

Risk Management and Resilience: Learning on CGIAR's Ways of Working

December 2025

Brief

Background

The [CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy](#), sets the stage for doing business differently to ensure that research provides real solutions for development. To support these changes, CGIAR is committed to following seven new implementation approaches, or Ways of Working (WoWs).

The Summary of Learning on Risk Management and Resilience as critical for food, land, and water systems, is part of a series of summaries pertaining to the WoWs (see [Synthesis](#)). This project aims to provide evidence-based learning to inform strategic decisions of the [System Council](#), CGIAR [Integrated Partnership Board](#) (IPB), and leadership more broadly, on the implementation and future planning of CGIAR WoWs.

Methodology

This summary is based on a structured desk review of internal and external evidence, including [IAES Evaluation Function](#)-led evaluations, reviews and assessments by the [Independent Science for Development Council](#) (ISDC), the [Standing Panel on Impact Assessment](#) (SPIA), [CGIAR Internal Audit Function](#) and, CGIAR centers. It also draws on Program and Accelerator inception reports from the [2025–30 CGIAR Research and Innovation Portfolio](#), and on selected external literature sources.

Key Findings

- Foresight and trade-off analysis:** CGIAR established a clear case for use of [Foresight](#) and [trade-off analysis](#) to inform its strategy and interventions, and to build a knowledge based on [megatrends](#) and the future of food systems. Overall, there is limited evidence of Foresight tools used to inform planning and action.
- Portfolio of tested solutions:** CGIAR established a broad portfolio of tested solutions targeting production losses, particularly in the face of climate- and health-related stressors and shocks. Resilience solutions are systems-oriented with strong engagement of beneficiaries. Robustness of solutions is shaped by CGIAR's research-for-development role, with uptake of solutions dependent on other actors.
- Specialized service providers:** The specialization of service providers provide a crucial role in testing, scaling, and sustainability of solutions such as credit packages, risk advisories, and distribution or marketing of seed and vaccines.
- Science Programs and Initiatives:** Collaboration in design and delivery of Science Programs and Initiatives ([CGIAR Portfolio 2022–24](#)) helped to build cohesion and community amongst CGIAR scientists across centers, geographies and disciplines. However, information on CGIAR's work on resilience remains fragmented in the absence of a framework to track this WoW delivery.
- Risk assessment:** Risk is referenced in general terms throughout the [2025–30 Portfolio Narrative](#) and the Program and Accelerator inception reports, with specific approaches to tackle risks associated with climate, disease and food safety clearly articulated by [Climate Action](#) (CA), [Sustainable Farming](#) (SF), and [Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods](#) (SAAF) programs.
- Resilience:** Integrated throughout the program narrative and inception reports is resilience, in generalized outcome statements. The term is not always sufficiently unpacked to understand

how programs contribute. Programs with comprehensive approaches include [Multifunctional Landscapes](#) (MFL) and [CA](#), while the Foresight Initiative will continue under the [Policy Innovations](#) (PI) program. There is limited reference to Foresight in the extended narrative and inception reports.

Strategic Takeaways

- Uptake of new solutions to known risk factors will depend on validation at scale beyond project or action-research contexts, requiring strong engagement with diverse actors.
- An organization-wide understanding of systems approaches to risk and resilience and of related terminology is needed to reinforce CGIAR's partnership-wide reputation as an authority on food systems resilience.

Implications for Investment

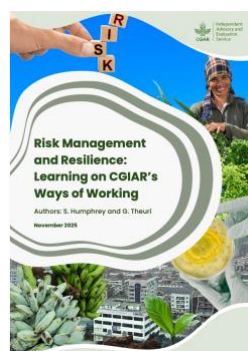
- Metrics are needed for monitoring CGIAR's efforts in resilience that reflect its role and comparative advantage as a research-for-development organization.
- Linkages between Foresight studies and planning for interventions/innovations need to be reinforced, including through engagement with country partners, potential scaling partners and service providers.
- Building a community of practice around resilience-building, and encouraging peer input during the development of research projects can capitalize on partnership-wide experience and reduce the risk of duplication.

Evidence Gaps and Looking Forward

- CGIAR should invest in closing the evidence gap caused by the lack of standard metrics, shared dashboards, and system-wide evaluative work. These gaps limit its ability to track changes under the Risk Management and Resilience WoW and to support learning across the system.

Box 1: Risk Management and Resilience WoW description

Risk Management and Resilience are critical qualities for food, land, and water systems. In a world where the climate crisis and emergence of new infectious diseases (such as COVID-19) demonstrate that rapid change, shocks, and tipping points are the new normal. From the outset, CGIAR will consider vulnerability to multiple risks to food systems (e.g., zoonoses, degraded ecosystems, climatic shocks, market swings, political upheaval, migration) and how this vulnerability can be turned into resilience by reducing exposure where possible, building human and societal capacity, and managing the sensitivity of forest, water, farming, and food systems to the onslaught of systems shocks. Research, capacity development, policy engagement, and partnerships will explore multiple possible future scenarios, map major pathways for change, and aim to create solutions that are robust across multiple contexts.



Learn more, visit the **Ways of Working** resource page



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