CGIAR | SCALING FOR IMPACT | POLICY INNOVATIONS | CLIMATE ACTION | SUSTAINABLE ANIMAL AND AQUATIC FOODS | GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSION | SUSTAINABLE FARMING

Scaling Fund Report 2025

December 2025

Report

CONTENTS

Authors: Kihoro, E.; Innocenti, A.; Buono, N.; Galie, A.; Jumba, Navarro, C.; Zapata, E.; Omair, B.**;** Go, A.; Malapit, H.; Kamau, J.; Bodach, S.; Jasada, I.; Mudereri, B.; Rao, J.; Mwendia, S.; and Gebreyes, M.

Suggested citation: Kihoro, E.; Innocenti, A.; Buono, N.; Galie, A.; Njumba, H.; Navarro, C.; Zapata, E.; Omair, B.**;** Go, A.; Malapit, H.; Kamau, J.; Bodach, S.; Jasada, I.; Mudereri, B.; Rao, J.; Mwendia, S.; and Gebreyes, M. 2025.

Photo: Front cover: ILRI/Women in Business project. Back cover: ILRI/women in Business

Acknowledgments: This work was funded by the Scaling Fund, organized under the CGIAR Scaling for Impact Program (S4I) and coordinated by the Impact at Scale Program at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) working in close collaboration with CGIAR's science programs and accelerators, including the Climate Action, Policy Innovations, Sustainable Farming, and Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods science programs and the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Accelerator. The Scaling Fund is indebted to its donor, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, CGIAR trust funders and to the 2025 cohort of Scaling Fund awardees for advancing impactful solutions across diverse domains and driving forward CGIAR's mission to deliver Impact at scale.

ABBREVIATIONS

AI	artificial intelligence
CIAT	International Center for Tropical Agriculture
DFA	Dairy Farmer Advisor
ENABEL	Belgian Agency for International Cooperation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GMIS	Groundwater Management Information System
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
INSIVUMEH	Instituto Nacional de Sismología, Vulcanología, Meteorología e Hidrología (Guatemala)
IPSR	Innovation Packaging and Scaling Readiness
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
LMICs	low- and middle-income countries
LTAC	Local Technical Agroclimatic Committee
MAGA	Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food) (Guatemala)
MAPAC	Malawi Programme for Aflatoxin Control
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MTA	Mesa Técnica Agroclimática (Agroclimatic Technical Committee)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ROI	return on investment
S4I	Science for Impact (CGIAR)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SNS	Smart Nkunganire System (Rwanda)
USD	United States dollar
WEMNS	Women's Empowerment Metric for National Statistical Systems
WiB	Women in Business (ILRI)

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 About the Scaling Fund

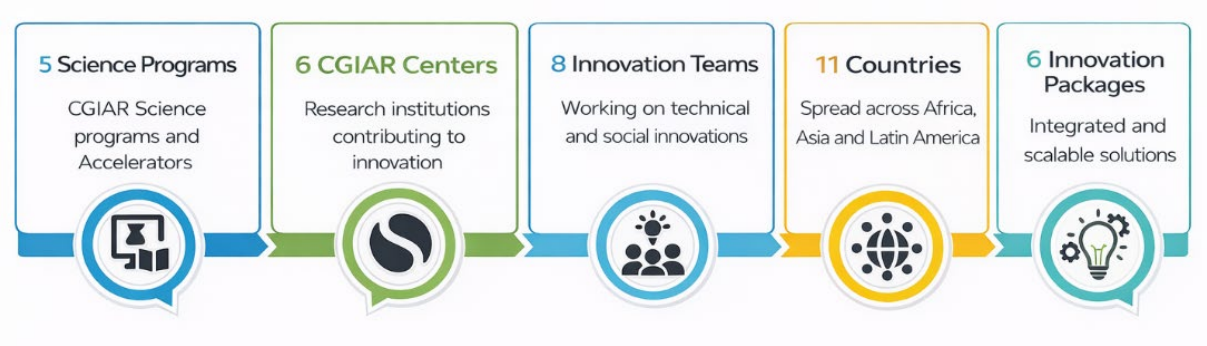
The CGIAR Scaling Fund addresses gaps that exist between developing agrifood innovations and scaling them broadly for wide impact. The Scaling Fund combines flexible financing with tailored technical assistance for innovation teams across CGIAR programs. The Fund targets this "scaling implementation gap", which hinders the transition of innovations that prove successful in pilot projects from subsequently transitioning to innovations having sustained, system-level uptake. Anchored in CGIAR's approach to responsible and demand-driven scaling, the Fund supports innovation teams in translating scientific research outputs into context-specific solutions with measurable benefits for end users.

The CGIAR Scaling Fund conducts is implemented through two main tracks:

- **Scaling Challenge**: This is a competitive initiative supporting high-impact innovations that have demonstrated proof of concept and are ready for broader deployment by providing them and their partners with structured support for co-developing and implementing productive scaling strategies.
- **Needs-Driven Support:** This other funding window provides short, targeted funding for activities such as workshops, stakeholder engagements, and rapid technical inputs to address specific scaling bottlenecks where limited resources can unlock progress.

1.2 Key achievements

In 2025, the Scaling Fund supported eight innovative teams. Five teams received USD 40,000 each through the Scaling Challenge initiative and three teams received USD 10,000 each through the Needs-Driven Support funding window. All eight teams benefited from tailored technical assistance, expert guidance, and peer learning. The supported innovations span 6 CGIAR science programs and 5 CGIAR centers and are implemented across 11 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.



1.3 Strategic partnership with ENABEL

In addition, the Scaling Fund partnered with ENABEL the Belgian Development Agency, to support two innovation teams in advancing the scaling of their innovations using CGIAR's innovative "Scaling Readiness" approach.

> *For the third consecutive year, the Scaling Fund is serving as a catalyst for responsible, evidence-based scaling—embedding scaling science into practice, strengthening partnerships, and driving equitable and sustainable outcomes.* Esther Kihoro, Scaling Fund Lead

1.4 Scaling Challenge innovations

Five innovations in 2025 were funded through the Scaling Challenge initiative; below is a summary of the key achievements of the five teams.

1.5 Needs-Driven Support innovations

An additional three innovations were funded through the Needs-Driven window:

- *Scaling* Urochloa*, a hybrid forage grass commonly called signalgrass and formerly known as* Brachiaria*, in Kenya.* The innovation team conducted a scaling pathway workshop in Kenya to define key scaling challenges, market potential, and an implementation roadmap for this important forage grass.
- *Disseminating locally tailored fertilizer recommendation packages in Rwanda.* The innovation team held an updated Innovation Packaging and Scaling Readiness (IPSR) workshop informed by dynamic evaluation findings and conducted a Responsible Scaling workshop to develop materials supporting disability-inclusive agriculture in Rwanda.
- *Strengthening Dairy Farmer Advisor Capacity in Kenya.* The innovation team is planning an IPSR workshop.

The Needs-Driven scaling support provided by the Scaling Fund promoted responsible scaling to ensure that innovations not only expanded their reach but also influenced institutions, shifted behavior, and were properly adapted to local contexts. The support also emphasized anticipating and mitigating potential environmental and social risks as innovations moved toward broader adoption.

1.6 Recommendations

In the feedback received from the innovation teams this year, the Scaling Fund was acknowledged for its strong value and for the high-quality support CGIAR's scaling team provided. Consistent appreciation was given for the professionalism, relevance, and practical orientation of the scaling support. The innovation teams particularly valued the Scaling Readiness course, Responsible Scaling Masterclasses, IPSR workshops, and follow-up engagements. The teams noted that these inputs clarified scaling pathways and strengthened their implementation planning and they described the Scaling Challenge process as smooth overall.

> *The scaling workshop was helpful and the scaling team very skilled."*
> *"The content was highly relevant and offered a clear pathway to strengthen and scale our innovation."— Two Scaling Challenge winners*

At the same time, the scaling innovation teams identified areas for improvement, including the need for clearer alignment between the agenda of CGIAR's Science for Impact (S4I) program and the expectations of its partners—especially those from the private sector. Among the specific recommendations made were requests for 1) longer and more flexible implementation timelines to allow effective capacity building, 2) more targeted design of workshops to focus on user-specific adoption challenges, and 3) clearer guidance on use of evidence, monitoring and evaluation processes, and accessible dissemination, all supported with practical templates and budgeting guidance for multi-channel scaling pathways.

Figure 1. An Innovation Packaging and Scaling Readiness workshop for the Women in Business project held in Kenya in 2025 (photo credit: ILRI/Ijudai Jasada).

2 INTRODUCTION

In an era of constrained development financing, research and innovation organizations face growing pressure to demonstrate measurable impact at scale. Donors and national governments increasingly expect investments to move beyond proof of concept and to deliver tangible outcomes in poverty reduction, food security, climate resilience, and equity. Yet a persistent gap remains between innovation development and its sustained uptake. Many promising innovations stall in the "valley of death" between research and real-world use, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where needs are greatest.

Despite increased recognition of the complexity of scaling, funding and implementation models continue to be underinvested in the scaling implementation phase. Research funding typically prioritizes discovery and validation while providing limited support for the relational, institutional, and market-oriented work required to embed innovations in practice. Additionally, researchers are often ill-equipped to navigate the "messy middle" dimensions of scaling—such as investment planning, market analysis, cost-benefit assessments, intellectual property management, and return-on-investment considerations—even though these capabilities are critical to whether innovations are adopted by public systems or private markets. Without practical guidance, mentorship, and real-time support, many teams address these challenges in isolation, which hinders the translation of scientific advances into sustainable, system-level impact.

2.1 Scaling Fund

The CGIAR Scaling Fund addresses this gap directly. Its strategic financing and technical support are designed to accelerate the optimization, delivery, and scaling of innovations across CGIAR and its partners. By combining targeted funding with embedded technical assistance and capacity strengthening, the Fund supports innovation teams in progressing from proof of concept to sustained, system-level impact.

The Fund is implemented under the CGIAR Scaling for Impact Program and builds on lessons from the inaugural Ukama Ustawi Scaling Fund, which was supported by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Anchored in CGIAR's commitment to responsible scaling, the Fund supports teams to translate research outputs into context-specific solutions that deliver measurable benefits for end users.

The Scaling Fund operates through a dual structure:

- **Scaling Challenge**—a competitive funding window supporting high-potential innovations that have demonstrated proof of concept and are ready for broader deployment. This stream provides structured support for the co-development and implementation of scaling strategies with relevant partners.
- **Needs-Driven Support**—a flexible mechanism offering short, targeted support (e.g. for workshops, stakeholder engagements, and rapid technical inputs) to address specific scaling bottlenecks where limited resources can unlock progress.

2.2 Scaling Fund design

The Scaling Fund adopts a responsive, adaptive approach that aligns support to each innovation's specific needs and level of scaling readiness, moving away from a one-size-fits-all model toward tailored scaling support for selected teams.

The Fund's design envisioned offering two levels of support—one for optimizing scaling work and another for developing scaling delivery strategies—reflecting different levels of innovation maturity. However, scaling readiness assessments indicated that none of the selected innovation teams in 2025

had yet reached the threshold required for developing a scaling delivery strategy. Consequently, support in this round focused exclusively on scaling optimization, with the objective to strengthen innovation readiness for future progression to delivery and institutional embedding.

The scaling optimization pathway centered on embedding "innovation bundles" [1] within specific scaling contexts. Support focused on strengthening the enabling conditions for an innovation by identifying context-specific barriers, addressing critical bottlenecks, and implementing tailored optimization plans informed by systematic assessments of the "innovation package" [2].

Depending on their specific scaling needs, innovation teams selected from a menu of tailored support options, including innovation packaging and scaling readiness workshop facilitation, scaling optimization through the design and implementation of scaling action plans, user-centered design, business case development, investment planning and costing, partnership coordination, cost-benefit analysis and return on investment, market analysis, and policy engagement and advocacy (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Scaling support options.

Each innovation team was supported by a dedicated scaling expert who provided embedded, cross-cutting technical guidance throughout the optimization process and helped lay the foundation for subsequent scaling delivery.

[1] Innovation bundle is a Combinations of interrelated innovations.
[2] An innovation package is a core technical, social, or institutional innovation paired with necessary, context-specific "enablers" (such as training, financial tools, or policy support) that, together, can lead to transformation and impact at scale in a specific context.

2.3 Scaling Fund implementation

The Scaling Fund was implemented in three main phases—1) inception and selection, 2) capacity strengthening and needs assessment, and 3) execution and reflection.

Inception and selection phase: Grant opening and selection

The process began with an open call inviting CGIAR science programs and accelerators to submit scaling proposals aligned with CGIAR's defined Impact Areas. Applications were reviewed by a multidisciplinary panel that assessed each proposal's scaling ambition, innovation maturity, enabling conditions, partnerships, and anticipated impact. Shortlisted teams were then invited to a "pitch session" to present their scaling vision and plans.

Following the pitch session, the review panel made final selections based on the selection criteria and scaling readiness of the innovation. Selected teams were then onboarded through an orientation session that introduced the Scaling Fund's operational framework, available technical support and learning resources, and the roles of embedded scaling experts.

Capacity strengthening and needs assessment phase

- *Capacity strengthening:* To enhance scaling literacy and implementation capacity, the Fund organized a series of targeted learning sessions, including master classes on Innovation Packaging and Scaling Readiness (IPSR) and the responsible Scaling Readiness Framework. These sessions provided teams with practical tools to assess innovation readiness, identify bottlenecks, and strengthen partnerships.
- *Onboarding scaling champions:* Each innovation team was paired with a Scaling Champion—an embedded scaling expert offering hands-on technical guidance, including diagnostics, partnership mapping, and progress tracking throughout implementation.
- *Needs assessment:* Scaling needs were jointly identified through a needs assessment conducted in collaboration with the innovation team.
- *Prioritization of key activities:* Based on the needs assessment, teams worked with the Scaling Fund team to prioritize key scaling activities to ensure a focused approach that maximized learning, alignment, and feasibility.

Execution and reflection phase

Once capacity strengthening and onboarding were complete, each team identified and implemented a set of prioritized scaling activities aligned with their innovation context and maturity level.

These included:

- *Innovation Packaging workshops*—defining the innovation, its value proposition, and user pathways to inform scaling.
- *Optimization processes*—refining the design, delivery, and institutional alignment of the innovation.
- *Scaling action plans*—outlining clear steps, partnerships, and milestones for scaling implementation.
- *Regular check-ins and reporting*—facilitating adaptive management, cross-learning, and accountability across teams.

At the end of the Scaling Fund cycle, teams pause to reflect on their achievements, using IPSR packages to assess their progress and inform their next steps. This phase places particular emphasis on the

partnerships and direct investment options required going forward to ensure that follow-up actions are undertaken.

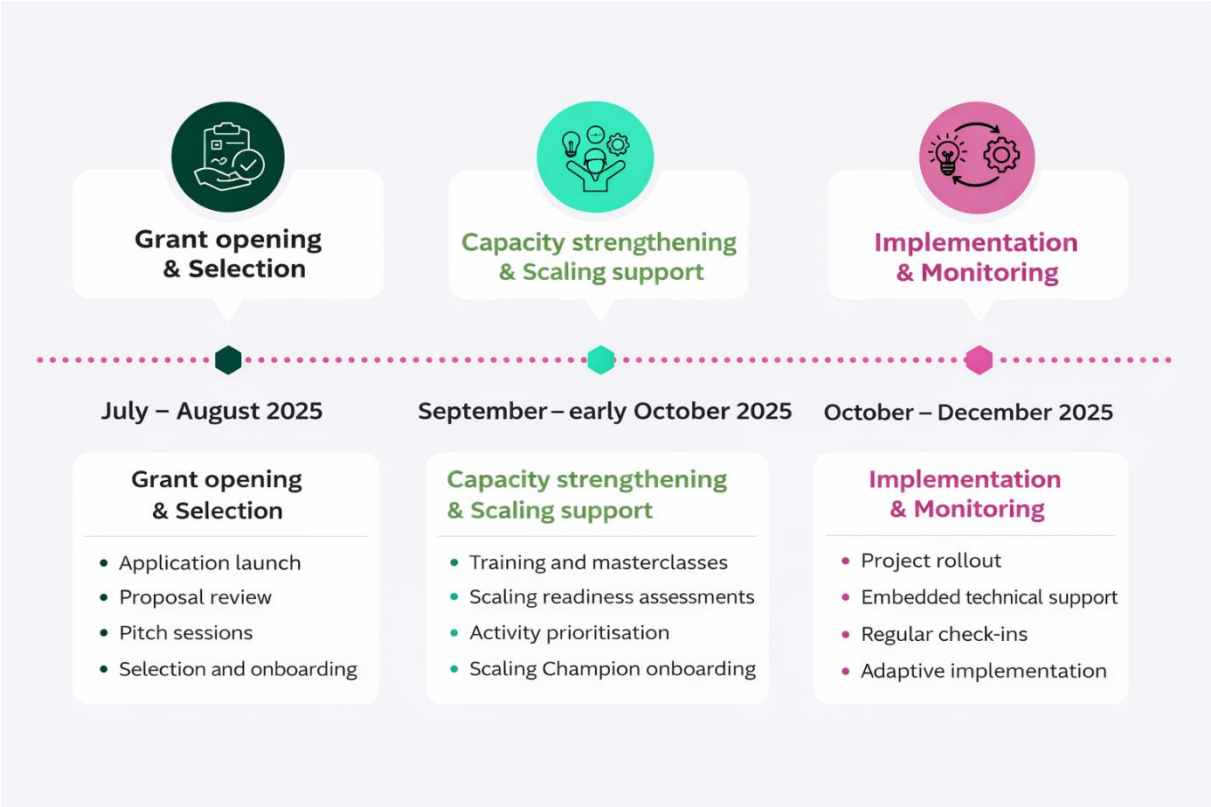


Figure 3. 2025 Scaling Fund timeline.

WEMNS Workshop in Nairobi. Photo credits: IFPRI

3 KEY RESULTS ENABLED THROUGH SCALING SUPPORT

3.1 Scaling Fund winners

In 2025, the Scaling Fund supported eight agrifood innovation teams. Five teams received USD 40,000 each through the Scaling Challenge and three teams received USD 10,000 each through the Needs-Driven Support window. All teams benefited from tailored technical assistance, expert guidance, and peer learning.

Figure 4. The five innovation teams supported by the Scaling Challenge initiative.

An additional three teams were supported through the Needs-Driven funding window.

- Promoting the adoption of *Urochloa* (formerly *Brachiaria*) hybrid forages to improve livestock productivity and pasture quality—implemented in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Vietnam
- Building the technical competencies of Dairy Farmer Advisor extension workers to enhance advisory services—implemented in Kenya
- Disseminating fertilizer recommendation packages tailored to local agronomic conditions to strengthen nutrient management—implemented in Rwanda

3.2 Key achievements

These 8 innovations were distributed across 6 CGIAR science programs and 5 CGIAR centers and implemented in 11 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This distribution reflects a deliberately diversified scaling portfolio that cuts across regions, disciplines, and institutional contexts, strengthening cross-program learning while positioning CGIAR to generate transferable evidence on what enables impact at scale in different settings. Strategically, this reach enhances opportunities for regional spillovers, partnership alignment, and policy influence, while reinforcing CGIAR's role as a global platform for responsible scaling.

Figure 5. Distribution of the 8 Scaling Challenge winners in 2025.

3.3 Capacity strengthening

Capacity strengthening was a core component of the support provided to the Scaling Fund winners. In total, 20 participants (12 female, 8 male) attended a Scaling Readiness Masterclass and 22 participants (15 female 7 male) attended a GenderUp Masterclass, which strengthened the teams' understanding of scaling readiness, inclusive scaling, and responsible delivery. Every team was paired with an embedded scaling expert and encouraged to complete the Scaling Readiness course, ensuring continuous, hands-on technical guidance alongside structured learning.

Participants highlighted the value of the Scaling Readiness and GenderUp Masterclasses. The sessions were seen as providing a clear and structured pathway for thinking through scaling challenges and inclusive delivery. As one participant noted, *"The content was highly relevant and offered a clear pathway to strengthen and scale our innovation."*

3.4 Hands-on scaling support

Each team was paired with a scaling expert who supported stakeholder engagement through IPSR workshops, scaling pathway development workshops, and implementation of scaling activities.

Strategic scaling engagements

Teams reported strong positive experiences with the IPSR packaging workshops and follow-up scaling support, noting that these were critical in translating learning into practical scaling pathways and implementation plans. As one team observed:

Across the Scaling Fund portfolio, a comprehensive set of targeted workshops was delivered to support innovation teams at different stages of scaling readiness and implementation. In total, six IPSR workshops were conducted, comprising three IPSR workshops by Aflasafe across Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia (this was updated using the scaling readiness framework from previous engagements), one for WEMNS, one for WiB in Kenya, and one IPSR update with stakeholders for LTAC/MTA. In addition, teams conducted one IPSR update workshops (including SNS), a responsible scaling workshop for SNS, and a scaling pathway workshop for *Urochloa* (Figure 6*)*. Complementary community engagement workshops were delivered for GMIS, while further activities are planned, including an investment-focused workshop for WiB in Tanzania and a Dairy Farmer Advisor (DFA) IPSR workshop in Kenya. These will help ensure continued support as teams progress along their scaling pathways.

Figure 6. Scaling support provided to innovation teams.

*Taken together, these engagements reached **well over 160 participants** across various organisations including governments, private sector actors, farmer organisation, research organisation and NGOs. The WiB workshop brought together **24 participants** from the three counties, including members of the media team, while the SNS engagement convened **27 participants** and the Urochloa workshop engaged **26 participants**. The Aflasafe Mozambique workshop recorded **29 participants**, reflecting strong country-level engagement. In addition, the WEMNS, Aflasafe Malawi, and GMIAS workshops each convened **over 20 participants**, underscoring broad interest and uptake across multiple thematic areas and country contexts.*

"The scaling workshop was very helpful, and the scaling team is very skilled," while another highlighted the value of sustained engagement, stating, *"We appreciate the support from the CGIAR Scaling team, including the capacity strengthening provided through the Scaling Readiness course, the Responsible Scaling Masterclasses, and the follow-up meetings."* Overall, the Scaling Challenge process was described as *"smooth overall,"* reinforcing confidence in the Fund's design and delivery.

Scaling optimization

Each supported team received **tailored scaling optimisation support**, guided by an embedded **scaling expert**. This hands-on support focused on strengthening scaling readiness, refining delivery pathways, sharpening partnership strategies, and addressing key bottlenecks across policy, market, and institutional dimensions. The approach ensured that scaling efforts were context-specific and aligned with responsible scaling principles.

3.5 Strategic partnership with ENABEL

The Scaling Fund also partnered with ENABEL the Belgian Agency for International Cooperation, to support two innovation teams in advancing the scaling of their innovations using the Scaling Readiness approach. The collaboration was launched through two pilot projects drawn from ENABEL's portfolio, creating a practical platform to test and refine CGIAR's **Scaling Readiness** approach.

Through a structured sequence of capacity strengthening, diagnosis, and action planning—combining online masterclasses, in-person IPSR workshops, ongoing scaling coaching, and joint reflection—the pilots strengthened teams' ability to identify scaling bottlenecks, co-design actionable scaling pathways with partners, and translate innovation into delivery-ready packages.

Team 1: ABALOBI MONITOR is a mobile and web-based platform co-designed with small-scale fishers to support real-time data collection, stewardship, and decision-making. It enables community monitors, government agencies, and civil society organisations to access and use fisheries data in a standardised and accessible format.

Figure 7. ABALOBI team in south Africa during the IPSR workshop

The scaling ambition is to expand across the Western Indian Ocean region and, over time, globally. Initial scaling will start in Tanzania. The IPSR process has already informed product adaptations and clarified partnership roles, with WorldFish supporting alignment and data standardisation (.

Team 2: Tap & Track is a digital decision-support tool designed to improve the susta supports the shift from community-based to professional water service delivery by strengthening asset management, financial sustainability, and infrastructure resilience. With ENABEL support through the DGI Action, the tool is being customised and piloted with Water Area Service Providers in Uganda, alongside training for caretakers and end-users. The IPSR process is helping clarify long-term ownership and maintenance models and strengthen engagement with the Ministry of Water and Environment, with a view to embedding the tool within institutional systems.

"The workshop helped us connect the dots in a practical way." — Tap & Track team member

Beyond supporting the two projects, the collaboration generated actionable learning for both organisations on how to embed scaling expertise within implementation processes, align innovation with partner demand, and build more effective pathways from science to impact, laying the foundation for deeper and more systematic collaboration going forward.

4 SCALING CHALLENGE WINNERS

This section presents the Scaling Challenge winners, providing an overview of each innovation, its scaling ambition, the key barriers constraining scale, the enablers identified to address these barriers, the achievements realized through Scaling Fund support, and the planned next steps.

4.1 Catalyzing partnerships for scaling Aflasafe use in Southern Africa

Lead organization: International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)
Countries implemented: Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia

Figure 8. Aflasafe IPSR workshop @Nampula, Mozambique. Photo credits: Jane Kamau

About Aflasafe

Aflasafe is a pioneering biocontrol solution developed by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) to address the persistent challenge of aflatoxin contamination in staple crops such as maize, groundnut, and sorghum. By leveraging naturally occurring, non-toxin-producing strains of *Aspergillus*, Aflasafe provides an environmentally sustainable and effective approach to preventing aflatoxin contamination, thereby enhancing food safety, protecting public health, and supporting agricultural trade across Southern Africa.

Led by IITA in collaboration with CGIAR's Sustainable Farming Program, the initiative promotes the adoption of Aflasafe through a private-sector–led investment model, supported by technical expertise and partnerships with farmer and consumer organizations, government ministries and agencies, and food and feed manufacturers. The initiative seeks to deliver a sustainable response to a widespread agricultural and public health challenge by embedding Aflasafe within existing production, regulatory, and market systems.

Scaling ambition

By 2030, IITA's Aflasafe Unit, in collaboration with licensed partners and relevant ministries, aims to raise awareness, initiate policy dialogue, and advocate for the allocation of national resources to mitigate aflatoxin. The ambition is to integrate Aflasafe into input subsidy programs, to cover 50,000ha, reaching at least 50,000 farmers—40% of whom will be women and youth—thereby boosting production, consumption, and trade in aflatoxin-safe groundnuts, maize, and sorghum.

Key achievements

- Conducted two IPSR workshops in Malawi and Mozambique and updated one in Zambia using previous stakeholder insights
- Attended two online masterclasses on IPSR and Responsible Scaling
- Created and deployed gender-sensitive communication strategies
- Established an Aflasafe farmer training and demonstration program
- Introduced aflatoxin testing services at buying centers
- Kicked off engagements for integrating Aflasafe into national input subsidy programs
- Built capacity among licensees through workshops, online courses, and hands-on training.

Figure 9. Pack of AflasafeMZ02 for Mozambique. Photo credits: Jane

Barriers and enablers identified during the IPSR workshop

Barrier to scaling	Corresponding enabler / response
Limited trust and confidence arising from insufficient on-farm demonstrations and lack of visible post-application benefits	Establishment of user training and application **demonstration** and **in situ aflatoxin testing at cooperative centers** to make risks and benefits visible
Limited availability caused by logistical challenges in reaching remote areas and weak distribution networks	**Strengthening and deepening distribution networks**, including last-mile delivery through cooperatives and local actors
Affordability constraints, including high product costs relative to other inputs and poverty among target users	Introduction of **credit programs for cooperatives**, targeted government-led subsidies, and alternative financing mechanisms
Policy incompatibility, including weak or absent commodity standards and lack of mandatory aflatoxin testing policies	**Policy engagement and advocacy** to strengthen commodity standards, testing requirements, and enforcement of institutional mandates
Limited user capacity, reflected in the need for tailored training approaches and simplified technical language	**Targeted user training** on aflatoxin occurrence and safe handling practices, delivered through multimedia platforms in local languages
Gender and social exclusion, including exclusion of vulnerable groups due to cost and weak producer-buyer links	**Gender-responsive design**, targeted outreach to vulnerable groups, and strengthened producer-buyer links
Fragmented stakeholder coordination limiting joint planning and collective action	**Stakeholder coordination and revitalization of the Malawi Programme for Aflatoxin Control (MAPAC)** to enable joint planning and institutionalization

Way forward

The next phase will focus on deepening partnerships, expanding testing and training activities, and advocating for policy reforms to institutionalize aflatoxin control. Continued emphasis will be placed on gender-sensitive outreach, stakeholder coordination, and integration of Aflasafe into national agricultural strategies to ensure sustainable impact.

4.2 Women in Business

Lead organization: International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)
Countries implemented: Kenya, Tanzania

Figure 10. WiB IPSR workshop in Machakos Kenya (photo credit:/WiB)

About WiB

Women chicken farmers often face limited access to quality breeds, veterinary services, and markets due to restrictive gender norms that constrain their mobility, interactions, and control over income. The ILRI-led WiB model addresses these barriers by deploying young women veterinarians to deliver services and link farmers to markets. In partnership with Shujaaz Inc., ILRI implements gender-transformative approaches via social media campaigns such as #BintiShujaaz, which help to challenge and reshape gender norms.

As the model scaled to new regions and commodities, including dairy in Tanzania, challenges emerged around access to loans, reliable feed supply, and scaling assessments. Workshops were planned with banks and feed companies to develop tailored loan products and collaborate on feed solutions, but civil unrest in Tanzania delayed these activities in 2025.

Scaling ambition

WiB aims to expand to new regions and commodities, integrating loan products and alternative feeds, and leveraging media partnerships for wider adoption. The ambition is to provide women farmers from remote areas with quality breeds, veterinary services, and market access, while addressing inequitable gender norms through transformative approaches and strategic partnerships.

Key achievements

In Kenya, the Maisha Makutano TV series integrated WiB into its episodes, providing practical tips, role models, and normalizing the image of successful women in business. Scaling workshops helped identify bottlenecks, partners, and best approaches for further expansion.

- One IPSR workshop held in Kenya, identifying scaling barriers and action plans for scaling WiB in Kenya

- Integration of WiB into the Maisha Makutano TV series, amplifying reach and impact with over two million viewers
- Strengthened partnerships with media, banks, government agencies, and women's organizations
- Production of blog articles and active dissemination through professional networks
- Identification of funding opportunities and strategic collaborations for future scaling.

Barriers and enablers identified during the IPSR workshop

Barriers include limited access to loans, unreliable feed supply, restrictive gender norms, and civil unrest affecting planned activities. Enablers comprise strategic partnerships with media, banks, government agencies, and women's organizations, as well as business incubation for women veterinarians and gender transformative approaches delivered through media and workshops.

Work packages

- Business incubation for women veterinarians
- Development of loan products tailored to women in chicken businesses
- Implementation of gender-transformative approaches via media and workshops
- Strengthening partnerships with media agencies, banks, and government stakeholders
- Policy advocacy and connection with women's organizations.

Way forward

The immediate priority is to conduct the postponed workshops in Tanzania, implement learnings from previous activities, and expand the model through strategic partnerships and targeted funding proposals. Leveraging the gender, youth, and social equity areas of work in CGIAR's Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods program will support the implementation of workshop outcomes and further scaling of the WiB model.

4.3 Enhancing public awareness and institutional capacity for GMIS scaling

Lead organization: International Water Management Institute (IWMI)
Country implemented: Pakistan

Figure 11. Community-level workshop to promote farmers' awareness of the efficient use of groundwater (photo credit: IWMI).

Description

The Groundwater Management Information System (GMIS), developed by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and CGIAR Policy Innovations program, is a web-based decision-support platform for groundwater governance in South Asia. GMIS integrates real-time data and analytics to support decision-making by policymakers, irrigation departments, and farmers, enabling hotspot identification and sustainable groundwater management. The system supports government agencies and farmer organizations to reduce unsustainable groundwater use and has been transferred to government institutions for operational use in planning and management.

Scaling ambition

The ambition is to expand GMIS from its successful piloting phase to broader provincial and eventually national-level use. This includes scaling adoption to additional provinces beyond Punjab, strengthening user readiness through targeted awareness campaigns, building institutional capacity within IWMI and partner agencies, and integrating GMIS into provincial groundwater monitoring and planning systems. The ultimate goal is to position GMIS as a nationally recognized, evidence-driven decision-support platform underpinning sustainable groundwater governance across Pakistan.

Key achievements

Supported by the CGIAR Scaling for Impact program, scaling activities focused on strengthening stakeholder awareness, promoting adoption, and building institutional capacity. A public awareness module was developed and integrated into the GMIS dashboard with simplified visuals for non-technical users, alongside digital outreach via SMS and WhatsApp to deliver targeted advisories to farmers and water users, with attention to women and marginalized groups. Community engagement

was strengthened through public awareness workshops, while internal coordination within IWMI was reinforced through regular meetings, training, and knowledge-sharing to support scaling.

- Successful integration of the public awareness module into the GMIS dashboard
- Implementation of community workshops in key districts, engaging diverse stakeholders
- Preparation and launch of digital outreach campaigns, with a focus on inclusivity
- Strengthened internal and external coordination, enhancing mobilization and messaging consistency
- Enhanced gender-responsive approaches, informed by dedicated training and stakeholder feedback.

Barriers and enablers identified during the IPSR workshop

Key barriers identified include:

- Ensuring consistent and meaningful stakeholder engagement across targeted districts
- Technical challenges in integrating the public awareness module with existing dashboard specifications
- Logistical difficulties in organizing workshops and mobilizing participants in rural areas
- Limited access for women farmers due to social norms and constraints on phone ownership and physical participation.

Enablers include flexible adaptation of outreach plans, gender-responsive communication strategies, partnerships with local authorities and community groups, and capacity-building initiatives. Approval for fund carry-forward and collaboration with development agencies further support the scaling process.

Work packages

- Development and integration of a comprehensive public awareness module within GMIS
- Design and deployment of digital outreach campaigns targeting farmers and water users
- Organization of community-level workshops to promote adoption and gather feedback
- Capacity building through training on innovation packaging, scaling pathways, and gender-responsive approaches.

Way forward

Future outreach and scaling efforts will place stronger emphasis on improving women's access to groundwater information, refining digital advisory content, and strengthening partnerships with local women's networks. Continued capacity building and stakeholder engagement will be prioritized to ensure sustainable, national-level scaling of GMIS awareness and adoption.

4.4 Women's Empowerment Metric for National Statistical Systems

International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania

Figure 12. WEMNS IPSR workshop in Nairobi, Kenya (photo credit: Ara Go/IFPRI).

Description

The Women's Empowerment Metric for National Statistical Systems (WEMNS) is designed to provide national governments and survey implementers with a concise, robust tool for measuring women's empowerment within national statistical systems. Implemented through the 50x2030 Initiative in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), WEMNS is currently operational in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania, with the ambition to expand to at least eight low- and middle-income countries by 2030.

The IPSR workshop held in Nairobi brought together stakeholders from IFPRI, FAO, and national statistical offices to identify priority challenges, enablers, and pathways for scaling. Key achievements include strengthened partner buy-in, development of a scaling action plan, and identification of resource constraints and demand generation as critical barriers. The enablers highlighted include awareness building, capacity strengthening, stakeholder coordination, and partnership development.

Scaling ambition

By 2030, IFPRI and partners aim to achieve institutional adoption of WEMNS by national government institutions, development partners, and large-scale survey implementers in at least eight countries. This will enable the collection of gender-sensitive data representing approximately 16–24 million agricultural households, contributing to inclusive, evidence-based policymaking and strengthened national data systems, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 5, on gender equality.

Barriers and enablers identified during the IPSR workshop

Barriers identified include resource constraints within institutions and globally, limited awareness and demand generation, competing priorities within national statistical offices, and risks associated with political transitions. Mitigation strategies focus on targeted donor engagement, securing co-investment, and leveraging existing platforms for visibility and advocacy.

Enablers include demonstrated success in awareness creation, access to finance, capacity building, stakeholder coordination, and partnership development. The workshop facilitated consensus on critical barriers and reinforced shared commitments to scaling goals.

Work packages

- Stakeholder mapping and engagement
- Awareness creation through demonstrated success and communication strategies
- Capacity strengthening programs for key actors
- Donor-targeted webinars and meetings to build momentum and secure investment
- Development of knowledge and advocacy products to demonstrate the tool's value.

Key achievements

- Strengthened partner buy-in and commitments from FAO and national statistical offices
- Successful IPSR workshop with broad participation
- Development of the innovation package and preliminary scaling action plan
- External outreach through event pages, social media campaigns, and media coverage
- Identification of scaling champions and initiation of capacity-building activities.

Way forward

The next steps include developing advocacy and promotional materials, convening donor-targeted webinars, expanding partnerships by leveraging existing networks, and delivering online training modules. The intermediate goal is to identify two countries with strong potential for WEMNS adoption by 2027, capitalizing on platforms such as FAO's 50x2030 and CGIAR's Gender Equality and Inclusion Accelerator.

4.5 Climate seasonal forecasts and agroclimatic advisories to support farmers' decision-making through Local Technical Agroclimatic Committees (LTAC/MTA)

CIAT

Description

Smallholder farmers in Latin America often lack access to reliable, actionable climate information, making it difficult to manage agricultural risks and adapt to changing conditions. The Climate Seasonal Forecasts and Agroclimatic Advisories initiative, developed by CGIAR's Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT and its Climate Action Program, addresses this challenge by delivering inclusive, human-centered climate services. Through participatory, user-centered design, the initiative co-creates seasonal forecasts and agroclimatic advisories—including the development and dissemination of meteorological bulletins—with farmers, extension agents, and public institutions.

Key achievements include the optimization of bulletin production workflows, expansion of implementation to new departments, and consolidation of the scaling vision with partners such as Guatemala's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food (MAGA) and the meteorological service / INSIVUMEH. The operation of Local Technical Agroclimatic Committees (LTACs) in Guatemala has been sustained and they support active committees that serve thousands of smallholder farmers through regular sessions and bulletins. Ecosystem mapping, capacity building, and focus groups have clarified roles and scaling pathways, while scaling readiness self-assessments and co-design workshops have identified bottlenecks and prioritized actions for sustainable scale. This participatory model empowers farmers—especially women and indigenous communities—with actionable, localized climate information to make climate-smart decisions and enhance resilience

Figure 13. User profiles / personas developed within the framework of the Scaling Challenge (photo credit: CIAT/Emmanuel Zapata).

Scaling ambition

By 2027, the CGIAR program and its partners will collaborate with key stakeholders to deliver agroclimatic advisory services using human-centered design principles through the Agroclimatic Technical Committees (MTAs). These services are projected to reach over 70,000 smallholder farmers in Guatemala—including at least 40% women and 30% indigenous farmers—and an additional 500,000 farmers through tailored radio programming. The approach will foster climate-informed decision-making, strengthen resilience, and enhance productivity. Adaptation and piloting in Honduras and Colombia will support regional replication, positioning the innovation as a scalable, public-good climate service for smallholder agricultural systems across Latin America.

Key achievements

The LTAC/MTA innovation has already delivered a series of notable achievements:

- *Strengthened institutional and farmer capacities:* Through ecosystem mapping, qualitative diagnostics, and targeted training, the capacities of MAGA, INSIVUMEH, extension agents, and farmers have been significantly enhanced.
- *Successful expansion and dissemination:* The model now supports 21 active LTACs, reaching over 55,000 smallholders with more than 40 sessions and bulletins, and has expanded implementation to new departments.
- *Development of AI-assisted bulletin generator:* The introduction of a bulletin generator tool has optimized production workflows, enabling more timely and standardized dissemination of advisories.
- *Enhanced partnerships and policy alignment:* Collaboration with national and regional partners has been deepened, and the innovation's priorities have been linked to the development of Guatemala's National Framework for Climate Services.
- *Evidence generation and learning:* Mixed-methods monitoring, including interviews, surveys, and usability studies, has generated robust evidence to inform further scaling and optimization.

Barriers and enablers identified during the IPSR workshop

Barrier identified	Enabler / response
Low participation of women in LTAC/MTA committees	Integration of gender and youth inclusion frameworks and participatory co-design
Limited legal frameworks to support institutionalization	Alignment with national policy initiatives, including the National Framework for Climate Services
Funding constraints for dissemination and routine operations	Use of cost-efficient, multi-channel dissemination strategies
High staff turnover within key partner institutions (e.g. MAGA)	Capacity strengthening and institutional knowledge-sharing
Literacy and language barriers limiting independent interpretation of advisories	Use of simplified, local-language formats and mediated communication channels
Delays and inefficiencies in advisory production and dissemination	Automation and standardization of bulletin production
Limited evidence on usability, reach, and inclusivity	Systematic tracking of scaling progress and user feedback

Way forward

Imagen 4. Imagen 3. Prototipo **imprimible** de baja fidelidad para el departamento de Huehuetenango

Imagen 3. Prototipo **digital** de baja fidelidad para el departamento de Huehuetenango

Figure 14. Low-fidelity prototypes for community bulletins developed within the framework of the Scaling Challenge support (photo credit: CIAT)

Looking ahead, the LTAC/MTA initiative will focus on finalizing and deploying the bulletin generator, deepening monitoring to better quantify adoption and outcome pathways, and strengthening dissemination through radio and digital channels. The project will continue to prioritize gender and youth inclusion, refine advisory formats based on user feedback, and consolidate partnerships for sustainable scaling. Regional replication in Honduras and Colombia is planned, positioning the LTAC/MTA model as a scalable, public-good climate service for smallholder agricultural systems across Latin America. The overarching goal remains the institutionalization of inclusive, human-centered climate services as public goods, enabling smallholder farmers to make climate-informed decisions and enhance their resilience and productivity.

5 NEEDS-DRIVEN SUPPORT

The Needs-Driven track of the Scaling Fund provides short, targeted support to help innovation teams unlock specific bottlenecks that constrain progress toward scale. By offering flexible, rapid funding and tailored technical inputs—such as focused workshops, stakeholder engagement, and specialized advisory support—this support enables teams to address critical gaps in readiness, partnerships, or delivery pathways. This approach allows relatively modest investments to catalyze disproportionate gains, accelerating momentum, strengthening enabling conditions, and positioning innovations for sustained impact at scale. The three innovations supported in 2025 include the following.

5.1 The Smart Nkunganire System (SNS)

In Rwanda, although the Smart Nkunganire System (SNS) already reaches over three million farmers, it was operating largely in isolation from other digital services, limiting system-level impact. Through a dynamic evaluation and an IPSR update workshop, this fragmentation was identified as a core scaling constraint, as well as lack of inclusion of persons living with disability. This led to a refined plan to strengthen integration and coherence across services. Following this a responsible scaling workshop addressed gaps in inclusion by building capacity, providing technical guidance, and developing practical materials to support the integration of disability-inclusive approaches within Rwanda's digital agricultural services.

Figure 15. *Urochloa* Scaling Pathways workshop in Kenya.

5.2 *Urochloa* (formerly *Brachiaria*) hybrid forages

While an IPSR package existed for the *Urochloa* hybrid forage innovation, the team had not yet defined a clear scaling pathway or implementation plan. Support from the Scaling Fund enabled the convening of key sector stakeholders in Kenya to jointly identify scaling bottlenecks, assess market potential, and articulate concrete scaling pathways and an implementation roadmap for *Urochloa*. These insights now provide a strong foundation for guiding scaling efforts in Kenya and informing replications in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Vietnam. Modest, needs-driven investments helped clarify priorities, align actors, and translate readiness diagnostics into actionable pathways toward sustained impact at scale.

5.3 Dairy Farmer Advisor extension services

Building the technical competencies of Dairy Farmer Advisor extension workers to enhance advisory services, implemented in Kenya. As part of scaling the DFA innovation, the CGIAR science program on Sustainable Aquatic and Animal Foods (SAAF) is therefore exploring alternative business anchorage for the innovation. These should be businesses that accrue benefits from an informed farmer clientele and would therefore have the incentive to invest in these agents. Sensitization to such businesses will be achieved through promotional workshops with potential businesses such as feed centers that are operated by dairy cooperatives and/or private forage businesses, dairy input supply businesses, and entrepreneurship development programs

5.4 Key achievements for the Needs driven cases

The table below provides key achievements across the tree needs driven teams.

Innovation (organization/ country/region)	Focus	Key achievements	Way forward
Site-specific Fertilizer Recommendations via Smart Nkunganire System (International Potato Centre—Rwanda)	Delivering tailored fertilizer recommendations through Rwanda's Smart Nkunganire System (SNS) to improve productivity, nutrient use efficiency, and soil health, with inclusive access for women, farmers with disabilities and low-literacy users.	Fully integrated and nationally endorsed fertilizer recommendation system within SNS reaching over 3 million farmers, strengthened through the Scaling Fund and IPSR process. Updated the IPSR workshop incorporating dynamic evaluation findings and refining the implementation roadmap. Conducted a responsible scaling workshop to enhance inclusion of people living with disability into digital agriculture platforms like SNS.	Translate improved recommendations into widespread practice. Expand reach through SNS and partner networks while prioritizing inclusivity and sustainability. Support integration of SNS into other digital platforms.
Urochloa (Brachiaria) Forage Scaling (ILRI—Kenya)	Promoting *Urochloa* forages to enhance feed security, livestock productivity, climate resilience, and soil health in smallholder dairy and beef-dairy systems.	Scaling Fund support enabled stakeholder engagement and development of a scaling pathway outlining key scaling bottlenecks, market share, scaling pathways, and an implementation plan for *Urochloa* in Kenya. Increased awareness and adoption among dairy and forage producers	Expand outreach to increase adoption and productivity gains. Strengthen partnerships, seed systems, and extension services. Intensify awareness campaigns.
Dairy Farmer Advisor Capacity Strengthening—(Kenya)	Building technical competencies of extension workers to improve dairy advisory services.	Targeted capacity strengthening for extension workers in an IPSR workshop scheduled for Feb 2026	

6 LESSONS LEARNED AND WAY FORWARD

6.1 Overall value of the process

Feedback from participating teams underscored the strong value of the Scaling Fund and the high quality of support provided by CGIAR's scaling team. Innovation teams consistently highlighted the professionalism, relevance, and practical orientation of the scaling support they received. As one participant noted, *"The scaling workshop was very helpful and the scaling team is very skilled,"* while another emphasized that *"the content was highly relevant and offered a clear pathway to strengthen and scale our innovation."* Several teams specifically valued the Scaling Readiness course, Responsible Scaling Masterclasses, IPSR workshops, and follow-up engagements. One team reflected, *"We appreciate the support from the CGIAR scaling team, including the capacity strengthening provided through the Scaling Readiness course, the Responsible Scaling Masterclasses, and the follow-up meetings,"* noting that these inputs helped clarify scaling pathways and strengthen implementation planning. The Scaling Challenge process itself was described as *"smooth overall,"* reinforcing confidence in the Fund's core design.

6.2 Key lessons and areas of improvement

Strategic alignment and demand responsiveness: At the same time, participants highlighted the importance of maintaining a clearer balance between advancing the Science for Impact (S4I) agenda and responding to partner and stakeholder expectations, particularly those of the private sector. This feedback points to how partner priorities are reflected in funding and support decisions.

Timing, flexibility: Tight implementation timelines were identified as a key constraint, limiting internal capacity development and effective rollout of activities. Teams recommended launching the Scaling Challenge earlier in the year to allow 9–10 months for learning and implementation, alongside greater flexibility to use funds for essential staff time and coordination.

Process design, evidence, and dissemination: Participants also noted opportunities to sharpen the technical process. In some cases, workshops would have benefited from more strategic targeting to keep discussions focused on user-specific adoption challenges rather than reverting to broader sector constraints.

Concise core monitoring and evaluation framework: Teams recommended introducing this framework supported by templates and examples of sufficient evidence, as well as stronger, standardized guidance on accessible dissemination (e.g. radio, local-language audio, low-literacy formats) and practical budgeting for multi-channel scaling pathways.

A cross-cutting recommendation from the portfolio is the importance of appointing a dedicated scaling champion within each innovation team—someone who deeply understands the innovation and is committed to driving the scaling process forward. This internal role should be complemented by an external scaling champion who provides hands-on guidance and intentionally transfers scaling knowledge, tools, and practices to the team to ensure sustained capacity.

Technical readiness alone does not guarantee impact at scale. Even well-validated innovations such as the fertilizer recommendation in Rwanda require deliberate attention to usability, interpretation, and delivery pathways to ensure they are effectively adopted and used by farmers. Continuous engagement and joint reflection among government, private sector, research, and civil society partners are essential for identifying evolving bottlenecks and aligning actions as scaling progresses.

Responsible scaling should be intentionally designed, not assumed. Inclusion of women, farmers with disabilities, and low-literacy users only occurs when accessibility and support mechanisms are deliberately embedded into innovation packaging and dissemination.

7 ANNEX: Links to the innovation teams

Innovation & partner organization	Type of document	Title and link
Aflasafe	LinkedIn post	**https://www.linkedin.com/posts/pettertidemand_aflasafe mwmz01-safermalawi-aflatoxinmanagement-activity-7402997126319763456-9tuM/**
	LinkedIn post	**https://www.linkedin.com/posts/pettertidemand_aflasafe-aflasafe-aflasafe-activity-7402721853091262466-Egek/**
GMIS by IMWI	Brochure	Raising awareness among farmers on groundwater management and advisory services
		https://cgspace.cgiar.org/items/9d959cec-5bae-4642-85e6-5d9fce248008
Women in Business by ILRI	Blog article	WiB IPSR workshop in Kenya **https://hdl.handle.net/10568/180212**
WEMNS by IFPRI	IFPRI event page	https://www.ifpri.org/event/integrating-womens-empowerment-and-nutrition-in-national-agricultural-surveys-country-experiences-perspective-and-the-path-forward/
	FAO event page	https://www.fao.org/statistics/events/events-detail/integrating-women-s-empowerment-and-nutrition-in-national-agricultural-surveys/en
	Social media	**https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ifpri_ifpris-agnes-quisumbing-will-participate-activity-7399550414133624832-kzMN/**
	Media coverage	https://youtu.be/Uh-WFMwUju0?si=wHkxVGZg_XlTe8Y_
Climate Seasonal Forecast by CIAT, in collaboration with Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT	Report	**https://hdl.handle.net/10568/180508**
	Website	The 2025 Local Technical Agroclimatic Committees begin https://www.maga.gob.gt/inician-las-mesas-tecnicas-agroclimaticas-de-2025/
	Social media	https://www.instagram.com/reel/DSLiR6vDV2i/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
		Strengthening the generation and use of agricultural climate information https://guatemala.gob.gt/fortaleciendo-la-generacion-y-uso-de-informacion-agricola-climatica https://iucn.org/es/articulo/202512/intercambio-de-experiencias-guatemala-panama-fortalece-las-mesas-tecnicas
	Social media	https://www.facebook.com/SECAC/posts/-fortaleciendo-la-agricultura-regional-frente-al-riesgo-climático-inició-en-ciud/1369558298512319/
	Video	Implementation of participatory climate services (PICSA) in Huehuetenango, Guatemala https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYunw_rJWwY
Urochloa by CIAT	Report	Scaling *Urochloa* Forages in Kenya A Systems-Led Pathway for Feed Security, Livestock Productivity, and Climate Resilience https://hdl.handle.net/10568/179491
SNS by CIP	Report	Updating SNS IPSR package https://hdl.handle.net/10568/179857
	Report	**Advancing responsible scaling through disability-inclusive agriculture** https://hdl.handle.net/10568/179605
Overall	**Blog** article	Scaling Fund blog https://www.cgiar.org/news-events/news/eight-innovation-teams-win-cgiars-2025-scaling-fund-support

Scaling Fund 2025

This work was funded by the Scaling Fund, organized under the CGIAR Scaling for Impact Program and coordinated by the Impact at Scale Program at ILRI working in close collaboration with CGIAR's science groups and accelerators, including the Climate Action, Policy Innovations, Sustainable Farming, and Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods science programs and the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Accelerator.

The Scaling Fund is indebted to its donor, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, CGIAR Trust funders, and to the 2025 cohort of Scaling Fund awardees for advancing impactful solutions across diverse domains and driving forward CGIAR's mission to deliver science at scale.