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WORKSHOP REPORT

Stakeholder Consultation Workshop on the CGIAR Country Strategy Framework (CSF) in Nepal

Kathmandu, Nepal | November 24, 2025

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About CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I) Program

Scaling for Impact (S4I) is a CGIAR program (2025–2030) that tests, refines, and scales innovations in food, land, and water systems. It works to align those innovations with stakeholder needs to achieve transformative impact.

Website: <https://www.cgiar.org/cgiar-research-portfolio-2025-2030/scaling-for-impact/>

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Front cover photo: Group photo of the CGIAR Country Strategic Framework workshop participants (*photo:* Aayush Niroula/IWMI)

Back cover photo: Rice farmers divide young rice plants and replant in flooded rice fields in Southeast Asia (*photo:* Shutterstock)

Contents

Acronyms	5
Executive Summary	6
Introduction	7
Setting the Scene: Agri-Food, Land and Water Systems Transformation in Nepal	9
CSF Concept and Co-Design Methodology	13
Stakeholders Discussions and Feedback	14
Milestone and Timeline for CSF Development	15
Concluding Remarks	17
Way Forward	17

Acronyms

AoW – Areas of Work

AEPC – Alternative Energy Promotion Centre

CSF – Country Strategy Framework

DWRI – Department of Water Resources and Irrigation

FLW – Food Land Water

IWMI – International Water Management Institute

MEL – Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

MoALD - Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development

MoEWRI – Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation

MoFE – Ministry of Forest and Environment

MoWS – Ministry of Water Supply

NARC – Nepal Agricultural Research Council

NHRC – Nepal Health Research Council

R4D – Research for Development

S4I – Scaling for Impact

SIP – Solar Irrigation Pump

TAC – Technical Advisory Committee

TWG – Thematic Working Group

WECS – Water and Energy Commission Secretariat

WEFE – Water Energy Food and Environment Nexus

Executive Summary

Despite CGIAR's contributions to research, technology transfer and capacity building in Nepal's food, land, and water (FLW) systems, challenges such as fragmentation, weak coordination, and limited alignment with national priorities continue to hinder effective impact. The P25 Listening Sessions held with CGIAR partners and stakeholders in 2024 highlighted the need for a shared country-level roadmap to enhance the impact of CGIAR research, scale innovation through strengthened collaboration and partnership, and advance research-for-development efforts aligned with Nepal's priorities.

Against this backdrop, a national consultation workshop held on 24 November 2025 in Kathmandu aimed to discuss and gather feedback from partners and stakeholders on the concept and approach for co-designing, implementing and evaluating the CGIAR Country Strategic Framework (CSF) in Nepal. Embedded within the CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I) program, the country-driven CSF is intended to address gaps related to weak integration across CGIAR Programs and Accelerators in responding to national priorities, foster collaboration among CGIAR Centers and partners, enhance the efficient use of resources, and strengthen strategic engagement and uptake of CGIAR research and innovations in agri-food, land, and water systems, as identified in 2024.

The half-day consultation workshop combined presentations, plenary discussions, and facilitated breakout group sessions. A total of 66 participants (30% women), representing government agencies, the private sector, research and academic institutions, investors, development partners, and civil society organizations, provided feedback on the CSF concept and structure, identified priority thematic areas, and discussed governance, coordination mechanisms, and ownership arrangements. The CSF process emphasized inclusiveness, practical relevance, and alignment with national systems and policies.

The workshop built a shared understanding of the purpose and value of the CSF as a coordination and planning tool. It clarified priority research and innovation areas across FLW systems, strengthened alignment with national strategies, and reinforced the importance of partnerships for scaling impact. The discussions generated concrete inputs on governance models, coordination mechanisms, and stakeholder roles, laying a strong foundation for a country-owned and operational CSF.

Participants emphasized the need for CGIAR Centers and Programs in Nepal to focus on areas where research, innovation, and partnerships can offer practical solutions to food, nutrition, water, climate, governance, and inclusion challenges. Continued stakeholder engagement, the establishment of a functional country-level coordination mechanism, and strong government ownership were highlighted as essential.

Recognizing CGIAR's significant roles in Nepal's development, particularly in research and innovations across FLW systems, technology transfer and human resources development, participants expressed strong interests and commitment to engage in the CSF co-design, implementation, monitoring and learning processes. Once formalized, the CSF will serve as a strategic tool to guide and strengthen scaling of CGIAR research and innovations, helping achieve the impacts envisioned under the CGIAR S4I programs. The S4I program commits to turn innovations into impact at scale through its various Areas of Work (AoWs). It aims to benefit people, including at least 30% women, youth, and underrepresented groups, by applying biodiversity-friendly and climate-smart innovations that create jobs, improve access to healthier diets, and mobilize significant development financing. The AoW1 specifically focuses on engaging and empowering stakeholders by developing country level strategies such as the CSF.

The CSF consultation workshop is a strategic dialogue among the CGIAR centers, programs and partners that recognizes the importance of scaling proven innovations, enhancing capacity-sharing, and fostering adaptive learning across the FLW systems to ensure that the CSF delivers tangible outcomes aligned with the S4I program. Future efforts should focus on translating the CSF into joint work plans, strengthening linkages between research and implementation, and improving resource mobilization to support innovations at scale.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Rationale

The CGIAR is a global research partnership dedicated to advancing a food-secure future through science and innovation that transform agri-food, land, and water systems in the context of climate crisis. Guided by the [CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy](#), it aims to raise the ambition and coherence of its research-for-development (R4D) efforts by leveraging the collective strengths of its Research Centers, Science Programs, and partners to deliver impact on scale.

In Nepal, the CGIAR operates through multiple centers and initiatives that address sustainable agriculture, water and irrigation management, climate change adaptation, agrobiodiversity, food and nutrition security, policy innovations, and scaling for impact. The CGIAR Centers collaborate closely with key national institutions, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation (MoEWRI), and the Department of Water Resources and Irrigation (DWRI), the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE), Water and Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS), Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEP), Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC), provincial and local governments, farmers organizations, as well as academic institutions, civil society, and private sector partners.

Despite CGIAR's contributions to research, technology transfer and capacity building in Nepal's food, land, and water (FLW) systems, challenges such as fragmentation, weak coordination, and limited alignment with national priorities continue to hinder effective impact. In 2024, the CGIAR Centers in Nepal convened six Consultative Portfolio²⁵ (P25) Listening Sessions to gather stakeholders feedback on CGIAR's contributions to Nepal's development and to identify priority research and innovation portfolios in FLW systems aligned with national policies and priorities, as well as the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy. The sessions generated valuable insights into CGIAR's comparative advantages in Nepal, particularly in knowledge and technology transfer, technical capacity sharing, and evidence-based policymaking and investment.

A central recommendation emerged from the P25 Listening Sessions was the need for a country-level strategic framework to enhance impacts by strengthening coordination, partnership, and coherence across CGIAR investments and engagements in Nepal. Stakeholders emphasized that a shared strategic roadmap and coordination mechanism would strengthen alignment with national policies and strategies, improve collaboration among CGIAR Centers, Programs, and partners, and enhance the uptake, scaling, and impact of CGIAR-supported innovations. Developing such a framework was identified as a critical step toward advancing CGIAR's five global impact areas in the Nepal context.



Figure 1. CGIAR's Five Global Impact Areas

Against this backdrop, the CGIAR Country Strategy Framework (CSF) for Nepal is being developed as a shared strategic platform to align CGIAR's research and innovation portfolio with Nepal's national priorities for prosperity, food and nutrition security, environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and inclusive development. The CSF, embedded within the vision of CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I), is envisioned as a result- and engagement-oriented framework that integrates the work of CGIAR Centers, Programs and Accelerators to achieve impact at scales. The framework also strengthen partnerships with government agencies, national research systems, development and financing partners, the private sector, farmers' organizations, and civil society to scale socio-technical innovations across FLW systems

To support a co-designed, inclusive, and nationally grounded CSF, a half-day **"Stakeholder Consultation Workshop on the CGIAR Country Strategy Framework (CSF) in Nepal"** was convened on November 24, 2025 (see agenda in **Annex A**). The workshop served as the first joint consultation for CGIAR Centers, partners, and national stakeholders to review the CSF concept and its relevance and co-design and implementation processes.

Box 1. “The Country Strategy Framework is not just a document, but a collective process developed in a co-design approach that brings science and policy closer together,” says **Dr Manohara Khadka, IWMI Nepal Country Representative and Country Convener for CGIAR Centers in Nepal.**

1.2. Objectives of the Workshop

The overall objective of the consultation workshop was to jointly review, refine, and co-design the CGIAR Country Strategy Framework (CSF) for Nepal, ensuring that it is responsive to national priorities and meets the needs of both CGIAR and its partners.

The specific objectives were:

- To present the concept, purpose, and potential applications of the CSF as a coordination and planning tool for CGIAR engagement in Nepal;
- To gather feedback from CGIAR Centers and national stakeholders on the core components, structure, and development process of the CSF, including modalities for stakeholder engagement;
- To identify priority thematic areas and opportunities for alignment between CGIAR research and innovation programs and Nepal’s national strategies and development goals;
- To discuss governance options, coordination mechanisms, and country-level ownership arrangements to support effective implementation of the CSF; and
- To outline a roadmap and next steps for the development, validation, and finalization of the CGIAR Country Strategy Framework for Nepal.

Dr. Manohara Khadka, the Country Representative of IWMI and the CGIAR Country Convener for Nepal, warmly welcomed and expressed gratitude to all participants for their time and continued support, to CGIAR’s work in Nepal, recalling the valuable insights generated through the P25 Listening Sessions held in 2024. Dr. Khadka highlighted Nepal’s key challenges related to food security, climate change, water and natural resource management, and inequality, and emphasized the need for stronger coordination, integrated planning, and mechanisms to scale CGIAR research and innovations. In this context, she outlined the purpose of the workshop as a platform to co-design the CGIAR Country Strategy Framework (CSF) for Nepal, including its priorities, governance, coordination mechanisms, and roadmap, and expressed appreciation to the [CGIAR Scaling for Impact Program](#) for enabling the CSF development process.

1.3. Workshop Participants and Methodology

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in collaboration with the Department of Water Resources and Irrigation (DWRI) convened the CSF consultation workshop. The workshop engaged CGIAR Centers, government institutions across all three tiers, the private sector, civil society organizations, research and academic institutions, and key national partners to jointly define priorities and pathways for the CSF.

A total of 66 participants, mostly in senior-level positions, attended the workshop, comprising 70% men and 30% women. Government representatives from federal, provincial, and local levels formed the largest group (30%), followed by CGIAR Centers (19%), research organizations (13%), civil society organizations (12%), media (9%), development partners (8%), and the private sector (9%), ensuring diverse perspectives. The workshop unfolded through key stages of presentation, discussions, and reflections collectively. It consists of five major agenda: (i) setting the scene of the FLW systems in Nepal and the 10 years impact of CGIAR Centers in Nepal, (ii) purpose, methods and draft outline of the CSF, (iii) interactive breakout group discussions, (iv) governance and coordination mechanism, and roadmap/timeline for finalizing the CSF for Nepal, and (v) key takeaways from the partners. An interactive and informal approach of engagement guided the sessions' deliberation (see **Annex A** for the detailed workshop agenda).

2. Setting the Scene: Agri-Food, Land and Water Systems Transformation in Nepal

The session began with a scene-setting segment designed to establish the context for the co-design of the CSF, including its rationale and the preparatory steps undertaken. This session featured opening remarks from the high-level government officials, and two presentations that oriented participants to Nepal's agricultural transformation status and challenges, as well as the CGIAR contributions to support national development outcomes—such as prosperity, food, and nutrition security, climate resilience, social transformation, and effective governance.

2.1. CGIAR 10-year Impacts in Nepal

Presented by Dr. Anil Aryal (IWMI), the session highlighted a decade (2014-2024) of CGIAR contributions to Nepal, showcasing key achievements in advancing food, land, and water systems through innovations, partnerships, capacity development, and policy uptake.

2.1.1. CGIAR centers in Nepal

In Nepal, six CGIAR Centers operate across all seven provinces, covering 44 districts, working with more than 100 partners. These include the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT (ABC), the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR–ICRAF), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). They have reached policymakers, researchers, communities, and farmers through capacity development, technology piloting, dissemination and adoption, science-policy dialogues, and scaling innovation and technologies in FLW systems.

2.1.2. Innovations

CGIAR innovations in Nepal center on climate-resilient agriculture, water security, and inclusive systems transformation. They integrate climate-smart technologies with market, governance, and inclusion mechanisms to strengthen resilient agrifood systems for women and smallholder farmers. Key advances include scaling appropriate mechanization and low-cost irrigation through service provider models and promoting intensified cereal–legume systems using zero tillage, precision nutrient management, and heat-resilient practices.

Smart irrigation toolkits, real-time canal monitoring, and micro-irrigation solutions are embedded in local decision-making to boost water productivity. Water–energy–food–ecosystem (WEFE) nexus innovations combine solar-powered water systems with institutional, financial, and gender-responsive arrangements to expand sustainable irrigation and domestic water access.

Climate and hydrological models, along with decision-support tools, have guided watershed planning, environmental safeguards, and climate-resilient water supply systems. During Covid-19 crisis, digital dashboards, risk outlooks, and adaptive finance mechanisms sustained mechanization and post-harvest services. Circular bioeconomy innovations—such as cooperative-led commercialization of bio-fermented rice straw—and inclusive platforms like agricultural knowledge hubs, and multi-stakeholder groundwater governance platforms help ensure technologies translate into equitable, scalable, and durable livelihood and ecosystem outcomes.

2.1.3. Capacity sharing

CGIAR Centers in Nepal have strengthened national and local capacities through co-designed programs that build technical, scientific, institutional, and leadership skills across agri food, land, and water systems. Capacity sharing spans farmers, technicians, cooperatives, extension agents, researchers, universities, private sector actors, and policymakers.

Key contributions include:

- **Agrobiodiversity (ABC):** Enhanced community capacities in agrobiodiversity conservation, engaging 60% women through Field Schools, Community Seed Banks, and training programs that reinforce the role of genetic diversity and local seed systems in food security.
- **Sustainable farming and seed systems (CIMMYT):** Built capacities in sustainable crop production, soil fertility, mechanization, digital agro-advisories, and seed system development—strengthening community-based seed production, quality control, and marketing for maize, wheat, and vegetables.

- **Livestock genetic data skills (ILRI):** Provided advanced training to 27 professionals from key government, academic, and NGO institutions on livestock genetic data management, breeding value estimation, and genetic ranking using national pedigree and performance datasets.
- **Rice systems knowledge (IRRI):** Trained 343 scientists and scholars through scholarships, internships, and courses on precision agriculture, Direct Seeded Rice (DSR), seed production, mechanization, data management, breeding, and integrated pest and disease management. Demonstrated climate resilient rice technologies through on station and on farm trials.
- **Mixed farming systems (CIMMYT & IWMI):** Co-designed and tested integrated crop–water–livestock–forage mixed farming practices in Nepal’s water-scarce hill regions, reaching 747 stakeholders (45% women) between 2022 and 2024.
- **Water systems capacity (IWMI):** Delivered 272 trainings and dialogues reaching 10,276 participants (46% women) on irrigation efficiency, solar and micro-irrigation, water and climate tools, flood forecasting, environmental flows, GESI-responsive WASH, watershed/Springshed monitoring, and digital decision support. Trained 157 local technicians (41% women) on solar pump O&M, contributing to a public SIP O&M handbook.
- **WEFE Nexus (IWMI & ABC):** Reached 582 participants (41% women, 37% from disadvantaged groups) through WEFE nexus training and policy dialogues. Twenty-two emerging leaders completed advanced WEFE leadership courses, and WEFE modules were integrated into national university curricula.

2.1.4. Uptake of CGIAR research and evidence

CGIAR scientific evidence and knowledge have supported policy and program design in Nepal. CGIAR’s research informed Nepal’s Irrigation Policy (2023), the draft Water Resources Bill (2024); Agri-Mechanisation Policy (2014). Barahathawa Municipality in Madhesh Province has adopted a municipality level multi stakeholder platform for equitable groundwater management, informed by research on local groundwater issues. Evidence-based research shaped the Irrigation Master Plan (2019), integrating water targets and indicators into the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0), and solar irrigation subsidy reforms—reducing private land requirements, expanding access for small and medium farmers. Additional policy uptake includes approval of the Animal Identification and Traceability System (AITS), scaling of ILRI’s Village Livestock Promoter network, rollout of ABC’s nutrition-sensitive agrobiodiversity framework, and CIMMYT’s contributions to smallholder-friendly mechanization policies and private-sector service models.

2.1.5. Technologies co-development and adoption

Between 2014-2024, CGIAR Centers in Nepal have co-designed and tested a range of technologies and made them available to diverse actors to support informed decision-making and planning. These include:

- **Hydrometeorological monitoring packages**—including Automatic Weather Stations and manual gauges—were deployed to support micro watershed planning.
- In partnership with federal and local governments, Nepal’s **first grid integrated solar irrigation pilot** was launched in Parsa, Madhesh Province, alongside broader efforts to create an enabling environment for renewable energy powered water lifting systems for multiple water uses.
- **Direct seeded rice (DSR)** and complementary agronomy packages were tested and disseminated through farmer codesign approaches.
- **Conjunctive irrigation options** that combine groundwater and surface water were identified for scaling based on diagnostics from the Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia (CSISA).
- **Two online platforms**—the Municipality and System Level Vulnerability, Risk and Resilience Mapping tool (MULVAR) and the Babai Irrigation Information System (BIIS)—were made publicly available to enhance data visualization and informed decision making.
- **A digitized on-farm feed advisor** was introduced to support livestock keepers.
- **An animal identification and traceability system** was developed to help livestock keepers and stakeholders select superior genetics, grounded in good animal husbandry practices in Nepal.
- **A digital decision support tool** was developed to help livestock farmers formulate improved diets by balancing nutrients, processing roughages, and mixing feed ingredients in appropriate proportions.
- **Over 3,302 rice accessions conserved** in the International Rice Genebank in the Philippines originate from Nepal, contributing significantly to biodiversity conservation.
- **Community Seed Banks** continue to conserve local crop varieties, restore threatened species, and provide farmers with access to high quality, diverse local seeds.

2.1.6. Impacts of CGIAR research

The works of the CGIAR Centers in Nepal have impacted wider arrays, including farmers, communities, researchers, women, and individuals.

- **Babai Irrigation Project:** IWMI's NEXUS Gains initiative established water flow monitoring systems, trained 62, including canal operators, farmers, and demonstrated potential scale-up to ~36,000 ha, benefiting over 360,000 farmers.
- **Through the Cereal System Initiative for South Asia project,** CIMMYT and IWMI supported over 150,000 farmers and improved irrigation and mechanization practices across more than 57,000 ha from FY2017/18 to FY2020/21.
- **Rice Innovation:** Over 70% of Nepal's High Yielding Variety rice is derived from IRRI germplasm, supported by a gene bank of ~3,000 Nepali rice lines and more than 5,000 accessions shared nationally.
- **Livestock Innovation:** The Sustainable Animal Productivity for Livelihoods, Nutrition, and Gender Inclusion (SAPLING) innovations delivered feed, reproductive health, and genetic gains interventions to over 12,000 farmers, with expansion underway across additional provinces.
- **Capacity Development:** CGIAR Centers generated over 100 jobs and provided internships to 50+ early-career researchers across water, agriculture, agrobiodiversity, and natural resources.

2.2. Nepal's Food, Land, and Water Systems Dynamics

Dr Ram Krishna Shrestha, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), presented Nepal's food, land and water systems—highlighting current challenges, major drivers of change, system impacts, and future priorities where CGIAR can play a catalytic role.

2.2.1. Current Status and Challenges

Nepal has reduced hunger (GHI 2025: 72/123), but malnutrition remains high due to cereal-based, low-diversity diets; 13% of households are food insecure and only 36% of young children meet minimum dietary standards. Shrinking and fragmented landholdings (avg. 0.55 ha) and degradation of ~one-third of land—worsened by climate-induced disasters—are reducing productivity, with severe topsoil loss on slopes. Water stress is intensifying, with hill-region scarcity driving migration and groundwater depletion accelerating in the Terai; only 23.2% of agricultural land has year-round irrigation amid drying springs, declining soil moisture, and rising water pollution.

2.2.2. Major Drivers of System Stress and Impacts

Key drivers include climate shocks, out-migration (8 million people moved in a decade), overexploitation of natural resources, unsustainable farming, high costs of nutritious diets, food loss and waste, and geopolitically driven supply chain disruptions. Together, these pressures are reducing productivity, accelerating biodiversity loss and soil degradation, and increasing production costs. Farming dependence is declining (from 83% to 70% of households in a decade), food imports are rising, and food insecurity, malnutrition, and noncommunicable diseases continue to increase.

2.2.3. Pathways for Transformation

Moving forward, transforming agri-food systems to be sustainable, resilient, and inclusive is essential amid rapidly evolving climatic and socio-economic drivers. This will require scientific innovation and integrated approaches to food, land, and water management. Dr. Shrestha highlighted the following priority areas for future research and innovation where CGIAR centers and programs can contribute.

Priority research domains include:

- **Nutritious and safe food systems:** Development of hybrid and stress-tolerant crop varieties; biofortification; conservation of landraces; food quality and safety; reduction of food loss and waste; and agrobiodiversity innovations leveraging the water–energy–food nexus.
- **Climate-resilient agronomic practices:** Direct Seeded Rice (DSR), Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD), System of Rice Intensification (SRI), climate and crop modelling, soil health management, digital agriculture, and small-scale mechanization.

- **Efficient water use:** Water-saving technologies, non-conventional irrigation systems, groundwater and spring recharge interventions.
- **Livelihoods and inclusiveness:** Low-cost technologies, value addition, agribusiness incubation, marketing and logistics, agrotourism, GESI integration, and equitable access to resources.
- **Nature-positive solutions:** Agroecology, agroforestry, integrated water management, restoring degraded ecosystems and watersheds, promoting neglected and underutilized species, and sustainable mixed farming.
- **Policy and cross-cutting research:** Socio-economic analyses, institutional innovations, multi-stakeholder platforms, and GESI impacts of food systems.
- **Strengthened seed systems and input delivery:** Ensuring farmers' access to quality, climate-smart seeds and inputs.
- **Digital and data-driven agriculture:** Precision agriculture tools and data-enabled decision-support systems.

Dr. Shrestha acknowledged CGIAR's contributions to innovation, research, and capacity building in Nepal, stressing that systems-based, science-led approaches are vital for agrifood transformation, climate resilience, and food security. He highlighted national priorities—including food and nutrition security, the water–food–energy nexus solutions, indigenous crops, and rural socioeconomic transformation—and urged CGIAR Centers to align closely with them. He further emphasized CGIAR's roles in delivering climate-resilient germplasm and technologies, digital tools, capacity sharing, evidence-based policy support, multisector coordination, and GESI-responsive interventions, calling for stronger collaboration across food, land, and water sectors.

2.3. Remarks from the High-Level Officials

Mr. Susheel Chandra Acharya, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI), acknowledged CGIAR's contributions to water, food security, biodiversity, and natural resource management in Nepal. He highlighted growing water insecurity and seasonal variation in rainfalls, despite Nepal's water-rich context, particularly drying springs in the hills and the impacts of climate change, resulting in both water scarcity and excess water that affect food security and livelihoods. Emphasizing that these challenges are also linked to management and governance issues, he stressed the importance of CGIAR's science-based knowledge, innovation, and nature-based solutions, and expressed hope that the CSF would be developed through integrated, coordinated efforts involving government, development partners, the private sector, and civil society to address climate risks and strengthen water and food system resilience.

Dr. Deepak Kumar Kharal, Secretary of MoALD, appreciated CGIAR Centers' contributions to science, technology, and capacity development in Nepal's agriculture, water, and natural resource sectors. He stressed that the CGIAR Country Strategy Framework (CSF) must be practical, implementable, and firmly aligned with national priorities, strategic focus areas, and results. Citing MoALD's experience in developing strategic frameworks, he emphasized the need for strong guiding principles and alignment with key national policies, including the Agricultural Development Strategy, 16th Plan and climate change policies. He highlighted food and nutrition security as a core CSF pillar, called for effective coordination across all three tiers of government, and encouraged CGIAR Centers to strengthen piloting and demonstration to support government-led scaling of innovations.

3. CSF Concept and Co-Design Methodology

Dr. Manohara Khadka, IWMI Country Representative and the CGIAR Country Convener for Nepal, presented the rationale, objectives, and methodological approach for designing the Country Strategic Framework (CSF) in Nepal.

3.1. Concept of CSF

The CSF is a demand driven, co-created, and impact-oriented coordination and planning mechanism. It is a multiyear framework that guides CGIAR’s engagement with governments, national research systems, and partners, grounded in the Scaling for Impact approach. Codeveloped with stakeholders, the CSF reduces fragmentation and aligns CGIAR efforts with national priorities. Once endorsed, it will serve as the operational vehicle through which CGIAR programs, Accelerators, and bilateral projects coordinate and implement in country research and scaling activities.

3.2. Purposes of the CSF

The main purpose of the CSF is to promote integrated CGIAR programs and innovations at the country and regional levels to achieve national impact. It aims to:

- Align CGIAR Centers, Programs, Accelerators, and partner offerings with national priorities and stakeholder demands.
- Define research and scaling pathways that link innovations to impact.
- Drive strategic partnerships, policy engagement, and resource mobilization.
- Strengthen coordination, visibility, and accountability of CGIAR efforts.
- Enable adaptive management and learning across CGIAR’s portfolio.

3.3. Stages of the CSF Preparation and Implementation

The CSF development process comprises different phases, starting from initiation and mobilization to implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), and adaptive learning through a participatory and iterative process structured around five interlinked phases (Figure 2). Each phase builds progressively to ensure a country-owned, evidence-based, and operational framework for collaboration.



Figure 2. The CSF development process in Nepal (adapted from Matieyedou et al., in preparation.)

Participants stressed that the CSF must be country-driven—rooted in national priorities and shaped through a stakeholder-led process—to ensure ownership and effective implementation. They also recommended establishing a dedicated CGIAR country focal point or convener, with adequate resources, to facilitate regular consultations and support a functional CGIAR Technical Advisory Committee to guide CSF approval and implementation.

3.4. Major Contents of the CSF

The CSF will include 11–12 sections, ranging from introduction to analyses of Nepal’s context and priorities for food–land–water (FLW) systems transformation. It will cover the interventions ecosystem, the CGIAR country-level theory of change and impact pathways, demand and portfolio analysis, scaling priorities, partnership and engagement strategy, resource mobilization plan, MEL framework, reporting requirements, governance and coordination mechanisms, and the implementation roadmap.

4. Stakeholders Discussions and Feedback

Through interactive group discussions, participants reflected on five themes critical to operationalizing the CSF: Nepal's priorities for food–land–water (FLW) systems; partnership and engagement; socio-technical innovations for FLW systems transformation; CGIAR funding challenges and resource mobilization strategies; and coordination, stakeholder engagement, and governance arrangements to enhance coherence, uptake, and impact of CGIAR research in Nepal.

4.1. Research Priorities

While reaffirming the priorities identified by the P25 Listening Sessions, stakeholders reiterated that food and nutrition security, climate resilience, technological innovation and capacity sharing, water management, and livelihood support targeted at smallholder farmers are top priorities. Participants emphasized that CGIAR research and innovations should prioritize integrated/mix farming systems, agroecology, conservation agriculture; agrobiodiversity, including neglected and underutilized crops, wild edible plants, and seed system innovations and water-smart agriculture through efficient water uses, wastewater reuse, soil moisture–based irrigation assessment, irrigation modernization, low-cost irrigation technologies, digitalized irrigation services, water diversion feasibility, and environmental flow management.

They also highlighted land and natural resource management needs, including soil health and fertility improvement, rangeland management, and land-use systems. Climate-related priorities included nature positive farming, early warning systems, human–wildlife conflict, and water–energy–food nexus, alongside forestry research on domesticating high-value forest foods. Cross-cutting priorities such as gender and social inclusion, youth- and women-friendly technologies, and digital tools were identified as critical, while environmental challenges—biodiversity loss, invasive species, forest fires, and land fragmentation—were underscored as urgent and escalating concerns.

4.2. Partnerships and Engagement

Stakeholders viewed partnerships as the backbone of the success of CSF. Government agencies at the federal, provincial, and local levels were seen as key for policy direction, implementation, and mobilizing resources. Research institutions and universities were valued for generating evidence, testing ideas, and building capacity. NGOs, INGOs, cooperatives, and community groups were recognized for their strong local presence and ability to scale solutions, while the private sector was seen as important for markets, supply chains, and finance. Participants stressed the need for joint planning, clearer roles, less duplication, and better communication, including stronger links with the media. Participants also suggested that the CGIAR centers should also reach out to non-traditional partners like the Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC), Buddha Air Pvt Ltd., for innovation, capacity building, scaling, and outreach activities.

4.3. Funding Opportunities

Stakeholders openly discussed CGIAR's funding challenges, including rigid systems (e.g., bureaucratic approval and procurement requirements), shifting donor priorities, and mismatched expectations. To address these constraints, they proposed measures such as government support letters for CGIAR proposals, joint CGIAR funding applications, multi-stakeholder consortia, private sector engagement, and a strong country-level CGIAR coordination mechanism to ensure alignment and adaptability. Emerging financing options highlighted included venture funding and partnerships with domestic companies such as Buddha Air and the Chaudhary Group.

4.4. Innovations

Participants discussed what innovation or solutions that CGIAR partners and stakeholders are involved in Nepal. They discussed what innovation actually works and can be scaled. Farmers' Field Schools, climate-smart and agro-ecological practices, rainwater harvesting, collective farming, and better water management were highlighted as high-impact options. Integrated approaches like the water–energy–food–environment nexus and payment for ecosystem services were seen as useful ways to balance trade-offs.

The participants urge that scaling innovation requires identifying the right innovation (need and demand-based), cost-benefit and social assessment of innovation, entrepreneurship, capacity building, strong business models, right partnership, multi-stakeholders' engagement, and effective value chain.

Government drives an enabling environment through policy and investment, while research and academic partners bring scientific expertise and technical support for evidence-based policy and actions. Civil society and the private sector support innovation co-design, test, and scale with cost-effective financial solutions and capacity building.

4.5. Governance Mechanism

Stakeholders strongly emphasized the need for CGIAR country-level coordination mechanisms and governance structures for co-designing, implementing, and monitoring the CSF in Nepal. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) at the country level was suggested as a key platform to provide strategic guidance for the CGIAR Centers. This body should be jointly led by a senior government representative and a CGIAR Country Convener to ensure balance and ownership. The participant (Figure 3) suggested that the TAC can either be led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) or the Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC), with representation from the Department of Water Resources and Irrigation (DWRI), the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS), the Ministry of Water Supply (MoWS) along with representatives of other relevant government agencies, representatives of universities, development partners, the private sector, civil society actors, and CGIAR centers. The stakeholders from the research community viewed NARC as the appropriate institution to lead the TAC. The TAC would provide strategic guidance, review progress, support alignment with national priorities, and help resolve coordination issues. The committee should meet at least two times a year, with additional thematic or technical meetings as needed.

A small secretariat with a dedicated Country Convener and budget is required to support day-to-day follow-up, monitoring, and communication. This structure would promote transparency, shared decision-making, effective engagement, evidence-based policy influence, and learning throughout CSF implementation. It would promote a system-based approach, moving beyond production-focused interventions toward multifunctional landscape planning that serves multiple national goals.



Figure 3. The Consultation Workshop Participants, the Country Strategy Framework in Nepal (Participant list in Annex B)

5. Milestone and Timeline for CSF Development

The key milestones and timeline for the overall process (Figure 4), show how activities are planned and sequenced over time (2024-2030). It highlights the major decision points, consultations, and outputs starting from P25 listening sessions, the CSF consultation workshop, and longer-term implementation and evaluation. The key aspect of concern was that the CSF co-development can be rolled out at the country level once the CGIAR high-level decision-making body approves the CSF design framework, including the roles and position of the country convener.

Box 2. *“Every voice matter, from policymakers to farmers; the multistakeholder participation would add value in shaping the roadmap of the country strategy framework. I believe CSF would be an essential document in transforming Nepal’s land, food, and water systems guided by the principles adopted by the Government of Nepal,”* says **Dr Deepak Kumar Kharal, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD).**

6. Concluding Remarks

During the closing remarks, **Dr. Shreemat Shrestha, Principal Scientist at NARC**, reminded that while CGIAR has strong technical capacity, its role in Nepal has remained limited mainly due to resource constraints. At the same time, there is clear openness from NARC to strengthen collaboration, including providing working space and institutional support. A major gap identified is in molecular breeding expertise, where closer engagement with CGIAR centers could add real value. It was strongly emphasized that programs should not work in isolation. Instead, they need to be embedded within NARC and aligned across the three tiers of government. Breaking siloes through restructuring and fostering stronger integration will be essential. Ultimately, knowledge, innovation, science, and technology must drive commercialization and support the transformation of Nepal’s agri-food system.

Also, in closing remarks, **Dr. Santosh Kaini, Deputy Director General at DWRI**, shared the importance of close collaboration between the IWMI and the DWRI, MoEWRI on water resources and irrigation. He stressed that agri-food system transformation must be viewed through a climate change and water security lens, ensuring that interventions are resilient and forward-looking. Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) were highlighted as a pathway that is both affordable and sustainable. He also stressed that the CSF should clearly define coordination mechanisms so that roles and responsibilities are not ambiguous. Most importantly, any framework we design must be practical, implementable, and genuinely beneficial for local users on the ground.

In summary, today’s discussion pointed toward stronger institutional collaboration, clearer coordination mechanisms, climate-responsive planning, and a shared commitment to science-based innovation and its scaling.


7. Way Forward

The workshop offered a platform for partners and stakeholders to reflect on CGIAR’s innovations, impacts, and priority areas, and to assess the relevance of operationalizing the Country Strategic Framework (CSF) in Nepal. Discussions helped build a shared understanding of how the CSF can support harmonized and integrated research planning and delivery across CGIAR Centers and programs in the country, thereby contributing to achieve impacts collectively.

Nepal continues to face persistent food and nutrition insecurity, shrinking and degrading agricultural land, increasing water scarcity, and climate-induced extremes. Structural challenges such as youth out-migration, limited access to technologies, information, and technical knowledge by women, smallholder farmers, and marginalized groups, unsustainable resource use, gender exclusion, and rapidly transforming food systems further constrain resilience and development.

Over the past decade, CGIAR research and innovations have supported farmers, communities, and waterscapes in adapting to climate shocks by boosting agricultural productivity, strengthening water security, and improving livelihoods. CGIAR work has advanced scientific knowledge and capacities in irrigation and water management, climate resilient crops and seed systems, rice germplasm improvement, livestock productivity, agrobiodiversity, agri-enterprise development, crisis response, the water energy food ecosystem (WEFE nexus, solar irrigation, and GESI responsive and inclusive water governance).

Looking ahead, CGIAR Centers in Nepal will need to focus on areas where research, innovation, and partnerships can offer practical solutions to food, nutrition, water, climate, and governance challenges. Aligned with Nepal’s national priorities and CGIAR’s Research and Innovation Strategy 2020–2030, future efforts aim to strengthen agri-food systems, enhance resilience, and drive inclusive and sustainable development. Priority domains include nutrition sensitive agriculture, rice-based system transformation; sustainable livestock value chains; water and climate resilience; the WEFE nexus for agrifood systems transformation; irrigation; biodiversity conservation; technology and seed systems; and GESI and governance in food–land–water systems. Capacity sharing and scaling of innovations through public–private–community partnerships, underpinned by strong policy engagement, will be core approaches.



The CSF, one of the innovative approaches of the CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I) program, once co-designed, implemented, and jointly monitored with national partners and stakeholder, will be instrumental in scaling up and scaling out CGIAR innovations in Nepal by strengthening integrated planning, collaboration and synergy across CGIAR centers, programs, and accelerators to better respond to national priorities and demand.

Recognizing CGIAR's significant roles in Nepal's development, particularly in research and innovations across FLW systems, technology transfer and human resources development, participants expressed strong interests and commitment to engage in the CSF co-design, implementation, monitoring and learning processes. Once formalized, the CSF will serve as a strategic tool to guide and strengthen scaling of CGIAR research and innovations, helping achieve the impacts envisioned under the S4I program. The program commits to turn innovations into impact at scale through its various Areas of Work (AoWs). By 2030, the program globally aims to benefit 62 million people, including at least 30% women, youth, or underrepresented groups, apply biodiversity-friendly and climate-smart innovations across 10 million hectares, create or improve 250,000 jobs, help 480,000 people (50% women) access healthier diets, and mobilize \$5 billions funds for development investment to unlock delivery at scale. The AoW1 specifically focuses on engaging and empowering stakeholders by developing country level strategies such as the CSF.

The CSF consultation workshop is a strategic dialogue among the CGIAR centers, programs and partners that recognizes the importance of scaling proven innovations, enhancing capacity-sharing, and fostering adaptive learning across the FLW systems to ensure that the CSF delivers tangible outcomes aligned with the S4I program. Future efforts should focus on translating the CSF into joint work plans, strengthening linkages between research and implementation, and improving resource mobilization to support innovations at scale. The CSF should also establish coordinated planning and decision-making mechanisms to reduce silos and strengthen coherence across CGIAR centers and programs.

Annex A. Agenda of the Workshop

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
08:00 – 08:30	Breakfast	Ramesh Tamang, IWMI
08:30 – 09:00	Registration	Alisha Adhikari, IWMI
09:00 – 10:00	Opening session	Sumitra KC, Researcher, IWMI
	Chief Guest: Deepak K. Kharal, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
	Welcome and objective of the workshop – 5 minutes	Manohara Khadka, Country Representative, IWMI and CGIAR Country Convener for Nepal
	CGIAR's 10-year Impacts in Nepal – 10 minutes	Anil Aryal, Researcher, IWMI
	Setting the Scene: Food, Land, and Water Systems Transformation in Nepal — Current Status, Drivers, Challenges, Future Priorities, and the Role of CGIAR – 20 minutes	Ram Krishna Shrestha, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
	<i>Q & A and inputs from the floor</i> – 10 minutes	
	Remarks from the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation (MoEWRI) – 5 minutes	Susheel Chandra Acharya, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation
	Remarks with guidance from the chief guest – 5 minutes	Deepak K. Kharal, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
10:00 – 10:30	Group photo followed by a tea/coffee break	Ramesh Tamang, IWMI
10:30 – 11:00	CGIAR Country Strategy Framework	Nisha Onta, Governance Lab
	Rationale, objective, co-design process, the draft content, and CGIAR governance mechanism	Manohara Khadka, Country Representative, IWMI and CGIAR Country Convener for Nepal
	Q&A and input from stakeholders	

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<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
11:00 – 12:00	Interactive Breakout Groups and Summary Presentation:	Nisha Onta, Governance Lab
	<p>Group 1: Priority themes and focus areas for alignment across CGIAR programs and national strategies</p> <p>Group 2: Partnership and engagement strategy</p> <p>Group 3: Socio-technical innovations of food, land, and water systems transformations in Nepal</p> <p>Group 4: Funding challenges and strategies for mobilizing resources</p> <p>Group 5: Governance structure and coordination mechanism for the CSF co-development and implementation</p> <p>Q&A and inputs from the stakeholders</p>	CGIAR Centers/partners
12:00 – 13:00	Interactive session: A roadmap/action plan for the co-design and implementation of the CGIAR CSF and CGIAR country coordination mechanism in Nepal	Nisha Onta, Governance Lab
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country-level governance arrangement and coordination mechanisms for CSF co-development, implementation, and monitoring Samjhana K. Kafle, Joint Secretary, MoALD Discussion on the CSF co-design key milestones and timeline, coordination/governance structure 	
13:00 – 13:30	Ways forward:	Dyutiman Choudhary, Country Representative, CIMMYT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Santosh Kaini, Deputy Director General, Department of Water Resources and Irrigation Representative from other partners Representative from CGIAR Centers 	
13:30 ~	Lunch and departure	

Annex B. List of the Workshop Participants.

S.N	Salutation	Name of participant	Designation	Affiliation
1	Dr.	Deepak Kumar Kharal	Secretary	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MOALD)
2	Mr	Susheel Chandra Acharya	Joint Secretary	Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation
3	Mr	Basudev Timilsina	Deputy Director General	Department of Water Resources and Irrigation
4	Dr	Ram Krishna Shrestha	Joint Secretary	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
5	Dr	Santosh Kaini	Deputy Director General	Department of Water Resources and Irrigation
6	Dr	Samjhana Kumari Kafle	Joint Secretary	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
7	Dr	Shanta Karki	Joint Secretary	MOALD
8	Mr.	Sanjeeb Baral	Joint Secretary	Water Resources and Energy Research Center
9	Dr	Hari Bahadur KC	Joint Secretary	MoALD
10	Mr	Krishnanand Singh	Program Officer	National Planning Commission
11	Ms	Anjana Kayastha	Under Secretary	Ministry of Forest and Environment, Madhesh Province
12	Mr	Jhamkanath Nepal	Chairperson	Indrawati Rural Municipality, Sindhupalchowk
13	Ms	Rambabu Prasad Sah	Deputy Mayor	Barahathawa Municipality, Sarlahi
14	Mr	Sri Narayan Singh		Barahathawa Municipality, Sarlahi
15	Ms.	Maina Kumari Rawal	Vice Chairperson	Alital Rural Municipality, Dadedhura
16	Mr	Mahendra Raj Wagle	Division Chief	Ministry of Forest and Environment, Lumbini
17	Mr	Ramesh Kumar Giri	Division Chief	Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment, Karnali
18	Mr	Shiba Prasad Shrestha	Under Secretary	Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment, Gandaki
19	Mr	Shankar Shah	Province Secretary	Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives, Sudurpaschim Province
20	Ms	Sangita Shrestha	Senior Agriculture Engineer	Department of Agriculture, Kathmandu
21	Dr	Shreemat Shrestha	Principal Scientist	Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC)
22	Dr	Ujjawal Kushwaha	Scientist	Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC)
23	Dr	Krishna Hari Ghimire	Chief	National Plant Breeding and Genetics Research Center, NARC
24	Dr	Devendra Gauchan	Honorary Research Fellow	Alliance for Biodiversity - CIAT (ABC)
25	Dr	Bhesh Raj Thapa	Principal (Associate Professor)	Universal Engineering and Science College, Pokhara University
26	Dr	Bim Prasad Shrestha	Professor	Kathmandu University
27	Dr	Huma Neupane	Director Research	Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science
28	Dr	Rishi Ram Kattel	Professor	Agriculture and Forestry University, Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management,
29	Dr	Vishnu Prasad Pandey	Professor	Center for Applied Research and Development, Institute of Engineering
30	Mr	Pragati Raj Sipkhan	Strategic Program Lead (Climate Action)	Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LIBIRD)

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S.N	Salutation	Name of participant	Designation	Affiliation
31	Dr	Nisha Onta	Executive Director	Governance Lab
32	Ms	Anandita Shrestha	Program Coordinator	Governance Lab
33	Mr	Prabin Gurung	Knowledge Mgmt. & Communication Manager	Heifer International
34	Ms	Suruchi Sharma	Senior Agriculture Officer	Nepal Agricultural Cooperative Central Federation (NACCFL)
35	Ms	Sovita Pariyar	Chairperson	Sarthak Nepal
36	Ms	Parbata Gautam	General Secretary	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN)
37	Mr	Gokul Prasad Dura	Chairperson	Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Research and Development
38	Ms	Draupadi Subedi	GESI Specialist	Women Leading for Change in Natural Resources Management (WLCN)
39	Dr	Binod Gupta	Dairy expert	Central Dairy Cooperative Association Limited Nepal (CDCAN)
40	Mr	Mahesh Chhetri	Head, Development Project Department	Muktinath Krishi Company Limited
41	Mr	Sandip Poudel	Renewable Energy Engineer	Quasar Energy Consult/Solar Irrigation
42	Mr	Anup Khanal	Executive Chairman	Innovative Engineering Services Pvt. Ltd.
43	MS	Kanchan Lama	Chairperson	Women Leading for Change in Natural Resources Management (WLCN)
44	Mr	Rewati Raj Dhakal	Resource Mobilization Specialist	FAO
45	Dr	Kamal Aryal	Agriculture Specialist	ICIMOD
46	Ms	Kamala KC	Social Sectors Advisor	British Embassy Kathmandu
47	Dr.	Ram Bastakoti	Deputy Team Leader	Green and Resilience Financing Facility Investment Program/ADB
48	Dr	Sindhu Dhungana	Forestry Expert	UNEP Consultant
49	Mr	Mukesh Pokhrel	Chief Editor	Echo Sanchar Network Pvt. Ltd.
50	Mr	Shreeram Subedi	Journalist	Nagarik
51	Mr	Keshab Poudel	Journalist	Spotlight
52	Mr	Sonam Lala Hyolmo	Journalist	Mongabay
53	Ms	Balika Madan	Journalist	Radio Nepal
54	Mr	Ganesh Khatiwada	Editor	Ecosphere News
55	Dr	Abdurahaman Beshir Issa	Scientist	CIMMYT
56	Ms	Alisha Adhikari	Research Intern	IWMI
57	Dr	Anil Aryal	Researcher	IWMI
58	Mr	Anuj Mishra	Research Officer	IWMI
59	Dr	Dyutiman Choudhary	Country Representative	CIMMYT
60	Dr	Manohara Khadka	Country Representative	IWMI
61	Dr	Narayan Khanal	Business Devt. Specialist	CIMMYT
62	Dr	Padmakumar Varijakshapanicker	Country Representative	ILRI
63	Dr	Pankaj Koirala	Agriculture Economist	CIMMYT
64	Mr	Prem Raj Bhatta	Researcher	IRRI
65	Dr	Sanju Koirala	Researcher	IWMI
66	Ms	Sumitra KC	Researcher	IWMI



Disclaimer

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IWMI

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