barriers, providing targeted technical assistance, and enabling the institutional shifts required for innovations to reach and benefit diverse user groups.

### CoA-3.1 Enabling Environment Diagnostics

CoA-3.1 focuses on improving CGIAR's ability to understand the systemic conditions that shape scaling - policies, institutional arrangements, market forces, and social dynamics. Through practical diagnostic tools and locally grounded evidence, it equips innovation teams to identify the structural and contextual factors that influence scaling success.

#### 1. Develop a “Responsible Scaler” toolbox

There is significant momentum within CGIAR and partner networks to develop a comprehensive “Responsible Scaler” toolbox that consolidates existing scaling tools and GESI methodologies into a modular suite adaptable to diverse project needs. This toolbox would provide structured prompts for anticipating risks, identifying differentiated user needs, and strengthening inclusiveness throughout the scaling process. It is envisioned as an integrative resource that brings together multiple GESI tools in a coherent, stage-specific manner. A Minimum Viable Product (MVP) for this toolbox has already been prototyped and presented as part of Responsible Innovations' CGIAR Deliverable 4.

#### 2. Advance the locally led Reach–Benefit–Empower–Transform (RBET) framework

The RBET framework, originally developed by IFPRI in collaboration with Responsible Innovations, is now being adapted into a locally led version through ongoing work with UN Women, including co-creation workshops held at UC Davis and in Cape Town. This locally grounded RBET approach enables researchers and implementers to assess the extent to which innovation and scaling processes are genuinely responsive to local context and demand. It also provides a structured mechanism for local organizations to articulate their preferred modes of engagement with CGIAR, ensuring that scaling pathways are shaped by community perspectives and priorities rather than externally imposed assumptions.

### CoA-3.2 Institutional Support and Technical Assistance

CoA-3.2 establishes the technical assistance, training pathways, and capacity-strengthening structures needed to help CGIAR researchers and partners systematically apply responsible and inclusive scaling approaches. It draws on recommendations in Altshul (2025) for light, moderate, and deep forms of support. **Key components of technical assistance:**

#### Light-Touch Support

- Short, practical 1–2-page guidance notes for project inception
- Templates and prompts for integrating responsible scaling into early planning
- Workshop-ready materials for teams beginning scaling strategy development

#### Moderate (Asynchronous) Support

- Webinar series on responsible innovation and scaling
- Recorded modules introducing core concepts, tools, and case examples
- Accessible training for geographically dispersed teams

## Deep-Dive Support (cont'd from last page)

- “Innovation and Scaling for Social Outcomes” masterclass with global experts
- Applied casework, such as GenderUp or Scaling Scan, with CGIAR innovation teams
- Professional learning cohorts focused on high-impact scaling design

### Expected Output 3.2.1:

- Training modules and capacity-building materials
- Certification programs and structured workshops
- Online courses and working groups

### Activity 3.2.2 — Train a network of CGIAR-certified GenderUp facilitators or “Responsible Scalers”

These facilitators will support mainstreaming responsible and inclusive scaling across centers, with an initial target of training 65 CGIAR staff.

### Expected Output 3.2.2:

- Sixty-five certified facilitators capable of delivering GenderUp across initiatives
- Expanded pool of in-house expertise supporting scaling teams

### Activity 3.2.3 — Provide targeted technical assistance (TA)

TA will help teams integrate responsible scaling into strategy and implementation through:

- one-on-one consultations
- support applying tools such as Scaling Scan, GenderUp, RBET, IPSR+
- tailored strategy development and adaptation
- integration of social and institutional considerations into innovation packages

This activity also promotes academic engagement by connecting innovation teams with early-career scholars from national and regional institutions.

### Expected Outputs 3.2.3:

- Responsible scaling integrated into innovation packages and scaling plans
- Academic partnerships supporting applied research and contextual adaptation
- Leadership opportunities for emerging researchers
- Case examples and lessons learned documenting good practice

## CoA-3.3 Enabling Systemic Step Changes

CoA-3.3 supports deeper institutional and systemic shifts that enable responsible and equitable scaling across CGIAR and partner ecosystems. This includes strengthening policy engagement, supporting organizational culture change, and building long-term communities of practice.

### Strategic Themes

- Understanding what makes scaling effective, equitable, and responsible
- Assessing the political economy of scaling, including how GESI commitments translate into resources
- Strengthening interdisciplinary capacity across CGIAR
- Building systems that sustain inclusive innovation beyond individual projects

### Activities and Outputs

#### Activity 3.3.1 — Support GenderUp and Responsible Scalers facilitators in delivering workshops

Ensures innovation teams receive structured, high-quality support in applying the tool.

##### Output 3.3.1:

- Full institutional use of GenderUp supported by trained facilitators

#### Activity 3.3.2 — Develop a Team Composition Assessment Method using CGIAR systems

A rapid sensitization and assessment method helping teams evaluate internal diversity, representation, and power dynamics, support PPU in getting the right data and evaluating it for systems improvement.

##### Output 3.3.2:

- Toolkit including:
  - a Rapid Sensitization Guide
  - a Team Composition Assessment Framework
  - an Action Plan template (with data path)

#### Activity 3.3.4 — Establish a CGIAR-wide Scaling & GESI expert network

A curated roster of specialists in scaling, GESI, innovation systems, and responsible innovation.

##### Output 3.3.4:

- CGIAR Expert Network hosted online
- Integrated pipeline of facilitators, researchers, and practitioners

### **Activity 3.3.5 — Advance deep scaling through research and learning**

Focuses on scaling that transforms values, relationships, and systems, not just reach and uptake.

Components include:

- Working groups on GESI and Scaling.
- An “Innovating and Scaling in International Food Systems” class for managers
- Support for academic publications from CGIAR researchers and grassroots partners
- An interdisciplinary course enabling cross-center collaboration

#### **Output 3.3.5:**

- Knowledge products on scaling deep
- A learning program for CGIAR managers
- Peer-reviewed publications and applied research
- Strengthened institutional understanding of transformative scaling

#### **Expected Outcomes Across AoW-3**

- Increased use of CGIAR innovations by diverse actors through more inclusive scaling strategies
- Improved food security, resilience, and poverty reduction outcomes
- Strengthened institutional capacity to integrate gender and social inclusion
- System-wide adoption of inclusive innovation and responsible scaling frameworks
- Evidence-based policy and practice shifts supporting enabling environments
- Empowered innovation teams and early-career researchers across the Global South



# Operationalization Guide for Responsive Scaling: AoW2 & AoW3

# 1. OPERATIONAL INTEGRATION

## 1.1 How AoW2 and AoW3 Connect

AoW2 (Pathways to Scale) provides the primary entry point through the 17 Solution Tracks, where innovations transition into thematic flagships. AoW3 (Enabling Environment Lab) analyzes systemic barriers and builds institutional capacity for responsible scaling. Integration occurs through four mandatory touchpoints:

Integration Point	AoW2 Responsibility	AoW3 Responsibility
Innovation Profiling	Complete IPSR+ with GESI modules; provide evidence of inclusion safeguards	Develop IPSR+ template; provide technical support; aggregate patterns across tracks
Mid-Point Review (Year 1)	Submit GenderUp/Responsible Scaler assessment results; document adaptations made	Facilitate workshops; synthesize cross-track learning; flag systemic barriers
Annual Reporting	Report on GESI-disaggregated indicators through MELIA; submit case studies	Analyze portfolio-level patterns; report to PPU/PRMS; update guidance based on evidence
Exit/Transition Planning	Document scaling pathway decisions; archive lessons learned; transition ownership	Support handover; extract replicable models; integrate into CoP knowledge base

## 2. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR SOLUTION TRACKS

All 17 Solution Tracks should complete the following requirements. Please refer to Appendix A for what tools are currently available and what needs to be developed.

### 2.1 Phase 1: Innovation Profiling and Design (Months 1-3)

Req ID	Required Action	Owner	Deadline	Output
<b>REQ-001</b>	Complete IPSR+ Innovation Profile including: (a) GESI analysis module, (b) Environmental safeguards checklist, (c) Scaling readiness assessment with inclusion barriers identified	Solution Track Lead + GESI Specialist	Month 2	IPSR+ Profile
<b>REQ-002</b>	Conduct Team Composition Assessment using CGIAR framework; submit diversity baseline and action plan to PPU	Solution Track Lead	Month 2	Team Assessment Report
<b>REQ-003</b>	Identify and document specific 'Scaling Challenges Mitigated' related to GESI (using template format from Solution Track presentations)	Solution Track Lead	Month 3	Challenges Matrix
<b>REQ-004</b>	Define GESI-disaggregated outcome targets for 2026, 2027, 2028 aligned with Theory of Change	Solution Track Lead + M&E Specialist	Month 3	Outcome Targets Table
<b>REQ-005</b>	Submit data disaggregation plan to MELIA system (gender, age, geography, income quintile minimum)	M&E Specialist	Month 3	MELIA Data Plan

## 2.2 Phase 2: Implementation and Adaptation (Months 4-12)

Req ID	Required Action	Owner	Deadline	Output
REQ-006	Participate in GenderUp OR Responsible Scaler workshop (facilitated by AoW3)	Solution Track Team (minimum 3 members)	Month 6	Workshop Attendance + Action Plan
REQ-007	Implement at least TWO adaptations from the workshop action plan; document changes and rationale	Solution Track Lead	Month 9	Adaptation Log
REQ-008	Submit Mid-Year Learning Brief including: GESI-disaggregated preliminary results, challenges encountered, and adaptations made	Solution Track Lead + Comms Specialist	Month 6	Learning Brief (2-3 pages)
REQ-009	Participate in at least ONE cross-track peer learning exchange organized by AoW3	Solution Track Representative	Month 10	Exchange Summary
REQ-010	Update MELIA system with quarterly GESI-disaggregated data (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)	M&E Specialist	Quarterly	MELIA Data Uploads

## 2.3 Phase 3: Annual Review and Scaling (Months 13-36)

Req ID	Required Action	Owner	Deadline	Output
REQ-011	Submit Annual Report with GESI outcomes section (template provided) to PRMS/PPU	Solution Track Lead	Annually (Dec)	Annual Report
REQ-012	Produce at least ONE case study per year documenting inclusion outcomes (success or failure)	Comms Specialist + GESI Specialist	Annually	Case Study
REQ-013	Update IPSR+ profile with scaling readiness progression and barrier analysis	Solution Track Lead	Annually	Updated IPSR+
REQ-014	Participate in Annual S4I Portfolio Review; present GESI-responsive scaling results	Solution Track Lead	Annually (Nov)	Presentation
REQ-015	Document scaling pathway decisions with GESI considerations in Theory of Action updates	Solution Track Lead	Ongoing	ToA Updates

### 3. MANDATORY DECISION POINTS

These decision points are embedded in the Solution Track workflow. Teams must pause at each point for formal review and approval before proceeding.

Decision Point	Trigger	Required Review	Decision Maker	Go/No-Go Criteria
<b>DP-1: Innovation Ready for Scaling</b>	IPSR+ profile completed	GESI Specialist reviews inclusion barriers; AoW3 validates assessment	S4I Leadership + AoW2 Lead	All REQ-001 to REQ-005 complete; no critical inclusion barriers unaddressed
<b>DP-2: Mid-Year Continuation</b>	6-month implementation period	Portfolio review of all tracks; cross-comparison of GESI results	S4I Leadership + PPU	On track for 2026 GESI targets; workshop action plan implemented; data quality acceptable
<b>DP-3: Annual Scaling Approval</b>	Annual report submission	PRMS assessment; donor review; AoW3 systemic barrier analysis	S4I Leadership + Donors	GESI outcomes demonstrated; scaling pathway viable; responsible scaling principles upheld
<b>DP-4: Geographic Expansion</b>	Request to expand to new geographies	Context analysis for new location; inclusion barriers assessment; partner capacity review	AoW2 Lead + AoW3 Lead	Evidence of successful GESI integration in current sites; partner capacity confirmed; adaptation plan approved
<b>DP-5: Exit/Transition</b>	End of S4I support or handover to partners	Lessons learned documentation; sustainability assessment; partner readiness evaluation	S4I Leadership	Documented lessons; partner commitments secured; knowledge products completed

## 4. REPORTING TEMPLATES AND AoW3 INDICATOR ALIGNMENT

### 4.1 Required Reporting Outputs

All Solution Tracks must use standardized templates for the following reports. Templates will be provided by AoW3 and integrated into MELIA/PRMS systems.

Report Type	Template Owner	Submission System	Review Cycle
IPSR+ Innovation Profile	AoW3 (CoA 3.1)	IPSR Database + MELIA	Initial + Annual Updates
Team Composition Assessment	AoW3 (CoA 3.3)	PPU Dashboard	Baseline + Annual
GenderUp/Responsible Scaler Action Plan	AoW3 (CoA 3.2 / 3.3)	Workshop Platform + MELIA	Post-Workshop + 6-Month Follow-up
Mid-Year Learning Brief	AoW2 (with AoW3 template)	S4I Knowledge Hub	Semi-Annual
Annual GESI Outcomes Report	PRMS/PPU (with AoW3 input)	PRMS + MELIA	Annual
Case Study (Inclusion Outcomes)	AoW2 Comms + AoW3	S4I Knowledge Hub + External	Annual (minimum 1)

## 4.2 Alignment with AoW3 Indicators

All Solution Track reporting must contribute data to the following AoW3 indicators. This ensures portfolio-level learning and demonstrates systemic impact.

AoW3 Indicator Type	Indicator Description	Solution Track Contribution	Reporting Frequency
High-Level Outcome	# of CGIAR innovations adopted by diverse user groups through inclusive scaling strategies	Report adoption data disaggregated by gender, age, income; document inclusive strategies used	Annual
High-Level Outcome	Improved food security, resilience, and poverty reduction outcomes among marginalized groups	Report outcome data for women, youth, vulnerable populations with attribution pathway	Annual
Intermediate Outcome	# of innovation teams demonstrating strengthened capacity to integrate GESI	Complete Team Composition Assessment; participate in capacity building; report skill gains	Baseline + Annual
Intermediate Outcome	# of innovations that have applied responsible scaling frameworks (IPSR+, GenderUp, etc.)	Document which tools used, when, and adaptations made based on insights	Continuous (tracked in IPSR)
Intermediate Outcome	Evidence of systemic barriers identified and addressed through enabling environment work	Report barriers encountered in scaling; flag those requiring AoW3 engagement	Quarterly + Annual
Output	# of interdisciplinary teams supported through Communities of Practice	Participate in CoP activities; contribute case studies and learning products	As participating
Output	# of evidence-based policy recommendations generated for inclusive scaling	Document policy engagement activities; contribute evidence for regional/national advocacy	As generated

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 5.1 Solution Track Team (AoW2)

#### Solution Track Lead

- Accountable for completing all mandatory requirements (REQ-001 to REQ-015)
- Ensures team participation in required workshops and learning activities
- Submits all reports and updates on time through designated systems
- Makes scaling pathway decisions at defined decision points

#### GESI Specialist (embedded or accessed)

- Co-develops IPSR+ GESI analysis module and scaling readiness assessment
- Reviews innovation design for inclusion barriers and safeguards
- Co-authors case studies on inclusion outcomes
- Supports GenderUp/Responsible Scaler implementation

#### M&E Specialist

- Designs data disaggregation plan and MELIA integration
- Ensures quarterly data uploads to MELIA system
- Produces GESI-disaggregated outcome reports
- Validates data quality and attribution pathways

### 5.2 Enabling Environment Lab (AoW3)

#### CoA 3.1 Lead (IPSR+ Development)

- Develops and maintains IPSR+ template with GESI modules
- Provides technical support to Solution Tracks on IPSR+ completion
- Reviews and validates IPSR+ profiles before DP-1 approval
- Aggregates scaling readiness patterns across portfolio

#### CoA 3.2 / 3.3 Leads (Capacity Building)

- Organizes and facilitates GenderUp and Responsible Scaler workshops
- Develops Team Composition Assessment Framework and rapid sensitization guide
- Tracks implementation of workshop action plans (REQ-007)
- Manages CGIAR Expert Network roster for on-demand support

#### AoW3 Portfolio Analyst

- Synthesizes cross-track learning from mid-year and annual reports
- Identifies systemic barriers emerging across multiple tracks
- Prepares portfolio-level reports for PPU and PRMS
- Flags tracks requiring escalation or additional support

### 5.3 S4I Leadership and Governance

#### S4I AoW3 Director

- Escalates non-compliance issues to relevant Center leadership
- Reviews annual portfolio GESI outcomes with donors

#### PPU (Performance and Results Management)

- Receives and reviews Team Composition Assessments (REQ-002)
- Monitors MELIA data quality and completeness
- Assesses Annual GESI Outcomes Reports for PRMS compliance
- Provides feedback to tracks and AoW3 on system improvements

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP (2026)

This roadmap outlines how to operationalize these requirements across the 17 Solution Tracks in Year 1. Subsequent years follow the annual cycle established in Phase 3.

Timeline	Milestone	Activities	Owner
Feb 2026	System Setup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize and distribute IPSR+ template with GESI modules</li> <li>Set up MELIA data fields for GESI disaggregation</li> <li>Onboard Solution Track leads to new requirements</li> <li>Establish PPU dashboard for Team Composition data</li> </ul>	AoW3 + PPU + S4I Leadership
Feb 2026	Innovation Profiling Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All 17 tracks begin IPSR+ completion (REQ-001)</li> <li>Tracks submit Team Composition baselines (REQ-002)</li> <li>AoW3 provides 1:1 technical support as needed</li> </ul>	Solution Track Leads + AoW3 CoA 3.1
Mar 2026	Design Finalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracks finalize innovation bundles with GESI safeguards</li> <li>Submit Scaling Challenges matrices (REQ-003)</li> <li>Define GESI-disaggregated outcome targets (REQ-004)</li> <li>Complete MELIA data plans (REQ-005)</li> </ul>	Solution Track Leads + M&E Specialists
Apr 2026	Decision Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review all IPSR+ profiles and Team Assessments</li> <li>S4I Leadership approves tracks to proceed to implementation</li> <li>Issue Go/No-Go decisions with conditions if needed</li> </ul>	S4I Leadership + AoW2 Lead + AoW3 Lead
May-Jun 2026	Workshops Wave 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct GenderUp workshops for 8-9 tracks (REQ-006)</li> <li>Conduct Responsible Scaler workshops for 8-9 tracks</li> <li>Teams develop action plans and adaptation strategies</li> </ul>	AoW3 CoA 3.2 / 3.3 Facilitators
Jul 2026	Mid-Year Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All tracks submit Mid-Year Learning Briefs (REQ-008)</li> <li>First quarterly MELIA data upload completed (Q2)</li> <li>Cross-track peer learning exchange organized</li> </ul>	Solution Tracks + AoW3 Portfolio Analyst
Aug 2026	Decision Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S4I Leadership reviews all mid-year briefs</li> <li>Portfolio-level analysis of GESI results to date</li> <li>Course corrections issued where needed</li> </ul>	S4I Leadership + PPU
Sep-Oct 2026	Adaptation Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracks implement workshop action plans (REQ-007)</li> <li>Second peer learning exchange</li> <li>Q3 MELIA data uploads</li> <li>Begin drafting case studies for annual reporting</li> </ul>	Solution Track Teams
Nov 2026	Annual Portfolio Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All tracks present at S4I Annual Review (REQ-014)</li> <li>Share preliminary GESI outcomes and lessons</li> <li>Identify systemic barriers for AoW3 engagement</li> </ul>	All Solution Tracks + S4I Leadership
Dec 2026	Annual Reporting & DP-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit Annual GESI Outcomes Reports (REQ-011)</li> <li>Submit case studies (REQ-012)</li> <li>Update IPSR+ profiles (REQ-013)</li> <li>Q4 MELIA data uploads</li> <li>S4I Leadership makes scaling continuation decisions (DP-3)</li> </ul>	Solution Tracks + S4I Leadership + Donors

## 7. SUPPORT RESOURCES FOR SOLUTION TRACKS

AoW3 provides the following resources to support Solution Tracks in meeting these requirements:

### Technical Support

- 1:1 support for IPSR+ completion (up to 5 hours per track)
- Access to CGIAR Expert Network for specialized GESI/scaling guidance
- Template library with examples from other tracks
- Monthly office hours for Q&A on GESI requirements

### Capacity Building

- GenderUp and Responsible Scaler workshops (fully funded)
- Online course: 'Innovating and Scaling in International Food Systems' for managers
- Peer learning exchanges (3 per year)
- Webinar series on responsible scaling topics

### Knowledge Resources

- S4I Knowledge Hub with case studies, tools, and lessons learned
- Communities of Practice (CoPs) for GESI and Scaling
- Quarterly synthesis briefs on cross-track learning
- Internationally curated library of academic publications and working groups

## 8. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This operational guide establishes clear requirements for embedding GESI-responsive scaling across the S4I program. By moving from guidance to mandate, from suggestion to requirement, and from optional tools to integrated systems, we ensure that responsible scaling becomes the default operating mode rather than an aspirational add-on.

Success depends on three critical factors:

1. Leadership Commitment: S4I and Center leadership must consistently enforce these requirements and resource AoW3 adequately to provide support
2. System Integration: MELIA, PRMS, PPU, and IPSR systems must be configured to receive and process GESI data seamlessly
3. Adaptive Learning: Portfolio-level analysis must inform continuous improvement of requirements, tools, and support mechanisms

### EXAMPLE: Immediate Actions Required (January-March 2026):

Action	Owner
Convene kick-off meeting with all 17 Solution Track Leads to introduce requirements	S4I Leadership + AoW2 Lead
Finalize and distribute all templates (IPSR+, Team Assessment, reporting formats)	AoW3 Leads
Configure MELIA system to accept GESI-disaggregated data inputs	MELIA Technical Team + PPU
Establish compliance tracking dashboard and assign AoW3 Portfolio Analyst	AoW3 Lead + PPU
Schedule GenderUp and Responsible Scaler workshop dates for 2026	AoW3 CoA 3.2 / 3.3 Leads
Communicate escalation protocol to all Centers and confirm acceptance	S4I Leadership

## Conclusion

Embedding Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) into responsible innovation and scaling is not a fringe exercise; it is fundamental to achieving meaningful, lasting, and equitable impact across CGIAR's research and delivery systems. The analysis presented in this report demonstrates that inclusion must be built into every stage of the innovation and scaling pathway, from early problem framing and design to evidence generation, partnership development, enabling-environment analysis, and long-term adaptive learning.

Across Areas of Work 2 and 3, the evidence demonstrates that responsible innovation and responsible scaling are most effective when supported by strong leadership, coherent institutional processes, and incentives that enable meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration. The recommendations presented- spanning upstream decision-making, innovation profiling, integrated methodological frameworks, capacity strengthening, tool harmonization, and the systematic embedding of social differentiation within IPSR- collectively outline a practical roadmap for institutionalizing responsible scaling across CGIAR.

Through implementing the operational framework, CGIAR demonstrates its commitment to scaling innovations responsibly, ensuring that the pursuit of reach and impact does not inadvertently deepen existing inequalities or create new harms. The 17 Solution Tracks become living laboratories for inclusive scaling, generating evidence and building institutional muscle that will strengthen CGIAR's research-for-development agenda for years to come.

**Next steps:** This report is a starting point; to begin implementation (with the help of the GenderUp Handbook, forthcoming), leadership within CGIAR must support the resources and necessary conversations that will turn these recommendations into action. Initial conversations should include one-on-one meetings with activity leaders and S4I leadership teams. Enabling an environment for responsible scaling that uplifts current systems to be more impactful for CGIAR target communities will take sustained and focused effort.

The system already has the tools, expertise, and growing internal momentum to operationalize a more inclusive approach to innovation. What is needed now is alignment: alignment of roles across units, alignment between GESI and scaling frameworks, alignment between donor expectations and locally defined indicators, and alignment between technical research and the lived realities of diverse users.

By investing in equitable partnerships, strengthening evidence systems, creating enabling environments, and institutionalizing adaptive, context-responsive practices, CGIAR can ensure that innovations not only reach scale but do so responsibly, enhancing agency, reducing structural inequalities, and ultimately contributing to more resilient and just agrifood systems.

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## APPENDIX A: TOOL DEVELOPMENT STATUS & ATTRIBUTION

This appendix clarifies which tools already exist and which are being developed for the GESI-Responsive Scaling operational requirements. Solution Track Leads should understand what they can use immediately versus what is under development.

### EXISTING TOOLS (Ready to Use)

Tool Name	Developed By	Purpose	S4I Integration
<b>GenderUp Workshop Method</b>	IWMI + Responsible Innovations (operational since 2020)	Discussion-based method for gender-responsive and socially inclusive scaling. 20+ countries, 100+ facilitators.	REQ-006: All Solution Tracks must participate in GenderUp workshops
<b>IPSR (Innovation Package for Scaling Readiness)</b>	CGIAR Scaling for Impact Program	Assesses innovation readiness and identifies scaling bottlenecks	Forms the BASE for IPSR+ (enhanced version being developed)
<b>RBET Framework</b>	CGIAR GESI Community	Measures depth of GESI impact: Reach-Benefit-Empower-Transform	Optional for REQ-004, REQ-011 (outcome measurement)
<b>WEAI (Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index)</b>	IFPRI	Measures women's empowerment across multiple dimensions	Optional indicator for GESI-disaggregated outcomes
<b>Scaling Scan</b>	CIMMYT	Diagnostic tool for scaling potential assessment	Can complement IPSR+ in innovation profiling phase

## TOOLS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

### Priority 1: IPSR+ (IPSR with GESI Modules)

Component	Description
<b>Status</b>	Recommended by CGIAR S4I responsible scaling consultants, has not been developed
<b>(a) GESI Analysis Module [NEW]</b>	Analyzes who benefits/who is excluded Examines power dynamics in innovation ecosystem Identifies gender and intersectional considerations Maps inclusion barriers at each scaling readiness level
<b>(b) Environmental Safeguards Checklist [NEW]</b>	Climate adaptation/mitigation alignment Biodiversity protection considerations Soil health and water management 'Do no harm' environmental screening
<b>(c) Enhanced Scaling Readiness [ENHANCEMENT]</b>	Adds social differentiation analysis to existing IPSR levels Identifies GESI-specific bottlenecks to scaling Maps barriers for marginalized groups
<b>Required For</b>	REQ-001 (Month 2), REQ-013 (Annual updates)
<b>Responsible Party</b>	AoW3 CoA 3.1 Lead (develops template) + Solution Track Leads (complete for their innovations)

### Priority: Responsible Scaler Toolkit

Component	Description
<b>Status</b>	MVP COMPLETED. Full toolkit needed (5-phase process) throughout 2026
<b>Purpose</b>	Capacity-strengthening toolkit bridging MELIA, Scaling, and GESI knowledge for responsible innovation and scaling strategies
<b>5 Learning Modules</b>	Module A: Scoping your strategy challenge Module B: Scoping your strategy package (context) Module C: Exploring inclusive potential (opportunities/risks) Module D: Creating and validating strategy Module E: Monitoring and evaluation
<b>Development Phases (2026)</b>	Phase 1 (Jan-Feb): Capacity Analysis Phase 2 (Feb-Apr): Audience Profiling Phase 3 (Mar-Aug): Toolkit Design Phase 4 (Jul-Oct): Pilot and Monitoring Phase 5 (Nov-Dec): Evaluation
<b>Integration with Requirements</b>	Supports REQ-006 (workshops), REQ-007 (adaptations), REQ-009 (peer learning)
<b>Responsible Party</b>	AoW3 CoA 3.2/3.3

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<b>Responsible Party</b>	AoW3 CoA 3.2/3.3

**Priority 2: Team Composition Assessment Framework**

Component	Description
<b>Status</b>	This already exists but the data is not collected effectively and the questions are not helpful
<b>Components</b>	Rapid Sensitization Guide (why diversity matters) Assessment Framework (gender, geography, discipline, seniority) Action Plan Template with PPU data path
<b>Required For</b>	REQ-002 annual assessments
<b>Responsible Party</b>	AoW3 CoA 3.3 (develops) + PPU (receives data)

**Priority 2: Standardized Reporting Templates**

Template	Required For
Mid-Year Learning Brief	REQ-008 (Month 6)
Annual GESI Outcomes Report	REQ-011 (Annual)
Case Study Template (Inclusion Outcomes)	REQ-012 (Annual)
MELIA Data Disaggregation Plan	REQ-005 (Month 3)
Scaling Challenges Matrix	REQ-003 (Month 3)
GenderUp/Responsible Scaler Action Plan	REQ-006, REQ-007 (Post-workshop)
<b>Status &amp; Responsible Party</b>	TO BE DEVELOPED by AoW3 Portfolio Analyst + PPU

**SYSTEMS REQUIRING CONFIGURATION**

These are existing CGIAR systems that need updates to receive and process GESI data:

System	Configuration Needed	Owner
<b>MELIA System</b>	Add GESI data fields (gender, age, geography, income) Configure quarterly upload schedule Link to IPSR+ profiles	MELIA Tech Team + PPU
<b>PPU Dashboard</b>	Receive Team Composition data Track diversity metrics over time Generate portfolio reports	PPU
<b>IPSR Database</b>	Upload IPSR+ template structure Enable annual update workflow Link to MELIA	JanAoW3 CoA 3.1 + IPSR Tech



## DISCLAIMER

This publication has been prepared as an output of the CGIAR Scaling for Impact Program and has not been independently peer reviewed. Responsibility for editing, proofreading, and layout, opinions expressed, and any possible errors lies with the authors and not the institutions involved.

