Agenda Item 4
For Information
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Update on the Inception Phase for CGIAR's 2025—30 science and innovation Portfolio

Purpose

This document provides an update on the Inception Phase for CGIAR's 2025—30 science and innovation Portfolio.

Following the System Council's approval of CGIAR's 2025–2030 science and innovation Portfolio in December 2024, the IPB discussed plans for the Portfolio Inception Phase at its February 2025 meeting.

The Portfolio Inception Phase is designed to (i) allow the 2025–30 Programs and Accelerators to complete key, outstanding design features that could not be fully addressed during the compressed writing process from March to September 2024; (ii) address the recommendations, guidance, and feedback provided by the Board, ISDC, and the System Council on the individual Program and Accelerator proposals as well as the overarching Portfolio Narrative; and (iii) ensure the effective operationalization of the new Portfolio alongside the final technical reporting on and operational closure of the 2022—24 Portfolio of Research Initiatives and Impact Area Platforms.

Management's update on the Inception Phase shares progress and emerging insights across the following key Inception work streams: (i) co-design and partnership, (ii) prioritization, (iii) comparative advantage analysis, (iv) alignment of CGIAR Trust Fund Window 3 and bilaterally funded work, (v) projection of benefits, (vi) funding the Portfolio, (vii) leadership arrangements, and (viii) risk management.

The IPB reviewed the update at its 5th meeting on 16 May 2025, including consideration of advice from its Science Committee, during which it provided guidance, as set out in the Communiqué from that meeting.

Action Requested

The System Council is requested to review the update on the Inception Phase for CGIAR's 2025—30 science and innovation Portfolio, to inform discussion during agenda item 4 of the SC22 meeting.

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Update on the Inception Phase for CGIAR's 2025—30 science and innovation Portfolio

This document provides an update on the Inception Phase for CGIAR's 2025—30 science and innovation Portfolio, for information, discussion, and feedback at the 22nd meeting of the CGIAR System Council in Penang, Malaysia on 4—5 June 2025.

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Executive Summary

This document provides a progress update on the Inception Phase for CGIAR's 2025—30 science and innovation Portfolio. It follows the CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board's (IPB) concurrence with and the System Council's approval of the Programs and Accelerators that make up the new Portfolio; as well as the Council's request to the Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) to carry out a targeted review of the Program and Accelerator Inception Reports and complete Plans of Results and Budgets (PORB) by Q3 2025. Pending the completion of relevant materials for ISDC's review by 30 June 2025, this document shares updates and emerging insights across key Inception work streams.

Against a backdrop of escalating global challenges, the 2025–2030 Portfolio represents a major shift in how research and innovation are prioritized, integrated, and delivered. Building on decades of lessons and progress towards programmatic integration, the new Portfolio marks a clear evolution in five key ways: (i) it brings together all of CGIAR's work across all Centers and funding streams in a single, integrated structure; (ii) it drives continuous prioritization based on evidence, demand, and performance; (iii) it consolidates CGIAR's offer in fewer, more connected Programs and Accelerators; (iv) it provides a more stable platform for long-term science, partnerships, and progress to impact; and (v) it matches CGIAR's ambition with the tools, services, and platforms required to accelerate uptake and scale.

To deliver on the ambition for the Portfolio, Programs and Accelerators are using the Portfolio Inception Phase to complete key, outstanding design features and address feedback provided by ISDC, the System Council, and the IPB. This includes leaning into a new, transformed partnership approach with enhanced co-design and stronger demand identification; completing a knowledge-driven prioritization process to systematically determine the impact potential of their high-level outputs (HLO) across different CGIAR regions and Impact Area indicators; and finalizing structured comparative advantage analyses to determine where and how CGIAR can add the greatest value in relation to others.

As a key input to the Inception process, teams now have access to a substantive mapping of Centers' CGIAR Trust Fund Window 3 (W3) and bilaterally funded projects and programs to the most relevant 2025—30 Programs and Accelerators; providing an unprecedented view to CGIAR's aggregate science and innovation offer and setting the foundation for enhanced complementarity, synergy, and alignment across Centers and funding streams.

The Portfolio Inception Phase takes place amid profound changes in CGIAR's funding landscape and operating environment. Reduced 2025 funding from one Funder alone is expected to result in a shortfall of $83m across all funding streams compared with expectations at the start of the year ($55m in W3 and bilateral and $28m in W1/2). For W1/2 funding towards the Programs and Accelerators, the current 2025 outlook is $242.6m compared with a Baseline Scenario of $288.7 in the budget approved by the System Council in December 2024 – a shortfall of $46.1m or 16%. Some Programs and

Accelerators face a much larger relative gap due to the distribution of Funders' W2 earmarks.

While CGIAR and its partners continue to assess the strategic implications of these changes and adapt accordingly, Programs and Accelerators are using the Inception Phase – where appropriate – to reassess and reprioritize. In the short term, this includes adapting 2025 PORBs to an emerging, updated W1/2 funding outlook, including consolidating activities and pausing work that cannot be resourced at a viable level. Looking forward, a Portfolio-level projection of 2030 and 2040 benefits for different funding scenarios is informing an Investment Case for launch in late-2025, underpinning broader efforts to strengthen and diversify resource mobilization to match the demand for and ambitions of the 2025—30 Portfolio.

1 Introduction

1. The CGIAR System Council, at its 21st meeting in Berlin, Germany on 11—12 December 2024, "(i) [a]pproved the Program and Accelerator proposals that make up CGIAR's 2025—30 Science and Innovation Portfolio [...]; and (ii) [r]equested that the Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) carry out a targeted review of the Program and Accelerator Inception Reports and complete Plans of Work/ Results and Budgets, no later than Q3 2025, and advise the Council on the extent to which the latter address the areas for improvement identified in ISDC's November 2024 reviews of the Program and Accelerator proposals and Portfolio Narrative"[1]. The System Council's decision followed the concurrence of the CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board (IPB) at its second meeting on 25 November 2024[2].

2. Pending the completion of Program/ Accelerator Inception Reports, updated 2025 Plans of Results and Budgets, and other supporting materials for ISDC's review by 30 June 2025, this document provides a progress update on the Inception Phase for CGIAR's 2025—30 science and innovation Portfolio, for review, discussion, and feedback from the System Council at its 22nd meeting in Penang, Malaysia on 4—5 June 2025 (SC22).

3. The Portfolio Inception Phase was designed to (i) allow the 2025—30 Programs and Accelerators to complete key, outstanding design features that could not be fully addressed during the compressed writing process from March to September 2024; (ii) address the recommendations, guidance, and feedback provided by ISDC[3], the System Council, and the IPB on the individual Program and Accelerator proposals as well as the overarching Portfolio Narrative[4]; and (iii) ensure the effective operationalization of the new Portfolio alongside the final technical reporting on and operational closure of the 2022—24 Portfolio of Research Initiatives and Impact Area Platforms. Framed around CGIAR's ambition for an impactful, prioritized, coherent, and demand-responsive Portfolio (Section 2), this document shares progress and emerging insights across the following key Inception work streams:

    a. co-design and partnership (Section 3),
    b. prioritization (4),

[1] Chair's Summary, 21st System Council meeting Berlin, Germany, 11—12 December 2024 (https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstreams/60d32c75-38ed-4082-8f8d-cc9d23e592a2/download)
[2] Meeting Summary of 2nd CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board Meeting (IPB-002), 25 November 2024, (Virtual) (https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/47227397-b622-47f5-bacc-cba5b0f9e8d7/content)
[3] SC21-05d - ISDC Review of 2025-2030 Research & Innovation Portfolio Proposals (https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/80725457-6604-4c70-9f3f-111e14efc11f/content?authentication-token=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJlaWQiOiI2NjVlOTAxZS00OGNiLTRlYmEtOGMzZi1kMGVjNDMxNzNkZDQiLCJzZyI6W10sImF1dGhlbnRpY2F0aW9uTWV0aG9kIjoicGFzc3dvcmQiLCJleHAiOjE3MzI3MDk3MjZ9.sVv2txMMUXP9Ka_ueYMCXX7I6wulOoZemEne4JUoXuM); SC21-05e - ISDC Feedback on CGIAR Portfolio Narrative 2025-2030 (content)
[4] CGIAR Research Portfolio 2025–2030 - CGIAR

c. comparative advantage analysis (5),
d. alignment of CGIAR Trust Fund Window 3 and bilaterally funded work (6),
e. projection of benefits (7),
f. funding the Portfolio (8),
g. Program/ Accelerator leadership and management (9), and
h. risk management (10).

In addition, Section 11 provides an overview of key milestones and next steps.

4. This update arrives amid profound changes in CGIAR's funding landscape and operating environment. CGIAR and its partners continue to assess the strategic implications of these changes and adapt accordingly, using the Portfolio Inception Phase – where appropriate – to reassess and reprioritize. Still, as a progress report, this document represents a snapshot in time and is not intended to address CGIAR's broader, strategic direction in a changing world. Additional insights and progress will be reflected in management's presentations at SC22.

2 Overview: an impactful, prioritized, coherent, and demand-responsive Portfolio

5. From extreme drought, flood, and heat events as well as volatile food prices to persistent malnutrition, ecosystem collapse, and deepening inequality; today's challenges are interconnected, intensifying, and urgent. Against this backdrop, excellent science alone is not enough. It must be embedded in responsive and inclusive systems and focused on delivering tangible solutions where they are needed the most.

6. CGIAR's 2025–2030 Portfolio represents a fundamental shift in how science and innovations are prioritized, integrated, and delivered. It responds to evolving global demands and funding realities through a more strategic, collaborative, and impact-oriented approach.

7. By 2030, CGIAR science, combined with aligned investments and coordinated action, can help reduce hunger risk for 182 million people, lift 31 million out of extreme poverty, prevent deforestation on 20 million hectares, and avoid 500 million metric tons of CO_2e emissions[5]. These projected impact ambitions reflect not just scale, but intentionality: impact that is inclusive, equitable, and accountable in terms of *who* benefits, not just *how many*.

[5] For further details on the preliminary, projected 2030 impact ambitions of the Portfolio, see Section 4.2 and Annex 5 of the November 2024 Portfolio Narrative (content).

Figure 1: An impactful, prioritized, coherent, and demand-responsive Portfolio

What sets this portfolio apart

8. This is not business as usual. Built on decades of scientific excellence and the integration momentum of the 2022–2024 Initiatives, the 2025–2030 Portfolio marks a clear evolution in five key ways:

   i. **A unified portfolio**: For the first time, all of CGIAR's scientific work and innovations—across all Centers and funding streams—are brought together in a single, integrated structure.
   ii. **Prioritized for impact**: Research efforts are selected based on alignment with major global challenges and regional priorities. Activities without strong evidence of impact potential will be phased out, ensuring that resources flow to what works.
   iii. **Streamlined and integrated**: With fewer, more connected Programs and Accelerators, the structure enhances synergies, communication, and delivery.

iv. **Designed for continuity**: A six-year planning horizon provides a stable platform for long-term science, strategic partnerships, and progress across the five Impact Areas and associated, targeted outcomes.
v. **Accelerated by delivery systems**: CGIAR's role as a trusted convener and intermediary—connecting innovation to implementation—is supported by on-the-ground presence, tools, services, and platforms that accelerate uptake and scale.

From fragmentation to coherence

9. The Portfolio is purpose-built for collaboration. Programs and Accelerators address different facets of food, land, and water systems while linking together through shared work plans and outcome targets. Progress towards CGIAR's 2030 impact goals will come from coordinated contributions across multiple parts of the Portfolio—not from isolated efforts. Incentives and resource allocation mechanisms are designed to make collaboration the norm, not the exception.

Prioritization as an operating logic

10. At the heart of this Portfolio is a clear, co-designed vision—shaped with stakeholders—to identify priority problems and drive solutions. Our approach to prioritization is demand-led, outcome-focused, and responsive to shifting evidence and contexts.

11. At the Portfolio level, iterative prioritization ensures that learning and performance are embedded in investment decisions. Each Program and Accelerator applies a shared, adaptive framework to generate High-Level Outputs aligned with urgent development needs, regional strategies, and CGIAR's comparative advantage.

12. This prioritization process improves focus, reduces duplication, and reallocates resources to where impact is most likely. It also shapes the design of future CGIAR-funded projects—irrespective of funding source and type—to ensure alignment, complementarity, and greater returns than fragmented investments.

Why this time is different

13. This is not a reinvention—it is an evolution informed by lessons from the CGIAR Challenge Programs, CRPs, and the 2022–2024 Research Initiatives and Impact Area Platforms. What is different is:

i. **How we prioritize**: Guided by evidence, demand, and performance, not tradition.
ii. **How we partner**: Strengthening national systems; collaborating with global, national, and local partners; stepping back where capacity exists, and engaging new actors, including the private sector, civil society, and the humanitarian community.

iii. **How we deliver**: With shared tools, integrated data, decision-support systems, and Portfolio-wide services—such as the Digital Transformation Accelerator and Scaling for Impact Program—to accelerate uptake and scale.

Building the systems for science to deliver at scale

14. To meet today's urgent challenges, CGIAR is strengthening the infrastructure that connects science to action. Shared tools and services—ranging from improved data platforms and inclusive research methods to innovation screening tools and partnership brokering networks—will help Centers and partners act faster and more cohesively.

15. Enhanced monitoring, learning, and capacity development systems—especially on scaling—will reinforce CGIAR's role as a trusted technical and socio-institutional partner. By bridging science and innovation through practical partnerships, we aim to make agricultural and food systems research more accessible, solutions-driven, and aligned with global development goals.

A Portfolio Steered for Impact

16. The Global Science Team (GST)—comprising the CGIAR Chief Scientist, science leaders from all Centers, as well as Directors/ Leaders of all Programs and Accelerators—guides the Portfolio with strategic oversight and scientific coherence. United by a shared vision and accountability for results, the GST champions a research agenda that is not just excellent, but transformative.

3 Co-design and partnership

17. In its review of the November 2024 Portfolio Narrative[6], ISDC recommended prioritizing CGIAR's commitment to advance Program and Accelerator co-design, noting the need for sufficient resources, clear guidance, effective tools, and key performance indicators (KPIs), as well as integration of best practices and lessons learned from the 2022—2024 period. This was echoed by the IPB in its call for a clearer articulation of CGIAR's approach to demand-side analysis. In addition, the IPB underscored the need for a comprehensive partnership strategy that goes beyond co-design: including comparative advantage analysis (see below), capacity sharing, global convening, and science diplomacy[7].

18. In response to this feedback, co-design and partnership is a major focus of the Portfolio Inception Phase. As part of their Inception Reports, Programs and Accelerators are requested to describe the mechanisms used for co-design and partner engagement in line with ISDC's recommendations as well as the CGIAR Engagement Framework for Partnerships and Advocacy (Version 2.0)[8]. In addition, the Inception Phase marks the roll-out and testing of a comprehensive, strategic partnership approach with an emphasis on (i) maximizing the mutual value from CGIAR's partnerships, (ii) a pro-partnering culture, and (iii) becoming fit for purpose to partner (see Annex I). The approach sets out definitions and tools that allow Programs and Accelerators to shift from business as usual towards a transformed partnership approach, which includes but is not limited to tangible commitments to co-design; with partners engaged early, often, and effectively to co-identify problems and co-design solutions; and using stakeholder mapping to understand who should be invited to co-design.

19. Building on partner engagement during the Portfolio design phase as well as the 2022—24 implementation of the Research Initiatives and Impact Area Platforms, the Portfolio Inception Phase leans into the new, transformed partnership approach across several key work streams. As part of the knowledge-driven prioritization process (see Section 4 below), Program and Accelerator teams are engaging with partners and drawing on context-specific data, information, and knowledge to 'ground-truth' the scoring of their high-level outputs (HLO); which in turn informs final decision-making on resource allocation across HLOs and Areas of Work (AoW). Through their comparative advantage analyses (see Section 5 below), Programs and Accelerators are working closely with partners to clarify where CGIAR is best positioned to deliver, and where others should take the lead. Similarly, partners play a key role in the review and update of Program/ Accelerator theories of change – shaping their higher-level logic and structure.

[6] SC21-05e - ISDC Feedback on CGIAR Portfolio Narrative 2025-2030 (content)
[7] Meeting Summary of 2nd CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board Meeting (IPB-002), 25 November 2024 (Virtual) (https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/47227397-b622-47f5-bacc-cba5b0f9e8d7/content)
[8] https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/7d4a0f3e-e96a-4f82-8f02-2de0237f8b3f/content

20. In addition, in early April, CGIAR Science Week convened some 4,500 attendees from more than 100 countries and 1,000 organizations in Nairobi, Kenya, offering a unique platform for strategic dialogue and engagement on the 2025—30 Portfolio and its Programs and Accelerators. An estimated 2,200 in-person participants and 1,900 online participants joined a plenary presentation on the Portfolio as well highly interactive parallel sessions featuring each of the Programs and Accelerators and providing rich feedback and insights towards their Inception Phase deliverables[9].

21. Box 1 below provides specific examples of partner engagement and co-design during the Inception Phase, for selected Programs. The 30 June Inception Reports will reflect more specifically on the design choices and changes that these engagements have informed.

Box 1: Selected examples of partner engagement and co-design during the Inception Phase

- During the Inception Phase, the **Scaling for Impact** (S4I) Program has convened and engaged with stakeholders in more than a dozen countries to refine its design and align more closely with stakeholder priorities. Three regional dialogue workshops—in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—produced recommendations to improve thematic coherence by scaling "flagship" topics linked to innovation clusters with shared constraints and opportunities, and to enhance collaboration with partners, particularly from the private sector, positioned to deliver at scale. The Program engaged more than 35 partner organizations—including public agencies, private firms, and development partners—many with a primary interest in scaling delivery, while also involving national research and extension partners. S4I also plays a unique Portfolio-wide service role in generating evidence on stakeholder demand and co-design, anchored in its first AoW. During the inception, the Program's AoW1 has advanced systems to annually collect, synthesize, and communicate stakeholder demand for research and scaling priorities back to all Programs and Accelerators, supporting more responsive and iterative co-design and adaptive management across the Portfolio.

- **The Capacity Sharing Accelerator** engaged stakeholders through multiple channels to inform its design. A highly interactive session at CGIAR Science Week generated detailed feedback and valuable insights into capacity-sharing priorities and gaps. In parallel, a detailed stakeholder survey was conducted to map both the demand for capacity-strengthening support as well as the available supply of

[9] The Program/ Accelerator-specific Strategic Dialogue sessions can be viewed here (https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLM2nmulYUUvkcLkThURN-K1-apCzjKOw7) and the plenary presentation of the Portfolio is available here (https://cgiar.sharepoint.com/sites/GIARTransitionandInception-Coordinationteam/Shared%20Documents/Coordination%20team/SC-ISDC-IPB%20slides%20(May%207%20touchpoint)/CGIAR%20Science%20Week%202025%20-%20Portfolio%20Presentation%20-%20YouTube).

institutional capabilities. These findings—together with lessons learned from CapSha pilot initiatives in Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Senegal under the Gates Foundation-funded CGIAR—NARS Joint Research initiative (in collaboration with the Multifunctional Landscapes and Breeding for Tomorrow Science Programs), as well as the GIZ-funded pilot on Collaborative Breeding Leadership implemented in Ghana, DRC, Ethiopia, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Benin, Malawi, India, and Kenya—have directly informed the Accelerator's design and areas of focus.

- **The Breeding for Tomorrow Science Program** has built on the codesign processes and associated lessons learned from the 2022—24 Genetic Innovation Initiatives. Four "NARES—Genetic Innovation Leadership Meetings" were held to influence and course-correct the design of those Initiatives, with clearly documented outputs describing how NARES and CGIAR leadership co-defined priorities. This input was foundational to design of Breeding for Tomorrow, particularly the ENABLE and Accelerated Breeding AoWs, and has been taken forward in the Inception Phase. Specifically, in collaboration with representative NARES leaders, the Program is finalizing partnership metrics to measure and monitor the strength of CGIAR and NARES breeding partnerships.

- **The Sustainable Farming Science Program** is working through partnership platforms in priority locations such as East and Southern Africa, West Africa, as well as South and Southeast Asia to validate priorities and demand, co-design solutions to key farm management constraints, and explore scaling pathways. In total, this consultation process included 24 meetings in 19 countries involving 429 participants from 219 organizations. Its outputs are being used to refine geographic and thematic prioritization.

- **The Multifunctional Landscapes Science Program** worked with senior researchers from Wageningen University to improve the Program's conceptual framework; enhancing its focus on capacity sharing through feedback received during a Partner Forum. In addition, the Program will establish an Advisory Committee with key partners later in 2025.

4 Prioritization at the Program/ Accelerator level

22. As mentioned in Section 2, prioritization is at the core of the 2025—30 Portfolio: it guides CGIAR's collective science and innovation to where it can have the greatest impact. In 2024, the time-limited Portfolio design process allowed for only a partial implementation of the 11-step Program/ Accelerator-level prioritization process defined at the time[10]. At SC21, System Council members underscored the critical importance of anchoring proposed resource allocation decisions in a clear, transparent, and structured prioritization process. In view of growing pressures on funding, this was seen as key to justifying continued investments and adapting to different funding outcomes in a way that preserves the most impactful elements of the Portfolio. ISDC highlighted the need for Programs and Accelerators to complete their prioritization processes during the Inception Phase, sharpening the rationale for geographic targeting, and more explicitly connecting the results of prioritization to stakeholder feedback[11].

23. Building on feedback received and lessons learned during the Portfolio design phase, the Program/ Accelerator-level prioritization methodology and associated guidance was updated during the first months of 2025 (see Annex II). In a first phase, the updated, knowledge-driven prioritization process aims to determine the impact potential of Programs'/ Accelerators' high-level outputs (HLO) across different CGIAR regions and Impact Area indicators. It follows a stepwise approach, starting with an assessment of the potential of each HLO to contribute to impact, measured against a trend or current state. The resulting scores are then weighted by both the potential *scale* of impact given region-specific conditions as well as enabling environments. Complementing the scoring exercise, the process includes a second, 'ground-truthing' phase that allows Programs and Accelerators to consider their HLO scores in light other factors that should influence final decisions on prioritization and resource allocation. These include the outcomes of comparative advantage analyses (see Section 5 below), partner and stakeholder demand (see Section 3 above), more granular data – e.g. at lower geographical scales – as well as linkages and dependencies across HLOs and other Programs/ Accelerators.

24. The first phase of the prioritization process applies 23 Impact Area indicators (see Table 3 in Annex II). For some of these, projected, 2040 trends are available for a *without CGIAR* scenario, building on the projection of benefits exercise (see Section 7 below). This allows Programs and Accelerators to assess the impact potential of their HLOs against longer-term trends. For other indicators, static, current-state values are provided. Overall, the indicators used aim to balance considerations of strategic relevance, availability of data, and the breadth of intended impact contributions across the Portfolio. They are not intended to be exhaustive, and the second, 'ground-truthing' phase of the prioritization process

[10] See Section 3.3.3 and Annex 3 of the November 2024 Portfolio Narrative (content).
[11] SC21-05e - ISDC Feedback on CGIAR Portfolio Narrative 2025-2030 (content)

allows Programs and Accelerators to use additional, more specific indicators to supplement their analyses.

25. Box 2 below shares emerging, Program/ Accelerator-level experiences and insights of the knowledge-driven prioritization process.

Box 2: Emerging insights from knowledge-driven prioritization

- Early findings across multiple Programs and Accelerators suggest **consistently high impact potential scores for West and Central Africa (WCA) and East and Southern Africa (ESA),** particularly across Impact Area indicators associated with poverty reduction, livelihoods, and jobs; nutrition, health, and food security; and gender equality and social inclusion. These findings align with the regions' large and growing populations combined with current baseline conditions and projected trends.

- In contrast, **for climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as environmental health and biodiversity,** some Programs and Accelerators are observing relatively higher relevance of their HLOs in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) as well as Southeast Asia and the Pacific (SEA).

- In some cases, **the 'ground-truthing' phase is adding critical, additional nuance to the regional patterns that emerge** from the HLO scoring. For example, Pacific Island nations – which are at the core of the Island Food Systems AoW of the Food Frontiers and Security Science Program – require additional, more granular consideration beyond the broader trends available for the SEA region due to their relatively small populations and geographical size.

- Consistent with ISDC and IPB feedback, the 'ground-truthing' phase **requires Programs and Accelerators to explicitly document and justify their final prioritization decisions** and the factors that underpin those decisions, including stakeholder feedback and demand at different levels.

26. The knowledge-driven prioritization process informs design changes as well as internal, Program- and Accelerator-level resource allocation. Beyond the Portfolio Inception Phase and 2025 work planning and budgeting processes, Program-/ Accelerator-level prioritization will be further refined to allow for more granular, geographical prioritization as well as a shift from high-level outputs to more specific innovations and activities. Prioritization will become continuous and iterative as part of the regular monitoring, reporting, and adaptive management cycles of the Programs and Accelerators, ensuring that resources continue to be allocated to where they can achieve the greatest impact in response to the most relevant needs.

5 Comparative advantage analysis

27. The September 2024 Program and Accelerator proposals set out initial elements of a comprehensive comparative advantage analysis, focusing on the sources of comparative advantage *required* to deliver their HLOs as well as relevant, *existing* sources of comparative advantage across CGIAR and key partner types[12]. In its feedback on the November 2024 Portfolio Narrative[13], ISDC recommended comparing CGIAR to similar organizations, particularly in terms of human capital input, and using the analysis to identify the types of partnerships required to strengthen CGIAR's comparative advantage. In addition, to avoid unintentional biases, ISDC suggested that it could be useful to have the comparative advantage analysis facilitated by an external expert. Echoing ISDC's feedback, System Council members requested greater clarity on CGIAR's comparative advantage vis-à-vis the evolving capabilities of NARES, the private sector, as well as other potential partners and competitors.

28. In response to the feedback and guidance received, the comparative advantage analysis guidelines and template were updated at the start of this year, with key inputs provided by an external expert who contributed to the development of ISDC's comparative advantage framework. The updated methodology goes beyond partner types to focus on specific *parties* – including existing/ potential partners as well as competitors. It guides Programs and Accelerators through a stepwise approach to determine how well CGIAR is positioned to deliver a given HLO vis-à-vis these other specific parties. After identifying up to ten parties that could undertake the work associated with each HLO, teams identify whether these parties are likely to undertake the work and whether they are likely to be efficient and impactful in doing so. As a result, Programs and Accelerators identify whether potential, alternative parties are well, moderately, or weakly positioned to deliver the HLO and – as a result – whether and what role CGIAR should play. The methodology is not intended to be exhaustive – it considers a manageable, representative group of parties for each HLO. Ultimately, the comparative advantage analysis invites Programs and Accelerators to systematically ask where and how CGIAR can add the greatest value in relation to others.

29. Based on emerging lessons and findings, Programs and Accelerators indicate that the comparative advantage analysis is informing a more strategic positioning of CGIAR within broader science, innovation, and delivery systems and the challenges and opportunities associated with specific, key partnerships. For example, one Program team noted that the analysis is helping them better understand whether their partnerships and collaborations can be considered through a technical complementarity lens (where both parties are moderately positioned to hold a comparative advantage) or a capacity sharing lens (where a difference in positioning allows a transfer of capacity or knowledge). Teams also report that the exercise has helped situate parties on an "action—research

[12] See Section 3.4.2 and Annex 4 of the November 2024 Portfolio Narrative (content).
[13] SC21-05e - ISDC Feedback on CGIAR Portfolio Narrative 2025-2030 (content)

continuum" with greater clarity on handover points between innovation development and scaling. As the methodology supports analysis of both partners and competitors, one Program noted that it has helped better them articulate the distinct and complementary contributions that each party brings to the table, e.g. in the case of CGIAR vis-à-vis the World Food Program or the Food and Agriculture Organization.

6 Alignment of CGIAR Trust Fund Window 3 and bilaterally funded work

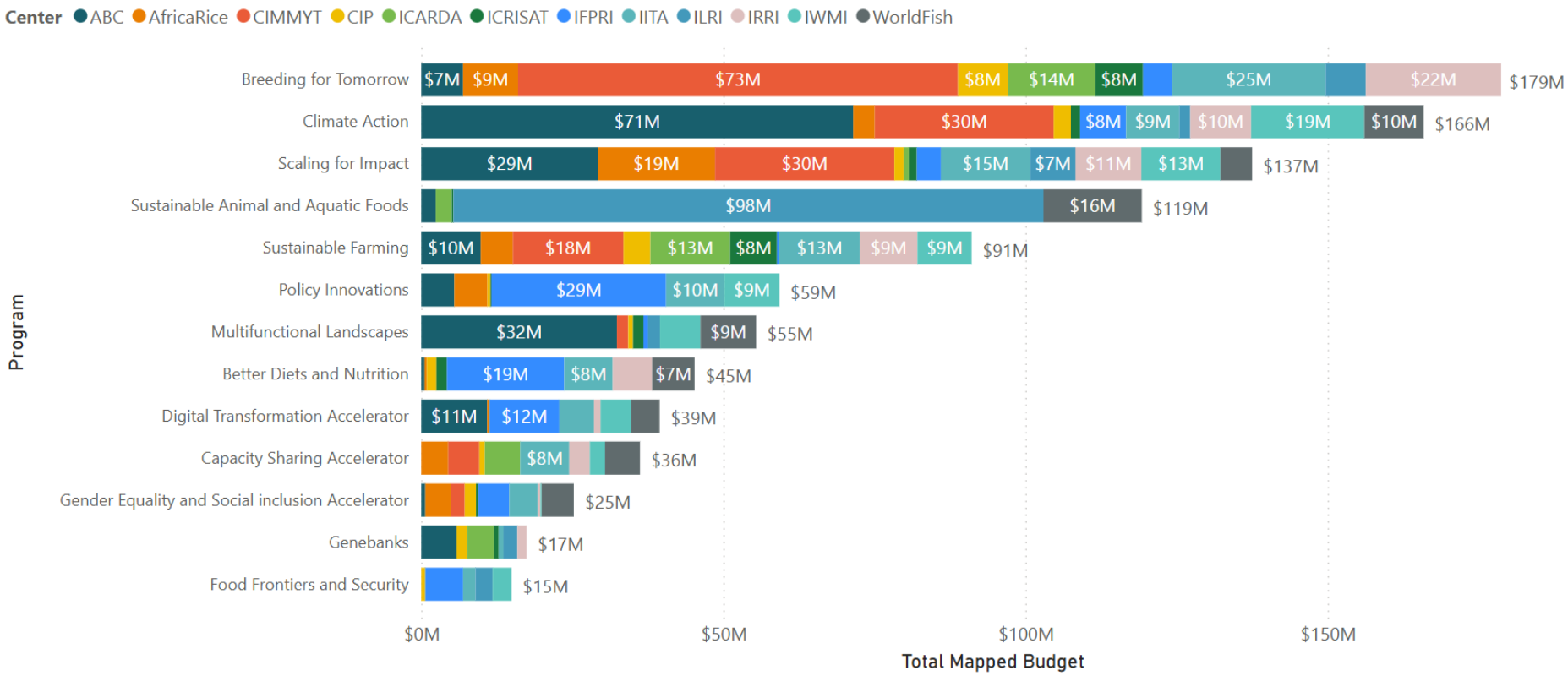
30. As discussed in Section 2 above, a key feature of the 2025—30 Portfolio is to encompass all of CGIAR's work, across all Centers and all sources and types of funding: 'pooled' funding from CGIAR Trust Fund Windows 1 and 2 (W1/2) as well as 'non-pooled' CGIAR Trust Fund Window 3 (W3) and bilateral funding. The IPB, in its review of the Program and Accelerator proposals and November 2024 Portfolio narrative, noted that the Portfolio management arrangements provided a sound starting point for fostering coherence and synergies across different sources and types of funding, but encouraged continuous improvement with a view to identifying and leveraging incentives for alignment[14]. ISDC's feedback called for greater visibility on the modalities for integrating W1/2 and W3/ bilateral funding, suggesting that a key aspect of these guidelines would be to ensure that Center scientists understand and communicate Portfolio-level synergies and reduce any tendency for W3/ bilateral funding to implicitly expect W1/2 funds to underwrite overhead costs[15].

31. To deliver on the Portfolio's 'whole-of-CGIAR' ambition, a cross-Partnership working group has developed guidance to allow Center-led W3/ bilaterally funded work to be 'mapped' to the most relevant Programs and Accelerators. Focusing on 80% of their active W3/ bilateral projects and programs by value, Centers proposed an initial mapping based on two principal criteria: (i) complementarity of results and (ii) efficiencies/ strategic benefit. For each criterion, Centers provided a high/ medium/ low scoring, drawing on decision-support tools developed by the Portfolio Performance Unit: a geographic footprint dashboard and an AI-driven similarity match list. In a second step, Interim Program/ Accelerator Directors were asked to agree or disagree with Centers' proposed mapping. Where agreement has been found, results information from the W3/ bilateral projects and programs is used to inform Programs'/ Accelerators' updated theories of change, Plans of Results and Budgets (PORB), and Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Impact Assessment (MELIA) Plans. From Q3 2025, W3/ bilaterally funded results will be digitally linked to Program/ Accelerator theories of change for inclusion in technical reporting.

32. Figure 2 below shows the current 'mapping' of 288 active W3/ bilateral projects and programs as of April 2025, amounting to $948m or 80% of active W3/ bilateral funding towards, most of which is expected to be spent during 2025 and 2026. At the time, the largest shares of W3/ bilateral funding were associated with Breeding for Tomorrow ($179m [19%]), Climate Action ($166m [18%], and Scaling for Impact ($137m [14%]).

[14] Meeting Summary of 2nd CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board Meeting (IPB-002), 25 November 2024, (Virtual) (https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/47227397-b622-47f5-bacc-cba5b0f9e8d7/content)
[15] SC21-05e - ISDC Feedback on CGIAR Portfolio Narrative 2025-2030 (content)

Figure 2: 'Mapping' of 288 active W3/ bilaterally funded projects and programs to the most relevant Programs/ Accelerators as of April 2025 (representing 80% of W3/ bilateral funding associated with all active projects and programs)



33. Alongside the Inception Phase mapping exercise, a Technical Reporting Arrangement for 2025—30 has been developed by a cross-CGIAR working group with input from the System Council's Strategic Impact Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (SIMEC) to enable reporting across all sources and types of funding. The Arrangement sets out a minimum data standard to ensure that all W3/ bilaterally funded projects and programs share a minimum of common data to allow for basic interoperability and aggregation across the Portfolio as a whole. Building on this flow of data and information, Program and Accelerator technical reports will include W3/ bilateral content, each reflecting a unique mix of W1/2 funded work as well as aligned W3/ bilaterally funded projects and programs. Given the different time frames and reporting deadlines associated with W3/ bilateral funding, these annual reports will always reflect a snapshot in time, whereas more frequent updates will be provided through the Results Dashboard.

34. Over the six-year period of the Portfolio, the Programs and Accelerators are expected to drive progressively greater alignment and synergies across different sources and types of funding, which will be reflected in more comprehensive reporting. The Portfolio Management Arrangements are designed to foster that alignment at different levels: through inclusive Program/ Accelerator Leadership Teams as well as the GST at the Portfolio level. In the meantime, as Programs and Accelerators work through their Inception deliverables, the W3/ bilateral mapping has proved a valuable tool in supporting complementarity and coordination.

7 Projection of benefits

35. The November 2024 Portfolio Narrative[16] provided preliminary, projected 2030 impact ambitions across eight Impact Area indicators and six regions. These projections represent impacts that can be achieved through continued investment in CGIAR and, importantly, continued development spending in relevant systems. At the time, a more granular projection of benefits was not possible as the Programs and Accelerators were still in the process of refining their theories of change and key performance indicators. ISDC, in its feedback on the Portfolio Narrative, requested further justification of the assumptions underlying the projections[17] and the IPB called for efforts to strengthen the set of Impact Area indicators used (e.g. to incorporate broader dimensions of nutrition) as a basis for enhanced accountability, performance management, and to inform investment priorities[18].

36. Following the 2024 projected impact ambitions, IFPRI's Foresight and Policy Modeling Unit has been commissioned by the System Organization to project the benefits of CGIAR's 2025—2030 Portfolio as part of the Inception Phase. The projection of benefits exercise works with information provided by the Programs and Accelerators, expands the number of Impact Area indicators, and extends the horizon of analysis to 2040 (in addition to 2030), thus improving the model's assumptions and regional targets in response to the feedback received.

37. During April and May, the projection of benefits team has met with the Programs and Accelerators to (i) ensure that the core components of their theories of change are captured in the modeling framework; (ii) identify tangible key performance indicators (KPI) that the Programs and Accelerators are targeting within their spheres of influence; and (iii) discuss the pathways linking KPIs to the five Impact Areas. Informed by these engagements, the team has improved the modeling framework and aims to share initial results in May. The final projection of benefits analysis will include (a) at least two outcome indicators for each of the five Impact Areas; (b) regionally disaggregated outcomes by 2030 and by 2040; and (c) outcomes at different Portfolio funding levels (i.e., 80%, 100% and 120%).

38. While this next phase of analysis represents a significant improvement on what was available in November 2024, important caveats remain. The analysis cannot capture all impact pathways and indicators of interest. Some Programs and Accelerators, e.g., Better Diets and Nutrition Science Program as well as the

[16] https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/67c78c19-ebf7-409f-9457-0941d42a6e6a/content?authentication-token=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJlaWQiOiI2NjVlOTAxZS00OGNiLTRlYmEtOGMzZi1kMGVjNDMxNzNkZDQiLCJzZyI6W10sImF1dGhlbnRpY2F0aW9uTWV0aG9kIjoicGFzc3dvcmQiLCJleHAiOjE3MzM2ODc0ODZ9.nUWjKSqzM2wi_yHtRUSHi74diL6jvUxgAWOUqLmMlWA

[17] SC21-05e - ISDC Feedback on CGIAR Portfolio Narrative 2025-2030 (content)

[18] Meeting Summary of 2nd CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board Meeting (IPB-002), 25 November 2024, (Virtual) (https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/47227397-b622-47f5-bacc-cba5b0f9e8d7/content)

Gender Equality and Inclusion Accelerator have noted that their global engagement and agenda-setting contributions could not be fully captured. For Genebanks, notwithstanding the magnitude of their contributions to the global agrifood system, it was concluded that it is not currently possible to project their benefits as they do not have information on how their distributed materials are used outside of CGIAR. Finally, the current modeling framework overlooks factors known to affect final impacts, such as market mechanisms that could cause prices to fall as production expands. These missing mechanisms could lead to over-/ underestimates for some impacts. Future work will utilize CGIAR's more sophisticated modeling tools to capture more mechanisms, impact channels, and outcome indicators.

39. Looking forward, the projected benefits represent a key component of a Portfolio Investment Case that will be launched in late-2025 and inform a review of CGIAR's 2030 impact ambitions, originally set out in the 2022—30 Performance and Results Management Framework[19].

[19] SC11-03b_CGIAR-Performance-and-Results-Management-Framework-2022-30_postmeeting8July2021.pdf

8 Funding the Portfolio

40. In addition to aligned W3/ bilateral funding (see Section 6 above), the Programs and Accelerators rely on W1/2 funding to deliver on their objectives. Consistent with the System Council -approved funding modalities[20], W1 funds can be used towards any Program/Accelerator, whereas W2 funds are earmarked to specific Programs/ Accelerators and – for up to 50% of a funder's total W1/2 contributions in a given year – specific AoWs.

41. The System Council-approved W1/2 Budget for 2025 allocates a total of $288.7m in W1/2 funds, including anticipated carryover from 2024, towards the Programs and Accelerators under a Baseline Scenario. This includes $261m in new W1/2 contributions, compared with $275m in 2024 (-5%). Under the Budget's Surge Scenario, the W1/2 funds available to Programs and Accelerators increase to $387.1m. The Budget sets out initial allocations of W1/2 funds towards the Programs and Accelerators under both scenarios. In the absence of several key building blocks of a robust, evidence-based prioritization process at the Portfolio level, these initial allocations are based on a mapping of 2022—24 W1/2-funded work to the new Programs and Accelerators[21].

42. The approved 2025 budget was developed in September—October 2024, in a funding landscape and operating environment that have since undergone profound changes. Reduced 2025 funding from one Funder alone is expected to result in a shortfall of $83m across all funding streams compared with expectations at the start of the year ($55m in W3 and bilateral and $28m in W1/2). The budget was also developed in absence of an approved Portfolio, in the face of considerable uncertainty regarding funder intentions for 2025 and beyond. To reduce the uncertainty, the System Organization has engaged with W1/2 funders in March—April 2025 to form a more granular view of expected 2025 W1/2 funding levels and W2 earmarks. The resulting picture, captured in Table 1 below, suggests that:

    a. as of 16 May 2025, aggregate, indicative, 2025 W1/2 contributions and carryover towards the Programs and Accelerators – net of CSP (2%) and risk (e.g. exchange rates, degrees of uncertainty where funds have yet to be paid or committed) – stood at $242.6m, or some 84% of the approved Baseline

[20] See Annex III of the System Council-approved W1/2 Budget for 2025 (https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/250b2999-205a-4c2d-92e7-a944f0542c4d/content?authentication-token=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJlaWQiOiI2NjVlOTAxZS00OGNiLTRlYmEtOGMzZi1kMGVjNDMxNzNkZDQiLCJzZyI6W10sImF1dGhlbnRpY2F0aW9uTWV0aG9kIjoicGFzc3dvcmQiLCJleHAiOjE3MzM3MzgyMDl9.9Rgc1DZTrL_X77xu-qnS_ybExGHa_ekMsDzmSUu6Ns4)

[21] See Figure 3 in the November 2024 Portfolio Narrative (https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/67c78c19-ebf7-409f-9457-0941d42a6e6a/content?authentication-token=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJlaWQiOiI2NjVlOTAxZS00OGNiLTRlYmEtOGMzZi1kMGVjNDMxNzNkZDQiLCJzZyI6W10sImF1dGhlbnRpY2F0aW9uTWV0aG9kIjoicGFzc3dvcmQiLCJleHAiOjE3MzM2ODc0ODZ9.nUWjKSqzM2wi_yHtRUSHi74diL6jvUxgAWOUqLmMlWA)

Scenario, leaving an aggregate W1/2 funding shortfall of $46.1m compared with the approved 2024 Baseline Scenario;

b. of the above, some $149.0m or 61% is made up of W2 contributions earmarked to specific Programs and Accelerators, representing between 11% and 101% of Programs'/ Accelerators' approved Baseline Scenario budget envelopes;

c. a minority of W2 contributions ($49.8m or 33%) were earmarked towards specific AoWs across 11 of the 13 Programs and Accelerators;

d. the remaining $93.6m in W1 contributions and unearmarked carryover from 2024 includes 2025 savings identified in the System Organization budget that reduce the use of W1 funds towards System Organization costs; and

e. whereas the above figures correspond to an emerging, updated, and conservative Baseline Scenario against which Programs, Accelerators, and Centers could plan with a high degree of confidence, some Funders have indicated potential additional contributions before the end of the year.

43. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the latest W1/2 funding outlook by Program/ Accelerator. Following Funders' W2 earmarks, the distribution of W1 funds and unearmarked carryover reflects a set of principles and steps discussed and agreed by the CGIAR Global Leadership Team (GLT) and Global Science Team (GST). Arriving five months into 2025, the updated 2025 funding envelopes aim to ensure continuity of critical work and leverage each Program's and Accelerator's impact contributions at a minimum viable level. Consistent with CGIAR's commitment to partnership and co-design, management aims to honor commitments to non-CGIAR partners to the extent possible. While recognizing the ongoing, major shift across all funding streams, the allocations of W1 funds and unearmarked carryover seek to catalyze growth in W3 and bilateral funding, not compensate for reductions. Finally, the allocations are intended to enable the Accelerators' core, cross-Portfolio contributions, consistent with existing commitments (Genebanks) and subject to restrictions associated with Funders' W2 earmarks (see note on Digital Transformation below).

Table 1: Status of 2025 W1/2 funding as of 16 May 2025 (all indicative figures net of CSP and risk)

Program/ Accelerator	Baseline Scenario ("Baseline") (mUS$)	Latest, indicative W2 ("W2") (mUS$)	Latest W1 & carryover ("W1") (mUS$)	W2 + W1 (mUS$)	(W2 + W1) / Baseline (%)	(W2 + W1) – Baseline (mUS$)
Better Diets and Nutrition	21.5	15.1	0.9	16.0	74%	-5.5
Breeding for Tomorrow[22]	51.8	43.7	7.4	51.1	99%	-0.7
Capacity Sharing[23]	1.9	0.7	1.5	2.2	117%	0.3
Climate Action	18.1	8.6	4.9	13.5	74%	-4.6
Digital Transformation[24]	4.7	3.9	2.8	6.6	141%	1.9
Food Frontiers and Security	12.6	6.6	2.8	9.4	75%	-3.1
Gender Equality and Inclusion	12.0	3.7	5.3	9.0	75%	-3.0
Genebanks	26.5	8.8	17.7	26.5	100%	0.0
Multifunctional Landscapes	18.7	18.8	0.0	18.8	101%	0.1
Policy Innovations	20.0	7.3	7.5	14.9	74%	-5.1
Scaling for Impact	36.4	15.8	11.1	26.9	74%	-9.5
Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods	28.4	3.1	17.9	21.0	74%	-7.4
Sustainable Farming	36.0	12.9	13.7	26.6	74%	-9.4
Total	**288.7**	**149.0**	**93.6**	**242.6**	**84%**	**-46.1**

[22] While the Breeding for Tomorrow Science Program is expected to receive significant, earmarked W2 contributions; additional W1 funds are required to cover core functions and capabilities.

[23] For the Capacity Sharing Accelerator, the modest Baseline envelope as well as funding towards cross-cutting management costs during the Portfolio Inception Phase are maintained to allow the Accelerator to launch operations.

[24] Most of the funding towards the Digital Transformation Accelerator is earmarked towards a single AoW over a three-year period. Hence, the Accelerator has been granted access its 2025 Surge Scenario envelope to launch other core, cross-Portfolio functions at a minimum viable level.

44. The updated 2025 envelopes in Table 1 are used by the Programs and Accelerators to revisit and complete their 2025 PORBs by end-June. They remain within the Baseline and Surge Scenarios approved by the System Council in December 2024 and do not necessitate the approval of a revised W1/2 Budget.

9 Leadership and management

45. The Programs and Accelerators were launched in January 2025 with interim leadership arrangements. Interim Directors and Deputy Directors were assigned by the GLT in October 2024, and AoW Transition Leads and Co-Leads by the GST in January 2025. In addition, Programs and Accelerators have put in place transitional management and coordination capacity to ensure an effective delivery of the Portfolio Inception Phase. In parallel, as a key component of the Portfolio Inception Phase, Program/ Accelerator leadership roles are being filled on a stable, longer-term basis. These longer-term Program/ Accelerator Directors/ Leaders will be employed by the System Organization and primarily hosted in Centers. The System Council, in its feedback on the Portfolio at SC22, emphasized the importance of bringing world-class talent to lead the Programs and Accelerators and empowering those leaders to drive decision-making on prioritization and resource allocation.

46. Most Program/ Accelerator Director/ Leader positions were advertised in January 2025, initially to internal CGIAR applicants. Where positions could not be filled from among internal candidates, they have been advertised externally. Table 2 below provides an update on the status of each role as of 12 May 2025. For each position, the CGIAR Chief Scientist chairs a diverse and inclusive Selection Panel, comprising two senior science leaders from Centers as well as two external experts along with a People & Culture leader from a CGIAR Center or the System Organization.

Table 2: Status of Program/ Accelerator leadership recruitment (as of 21 May 2025)

Program/ Accelerator	Recruitment status
Better Diets and Nutrition	End-of-search report to be issued
Breeding for Tomorrow	Longlisted
Capacity Sharing	End-of-search report to be issued
Climate Action	End-of-search report to be issued
Digital Transformation	Not yet advertised
Food Frontiers and Security	End-of-search report to be issued
Gender Equality and Inclusion	Interviews being scheduled
Genebanks	Interviews being scheduled
Multifunctional Landscapes	Longlisted
Policy Innovations	Interviews completed
Scaling for Impact	Longlisted
Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods	Advertised externally until 3 June
Sustainable Farming	Longlisted

47. Management aims to complete decision-making on the above roles by June 2025. Once in place, the Directors/ Leaders will run CGIAR-wide competitive processes to assign longer-term AoW leadership and management unit roles, with the aim of having stable arrangements in place from January 2026.

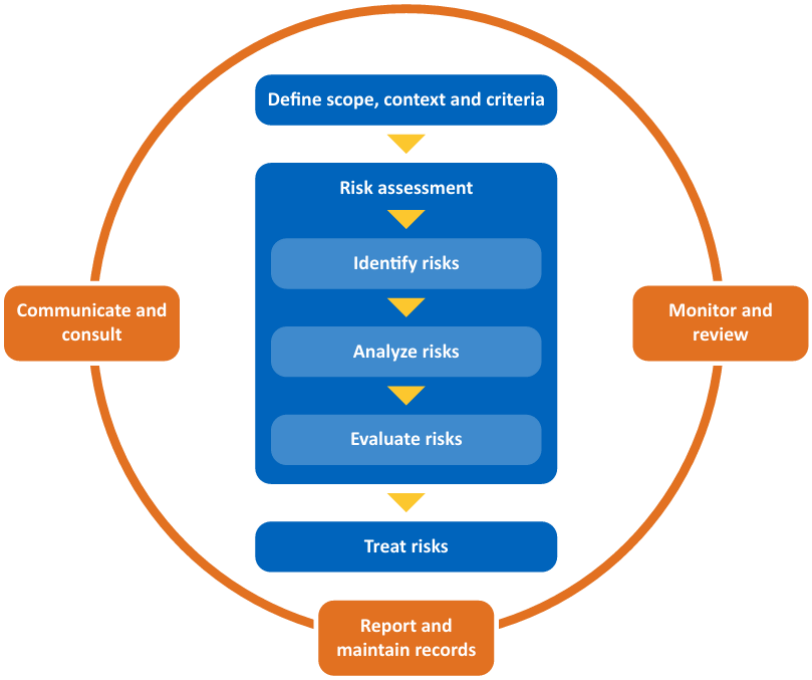
10 Risk management

48. In the September 2024 proposal documents, the Programs and Accelerators identified top five risks, focusing on areas critical to achieving their objectives and intended impact. ISDC, in its feedback, recommended integrating robust risk frameworks to strengthen the credibility and resilience of the Programs and Accelerators. It underscored the importance of clear risk mitigation strategies as part of feasibility assessment and implementation readiness[25]. Echoing ISDC's feedback, IPB members noted that CGIAR and the end-users of its science and innovations face an increasingly volatile operating environment, which calls for intentional, strategic, and proactive risk management; as well as frequent risk reviews in a continuously evolving risk landscape[26].

49. As part of the Inception Phase, Programs and Accelerators have carried out more detailed risk assessments. An online tool, initially designed for the 2022—24 Research Initiatives and Impact Area Platforms, was updated to accommodate the needs of the Programs and Accelerators, allowing teams to identify risks and risk owners, assess their likelihood and impact, and define mitigation actions. While only the top five critical risks are reported annually, teams are encouraged to manage risks on a continuous basis and regularly update their risk registers to ensure proactive and strategic risk management. The risk management process followed – adapted from ISO 31000:2018, the international standard on risk management – is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

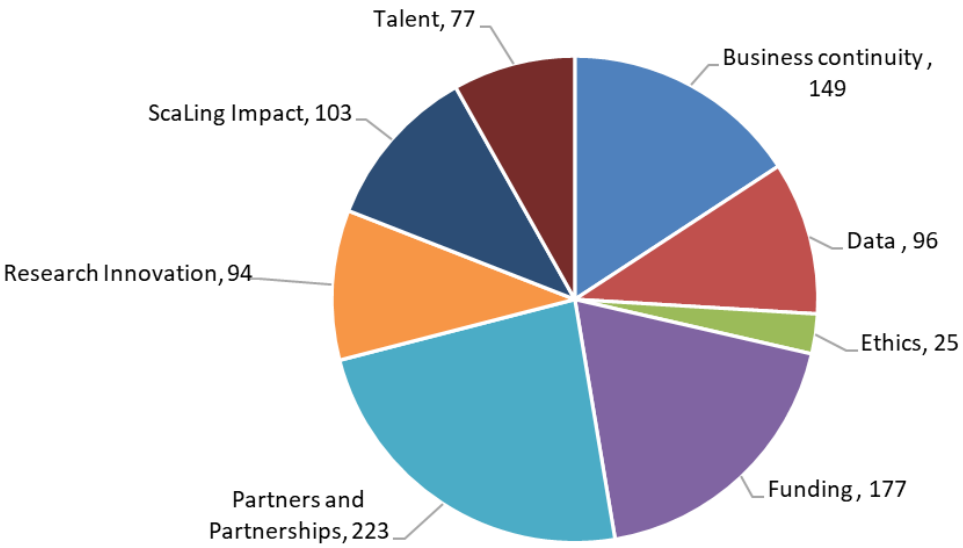
[25] SC21-05e - ISDC Feedback on CGIAR Portfolio Narrative 2025-2030 (content)
[26] Meeting Summary of 2nd CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board Meeting (IPB-002), 25 November 2024, (Virtual) (https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/47227397-b622-47f5-bacc-cba5b0f9e8d7/content)

Figure 3: Program/ Accelerator risk management process



50. While risks to Programs' and Accelerators' contributions to impact are complex and interconnected, categorizing them helps identify common themes, prioritize mitigation measures, and assign ownership. Based on reporting by Programs and Accelerators, risks associated with Partnerships, Funding, and Business Continuity received the highest aggregate scores (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Aggregate Program/ Accelerator risk levels by risk category



51. In terms of **partner and partnership risks,** Programs and Accelerators cited, *inter alia*, the implications of commodity or regional prioritization, which could undermine support towards national capacities and damage key relationships; insufficient empowerment of NARES and SMEs, which could hinder effective collaboration; and the transition from the 2022—24 Research Initiatives and Impact Area Platforms to the 2025—30 Programs and Accelerators disrupting progress. To mitigate these and related risks, Programs and Accelerators focus on stakeholder engagement and collaboration, which may include partnership reviews and co-design. Stakeholder engagement in policy, capacity building in conflict resolution and governance, and tailored communications will be key to ensuring equitable participation and program success.

52. **Funding risks** primarily stem from uncertainty due to changing funder priorities, the short-term funding outlook, underfunding of critical themes, and the impact of external shocks. These challenges can disrupt long-term planning, weaken partner trust, and limit the flexibility needed to adapt to evolving needs. Scenario planning and adaptive management will build resilience against funding volatility and open dialogue can ensure that underfunded areas continue to receive support. CGIAR's approach to addressing these risks can include enhancing KPIs and accountability mechanisms, advocating for flexible budget allocations, and securing diversified funding through co-financing and strategic partnerships.

53. **Business continuity risks** involve environmental, political, and economic disruptions that can hinder Program/ Accelerator delivery and research efforts. Issues such as droughts, political instability, and economic downturns can disrupt activities, reduce demand, and limit investments in innovation. To enhance resilience and responsiveness, Programs and Accelerators can strengthen early warning, adjust activities and budgets based on emerging risks, and prioritize affordable innovations. Joint planning across Programs and Accelerators, robust monitoring, and evidence-based investment proposals support coordinated scaling and resource alignment. Funding resilience and diversification strategies can help diversify income sources and sustain impact amid financial uncertainty.

54. The above, emerging Program/ Accelerator risks are aligned with CGIAR's top risks, which are regularly reviewed by the CGIAR Global Leadership Team (GLT). CGIAR's top risks include the inability to establish a sustainable, long-term funding strategy aligned with the integrated partnership's vision; a failure to deliver a high-quality research portfolio; and challenges in maintaining effective partnerships. Other risks monitored by the GLT include potential disruptions to facilities and non-adherence to CGIAR's core ethical values, including those related to scientific research integrity.

11 Key milestones and next steps

7 February	✓	Portfolio Inception Plan defined and presented to the CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board (IPB) at its 3rd meeting
4 March	✓	1st System Council, IPB, ISDC touch point on the Portfolio Inception Phase
11 March	✓	Program/ Accelerator Inception Report template completed in consultation with ISDC
March—April	✓	Detailed guidance on prioritization, comparative advantage analysis, theories of change, MELIA plans, and risk management completed and available to Program/ Accelerator teams
2—4 April	✓	1st in-person meeting of the CGIAR Global Science Team (GST), with a focus on prioritization, resource allocation, and management
Early-April	✓	CGIAR Science Week: presentations of all Programs and Accelerators, key partner engagement and outreach
early-May	✓	Technical Reporting: Type 1 technical reports of the 2024 performance and results of the Research Initiatives and Impact Area Platforms, Type 3 report on Portfolio practice change published: Portfolio Reports - CGIAR
7 May	✓	2nd System Council, IPB, ISDC touch point on the Portfolio Inception Phase
14 May	✓	3rd meeting of the IPB's Science, Innovation, Impact, and Partnership Committee: review of management's update on the Portfolio Inception Phase
16 May	✓	5th meeting of the IPB: review of management's update on the Portfolio Inception Phase
21 May	✓	Update on the Inception Phase posted for information ahead of the 22nd meeting of the CGIAR System Council (SC22)
4—5 June	☐	SC22: Update presented for System Council discussion, feedback, and guidance
30 June	☐	Deadline for ISDC submission of Program/ Accelerator Inception Reports, complete 2025 Plans of Results and Budgets, and relevant supporting materials
July	☐	Technical Reporting: 2024 Portfolio Narrative and Type 2 technical report on 2022—24 progress to impact published
early-August	☐	ISDC reviews completed
August—September	☐	Management Action Plan in response to ISDC reviews completed, submitted to the IPB for approval, System Council information

Annex I: Strategic partnership approach

CGIAR's ability to drive transformative change in food, land, and water systems depends on how effectively it collaborates with others. Tackling the climate crisis, addressing inequality in science, and scaling innovation all demand new kinds of partnerships that are more inclusive, co-creative, and outcome-driven. To meet this challenge, CGIAR leadership committed to developing a Strategic Partnership Approach that unlocks the full value of partnerships, grounded in principles of equity, mutual benefit, and collective impact.

In 2024, a consultative process was launched to translate this vision into practice by building on the CGIAR Engagement Framework. With support from The Partnering Initiative (TPI) – a global leader in multi-stakeholder collaboration – CGIAR drew on lessons from other organizations and sectors to design a more systematic, impact-driven model for partnering. The result is a concise, actionable Strategic Partnership Approach that aligns with CGIAR's 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy and provides practical guidance on both the "why" and the "how" of partnering.

A suite of tools accompanies the approach, designed to support its implementation across CGIAR's diverse programs and contexts. Together, these resources aim to institutionalize a partnership culture that is transparent, equitable, and focused on shared outcomes.

In the Portfolio Inception Phase, CGIAR began testing and embedding its new Strategic Partnership Approach across the system. The rollout focused on building the internal foundations, modeling the approach with partners, and integrating it into core CGIAR processes—while learning from experience and identifying barriers to change. Key areas of action included:

1. Building awareness, shared understanding, and capacity internally

To support a mindset shift toward more strategic, impact-oriented partnering, CGIAR launched targeted internal efforts to build awareness and capacity, including:

- A system-wide call convened by the Executive Managing Director in December 2024 engaged over 250 staff, signaling high-level commitment.
- A cross-CGIAR Technical Working Group (TWG), including Interim Program/ Accelerator Directors, was formed to promote the approach across programs and Centers.
- Capacity-strengthening sessions were held with the TWG and CapSha team to build foundational skills and shared understanding.
- Broader training and socialization efforts are being planned to embed partnering principles more widely across CGIAR.

2. Testing and modeling the approach with partners

CGIAR used Science Week and related consultations to test the new approach and strengthen co-design with diverse partners:

- Partnership was featured as a central theme throughout Science Week sessions.
- Interactive polls, surveys, and games allowed partners — including NARES partners and farmer organizations — to share perspectives and shape priorities. This helped foster co-creative, participatory engagement.
- Regional consultations under the Scaling for Impact Science Program applied the Strategic Approach to Partnerships to promote capacity sharing and collaborative planning.

3. Embedding strategic partnering across CGIAR systems

To transition the Strategic Partnership Approach from aspiration to action, CGIAR made targeted efforts to integrate it into key processes and tools across the system, including:

- Ensuring co-design was prominently featured and well-defined in the Inception Report Template.
- Aligning with the CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service's partnership review to ensure consistency.
- Reviewing and updating the System Organization's MoU templates to reflect the core principles of strategic partnering.
- Exploring the inclusion of partnership capacity-building in ongoing leadership development initiatives (currently under discussion).

4. Advancing the Strategic Partnership Approach at Center level

The Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT has begun applying the approach to assess and strengthen its institutional partnering capacity. This pilot will generate lessons for other Centers on embedding a "pro-partnering" way of working.

5. Identifying barriers to shifting the partnership approach

Throughout the processes outlined above, careful attention has been given to identifying the barriers and challenges in shifting CGIAR's partnership approach, both during the Inception Phase and beyond. Key challenges include:

- Time constraints during the Inception Phase have limited truly inclusive partner engagement.

- Insufficient funding for co-design and relationship-building has hindered deeper, more collaborative partnerships.

- A lack of incentives and accountability mechanisms for equitable partnership practices remains a structural barrier to lasting change, if left unaddressed.

Looking ahead

The work carried out in 2024–25 lays a strong foundation for more strategic, equitable, and outcomes-focused partnerships. As CGIAR moves from piloting to full implementation, the next phase will focus on four key priorities:

- Scaling adoption across CGIAR: Embedding the approach in the systems, practices, and cultures of all Centers, Programs, and Accelerators.

- Capturing and sharing learning: Documenting insights from pilots to support peer learning.

- Aligning incentives and resources: Ensuring that time, funding, and recognition support effective partnering.

- Strengthening accountability: Embedding mechanisms to monitor the quality, equity, and impact of partnerships.

By investing in these areas, CGIAR can harness the full potential of its current and future partnerships—delivering more inclusive, resilient, and impactful research and innovation.

Annex II: Knowledge-driven prioritization

The knowledge-driven prioritisation methodology includes two phases (see Figure 5). The first phase uses a template and guides teams through a scoring of their high-level outputs (HLO) per CGIAR Region and Impact Area. The second phase brings in 'ground truthing' factors to the results of the first phase to inform final decisions around resource allocation across HLOs, CGIAR regions, and Impact Areas are made. These ground truthing factors may include partner and funder preferences, results of the Program/Accelerators' comparative advantage exercises, work continuity, availability of funding sources, and any other factors that Program and Accelerator leadership deem necessary.

Figure 5: Broad overview of the two phases of the knowledge-driven prioritization process

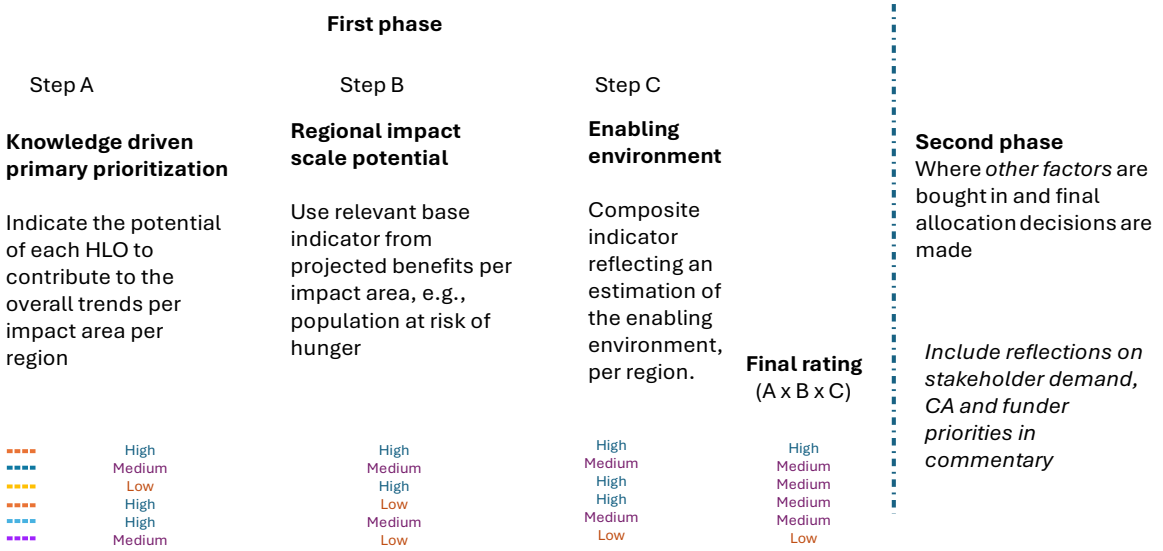


Figure 6.

Phase 1

In Phase 1, for each HLO, Programs and Accelerators develop 'narrative cells' for:

- The *Current state (across the Global South)* of each HLO: What is the status of the HLO? Why this work is necessary (what is the problem)?
- The *Ideal state (across the Global South)* of each HLO: Where does the Program/ Accelerator want to get to by 2030?
- The *Assumptions* for each HLO: What assumptions are being made in relation to each HLO? This narrative helps provide context for why there is variation across the HLOs' scores across regions.

- The *Requirements for success (internal to the Program/Accelerator)*: What is needed, within the Program/Accelerator to ensure that the HLO is successful? This part of the narrative allows teams to highlight dependencies and linkages within their Program/Accelerator.

- The *Requirements for success (from other Programs/Accelerators)*: What is needed from other Program/Accelerators to ensure their HLO is successful? This part of the narrative allows teams to highlight dependencies and linkages between in the CGIAR Portfolio.

Documenting assumptions and requirements allows teams to elucidate the richness of knowledge they have around their HLOs to support scoring and allow future interrogation around scoring at a later date.

As a second component of Phase 1, teams are then guided through the quantitative scoring of their HLOs, per CGIAR Region and Impact Area. For all Impact Area tabs, teams score each HLOs per region between 1-5 (see below an example of the scoring template for the Food Security and Nutrition Impact Area (Figure 6)). Teams' scoring process broadly should consider:

- The narrative cells and how far away from the 'ideal state' the HLO's 'current state' is (if the current state is further away from the ideal state, the HLO's potential to achieve impact may be greater, potentially leading to a higher score).

- The indicators relevant to the Impact Area per region – both those for which 2040 projections are available ("projected indicators") and those for which only static baseline values are available. See Table 3 for the full list of indicators used.

- How linked the 'ideal state' is to the indicators – strong links may lead to higher scores. For example, if the HLO's activities are primarily targeting emissions reduction strategies, and teams are scoring in the tab on *Climate mitigation*, the direct link may be stronger than, for example, the link with the indicators in the *Food security* tab.

- Other narrative cells. Teams need to assess whether the assumptions support or reduce the probability of success.

Teams then select a score for each HLO in each Region and for each Impact Area tab. Scoring is capped by a maximum per region (which is set as a function of the number of HLOs). If teams exceed the maximum score in a Region, HLOs need to be rescored with lower values until the region's total score fits below the maximum. Having a maximum requires teams to consider the potential contribution of an HLO to impact in a Region *relative* to other HLOs.

Figure 7: An example of a scoring tab in the knowledge-driven prioritization process. For each CGIAR Region and Impact Area, teams score their HLOs from 1 to 5 (5 = very high potential to contribute to impact; 4 = high potential; 3 = moderately high potential; 2 = moderate potential; and 1 = low potential).

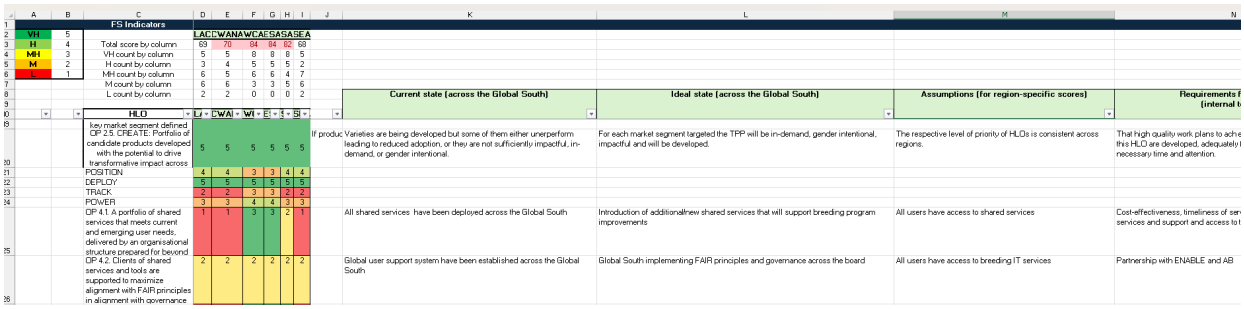


Table 3: List of the indicators used in the knowledge-driven prioritization process. Indicators are either baseline values (taken from the most recent data available) or projected values (using data from the 2024 Projected Benefits work).

Impact Area	Projected to 2040 or current state?	Indicator
Nutrition	current state	Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) % children under 5 years of age
Nutrition	current state	Prevalence of wasting (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) % children under 5 years of age
Nutrition	current state	% of population unable to afford a healthy diet
Nutrition	current state	Women not meeting minimum dietary diversity (MDD-W) (%)
Gender	current state	Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training (NEET) (%)
Gender	current state	Gender Development Index (GDI)
Gender	current state	Gender Inequality Index (GII)
Poverty	current state	The ratio of the people employed in agriculture in rural areas over all people employed in rural areas"
Climate	current state	Vulnerability index of the geography (exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity in six life-supporting sectors: food, water, health, ecosystem services, human habitat, and infrastructure).
Climate	current state	Emissions intensity - CO2eq emissions from croplands (kg/ha) (Carlson et al., 2017)
Climate	current state	CRI - Climate Risk Index - the index of the level of exposure and vulnerability to extreme events such as storms, floods and heatwaves based on historic data
Environment	current state	Consumptive blue and green water used in food production (m3/ha)
Environment	current state	Soil erosion rate (/Ha)

Environment	current state	Forest area lost (%) - the percentage of forested area (%) lost between 2010 and 2020
Environment	current state	GBI - Global Biodiversity Index - Total number of plant, reptile, mammal, bird, fish and amphibian species
Environment	current state	Sustainable agriculture score - Index quantifying progress toward productive and sustainable agriculture (current status score)
Nutrition	projected to 2040	Prevalence of Undernourishment - Share of total population living below the minimum calorie daily threshold
Poverty	projected to 2040	Poverty Headcount Rate ($2.15) - Share of total population living below the poverty line
Poverty	projected to 2040	Poverty Headcount Rate ($3.65) - Share of total population living below the poverty line
Poverty	projected to 2040	Poverty Headcount Rate ($6.85) - Share of total population living below the poverty line
Poverty	projected to 2040	Agrifood System Jobs (incl. subsistence farming and informal sector) - millions of workers
Poverty	projected to 2040	Agrifood System GDP Per Worker - US$ per worker
Climate	projected to 2040	Agrifood System Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

Following the scoring, the HLO scores are weighted by their potential for scale per CGIAR region (e.g., for the Nutrition and Food Security Impact Area scores, weights are calculated by the share of the Region's total population living below the minimum daily calorie threshold, representing the population that the HLO could potentially impact). Subsequently, scores are weighted by enabling environment factors per region. For each region, an estimation of the enabling environment is calculated and applied to the scores (using a combination of the Conflict Index, Corruption Perception Index, Ease of Doing Business, Empowerment Rights Index, and Fragile States Index). After weighting, teams have their final scores for each HLO. These final scores provide an indication of which HLOs may have the greatest potential for impact and where.

Phase 2

The second phase of the methodology brings 'ground truthing' factors into the results of the first phase. It is where teams make final decisions regarding resource allocation across HLOs, CGAIR regions, and Impact Areas.

Given the limitations of Phase 1, ground truthing factors can include partner and funder preferences, results of the Program's/Accelerator's comparative advantage analysis, additional research and data points, work continuity, availability of funding, and any other factors that Program and Accelerator deem necessary. The methodology does not dictate how Programs and Accelerators should account for these factors in their final decisions. **However, in all cases, teams must document and justify the factors used and the decisions taken.**

Annex III: Comparative advantage analysis

The comparative advantage exercise uses a simplified methodology for determining how well a Program/ Accelerator is positioned to deliver its HLOs relative to other parties. The exercise uses a template to walk teams through a stepwise logic (see Figure 7):

- First, teams are guided to identify the needed sources of comparative advantage for undertaking the HLO, and which of these sources CGIAR holds.

- Teams are then guided to investigate whether there is an obvious third party that can undertake the work associated with the HLO. If the answer is no, this work has a higher likelihood of falling within CGIAR's comparative advantage.

- If the answer is yes, teams are invited to analyze whether the identified party is likely to undertake the work. If the answer is no, the work is more likely to fall within CGIAR's comparative advantage.

- If the answer is yes, teams analyze how efficient and impactful the party is estimated to be at delivering the work. If the answer is very efficient and impactful, not considering other factors, CGIAR may not be best positioned to deliver the work. In these cases, teams are asked to consider, relative to other opportunities that are being foregone, whether their Program/ Accelerator should dedicate their resources elsewhere. If the answer is moderately efficient and impactful – teams are asked to consider whether their Program/ Accelerator has considered co-delivering the work, depending on the party's appetite and the other opportunities that CGIAR would be foregoing. If the answer is inefficient and not impactful, it suggests that the Program/ Accelerator may be better positioned to have the comparative advantage for delivering this HLO.

This stepwise logic places HLOs in three different categories in terms of CGIAR's comparative advantage:

i. **Well positioned:** CGIAR may be well positioned to deliver the HLO because of an absence of others doing the work or because other parties are unlikely to undertake the work associated with the HLO.

ii. **Moderately positioned:** Other parties are present and will likely undertake the work associated with the HLO but are probably less efficient and impactful than CGIAR.

iii. **Weakly positioned:** Other parties are present, are likely to be efficient and impactful, and will likely undertake the work associated with the HLO.

Figure 8: Extracts from the comparative advantage analysis template. The template invites Programs and Accelerators to walk through a stepwise logic to determine whether specific parties or CGIAR are better positioned to deliver the work associated with a given HLO. Up to ten parties can be analysed per HLO.

High-level output	Are there other parties that could undertake this work? Indicate Y or N. If N, provide a small justification and go stright to column I - and indicate 1. If yes, go to the next column	Name the specific party that could undertake this HLO.	Geography of party - at what 'level' does this party sit? Global or regional or country (and if regional or country, which region or country?)	Is this partie likley to undertake the work associated with the HLO in the geography identified? Y/N. If N, in this cell provide a small justification as to why and then go stright to column I - and indicate 1. If Y, go to the next column.
HLO 1 *Copied directly from your Program/ Accelerator's Section 4 proposal table*		Specific party 1.		
		Specific party 2.		
		Specific party 3.		
		Specific party 4.		
		Specific party 5.		
		Specific party 6.		
		Specific party 7.		
		Specific party 8.		
		Specific party 9.		
		Specific party 10.		

The party is likley to undertake the work assoicated with the HLO. Estimate how efficient and impactful the party will be at delivering the work. Provide a justification. If the party is estimated to be highly efficient and impactful - go to column I, and indicate 0; If the party is estimated to be moderatly efficient and impactful - go to column I, and indicate 0.5; If the party is estimated to be minimally efficient and impactful - go to column I, and indicate 1.	Comparative Advantage bucket: Well positioned for CA - 1 Moderately positioned for CA - 0.5 Weakly positioned for CA - 0	If the response in column I is either 0.5 or 0, justify why your Program or Accelerator is undertaking the work associated with the HLO (either with or without the party).
Use thinking from your Program/ Accelerator's Section 4 proposal table column labelled "What is your Partners' source of Comparative Advantage in delivering the high-level output".		

Because Programs/Accelerators work in many geographies, analyzing each potential party for each HLO in each country is not feasible. Thus, when undertaking their analyses, teams are guided to consider a representative selection of parties per HLO that work either at the global or regional level. If these parties don't exist, teams are invited to look at the country level.

After completing the template, teams are requested to consider their results in light of other variables (e.g. research continuity, partner demand, etc.). In some cases, while the analysis suggests that CGIAR is weakly positioned, Programs/ Accelerators may have other reasons for investing in the work.