

Executive summary

The **First CGIAR MELIAF Annual Convening**, held **15–17 October 2025** at ILRI Nairobi and online, marked a key milestone in developing a coherent, connected and interoperable evidence ecosystem across CGIAR. The event brought together over sixty participants from Centers, Programs and Accelerators, independent advisory bodies, funders, and partners, establishing the MELIAF project as a unifying initiative linking evidence generation, learning, foresight, and decision-making. This first in-person convening was both a **collaborative laboratory and system-building moment**, designed to co-develop the MELIAF Project’s main components—its **Community building, Framework, Taxonomy, Hub, Storytelling, and Activator Projects**—and to strengthen alignment across Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight functions. Through twelve interactive sessions combining plenary exchanges, group work, and participatory design, participants developed a shared understanding of how MELIAF as a system-wide approach can evolve from concept to an operational system that enables integration, interoperability, and continuous learning **delivering tangible value by strengthening evidence quality, coherence, and usability for decision-making and impact delivery across the System**.

The workshop clarified the relationship between **MELIAF as a project**—a funded initiative developing specific deliverables such as the Framework, Taxonomy, Hub, and Activator Projects—and **MELIAF as a system-wide approach** to strengthening evidence and learning across CGIAR. Participants agreed that the project provides the structures, tools, and coordination mechanisms needed to operationalize the concept: a coherent evidence architecture grounded in shared data standards, interoperable digital systems, and collaborative ways of working. Participants agreed that MELIAF’s value lies in “*connecting the dots*” across CGIAR’s evidence landscape—linking monitoring with evaluation, foresight with impact assessment, and data with meaning. As one participant noted, “*MELIAF is about integration, not addition.*” Throughout the convening, shared principles of **coherence, inclusiveness, transparency, and learning** guided discussion and built consensus on immediate priorities for 2026.

Key workshop outcomes included

- **Validated drafts** of the MELIAF Framework, Taxonomy roadmap, and Hub concept to guide implementation.
- **Defined priorities** for the three Activator Projects—**Kenya**, developing a country-level Theory of Change and harmonized indicators; **Climate Adaptation**, creating shared taxonomies and tagging systems; and **Projected Benefits**, connecting foresight modeling with impact pathways.
- **Follow-up mechanisms**, including thematic and functional **Working Groups** with draft **Terms of Reference (ToRs)** to sustain collaboration across Centers and Communities of Practice (CoPs).
- **Commitments to storytelling and communication**, recognizing that data gains meaning when translated into compelling, human-centered narratives.

The convening also generated **measurable progress in community building and alignment**. A comparative pre- and post-workshop survey showed marked improvement in participants’ sense of connection, understanding of the MELIAF Project’s purpose, and confidence to contribute to next steps. Participants left with a clearer grasp of how some of the project’s key deliverables—its Framework, Taxonomy, and Hub—interconnect, and greater awareness of how their roles align with the project’s strategic direction. Importantly, the workshop re-invigorated the MEL, Impact Assessment, and Foresight functional groups across CGIAR, providing **renewed energy, visibility, and coordination pathways for the three Communities of Practice**. Overall, the convening strengthened coherence, engagement, and shared ownership across the MELIAF community, turning abstract coordination goals into tangible relationships and actionable plans.

Key messages emerged to guide the MELIAF Project’s next phase

- **Integration over fragmentation:** MELIAF must act as an enabling architecture—connecting systems, not replacing them.
- **Learning at the center:** The “L” in MELIAF is the core process that transforms evidence into reflection and improvement.
- **Interoperability in action:** The Framework and Taxonomy will define shared standards and tools, while the Hub operationalizes these connections through digital spaces.
- **Pragmatic entry points:** The Activator Projects serve as laboratories for testing MELIAF principles and demonstrating early “wins.”
- **Storytelling and visibility:** Translating data into accessible narratives strengthens credibility, influence, and engagement.

The report captures the convening’s results and decisions across three main parts. **Part I** provides a summary of the presentations and discussions, documenting the objectives, methods, and key insights from each session. **Part II** outlines high-level workplans for six of the project workstreams—Framework, Taxonomy, Hub, Activators, MELIAF community, and storytelling—validated during the workshop. **Part III** presents the draft Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the working groups that will coordinate technical and thematic follow-up. Five annexes complement these sections: the **agenda (Annex 1)**, **participant list (Annex 2)**, **links to presentations and recordings (Annex 3)**, **validated workplans (Annex 4)**, and **Working Group ToRs (Annex 5)**. Together, they provide a complete record of the convening and practical references for continued collaboration.

For more information about the MELIAF Project, visit the [Performance & Results Hub](#)¹.

Key takeaways from the workshop

- **Collective ownership and collaboration are MELIAF’s main strengths.** The convening confirmed broad commitment from CoPs, Centers, and partners to co-design and co-implement MELIAF’s core components and deliverables.
- **Clarity and coherence improved significantly**, with participants developing a more aligned understanding of MELIAF’s architecture and the complementary roles of the Framework, Taxonomy, and Hub.
- **Learning remains central to MELIAF’s identity.** Participants emphasized that MELIAF’s impact will depend on cultivating continuous learning across functions—not only improving data collection or reporting.
- **Maintaining momentum is essential.** Regular updates, transparency, and small working groups were identified as key mechanisms to sustain engagement beyond the convening.
- **Storytelling and communication are strategic levers.** Clear narratives about MELIAF’s progress, value, and early wins will strengthen visibility and system-wide buy-in.
- **Community alignment and confidence increased.** Post-workshop survey results showed clear gains in participants’ clarity, confidence, and sense of ownership across all dimensions. Although cross-CoP connection remains an area for improvement, the overall upward shift reflects **meaningful progress toward a more integrated and learning-oriented MELIAF culture**—reinforcing the need to sustain and invest in community-building throughout 2026.
- **Clear next steps across all workstreams.** The convening enabled participants to agree on concrete actions and priority steps for each MELIAF workstream—providing a shared roadmap for coordinated implementation and accelerating progress across the **Framework, Taxonomy, Hub, Activator Projects, and community-building efforts.**

Summary of workshop actions

1. MELIAF Community Building – actions and next steps

- **Reactivate the MEL, IA, and Foresight CoPs**, establishing clear focal points, regular meeting schedules, shared calendars, and structured communication channels.
- Define **near-term CoP priorities** that link directly to the development of the Taxonomy, Framework, Hub and Activator Projects.
- Use the **MELIAF Hub as the central collaboration and knowledge-sharing space**, enabling coordinated resource sharing, documentation of learning, and hosting of community-level materials.
- Maintain engagement and transparency through **periodic PPU updates**, visible progress tracking, and light-touch feedback mechanisms based on the workshop’s baseline and endline survey.

2. MELIAF Taxonomy – actions and next steps

- Conduct a **system-wide stocktake** of current terminology, glossaries, indicator sets, and conceptual frameworks to establish a shared language baseline and generate inputs for the development of the MELIAF Framework.
- Hold **interviews and onboarding sessions** with practitioners, communications teams, and digital leads to clarify alignment needs and priority concepts.
- Convene **co-creation workshops** with domain experts and CoP representatives to shape contextual taxonomies, validate definitions and structure content.
- Establish **feedback loops** (question sets, review rounds) to test clarity and usability as the taxonomy evolves.
- Begin development of **visual and machine-readable taxonomy components** with The Lexicon, using Activator Projects as proving grounds.
- Facilitate **CoP-based validation sessions** and prepare a first consolidated draft of the taxonomy for review and publication via the Hub.

3. MELIAF Framework – actions and next steps

- Establish an **Interoperability Working Group** to coordinate development of shared metadata standards, indicator definitions, and reporting formats.
- Co-develop **lightweight interoperability principles and minimum standards** for gradual adoption across MEL, IA, and Foresight functions.
- Integrate **lessons and use cases** from Activator Projects into Framework design, ensuring practical applicability.
- Draft the **MELIAF Interoperability Blueprint** and refine it through structured consultations with CoPs and the PPU.
- Engage CoPs and PPU in **structured review and refinement** of the Blueprint to prepare for early adoption.

¹ <https://sites.google.com/cgxchange.org/cgiarrprhub/meliarf-project>

4. MELIAF Hub – actions and next steps

- Establish a **Hub Co-Design Group** and conduct collaborative design and user-requirements sessions to define architecture, content priorities and governance.
- Develop and validate the **Hub’s conceptual architecture**, including repository structure, navigation pathways, metadata standards and endorsement procedures.
- Curate **core MELIAF content**—foundational documents, indicators, templates, SOPs, and methodological guidance—to populate early versions of the Hub.
- Build and test a **Hub prototype (v1)**, incorporate user feedback, and refine for broader deployment aligned with CGIAR’s Common Platform vision.

5. Kenya Activator Project – actions and next steps

- Establish a **coordinated structure** for CGIAR–national partner collaboration, defining roles, communication mechanisms, and engagement pathways.
- Complete a **mapping of OIEs and innovation-use evidence**, integrating Center and SPIA data to inform coherent analysis.
- Co-develop and validate a **shared Kenya country-level Theory of Change (ToC)** linking CGIAR innovations to national outcomes.
- Define and test a **shared set of outcome and impact indicators**, aligned with the emerging Taxonomy and suitable for coordinated evaluations.
- Launch **joint or coordinated impact evaluations** using shared protocols and strengthen synthesis through a hybrid seminar series.
- Document lessons and early findings to inform frameworks and enhance **replicability in other countries**.

6. Climate Change Adaptation Activator – actions and next steps

- Establish the **Climate Adaptation Taskforce (CAT)** and conduct a **diagnosis of use cases and alignment needs** with PRMS and other systems.
- Co-design and test the **Adaptation Tracking Toolkit**, including definitions, tagging standards, indicators and data workflows.
- Pilot the toolkit across selected Science Programs, Accelerators and bilateral projects to test feasibility and coherence.
- Convene **virtual review sessions** to refine prototypes and integrate user feedback.
- Develop a **roadmap for institutionalization** of adaptation tracking across.

7. Theory of Change & Projected Benefits (PB) Activator – actions and next steps

- Review **PB exercises from 2024–2025** to identify methodological improvements and standardisation opportunities.
- Hold structured **dialogues with Science Programs and Accelerators** to align ToCs, indicators, data inputs and modelling assumptions.
- Link with the Kenya and Climate Adaptation Activators to incorporate **contextual and thematic evidence** into PB modelling.
- Strengthen **modelling tools and analytical frameworks**, refining data structures and simulation parameters.
- Develop an **integrated ToC–indicator–model framework** consistent with the MELIAF Framework and Taxonomy.

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Structure of the report

This report presents the main results, insights, and decisions that emerged from the MELIAF Convening. It is organized in **three main parts**, each corresponding to a distinct output of the event:

- **Part I – Summary of the presentations and discussions**
Provides a detailed account of each of the twelve workshop sessions, capturing objectives, methods, key discussion points, takeaways, and agreed next steps. Together, these summaries illustrate the collective process through which participants shaped the MELIAF Project’s strategic and operational foundations.
- **Part II – Overview of workstream workplans**
Outlines the six- to twelve-month workplans validated during the convening, summarizing priorities, milestones, and responsibilities for the MELIAF Project’s key workstreams: Framework, Taxonomy, Hub, Activators, the MELIAF community, and storytelling.
- **Part III – Overview of working groups terms of reference (ToRs)**
Presents draft ToRs for the thematic and functional working groups established during the convening, including their purpose, scope, time allocation, and participation details.

The report concludes with a brief reflection on the convening’s overall outcomes and the next steps toward implementing the MELIAF Project’s 2026 roadmap.

In addition, a set of **five annexes** provide supporting materials and complementary documentation for reference:

- **Annex 1 – Workshop agenda**
- **Annex 2 – Participants list**
- **Annex 3 – Links to MELIAF workshop presentations and session recordings**
- **Annex 4 – Detailed workstreams workplans**
- **Annex 5 – MELIAF Working Groups terms of reference (ToRs)**

Together, these annexes offer detailed information that complements the main report and supports follow-up activities across the MELIAF Project.

PART 1 | Summary of the presentations and discussions

Background

The *Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment and Foresight (MELIAF) Project* is a system-wide effort to strengthen CGIAR's capacity to generate, integrate, and use high-quality evidence for decision-making, accountability, and learning. It aims to overcome longstanding fragmentation among MELIAF functions across Centers, CGIAR's pooled funding Portfolio, and independent advisory bodies by promoting a coherent framework, shared standards, and interoperable digital tools.

The MELIAF Project, funded by the Gates Foundation and coordinated by CGIAR's **Portfolio Performance Unit (PPU)**, seeks to deliver a more connected and effective MELIAF system. Through this investment, CGIAR will:

- **Strengthen community building across CGIAR** by cultivating an engaged, **cross-system MELIAF team that collaborates** through shared standards, learning mechanisms, and coordinated processes.
- Develop and validate a **MELIAF Framework** and **Taxonomy** to align MEL, IA, and Foresight functions;
- Implement **Activator Projects** that demonstrate MELIAF integration in practice (Kenya, Climate Adaptation, and Projected Benefits);
- Establish a **MELIAF Hub** as a digital interface for tools, data, and learning; and
- Enhance **impact storytelling and visualization** to strengthen communication and funder confidence.

The **First Annual MELIAF Convening** (Nairobi, 15–17 October 2025) marked the first major in-person milestone of this process. It brought together more than 60 participants from Centers, Programs and Accelerators, the System Organization, independent advisory bodies (IAES, IAES/Evaluation function, and SPIA), and CGIAR leadership to collectively define the project's operational direction and foster a sense of community across MELIAF stakeholders.

Workshop objectives and outcomes

Objectives

1. **Community building** – Strengthen collaboration within and across the MEL, Impact Assessment, and Foresight focal points, while deepening engagement with independent advisory bodies to form a connected MELIAF community that enables collective learning and exchange.
2. **Strategic alignment and portfolio integration** – Align MELIAF's approach with CGIAR's strategic priorities and delivery model, clarifying its scope, priorities, and added value for improving accountability, learning, and impact.
3. **Project delivery and action roadmap** – Advance key MELIAF deliverables (Taxonomy, Framework, Activator Projects, MELIAF Hub, and data-driven storytelling) and co-develop a practical roadmap—including working groups and next steps—for implementation through 2026.

Expected outcomes

- **A strengthened and connected MELIAF community**, with clear collaboration pathways across the three CoPs and stronger links to independent advisory bodies.
- **A shared vision and strategic alignment**, establishing a common understanding of the MELIAF Project's role in supporting coherent and high-impact delivery within the CGIAR Portfolio.
- **A co-owned roadmap for MELIAF implementation**, including validated workstream priorities, agreed coordination mechanisms, and working group ToRs to ensure follow-up and sustained momentum.

Achievement summary

Across 12 interactive sessions, participants produced a coherent set of technical, organizational, and collaborative outputs that now form the backbone of MELIAF's 2026 implementation roadmap. These include:

- Validated **drafts of MELIAF's core design elements**—the Framework, the Taxonomy roadmap, and the Hub concept—providing the foundations for shared standards, data interoperability, and coordinated evidence systems across CGIAR.

- Refined priorities and **design inputs for the three Activator Projects** (Kenya, Climate Adaptation, and Projected Benefits), clarifying their objectives, expected contributions to MELIAF, and opportunities to serve as early testbeds for integration.
- Concrete recommendations to **strengthen collaboration across the MEL, Impact Assessment, and Foresight Communities of Practice (CoPs) and with independent advisory bodies** (IAES, Evaluation Function, SPIA), particularly around communication channels, methodological alignment, and shared learning practices.
- A set of **agreed coordination and follow-up actions**, including the activation of Working Groups with draft Terms of Reference (ToRs), timelines for workstream development, and next steps for communication and reporting to GST and SIMEC.

Together, these results demonstrate the **transition of the MELIAF project from a conceptual initiative to a collaborative, system-building project, providing clear operational direction for 2026**. The following section presents a detailed, session-by-session synthesis of the convening, describing the objectives, methods, insights, and agreed next steps that shaped the MELIAF Project's emerging architecture and collaborative mechanisms.



DAY 1 – Wednesday, 15 October 2025

Session title

Session 1. Opening & participants exchange

1.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 15 October 2025, 9:00 – 10:30 AM
- **Facilitators/leads:** Jules Colomer (Director, Portfolio Performance Unit), Alejandro A. Imbach (workshop facilitator)
- **Speakers:** Dr. Bonnie Ayola (Deputy Director General, ILRI); Mariana Kim (Senior Program Officer, Gates Foundation).
- **Link to presentation:** [Session 1 - MELIAF workshop Nairobi oct 2025 v1.pptx](#)
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 1 AM sessions.mp4](#)

1.2 Session overview

The opening session formally launched the *CGIAR MELIAF Project First Annual Convening*, held at ILRI Nairobi. It was designed to set the tone for three days of collective reflection, learning, and planning across CGIAR's Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight (MELIAF) functions. The objectives were to:

- Welcome participants and acknowledge key partners.
- Present the workshop's purpose, structure, and expected outcomes.
- Build initial connections among participants through interactive exercises.
- Establish shared ground rules and participation agreements.

1.3 Summary of the discussion

The session opened with welcoming remarks from **Jules Colomer (PPU Director)**, who framed the convening as a milestone uniting MEL, IA and Foresight communities for the first time, and highlighted MELIAF's role in building a coherent system for learning and accountability. **Dr Bonnie Ayola (ILRI Deputy Director General)** linked MELIAF's ambitions to ILRI's 2030 strategy and called on participants to strengthen MEL practices and make impact evidence more visible. **Mariana Kim (Gates Foundation)** emphasized the Foundation's focus on connecting innovation to impact and encouraged CGIAR to clarify its comparative advantage and use MELIAF to inform investment decisions. Finally, **Alejandro A. (Facilitator)** presented the workshop objectives—community building, strategic alignment, and road-mapping—and led the introductory activities to foster connection among participants.

1.4.1 Interactive mapping and expectation-building

The "mapping the room" activity revealed striking diversity across functions and geographies:

- Roughly two-thirds of participants were based in Africa, followed by the Americas, Europe, and Asia.
- The majority represented CGIAR Centers, with others from System Offices, Independent Bodies and Programs & Accelerators.
- Participants' roles spanned all MELIAF domains, though many carried *multiple hats*, combining MEL, IA and Foresight responsibilities.
- Experience levels ranged from newcomers to professionals with 15–20 years in MELIAF-related work.

The **2-4-8-ALL** exercise that followed asked: "*What is one key thing you hope to gain or contribute during this workshop?*". When pairs, quartets, and groups of eight shared back in plenary, the following **clusters of expectations** emerged:

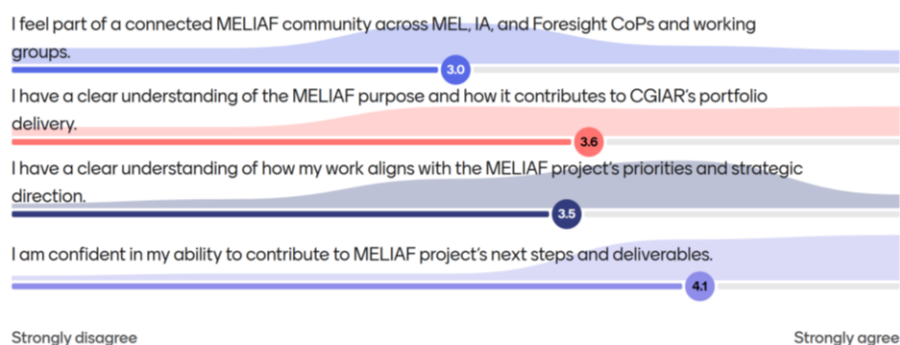
Theme	Representative participant reflections
1. Shared understanding of MELIAF	Participants wanted clarity on the project's scope, deliverables, and how it connects to CGIAR's portfolio. Many expressed a desire to " <i>learn what others do</i> " and " <i>see the big picture of MELIAF.</i> "
2. Coherence & harmonization	Several long-standing members highlighted the challenge of fragmented MEL, IA, and Foresight processes. They hoped the workshop would define <i>common guidelines and standards</i> for MELIA across centers, while respecting institutional diversity.
3. Collaboration and community-building	A strong expectation was to strengthen ties among CoPs, build trust, and understand respective mandates. Participants valued the chance to " <i>connect beyond silos</i> " and " <i>build a genuine MELIAF family.</i> "
4. Learning across domains	Many wanted to understand how the different functions intersect— <i>what happens in IA if you are in MEL, what foresight can offer to evaluation</i> , etc. The need for <i>cross-domain literacy</i> was emphasized.

Theme	Representative participant reflections
5. Evidence, funding & resources	Participants voiced concern about shrinking budgets and stressed the importance of demonstrating MELIAF's value for accountability and fundraising. "MELIA is often the first budget line to be cut," one participant noted.
6. Visibility and communication	The idea of a shared <i>resource hub</i> and better storytelling of results emerged early. Participants wanted tools to show the impact of CGIAR work beyond technical reports.
7. Respect for mandates & diversity	Several groups underscored the need to maintain the identity and comparative advantage of each CoP, while working toward system-wide coherence: "We must respect our own and each other's mandates."
8. Challenging questions and reflection	Some participants committed to "ask difficult questions" and push for clarity where ambiguity persists, to ensure genuine alignment and learning.

1.4 Key takeaways

- **A sense of shared purpose was established:** Participants converged on the idea that MELIAF's greatest value lies in *integration*: connecting evidence, learning, and foresight functions into a single narrative that supports decision-making and accountability across the CGIAR portfolio.
- **Strong appetite for collaboration and coherence:** Across all groups, there was a call to align MELIAF practices, define minimum standards, and create a framework that supports cross-center collaboration—without erasing local adaptation or functional identity.
- **Diverse yet complementary community:** The mapping exercise demonstrated the system's richness: broad geographical distribution, interdisciplinary skills, and a balance between experienced and newer professionals — conditions that favor peer learning and innovation.
- **Emerging priorities for the workshop:** Participants implicitly prioritized:
 - Clarifying the MELIAF project's theory of change and deliverables.
 - Identifying areas for cross-CoP collaboration.
 - Co-designing a practical roadmap and governance model for implementation.
 - Strengthening communication, storytelling, and visibility of impact.
- **Baseline perception data gathered:** The Menti survey (46 responses) provided an initial picture:
 - Moderate sense of connection across MEL-IA-F (avg ≈ 3.0).
 - Reasonable clarity about MELIAF's overall purpose (avg ≈ 3.6) and about how one's own work aligns with the project's priorities (avg ≈ 3.5).
 - High confidence in ability to contribute to next steps (avg ≈ 4.1).
 These scores served as a benchmark for comparison in the closing session.

Pre-workshop survey



Session title

Session 2. Strategic priorities and portfolio delivery

2.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 15 October 2025, 10:45 AM – 12:10 PM
- **Facilitators:** Alejandro A. Imbach (workshop facilitator)
- **Speakers/leads:** Jules Colomer (Director, Portfolio Performance Unit)
- **Link to presentation:** [Session 2 - MELIAF Project Overview.pptx](#)
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 1 AM sessions.mp4](#)

2.2 Session overview

This session introduced the *MELIAF Project* in depth, situating it within CGIAR's evolving strategic and portfolio landscape. It was designed to help participants understand **how MELIAF functions underpin portfolio delivery**, and how the project's structure and outputs will contribute to organizational coherence, prioritization, and impact. The presentation by Jules Colomer served as a bridge between the workshop's opening (Session 1) and the more technical discussions of the following days. The objectives were to:

- Explain the rationale behind MELIAF as an integrated approach that strengthens **learning, accountability, foresight, and evidence use**.
- Highlight the **fragmentation challenges** across MELIAF functions and entities and the need for system-level alignment.
- Present the project's **three work packages** and the corresponding Activator Projects.
- Demonstrate the link between MELIAF deliverables and the **strategic imperatives of the CGIAR 2025–2030 Portfolio**, including accountability, prioritizations, and integration of Window 3 and bilateral projects.
- Set the stage for collaborative work throughout the convening by showing how MELIAF enables both system coherence and Centre ownership.

In this session, Jules walked participants through the logic of the MELIAF framework, showing how it connects to live CGIAR management priorities—such as the *Impact Assessment Plan*, the *Projected Benefits Model*, and the integration of diverse funding streams. The presentation combined strategic vision with specific examples of how MELIAF could improve reporting, resource allocation, and the translation of evidence into decision-making.

2.3 Summary of the discussion

The session combined a plenary presentation with small-group discussions to explore what enables MELIAF to effectively deliver on its core purposes—learning, accountability, communication, and resource mobilization. Participants were invited to identify concrete examples of successful MELIAF-related processes and extract the key ingredients that made them work. Across the six groups and the subsequent plenary discussion, several themes emerged consistently:

- **Stakeholder engagement and ownership:** Groups agreed that stakeholder engagement is essential to ensure relevance, credibility, and accountability. Successful MELIAF examples featured early involvement of national partners, government agencies, and CGIAR centers, coupled with shared ownership of results. Leadership support was repeatedly described as “*key to success*.”
- **Leadership, champions, and trust:** The presence of committed leaders and champions was highlighted as decisive for sustaining MELIAF initiatives over time. Participants noted that trusted leadership fosters confidence and allows room for experimentation, learning, and adaptive management.
- **Resourcing and sustainability:** Several participants voiced concerns about declining budgets for impact assessment and MELIA-related work. They stressed that harmonization and taxonomy development are valuable but cannot replace direct investment in evidence generation. Sustained funding and dedicated MELIAF staff time were seen as essential for maintaining quality and continuity.
- **Strategic impact assessment planning:** A strong consensus emerged around the need for a system-level *Impact Assessment Plan* that would prioritize a limited number of portfolio-level questions to be answered by 2030. Participants viewed this as a key step toward coherence and collective learning across CGIAR.
- **Science quality, data credibility, and harmonization:** Good science and robust data were seen as the foundation of MELIAF success. Participants emphasized the importance of using common methodologies and data standards across projects and centers to ensure comparability and synthesis. Examples such as the CGIAR Type 2 Impact Report, SPIA's Ethiopia study, and the AfricaRice experience were cited as good practice cases.

- **Learning and adaptation:** The discussion underscored that MELIAF must be dynamic and responsive to contextual change. Participants asked: “How will strategies designed in 2025 remain relevant in three to five years?”—calling for built-in mechanisms for real-time learning and course correction.
- **Communication and visibility:** Participants agreed that communication is integral to MELIAF. Transparent reporting, practical communication plans, and storytelling based on credible data were identified as vital tools to enhance visibility, accountability, and donor confidence.
- **Institutional culture and future relevance:** The plenary reflections pointed to the importance of institutional buy-in and culture change. Participants noted that MELIAF should not be perceived as a compliance mechanism but as a system that helps CGIAR Centers make better decisions and communicate results more effectively, especially in an evolving funding landscape where impact investors and new partners demand clearer, faster, and more visual evidence.

Overall, the discussion revealed broad alignment on the dual nature of MELIAF: it is both a **technical system** (of tools, standards, and data flows) and a **social system** (of collaboration, trust, and shared purpose).

2.4 Key takeaways

- **Leadership and commitment are decisive.** Successful MELIAF processes depend on proactive leadership, trusted champions, and institutional commitment that extends beyond projects or funding cycles.
- **Stable resourcing underpins quality.** Consistent financial and human resources are necessary to sustain MELIAF functions, maintain data quality, and ensure that evidence continues to inform portfolio decisions.
- **Strategic focus on impact is needed.** CGIAR should define a concise set of *must-answer strategic impact questions* for 2030, guiding collective evaluation and learning efforts across the portfolio.
- **Standardization drives interoperability.** Common indicators, templates, and digital platforms—particularly the MELIAF Hub—are essential to avoid duplication and to translate evidence into actionable insights.
- **Partnerships enhance credibility and ownership.** Early engagement of national partners and stakeholders builds trust, improves data relevance, and strengthens accountability at all levels.
- **Adaptation and learning are continuous processes.** MELIAF systems must remain flexible to respond to contextual shifts and evolving priorities, ensuring sustained relevance.
- **Communication and storytelling are part of MELIAF’s core function.** Data-driven narratives are indispensable for accountability, advocacy, and resource mobilization.
- **Institutional buy-in must be built, not mandated.** MELIAF will succeed only if Centers perceive it as useful and aligned with their needs—not as a top-down requirement.
- **Innovation in reporting adds value.** Leveraging AI-assisted reporting, dashboards, and data visualization can reduce costs while increasing credibility and reach.

Session title

Session 3. CoPs achievements, challenges and opportunities for collaboration

3.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 15 October 2025, 1:15 – 3:30 PM
- **Facilitators/leads:** Alejandro A. Imbach (workshop facilitator)
- **Speakers:** Elisabetta Gotor (Foresight CoP); Tonya Schneider (MEL CoP); Alan de Brauw (Impact Assessment CoP); Keith Wiebe (Foresight CoP).
- **Link to presentation:** [Session 3 - MEL IA F CoP Engagement.pptx](#)
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 1 PM sessions.mp4](#)

3.2 Session overview

This session marked the first collective reflection of the three MELIAF Communities of Practice (CoPs) — Monitoring and Evaluation (MEL), Impact Assessment (IA), and Foresight. Its purpose was to:

- Revisit the trajectories and experiences of each CoP.
- Identify what has worked well and what has limited sustained collaboration.
- Explore how each CoP envisions its role within the MELIAF project and the CGIAR portfolio.
- Surface opportunities for synergy, mutual learning, and a shared governance approach.

Elisabetta Gotor (Alliance Bioversity-CIAT) opened the session with a historical overview of how the three CoPs have developed since the mid-2000s and why their collaboration has remained limited. She recalled that the MEL CoP emerged during the CRP period and has remained the most active network, while the Impact Assessment CoP evolved under SPIA and the Foresight CoP originated around the PIM program and Global Futures grant. Her presentation framed the MELIAF grant as a unique opportunity to “*re-energize the three CoPs as inter-connected learning communities rather than isolated technical groups.*” She highlighted three systemic challenges limiting CoP vitality: (1) scarce and unpredictable institutional funding; (2) limited staff time to engage and reflect; and (3) weak cross-CoP learning mechanisms. The session also outlined the potential value of the MELIAF grant for CoPs:

- Creating a **shared learning platform** across functions.
- Enabling **cross-pollination of methods and innovations**.
- Supporting **evidence-based improvements** through collective testing and refinement of tools and frameworks.

3.3 Summary of the discussion

The session provided the first in-depth opportunity for the three MELIAF Communities of Practice (CoPs) — Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL); Impact Assessment (IA); and Foresight — to collectively reflect on their trajectories, strengths, challenges, and future directions within the MELIAF project.

3.4.1 Historical trajectories and current realities

- **Impact Assessment CoP:** Participants recognized that the predecessor to IA CoP, which involved nominating Impact Assessment Focal Points (IAFPs) across centers and science programs was led by SPIA. This organically paved way for the IAFP group to form, with SPIA acting as its host and technical convener. While this structure ensured capacity-building, methodological rigor and coherence, it did not delve into internal CGIAR management processes, given SPIA’s status as an independent body. Members praised SPIA’s leadership in strengthening methodological standards — notably through *rigorous impact evaluation methods*, *matchmaking with external academics*, and *competitive calls for studies* that fostered quality and innovation. However, broader concerns included system-wide declining funding, reduced opportunities for independent studies, and the need for greater advocacy with CGIAR’s senior management to fund more impact assessments. As one participant noted on the funding challenges, “*We can harmonize and standardize, but without resources to do the studies, we have a problem.*”
- **Foresight CoP:** Participants traced the origins of this CoP to the *Global Futures and Strategic Foresight* initiative (2010–2020) funded initially by BMGF and continued under the PIM program, which convened modelers, economists, and crop scientists to advance foresight analysis across CGIAR. The group highlighted that this CoP has been strongly grant-dependent, and its continuity has suffered since the end of dedicated funding. Key functions have included *capacity building in modelling*, *methodological harmonization*, and *networking among foresight focal points*. Participants acknowledged the need to reconnect foresight with MEL and IA functions through the MELIAF project and, in particular, to establish links with the **Projected Benefits Activator** to ensure mutual learning and shared data pipelines.
- **MEL CoP:** Participants described the MEL CoP as the most enduring and structured of the three, with roots in the CRP era. Its past strengths included a *vibrant learning culture*, *cross-center exchanges*, and the production of practical tools such as common indicators, digital solutions for results reporting, and the “*sphere of control*—

influence–interest” framework that has informed CGIAR’s performance narratives. The CoP’s challenges centered on maintaining momentum after CRP funding ended, limited engagement from management, and an unclear balance between voluntary collaboration and formalized governance. Members also discussed how to reconnect MEL practitioners to partners and field-based systems, ensuring that learning from implementation informs strategic decision-making.

3.3.2 Cross-cutting challenges

Across the three CoPs, several recurrent challenges emerged:

- **Lack of sustained funding** – Without core resources, CoP activities remain episodic and dependent on volunteer time.
- **Fragmented mandates and priorities** – Different centers interpret MELIAF functions in varied ways, making coordination difficult.
- **Weak institutional incentives** – CoP participation is rarely recognized in work plans or performance metrics.
- **Limited cross-CoP interaction** – While thematic overlaps exist (e.g., between MEL and IA), collaboration has been sporadic and personality-driven rather than structural.
- **Overemphasis on compliance over learning** – Participants noted that MEL processes often become reporting exercises, whereas their real value lies in fostering adaptation and insight.

3.3.3 Emerging opportunities

Despite these constraints, the discussions revealed strong enthusiasm for renewal through MELIAF. Participants identified key opportunities:

- Using the **MELIAF grant** to provide minimal coordination funding and shared digital platforms to revitalize interaction.
- Establishing **feedback loops between MEL, IA and Foresight**, where data collected through monitoring informs impact evaluation design and foresight modelling, and vice versa.
- Leveraging **joint advocacy** to elevate the visibility and institutional relevance of MELIAF functions within CGIAR’s reform processes.
- Exploring **AI-enabled tools, matchmaking mechanisms, and shared templates** to make evidence generation more efficient and cost-effective.
- Reconnecting CoPs to external partners and funders, positioning them as communities that produce strategic, actionable evidence rather than isolated technical forums.

3.4 Key takeaways

- **MELIAF offers a chance to rebuild coherence and continuity.** The session reaffirmed the importance of revitalizing the three CoPs as mutually reinforcing communities rather than parallel silos.
- **Leadership and hosting matter.** Both historical experience and current reflections showed that having a convening institution can provide direction, but sustainability requires shared governance and distributed ownership.
- **Funding remains the critical bottleneck.** The absence of institutional budgets and staff time continues to undermine learning and cross-CoP collaboration. MELIAF’s seed funding could serve as a catalyst for reactivation, but long-term sustainability will depend on center-level commitment.
- **Learning needs structure and incentives.** Voluntary participation alone is insufficient; CoP contributions must be valued as part of CGIAR’s performance culture.
- **Harmonization and integration are shared aspirations.** Participants agreed that the CoPs should co-develop a *common analytical framework* that links MEL, IA and Foresight through shared concepts, data protocols, and key questions.
- **Advocacy and communication are strategic functions.** Each CoP has a role in demonstrating the value of MELIAF functions to funders and leadership—clarifying what impact evidence, learning, and foresight contribute to the CGIAR mission.
- **Simple, connected systems are better than complex, disconnected ones.** As one participant concluded, *“We need to start simple—with a few shared indicators and feedback mechanisms—and add complexity once the basics work.”*

Session title

Session 4. Strengthening Alignment: MELIAF Project and Advisory Bodies

4.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 15 October 2025, 3:40 – 5:00 PM
- **Facilitators/leads:** Allison Grove Smith (Director, IAES)
- **Speakers:** Allison Grove Smith (IAES Director); Svetlana Negroustoueva (Evaluation Function Lead, IAES); Swetha Ramachandran (Senior Officer, SPIA / IAES)
- **Panelists:** Tonja Schutz (MEL CoP); Alan de Brauw (Impact Assessment CoP); Elisabetta Gotor (Foresight CoP).
- **Link to presentation:** [Session 4 - IAES.pptx](#)
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 1 PM sessions.mp4](#)

4.2 Session overview

This session explored how the **Independent Advisory and Evaluation Bodies of CGIAR (IAES, ISDC, and SPIA)** connect to and can strengthen the **MELIAF project's goals**. It sought to clarify what kind of evaluative and advisory evidence these bodies generate, how that evidence is used across CGIAR, and where greater integration or collaboration with MELIAF functions — Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight — is both possible and beneficial. Allison Grove Smith opened the session by explaining IAES's **three-fold mandate**:

- **Provide independent advice** to CGIAR decision-makers.
- **Generate evaluative and impact evidence** to support learning and accountability.
- **Promote accessibility, relevance, and timeliness** of evidence use across the system.

The presentations outlined how IAES serves as a **bridge between independent science advice, evaluation, and learning within CGIAR**. Allison described IAES's coordination of SPIA and ISDC and their roles in foresight and evaluation, while Svetlana detailed the Evaluation Function's mandate to lead system-wide evaluations and strengthen the joint assurance system linking evaluation, monitoring, and performance management. Swetha emphasized SPIA's contribution to generating independent evidence on CGIAR's impact and the importance of learning from both successes and failures. Collectively, they **highlighted that integrating IAES across MELIAF functions is not only a technical task**—requiring consistent data and shared indicators—but also a **cultural one, grounded in collaboration and mutual respect among disciplines**.

4.3 Summary of the discussion

The plenary discussion built upon the IAES presentations and the panel exchange, focusing on the relationships between **independent advisory and evaluative bodies** (IAES, SPIA, ISDC) and **MELIAF functions**. Participants explored how these entities can better connect to strengthen learning, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making across CGIAR. Several central themes emerged:

- **Understanding integration as connection, not merger.** Participants agreed that integration across Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight should not mean collapsing the functions into one process. Instead, it is about creating **pathways of connection**—mechanisms that enable evidence to flow across domains and to inform portfolio-level learning.
- **Data as the common denominator.** A strong consensus emerged that **data is the glue** linking all MELIAF and IAES functions. Participants emphasized the need for interoperable systems, common standards, and improved metadata structures that can support both accountability and learning.
- **Implicit hierarchies and organizational culture.** Several speakers pointed to **tacit hierarchies** in CGIAR's evidence ecosystem—where MEL is often perceived as operational, IA as scientific, and Foresight as strategic. This implicit value system, referred to by some as *"the elephant in the room"* was seen as a barrier to collaboration and mutual respect. Participants stressed that all functions contribute differently but equally to CGIAR's credibility and impact.
- **Foresight as a timely addition.** Foresight was described as a "newcomer" to MELIAF, bringing valuable forward-looking perspectives that can inform planning and investment prioritization. Participants encouraged stronger connections between foresight modeling, prioritization processes, and impact assessment.
- **Reframing impact assessment.** Several contributions argued that **impact assessment should be present at the design and implementation stages**—not only ex post—to ensure evaluability and strengthen adaptive management.

- **Extending linkages beyond MELIAF.** Participants called for **linking outward** from the MELIAF community to related domains such as Internal Audit, Knowledge Management, Communications, and Data Governance. These connections could bolster the broader joint assurance system across CGIAR.
- **Learning at the core.** The most recurrent message was that **learning is not a secondary component** but *the central process* that unites monitoring, evaluation, impact assessment, and foresight. Participants emphasized that MELIAF should reclaim learning as its guiding principle—transforming data and evidence into actionable insight that drives portfolio improvement.

The discussion concluded with broad agreement that MELIAF and IAES share a common mission: **to make evidence timely, credible, and useful for decision-making.**

4.4 Key takeaways

- **Integration is about connection, not consolidation.** The goal is to create bridges across MELIAF functions and with IAES bodies, enabling continuous evidence flow rather than structural merger.
- **Data coherence is foundational.** Shared taxonomies, interoperable platforms, and consistent data quality are prerequisites for increasing effective collaboration.
- **Organizational culture matters.** Overcoming implicit hierarchies and fostering mutual respect across MEL, IA, and Foresight are essential for genuine system-wide learning.
- **Learning must be central.** The “L” in MELIAF should serve as the axis connecting all other functions, ensuring that evidence leads to reflection, adaptation, and improvement. It ought not to be siloed into “MEL.”
- **Foresight adds more value when connected early.** Linking foresight to portfolio design and prioritization enhances strategic relevance and anticipatory capacity.
- **Impact assessment should be part of the design table.** Integrating evaluation thinking, including impact evaluation, from the start increases the utility of findings and the evaluability of initiatives.
- **External linkages strengthen assurance.** Collaboration with Internal Audit, Communications, and Knowledge Management can broaden MELIAF’s influence and coherence.

DAY 2 – Thursday, 16 October 2025

Session title

Session 5. Taxonomy & applications

5.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 16 October 2025, 9:00 – 10:40 AM
- **Facilitators:** Alberto Miti (The Lexicon), Douglas Gayeton (The Lexicon), Alejandro A. Imbach (workshop facilitator)
- **Speakers/leads:** Alberto Miti (The Lexicon), Douglas Gayeton (The Lexicon)
- **Link to presentation:** [Session 5 - MELIAF Taxonomy.pdf](#)
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 2 AM sessions \(part 1\).mp4](#), [MELIAF Convening Day 2 AM sessions \(part 2\).mp4](#)

5.2 Session overview

The session introduced the **concept, purpose, and process** for developing a **MELIAF contextual taxonomy** — a shared representation of key terms and concepts that define consensus across CGIAR’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight (MELIAF) functions. Drawing on the collaboration between **MELIAF and The Lexicon**, the facilitators presented the taxonomy not as a glossary, but as a **set of agreements** that express common understanding across domains and disciplines. Through examples from *The Lexicon of Food* and the *Lex Icons* initiative, the presentation demonstrated how shared language can act as a **“digital handshake”**—comparable to Bluetooth in technology—enabling interoperability across CGIAR centers, partners, and funders. The session outlined a **one-year co-creation process** that will begin with:

- A **stocktake** of existing MELIAF glossaries, frameworks, and terminologies;
- **Interviews and consultations** across centers, CoPs, and partners;
- Development of a **preliminary taxonomy by domain area**;
- **Validation and iteration** through feedback loops; and
- **Design of a visual taxonomy**, supported by The Lexicon’s design network, to create machine-readable icons for MELIAF terms.

Participants were invited to consider **how a shared taxonomy could make their work easier or more impactful**, and to identify potential **barriers and challenges** in its development and use. The session combined a plenary presentation, an open Q&A, and small-group discussions (five in-person tables plus an online group).

5.3 Summary of the discussion

Group discussions and plenary exchanges centered on how a **shared MELIAF taxonomy** could strengthen collaboration, interoperability, and communication across CGIAR’s MELIAF functions, while identifying practical challenges for its development and use. Across the six groups, participants highlighted a combination of **use cases, enabling conditions, and cautionary notes**:

- **Potential uses and benefits**
 - A shared taxonomy could serve as a **translation tool** across centers, disciplines, and partners—allowing different teams to describe results, methods, and concepts using consistent terminology.
 - Several groups noted that such a system would help **reduce duplication** and **bridge data gaps** between MEL, IA, and Foresight activities.
 - It could also facilitate **portfolio-level reporting**, **cross-Center synthesis**, and **AI-supported data analysis**, by creating a common reference for indicators, outcomes, and learning products.
 - Participants saw value in the taxonomy as a **capacity-building tool**, helping new staff, external partners, and policymakers understand the MELIAF ecosystem.
- **Conditions for success**
 - Participants agreed that the process must balance **standardization with flexibility**—establishing core definitions while allowing contextual adaptation.
 - Several participants suggested a **“minimum viable product” (MVP)** approach: start with a small set of shared indicators or terms that flow through MELIAF functions, demonstrate value, and expand iteratively.
 - The taxonomy should **integrate with existing systems**—such as PRMS, MELCOP resources, and impact assessment templates—rather than create new silos.
 - Co-creation and **inclusive governance** were seen as essential to avoid the taxonomy being perceived as top-down or overly prescriptive.

- **Challenges and risks**
 - Many groups cautioned against excessive complexity, noting that too many layers or overly detailed classifications could limit usability.
 - Participants raised concerns about **language diversity and disciplinary nuance**—ensuring terms mean the same thing across different scientific and operational contexts.
 - **Governance and maintenance** were recurring themes: Who will update, validate, and “own” the taxonomy? How will it evolve as MELIAF grows?
 - There were also reflections on the risk that a taxonomy might **privilege certain knowledge systems** or reinforce existing power asymmetries if not co-created inclusively.
- **Conceptual synthesis**
 - The plenary synthesis emphasized that data and learning are the **common denominators** that connect all MELIAF functions. The taxonomy should therefore not only define terms, but **represent relationships and learning pathways** across monitoring, evaluation, impact assessment, and foresight. As one participant put it, “*It’s less about naming things and more about connecting meanings.*”

5.4 Key takeaways

- **A taxonomy is a language of connection, not control.** It should facilitate interoperability and understanding rather than impose uniformity.
- **Start small, demonstrate value, and expand.** A phased approach beginning with a few shared concepts or indicators can build credibility and user ownership.
- **Co-creation and governance are critical.** The process must involve representatives from CoPs, Centers, and Independent Advisory Bodies to ensure legitimacy and sustainability.
- **Integration with digital systems is essential.** The taxonomy should plug into PRMS, data repositories, and MELIAF Hub infrastructure to enable practical application.
- **Balance standardization and contextualization.** Common definitions must remain adaptable to different scientific and programmatic realities.
- **Learning is the end goal.** Beyond harmonization, the taxonomy should enhance collective sense-making, knowledge sharing, and system-wide learning across MELIAF.

Session title

Session 6. MELIAF Framework and interoperability

6.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 16 October 2025, 10:50 AM – 12:00 PM
- **Facilitators/leads:** Frank Place (SO); Alejandro A. Imbach (workshop facilitator)
- **Speakers:** Frank Place (SO)
- **Panelists:** Valerien Pede (IRRI); Aminou Arouna (AfricaRice); Andrea Gardeazabal (CIMMYT); Tonja Schutz (Alliance Bioversity - CIAT); Iddo Dror (ILRI); Mequanint Melesse (ICRISAT).
- **Link to presentation:** [Session 6 - MELIAF Framework Overview.pptx](#); [Session 6 - MELIAF Framework Panel.pptx](#)
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 2 AM sessions \(part 1\).mp4](#), [MELIAF Convening Day 2 AM sessions \(part 2\).mp4](#)

6.2 Session overview

This session introduced and explored the **MELIAF Framework**, conceived as a blueprint for how the Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight (MELIAF) functions can operate as a **coherent and interconnected system** across CGIAR. The session had two main goals:

- To present the **concept and structure of the MELIAF Framework**—a coordinated, modular approach for linking data, methods, and processes across Centers, Programs, and Activators.
- To identify **practical opportunities** (“early wins” or “low-hanging fruits”) for improving interoperability across MELIAF entities and projects.

In his framing presentation, **Frank Place** defined **interoperability** as enabling **MELIAF data, systems, and outputs** to connect seamlessly — allowing evidence from one area to be reused and understood elsewhere without duplication or translation costs. He presented the **MELIAF Framework** as a set of common building blocks: **shared taxonomy and definitions, standardized tools and protocols, interfaces for data exchange, and governance mechanisms** rooted in **co-design and community ownership**. Frank stressed a **pragmatic, phased approach**—starting with a few **high-value use cases** such as **Kenya’s country-level ToC** and the **Climate Adaptation Activator**—before expanding as collaboration strengthens. A subsequent **panel of six speakers** shared examples from across **Centers** on efforts to integrate **MELIAF functions** and overcome **fragmentation**. Their experiences showed that while progress is underway, integration remains inconsistent and often **under-resourced**, underscoring the need for **structured support through the Framework**. The session concluded with a **collective reflection** in which participants proposed early opportunities for interoperability—from **harmonizing data standards and KPIs** to **strengthening coordination across geographies** and **embedding MELIAF functions into Activator projects**.

6.3 Summary of the discussion

6.3.1 Panel insights

Panelists from **IRRI, AfricaRice, the Alliance Bioversity–CIAT, CIMMYT, ILRI, and ICRISAT** shared practical experiences integrating **MELIAF functions** within their Centers and projects. Common threads included:

- **Reducing fragmentation** through decentralized yet coordinated systems linking monitoring, evaluation, learning, and impact assessment under shared standards.
- **Institutional alignment and interoperability**, requiring both technical solutions and incentives for collaboration.
- **Turning data into decisions**, demonstrating how MELIAF processes can produce actionable insights.
- **Cultural and behavioral shifts**, highlighting that interoperability depends on collaboration, trust, and continuous learning.

Panelists stressed that interoperability must extend beyond data integration to inform decision-making. **IRRI** illustrated how data should flow “from information to knowledge to action,” while **CIMMYT** and **the Alliance** underscored the importance of clear roles and shared quality assurance. **Iddo Dror** suggested linking MELIAF with innovation management systems such as **IPSR** and **Scaling Readiness** to bridge gaps between science and scaling. Participants agreed that **country-level collaboration**, such as **ICRISAT’s Ethiopia case**, offers a model for translating interoperability into practice.

6.3.2 Plenary reflections and “early wins”

During the plenary discussion, participants explored how interoperability could be advanced through **small, achievable steps** that demonstrate immediate value. Contributions posted on the flipchart and summarized by **Frank Place** fell into four broad clusters:

- **Data and standards** – Conducting a system-wide stocktake of MELIAF data assets; establishing minimum CGIAR-wide standards for key indicators and KPIs; and building a hub for shared definitions and standard operating procedures.

- **Coordination and governance** – Strengthening collaboration among Centers through harmonized reporting, linking PRMS and EBS systems, and prioritizing coordination in key Tier 1 countries.
- **Innovation and learning** – Integrating innovation tracking into all Activator projects; developing a process to identify priority innovations; and fostering continuous learning loops across projects.
- **Capacity and methods** – Expanding capacity building on data management, methods, and analytical tools to support interoperability.

Participants appreciated the practicality of these suggestions and the emphasis on starting with realistic, measurable actions. The list of “early wins” was left posted for further additions during the workshop, to remain visible as a living reference point for subsequent sessions.

6.4 Key takeaways

- The **MELIAF Framework** provides a shared structure connecting **MEL, IA, Foresight, and Learning** within a coherent system for evidence generation, use, and improvement across CGIAR.
- **Interoperability** is both technical and organizational, requiring shared standards, digital tools, clear roles, incentives, and governance that foster collaboration and accountability.
- It must **enable decision-making**, turning data into actionable insights that guide strategy, management, and investment.
- A **balance between decentralization and coordination** is needed—empowering Centers to innovate while ensuring system-wide coherence and quality assurance.
- **Reliable, connected data systems** are central, driving cross-function collaboration and organizational learning.
- Linking MELIAF with **Innovation Packages and Scaling Readiness (IPSR)** strengthens alignment and ensures evidence supports innovation.
- **Country-level collaboration**, as seen in Kenya and Ethiopia, demonstrates how interoperability enhances decision-making at multiple levels.
- **Early wins** like harmonizing indicators or connecting dashboards can build momentum and shared ownership.
- **Communities of Practice (CoPs)** can steward standards, peer learning, and sustained engagement.
- Finally, **trust and collaboration** among Centers, Programs, and Independent Bodies are essential for a functional, lasting Framework.

Session title

Session 7. MELIAF Hub vision and alignment

7.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 16 October 2025, 1:10 – 3:20 PM
- **Facilitators/leads:** James Hammond (SO), Alejandro A. Imbach (workshop facilitator)
- **Speakers:** James Hammond (SO)
- **Link to presentation:** [Session 7 - MELIAF Hub.pptx](#)
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 2 PM sessions.mp4](#)

7.2 Session overview

This session introduced the concept of the **MELIAF Hub** — an **open-access digital platform** designed to strengthen coordination, learning, and efficiency across CGIAR’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight (MELIAF) functions. The session’s main objective was to **co-develop a shared vision** for a useful and sustainable Hub that could serve as both a **repository of resources** and a **collaborative workspace** for the MELIAF Communities of Practice (CoPs). In his opening presentation, **James Hammond** described the Hub as the operational complement to the P+R Hub: “If the P+R Hub is about *how to report*, the MELIAF Hub is about *how to measure*.” He outlined three proposed components of the Hub:

- **A repository of practical resources** – including indicator banks, data collection tools, study registries, and standard operating procedures.
- **Foundational documentation and guidance** – providing accessible explanations of key MELIAF frameworks, taxonomies, and reporting standards.
- **Spaces for CoP collaboration** – allowing members to share experiences, host webinars, endorse methodologies, and co-create content.

Participants were invited to **work in groups** to identify: (i) what content and functions are essential and not easily available elsewhere; (ii) how the Hub could best serve staff working in MEL, IA, and F; and (iii) how it could strengthen CoP collaboration and CGIAR’s broader learning ecosystem.

7.3 Summary of the discussion

The discussion focused on shaping a **shared vision for the MELIAF Hub** as a practical and user-driven platform to support CGIAR staff working in Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight (MELIAF). In his opening remarks, **James Hammond** outlined the purpose of the Hub: to become an *open-access digital resource and collaboration space* that strengthens coherence, efficiency, and learning across the MELIAF community. He emphasized that co-design and community ownership will be essential to ensure that the Hub reflects user needs and adds tangible value to everyday work.

During the group discussions, participants agreed that the Hub should primarily serve as a **“how-to-measure” companion** to the existing P+R Hub (“how-to-report”), focusing on providing accessible, credible, and up-to-date MELIAF resources. Across the six discussion groups (five in-person and one online), several recurring themes emerged:

- **Essential content**
 - **A repository of practical tools and templates** (e.g., indicator banks, data collection protocols, evaluation guidance, study registries, and standard operating procedures).
 - **Foundational materials** explaining MELIAF frameworks, theories of change, results reporting, and glossary/taxonomy content in plain language.
 - **Examples and case studies** that show how MELIAF approaches are applied in real contexts, including successful data workflows and impact stories.
- **Design and accessibility**
 - The Hub should be intuitive, well-curated, and structured around user needs rather than institutional hierarchies.
 - Participants called for **searchable, categorized content** with clear navigation, emphasizing “*quality over quantity*.”
 - Offline access or downloadable materials were identified as important for colleagues in regions with limited connectivity.
- **Collaboration and community functions**
 - Participants saw the Hub as a space for **cross-CoP collaboration**, featuring discussion forums, webinar listings, and opportunities for peer review and endorsement of tools.
 - A number of groups proposed the inclusion of an **“open shelf” section** where members can share draft tools or lessons for feedback before formal publication.

- **Governance and sustainability**

- Several participants stressed the need for clear governance, content curation protocols, and moderation to maintain quality and relevance.
- The Hub should have **dedicated stewardship**—likely through the MELIAF CoPs and the PPU—with defined responsibilities for content updates, technical maintenance, and community engagement.

In plenary, James Hammond acknowledged that the proposed ideas represented both **a vision and a roadmap** for the Hub's development, noting that the next phase will involve prioritizing features that deliver immediate value to users while keeping the structure adaptable for future growth.

7.4 Key takeaways

- **The MELIAF Hub will be a practical, user-driven platform.** It aims to centralize resources, foster collaboration, and raise the quality and coherence of MELIAF-related work across CGIAR.
- **User needs must guide design.** The Hub should be intuitive, accessible, and curated around the practical challenges of MEL, IA, and Foresight practitioners.
- **Co-creation ensures ownership.** Success depends on active participation from CoPs, Centers, and independent bodies to define priorities, contribute content, and maintain relevance.
- **Quality and curation are essential.** The Hub must balance openness with moderation to ensure reliability, usability, and trust in shared tools and information.
- **Integration with existing systems.** The Hub should align closely with the P+R Hub, taxonomy, and digital platforms such as PRMS and the MELIAF interoperability framework.
- **Learning and collaboration are central.** Beyond being a repository, the Hub should serve as a community workspace where methods, lessons, and innovations are shared and improved collectively.

Session title

Session 8. Activator Projects deep dives

8.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 16 October 2025, 3:30 – 5:30 PM
- **Facilitators:** Alejandro A. Imbach (workshop facilitator)
- **Speakers/leads:** Kenya Activator: Berber Kramer and Sedi Boukaka (IFPRI Kenya); Climate Adaptation Activator: Andreea Nowak (Alliance Bioversity–CIAT) with Todd Rosenstock (SO); Projected Benefits Activator: Keith Wiebe (IFPRI).
- **Link to presentations:** [Session 8 - Kenya Activator.pptx](#); [Session 8 - Climate Adaptation Activator.pptx](#); [Session 8 - Climate Adaptation Activator.pptx](#)
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 2 PM sessions.mp4](#)

8.2 Session overview

This session showcased the **three MELIAF Activator Projects**, each designed to test and operationalize key elements of the MELIAF Framework in practice. The activators serve as **proof-of-concept initiatives**, demonstrating how MELIAF principles can be embedded in ongoing CGIAR work to improve coherence, interoperability, and evidence generation. The plenary introduced the activator portfolio:

- **Kenya Activator** – Led by IFPRI Kenya, this country-level pilot coordinates MELIAF functions through a country-level Theory of Change, common indicators, synthesis of outcome / impact evaluations, and hybrid seminars on work in progress to foster collaboration (Project coordinator: Berber Kramer).
- **Climate Adaptation Activator** – Led by the Alliance Bioversity–CIAT, this initiative seeks to institutionalize adaptation tracking through shared taxonomies, tagging systems, and harmonized data standards (Project coordinator: Andreea Nowak).
- **Projected Benefits Activator** – Led by IFPRI, this project advances foresight analysis and ex-ante impact estimation across CGIAR using consistent models and assumptions to project the future benefits of portfolio investments (Project coordinator: Keith Wiebe).

After short plenary presentations by each lead, participants joined a **World Café-style exercise** to explore two questions for every project:

- *Project → Participant Alignment: Which project deliverables are most useful or relevant to your work? How could you apply them in your context?*
- *Participant → Project Alignment: How could you or your team contribute to this project's goals? What knowledge or resources could you bring?*

This interactive format encouraged cross-fertilization of ideas among participants with diverse MELIA, IA, and Foresight backgrounds and set the stage for continued collaboration among the three activator teams.

8.3 Summary of the discussion

The session generated a comprehensive exchange on the **three MELIAF Activator Projects**, each testing different aspects of how MELIAF principles can be operationalized within CGIAR. After the presentations and World Café discussions on Day 2, the Activator teams reconvened in the Day 3 plenary to share **reflections and next steps** emerging from their group conversations.

8.3.1 Kenya Activator (led by IFPRI Kenya – Berber Kramer and Sedi Boukaka)

The Kenya Activator was discussed as a **country-level pilot** for MELIAF integration, focused on developing a joint Theory of Change (ToC), aligning indicators, synthesizing Outcome and Impact Evaluations (OIEs), and hybrid work-in-progress seminars on OIEs in their design phase to facilitate coordination.

- The group agreed that the **ToC will be the central organizing instrument** and the first priority for the Kenya team. It will provide a structure for coordination across Centers and serve as the entry point for harmonizing indicators and linking with national priorities.
- Participants recommended using **SPIA's stocktake** study as a starting point to identify the universe of CGIAR innovations and potentially identify related impact assessments conducted within Kenya, inviting Centers to contribute new or planned studies to the shared database.
- The **PPU** offered to share relevant outputs and results data for Kenya to support ToC design and evaluation planning.
- Participants also discussed the need for clear **coordination and communication mechanisms** to keep Centers informed of progress and opportunities for engagement.
- The group emphasized that this country-level process should document lessons learned to guide replication in other countries.

Overall, the Kenya Activator was viewed as a **strategic testing ground** for operationalizing MELIAF principles at country level—linking frameworks, data systems, and partnerships in a coherent, locally grounded model.

8.3.2 Climate Adaptation Activator (led by Alliance Bioversity–CIAT – Andreea Nowak and Todd Rosenstock)

The discussion centered on how the activator can build a **common framework for tracking adaptation outcomes** through shared taxonomies, tagging systems, and harmonized data standards.

- Participants highlighted the value of **consistent tagging protocols** to identify adaptation-related activities and outcomes across projects, datasets, and Centers.
- The activator was seen as a way to **connect MELIAF components**—linking foresight (hazard and risk modeling), monitoring, learning, and impact assessment through a unified adaptation cycle.
- The group agreed on the importance of **building from existing resources**, such as CIMMYT’s taxonomy, PRMS tagging systems, and the PPU’s work on OECD adaptation markers, rather than creating new frameworks from scratch.
- Clarifying adaptation concepts (e.g., hazard, risk, exposure, and resilience) was identified as a priority to ensure coherence across MELIAF and climate reporting efforts.

Participants concluded that the Climate Adaptation Activator can serve as a **cross-cutting integrator**, aligning CGIAR’s adaptation data and reporting systems and strengthening the evidence base for adaptation outcomes.

8.3.3 Projected Benefits Activator (led by IFPRI – Keith Wiebe)

The group discussion focused on clarifying the **scope, application levels, and methodological linkages** of the Projected Benefits (PB) Activator. Participants recognized its potential to create a common foresight-based approach for estimating the ex-ante impacts of CGIAR investments.

- The team emphasized strengthening the **“handshake” between Science Program and Accelerator Theories of Change (ToCs) and the PB modeling framework**, ensuring that foresight analyses and projected benefit estimates are systematically connected to portfolio planning and MELIAF indicators.
- Participants discussed the need for **clear docking points** between MELIAF components—ToCs, impact pathways, indicators, and foresight data—so that modeling results can inform decision-making and prioritization.
- Three possible **application levels** were identified: portfolio-wide, country-level (beginning with Kenya), and thematic (starting with climate). These remain under consideration as the activator’s scope is refined.
- Capacity building and transparent communication of assumptions were underscored as essential to ensure that modeling outputs are interpreted and used effectively across Centers, SP/As, and at the System level.

Overall, the Projected Benefits Activator was viewed as a **methodological backbone** of the MELIAF system, helping connect foresight and impact assessment under a shared analytical framework.

8.4 Key takeaways

8.4.1 Cross-cutting insights

- **Activator projects are practical laboratories for MELIAF integration.** They demonstrate how MELIAF principles can move from design to implementation across thematic, methodological, and geographic levels.
- **Coherence requires alignment, not uniformity.** Each activator offers a distinct pathway—analytical (Projected Benefits), thematic (Climate Adaptation), and geographic (Kenya)—to achieving system integration.
- **Learning and coordination matter as much as methods.** Participants stressed that continued collaboration among activator teams and with CoPs will be critical for scaling and system-wide learning.
- **Capacity and communication are enablers.** Strengthening skills to interpret and apply evidence, and maintaining transparent coordination across Centers, were identified as priorities for 2026.

8.4.2 Per activator

- **Kenya:** The first priority is finalizing the country-level ToC, followed by alignment of indicators, using SPIA’s stocktake as a starting point and coordinating with the country team, and stronger communication channels among Centers.
- **Climate Adaptation:** The priority is developing shared taxonomies and tagging systems that unify adaptation tracking and align with ongoing MELIAF taxonomy and interoperability efforts.
- **Projected Benefits:** A key focus is on creating a consistent handshake between ToCs and an improved modeling framework, ensuring foresight results feed into portfolio design and monitoring.

DAY 3 – Friday, 17 October 2025

Session title

Session 9. Storytelling

9.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 17 October 2025, 9:20 – 10:50 AM
- **Facilitators:** Alejandro A. Imbach (workshop facilitator)
- **Speaker/leads:** Alberto Miti (The Lexicon), Douglas Gayeton (The Lexicon)
- **Panelists:** Carlo Fadda (Alliance Bioversity–CIAT co-lead of CGIAR Nature Positive Solutions); Rachel Kibui (Alliance Bioversity–CIAT); Francis Oduor (Alliance Bioversity–CIAT, My Farm Trees project); and Evalyn Okoth (community seed bank leader, Kisumu, Kenya).
- **Link to presentation:** [Session 9 - Storytelling.pdf](#)
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 3 AM sessions-20251017_091651-Meeting Recording - part 1.mp4](#); [MELIAF Convening Day 3 AM sessions-20251017_091651-Meeting Recording - part 2.mp4](#)

9.2 Session overview

This session introduced **storytelling as a strategic component of MELIAF's enhanced impact communications**. Led by *The Lexicon*, the discussion illustrated how narrative, imagery, and data visualization can make complex evidence more accessible, relatable, and actionable across CGIAR's work. The session demonstrated that storytelling is not an ancillary activity but a **core communication and learning tool**—one that helps put “*a face and a place on data*.” By translating evidence into emotionally resonant narratives, CGIAR can strengthen literacy and consensus around key impact concepts while increasing public understanding of its research. A panel discussion brought together communication practitioners and local partners from Kenya to showcase how visual storytelling has been applied through **Nature Positive Solutions** and **My Farm Trees** initiatives. Panelists reflected on how large-format “information artworks” and participatory photography helped connect farmers, policymakers, and donors, turning complex scientific work into lived, human stories. The session concluded with a **short group exercise** where participants discussed challenges and opportunities in applying storytelling to MELIAF and their own work. They explored how evidence-based stories could enhance communication, learning, and internal coherence across MEL, IA, and foresight functions.

9.3 Summary of the discussion

9.3.1 Panel discussion

The plenary opened with **Douglas Gayeton** introducing *The Lexicon's* storytelling approach as both a methodology and mindset, inviting participants to see stories as “a shared language of understanding” that makes complexity accessible and builds ownership. **Carlo Fadda** stressed that MELIAF's mission to measure, learn, and improve requires not just evidence but also the ability to communicate meaning—making storytelling an integral part of science that combines rigor and relatability. **Rachel Kibui** from the Alliance Bioversity–CIAT shared how collaborative visual storytelling in the *Nature Positive Solutions* initiative enabled researchers and farmers to co-create authentic messages about biodiversity and agroecology. **Francis Oduor**, also from the Alliance, described how farmers in *My Farm Trees* used digital tools to document their practices, fostering peer learning and grounding evidence in lived experience. **Evalyn Okoth**, a community seed bank leader from Kisumu, Kenya, reflected that storytelling gave her “a voice in science,” turning farmers into partners and strengthening trust and dignity. Together, the panel showed how storytelling connects conceptual framing, institutional practice, and community voice within MELIAF.

9.3.2 Plenary exchange

Following the panel, participants joined an open exchange with **The Lexicon team**, focusing on how to embed storytelling within scientific workflows while ensuring **ethical and inclusive representation**. The discussion addressed challenges such as translating complex research without losing nuance, maintaining transparency by acknowledging both successes and failures, and ensuring communities retain **co-ownership and credit** for their stories. Participants also highlighted the need for **capacity building** across Centers to strengthen skills in visual storytelling, interviewing, and ethical communication. In response, **Douglas Gayeton** underscored that storytelling is not about simplification but **translation**—transforming complexity into clarity—and that every good story should remain “**true, human, and purposeful**.”

9.3.3 Group discussions

After the plenary, participants divided into five groups for a short reflective exercise. The **flipcharts and summaries** revealed strong alignment across groups around four clusters of ideas:

- **Challenges and constraints**
 - Lack of dedicated time and capacity for documentation and storytelling.
 - Stories are often collected informally and lost during reporting cycles.

- Limited institutional support or guidance for integrating storytelling into MEL, evaluation, or communication workflows.
- Concerns about balancing institutional messaging with authenticity—how to show complexity, setbacks, or context-specific lessons.
- **Opportunities and immediate needs**
 - Participants expressed a desire for **simple, replicable tools** to help identify and document good stories during project implementation.
 - There was enthusiasm for developing a **community of practice or mentorship system** for storytelling, connecting MELIAF practitioners with communication experts.
 - Many groups suggested **visual storytelling formats**—short videos, illustrated briefs, or photo essays—as the most effective for engagement.
- **Stories that participants would tell first**
 - Several groups proposed stories focused on **how collaboration and learning happen within MELIAF**, showing integration in action.
 - Others wanted to document **local innovations and farmer-led solutions**, connecting them to CGIAR's broader impact goals.
 - A few participants mentioned the importance of stories about **internal change**—how teams adopt new tools, frameworks, or methods.
- **How storytelling could enhance MELIAF work**
 - Improve **internal learning** by capturing tacit knowledge and lessons not visible in reports.
 - Strengthen **external communication** by making impact evidence accessible and engaging.
 - Increase **collaboration and morale**, as teams see themselves and their work represented in narratives.

9.4 Key takeaways

- **Storytelling connects evidence to experience**, translating MELIAF's data and outcomes into relatable narratives that bridge science and society.
- It is **integral to learning and reflection**, capturing tacit knowledge, illustrating change, and making learning visible across MELIAF functions.
- **Scientific rigor and empathy can coexist**—as noted by Carlo Fadda, effective stories balance credibility with human context.
- **Participatory storytelling builds ownership and trust**: when communities co-create stories, as shown by Francis Oduor and Evalyn Okoth, research becomes a shared, empowering process.
- **Visual narratives increase engagement**, as Rachel Kibui's projects showed, conveying complexity more effectively than text-heavy reports.
- **Institutional support is essential**—storytelling needs time, skills, and systems for ethical documentation and integration into MELIAF workflows.
- **Authenticity and ethics are key**: stories should be co-owned, transparent, and representative, reflecting both progress and challenges.
- **Storytelling fosters collaboration and motivation** by giving visibility to people behind the data and strengthening collective pride and purpose across CGIAR.

Session title

Session 10. Communications and advocacy

10.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 17 October 2025, 11:00 AM –12:10 PM
- **Facilitators:** Alejandro A. Imbach (workshop facilitator)
- **Speakers/leads:** Bronagh Woods (Institutional Communications Officer, CGIAR System Organization); Mulugeta Bayeh (Web and Digital Transformation Specialist, CGIAR System Organization).
- **Link to presentation:** [Session 10 - Comms and Advocacy.pptx](#)
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 3 AM sessions-20251017_091651-Meeting Recording - part 1.mp4](#); [MELIAF Convening Day 3 AM sessions-20251017_091651-Meeting Recording - part 2.mp4](#)

10.2 Session overview

This session aimed to introduce participants to the **communications and advocacy (C&A) architecture** of the CGIAR System Organization and to identify **synergies between MELIAF and C&A functions**, particularly regarding storytelling, digital infrastructure, and strategic communication for impact. The presentation by the System Organization's Communications and Advocacy team outlined the **current tools, services, and communication strategies** that support CGIAR-wide visibility, brand coherence, and resource mobilization. It also provided an overview of the **Common Platform**—a new integrated web and content management system designed to streamline CGIAR's digital presence across centers and programs. Through the session, participants gained an understanding of:

- How system-level communication aligns with science, MELIAF, and advocacy priorities.
- Existing tools and platforms (e.g., Sprout Social, SplashThat, Canva, Shutterstock, CGSpace) that MELIAF projects can leverage.
- The architecture and potential of the **CGIAR Common Platform**, which enables shared repositories, standardized metadata, and integration with MELIAF and Activator initiatives.

The discussion underscored the importance of **close collaboration between MELIAF and Communications & Advocacy teams** to ensure that evidence and impact stories generated through MELIAF can be effectively packaged, shared, and amplified through system-wide channels.

10.3 Summary of the discussion

The discussion highlighted the **strategic value of communications and advocacy (C&A)** for amplifying MELIAF's impact and ensuring that evidence, data, and stories reach key audiences in ways that drive understanding, engagement, and action.

10.3.1 Presentation highlights

- **Bronagh Woods** introduced the **C&A team's mandate** within the CGIAR System Organization—to strengthen science communication, advocacy, and brand alignment across centers. She outlined the five main workstreams: **media and campaigns, events, content and brand management, digital communication, and internal capacity support**.
- She emphasized that storytelling and advocacy are most effective when grounded in **credible data and human-centered narratives**, echoing earlier discussions from Session 9.
- Bróna presented examples of how evidence-based communication had increased visibility and funding opportunities, such as through the **Africa Food Systems Summit, COP28 engagement, and gender and climate campaigns**, each linking research to public discourse and policy influence.
- She encouraged MELIAF participants to see themselves as **story contributors and amplifiers**, noting that data from monitoring and evaluation can become powerful stories of progress when presented in accessible formats.

10.3.2 Technical integration

- **Mulugeta Bayeh** showcased the **CGIAR Common Platform**, designed to integrate multiple communication tools and databases into a single content management system (CMS). He explained how this architecture allows shared content—such as research highlights, case studies, and MELIAF outputs—to be distributed automatically across CGIAR websites, regional pages, and thematic portals.
- The platform's key benefits include **metadata consistency, centralized search, improved analytics**, and the capacity to embed visual storytelling and dashboards.
- Participants saw potential in connecting MELIAF's planned **Hub (Session 7)** to this system to improve visibility of learning outputs and reduce duplication of repositories.

10.3.3 Plenary reflections and questions

Participants expressed strong interest in exploring synergies between **MELIAF's evidence ecosystem and the C&A infrastructure**. Key themes included:

- **Integration:** How the Common Platform could serve as an access point for MELIAF stories, dashboards, and impact materials.
- **Capacity and accessibility:** The need for clear guidance and simple workflows for non-specialists to contribute content or publish stories.
- **Data integrity:** Ensuring that automated content sharing preserves context, accuracy, and source attribution.
- **Collaboration:** Suggestions for joint training or shared workplans between MELIAF and the C&A team to ensure storytelling, advocacy, and evidence cycles reinforce one another.

The Communications and Advocacy team emphasized that the Common Platform is a **living system**, evolving to support CGIAR's transformation and the principles of open, connected, and strategic communication.

10.4 Key takeaways

- **Communications and advocacy are strategic enablers of MELIAF.** They ensure that learning and evidence translate into influence, visibility, and action.
- **Evidence-based storytelling builds credibility.** Strong narratives depend on reliable data, rigorous analysis, and authentic voices from research and communities.
- **Digital integration enhances efficiency and reach.** The Common Platform offers shared infrastructure for disseminating MELIAF products through CGIAR's unified web ecosystem.
- **Collaboration is essential.** MELIAF and the C&A team can co-develop workflows for content sharing, campaign alignment, and joint communication planning.
- **Capacity and guidance are needed.** Clear roles, editorial support, and practical templates will help MELIAF contributors produce high-quality, on-brand communication materials.
- **Visibility strengthens advocacy.** By showcasing MELIAF's results through compelling stories and digital presence, CGIAR can attract partners and funding while demonstrating accountability and impact.

Session title

Session 11. CoP integration and collaboration

11.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 17 October 2025, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
- **Facilitators/leads:** Jules Colomer & Nicoleta Trifa (MEL CoP); Frank Place & Keith Wiebe & Elisabetta Gotor (Foresight CoP); Marissa Van Epp & James Hammond (IA CoP); Alejandro A. Imbach (workshop facilitator).
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 3 PM sessions.mp4](#)

11.2 Session overview

This session provided an opportunity for **the three MELIAF Communities of Practice (CoPs)** — Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL); Impact Assessment (IA); and Foresight — to **reconvene separately and articulate concrete pathways** for closer collaboration under MELIAF. Each CoP was invited to reflect on:

- What **support or contributions** it expects from the MELIAF project;
- What **success would look like** if the three CoPs worked more effectively together; and
- Where there are **practical opportunities for joint action** and shared learning.

11.3 Summary of the discussion

11.3.1 MEL CoP

The MEL CoP group focused on revitalizing collaboration and improving coherence across monitoring systems. Key discussion points included:

- **Standardization and coherence** – Members highlighted the need for shared frameworks, indicator definitions, and reporting processes linked to PRMS and the emerging MELIAF taxonomy.
- **Community reactivation** – Participants expressed that the MEL CoP had lost visibility and required structured facilitation, regular meetings, and clearer communication channels.
- **Capacity and tools** – Members requested support on digital M&E tools, indicator management, and data quality assurance, emphasizing peer-to-peer learning and practical resources.

The flipchart synthesis captured the CoP's vision succinctly: *"MELIAF should strengthen coordination, coherence, and capacity—not create new systems but connect existing ones."*

11.3.2 IA CoP

The IA CoP group discussed how to strengthen collaboration within MELIAF while maintaining IA's independence and analytical integrity. Main themes included:

- **Independence and complementarity** – Participants reaffirmed the importance of maintaining IA's independent evaluative role, while aligning conceptually and methodologically with MELIAF functions.
- **Data harmonization and interoperability** – Members called for systematic data sharing, metadata consistency, and improved connection between IA datasets and MELIAF repositories.
- **Cross-CoP learning** – Participants proposed creating shared spaces with MEL and Foresight teams to refine methods, test integration approaches, and link IA data with modeling and learning frameworks.
- **Thematic collaboration** – The IA CoP agreed to explore joint methodological development around shared priority themes such as climate adaptation, food security, and systems transformation.

11.3.3 Foresight CoP

The Foresight CoP's discussion, informed by the detailed notes from this group, revolved around clarifying its role within MELIAF and identifying concrete entry points for collaboration with IA and MEL. Key discussion points:

- **Community engagement and inclusivity** – Participants acknowledged that while the Foresight CoP has existed for several years—first under a bilateral project and the PIM CRP, then under Initiatives and now a Science Program—it has often been active only among small subgroups. MELIAF can help by **bringing together all Foresight members more regularly** to exchange on methods and system-level topics.
- **Support and resources** – The group noted that MELIAF's limited budget may not cover formal training on foresight tools, but **MELIAF could support convening**, while the **Policy Innovations Science Program** might fund complementary training or technical sessions.
- **Integration with IA and MEL CoPs** – IA can help synthesize data on adoption curves, yield gains, and baseline productivity growth for use in Projected Benefits (PB) analysis. MEL and IA can serve as "checks" when PBs are estimated, ensuring internal consistency between foresight modeling and empirical evidence.
- **Concrete opportunities for collaboration**
 - Establish a mechanism for **CoP-level feedback** on Activator projects' theories of change (especially outcome targets).
 - Plan for a **joint review** during a potential **2027–28 stocktaking of the CGIAR portfolio**, using updated MEL and IA evidence to recalibrate PB projections.

- Provide **training to Foresight CoP members** on PB tools and related modeling applications.

11.3.4 Cross-cutting discussion

- **Learning as a shared function:** All CoPs emphasized that learning—not only monitoring or evaluation—should be central to MELIAF’s purpose and processes.
- **Data interoperability and standardization:** Each CoP identified the need for compatible data systems and shared taxonomies to facilitate collaboration.
- **CoP revitalization and engagement:** Participants called for more frequent communication, joint meetings, and cross-CoP exchanges.
- **Integration through Activator Projects and the MELIAF Hub:** These were seen as practical platforms for inter-CoP collaboration and for testing data linkages in real contexts.

11.4 Key takeaways

11.4.1 MEL CoP

- Requires dedicated coordination to sustain activity and engagement.
- Prioritizes harmonized indicator frameworks and alignment with PRMS and MELIAF taxonomy.
- Emphasizes that MELIAF’s role is to **connect and strengthen existing systems**, not to duplicate them.

11.4.2 IA CoP

- Supports closer methodological alignment with MEL and Foresight while preserving IA’s independence.
- Calls for harmonized data systems and shared repositories.
- Proposes collaboration on cross-cutting themes such as adaptation, food systems, and transformation metrics.

11.4.3 Foresight CoP

- Sees MELIAF as a platform to **revitalize and expand participation** within the Foresight community.
- Requests regular convening to share methods and coordinate work on modeling and scenario analysis.
- Identifies specific **joint opportunities with IA and MEL:**
 - IA to provide synthesized adoption and yield data for PB estimates.
 - MEL to help ground foresight insights in project-level evidence.
- Recommends training on PB tools and collaborative review mechanisms during future portfolio stocktaking.

11.4.4 Cross-cutting

- Learning and interoperability are shared priorities across CoPs.
- Joint activities (training, stocktaking, activator pilots) are seen as effective ways to operationalize collaboration.
- The MELIAF Hub will serve as an enabler for CoP communication, data exchange, and joint visibility.

Session title

Session 12. MELIAF convening closing and next steps

12.1 Session details

- **Date and time:** 17 October 2025, 3:20 – 4:30 PM
- **Speakers/leads:** Marissa Van Epp (MELIAF project coordinator)
- **Link to presentation:** [Session 12 – MELIAF Convening Closing.pptx](#)
- **Recording reference:** [MELIAF Convening Day 3 PM sessions.mp4](#)

12.2 Session overview

The final session concluded the first Annual MELIAF Convening by summarizing the workshop's main results and outlining next steps for 2025–2026 and collecting participants' feedback through a **post-workshop survey** mirroring the baseline survey from Session 1. **Marissa Van Epp, MELIAF Project Coordinator**, delivered a concise recap of the three-day event, highlighting how the convening had:

- Brought together **over 60 participants** from MEL, Impact Assessment, and Foresight Communities of Practice (CoPs) **for the first time**;
- **Generated thousands of inputs across 12 sessions**, shaping the MELIAF Framework, Taxonomy, and Hub designs; and
- **Established a shared understanding of MELIAF's role** in driving coherence, collaboration, and learning across CGIAR.

The closing presentation revisited MELIAF's "**success formula**"—effective systems, practices, and behaviors leading to stronger delivery and results on the ground—and confirmed the project's immediate coordination and communication priorities. The repeated survey allowed the facilitation team to assess changes in participants' perceptions of coherence, clarity, and connectedness within the MELIAF community, serving as a quick indicator of progress toward the workshop's objectives.

12.3 Summary of the discussion

The closing discussion captured participants' reflections on the convening's achievements and the next steps for consolidating MELIAF as a CGIAR-wide collaborative platform. After **Marissa Van Epp's** recap of the workshop, participants expressed appreciation for the inclusive and hands-on format, as well as for the opportunity to reconnect across the three Communities of Practice—**MEL, Impact Assessment, and Foresight**.

They agreed that the convening successfully balanced **conceptual design and practical application**, generating actionable ideas for implementation in 2026. Several participants noted that the event had clarified MELIAF's purpose—a **system for integration, not addition**—and emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum beyond the workshop.

Suggestions focused on ensuring **regular communication, clear focal points for each CoP, and visible leadership** to sustain coordination. The discussion also reaffirmed MELIAF's value as a **community-building mechanism**—a shared space to exchange methods, align standards, and transform evidence into learning. Participants stressed the importance of keeping the process transparent, inclusive, and grounded in collective ownership. Finally, participants reflected on the **post-workshop survey results**, noting that the convening had significantly strengthened their understanding of MELIAF's vision and clarified how each CoP and partner can contribute to its next phase of implementation.

The closing survey (32 responses) provided a snapshot of how participants' perceptions evolved after three days of joint work:

- Improved sense of connection across MEL-IA-F (avg ≈ 3.7).
- High clarity about MELIAF's purpose and its contribution to CGIAR's portfolio delivery (avg ≈ 4.0).
- Stronger understanding of how one's work aligns with MELIAF priorities and strategic direction (avg ≈ 4.2).
- Very high confidence in ability to contribute to next steps and deliverables (avg ≈ 4.4).

Post-workshop survey



12.3.1 Comparison between baseline (Session 1) and post-workshop survey (Session 12)

Dimension	Baseline (Session 1)	Post-workshop (Session 12)	Change
Connection across MELIAF community	3.0	3.7	▲ +0.7
Understanding of MELIAF purpose	3.6	4.0	▲ +0.4
Understanding of alignment with MELIAF priorities	3.5	4.2	▲ +0.7
Confidence to contribute to MELIAF deliverables	4.1	4.4	▲ +0.3

The comparative results between the opening and closing surveys show **consistent improvement across all four dimensions**, indicating that the convening effectively enhanced both clarity and confidence among participants.

- **Connection across the MELIAF community** rose from **3.0 to 3.7 (+0.7)**, suggesting that the workshop's interactive design and CoP-based sessions helped participants feel more integrated within a shared MELIAF network.
- **Understanding of MELIAF's overall purpose** increased from **3.6 to 4.0 (+0.4)**, reflecting stronger conceptual clarity about MELIAF's role within CGIAR's portfolio.
- **Understanding of how one's work aligns with MELIAF priorities** improved markedly from **3.5 to 4.2 (+0.7)**, showing that discussions around the Framework, Activator Projects, and Hub made the project's operational logic more tangible.
- **Confidence in contributing to MELIAF's deliverables** grew from **4.1 to 4.4 (+0.3)**, indicating already high baseline confidence was further consolidated by clearer direction and defined next steps.

Overall, the results suggest that the workshop achieved one of its key objectives: **strengthening coherence, shared understanding, and ownership** across the MELIAF community—laying a stronger foundation for coordinated implementation in 2026.

PART 2 | Overview of workstream workplans

This section presents the **high-level workplans** developed for each of the project's six workstreams. These plans have been **reviewed and validated in consultation with the respective workstream leads** following the MELIAF Workshop. They outline the key priorities, activities, and milestones for the next 6–12 months and will serve as the foundation for tracking progress and coordinating efforts across the MELIAF project.

It is important to note that these workplans are **living documents**. As implementation advances, they will be refined and updated to reflect lessons learned, emerging opportunities, and the **adaptive management approach** that characterizes initiatives of this nature.

The detailed high-level workplans are included in **Annex 4** of this report, as available at the time of publication. In addition, **online versions** of these documents are being maintained as living references (see links below). Readers are encouraged to refer to these online versions to access the **most up-to-date information and revisions**.

The workstreams included in this report are:

1. [MELIAF Taxonomy high-level workplan](#)
2. [MELIAF Framework high-level workplan](#)
3. [MELIA Hub high-level workplan](#)
4. [Kenya Activator Project high-level workplan](#)
5. [Climate Change Activator Project high-level workplan](#)
6. [Theory of Change & Projected Benefits high-level workplan](#)

PART 3 | Overview of working groups terms of reference (ToR)

This section outlines the **initial proposal for the formation of Working Groups (WGs)** and the **draft terms of reference (ToRs)** defined for each. These groups are intended to facilitate collaboration, knowledge exchange, and joint progress within and across MELIAF workstreams.

For each of the five current workstreams, the ToRs describe the **group's purpose, expected contributions, and modalities for participation and subscription**. Together, they provide a foundation for operational coordination and shared learning.

The detailed Terms of Reference are included in **Annex 5** of this report, reflecting the versions available at the time of publication. In addition, **online versions** of these ToRs are maintained as living documents. Readers are encouraged to refer to the online versions to access the **most up-to-date information and adjustments** as the project evolves.

As with the workplans, these are **initial arrangements** that will likely evolve as implementation progresses and the project gains experience on how to operate these groups most efficiently and effectively, and how participants can best add value through their engagement

At this stage, Working Groups are envisaged for the following five workstreams:

1. [MELIAF Taxonomy WG ToR](#)
2. [MELIAF Framework WG ToR](#)
3. [MELIA Hub WG ToR](#)
4. [Kenya Activator Project WG ToR](#)
5. [Climate Change Activator Project WG ToR](#)

The **Theory of Change & Projected Benefits Activator Project** is not yet included, as the nature and timing of its contributions are still under consideration. Greater clarity is expected after the “review of 2024–2025 projected benefits exercises and engagement with Programs and Accelerators” scheduled for **Q1 2026**.

Annex 1. Workshop agenda

Day 1: 15 October 2025

TIME	DURATION		LEAD	OBJECTIVE
09:00AM	1h 30m	Session 1. Opening & participants exchange	MELIAF core team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set the tone, clarify goals, and align participant expectations for the workshop.
10:30AM	20m	Coffee Break		
10:50AM	1h 40m	Session 2. Strategic priorities and portfolio delivery	MELIAF core team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how MELIAF functions support the delivery logic and strategic goals of the CGIAR portfolio. Explore real-life experiences from across the CGIAR system to assess the current state of MELIAF implementation. Identify essential elements, enablers, and gaps that should inform a practical guidance framework for MELIAF functions. Lay the groundwork for minimum standards and shared principles to enhance MELIAF coherence and performance at the system level.
12:30PM	1h 00m	Lunch		
01:30P	1h 30m	Session 3. CoPs achievements, challenges, and opportunities for collaboration	MELIAF core team + COPs champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share how each CoP operates across CGIAR and at Center level. Reflect on internal strengths and challenges. Clarify each CoP's strategic contribution to MELIAF. Identify opportunities for collaboration, especially between IA and Foresight CoPs.
03:00PM	20m	Coffee Break		
03:20PM	1h 30m	Session 4. MELIAF coherence with System Council Advisory Bodies	IAES team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ways to make the use of evidence more systematic and actionable across the system. Clarify Advisory Bodies' offering - what is needed to evaluate and assess the impact of the new CGIAR portfolio. Explore how MELIAF people and activities enhance evaluability and evaluations/impact assessments, to support better outcomes. Strengthen strategic mechanisms to better connect MELIAF, EF and SPIA evidence, and CoPs.
04:50PM	10m	Closing of the day		

Day 2: 16 October 2025

TIME	DURATION		LEADS	OBJECTIVE
09:00AM	10m	Recap Day 1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce progress and provide clarity on Day 2 objectives.
09:10AM	1h 30m	Session 5. Taxonomy & applications	The Lexicon of Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify the MELIAF taxonomy development process and expected timeline. Visualize what the completed taxonomy could look like and how it can be used. Gather early feedback and potential use cases from participants. Explore the connections between taxonomy, storytelling, and internal communication. Define expectations and boundaries around Lexicon's role.
10:40AM	20m	Coffee Break		
11:00AM	1h 30m	Session 6. MELIAF framework & interoperability	MELIAF core team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present the MELIAF framework and its current state of development. Share and discuss interoperability needs and emerging challenges across the system. Build a compelling case for interoperability by showcasing practical examples. Identify opportunities for alignment and synergy in evaluation, monitoring, and foresight. Generate interest and input for refining the framework going forward.
12:30PM	1h 00m	Lunch		
01:30PM	1h 30m	Session 7. MELIAF Hub and resources for alignment	MELIAF core team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure participants gain a clear understanding of each Activator Project's purpose and expected deliverables. To explore how project goals align with MELIAF participant needs, interests, and roles. To gather feedback and ideas from participants on how they could contribute to each project.
03:00PM	20m	Coffee Break		
03:20PM	1h 30m	Session 8. Activator Projects deep dives	Activator Project Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure participants gain a clear understanding of each Activator Project's purpose and expected deliverables. To gather feedback and ideas from participants on how they could contribute to each project. To explore how project goals align with MELIAF participant needs, interests, and roles.
04:50PM	10m	Closing of the day		

Day 3: 17 October 2025

TIME	DURATION		LEADS	OBJECTIVE
09:00AM 10m	10m	Recap Day 2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm agenda and connect discussions across days.
09:10AM 20m	20m	Session 8. Activator Projects deep dives		<p>Plenary report-back Each station spokesperson presents a brief synthesis of the feedback received for their project (3–5 minutes per group)</p>
09:30AM 1h 30m	1h 30m	Session 9. Storytelling	The Lexicon of Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showcase compelling examples of storytelling that support MELIAF visibility and strategic communication. Reflect on how narrative approaches can complement traditional reporting and learning mechanisms. Inspire participants to explore storytelling as a valuable tool in their own contexts.
11:00AM 20m	20m	Coffee Break		
11:20AM 1h 00m	1h 00m	Session 10. Comms and advocacy	CGIAR Communications and Advocacy team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present the current communications and advocacy strategy, including tools and outputs. Showcase the web aggregation and syndication approach, with focus on visualizing impact. Gather feedback from participants on content needs and how the site could better reflect MELIAF-related results. Explore opportunities for collaboration and synergy with Centers and Programs.
12:20PM 1h 00m	1h 00m	Lunch		
01:20PM 2h 20m	2h 20m	Session 11. CoP integration and roadmap for collaboration (continuation)	MELIAF core team + COPs champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify mutual expectations between MELIAF CoPs and project leaders. Identify opportunities for meaningful CoP contributions to MELIAF outcomes. Facilitate trust-building and shared ownership through open dialogue. Co-create initial elements of a shared vision and principles for collaboration.
03:40PM 20m	20m	Coffee Break		
04:00PM 50m	50m	Session 12. MELIAF working groups, coordination and next steps (continuation)	MELIAF core team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of group commitments and next steps. Consolidation of roadmap elements for post-workshop follow-up. Final reflections and closing remarks.
04:50PM 10m	10m	Closing & Next steps	MELIAF core team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidation of roadmap elements for post-workshop follow-up. Final reflections and closing remarks.

Annex 2. Participants list

#	Participant name	Center
1	Afari-Sefa, Victor	ICRISAT
2	Ajima, Nancy	CIP
3	Ampadu-Boakye, Theresa	IITA
4	Andrieu, Hugo	SO
5	Arouna, Aminou	AfricaRice
6	Baltenweck, Isabelle	ILRI
7	Bayeh, Mulugeta	SO
8	Blundo, Genowefa	ABC
9	Bonaiuti, Enrico	ICARDA
10	Boukaka, Sedi	IFPRI
11	Breisinger, Clemens	IFPRI
12	Buisson, Marie-Charlotte	IWMI
13	Chamberlin, Jordan	CIMMYT
14	Chan, Chin Yee	WorldFish
15	Chesoli, Rose	ILRI
16	Colomer, Julien	SO
17	de Brauw, Alan	IFPRI
18	Dhulipala, Ram	ILRI
19	Dror, Iddo	SO
20	Enahoro, Dolapo	ILRI
21	Frija, Aymen	ICARDA
22	Gardeazabal, Andrea Monsalve	CIMMYT
23	Gatto, Marcel	CIP
24	Gayeton, Douglas	Ext.
25	Gbegbelegbe, Sika	IITA
26	Getachew, Muluhiwot	SO
27	Gotor, Elisabetta	ABC
28	Hammond, James	SO
29	Imbach, Alejandro	SO
30	Islam, Akm Saiful	CIMMYT
31	Jeitani, Asma	ICARDA
32	Kabaji, Faith	SO
33	Karachiwalla, Naureen	IFPRI
34	Kihui, Evelyne	CIP
35	Kim, Mariana	N/A
36	Kramer, Berber	IFPRI
37	Melesse, Mequanint	ICRISAT
38	Miti, Alberto	Ext.
39	Msayo, Issoufou	ICRISAT
40	Negroustoueva, Svetlana	N/A
41	Nirmal, Rajalakshmi	IFPRI
42	Njuguna, Lucy	ABC
43	Nowak, Andreea	ABC
44	Owuor, Antonate	IFPRI
45	Pede, Valerien	IRRI
46	Place, Frank	SO
47	Ramachandran, Swetha	N/A
48	Reyes, Byron	ABC
49	Rosenstock, Todd	ABC
50	Rosignoli, Cristiano	WorldFish
51	Schuetz, Tonja	ABC
52	Sengupta, Debdatta	IFPRI
53	Smith, Allison	N/A
54	Sogue, Babou	AfricaRice
55	Staiger Rivas, Simone	ABC
56	Swamikannu, Nedumaran	ICRISAT
57	Teufel, Nils	ILRI
58	Theuri, George	N/A
59	Trifa, Nicoleta	SO
60	Ullah, Najeeb	IWMI
61	UR-RAHMAN, Md.Syed	CIMMYT
62	Van Epp, Marissa	SO
63	Wiebe, Keith	IFPRI
64	Woods, Bronagh	SO
65	Wossen, Tesfamicheal	IITA

Annex 3. Links to MELIAF workshop presentations and session recordings

Session	Presentations	Recording
DAY 1 – Wednesday, 15 October 2025		
Session 1. Opening & participants exchange	Session 1 - MELIAF workshop intro.pptx	MELIAF Convening Day 1 AM sessions.mp4
Session 2. Strategic priorities and portfolio delivery	Session 2 - MELIAF Project Overview.pptx	
Session 3. CoPs achievements, challenges and opportunities for collaboration	Session 3 - MELIAF CoP Engagement.pptx	MELIAF Convening Day 1 PM sessions.mp4
Session 4. MELIAF coherence with System Council Advisory Bodies	Session 4 - IAES.pptx	
DAY 2 – Thursday, 16 October 2025		
Session 5. Taxonomy & applications	Session 5 - MELIAF Taxonomy.pdf	MELIAF Convening Day 2 AM sessions - part 1.mp4
Session 6. MELIAF Framework and interoperability	Session 6 - MELIAF Framework Overview.pptx Session 6 - MELIAF Framework Panel.pptx	
Session 7. MELIAF Hub vision and alignment	Session 7 - MELIAF Hub.pptx	MELIAF Convening Day 2 PM sessions.mp4
Session 8. Activator Projects deep dives	Session 8 - Kenya Activator.pptx Session 8 - Climate Adaptation Activator.pptx Session 8 - Projected Benefits Activator.pptx	
DAY 3 – Friday, 17 October 2025		
Session 9. Storytelling	Session 9 - Storytelling.pdf	MELIAF Convening Day 3 AM sessions - part 1.mp4
Session 10. Communications and advocacy	Session 10 - Comms and Advocacy.pptx	
Session 11. CoP integration and collaboration	N/A	MELIAF Convening Day 3 PM sessions.mp4
Session 12. MELIAF convening closing and next steps	Session 12 – MELIAF Convening Closing.pptx	

Annex 4. Detailed workstream workplans

1. MELIAF Taxonomy – high-level workplan

Overall focus

To co-develop a CGIAR-wide MELIAF Taxonomy that establishes a shared language across Centers, programs, and partners, enhancing coherence, interoperability, and clarity across MELIAF functions. The Taxonomy will act as a “translation tool” that aligns definitions, indicators, and concepts across the CGIAR System, while remaining accessible, machine-readable, and co-owned by the MELIAF community.

Key actions / next steps (next 6–12 months)

1. Conduct a **System-wide stocktake** to identify key MELIAF concepts, principles, and terminology currently in use across Centers, Programs, and Accelerators.
2. Carry out **interviews and onboarding sessions** with MELIAF practitioners, communications teams, and digital leads to define core concepts and gaps in language alignment.
3. Launch **consultation and co-creation workshops** with domain experts and CoP members to gather contextual taxonomies and establish the foundational structure.
4. Develop **question sets and feedback loops** to test understanding and ensure inclusive participation from MELIAF and related stakeholders.
5. Begin **iterative development of the machine-readable and visual taxonomy library** in collaboration with *The Lexicon of Sustainability*.
6. Integrate feedback from the **three Activator Projects** (Kenya, Climate Adaptation, and Projected Benefits) as test cases for validation and stress-testing.
7. Host **online CoP validation sessions** to review, refine, and approve early taxonomy components.
8. Prepare the **first draft of the MELIAF Taxonomy** for presentation and system-wide feedback through the MELIAF Hub.

Timeline (Indicative, 2025–2026)

Period	Milestones
Q4 2025	System-wide stocktake completed; onboarding calls and interviews conducted
Q1 2026	Co-creation workshops and contextual taxonomies developed
Q1–Q2 2026	Feedback loops established; initial visual and machine-readable taxonomy components built
Q2 2026	Online CoP validation meetings held; integration of Activator Project test cases
Q3 2026	Draft MELIAF Taxonomy prepared for wider feedback and inclusion in the MELIAF Hub

2. MELIAF Framework – high-level workplan

Overall focus

To co-design and operationalize a shared interoperability framework that connects CGIAR’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight (MELIAF) functions. The Framework will establish the principles, protocols, and structures required to ensure MELIAF data, definitions, and tools can “talk to each other” across CGIAR entities, and that mechanisms are in place to enhance coordination and planning across MELIAF. All of this will enable more coherent, efficient, and AI-ready evidence systems.

Key actions / next steps (next 6–12 months)

1. Conduct a **stocktake of existing MELIAF tools, standards, and data protocols** across Centers, Programs, and Accelerators to identify overlaps, gaps, and good practices.
2. Establish a **working group** to address interoperability themes (e.g. taxonomy alignment, indicators, reporting formats, metadata standards).
3. Co-develop **lightweight interoperability principles and minimum standards** that can be progressively adopted across MELIAF functions.
4. Pilot at least one “**low-hanging fruit**” **interoperability initiative per year**, such as a shared dashboard or common database of planned and ongoing MELIAF studies.
5. Align and integrate **Activator Project learnings** (Kenya ToC, Climate Adaptation, and Projected Benefits) as practical test cases for the Framework.
6. Draft and validate the **initial MELIAF Interoperability Blueprint**, including guidance on data exchange, governance, and integration pathways with PRMS and P+R systems.
7. Present and discuss the **draft Framework** with MELIAF CoPs and the Portfolio Performance Unit (PPU) for feedback and GST endorsement..
8. Prepare for **initial system-wide adoption and refinement** in coordination with PRMF and PRMS v2 development processes.

Timeline (indicative, 2025–2026)

Period	Milestones
Q4 2025	Stocktake completed; interoperability working groups established
Q1 2026	Draft interoperability principles and pilot initiatives defined (“low-hanging fruits”)
Q1–Q2 2026	MELIAF Interoperability Blueprint co-developed and validated
Q2 2026	Feedback from CoPs and PPU integrated; preparation for early adoption
Q3 2026	Initial implementation of interoperable standards and tools across MELIAF functions

3. MELIAF Hub – high-level workplan

Overall focus

To co-design and establish the foundational structure of the MELIAF Hub as an open-access digital platform that enhances coherence, quality, and efficiency in Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, and Foresight (MELIAF) across CGIAR.

Key actions / next steps (6–12 months)

1. Establish a **co-design group** representing MEL, IA, and F Communities of Practice (CoPs) and other key stakeholders.
2. Conduct **consultations and design workshops** to define the Hub's structure, content priorities, and user requirements.
3. Draft and validate a **conceptual architecture** for the Hub, including repository design, navigation structure, and content endorsement model.
4. Begin **compiling and curating core content**, such as foundational MELIAF documents (Framework, Taxonomy, PRMF, TRA, Results Framework).
5. Identify and prioritize **early content for upload**, such as approved indicator lists, standard templates, and methodological guidance.
6. Develop a **prototype (v1)** for internal testing within the MELIAF community.
7. Conduct **user feedback sessions** and refine the design and content accordingly.

Timeline (indicative, 2025–2026)

Period	Milestones
Q4 2025	Co-design group established; initial design consultations underway
Q1 2026	Conceptual architecture and governance model validated
Q1–Q2 2026	Core content curated and uploaded; prototype (v1) developed
Q2 2026	Internal testing and user feedback sessions conducted
Q3 2026	Refinement and preparation for wider deployment of Hub v1

4. Kenya Activator Project – high-level workplan

Overall focus

To operationalize and test the MELIAF Framework at the country level, using Kenya as a demonstration case. The project aims to strengthen coordination and integration of outcome and impact evaluations (OIEs), develop a shared country-level Theory of Change (ToC), and establish practical mechanisms for collaboration and learning among CGIAR Centers and partners.

Key actions / next steps (next 6–12 months)

1. Establish a **country coordination framework** for actors (CGIAR and National Partners) involved in OIEs in Kenya, including roles, communication channels, and engagement mechanisms.
2. Conduct a **mapping of existing OIEs and innovation-use evidence**, identifying geographic coverage, methodologies, and data gaps.
3. Co-develop a **country-level Theory of Change (ToC)** linking CGIAR innovations, outcomes, and impacts, aligned with Kenya's transformation agenda.
4. Develop and validate a **set of common outcome and impact indicators**, with corresponding guidelines and tools adapted to the Kenyan context.
5. Initiate **joint or coordinated impact evaluations**, building on the common indicators and shared study protocols.
6. Launch a **hybrid seminar series** for ongoing exchange, where teams present early-stage OIEs to identify collaboration and synthesis opportunities.
7. Begin **synthesis of findings** from existing evaluations to demonstrate the added value of coordinated MELIAF approaches at the country level.
8. Document **early lessons and linkages** with the MELIAF Taxonomy and Framework workstreams, providing feedback for interoperability design.

Timeline (indicative, 2025–2026)

Period	Milestones
Q4 2025	Coordination framework established; OIE mapping and stakeholder engagement initiated
Q1 2026	Country-level ToC co-developed and validated; draft set of common indicators produced
Q1–Q2 2026	Pilot OIE coordination and joint evaluations launched; hybrid seminar series operational
Q2 2026	Early synthesis and learning documented; contributions shared with MELIAF Framework and Taxonomy teams

5. Climate change adaptation Activator Project – high-level workplan

Overall focus

To establish the foundations for a CGIAR-wide system to track, analyze, and communicate contributions to climate change adaptation. The Activator aims to harmonize definitions, indicators, and workflows for adaptation tracking across MELIAF functions, ensuring credibility, consistency, and visibility of adaptation results. It will build on existing platforms and data systems, working closely with the Climate Action Program, PPU, MELIA focal points, and other Science Programs and Accelerators, to reduce reporting burdens while improving evidence quality and comparability.

Key actions / next steps (6–12 months)

1. Establish a **working group (“Climate Adaptation Taskforce”)** bringing together PPU, PCU, the Climate Action Program, and MELIA focal points from Centers, Science Programs, and Accelerators.
2. Conduct an initial **diagnosis and planning phase** to identify key use cases, including reporting systems and alignment requirements with PRMS and other MELIAF systems.
3. Co-design and prototype CGIAR-focused **adaptation taxonomy, tagging standards, indicators, and data workflows (packaged as “Adaptation tracking toolkit”)**, drawing on the Adaptation Insights project.
4. Test early prototypes through **pilot integrations** with selected Science Programs and bilateral projects.
5. Facilitate **virtual workshops and bilateral consultations** to review prototypes, gather user feedback, and refine tools for operational use.
6. Develop a **roadmap for institutionalization**, outlining how adaptation tracking tools and standards will be embedded into CGIAR’s planning and reporting processes.
7. Document and communicate **early results and learning**, highlighting contributions to the MELIAF Framework, Taxonomy, and Hub workstreams.

Timeline (indicative, 2025–2026)

Period	Milestones
Q4 2025	Working group established. Roadmap for adaptation tracking in CGIAR (diagnosis and planning completed).
Q1-Q2 2026	Prototype adaptation tracking toolkit developed (taxonomy, tagging standards and indicators, operational workflows)
Q2-Q3 2026	Pilot testing & refinement with selected use cases (PPU, Science Programs, Accelerators) (additional use cases to be added in 2027)
Q4 2026	User feedback integrated into toolkit materials. Roadmap for institutionalization drafted (work to be continued in 2027). Early learnings consolidated and shared across MELIAF workstreams (engagement to be continued in 2027)

6. ToC and projected benefits Activator Project – high-level workplan

Overall focus

To establish a systematic and credible process for projecting the future benefits of CGIAR research investments, strengthening the link between Theories of Change (ToCs), indicators, and analytical models. The Activator aims to improve the rigor, transparency, and comparability of benefit projections across Programs and Accelerators, while informing portfolio prioritization, impact assessment, and communication with funders.

Key actions / next steps (6–12 months)

1. **Review lessons learned** from recent projected benefits exercises (2024–2025), focusing on methodological strengths, gaps, and opportunities for standardization across Programs and Accelerators.
2. Conduct **dialogues with Science Programs and Accelerators** to refine processes, clarify data needs, and ensure consistency between projected benefits and ToC logics.
3. Initiate **collaboration with the MELIAF Kenya and Climate Change Adaptation Activators** to explore how geographic and thematic insights can inform benefit projections.
4. Begin **refinement and improvement of analytical and modelling tools**, including data structures, assumptions, and simulation models for projecting benefits across the five Impact Areas.
5. Begin developing a **framework to improve and systematize the process of projecting benefits**, including linking ToCs, indicators, targets, and projection models, ensuring alignment with the MELIAF Framework and Taxonomy.

Timeline (indicative, 2025–2026)

Period	Milestones
Q1 2026	Review of 2024–2025 projected benefits exercises; engagement with Programs and Accelerators
Q1-Q2 2026	Collaboration initiated with Kenya and Climate Activators
Q2-Q3 2026	Refinement of analytical tools and improvement of prototype ToC–indicator–model framework underway

Annex 5. MELIAF Working groups terms of reference (ToRs)

1. Terms of Reference - MELIAF Taxonomy working group

Workstream: MELIAF Taxonomy

Proposed working group title: MELIAF Taxonomy Editorial Council

Lead / focal point: Alberto Miti, The Lexicon

1. Purpose and scope

The Working Group, also referred to as the *MELIAF Taxonomy Editorial Council*, will engage in a collaborative and iterative process to validate MELIAF contextual taxonomies consisting of the key words, concepts, and principles that define MELIAF functions. The work will support the design and refinement of the MELIAF Lex Icons visual taxonomy, ensuring that its outputs are practical, coherent, and aligned with MELIAF's overall objectives. It will also serve as a co-creation and feedback space connecting MEL, IA, and Foresight practitioners across CGIAR, fostering collaboration and shared ownership of the results. The work will be coordinated by Alberto Miti and the Lexicon team, with logistical and facilitation support from the MELIAF project team.

2. Key tasks

1. Validate definitions for each term
2. The parent/child relationships of each term within contextual taxonomies
3. Provide Lex Icon design feedback and guide the development of visual elements and icons
4. Governance for the Lex Icon library (licenses, fair use)

3. Duration and work modality

- Lex Icon production (December 2025 - February 2026)
Mostly asynchronous feedback sessions given at your own pace on a shared document. 3 Virtual meetings supported by ongoing communication via Teams.
 - Round 1: Semantic validation of contextual taxonomies assembled through the review and approval of terms, definitions, and attributes used in the MELIAF contextual taxonomies
 - Round 2: Visual development that included reviewing design sketches and providing feedback to designers on how specific terms can be effectively translated into icons
 - 3 months for preliminary design phase Approx. 2–3 hours per feedback round
 - 1 hour per month of participation in meetings to review
- Governance (March-May 2026)
Following the preliminary design phase, the Council will initiate a three-month Governance phase. This phase will focus on establishing the governance framework for the MELIAF taxonomy's library of terms and icons. Key areas will include defining the processes for expansion and curation (covering terms, definitions, and icons), setting the terms of use, and identifying the relevant decision-making bodies.

4. Participant profile

- MELIAF practitioners or technical staff working in Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, or Foresight
- Staff from CGIAR Programs, Accelerators, or Centers with relevant expertise or interest in taxonomies
- Individuals willing to contribute to co-design, peer review, and testing activities

5. Sign-up and confirmation

- Participation is voluntary.
- Interested staff may express interest by emailing the group lead directly (A.Miti@cgiar.org) or by completing the online registration form available [here](#).
- Confirmation of participation will be agreed with Alberto Miti and shared with the MELIAF coordination team.

6. Coordination and support

The Working Group will be coordinated by Alberto Miti and The Lexicon team, with logistical and facilitation support from the MELIAF project team.

2. Terms of Reference - MELIAF Framework working group

Workstream: MELIAF Framework

Proposed working group title: MELIAF Framework Co-Design Group

Lead / focal point: Jules Colomer, Director, PPU and Frank Place (SO)

1. Purpose and scope

The Working Group will support the initial design, refinement and finalization of the MELIAF Framework, ensuring that its outputs are practical, coherent, and aligned with the overall MELIAF objectives. It will act as a co-creation and feedback space connecting MEL, IA, and Foresight practitioners from across CGIAR, fostering collaboration and shared ownership of the results.

2. Key tasks

1. Provide technical and strategic feedback on MELIAF Framework development, identification of priority interoperability actions, and implementation of those actions
2. Participate in virtual workshops, review meetings and design sessions.
3. Support reviewing and refinement of the MELIAF Framework and priority interoperability cases.
4. Support the involvement of other MELIAF staff in development and/or review of outputs.
5. Document lessons and recommendations for wider use across CGIAR.

3. Duration and work modality

- **Indicative Duration:** 12-18 months.
- **Estimated Time Commitment:** Approx. 3-4 hours per month, including participation in meetings and review of draft materials.
- **Working Modality:** Virtual meetings every month, supported by ongoing communication via Teams, SharePoint and/or email thread.

4. Participant profile

- MELIAF practitioners or technical staff working in Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, or Foresight.
- Staff from CGIAR Programs, Accelerators, or Centers with relevant expertise or interest in a MELIAF Framework.
- Individuals willing to contribute to co-design, peer review, and testing activities.

5. Sign-up and confirmation

- Participation is voluntary.
- Interested staff may express interest by emailing the group lead directly (J.Colomer@cgiar.org or F.Place@cgiar.org) or by completing the online registration form available [here](#).
- Confirmation of participation will be agreed with Jules Colomer and/or Frank Place and shared with the MELIAF coordination team.

6. Coordination and support

The Working Group will be coordinated by the Jules Colomer and Frank Place, with logistical and facilitation support from the MELIAF project team.

3. Terms of Reference - MELIAF Hub working group

Workstream: MELIAF Hub

Proposed working group title: MELIAF Hub Co-Design Group

Lead / focal point: James Hammond, Portfolio MELIA Advisor, OCS, SO

1. Purpose and scope

The Working Group will support the design, stocking, piloting, and refinement of the MELIAF Hub, ensuring that its outputs are practical, coherent, and aligned with the overall MELIAF objectives. It will act as a co-creation and feedback space connecting MEL, IA, and Foresight practitioners from across CGIAR, fostering collaboration and shared ownership of the results.

2. Key tasks

6. Provide technical and strategic feedback on hub design, content, and engagement with MELIAF communities of practice.
7. Participate in virtual workshops such as design sessions and review meetings.
8. Support reviewing, testing and refinement of digital tools, guidance materials, and/or proposed content.
9. Document lessons and recommendations for wider use across CGIAR.

3. Duration and work modality

- **Indicative Duration:** 12 months.
- **Estimated Time Commitment:** Approx. 2–3 hours per month, including participation in meetings and review of draft materials.
- **Working Modality:** Virtual meetings every month, supported by ongoing communication via Teams / SharePoint / email thread.

4. Participant profile

- MELIAF practitioners or technical staff working in Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, or Foresight.
- Staff from CGIAR Programs, Accelerators, or Centers with relevant expertise or interest in [specific workstream topic].
- Individuals willing to contribute to co-design, peer review, and testing activities.

5. Sign-up and confirmation

- Participation is voluntary.
- Interested staff may express interest by emailing the group lead directly (J.Hammond@cgiar.org) or by completing the online registration form available [here](#).
- Confirmation of participation will be agreed with James Hammond and shared with the MELIAF coordination team.

6. Coordination and support

The Working Group will be coordinated by the workstream lead, with logistical and facilitation support from the MELIAF project team.

4. Terms of Reference – Kenya Activator Project

Workstream: Activator Project 1 – Kenya

Proposed working group title: MELIAF–Kenya Country Coordination Working Group

Lead / focal point: Berber Kramer, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI–Kenya (B.Kramer@cgiar.org)

1. Purpose and scope

The Working Group will support the design, piloting, and implementation of the Kenya Activator Project, which aims to demonstrate the value of a connected Impact Assessment (IA) system within the broader MELIAF framework at the country level. The group will act as a collaborative platform to strengthen coordination, coherence, and complementarity in Impact Assessment efforts across CGIAR centers and initiatives in Kenya. Specifically, the group will:

- Support the development of a country-level Theory of Change (ToC) linking CGIAR innovations to national outcomes and impacts.
- Co-design and test common indicators, survey modules, and analytical tools for Outcome and Impact Evaluations (OIEs).
- Facilitate coordination and synthesis of OIEs, ensuring complementarity and aggregation potential.
- Strengthen learning and communication mechanisms, including hybrid OIE seminars and evidence-sharing channels.

The Working Group will ensure outputs are practical, coherent, and aligned with both CGIAR and Kenyan policy priorities, while feeding lessons into the MELIAF taxonomy and framework.

2. Key tasks

- 1 Provide technical and strategic input on the Kenya-level ToC, indicator set, and guidance materials.
- 2 Review and test tools for data collection, analysis, and coordination (e.g., standardized survey modules, code repositories).
- 3 Contribute to mapping and synthesis of ongoing OIEs to identify complementarities and evidence gaps.
- 4 Support learning activities, including hybrid seminar presentations and documentation of coordination lessons.
- 5 Provide inputs to MELIAF taxonomy refinement, highlighting how Kenya-level work can inform broader CGIAR guidance.
- 6 Provide feedback on lessons and recommendations for replication in other Activator countries.

3. Duration and work modality

- **Indicative Duration:** November 2025 – December 2026 (initial 14-month cycle, extendable).
- **Estimated Time Commitment:** Approx. 2–3 hours per month, including participation in meetings and review of draft materials.
- **Working Modality:** Virtual meetings every 4–6 weeks, supported by ongoing communication via Teams / SharePoint / email thread.

4. Participant profile

- MELIAF practitioners or technical staff working in Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment, or Foresight within CGIAR–Kenya projects.
- Staff from CGIAR Programs, Accelerators, or Centers implementing or evaluating innovations in Kenya, including the IAES team involved in country-level evaluations.
- Representatives from national partners (e.g., KALRO, universities, ministries) engaged in impact assessment or data integration.
- Individuals willing to contribute to co-design, peer review, and testing activities (including tools and standards).

5. Sign-up and confirmation

- Participation is voluntary.
- Interested staff may express interest by emailing the group lead directly (B.Kramer@cgiar.org) or by completing the online registration form available [here](#).
- Confirmation of participation will be agreed with Berber Kramer and shared with the MELIAF coordination team.

6. Coordination and support

The Working Group will be coordinated by the Kenya activator team under the leadership of Berber Kramer and Sedi Boukaka, with logistical and facilitation support from the MELIAF project team.

5. Terms of Reference – Climate change adaptation Activator Project

Workstream: Climate change adaptation / Activator Project 3

Proposed working group title: Climate Adaptation Taskforce (CAT)

Lead / focal point: Andreea Nowak, PI of Activator Project 3

1. Purpose and scope

The Working Group will support the design and piloting of approaches and tools to institutionalize climate adaptation tracking in the CGIAR, ensuring that its outputs are practical, coherent, and aligned with the overall MELIAF objectives. It will act as a co-creation and feedback space connecting Monitoring (M), Evaluation (E), Impact assessment (IA), and Foresight (F) practitioners and climate change adaptation scientists from across CGIAR, fostering collaboration and shared ownership of the results.

2. Key tasks

1. Co-design the roadmap for institutionalizing adaptation tracking, including identification of pilot use cases and priorities for testing.
2. Provide technical and strategic feedback on climate adaptation tracking toolkit (taxonomy, tagging standards, operational workflows) and support testing and refinement through use cases.
3. Contribute to virtual design/review sessions and to the documentation of lessons and recommendations for wider CGIAR application

3. Duration and work modality

- **Indicative Duration:** Engagement expected throughout the project, with more intensive participation during 2025–2026 and continued involvement as needed into 2027.
- **Estimated Time Commitment:** Around 2–3 hours per month during Q4 2025–Q2 2026, then adjusted based on each member's role in use-case activities.
- **Working Modality:** Primarily virtual, with about one meeting per month (frequency TBC) and ongoing collaboration through Teams/Slack and SharePoint.

4. Participant profile

- MELIAF practitioners or technical staff working in M, E, IA and/or F.
- Staff from CGIAR Programs, Accelerators, or Centers with relevant expertise or interest in climate change adaptation and climate resilience.
- Other CGIAR individuals willing to contribute to co-design, peer review, and testing activities.

Taskforce members will have early access to the Adaptation Tracking Toolkit and the opportunity to apply and test it in their own programs/projects. They will also gain access to a collaborative platform for sharing methods, data, and expertise, and will become part of a cross-CGIAR team working to transform how adaptation results are tracked and communicated across the system.

5. Sign-up and confirmation

- Participation is voluntary.
- Interested staff may express interest by emailing the group lead directly (A.Nowak@cgiar.org) or by completing the online registration form available [here](#).
- Confirmation of participation will be agreed with Andreea Nowak and shared with the MELIAF coordination team.

6. Coordination and support

The Working Group will be coordinated by Andreea Nowak (Activator Project 3), with logistical and facilitation support from the MELIAF project team.