



IFPRI'S COUNTRY PROGRAMS

FACILITATING COUNTRY-LED FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION



In most low- and middle-income countries, agrifood systems constitute a sizable share of economic activity and serve as a primary source of livelihoods, especially for poorer members of the population. As a result, national development strategies frequently put strong emphasis on the agrifood sector to achieve key goals, such as accelerating economic growth, reducing poverty, improving food and nutrition security, and confronting climate change. This emphasis was confirmed at the 2021 [United Nations Food Systems Summit](#), where more than 100 countries committed to transforming their food systems to make them more productive, nutrition-focused, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable, and it was further reinforced by the [Food and Agriculture Declaration at COP28](#). To achieve these desired transformations, governments require data and research-based evidence to assess the situation, identify solutions, and prioritize actions. Governments are also increasingly interested in enhancing institutional capacity to support country-led development pathways.

HOW IFPRI'S COUNTRY PROGRAMS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) is an international, independent, and trusted research institution and a globally recognized center of excellence for food and development policy. A CGIAR Research Center, IFPRI has engaged with partners to inform key policy decisions around the world for nearly five decades. IFPRI's country programs are initiated upon request from country governments and co-designed to meet country-specific objectives. These on-the-ground presences facilitate close partnerships with key stakeholders, such as ministries of agriculture, planning, and finance; regional bodies; and national policy research institutions. Activities typically span multiple research themes and draw on expertise from across IFPRI's Research Units in collaboration with national partners (Figure 1). Activities also take place throughout the policy cycle, from agenda-setting to policy design to policy adoption, implementation, and continued reform (Figure 2).

Figure 1

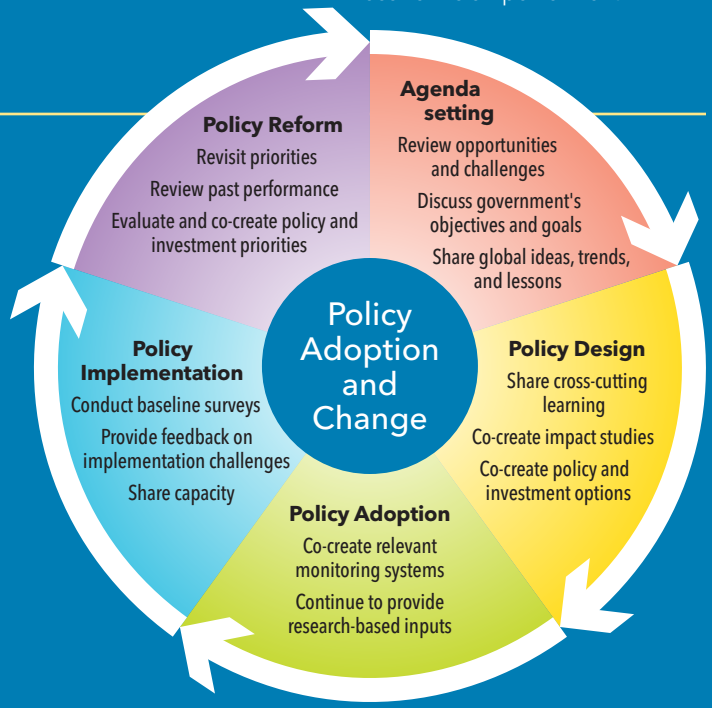
IFPRI's country programs, with example activities



Note: CAADP = Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.

Figure 2

How IFPRI's country programs support the policy process



IFPRI'S COUNTRY PROGRAMS IN ACTION

IFPRI's country programs co-create evidence-based analysis with partners to support the prioritization of policies, programs, and investments. These analyses aim to facilitate deliberate decision-making that advances development and food systems transformation objectives by:

1. Clarifying the situation and outlook,
2. Testing and scaling diverse policy solutions, and
3. Shaping a conducive enabling environment.

1. Clarifying the situation and outlook

Providing country-level foresight, both long and short term

IFPRI's foresight analytics provide baselines for long-term policy planning and prioritization, including support to budgets, medium-term fiscal frameworks, and nationally determined contributions. Recent foresight requests from countries have frequently focused on much shorter-term outlooks due to large shocks, such as the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) and the [Russia-Ukraine war](#). IFPRI has delivered timely information on likely impacts and appropriate policy responses for 30 countries for COVID-19 and 21 countries for the Russia-Ukraine war, including all countries with IFPRI's country programs, with broad uptake. For example, in Egypt, the government used co-created [results](#) on COVID's socioeconomic impacts to inform lockdown and [reopening decisions](#).

Measuring and monitoring women's empowerment

IFPRI's Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index ([WEAI](#)) measures the inclusion of women in the agriculture sector. Since its inception, WEAI has been adopted by more than 255 organizations across 61 countries, informing a vast array of decisions. For example, the Bangladesh country program integrated the WEAI into a national household survey. Results demonstrated that greater women's empowerment can improve agricultural diversity, nutrition, and poverty outcomes, leading to a pilot called the [Agriculture, Nutrition, and Gender Linkages \(ANGeL\) project](#) that succeeded in increasing women's empowerment and home-stead production of vegetables, eggs, and milk across the study areas. The project was approved for implementation nationally in December 2020.

Assessing food and nutrition security in fragile settings

IFPRI's country programs provide timely and high-quality assessments using innovative methods such as household surveys by phone and satellite data. These surveys address data and information scarcity in fragile contexts to understand the food and nutrition situation. In Yemen, IFPRI's [research](#) informed the [decision](#) to expand a cash-for-nutrition intervention. In Myanmar, the IFPRI program [informed](#) international partners' program designs and priorities, such as the new Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT) Strategy 2022-2024, and, with local partners, provided an estimate of the [persons in need](#) in the country.

2. Testing and scaling diverse policy solutions

Evaluating social protection and inclusion policies

IFPRI's country programs have evaluated safety net programs to examine delivery modalities and linkages to complementary programs in schooling, nutrition, and financial inclusion to identify cost-effective designs that improve outcomes for the poor. In Ethiopia, IFPRI's work on the Productive Safety Net Program showed [reduced food insecurity](#) due to transfers and highlighted the importance of timely payouts; the value of combining with an asset transfer program (the Household Asset Building Program); and the positive impact on [resilience](#) during crises. Similar evaluations of the [Takaful and Karama programs](#) in Egypt showed increased household consumption and [greater debt repayment and investment in productive assets](#) among beneficiaries, supporting the government's decision to expand the program from 2.2 million to 3.8 million households.

Addressing common property governance and natural resource depletion

IFPRI conducts research on ways to strengthen governance of the commons (shared resources such as water, forests, and rangelands). To do so, IFPRI partners with the Foundation for Ecological Security in India to [strengthen community tenure](#) and improve the governance of 5.7 million hectares of commons in 70,000 communities. This partnership includes scaling up innovative [experiential learning approaches for water management](#) in more than 6,500 communities to date. In addition to direct work at the community level, scaling strategies include strengthening [multistakeholder processes](#) that empower local governance and influencing government programs, such as through [mapping](#) and showing the [value of ecosystem services from the commons](#).

Developing and scaling nutrition-enhanced crops

Biofortification of staples is a powerful tool for improving the nutritional status of vulnerable populations, notably in rural areas. For example, in Pakistan, more than 60 million people have inadequate daily zinc intake – a group that includes one in five children. Because wheat makes up about 72 percent of Pakistanis’ daily caloric intake, wheat varieties rich in zinc can be a prime vehicle to tackle zinc deficiency. IFPRI’s HarvestPlus has been working with CIMMYT and the Ayub Agriculture Research Institute for more than a decade [to develop and scale biofortified zinc wheat](#). Since its release in 2019, zinc wheat is now grown on 42 percent of the wheat production area, helping to transform food systems and benefiting more than 97 million people.

3. Shaping a conducive enabling environment

Prioritizing public investment

Public investment sets the stage for economic activity and development pathways. Key considerations include the role of food and agriculture in achieving development objectives and the portfolio of possible investments to meet these objectives. For example, the government of Rwanda continues to invest in the agriculture sector by building on its Strategic Plans for the Transformation of Agriculture that were initiated in the early 2000s. IFPRI’s country program in Rwanda works closely with various ministries using advanced tools to [inform the selection](#) of agricultural policy, investment, and expenditure portfolios.

Confronting climate change

Over the past decade, IFPRI has invested in understanding and unpacking the economywide implications of climate change. IFPRI is a global leader in analyzing the expected increase in the frequency and severity of extreme events such as droughts and floods, and in formulating appropriate policy responses. For example, in South Africa, IFPRI [engaged with the National Treasury](#) and other partners to inform water

sector investment plans designed to increase resilience to climate change. Currently, IFPRI is partnering with the South African Reserve Bank to assess the implications of climate-related shocks for financial stability and to formulate policies and regulatory frameworks to enhance resilience of private operators, notably within the food system.

Building and sharing tools and analytical capacity

Country partners shape the enabling environments in the countries where IFPRI works and are the principle agents of policy change. Capacity sharing is critical to policy impact and is therefore a central objective of IFPRI’s country programs. These programs strengthen the analytical capabilities of advisors and policy analysts by partnering with research institutions such as local universities and think tanks to build technical skills and offer specialized trainings through a trainer-of-trainers approach. IFPRI also facilitates dialogue among policymakers and other stakeholders and in doing so promotes a collaborative network on policy analysis.

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE OF IFPRI’S COUNTRY PROGRAMS

IFPRI’s country programs are usually based on a memorandum of understanding between IFPRI and a government institution and are often overseen by a national advisory committee (NAC) that provides input and feedback to the research program. NACs typically comprise members drawn from a variety of government ministries to enhance cross-sectoral coordination and ensure greater ownership of results by the wider government. Our country program teams are led by internationally recruited program leaders who manage the office and liaises with government and partners. Other senior research staff lead specific activities, including research and capacity sharing. IFPRI’s headquarters and regional offices provide backstopping for all activities, drawing on expertise from our [Research Units](#), while in-country staff undertake most key activities.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IFPRI.

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INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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