



ISDC Feedback on CGIAR Portfolio Narrative 2025-2030 and Review of Program and Accelerator Proposals:

Preliminary Management Action Plan

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Introduction

Management thanks the Independent Science and Development Council (ISDC) for its thorough review and constructive feedback on CGIAR's 2025—30 Portfolio Narrative and Program/Accelerator proposals. ISDC's feedback will be carefully considered and addressed during the Portfolio Inception Phase in Q1-Q2, 2025 with a view to improving the coherence, relevance, and impact potential of the Portfolio and its components.

To maximize the time available for the Portfolio Writing Teams to design the individual Programs and Accelerators before ISDC submission on 27 September, the final version of the Portfolio Narrative – which builds on the individual proposals – was only submitted on 1 November. Management recognizes that this caused a sequencing challenge for ISDC's review process; which was in part mitigated through a substantive cover letter that accompanied Management's 27 September submission.

This document comprises two sections: I/ Responses to ISDC's Portfolio-level suggestions; II/ Responses to ISDC's suggestions on each Program and Accelerator.

In its review of the 2025-30 Portfolio Proposals, ISDC provided several comments that are common to all proposals, on the need to provide a more detailed analysis of risks; complete comparative advantage analyses; refine research questions, outputs, and theories of change; and develop more robust MELIA plans. To avoid repetition, a common response to these comments is provided in Section 2.

It should be noted that each Program/Accelerator will submit an Inception Report at the end of the Inception Phase in Q2 2025. These reports will demonstrate in further detail how ISDC's feedback has been addressed.

In both sections of this document:

- efforts have been focused on responding to forward-looking comments, as opposed to those related to the structure and contents of the proposals;
- comments have been grouped and summarized for ease of reading and to keep this document within a reasonable length;
- responses are focused on qualitative feedback (as opposed to scores).

Section I – Responses to the Portfolio Narrative feedback

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Codesign of the Portfolio – “The proposals reviewed by ISDC do not meet the ambitions of the Engagement Framework or the demand for proposal codesign expressed in the Listening Sessions. It recommends that during Inception Phase, the commitment to advance Program and Accelerator codesign as an engagement enabler should be prioritized.”</p>	<p>Management will ensure that Programs and Accelerators apply agreed principles and best practices in co-designing the 2025-30 Portfolio, building on the Engagement Framework and guided by the forthcoming Partnership Strategy. A key first step will be to “create a shared definition of codesign used across CGIAR” as recommended by ISDC. One of the key components of the Inception Phase is to further develop detailed priorities and plans alongside partners in a transparent manner.</p>
<p>“Some proposals are still largely rooted in a linear and technologically-focused research paradigm that belies the systems orientation CGIAR espouses in the Strategy. Moving from linearity to complexity will require a sustained, significant cultural shift within the organization, changing attitudes, behaviors, and approaches.”</p>	<p>CGIAR’s continued progress towards a systems orientation is indeed a priority for CGIAR to achieve its mission and intended impacts. The linear appearance of several of the visuals included in the Portfolio Narrative and proposals often reflects simplification rather than the intent of the Portfolio. Refinement of theories of change, including adding clearer assumptions, should help alleviate this concern. Regarding the observation that some proposals are too technologically focused, this feedback will be conveyed to Program/Accelerator teams to guide their codesign processes and ensure that all teams have a good balance of research disciplinary.</p>
<p>CGIAR’s Value Proposition – “A value proposition is a key component of an organizational plan and essential to engage new funders. However, the value proposition was cut from the May Narrative draft”.</p>	<p>The Value Proposition included in the May version of the CGIAR Portfolio Narrative was found to be inadequate by many internal stakeholders. An improved Value Proposition statement will be finalized as part of the Portfolio Inception Phase, once CGIAR’s new science leadership is in place, and will be anchored in a 2025—30 Portfolio Investment Case.</p>
<p>ISDC has highlighted several subject matter topics that did not receive the level of attention that it expected in the Portfolio Narrative and/or proposals. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. water systems, ii. climate mitigation, 	<p>Management agrees that all of these topics deserve significant and increased attention. Actions to achieve this will include creating new lines of research, raising the profile of existing research, and enhancing coordination across Programs and Accelerators on planned work on these topics. More work on orphan crops and pulses and youth and social inclusion in particular needs to be newly built into the Portfolio.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. tradeoffs and synergies in mixed systems, iv. the Environmental Health and Biodiversity Impact Area, v. youth and social inclusion, and vi. orphan crops and pulses. 	<p>In the case of youth and social inclusion, strategy papers commissioned by the Gender Equality, Youth and Social Inclusion Impact Platform will provide a starting point for discussions.</p> <p>In the other cases (water systems, climate change mitigation, mixed systems, and the Environmental Health and Biodiversity Impact Area), existing areas of planned research on these topics in multiple Programs/Accelerators will serve as starting points for developing more coordinated approaches and identifying remaining key research gaps.</p> <p>Taking the example of the Environmental Health and Biodiversity Impact Area, the Platform Director has shared with all Programs and Accelerators a background document on priority areas of attention by CGIAR and provided comments on all draft proposals. While more work is needed to deliver a compelling and connected portfolio of research products, there are several areas of strength to build from: environmental health and biodiversity is the primary Impact Area for the Multifunctional Landscapes Program; the Sustainable Farming Program features strong components on soil health and water-use efficiency; environmentally-oriented research is also included in the Policy Innovations, Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods, and Food Frontiers and Security Programs; finally, innovations to enrich the natural resource base feature as part of larger resilience bundles in the Climate Action Program. Similarly, ISDC’s comment on mixed farming interdependencies across Multifunctional Landscapes, Sustainable Farming and Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods points to another case where coordination is required for assessing tradeoffs and synergies across Programs. Developing such coordination mechanisms will be prioritized during the Inception Phase.</p> <p>More generally on linkages and synergies across Programs and Accelerators, the management arrangements for the Portfolio provide several mechanisms to strengthen these, including a cross-Portfolio Global Science Team and Center-level</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>coordination and collaboration across teams delivering on different parts of the Portfolio.</p>
<p>Geographic coordination – “As CGIAR proceeds with the Inception Phase, coordination details of collocated, integrated research at sub-national scales are needed. What will be the role of the Scaling for Impact Accelerator in the overarching structure of collocation at varying scales?”</p>	<p>Improved coordination of Portfolio efforts at country and sub-national levels is essential for CGIAR to contribute to country objectives and to avoid duplication and foster synthesis and learning. In the 2022-24 Portfolio, a number of coordination approaches were used, including Country Conveners, leadership from the Regionally Integrated Initiatives and/or other Initiatives and Centers, as well as more bottom-up approaches led by groups of Initiatives. In the 2025-30 Portfolio, the Scaling for Impact Program is expected to play a significant role alongside Country Conveners in conveying country demand and coordinating scaling efforts. Pilots will be put in place during the Inception Phase to test the operationalization of this approach. CGIAR’s country and regional engagement functions will be organized under a new Continental structure.</p> <p>In addition, the preliminary 2025 workplans will highlight shared deliverables across Programs/Accelerators, and principles for Program/Accelerator coordination and collaboration will be defined by the end of 2024.</p>
<p>CGIAR’s role among partners – how will the new Partnership Strategy inform the Portfolio Narrative and proposals?</p>	<p>The new Partnership Strategy will enable CGIAR to maximize the shared value of diverse partnerships, especially in the Global South; drive a stronger partnering culture across CGIAR; and enable CGIAR to become more fit-for-purpose to partner. Specifically, through a more systematic and intentional partnership approach, the Strategy will guide the Programs and Accelerators to make better investment/ divestment decisions on partnerships, strengthen pathways to scale, seek out new and more diverse partnerships, apply clear metrics to demonstrate when partnerships are delivering value, and mitigate operational and reputational risks.</p> <p>As noted above, a new Continental structure and Country convening functions will promote strong and cohesive partnerships at the national, sub-national, and local levels.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Externally facilitated comparative advantage process</p>	<p>For the initial comparative advantage (CA) exercise undertaken at proposal stage, a coordinated approach steered by a working group proved highly beneficial. Nonetheless, the teams highlighted some challenges in applying ISDC’s comparative advantage methodology. Thus, the recommendation to set up an externally facilitated CA process is appealing. Management thanks ISDC for this suggestion and will be in touch on how to take this forward.</p>
<p>Capacity sharing and decolonization of research – “Capacity sharing is primarily externally focused, training partners and others. Will there be an internal component? While two-way learning encompassed in the capacity “sharing” positioning is noted, success relies on CGIAR learning to learn from others, which represents a deep cultural change in the organization.”</p>	<p>Inward-facing capacity strengthening is indeed included, as noted in the CGIAR-level theory of change visual graphic and in some of the proposals. Management agrees with the cultural shift recommendations about CGIAR learning how to learn from others. The shift from “capacity development” to “capacity sharing” recognizes the importance of this cultural change. The Capacity Sharing Accelerator will provide leadership in this area.</p> <p>Decolonization of research has been extensively discussed within CGIAR, with sharing among CGIAR staff of emergent best practices from the literature. CGIAR leadership will work to formalize and coordinate efforts to mainstream these practices, with the Global Leadership Team and Global Science Team driving cultural change.</p>
<p>CGIAR impact ambitions (Section 4 of the Portfolio Narrative) – “Some stronger justification for assumptions is required. For instance, the 1% productivity gain per annum needs to be evidenced, while regional differences need to be accounted for. Is the 1% productivity gain based on CGIAR only research or does it reflect aggregate growth rates, of which CGIAR is a contributor?”</p>	<p>More details on the methods, including assumptions, will be provided. The ambition assumes collective efforts by partners.</p> <p>As for the assumption of 1% productivity gain per annum, the figure was drawn from work undertaken under the Genetic Innovation Science Group, with some regionalization of the figures based on historical evidence. It is close to the target CGIAR set for itself in the 2016-2030 Strategy and Results Framework (“Improve the rate of yield increase for major food staples from current < 1% to 1.2%-1.5% per year”) and in line with estimates from a recent Fuglie and Echeverria paper.</p> <p>Plans have been made to update the analysis in 2025 through integration of more detailed Portfolio research plans.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Role of Accelerators – “An Accelerator definition and a clear mandate in CGIAR’s context would be beneficial.”</p>	<p>As pointed out by ISDC, the Portfolio Narrative describes the general purpose of Accelerators without providing a definition of the term. The Accelerators’ theories of change rely heavily on enhancing the quality of research and use of key methods and tools within the Portfolio. Thus, most of Accelerators’ activities will consist in engaging collaboratively with the Programs. It is expected that the conceptual model of Accelerators will become clearer in the Inception Phase when put into practice.</p>
<p>Research ethics – “CGIAR should consider developing and using clear standards for upholding scientific integrity, research ethics, and accountability”</p>	<p>Agreed. Sharing and coordination of IRB procedures (including country level-requirements) within CGIAR has undergone recent improvements. Centers continue to strengthen their own IRBs or deepen their use of external review boards. The recommendations related to other areas (e.g. working with minors, digital tools) will be addressed under the leadership of the Chief Scientist. Through the implementation of the Partnership Strategy and Engagement Framework, we will work towards developing guidelines for promoting the use of high ethical standards in CGIAR partnerships, consistent with international best practice.</p>
<p>Risk management – “A robust risk framework is essential for strong proposals and enhances their robustness and credibility. Proposals must clearly outline risk mitigation to allow for the assessment of feasibility and preparedness. The Narrative risk framework is a good starting point and CGIAR proposals should adopt it. Currently, the proposals lack adequate risk analyses, which are apparently earmarked for the Inception Phase. Developing detailed risk frameworks is an area flagged for further development during the Inception Phase. ISDC was unable to assess this specific QoR4D criterion because of the lack of information provided.”</p>	<p>As noted by ISDC, the identification of key risks and development of risk management plans at the Program and Accelerator levels is a key priority for the Portfolio Inception Phase and will be captured in complete Plans of Work/ Results and Budgets as well as Inception Reports.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Integration of bilateral and pooled funding – “How will CGIAR manage the integration of pooled and bilateral funding for Portfolio? What levers will the Chief Scientist deploy in their work with Center Directors General considering the integrated partnership structure and lack of line authority? How will CGIAR prevent and/or manage competition among Centers for pooled funding? How will scientists be incentivized and motivated to work seamlessly within a pooled and bilateral system? What happens if System Council (SC) approves a mechanism to earmark W2 funding to Areas of Work and some Areas of Work receive relatively little funding? What was learned about managing this challenge in the 2022-24 cycle? How will geographies with little Program crossover be managed across pooled and bilateral funding?”</p>	<p>Principles and mechanisms to drive progressive alignment of W3 and bilaterally funded projects and programs with the objectives and theories of change with the Programs and Accelerators are detailed in the Technical Reporting Arrangement for the 2025—30 Portfolio. These include, but are not limited to: (i) mapping of key results to Program/ Accelerator theories of change; (ii) a minimum data standard for W3 and bilaterally funded projects to describe, consistently, the impact the project seeks to contribute to (by Impact Area/ SDG), the specific results the project/ program contributes to, the partners with whom those results are generated, where the results are generated, and their cost; and (iii) monitoring and reporting against the common CGIAR Results Framework.</p> <p>In addition, the agreed management arrangements for the Portfolio introduce mechanisms to foster integration and synergies between W1/2-funded and W3/ bilaterally funded work at all levels, including the CGIAR Global Leadership Team at the executive leadership level, the CGIAR Global Science Team at the Portfolio level, as well as Program/ Accelerator Leadership Teams.</p> <p>While recognizing that elements of competition and collaboration will always be present in a partnership, the allocation and deployment of W1/2 funding will be based on clear, agreed decision-making processes and criteria.</p> <p>With a joined-up performance and results management approach, including a minimum data standard and technical reporting across all sources of funding, individual scientists have an incentive to deliver against shared, higher-level objectives and Program/ Accelerator theories of change regardless of how their work is funded.</p> <p>Management has proposed that earmarking to Areas of Work through W2 be limited to 50% of a Funder’s total W1/2 contributions. Through agile, scenario-based budgeting and planning, Programs and Accelerators will be designed to adapt and adjust to different possible funding outcomes.</p>

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<p>MELIA – “During the Inception Phase, strengthening the MELIA sections is essential. Some proposals lack sufficient detail on how recommendations from external evaluations will be incorporated, while others omit evaluation recommendations entirely.”</p>	<p>As mentioned in the proposal guidance provided to Writing Teams, Program/Accelerator MELIA plans will be developed during the Inception Phase. MELIA Focal points will be appointed to deliver on these plans with support from the Office of the Chief Scientist. Recommendations from relevant external evaluations were shared with Writing Teams at proposal stage and a deliberate effort will be made for them to be used more systematically in future design and implementation of the Programs and Accelerators.</p>
<p>Theories of change and assumptions – “The main question from ISDC is why assumptions were not included in the Portfolio-level Theory of Change. Knowing how the Programs and Accelerators contribute to the Portfolio-level Theory of Change is useful, but this does not replace assumptions (p. 22). Assumptions are a critical component of Theories of Change. Without them the veracity of the analyses and causal linkages cannot be established. Most proposals did include assumptions related to the outcome level. However, assumptions at all levels of the Theory of Change—from input to impact—will be important to explore, record, and monitor.”</p>	<p>Compared to the theory of change (ToC) versions included in CGIAR’s 2030 Strategy and in the Companion Document to the 2022-24 Portfolio, improvements to the CGIAR-level ToC include an explicit articulation of contextualization, prioritization, and comparative advantage analysis, as well as a better articulation of the core CGIAR impact pathways. Although the format of the Portfolio Narrative did not allow more details to be included, Management recognizes the value in developing a more elaborate version of this ToC. This will help justify how the Portfolio is fit to deliver CGIAR’s intended impacts and will serve as a guide for refinement of Program/Accelerator-level ToCs during the Inception Phase.</p>

Section II - Responses to ISDC feedback at the Program and Accelerator Level

As a reminder, ISDC provided several comments that are common to all proposals (on comparative advantage, risk assessments, MELIA plans, and refining research questions, outputs, and ToCs). Please see Section I for a common response to this feedback.

Considering that the Breeding for Tomorrow and Genebanks proposals were submitted to and reviewed by ISDC separately, their responses below remain separate.

Climate Action Program

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>[Section 4. QoR4D] ...the proposal emphasis adaptation at the expense of mitigation... To strengthen scientific credibility, research questions should be more targeted and specific. Given the Program’s broad geographic scope, it would advisable if region- and country-specific research questions were developed with partners with a strong focus on enhancing social inclusion...Further, local knowledge and innovations arising from climate change impacts should be specifically included to enable codesign and ensure impact. The Theory of Change...needs a more critical assessment of assumptions and risks. Greater clarity on roles, division of labor, and funding allocation among partners would help assess collaboration incentives and success prospects. Incorporating relevant R4D work by CGIAR and others would complement a climate change vulnerability analysis. The MELIA approach still lacks mechanisms for transparency, governance, and accountability, which are necessary for adaptive management. Effectiveness could be improved by explicitly addressing risks associated with specific activities’ outputs, outcomes, and impacts.</p>	<p>During the Inception Phase, the Transition Team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revisit the Areas of Works’ (AoW) scope to balance mitigation and adaptation. • implement a country and partner engagement plan to co-develop relevant research questions with partners and output users, assess and adjust the Theory of Change (ToC) assumptions and risks, and better understand the root causes of vulnerability in different geographies.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>[Section 5, Overall weakness] Socially inclusive frameworks and approaches are mentioned at a general level in all Areas of Work, but the focus is largely on beneficiaries. To empower a greater diversity of people, it is important to include them in the cogeneration of knowledge and to respect and seriously consider their own sources of knowledge.</p>	<p>The Transition Leadership Team acknowledges the need for an approach where co-design translates into a different way of conducting research. This approach includes diverse types of knowledge in the co-creation of innovations for mitigation and adaptation, allowing CGIAR to learn from other sources of knowledge as well. This will be addressed during the Inception Phase.</p>
<p>[Criteria 1] As a basis for prioritization of activities, this Program could benefit from more specific ex-ante appraisal of the climate problems it intends to address, specifically which elements of total food system GHG emissions does it aim to influence and (relative to the total) by how much? This could then lead seamlessly into a root cause analysis of vulnerability, thereby increasing the chances of well-tailored technical and social innovations.</p>	<p>The recommendation to better define which elements of the food system this Program will influence ex-ante towards creating low-emission, less vulnerable food systems and communities is well acknowledged. This will be addressed during the activity planning for 2025.</p>
<p>[Criteria 2]... “listening sessions” do not equal “codesign” and it is not clear how codesign will be done after the program commences. Given the complex and uncertain domain of this program, developmental and participatory evaluation methods could be combined with MELIA and training programs to inform adaptive management and ongoing codesign.</p>	<p>This will be addressed during the Inception Phase. The Leadership Team acknowledges this recommendation and will incorporate it during the partner engagement process in the Inception Phase and later throughout the overall implementation, monitoring, and learning process.</p>
<p>[Criteria 3] However, for this to be successful, these partnerships need to be resourced and given agency in design. In other areas there is little evidence supporting CGIAR’s comparative advantage...his should then be included in the comparative advantage analysis. Finally, there are many assertions—e.g., “a key player in shaping climate change policies;” “a strong position to collaborate with financial institutions;” and “a key partner in shaping international policies and processes;” which are plausible but neither evidence nor examples nor anecdotes are presented in support.</p>	<p>This will be addressed during the Inception Phase. The mentioned assertions will be reviewed in the light of evidence, previous CGIAR evidence-based outcomes, and feedback from partner engagement and co-design sessions.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>[Criteria 5.1] Prioritization and coordination...Two-way communication with on-ground initiatives and MEL to track program results are essential to adaptive capacity and merit specific attention in Area of Work design and budgeting; this Area of Work also needs adequate funding to build regional capacity and avoid bottlenecks of centralized processes.</p>	<p>This will be addressed during the Inception Phase, and specifically during revision, adjustment and planning of this AoW.</p>
<p>[Criteria 5.3] 3. Local adaptation...Cross-scale coordination, governance, and accountability could be challenges and will deserve attention. Assumptions regarding adoption appear to be unrealistic given timeframes and extent of planned impact (8 million producers). Area of Work 3 has very high- level generic questions which seem to assume that there has not been much done already. It would be important to highlight which participating countries already have ongoing CGIAR work, and how such experience will be used to inform and advance work at new sites.</p>	<p>This will be addressed during the Inception Phase, and specifically during revision, adjustment and planning of this AoW.</p>
<p>[Criteria 5.4] 4. Low emissions transitions...scaling pathways are not clear and causal links to outcomes are not articulated clearly and may be unrealistic within the timeframe...Surprisingly, there is no mention of trees, forests, and reducing deforestation driven by agricultural land use, why? And why is there no mention of energy efficiency and alternative energy in the food-fuel-water nexus (including cooling for perishables and for human survival)?</p>	<p>This will be addressed during the Inception Phase, and specifically, during revision, adjustment and planning of this AoW. Trees, forests and energy are included but the Transition Team will make them more explicit during the Inception Phase.</p>
<p>[Criteria 5.5] 5. Finance and policy... Two specific concerns: do CGIAR and partners have sufficient expertise in policy analysis, political economy, financial analysis, and social cost-benefit analysis to address real barriers to this approach? Second, and related to the first, is an unspoken assumption that there are many “bankable” projects languishing in agriculture and land use...is that true? Or could the proposal be placing too much confidence in private solutions and markets to address global public goods problems in this sector, which</p>	<p>This will be addressed during the Inception Phase, and specifically, during revision, adjustment and planning of this AoW.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>also includes sector-specific issues of impermanence, additionality, leakage, sink saturation, just transitions, and high transactions costs? How will issues of equity and justice be addressed? Finally, and most importantly, AoW5 requires much more explicit articulation of key uncertainties and risks, which obviously are central to finance and hence for feasibility of various instruments and mechanisms.</p>	
<p>[Criteria 6] Methods have not been described in enough depth to assess their feasibility or fitness. In particular, methods for adoption and scaling need to be described further. To the extent research methods are discussed, they aim to fill knowledge gaps but lack complementary capacity to understand contending interests and power imbalances. Additionally, there is mention of conducting work in conflict regions, but appropriate methods for conflict settings are not discussed anywhere.</p>	<p>This will be addressed during the Inception Phase. During activity planning of Areas of Work, due attention will be given to research methods that are feasible and effective to generate the planned outputs.</p>
<p>[Criteria 7] The proposal includes elements of social inclusion in Areas of Work 1 and 3, however this needs to be further embedded within and across Areas of Work to drive transformative change...It would be good to see more inclusive approaches being adopted in science and knowledge creation...The inclusion of Indigenous group's voices and perspectives is lacking...Overall, one would have expected more attention to specific collaborative connections with the proposed Gender and Social Inclusion Accelerator both in the Theory of Change (Fig. 5.1 and narrative) and specific narratives on approaches to research and scaling.</p>	<p>This will be addressed during the Inception Phase. The Leadership Transition Team acknowledges the need to incorporate inclusive approaches across the Program's Areas of Work, especially for co-creating knowledge and innovations for low-emission, resilient food systems.</p>
<p>[Criteria 8] adoption pathways are not clear. It is therefore challenging to assess their effectiveness. One concern is that so much emphasis is placed on filling knowledge gaps without sufficient attention to conflicts of interest and power imbalances among key actors, which have been shown to have blocked progress on emissions reduction quite generally.</p>	<p>This will be addressed during the Inception Phase.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>[Criteria 9] Linkages to other Programs have been identified in the Theory of Change, but there is little evidence or discussion of how these linkages will produce impact. Given the complexity of the Program, greater clarity on roles, division of labor, and funding allocation among partners within the program would be helpful in assessing incentives to collaborate and prospects for success... approaches for scaling are not adequately elaborated in the proposal. Adding more detail on mechanisms for scaling could make the outcomes more credible and enable tracking of effectiveness and opportunities for adaptive management. The proponents may wish to consider strategies for “scaling deep”; it also could be helpful to distinguish measures (quantitative indicators) from outcomes (beneficial changes in behaviors, policies, and capabilities) with the aim of avoiding incentivizing actions focused exclusively on meeting specific narrow targets. (Moore et al., 2015).</p>	<p>This will be addressed during the Inception Phase, including with in-depth discussions and plans with other Programs to co-define joint work programs amongst other actions.</p>
<p>[Additional comments] Links to the CGIAR Impact Area Environmental Health and Biodiversity are weak. As climate adaptation and mitigation in food, land, and water systems directly impact ecosystems and biodiversity, and vice versa, it would be good to see stronger connections to this Impact Area in the Theory of Change and elsewhere</p>	<p>This will be addressed during the Inception Phase as part of the reevaluation of how the Climate Action Program interacts with other Programs and Accelerators.</p>

Multifunctional Landscapes Program

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p><u>Overall weakness No.1:</u> <i>“Requires clarification on how Area of Work 6 ‘Performance Assessment and Evidence’ may integrate outputs from Areas of Work 1, 2, and 3 that will be used for MELIA and quantifying their impact on Gender, Policy and Education outcomes. We recommend that Areas of Work 4, 5 and 7 be merged”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We acknowledge the comment about the links between AOW 6 and other AoWs. AoW 6 assesses the ‘overall performance’ of various AoWs in contributing to their objectives using solutions (AoW 1), planned land use and governance systems (AoW 2), financial mechanisms (AoW 3), enabling environments (AoW 4), and equity considerations (AoW 5). It also monitors changes in near real-time for adaptive learning and informed decision making (AoW 7). Data and relevant outputs from AoWs 1-5 will be used for AoW 6, while AoW 6 informs the other AoWs on evidence of performance. In addition, data and outputs from AoWs 1-6 inform MELIA; data and results from MELIA can in turn be used under AOW 6. These linkages will be spelled out in more details during the Inception Phase. • The suggestion to merge some AoWs will be taken into consideration.
<p><u>Overall weakness No.2:</u> <i>“Section 6.7 on Global engagement and Learning. One key gap is that knowledge outputs are still defined/described generally, thus not based on the CGIAR definition and categorization of knowledge products. It is not clear how many knowledge products will be generated”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The output “capacity sharing and learning” of AOW 7 will include knowledge products, mainly 1) toolkits (AOWs 1-6), 2) PhD and Masters opportunities, 3) exchange programs between countries, 4) knowledge products to inform the Rio conventions, including synthesis of scientific evidence (metanalysis) across the CGIAR Portfolio. A flexible, adaptive approach will guide activity planning and knowledge product development between 2025 and 2030, aligned with CGIAR standards and evolving priorities.
<p><u>Overall weakness No.3:</u> <i>“Some elements make 6.1 (Solutions and Innovations) a promising section. It has clear strengths in studying incentives and factors that enable actors to replicate and scale the proposed solutions. However,</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About design of AoW 1 activities being ‘<u>top-down</u>’: The Program builds on the co-creation, participatory, and inclusive approaches under the Initiatives to ensure sustainability and success. The Program will continue to adopt a convergence approach, involving farmers, communities, value chain actors, policymakers, and extension systems in co-designing and co-developing landscape

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p><i>it seems to be a top-down approach to investigate agroecological, nature-positive, and regenerative agriculture ideas.</i></p> <p><i>Effective climate adaptation and mitigation strategies are mentioned, though these are undefined.</i></p> <p><i>Enhanced farm productivity is mentioned, though 6.1 does not acknowledge that for farmers to be more sustainable or nature-positive, they need to be profitable and able to manage risks. These concepts should be included in this section and the program overall”.</i></p>	<p>transition pathways. We will emphasize ‘co-creation, co-design, co-implementation, and co-holistic assessment’ as key for success and sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We acknowledge that the <u>climate adaptation and mitigation</u> focus needs to be further specified across the AoWs. In AOW 1, integrating tools such as conservation, restoration, and regenerative practices will form a critical part of the solutions. Specific approaches will be refined during the Inception Phase. • We acknowledge that solutions have to balance <u>profitability and risk management</u> while achieving ecosystem services. We will elaborate this during the Inception Phase.
<p>Criteria 1. Clearly defined research problem that addresses Impact Areas, is a high priority in the targeted geographies, is well aligned to the 2030 Strategy, multi-funder priorities, and is well informed by previous research findings and lessons from the 22-24 Portfolio Initiatives.</p> <p><u>Feedback on proposal Section 2. High-level vision and Section 3. Evidence-based and demand-led prioritization</u></p> <p><i>“The problem is well-known and complex, the vision is highly ambitious, and the expected outcomes are highly optimistic. Greater clarity of how landscapes, different ecological systems and countries are prioritized is needed.</i></p> <p><i>Needs better reference to Theory of Change or Tables 6.1/6.2/6.3.</i></p> <p><i>Evidence on the value of the innovative solutions and innovations (6.1) needs strengthening.</i></p> <p><i>While the proposal is aligned with the Strategy and multi-funders priorities, examples of priority landscapes that will be the focus for research at the country and sub-regional levels would help clarify how the research problem will be addressed”.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As to <u>prioritization</u> – key criteria used include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Primary focus: Continue research with demonstrated impact and relevant progress in high-demand landscapes. These include areas where Initiatives have co-designed solutions with partners and achieved promising outcomes. b. Secondary focus: Expand to include underrepresented socioecological landscapes (e.g., islands, wetlands, coastal areas, lakes, peri-urban zones) to ensure methodological diversity and better representativeness. c. Funding considerations: Prioritization also depends on the availability of additional funding from bilateral sources. 2. Better integration with <u>theories of change</u> and partnership strategies, as well as <u>prioritization of landscapes</u> and evidence about the <u>value of innovations and solutions</u> will be designed during the Inception Phase through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Collaborative workplans: Engage food, land, and water systems actors in co-developing plans based on prior results.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>b. Cross-program coordination: Leverage dialogues with Programs such as Breeding for Tomorrow, Sustainable Farming, Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods, and Scaling for Impact to identify and integrate the needed innovations and establish actionable strategies.</p>
<p>Criteria 2. Evidence that the Science Program is demand driven through codesign with key stakeholders and partners (NARES, governments, farmers, private sector, funders) and research collaborators within and outside CGIAR.</p> <p><u>Feedback on proposal Section 2. High-level vision, Section 3. Evidence-based and demand-led prioritization and Section 7. Country integration</u></p> <p><i>“Evidence of need is clear in sections 1 and 2, but there is limited evidence of codesign or detail on what actual consultation has taken place beyond reference to CGIAR priorities. Specify how stakeholders other than the writing team contributed to codesign. Cross reference: Table 5 Partners and “landscape stakeholders” in Theory of Change; Table 7.2 in section 3; include list of stakeholders consulted. It will be useful to link key partners to specific roles and activities in section 6, for example, the partners providing the land for living landscapes that are the operational units for action research”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We acknowledge that we need to emphasize further how the Program is designed to build on previous co-designed and co-developed work with stakeholders through Initiatives and bilateral grants. For example, the Agroecology Initiative has already engaged with over 5,000 food system actors involving 56 partner organizations across eight countries through a vision-to-action process which has led to context-specific and inclusive transition pathways identified by local stakeholders. This process will be continued and expanded, with a focus on locally driven needs and priorities. • During proposal development, extensive consultations were held with partners and donors, incorporating feedback from various organizations and experts. We will cross-reference text and tables and provide details of partners who have been engaging and will be engaged in the program. The Inception Phase will allow further collaboration with key partners and donors to finalize the workplan in alignment with regional priorities.
<p>Criteria 3. Analysis of comparative advantage of CGIAR in delivering key outputs and outcomes (rather than focus on inputs) necessary for impact and how this has created opportunities for new partnerships.</p> <p><u>Feedback on proposal Section 4. Comparative Advantage</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See response to “Criteria 1” above for a justification of selection of countries. New partners will be identified during the Inception Phase based on needs and priorities. • An analysis of current partners highlights the need for more academic partnerships. To improve coordination with other programs (Climate Action, Sustainable Farming, Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods), partner engagement in target countries and landscapes will be strengthened. Discussions are

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p><i>“The selection of priority countries and linkages across outputs is described but it is not clear why these were prioritized. And ‘NEW’ partnerships are not provided.</i></p> <p><i>The comparative advantage statement of CGIAR in delivering key outputs is clear and would benefit from listing specific partnerships needed to complement areas where CGIAR lacks capacity or capabilities were included. For example, section 6 proposes to work with crops and livestock across many countries, though no mention of CIMMYT or ILRI is made in the comparative or Theory of Change or how those skills will be resourced”.</i></p>	<p>ongoing between CGIAR Centers and IUCN, EcoAgriculture, and others to sign an MoU to enhance collaboration and delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further screening to prioritize activities and outputs will be completed during the Inception Phase.
<p>Criteria 4. Research questions address well defined knowledge gaps and emerging megatrends, with a particular emphasis on climate change, and are supported by underlying hypotheses.</p> <p><u><i>Feedback on proposal Section 2. High-level vision and Section 6. Areas of Work</i></u></p> <p><i>“The research questions are not supported by research hypothesis. Clear linkages to megatrends are well articulated.</i></p> <p><i>Areas of Work: (i) Need to ensure system agronomy approaches suggested match tools and solutions to local conditions and provide comparisons with well tested approaches (conservation agriculture and sustainable intensification) across all demonstration/experimental sites (6.1); (ii) Research incentives for technology adoption and change should be more central; (iii) climate adaptation technologies to be scaled within and between landscapes should be central to the whole program.</i></p> <p><i>6.2 questions are important, define known gaps in understanding, and are critical to the overall success of the program.</i></p> <p><i>Research questions in 6.3 should take advantage of the opportunity to promote startups and small and medium enterprises.</i></p>	<p>The comments on AOW’s research questions will be taken onboard for the Inception Phase, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AoW 1: Matching options with locally specific contexts started during 2022-2024 and will continue. We will provide details on the types of incentives that would be most relevant to stimulate the adoption of improved practices. Focus on incentives and climate change will also be enhanced. • AoW 2. The gaps to be addressed to achieve Program objectives will be further elaborated based on the lessons learned from the Agroecology, Nature-positive, and Livestock and Climate Initiatives. • AoW 3: The promotion of startups and small and medium enterprises started in 2022-2024; we agree that they need to be more prominent in this new Program. • AoW 4. Incentives to assess policies will be elaborated. • AoW 6. Profitability and other ecosystem services will be included as KPIs (already achieved under the Agroecology Initiative); adoption and risk will also be considered.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>6.4 will be critical for identifying incentives to assess policies within a more multidimensional framework.</p> <p>6.5 questions focus on addressing a well-known problem.</p> <p>6.6 could more clearly focus on needs for farmers to be profitable and have the ability to effectively manage risk.</p> <p>6.7 research questions are unclear”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AoW 7: this AoW mainly aims to (a) inform the other AoWs on research priorities based on feedback from national, regional and global engagement and benchmarks set by regional and global processes, and (b) carry out outreach, evidence-based engagement and advocacy, collaboration and cross-regional/country learning. Therefore, research questions were not defined for this AoW.
<p>Criteria 5. Theory of Change with intended outputs, outcomes, and impacts at scale clearly described. Assumptions are documented, causal linkages are clear, especially the role of partners in driving impact through inclusive innovation, and all indicators made explicit.</p> <p><u>Feedback on proposal Section 5. Program-level theory of change</u></p> <p>“Assumptions well documented with clear causal linkages in Theory of Change. There is need to articulate outcomes and associated indicators for resilient landscapes and to provide specific targets on poverty reduction.</p> <p>Consider reducing the number of Areas of Work to make the Program of work focus on MFL, which will make the Theory of Change sections clearer and less repetitive”.</p> <p><u>Feedback on proposal Section 6. Areas of Work</u></p> <p>“Given the assumption that multifunctional landscapes can be effectively managed, Areas of work 2, 3 and 4 will be crucial to the Program’s success. Well written content would benefit from a summary statement integrating across all Areas of Work to lead section 6.</p> <p>Feasibility of funding the management of real-world proof of concepts in Areas of Work 1-2, which will be critical to MFL, should be linked to Area of Work 3 creating self-sustaining business models. Existing business models in carbon, nature-based solution and ecosystem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific targets on poverty reduction will be further articulated during the Inception Phase in consultations with partners and stakeholders. • On reduction of number of AOWs, see above under "Overall Weakness No. 1”. • An improved summary statement integrating the different AoWs will be put together. • We appreciate the comments related to AoW 3 on creating self-sustaining business models through linking with financial institutions and will give thought to how this can be handled. We will also include outputs related to cost-benefit sharing, as well as highlight linkages with AoW 4. • The relations between AoW6 and other AoWs in terms of data- and output-sharing will be elaborated during the Inception Phase as mentioned earlier. • We are keen on better understanding the comment about CGIAR collaboration and its impact on the validity of Section 4 on comparative advantage.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p><i>service markets should be engaged as well as linking this work to “financial institutions” (6.3). For Area of Work 3, there are no outputs/interventions targeted at addressing costs and benefit sharing from the business models implemented at landscape level, which may be addressed in Area of Work 4.</i></p> <p><i>Area of Work 4 could also focus on developing policies that impact gender (Area of Work 5) and education (Area of Work 7) to bring these three themes together into one Area of Work.</i></p> <p><i>Area of Work 6.6 provides tangible outputs that stakeholders may use to understand the impacts of MFL and linkages to data collected from Areas of Work 1, 2 and 3 should be made explicit.</i></p> <p><i>The lack of CGIAR collaboration questions the validity of section 4 on comparative advantage”.</i></p>	
<p>Criteria 6. Research approach and broad methods are fit for purpose, feasible, are innovative and rigorous in data collection and analysis, and make appropriate use of laboratories, field sites, modelling assets, and digital infrastructure (soft and hard).</p> <p><i>Feedback on proposal Section 6. Areas of Work</i></p> <p><i>“As suggested above, identifying key partners for activities will help to ensure non-CGIAR capacity is available to support the delivery of on-ground activities.</i></p> <p><i>Consider systems and integrative/whole farm/landscape dynamic modelling and foresighting techniques to address the lack of evidence on the production approaches to be tested”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On key partners, see response under Criteria 3. • On ‘systems and integrative approaches’ - as highlighted in the proposal, particularly in the description of AoWs 2 and 6, we will employ systems thinking and integrative approaches such as whole farm and landscape dynamic modeling along with foresight techniques to understand linkages, interactions, feedbacks, emergent behavior, trade-offs, and synergies across themes, value chains, and scales. In addition, we will further elaborate the needs for and benefits of these approaches.
<p>Criteria 7. Research design and proposed implementation demonstrates genuine gender and social inclusion in both the research process and in its intended outcomes with explicit linkages to the Gender and Social Inclusion Accelerator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Program describes ambitious action research focusing on gender, social inclusion, and fairness. Next steps in Program planning will consider how to best address gender and social inclusion to achieve specific AoW outcomes. ‘GESI related outcomes’ will be adjusted to highlight how fairness, gender and

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p><u>Feedback on proposal Section 11. Gender and social inclusion</u></p> <p><i>“The outcomes do not clearly highlight how gender will impact MFL. Incorporating a specific example of how gender will be addressed in each Area of Work rather than a separate Area of Work 5 is suggested. Though the Program does provide high level outcomes aiming to advance gender equality and inclusion”.</i></p>	<p>social inclusion will impact the development of ‘equitable’ multifunctional landscapes.</p>
<p>Criteria 8. Anticipated research outputs (knowledge, technical, or institutional advances, specific technologies or products, policy analyses) are described and knowledge/gaps they will fill are evident with a demonstrated focus on quality and impact relevance.</p> <p><u>Feedback on proposal Section 6. Areas of Work</u></p> <p><i>“There will be valuable learnings from research on institutional, policy, collective actions and business approaches to support positive landscape outcomes. However, there are no specific technologies or products proposed in 6.1. The knowledge outputs are defined/described generally, thus not based on the CGIAR definition and categorization of knowledge products. Nevertheless, each Area of Work includes a Table that explicitly describes “outputs and intermediate outcomes,” which are rather general. The knowledge gaps are clarified in each Area of Work as a list of research questions, which are clear for Areas of Work 1-3 and 6”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific innovations/solutions will be defined and co-designed with stakeholders once the areas of implementation are determined. • Knowledge products will be better defined and categorized. • We will work on AoWs 4, 5, and 7 to clarify knowledge gaps.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Criteria 9. Evidence that the Science Program will likely lead to impact at scale through approaches that drive inclusive innovation in research and partnerships, with explicit linkages to other Science Programs, Impact for Scaling, and Accelerators.</p> <p><u>Feedback on Section 7. Country integration, Section 8. Boundaries and linkages with other components of the portfolio and Section 10. Capacity sharing.</u></p> <p><i>“The linkages to other Programs such as Impact for Scaling, and Accelerators are encouraging.</i></p> <p><i>Avoid imposing agricultural production systems conceived for purposes secondary to food production and income on vulnerable farmers.</i></p> <p><i>The Identification and inclusion of key partners in this section provides evidence the program understands who is working in what countries, although there are many gaps.</i></p> <p><i>Summarize “Area of Work” and “Program and Accelerator collaboration” in table 7.2 as it is repetitive.</i></p> <p><i>Connectivity with other initiatives is clearly described in 8”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We note the comment associated with the gaps in the identification and inclusion of key partners. We will generally build on existing partnership assets built through the Initiatives while bringing on board new partners based on the prioritization and comparative advantage exercises as well as interactions with partners during the Inception Phase. • AoW/Program/Accelerator collaboration will be summarized to provide a crisper picture.

Policy Innovations Program

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Comparative advantage is “superficial” (p. 30, 31)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through its strong partnerships with national and regional governments and other partners, including multistakeholder partnerships for water and land governance, CGIAR has a unique comparative advantage and strong track record in influencing institutional reforms and strengthening institutional analytical capacity. For example, through the country program model discussed in AoW 5, CGIAR has worked with partners to help design and implement the Agricultural Transformation Agency in Ethiopia. The fundamentals of this model, including performance-based targets for clear transformation objectives embedded within cross-ministerial delivery units, has been replicated in several African countries. In several other countries which have undergone major decentralization reforms (e.g. Ghana, Nepal), CGIAR has offered critical analytical support to government partners about how public sector institutions could be re-structured to bolster agricultural service provision. • CGIAR’s expertise in social science policy and institutional research combined with technical agricultural research is key to enable uptake of agricultural technologies and contributes to CGIAR’s comparative advantage over organizations that solely focus on technological innovation and extension services. Research on institutions related to food, land and water is an area in which CGIAR has a very well-established body of work carried out over 20+ years. Three critical activities can build on this to advance science under the Policy Innovations Program: 1) build strong multi-country comparative analysis, scaling and sharing insights (on governance, political economy, etc.) across major FLW system geographies in collaboration with the Scaling Program; 2) build on existing, embedded and, in some cases, historical partnerships with governments, academic and civil society in multiple geographies; 3) conduct high-quality social science research (such as policy modelling, political economy analysis, and causal impact evaluation) complementary to the more technical agricultural research. • During the Inception Phase, a more elaborate comparative advantage analysis will be developed, including details of the areas of weakness of CGIAR, alternative providers of research on policies and institutions, and partnerships that will be established and/or strengthened with advanced research institutions. For adoption

	<p>and impact analysis, for instance, the selection of partnerships will build on SPIA's "matching" exercises, whereby CGIAR Centers were matched with advanced research institutions which possess scientific leadership in specific topics to jointly implement SPIA-funded studies.</p>
<p>Coordination and collaboration across AoWs (p.31, 32)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ISDC suggestions on better integration and collaboration across the AoWs (including a possible realignment of AoWs and/or selected parts of them) will be taken into consideration. As a first step towards cross-AoW integration, selected demand from national, regional and international partners will be prioritized to develop a cross-AoW approach to selected value chains, topics, and countries. Building on ISDC's recommendation to emphasize macroeconomic and GESI aspects, candidate topics for Program-wide integrated analysis across AoWs could be: (i) repurposing of subsidies; and (ii) the role of youth in food system transformation. The rapid response mechanism will also provide an opportunity to foster cross-AoW collaboration. • During the Inception Phase, the risk of duplication of efforts across AoWs will be assessed and measures will be taken to clarify respective responsibilities, foster synergies (e.g. between modelling approaches), and promote efficiency and effectiveness. • About ISDC's specific comment on the role of AoW 4, we would like to point out that AOW 4 serves as a home for research on water policy and its links with food, land and energy policies, and will therefore help address ISDC's recommendation to strengthen research on sustainable water use, conservation and management policies in the CGIAR Portfolio. • Regarding the coordination and integration of the modeling tools and activities in AoW 1 and AoW 4: the models used in AoW 1 cover food, land and water (river basin) systems, as well as the energy sector and environmental outcomes. AoW 4 uses core water, biodiversity, and energy systems models (e.g., SWAT, Pwyr, IMPACT-WATER, Agro-biodiversity index) and in some cases links these to economic modeling systems (IFPRI's IMPACT, CGE models, etc.). In addition to these technical differences, the Foresight and NEXUS Gains Initiatives had different focus geographies, making it difficult to harness synergies. The Policy Innovations Program will unlock new opportunities to combine modeling efforts across the two AoWs,

	<p>resulting in enhanced modelling apparatus and reduced model development and maintenance costs. The 2025 workplan will include piloting new joint research and policy engagement activities across AoW 1 and AoW 4. This will allow us to assess the potential benefits of further integrating modeling tools and teams versus the risk of losing momentum in the respective teams’ work programs.</p>
<p>AoW specific feedback (p.31-33)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for bringing up the importance of codesign for policy uptake and institutional capacity development. The lack of mention of codesign as an approach for modeling (AoW 1) is an oversight in the proposal. Indeed, a strong level of co-design has gone into model development and the model-based studies conducted under the Foresight, Nexus Gains, and NPS Initiatives. For example, country models (RIAPA) are typically developed together with National Statistical Agencies and researchers from national institutions. Country model scenarios are also designed together with national stakeholders, including government counterparts. This process of engagement and co-design has proved very successful. Another example of co-design is the IMPACT modeling work, which is co-created by all CGIAR Centers. In addition, country variants of the IMPACT model are being developed together with national research institutes and government agencies in Brazil, China, and India. Nexus Gains has also built collaborations through co-design of models used in river basins. Close collaboration between all AOWs will ensure that co-creation of models and other tools will become a signature feature of the Policy Innovations Program. • We agree that AoW 2 needs to be strengthened and better integrated with other AoWs and we appreciate ISDC’s specific suggestions on how to do this, such as linking AoW 2 with the investment decision making under AoW 3 by testing hypotheses deriving from the political economy analysis. AoW 2 will also generate new adoption and impact parameters for modeling economy-wide or cross-sectoral outcomes under AoW 1 and AoW 4. Building on that, AoW 2 can directly support the investment prioritization and rapid response analysis conducted by AoW 1 by providing (rapid) value chain-specific “deep dive” assessments. Linking AoW 2 more strongly to other AoWs and related demand from partners will ensure that the questions addressed by this AoW are relevant and inform national, regional, and global policies. During the Inception Phase, we will better specify the description of AoW 2 methods and the underlying theory of change to ensure research quality.

	<p>This AoW will address the market and policy failures that were identified by the Rethinking Food Markets initiative as holding back value chain development, as well as on other recent research. In addition to market and value chain analyses, we expect AoW 2 to contribute rigorous impact assessment for evaluating interventions to address key market failures and social policies for protecting the poorest and most vulnerable, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Review pieces and diagnostics that apply these findings to address on-demand requests for policy advice, as well as methodological work on improving the cost-effectiveness and external validity of impact evaluation methods (without sacrificing internal validity), will contribute to more evidence-based programming by national stakeholders and scaling agents for CGIAR innovations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We acknowledge that the methods section in AoW 4 will benefit from further elaboration during the Inception Phase. We also agree that a clearer delineation is needed on the intermediate outcomes resulting from AoW 4 versus those that are expected from collaborative efforts across AoWs. Spelling this out will help clarify the unique contributions of AoW 4 as well as the synergies between AoW 4 and other AoWs.• ISDC’s concerns about AoW 6 (potential overlaps with other AoWs and potential lack of adequate resources) are gratefully acknowledged. Building on ISDC’s suggestion to explore “the potential learning from and interaction between institutions engaged in high-level planning across countries”, we are considering placing a stronger emphasis on the cross-country-learning component (6.6.3.1). An increased focus on cross-country learning could also help coordination and collaboration across AoWs and with other Programs and Accelerators. We will also consider how the policy advisory functions (6.6.3.2), multi-stakeholder platforms (6.6.3.3) and capacity sharing activities (6.6.3.4) can be linked and/or integrated with the other AoWs.
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Better Diets and Nutrition Program

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Actionable Recommendation #1: Strengthen the demand-led prioritization section, making clear the extent of external consultation and the rationale for country prioritization.</p> <p>Key shortcomings and overall weakness of the proposal (1/10): The extent to which prioritization of the research agenda was informed by demand expressed by stakeholders (beyond CGIAR) is not clear, and similarly the rationale for the choice of specific countries for focused work is unclear...For example, why Vietnam where there has been longstanding investment and the indicators are mostly good, rather than other countries where the need may be greater?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inception Phase will be a critical step in the co-creation process. The Program’s constituent Initiatives have built healthy working relationships and nurtured them into partnerships conducive to meaningful dialogue which will provide a strong foundation for this new Program. The numerous consultations held during proposal design as well as the additional consultations to be held during the Inception Phase will be documented in the Inception report. • We will use the Inception Phase to further prioritize the 11 target countries more closely. Prioritization criteria will be documented in the Inception report. • Vietnam is an ideal case to study how food systems transformation can be supported by government commitment. It is one of the few LMIC that has demonstrated a commitment to changing its food system towards more sustainable production and healthier diets, as described in a national action plan approved by the Prime Minister and currently under implementation. Vietnam has also become a regional and global reference point as a leader in food systems transformation, providing an opportunity for CGIAR science to be scaled via South-South collaboration.
<p>Actionable Recommendation #2: Bolster climate change and other sustainability aspects throughout, including at Areas of Work workplans level.</p> <p>Key shortcomings and overall weakness of the proposal (2/10): The focus is on sustainable and healthy diets; climate change and other sustainability aspects receive too little attention in the proposal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for this suggestion. Climate and sustainability considerations will be bolstered, for example through assessing the environmental footprint of current diets and modeling how changes in diets will change that footprint in selected countries (AoW 1) and using national food-based dietary guidelines as an entry point for integrating nutrition, health, and environmental sustainability (AoW 3).

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the Inception Phase, collaboration will be planned with other Science Programs such as Breeding for Tomorrow and Genebanks, Multifunctional Landscapes, and Climate Action to jointly analyze potential trade-offs and synergies between planetary and human health traits (AoW 4) and the effects of bringing in a consumer and diet focus on business models for agroecological production (AoW 1-4).
<p>Actionable Recommendation #3: Bolster other social inclusion aspects throughout, including at Areas of Work workplan level.</p> <p>Key shortcomings and overall weakness of the proposal (9/10): While gender is well emphasized in the proposal, other aspects of social exclusion such as disability, indigeneity, etc., receive little attention.</p>	<p>The extent to which other sources of exclusion and disadvantage are important varies across countries and contexts. Consultations with stakeholders during the Inception Phase will allow to identify priority areas for research and action.</p>
<p>Actionable Recommendation #4: Revisit Area of Work 1, placing consumers more centrally into the Theory of Change and explaining more clearly how food environments can be realistically changed and transformation catalyzed.</p>	<p>The extent to which consumers can be put at the center of efforts to transform food systems is context-specific. We will refine and strengthen the TOC during the Inception Phase. As part of this process, the evidence base on consumer-centered behavior change and consumer-centered design with respect to food environments will be incorporated.</p>
<p>Actional Recommendation #5: Harmonize and leverage overlapping Areas of Work (for example, on MSMEs and governance systems), and Areas of Work 2-3.</p> <p>Key shortcomings and overall weakness of the proposal (5/10): Areas of Work 2-3: There would appear to be significant overlaps between the agendas of these two Areas of Work, and it would be helpful to know how they interface and how synergies are maximized.</p>	<p>During the Inception Phase, as part of revising all the TOCs, we will look more closely at how to address the perceived overlaps between AoWs. The respective responsibilities of AoW 2 and AoW 3 will be clearly delineated, and mechanisms will be put in place to maximize synergies, including identification of common areas of collaboration and learning. For example, the AoW 2 and AoW 3 teams will work together to ensure that lessons learned in AoW 3 are applied in AoW 2 and vice versa, while keeping country specific dynamics in mind. In addition, TOC revisions will include clarifying the assumptions and geographies and identifying key indicators. We will re-frame the</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>centrality of consumers in the AoW 1 ToC and highlight the linkages with other Programs working on climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable production systems to show how these linkages are critical to ensure both the production and consumption of sustainable healthy diets.</p>
<p>Actionable Recommendation #6: Revisit Area of Work 4, with indication of demand, potential cost-effectiveness and co-creation aspects of the new biofortified varieties proposed.</p> <p>Key shortcomings and overall weakness of the proposal (7/10): Area of Work 4 does not provide much indication of demand for and potential cost-effectiveness of the proposed new technologies. It also does not indicate whether and how the proposed technologies were co-created with country and other external stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address demand, cost-effectiveness, and stakeholder co-creation in the development and deployment of new biofortified crops, a strategic stakeholder meeting (including country-level stakeholders, researchers, and private sector partners) will be convened during the Inception Phase to (1) assess the current biofortification landscape, (2) identify consumer and business demand for biofortified crops, and (3) review ex-ante evidence of the cost-effectiveness of proposed crops in target geographies. The outputs of this meeting will ensure that research and interventions are tailored to meet demand and co-create a strategic pathway to biofortification research that delivers impactful, economically viable solutions. This meeting will also provide a foundation for a transdisciplinary community of practice (see AoW 4 ToC). • Close collaboration will be established with Breeding for Tomorrow and Genebanks (especially its AoW 1 on Market Intelligence) to plan for rigorous analysis of demand for biofortified and nutrition-enhanced staples based on the nutritional needs of the target populations in the market segments. These staples will be integrated into target product profiles (following a co-creation process between CGIAR and NARES and experts and stakeholders, see the Breeding for Tomorrow proposal) that will guide the breeding pipelines to serve the identified market segments with future biofortified and health-enhancing staple varieties. This will be reflected in the detailed 2025 workplan.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Actionable Recommendation #7: Consider including some material early on that captures the work of the 2022-24 initiatives and how that leads on to the proposed work.</p> <p>Key shortcomings and overall weakness of the proposal (8/10): There is not a sufficient up-front description of what has been undertaken and achieved by the multiple 2022-24 Initiatives and how that leads on to the proposed Program.</p>	<p>During the Inception Phase, summative reports from the constituent Initiatives and Nutrition Impact Area Platform will be compiled, and a summary included in the Inception report. CGIAR’s Science Week (in April 2025) will also provide an opportunity to share the progress made by the Initiatives and Nutrition Platform in the context of the new Program.</p>
<p>Key shortcomings and overall weakness of the proposal (7/10): Area of Work 5: The importance of leveraging complementary systems to maximize the potential of food systems to impact diets and nutrition is appreciated. Nevertheless, it is worth keeping in mind the centrality of a food systems focus for this funding, the comparative advantage of the CGIAR and to ensure limited resources are not spread too thinly.</p>	<p>Food system actions alone are insufficient to deliver impacts on healthy diets. Thus, it seems appropriate to leverage an already robust pipeline of research to meet policy demands for insights on multisectoral interventions and how they can help tackle malnutrition. Combining limited pooled funding with potentially expanding bilateral funding will create synergies and provide robust systems-linked evidence.</p>
<p>Criteria 9: The Bangladesh example provides a good illustration as to how impacts can be achieved at scale through sustained multisectoral investment. It is less clear how the program aims to achieve large scale impact in countries where only a couple of Areas of Work are operational. Also, achieving impact at scale requires country stability and sustained commitment from national budgets—which target countries can offer this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In countries where only a few AoWs are operational, the focus will be on integration and synergy of efforts by supporting and strengthening existing country coordination mechanisms. Using capacity sharing as a cross-cutting goal, learning exchanges and cross-fertilization will be facilitated between the different AoWs. • With regards to the comment about country stability, one way to maintain a stable agenda is to build and maintain partnerships across diverse types of partners, which has been a high priority of the constituent Initiatives and will be continued under this Program. • (Also see the response above to the feedback about prioritization)

Breeding for Tomorrow Program

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Breeding Resources and Data Quality Risks: Sharing breeding resources and IT platforms is well-intentioned but raises concerns around data quality and security. With more users outside CGIAR contributing data there is a risk of data degradation, incorrect entries, or even misuse.</p>	<p>Integral to the use of shared data platforms is quality and security. Platforms of this nature are not new to CGIAR Centres nor CGIAR-partner breeding networks; we will continue implementation work and continue to prioritize data quality (work on and support of automated and human data quality control and inbuilt and human data curation), security and data privacy/ownership, aligned with CGIAR, Centre and partner, policies, procedures, guidelines and network membership agreements. Change management and training are integral activities which will continue, as well as technical backstopping to users from CGIAR Centres and external partners on data management and IT security. This will minimize risks associated with data integrity/security breaches. A comprehensive risk assessment will identify potential threats to data quality, security, and platform adoption, prioritizing mitigation strategies.</p>
<p>The Theory of Change in fig. 1 is effective in discussing the overarching goals of this proposal and the intended effects on society. However, the details are not clear. For instance, the links between outputs, outcomes, and impacts are not clear, with the large arrows from “Areas of Work” to “High-Level Outputs” and “2030 Outcomes” to “Impact Areas” being too unspecific. In addition, integration with other Programs is missing. Fortunately, Table 2 helps to clarify many of these problems as it includes Outcome Statements, Partners, Assumptions, and Indicators. In addition, the individual Area’s of Work Theory of Changes add clarity to the overall Theory of Change, as discussed on pages 60-64.</p>	<p>Yes, given the nature and diverse scope of B4T, the overall TOC at the Program level does not include copious amounts of details (to maintain high-level clarity). The Program TOC presents how the intermediate and 2030 outcomes contribute to each other with dedicated arrows. High level outputs have arrows to show which outcomes they contribute despite the linkages between high level output and outcomes are defined at the AoW level with corresponding assumptions. We have prioritized two impact areas (marked with a star) to identify the two main pathways for generating evidence. The detailed pathways, linkages, and integration points with other initiatives are fully elaborated in Table 2 (pages 60-64) when you go through the TOCs for each of the AOWs collectively.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>The proposal’s focus on standardized crop outputs poses risks of monoculture with all the attendant risks. It should consider how to incorporate more diversified crop varieties tailored to specific environmental and market considerations. Leveraging both generative AI and analytical AI could allow CGIAR to support polyculture leading to greater resilience. Smallholder farmers could then command higher price premiums by offering more specialized as well as diverse crops.</p>	<p>Breeding networks and seed systems are driven by market demand and opportunities rather than breeding programs. Information on species and variety usage, and their potential to improve farming systems, will be gathered using a transdisciplinary approach involving a broad range of stakeholders. These activities will be central to the Market Intelligence work, which currently targets 21 major food crops and is expanding to additional species, including neglected crops. This effort will involve collaborations and access to core breeding and seed services.</p>
<p>Proposal section 2 and 3: More details could have been given regarding different funding strategies, as well as the “gender-intentional systems approach” and the “viable pathways out of conflict and migration.”</p> <p>There is an emphasis on LMIC which is appropriate, including geopolitical instability-related challenges. The alignment with the Strategy could be made more prominent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding strategies will respond to the funding landscape and prioritization processes. • The initiative recognizes that viable pathways out of conflict and migration require integrated approaches that combine food security, economic opportunity, and social cohesion. This includes supporting resilient local food systems and agricultural livelihoods in conflict-affected areas. Alignment with the strategy will be elucidated through the prioritization process and the activities and deliverables that result from prioritization.
<p>This Program targets “impactful geographics and user needs,” seeking to identify areas with the lowest 35% impact and reallocate these resources to the top 25% impact. However, more acknowledgements could be given to the crucial role of the NARES and farmers and their local knowledge which should be integrated with modern tools to enhance adoption. While targeting “the highest scale for potential impact,” care must be taken to include the most vulnerable and poor. More detail could be given to the methods of the implementation of “co-creation and co-testing.”</p>	<p>NARES and SMEs are integral to breeding networks’ success and ability to deliver. Our approach recognizes NARES as implementers and key knowledge holders and co-creators in the innovation process. Their deep understanding of local farming systems, traditional practices, and community needs is essential to our work. Some of our commodities’ co-creation process include regular joint planning sessions, integration of indigenous knowledge systems with modern breeding tools, and participatory research methods that capture farmers’ experiential knowledge. Breeding product concepts and knowledge moves through design stages in line with customer driven approaches. This ensures the voice from next-stage users is</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>incorporated into processes. Moving from global and regional levels, these actors together with other local stakeholders are fundamental to the assessment and adoption of tools. Vulnerability, including poverty, impact of climate change, and hidden hunger are considered in prioritization processes. When targeting areas for highest potential impact, we employ specific safeguards and metrics to ensure the most vulnerable are not left behind, including explicit inclusion criteria for resource-poor farmers and marginalized communities in fragile contexts. The capacity development and strengthening of NARES will enable their adoption of proposed interventions.</p>
<p>The comparative advantage of CGIAR is well articulated and includes its global research infrastructure, publicly available breeding materials and vast genetic diversity in germplasm banks, and access to advanced breeding technologies. This is a general comparative advantage, however, and may not apply to each individual case. Specific opportunities should be continuously monitored to ensure this comparative advantage is leveraged.</p>	<p>Thank you for your thoughtful feedback on the comparative advantage of B4T in delivering key outputs and outcomes. We are aware our assessment of comparative advantage was carried out at the Area of Work level, and in some cases at the High-Level Output level, within a given Area of Work (rather than at the crop, food system, geographic, or business level). We recognize that comparative advantages are dynamic and will implement regular assessment mechanisms to monitor and leverage these advantages as contexts evolve, ensuring they remain relevant and impactful at both system and individual case levels. The rationale was that all CGAIR Programs undertook the same comparative advantage methodology. In Genetic Innovation, the TRANSFORM Initiative, with partners, undertook over 100 <i>Breeding Program Assessments</i> on partners' breeding programs to co-identify specific strengths and weaknesses in their programs and allow CGAIR to collaboratively work them based on their sources of comparative advantage. These assessments will be continued in B4T.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>More clarity could be given to how the transformational partnerships will be implemented to advance the seed sector’s policies and practices.</p>	<p>During the Inception Phase, we will provide additional nuance about transformational partnerships’ (mainly CGIAR-NARES breeding networks within the remit of B4T) implementation and how spillovers to the seed sector policies, guidelines, and practices are delivered for maximum impact.</p>
<p>The research questions and hypotheses are clearly stated but could be improved by being more quantitative and giving clarity to how they can be tested. For instance, the research question in the Program-level Theory of Change as shown in fig. 1 seems to be too general and not clearly actionable. For example, “How do breeding network actors innovate and strengthen their research...?” is answered with “Breeding network actors increase uptake of quality products in priority market segments.” In addition, potential negative outcomes and time frames could be discussed.</p>	<p>How to address and answer the research questions with KPIs will be a key part of the Implementation process. If needed more specific research questions and the research required to answer them will be developed during the implementation process as funding and prioritization allow/guide. In developing and addressing research questions potential negative outcomes and timeframes will be identified.</p>
<p>1. MARKET INTELLIGENCE is a robust and important area with tremendous impact potential. The integration of foresight modeling for climate, crops, and pests/diseases enhances its capacity to effectively target, design and deliver products. Areas that could be included are substitute meat, crops that support the biome and urban climate-controlled farming. Does a focus on maximum ROI risk reducing the benefits for the poor?</p> <p>2. ACCELERATED BREEDING is a major strength of this Program. Is there a reason (other than policy restrictions imposed by a group of funders) for not including GMOs? Maybe not now but what about in the future when they might become a necessity? Farmer organizations are not listed as partners in the PARTNER/TRANSFORM high-level output.</p> <p>3. INCLUSIVE DELIVERY. This is a strong point in this proposal. Missing, however, is the dimension of linking smallholder farmers to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the effectiveness of our Program, several key areas have been identified for focused efforts and strategic development. Each area has specific goals and follow-up actions designed to enhance our overall impact and drive progress toward our objectives as follows: • Market Intelligence: Focuses on being forward-looking, capturing assumptions about significant changes (like dietary shifts and urban farming) and their impact on future crop markets. Prioritizes understanding smallholder farmer needs, informal markets, and opportunities for vulnerable groups, ensuring inclusive development. ROI measures development outcomes per dollar spent, aligned with CGIAR Impact Areas. • Accelerated Breeding: Utilizes precision genetics, GMOs, and gene editing to address market and farmer needs. Collaborates with

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>markets. Lack of market access by the most vulnerable farmers can result in constraint for variety adoption.</p> <p>4. The BREEDING RESOURCES Theory of Change is very well articulated but might hold risks (see section 10).</p> <p>5. ENABLE. It is not clear why ENABLE is a necessary part of this proposal. The added value and essential contributions of ENABLE should be made more explicit.</p>	<p>key partners (farmer organizations, universities) to define breeding priorities and conduct on-farm trials. Emphasizes the importance of stewardship and good practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Delivery: Works with partners to improve seed systems and market access. Builds on positive experiences involving traders and aggregators in seed supply chains. Provides innovation packages to partners and end users in collaboration with other programs. • Breeding Resources: Involves risk assessment and mitigation strategies, formulated and updated as activities are defined, ensuring effective project and program management. • Enable: Addresses the need for high-level functions to improve collaboration across breeding domains and partners. Focuses on cohesive development, alignment, and coordination of enablers at the system level while tactical implementation remains with specific areas of work.
<p>However, a more explicitly farmer-centered approach would be desirable, recognizing the value of local knowledge alongside modern tools to effectively target improved crops and varieties. Perhaps a little more experimental details could have been included.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NARES and SMEs, together with local actors including farmer groups and processors are integral to the breeding networks. Knowledge from local farmer and consumer contexts is key to the initial development of market opportunity information and captured through national stakeholder discussions and product advancement meetings. This is in addition to leveraging knowledge and feedback from seed systems and through partnerships with the Scaling for Impact, Gender and Social Inclusion, and Sustainable Farming Programs into the initial formulation of product concepts. The shift to earlier on-farm testing of products additionally brings in earlier input of farmer feedback into germplasm development, bringing in scaled local knowledge to the product development process in a more aligned, inclusive, and data driven manner. Through early-stage

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>field testing, farmers' experiential knowledge directly shapes breeding decisions and variety development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the Market Intelligence and Seed Equal Initiatives, the Market Intelligence and Inclusive Delivery Areas of Work will to engage with farmers, processors, and consumers to gather information to better prioritize breeding investments and clarify gaps in current market intelligence.
<p>By lifting those who have been historically excluded there could well be a pushback from those who may feel as if they are losing their relative positions of power, wealth, respect and overall dominance. There is evidence suggesting that the rise of extreme political movements is partially driven by a perceived loss of power and status among groups who historically held social, economic and political dominance. Despite the unjustness of this stance, it would be well for this proposal to include consideration of how to deal with such situations. Additionally, CGIAR should have an active “influencer strategy” to support their work and to shape acceptance.</p>	<p>While it is concerning that historically powerful groups push extreme political movements in response to their perceived loss of power, it falls outside the Program’s scope to deal with this. Conversely, those who have been historically marginalised also have a tendency to politically rise, in response to a lack of opportunities, food, basic necessities, etc. By providing farmers with more options of more stable (in terms of climate, yield, etc.) and healthy food, we are contributing to meeting basic needs, helping prevent social uprisings.</p>
<p>Perhaps too much concentration on building standardized crops for rapid growth and expansion, which could result in certain alleles becoming too dominant in a monoculture leading to susceptibility to diseases, climate changes etc. Rather use a more resilient approach using a variety of similar traits but from various sources leading to greater crop diversity. Stronger farmer participation in all stages of crop improvement could strengthen this.</p>	<p>The population improvement breeding approach over time ensures equilibrium of allelic frequencies and maintains genetic diversity. Gene stacking/pyramiding is another approach followed by the CG breeders that ensures durability of resistance to various biotic and abiotic stresses. Moreover, this is addressed through the diverse participatory breeding approaches that are already in place along several phases of breeding pipelines and will be built on during the Inception Phase, where we will carefully seek additional entry points to gather the insights and needed of farmers, both female and male.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>The impact of scale factor is listed and explained through various examples. The Program works with 107 countries in a market-driven approach that is likely to lead to higher adoption. It will expand its coverage in the revised Portfolio to include vegetable crops, neglected species, tree and agroforestry, and animal breeds. Linkages include Better Diets and Nutrition Program, Multifunctional Landscapes and Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Food Programs. The question is, how to assure these linkages? CGIAR could benefit from the introduction of three models of scaling: scaling up, scaling out and scaling deep. It could explore how to foster all three to enhance their impacts.</p>	<p>To facilitate scaling, and work with other Programs, in addition to sharing funding and collaborating on deliverables, currently CGIAR is outlining principles for fostering inter-Program/Accelerator work and collaboration. This is to ensure this cross collaboration is deeply rooted in the way we work and becomes a part of the culture.</p>
<p>It is important to address what is new in this Program, as well as how it builds on previous Initiatives. What successes are being built upon and how will this Program help in this process? Continuation of what has gone before is important, and if mistakes were made to ensure they are not repeated. On p. 6, the last paragraph details some of the improvements the program aims to achieve. However, to do so, the section starting on p. 60 (Boundaries and linkages with other components of the Portfolio) will need to be strongly adhered to. This will ensure the linkages lead to specific actions. It would be important to do this if we don't want to be facing the same or similar problems in 10 years' time.</p>	<p>B4T builds on the work accomplished in the Initiatives especially the baseline of current market segments and Target Product Profiles. The new areas addressed by this Program include a forward-looking view on what crop market systems will be required in future and how these crop market segments fit in future cropping systems. Strengthening CGIAR-NARES partnerships and adding more players (particularly SMEs and advanced research institutes, such as Universities) to these networks will be a key component of this Program. Integrating new technologies such as AI to help understand the future and identify new market segments is another key new area.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Support and empower the Breeding Networks. Continue advocating Advanced Breeding Technologies integrating cutting-edge ones such as AI, allele mining, genomic tools, and advanced digital infrastructure such as GloMIP.</p> <p>Always bear in mind the importance of aligning with national breeding targets as this can contribute to global food security and economic sustainability for smallholder farmers, particularly in the designated regions (LMIC).</p>	<p>The Program will continue its strong engagement with partners, through Aide Memoire events (that help dictate the overall direction of partnership engagement between the CGAIR breeding and NARES partners) and through close work based on Breeding Program Assessments (elucidating sources of comparative advantage) with the CGAIR-NARES-SME breeding networks and developing network agreements; Moreover, in defining new products for breeding, Market Intelligence and Accelerated Breeding will engage with national partners on their priorities through structured national and regional product design and advancement meetings to ensure alignment with national and regional strategies.</p>
<p>The use of modern data collection methods, modeling and analysis techniques can lead to substantial advances in agricultural development improving productivity and sustainability.</p>	<p>Use of modern breeding tools and advocacy for which tools to use where is part of the continuation of breeding optimization work. Where tool use is in demand and can be scaled breeding support is prepared to broker services (internal and external) to meet capability and capacity needs enabling networks to access the tools needed to deliver candidate varieties to the seed system.</p>

Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods Program

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Codesign: (1) Include more concrete examples of stakeholder codesign and feedback integration to strengthen the demand-driven approach. (2) Additionally, alignment with regional policy frameworks, such as the Blue Economy Agenda in Africa, would ensure that the Program meets local and regional demands effectively.</p>	<p>(1) Co-design is a central component of SAAF. SAAF builds upon the co-design and partnerships established under the Initiatives, and further investment in co-design will be prioritised, particularly for new geographies. Co-design processes will be further addressed during the inception period.</p> <p>(2) Alignment with regional frameworks, including Africa’s Blue Economy Agenda, will be strengthened by mapping Program components to policy priorities and collaborating with regional and national bodies to ensure the program meets local demands effectively.</p>
<p>Geographic focus: Expand geographic and programmatic scope, particularly in underrepresented regions like Central and Southern Africa, which will require additional prioritization in the 20 focus countries in the proposal.</p>	<p>Geographic focus of the Program to be further defined during the inception period, including consideration of the revised comparative advantage analysis for better regional representation with additional consideration for Central and Southern Africa.</p>
<p>AoW integration: While the Areas of Work are comprehensive, more integration across them is recommended, particularly between Productivity+ and other areas like One Health and nutrition.</p>	<p>Integration between AoWs, including Productivity + and One Health, is a high priority for SAAF, with all Program outcomes being achieved through the efforts of two or more AoWs. Modalities for achieving this integration, such as working on common sites, will be further elaborated during the inception period.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Research questions: (1) The broad scope of the research presents challenges in addressing all gaps effectively. A more focused approach, targeting region-specific gaps and underrepresented issues like gender equity, would enhance the Program’s relevance. (2) Furthermore, while the proposal addresses environmental degradation, it could provide more detail on specific ecological challenges and how the research will mitigate these impacts. (3) It is important to indicate how Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) will be taken care of in the implementation of SAAF across countries and regions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) SAAF research will be contextualised to address regional and local issues, whilst remaining within SAAF’s defined scope of work, based on focal geographies and animal and aquatic systems, which will be refined during the Inception Phase. (2) Different animal and aquatic food systems have different effects on the environment. In the Inception Phase we will ensure workplans include assessing the contribution of different production systems to environmental degradation, identification of the most cost-effective solutions to prevent emissions, minimize environmental degradation or support resource rehabilitation, and to mitigate risks. (3) The SAAF program will comply with international frameworks, such as the Nagoya Protocol, and relevant national laws on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS), by obtaining prior informed consent (PIC) from relevant authorities, establishing mutually agreed terms (MAT) with stakeholders, and ensuring equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and traditional knowledge.
<p>Market system, Policy Solutions, and Scaling AoW (1) Specific details on the implementation of market systems and scaling are lacking. (2) Area of Work 4 on policy would benefit by considering a wider set of policies that affect animal and aquatic systems, e.g., land tenure and its impact on pastoral livestock productivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Following the research for development pathway toward scaling, the implementation of market systems innovations will be preceded by market systems diagnosis. Market-related innovations will be co-designed and tested while Scaling will build on the diagnosis phases for specific value chains and geographies (some already started under the initiatives and bi-lateral projects), stakeholder engagement and evidence generation. (2) Norms, rules, regulations, and institutional constructs underpinning performance and inclusion in animal and aquatic food markets will be considered in the analysis the enabling environment. More specifically, with respect to the land tenure

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>issues, models promoting cooperative arrangements, multiple uses of land and water, community management of pastoral land or ponds will be further explored in relevant contexts.</p>
<p>Digital and Data Systems AoW. Area of Work 6 seems relatively nascent in development and somewhat more exploratory and is vague in its approach. That is ok but it could be strengthened by better conveying the understanding of current needs and opportunities in this area.</p>	<p>Digital and Data Systems is a new AoW and as part of its early work it will further explore needs and opportunities in this area. This will build on the methodologies developed in the AquaData Work Package of the Aquatic Food Initiative and will be thoroughly documented as part of the Inception Phase.</p>
<p>Research approach. (1) The proposal demonstrates a rigorous approach, but greater integration of data systems across work areas would improve coherence and impact. (2) We suggest that certain methods, particularly around breeding programs and genomic resources, could be more tailored to specific regional contexts</p>	<p>(1) The Data and Digital Solutions AoW will co-ordinate integration of data systems across the AoW. Modalities for achieving this will be explored during the Inception Phase.</p> <p>(2) Methods, such as breeding programs and genomic resources, will be tailored to specific regional contexts as part of the co-design process to which SAAF is heavily committed.</p>
<p>Gender and social inclusion. While the proposal highlights inclusive approaches, there is room for improvement in ensuring these aspects are fully operationalized across all Areas of Work. More explicit strategies for addressing the needs of marginalized groups—beyond women and youth—are needed, including disabled populations, refugees, and people living in extreme poverty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inclusion is intended to be a central component of each AoW, with the Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion (GYSI) AoW leading this area of research and coordinating the integration of inclusion and equity analysis across the other AoWs. Strategies to achieve this will be explored and documented during the Inception Phase. Investment in this will also be prioritized and aligned with the work achieved by the GYSI Accelerator. • SAAF has used the term ‘women, youth and marginalized groups’ throughout the proposal with marginalized groups inclusive of disabled populations, refugees, and people living in extreme poverty.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Research outputs. (1) more clarity on how these outputs will be disseminated and scaled across regions. (2) Productivity+, more emphasis on diverse species and varietal selection—particularly in aquaculture—would enhance its impact. (3) Ensuring that outputs are relevant to regional contexts and that lessons are shared across countries and regions will be key to achieving widespread and scalable results.</p>	<p>(1) The SAAF Program will implement a structured dissemination plan to scale research outputs across regions, leveraging partnerships, digital platforms, and the Scaling for Impact Program.</p> <p>(2) Attention will be paid to diversity of species and varietal selection during the SAAF planning undertaken during the Inception Phase.</p> <p>(3) SAAF will ensure regional relevance via co-design. Lesson sharing will be achieved through regional hubs, South-South collaborations, participatory demonstration and evaluation, and workshops for scalable, and other modalities as further defined during the Inception Phase.</p>
<p>Impact at scale. The proposal could provide more detail on how lessons learned will be shared and adapted across regions to ensure that scaling strategies are context-specific and effective.</p>	<p>SAAF will work with Scaling for Impact to develop approaches for capturing and sharing learning lessons on scaling approaches, and ensuring that scaling strategies are context-specific and effective. Modalities for achieving this will be determined during the Inception Phase.</p>
<p>Addressing sustainability. Two important areas for consideration in SAAF are how livestock and aquatic species are integrated into farming systems that include cropping and the issue of resource management in pastoral systems. Both areas are critical for the sustainability (a key word in the Program name) of livestock and aquatic production. Without this context, the program will appear to be lacking in the sustainable element of SAAF.</p>	<p>While crop-livestock and crop-aquatic production systems were already integral to the Initiatives mapped into SAAF, the Program will leverage learnings to support crop-livestock-aquatic system integration. Similar resource management in pastoral systems will continue to be addressed, building on initiative learnings. Further, as part of the Inception Phase SAAF will consolidate linkages with other Programs, particularly Sustainable Farming, Multifunctional Landscapes and Climate Action, to ensure all critical farming systems aspects are considered.</p>

Sustainable Farming Program

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>An area needing further consideration is how the proposal describes highly diverse farmers and farming practices as relatively homogenous and in need of supply-side solutions from experts. While there is some mention of codesign and the role of farmer-facing services and support organizations as the primary mechanism for effecting change, many entries do not sufficiently emphasize farmers (and their service suppliers) as real partners. Additionally, there is an assumption that farmer-facing services will readily adopt new bundles and technologies, but this needs further unpacking and detailing.</p>	<p>The principle of co-creation with farmers and other key stakeholders has been used during proposal design and will be emphasized during the elaboration of annual work plans. Co-creation methodologies to involve farmers, service providers and other actors of the value chains will be used in all AoWs. Methodologies to determine farmer typology to design targeted interventions will be used to adequately address the needs of different types of farmers. Co-creation will be particularly monitored by AoW 7 (System Integration through Co-creation), which will emphasize farmer participation in bundling farm system innovations. Lessons from Initiative implementation will be used, such as the use case model from the Excellence in Agronomy Initiative, which has facilitated the identification, development and scaling of demand-driven innovations. Identifying demand partners and their localized needs to define co-creation and co-development of solutions in an integrated manner is a priority for AoW 8.</p>
<p>While the research design is supported by relevant literature showing evidence of social and gender inequalities in agri-food systems, the inclusion and gender-responsive approach appears diffuse in the proposal and greater details on incorporating this issue is needed in many Areas of Work. The main strategy to address these issues is linking with the Social and Gender Inclusion Accelerator, which includes team specialists to support this work at the Area of Work level. Drawing on lessons learned and successes from previous initiatives in addressing these issues could help strengthen the emphasis needed for these topics.</p>	<p>In coordination with the Gender Equality and Inclusion Accelerator, gender- and youth-responsive planning will take place in all AoWs. For example, AoW 7 (System Integration through Co-creation) is planning to specifically include women and youth demands for prioritizing, planning, conducting and scaling bundles of innovations. This work will be supported by gender specialists in Centers and partner organizations with guidance from the Gender Equality and Inclusion Accelerator. During the Inception Phase, the team will articulate a strategy for gender- and youth-responsive research to be applied by all AoWs.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Research questions could be more descriptive regarding the social and economic factors that impact farmers' ability to use and deploy existing and developed knowledge.</p>	<p>Co-creation methods combined with system (both biophysical and behavioural) sciences will be used to address social and economic factors that influence development and scaling of farm innovations, particularly in AoW 7. During this process, AoW research questions and outputs will be revised to emphasize social and economic factors where relevant.</p>
<p>New geographies and emerging pests should be given due consideration when prioritizing activities during the Inception Phase.</p>	<p>This recommendation will be taken into consideration during the updated prioritization process to be conducted during the Inception Phase. AoW 4 (Plant Health and Mycotoxin Safe Crops) is planning to support national partners to monitor both existing and emerging pests and strengthen diagnostics, surveillance, predictive modelling and risk analysis by national partners.</p>
<p>There is limited discussion on how existing farming systems were conceived and specific proposed outcomes were determined. Including a comparison of work aims with those achieved in the previous cycle of Initiatives would be beneficial.</p>	<p>The definition of outcomes took into consideration the lessons learned, and progress made by Initiatives (for example, the work on farming system definitions conducted as part of the Excellence in Agronomy and Mixed Farming Systems Initiatives). Outcomes will be revisited (for relevance and adding measurable indicators) during the Inception Phase.</p>
<p>AoW 1: Including specific examples of previously developed climate-related agronomic interventions would be helpful. How do these interventions differ from existing agronomic recommendations?</p>	<p>Building on the progress made by Initiatives and bilateral projects, a more detailed analysis and inclusion of previously developed climate-related agronomic interventions will take place during annual planning, including a comparison of previous experiences with new potential solutions.</p>
<p>AoW 2: Additional information on how AgWise was used and its impact in previous Initiatives would strengthen this section.</p>	<p>During the Inception Phase, a more detailed analysis of progress made by AgWise will be carried out to build on its strengths and address weaknesses to improve targeted fertilizer recommendations.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>AoW 3: This Area of Work is high on ambition but low on details and problematization. Aiming to deliver healthier soils with more organic matter across a large area in the semi-arid and humid tropics, where SOM content is low/variable and SOM oxidation is high, will be incredibly difficult. More spatial consideration is needed in this Area of Work. Furthermore, the authors seem not to recognize this uphill challenge. This Area of Work needs greater details on actions that will be taken to improve soil health. Since this Area of Work will have less existing information and expertise to draw on, additional details on key research partners, methods, and models developed elsewhere would be helpful. Though the importance of soil health should not be marginalized, a comparative advantage analysis is needed to clarify why this work should be pursued by CGIAR.</p>	<p>These recommendations will be taken into account in developing annual work plans for AoW 3, emphasizing the analysis of challenges that may limit the scaling of solutions for improving soil health in order to identify priority activities and deliverables. Additionally, an updated comparative analysis will be carried out to involve key partners that can contribute to or take the lead in developing some of the solutions.</p>
<p>AoW 4: This area of work would be strengthened with a plan on how it might respond to emerging pests (e.g., a new disease outbreak).</p>	<p>AoW 4 includes a cluster of activities and outputs focused on developing state-of-the-art and cost-effective tools to enhance surveillance and early warning systems as well as capacity sharing for National Plant Protection Organizations to enhance their detection/diagnosis, surveillance, monitoring and risk assessment capabilities. This will include specific plans for rapid response to emerging pests.</p>
<p>AoW 5: It is unclear why most proposed work for non-irrigated environments is not part of AoW 1 and/or AoW 7, given the Program's emphasis on integration. Most interventions for water management will likely include extensive crop-related agronomic recommendations. The CA could be strengthened with more specific information on other actors. The details of appropriate water stewardship and management are thin and idealistic.</p>	<p>Strong inter-AoW interactions are planned. AoW 1 will integrate solutions that enhance adaptation to climate change from other AoWs (e.g. AoW 5). Collaborative activities will be conducted with other Programs and Accelerators, such as with the Multifunctional Landscapes Program to address water-related challenges at farm- and landscape-levels.</p>
<p>AoW 6: The heading for Section 6.6.1 does not adequately describe the proposed activities. It is unclear whether this Area of Work will develop new SAMs, adapt existing ones, or simply write SOPs for</p>	<p>AoW 6 will be context-specific, focusing on situations where farmers, public and private stakeholders express demand for mechanization solutions. Depending on context and opportunities, Program</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>them. There should be a clear link between the SAMs developed by the program, their impact at the farm level, and the factors inhibiting their adoption. If the development of post-harvest equipment presents a significant opportunity, it is unclear why it should be excluded at this stage of the program's development.</p>	<p>responses could include developing new solutions or adapting existing ones, and developing SOPs if required. A priority for AoW 6 will be to conduct an assessment of needs, identifying the factors that could limit the adoption of SAM solutions using participatory and co-creation methods (involving farmers and other market actors), and strengthening local service providers to facilitate availability of mechanization service when required. The analysis of opportunities to develop post-harvest equipment will be included in the planning.</p>
<p>AoW 7: There is good attention to upscaling and cocreation, but more could be done in this regard as mentioned elsewhere in this review. The linkages between this activity and other AoWs could be strengthened, and the proposal should clarify how this Area of Work differs from Area of Work 1.</p>	<p>During the Inception Phase and annual planning, the development and use of co-creation and upscaling approaches for bundling and scaling farm innovations will be emphasized and the links with other AoWs clarified. AoW 7 aims at developing co-creation methods and modelling system approaches (combining biophysical, socioeconomic and behavioural factors) for bundling farm innovations which contribute not only to climate adaptation and mitigation on farms (AoW 1) but also to other objectives related to sustainable farming (i.e. profitable yields, yield stability, resource-use efficiency, soil and plant health, etc.) in response to farmer and particularly women and youth demand.</p>
<p>AoW 8: This Area of Work should have its own evaluation indicators to avoid dilution within other Areas of Work.</p>	<p>During the Inception Phase, all AoWs will develop more specific performance indicators. For AoW 8, these indicators will focus on enhancing Program efficiency for facilitating integrative research, data management and scaling integrated solutions, with emphasis on digital solutions.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>The sensitive issue of the willingness to share data among partners is not fully addressed nor is the special effort needed to adapt integrated management strategies to different geographies, climates, or cultures at the farm level.</p>	<p>Indeed, integrated data management requires addressing the sensitivity of data sharing among partners. AoW 8 will emphasize this process and build on the progress made during Initiative implementation, with agreements among CGIAR Centers and other partners established to share and harmonize data management and digital tools. This topic will be emphasized during the elaboration of annual work plans and identification of collaborative activities with partners.</p>
<p>The Program clearly describes how innovative collaborative approaches, mechanisms for establishing partnerships, cooperation with other programs and accelerators, and building on activities of previous initiatives can lead to significant impact. The activities of CGIAR in Ethiopia are used as a compelling example. It is less clear how these collaborative, integrated research efforts will be undertaken in countries where CGIAR has a limited presence. The link with other Programs and accelerators to achieve effective scaling and impact is explicit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Inception phase, the analysis about responding to country demands in a more integrated manner will continue for each Program and Accelerator under the coordination of the Scaling for Impact Program. This analysis should consider countries with high, medium or low maturity of CGIAR presence and integration. • As part of the Sustainable Farming Program planning, there will be emphasis on a capacity sharing strategy to be coordinated by AoW 8, across AoWs and with other Programs including the Capacity Sharing Accelerator. • The Sustainable Farming Program plans to interact and collaborate closely with other Programs such as Multifunctional Landscapes and Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods to address environmental topics and the challenges of mixed farming systems according to country demands.
<p>The role of farmers in MELIA needs to be highlighted, as does the impact of activities on non-technical outputs such as institutional strengthening and community infrastructure. The robust Capacity Sharing plan should ensure uniformity in approaches and data collection across partners. Impact assessment should be designed to mitigate the risk of stakeholders' unwillingness to share data.</p>	<p>During the development of the MELIA plan, the role of farmers will be specified and highlighted, and indicators related to non-technical aspects included. The capacity sharing plans (at the level of AoW 8 and at Program level) will include strengthening data management capabilities across CGIAR and strategies to mitigate the risk of stakeholders not being willing to share data.</p>

Food Frontiers and Security Program

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>“The specific challenges facing each of these distinct at-risk areas are vastly different, limiting the potential gains from housing all three under one program.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indeed, the three food systems are very different in terms of the challenges they face, and solutions developed for one system may not be transferable to the other two. This was discussed extensively within the Writing Team and resulted in the proposed Program structure, with one AoW per system – allowing each area to expand relatively independently and attract interest from a tailored network of stakeholders, donors, and practitioners. • However, clear commonalities between the three systems have been identified: all three are characterised by heavily constrained food production; natural resource management concerns; vulnerable populations; high risk from climate change and global and regional trade shocks; and challenges posed by displacement and migration. The Future Food Systems Lab (AoW1) will house learning across the three systems. During the Inception Phase, more detail will be provided on how commonalities will be drawn out in the research undertaken across all three systems.
<p>“The Program contemplates a significant investment in research in fragile and conflict-affected areas, where CGIAR has not operated previously.”</p> <p>Criterion 5: “Area of Work 2 involves a new focus for the CGIAR that may involve substantial risks not fully incorporated in contingency plans. It is not entirely clear that CGIAR possesses the necessary comparative advantage from the analysis contained in the proposal.”</p> <p>Q4RD commentary on individual proposals: “The prior engagement and existing capacity of the CGIAR in these three areas are quite heterogeneous, with the greatest limitations in FCA areas. The eventual effectiveness of the Program could be hampered by the need to establish capacity and inherent costs and risks involved.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the last few years, in line with donors’ and partners’ priorities, CGIAR has recognized that significant research investments in fragile and conflict-affected (FCA) settings are necessary for meeting its objectives of reducing poverty and hunger. While the rates of people living in poverty and experiencing malnutrition in stable settings have continued to decline, FCA settings are experiencing an increase in these rates. As CGIAR’s Executive Managing Director Ismahane Elouafi articulated on October 10, 2024: “In the coming years, I think CGIAR research will increasingly focus on fragile and conflict-affected food systems, due to their unique vulnerabilities and growing populations, and the growing number of conflicts—

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>human-made or climate-made. This will require really targeted innovation and context-specific science.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CGIAR Research Initiative on Fragility, Conflict and Migration (FCM) has already charted a path for CGIAR’s work in FCA food systems. Through this Initiative, CGIAR has assembled a cadre of CGIAR scientists and strong network of partners delivering evidence in FCA settings, and invested in innovations to support communities grappling with conflict and associated compounding shocks. These investments have helped CGIAR nurture partnerships with key actors operating in FCA food systems, from humanitarian organizations and governments to civil society organizations and NGOs. For example, CGIAR has signed agreements with WFP and UNHCR, among others. These partnerships will further strengthen CGIAR’s capacity to serve these food systems and respond to emerging challenges. • In addition, fragility and conflict are increasingly affecting traditionally stable areas where CGIAR has operated for a while, mandating additional investments in these areas. The Global Peace Index (2024) shows that the level of peacefulness has decreased globally for the 12th consecutive year. Climate change often exacerbates fragility and conflict. As part of the FCM initiative, models have been developed with partners to bridge the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus. These efforts leverage our respective comparative advantages and address strong demand from UN organizations, regional and national governments, and international and local NGOs for linking emergency response with long-term resilience objectives.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>"The failure to engage with the typical thinness of adequate, existing secondary datasets and the difficult challenges associated with generating new and credible primary data for impact evaluation and other purposes in fragile and conflict affected areas."</p>	<p>Indeed, FCA food systems suffer from data scarcity and challenges to conventional data collection efforts. These challenges have been successfully addressed in FCM. In addition, three encouraging trends can help alleviate these concerns. First, technologies are increasingly enabling remote data collection and providing access to new sources of data (e.g., remote sensing, phone surveys). Second, investments by partners are enabling and increasing access to data (e.g., Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)). Third, innovative and flexible partnerships can be used to generate novel data. During the Inception Phase, details will be provided on these different types of data will be leveraged.</p>
<p>"The lack of well-supported hypotheses and credible research literature references makes it very difficult to assess originality and with that the likely value added and overall merit of the Program and its respective sub-components."</p>	<p>We agree that not all sub-components were equally well supported with literature references. This will be strengthened during the Inception Phase.</p>
<p>Criteria 7: "Gender aspects at institutional/ partner level need to be highlighted, i.e., demonstrating efforts to ensure that the Program's team meets CGIAR's gender target of a minimum of 40% women in professional roles. There is also a need to demonstrate efforts made to ensure that women, minorities, and other under-represented groups hold leadership roles in the team."</p>	<p>Ensuring appropriate diversity within the Program team in line with this comment will be a key goal during the Inception Phase.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>“The proposal lacks a comprehensive framework for dealing with the considerable risks associated with undertaking this proposed research: this includes, e.g., risks to survey organization staff, research participants and key informants, and of violence and other disruptions to the Area of Work 2 work, potential unintended consequences of proposed innovations, including related to environmental sustainability. The section touches on risks but uses language and risk classifications that are ambiguous and do not indicate mitigation strategies or address how risks such as natural resource depletion, increased GHG emissions, or the above Area of Work 2 related risks, will be adequately managed. Providing a more comprehensive and thought through risk framework, with explicit mitigation actions and contingency plans for possible disruptions and unintended consequences would significantly enhance the robustness of the proposal.”</p> <p>Criterion 10: “The proposal lacks a sufficiently comprehensive framework for dealing with the considerable risks associated with undertaking this proposed research, which includes risks to survey organisation staff, research participants and key informants, and, e.g., violence and other disruptions to the Area of Work 2 work, potential unintended consequences of proposed innovations, including those related to environmental sustainability to name a few obvious and serious oversights.”</p>	<p>We agree that risk management is key to successful operation in frontier food systems. The Program presents a unique opportunity to integrate conflict sensitivity into CGIAR’s performance and results management framework. Initial ideas for the risk management plan to be developed in the Inception Phase include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AoW 2: staff risks and risks to human subjects within FCA food systems will be managed through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Utilizing Center country/regional offices’ experience and trusted stakeholder relationships ✓ Partnering with experienced organizations to conduct field work and build CGIAR capacity ✓ Leveraging on-the-ground human capacity of partners in field locations ✓ Working with UN agencies and conducting field activities aligned with their security policies and safeguards ✓ Imposing rigorous ethical and IRB standards (including local IRB) for data collection ✓ Making use of the existing datasets owned by partner organizations and CGIAR ✓ Using remote technologies, including satellite imagery and phone surveys • AoW 3: the following risks to human subjects and research staff will be mitigated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Social and civil unrest in megacities or urban centers: Risk assessments will be conducted prior to field activities; constant monitoring of social contexts will be conducted; and the Program will work closely with relevant

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>government institutions to protect Program staff and activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Frequent turnaround of city government leaders, which may compromise the ability of the Program to engage with governments in the long term: An effort will be made to position the Program as politically neutral and engage with individuals who hold technical/permanent positions which are less susceptible to change. ✓ By working to create livelihood opportunities for the most vulnerable in cities, the Program may face push back from established large players in the food sector: This risk can partly be mitigated through engagement with a wide array of food system stakeholders as well as conducting stakeholder mapping and action planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AoW 4: This AoW is operated out of Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, which share a history of recent conflict. WorldFish has remained in operation during the civil war in Solomon Islands. The principles and approaches to research in this context will be drawn during the Inception Phase. <p>In addition, we will also carry out a review of existing CGIAR operational health and security policy, procedures, and fieldwork checklists to identify weaknesses and suggest improvements related to research in FCAs.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Criterion 2: “While [the] involvement of various partners is acknowledged and emphasized, what their roles are, how these different stakeholders participated in and what inputs they fed into the design process are much less clear. Examples of codesign and evidence of partner support would strengthen this part of the proposal. Given the CGIAR experience with participatory approaches, the limited reference to and inclusion of farmer organisations and other grassroots perspectives is surprising.”</p>	<p>The Program’s constituent Initiatives have built a strong legacy of partner networks through listening sessions, validation workshops, and all phases of research and dissemination. For example, the FCM Initiative has launched a weekly podcast series called “From Fragility to Stability”, with each episode featuring two partners and a CGIAR staff member talking about co-design and collaboration. The Resilient Cities Initiative has established a solid engagement with the government of Quezon City, leading to institutionalization of a piloted innovation; is engaging with the African Union in developing guidance for governments around informal food systems; and has successful engaged with several civil society organizations and NGOs.</p>
<p>Criterion 3: “While some comparative advantage analysis must be reserved for the Inception Phase, a more explicit identification of potential competitor organizations and whether CGIAR is the best among the group to take such tasks is warranted. The identification of potential partners is important, but just as important is to identify others working in the space that are not likely to be partners. This is how comparative advantage is established. Without such a discussion, the current proposal is asserting comparative advantage without providing evidence of the claim.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGIAR’s expertise in FCA food systems, urban and peri-urban environments, and islands, combined with its field presence, partnerships in focus countries, interdisciplinary capabilities, and deep knowledge of food, land, and water systems, sets it apart from competitors. Think tanks such as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and Peace Research Institute Oslo lack CGIAR’s Global South presence and capacity for integrated physical and social science research. Similarly, INGOs such as the International Crisis Group lack the Program team’s interdisciplinary expertise, partnerships, and ground-level presence, which enables more meaningful engagement with knowledge and scaling partners. • FCA food system partners seek support for context-specific analyses, modelling, and evaluation, for which CGIAR researchers are uniquely qualified due to their technical expertise, interdisciplinary knowledge, and field experience. Additionally, the Program leverages CGIAR’s growing track record in designing and implementing accelerator programs, which offer innovators mentorship, guidance, and funding. The Program’s AoW 4 builds on decades of integrated research with Pacific Island institutions

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>and a growing network of partners (e.g., SPC, SINU, national agencies).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Inception Phase, this institutional landscape and CA analysis will be further refined.
<p>Criterion 5: “Area of Work 1 (The Lab) is very important to the Program and has substantial potential to add value. However, added details are needed to determine whether this potential is realized”</p>	<p>This will be addressed once the budget available for the lab is more clearly known.</p>
<p>Criterion 6: “The countries, settings, and themes that will be covered should have prompted a more balanced assessment of what this will require in terms of data-access and new data-generation: conflict-related data introduce ethical and logistical challenges with serious risks of disruptions”</p>	<p>Country selection considered data collection feasibility, access to alternative sources, and CGIAR presence and experience. Innovative approaches and partnerships are key to overcome logistical challenges. CGIAR Centers are in the process of updating ethical processes for FCA settings. The Program team will use adaptive management techniques and adjust research timelines to political events.</p>
<p>Criterion 6: “Another example of where greater clarity is needed is on how laboratory and field assets will be integrated into a cohesive data collection and analysis framework.”</p>	<p>A major goal of the Inception Phase will be to more clearly define the role of the Future Food Systems Lab. In addition, the role and resourcing of the Stability and Peace Innovation Accelerator (AoW 1) and Nusatupe Innovation Hub (AoW 4) will be clarified.</p>

Scaling for Impact Program

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>The Program is highly ambitious (62 million people benefiting and unlocking \$5Bn in new investment), which is both a strength and a potential weakness. Without sufficient resources to establish and maintain partnerships there will be reduced effectiveness, risking the Program’s credibility. To manage these risks particular attention should be given to (a) Feasibility (i.e., assessing the practicality of the ambitious Theory of Change and Areas of Work); (b) Realistic assessment of obstacles (i.e. evaluating obstacles to achieving impact, particularly institutional blockages and social and behavioral impediments to adoption at local scales); and (c) a rigorous risk assessment (i.e. conducting a thorough risk assessment with focus on mitigating risks to achieving the Program’s outcomes). (Paraphrased from ISDC Review Document text on page 14)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These targets were derived from a structured empirical process described in Appendix 7 of the proposal and which used 2022-24 impacts reported by CGIAR from the Initiatives integrated into the Scaling Program as a basis for projection, providing an evidence base for potential impact. These targets are preliminary. Outcome target adjustments will depend on confirmed investment levels and will be refined during the Inception Phase and annually based on performance, iterative learning, and input from CGIAR and investors. The Scaling Program will work with other Programs/Accelerators to synergize and co-report impacts aligned with CGIAR’s comparative advantage, scaling partnership potential, and anticipated investment levels. • The Scaling Program team acknowledges ISDC’s concerns and values the advice to consider (a) feasibility, (b) obstacle assessment, and (c) risk evaluation. The Program will adjust its ToC and AoWs as needed during the Inception Phase, focusing on feasibility and systematically addressing obstacles across CGIAR’s Portfolio.
<p>The Program’s ambition is commendable but may be overly optimistic given institutional and political barriers. The inclusive demand signaling process is promising but lacks analysis of beneficiary support and conflicting incentives. A deeper examination of these challenges could result in a more realistic strategy. Additionally, low adoption rates among smallholders point to social, economic, and cultural barriers that need explicit attention. (Paraphrased from ISDC Review Document text on page 64)</p>	<p>We appreciate this comment and largely agree with it. Addressing political economy and cultural barriers to demand articulation is crucial. These factors will be included in the Program’s first-year work plan. We also agree on the need to consider low smallholder adoption rates linked to social, economic, and cultural barriers. These challenges will be further tackled in the work planning for AoWs 2, 3, and 5, which are well positioned to develop effective strategies to address them.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Area of Work 4: Unlocking Financing and Partnerships needs clearer analysis for the \$5 billion IFI financing target, considering global trends and demands. The scope, role, and required resources, including potential staffing needs of over 200, are not well-defined. A phased, partnership-based approach is recommended. (Paraphrased from ISDC Review Document text on page 64)</p>	<p>The Program team appreciates this comment. However, significant financial leverage can be achieved with a lean, fit-for-purpose, and skillful team. The staffing and other aspects of AoW 4 will be clarified during the Inception Phase and work planning.</p>
<p>Collaboration with Catalyst and “opportunity countries” offers potential for national scaling. However, Section 7 does not clearly show how stakeholder consultations influenced the design or achieved genuine co-design, which needs active stakeholder engagement. The Inception Phase should also focus on resource management, tracking, and evaluation for effective learning. (Paraphrased from ISDC Review Document text on page 65)</p>	<p>ISDC’s question on co-design is acknowledged. Section 7 outlines activity areas based on prior Initiatives, with additional prioritization planned to occur during the Inception Phase. We agree that deeper co-design is required both during and beyond inception, to be guided by AoW 1. CGIAR’s first Science Week in April 2025 will be leveraged for this purpose, and the Program team will work with local, national, and regional development partners to secure resources for tracking and evaluating co-design impacts.</p>
<p>The proposal effectively addresses the emerging science of innovation scaling in agri-food systems, but we have concerns. The number of research questions is excessive and their interrelated nature may hinder clear causality and attribution, especially across scaling pathways, innovation bundles, stakeholder capacity, enabling environments, responsible scaling, and funding goals. Additionally, barriers to smallholder adoption (social, economic, cultural) are not clearly identified. We recommend reducing and refining the scope of research questions. (Paraphrased from ISDC Review Document text on page 66)</p>	<p>While we agree that streamlining the research questions may be necessary, the complexity of the CGIAR Portfolio requires a comprehensive, systems-oriented analytical approach. The points on causality are well taken, and the Program team will revise and consolidate the research questions as part of the ToC update during the Inception Phase. Research to identify barriers and options to overcome adoption obstacles is crucial for CGIAR’s entire portfolio. Efforts in this area will therefore be undertaken in collaboration with other Programs and Accelerators.</p>
<p>One concern is whether given the scale and scope of the Program, the research methods will be sufficient. The geographic scope may be overly ambitious with 17 catalyst and 15 promising countries, as well as bilateral projects in a range of countries. We recommend being pragmatic. (Paraphrased from ISDC Review Document text on page 67)</p>	<p>The country prioritization exercise outlined in the proposal will be refined during the Inception Phase. The list of catalyst and promising countries will likely be streamlined, with activities phased annually to avoid overextending the team/resources. Not all activities will start simultaneously across countries.</p>

Gender Equality and Inclusion Accelerator

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Address the issue of buy-in, both internal and external to CGIAR: in fact, most objectives stated in the proposal require such buy-in to be achievable.</p>	<p>Iterative research analysis for stakeholder alignment:</p> <p>The proposal reflects on-going discussions both with external and internal partners. The Solutions AoW is a direct reflection of the discussions had with partners who are looking at the CGIAR for solutions for women’s empowerment in food systems. Internal buy-in is growing but will need to be consolidated. As we move forward, we will ongoingly analyze research supply and demand during the inception and implementation phases to ensure the Accelerator’s success. Several steps have been taken and will be taken in the future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GENDER Impact Platform organized a “Gender Science Exchange” in October 2024 to exchange experiences on gender research within CGIAR. This year it identified research being done within the eight themes of the Science Programs, highlighting new directions in gender research that can be built in the Science Programs and Accelerators. This information will continue to be developed over the next two months and is being shared with the Science Programs. • There will be a meeting with all the Center Gender Research Coordinators in Q1 to consolidate the gender work in the Science Programs. • For external buy-in, this will be an on-going process, including the global gender conference in October hosted by IWMI in South Africa. Similar to the one held in India in 2024. discussion and collective brainstorming with stakeholders in early 2025.
<p>Have a more credible stance at dealing with GESI, clarify how CGIAR wants to work on social inclusion, including which groups will be the focus of social inclusion work. A review of the expertise CGIAR currently has or will need to bring in to do this or partner with intuitions that do have the expertise would be important and</p>	<p>Building on existing resources and spaces to establish a clear research agenda on social inclusion:</p> <p>The process will include the following key steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A background paper and position paper was developed by the GENDER Impact Platform on social inclusion which is being shared and should be the basis of further discussions on social inclusion https://hdl.handle.net/10568/151613 and https://hdl.handle.net/10568/151668 2. A review of social inclusion guidelines, methods, and tools was developed by the GENDER Impact Platform. This document further analyzes cases and experiences to highlight good practices and identify gaps, offering recommendations to inform the design and use of future AR4D social inclusion resources. This is the first step towards a social inclusion framework. https://hdl.handle.net/10568/149204

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>would improve the credibility of the proposal.</p>	<p>3. Define the elements of intersectionality to be addressed in different cases. A recently published paper by CGIAR researchers working on intersectionality https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-60986-2_9 highlights specific cases to draw lessons for future design of AR4D processes.</p> <p>These and other materials will be used as basis for the discussions and development of specific research agendas with Programs and Accelerators. The specific definition of which groups will be the focus of social inclusion, and the research questions and methodologies used, will be tailor made to the specific use-cases prioritized with Programs, Accelerators and partners.</p> <p>Build robust partnerships to address issues of youth, social inclusion, and other inequities. Beyond interactions with NAREs partners, a mapping of leading organizations working on social inclusion and youth will be conducted during the Inception Phase to explore complementarity and potentially co-design new projects and initiatives to leverage external expertise.</p>
<p>Strategize how to balance the Portfolio that currently is tilted heavily towards women (although men are occasionally mentioned, but not with much depth nor state-of-the-art thinking).</p>	<p>Gender within the document does refer to men and women, but specifically it includes work on engaging men in transforming gender norms and power dynamics. The Accelerator will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build on the progress and analysis conducted by the CGIAR Community of Practice on Masculinities. 2. Review and integrate outstanding examples and lessons learned from research in the CGIAR on masculinities https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367815776 3. Conduct an analysis of incentive mechanisms to encourage men to act as allies in transforming gender norms and power dynamics.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Develop a more thorough analysis to work on youth and socially excluded groups: While the proposal briefly mentions working with youth, a more thorough and honest analysis is required to develop these Areas of Work, including strong partnerships outside of CGIAR.</p>	<p>Strengthening the research agenda on youth:</p> <p>This process will consider the following steps during the Inception Phase:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A background paper has been developed on youth and a position paper is forthcoming. https://hdl.handle.net/10568/151612 These will form the basis of future work in this area. 2. Build on past research and practical experiences from CGIAR and partners outside the system. 3. Strengthen collaboration with partners with strong experience working with youth such as has been initiated by the GENDER Impact Platform with https://youth.world-food-forum.org/en 4. Strengthen internal capacity development and alignment of future hires to bridge knowledge gaps. 5. Funding gaps will be identified, and fundraising targets will be developed as part of the deliverables for the Inception Phase.

Digital Transformation Accelerator

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>The Accelerator must engage demographics with little previous exposure to such technologies, such as marginalized groups and the rural poor. It is crucial to give all stakeholders a voice, recognizing that some may need prioritization.</p>	<p>We agree more intentional, strategic efforts are needed to bridge the digital divide of marginalized groups. This will be addressed during the Inception Phase in consultations with other Science Programs and Accelerators. Digital inclusion-focused activities (e.g., measurement tools, best-practice guidelines, community of practice) undertaken by the Digital Innovation Initiative will be leveraged.</p>
<p>More details on how cross-pollination with other Programs will occur are necessary. Lack of intentional linkages and tangible methods of working with other Programs increase the risk that the Accelerator will fail.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have initiated a series of consultation processes with all other Programs/Accelerators to jointly develop and prioritize use cases and workplans. Through these exercises, the Accelerator’s ToC will be improved, with more specific output-to-outcome pathways. These exercises will also guide resource allocation, joint funding, and scaling strategies. • As part of the Accelerator’s operating model, we intend to set up Communities of Practice (CoPs) on critical areas such as gender and social inclusion, and data security and interoperability.
<p>Project management will be just as important as the new technologies per se! More specificity relating to project management in the Areas of Work would be useful.</p>	<p>Building on the success of the Digital Innovation Initiative, effective project management processes and supporting digital tools will be set up to coordinate activities and collaborations to achieve outcomes.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>The Theory of Change could be more explicit, particularly those relating to the ‘innovation’ and ‘policy’ theories of change. The Theory of Change needs to be more carefully conceived, with clear details of HOW the acceleration/support/facilitation will occur. The linkage between outcomes and outputs needs more thought and more explicit methods. There is a lack of deliberate methods relating to the innovation and policy Theory of Change. Further, the Accelerator-level Theory of Change visual is complex to digest: it would be great to simplify, or just clarify the directions of the arrows. It would be useful to articulate some quantitative KPIs to track the Accelerator’s progress.</p>	<p>Consultations with partners and other Science Programs during the Inception Phase, using the use case framework as a guide, will be used to provide more specificity to and improve the ToC. Thank you for these suggestions, which will be incorporated at that point.</p>
<p>There is a lack of information on data security, data ownership, and the potential downsides of AI, including how AI is trained. We are concerned that the Accelerator does not prioritize safeguarding stakeholders against inappropriate monetization of their data.</p>	<p>This will be addressed under the Enabling Environment Area of Work, as part of the Digital Core. A CoP will bring research rigor and programmatic focus to Centers’ research on emerging issues of data security, data ownership, and the potential downsides of AI. Additionally, the Accelerator will provide guidance to governments and policy makers on these topics.</p>
<p>Lack of explicit objectives: As written, the Accelerator almost proposes doing “everything for everyone,” which is very vague and increases the risk of failure. There needs to be explicit, specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound objectives (SMART).</p>	<p>The engagement framework and use case-based principles will allow to define SMART objectives once use cases have been identified in collaboration with Programs. The Digital Innovation Initiative experience on building metrics for such objectives will be helpful in this regard.</p>
<p>The Digital Accelerator aims to operate in the global South, but target geographies are not well defined.</p>	<p>Target geographies will be prioritized in the Inception Phase through consultations with Programs.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Action Lab (AoW2) and Digital Futures (AoW3) will prioritize use cases and appear to be demand driven. On the other hand, AoW2 speaks of “transforming” and “digital innovations,” which may comprise completely new technologies, practices or infrastructure. How can this be demand-driven if the practitioners are unaware of the innovation in the first place? Perhaps the authors imply that the problems will be demand driven whereas the solutions will involve innovations?</p>	<p>Indeed, strong emphasis will be placed on demand-driven problem identification, while the proposed solutions will be human-centred digital innovations addressing the specific target community or geography.</p>
<p>The Accelerator will conduct targeted meetings with “relevant taskforces in each Program and Center” but again how those “relevant taskforces” are selected and their demands prioritized is unclear. Care must be taken to ensure that partners are engaged in a thoughtful, open, and timely manner.</p>	<p>Duly noted; these aspects will be incorporated in the use case development process.</p>
<p>The summary of outputs is excessively high level (section 4.1). More specific information would be useful: is this about data gathering, data harvesting, training, engagement, and/or tools and infrastructure? Clearly identified themes would help solidify work areas in this Accelerator.</p>	<p>Indeed, activities range from data gathering to data harvesting, training, engagement, and tools and infrastructure. During the Inception Phase, high-level outputs will be classified according to recurring themes, which will help communicate the Accelerator’s value proposition and link back to CGIAR’s comparative advantage.</p>
<p>It may be better to rename Area of Work 3 “Digital Frontier Technologies”,</p>	<p>This suggestion will be taken into consideration.</p>
<p>AoW 4 could be better integrated within Areas of Work 1, 2, 3.</p>	<p>CoPs and other methods will be used to ensure cross-AoW integration. More details to be provided during the Inception Phase.</p>
<p>The logic driving Area of Work 4 is unclear.</p>	<p>During the Inception Phase we will develop a plan which reflects the sequence of events and articulate the logic that links the stated challenges to the proposed solution design for this AoW.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Much of the text in sections 6 and 10 implies that the Accelerator is starting from zero. The proponents need to better describe how existing work will be leveraged and built from. Where are the existing databases and how will they be improved?</p>	<p>Indeed, the Accelerator intends to build on the achievements of the Digital Innovation Initiative.</p>
<p>In many organizations, staff are busy. Imposing further data management may be perceived as just another administrative burden. How can the proponents be sure that CGIAR staff will use the database (e.g., GARDIAN) and standardize their data in a way that is commensurate with the database?</p>	<p>These concerns will be addressed by leveraging resources and lessons learned from past work, including bilateral projects on data ecosystems.</p>

Capacity Sharing Accelerator

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Resource allocation</p> <p>To strengthen scientific credibility, the proposal should clarify resource allocation and team expertise, especially on the overall coordination and linkages with the Programs and the Accelerators (pp.15).</p> <p>It is unclear from the proposal what level of funding or full-time equivalent personnel will be dedicated to the Accelerator. This, as well as the experience and expertise of the team that will be responsible for delivering on the work, will have a significant impact on its feasibility and success. (pp. 83).</p> <p>Better clarity is needed on community of practice, how it will be operationalized and meaningful engagement achieved whilst being mindful of time capacity of CoP members (pp. 86).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget allocations for Programs and Accelerators for 2025 are now available and the Accelerator revised its budget (see revised Section 13 of the Proposal document submitted to PCT) to reflect its allocation. The funding was allocated to the Areas of Work based on resources needed to kickstart the Areas of Work in 2025. • The Accelerator will look internally to identify its Transition Areas of Work leads and Co-leads, based on the expertise and experience available. It will also adopt the same approach to form the teams (within the limit of the financial resources available to the Accelerator) around these Leads and Co-leads needed to deliver on the work of the Accelerator. If the expertise is not found internally, the Accelerator will look externally to complement its teams. • The Accelerator will develop terms of reference for the Community of Practice during the Inception Phase, clearly identifying roles and responsibilities, operationalization, etc. This CoP will include select critical stakeholders for CapSha from CGIAR and from Partners.
<p>Proposal scope</p> <p>Narrowing the broad scope through gap analysis and priority setting would enhance effectiveness, ensuring resources are directed to high-impact areas (pp.15).</p> <p>The recommendation to the writing team is to tighten the scope and focus the work on strategically important activities identified to ensure meaningful traction and avoid fragmented and disparate deliverables (pp. 83).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerators are adopting a Use Case Approach to prioritization precisely due to their role as “accelerators” for the entire Portfolio. This Use case approach will enable the CapSha Accelerator to prioritize its interventions and geographies for high impacts based on CGIAR’s Programs and Accelerators “footprint”. The use Case methodology will be based on key principles and a rigorous assessment of CGIAR and Partners’ capacity interventions, interests in engaging in the use cases, capacities, etc. This exercise can only be done during the Inception Phase after the Programs’ own prioritization to allow for identification of

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>strategic activities and gaps from the CapSha Accelerator’s perspective and ToC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Accelerator will include a matrix analysis of Programs and other Accelerator during inception, to map Programs’ AoWs and its own AoWs, in order to define common interests in research questions or challenges, synergies, alignments, complementarities, and avoid duplication of actions.
<p>Partnerships</p> <p>Partner engagement lacks clarity, raising questions such as: was the Accelerator truly co-designed and how will the Accelerator add value to the delivery of capacity sharing beyond supporting activities? (pp. 15)</p> <p>The proposal could elaborate on how it will actively support formation of partnerships, outlining strategies for partner vetting and identification, engagement and resource mobilization, as well as measuring potential engagement fatigue (pp. 84).</p> <p>The proposal does not fully address issues such as power imbalances, knowledge ownership, engagement fatigue, or cultural challenges in collaboration (pp. 84)</p> <p>How the Accelerator will ensure inclusive innovation and equitable partnerships needs to be clear to all partners from the outset (pp. 85).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Accelerator drew from evaluations since the CRPs and P22, which included extensive interviews with Partners on some of the ambition elements of CapSha. The Accelerator shared its preliminary vision and structure with Partners during an online Stakeholders’ engagement in August 2024 as well as during bilateral meetings with partners that took place between June and September 2024. Some AoWs were modified following this feedback (especially AoW 3 SSTC). More efforts will be made during the Inception Phase, especially in designing Use Cases for the three AoWs, and for the CA analysis, which includes partners. The Accelerator will build on existing engagement with science institutions, development and humanitarian actors, such as under the Fragility, Conflict, and Migration Initiative, which directly supports a shift in power towards local actors and knowledge generation through capacity sharing and co-design of research agendas and climate-smart agriculture solutions. Lessons from the Climate, Peace, and Displacement Partnership, for example, will be used to further develop new partnership engagement models for science capacity in CGIAR priority countries. In addition, co-creation and co-development are key principles for CapSha which will guide implementation.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Exogenous vs. endogenous engagement</p> <p>The design appears somewhat externally driven, emphasizing passive resource distribution, which may not fully engage intended users (pp. 15).</p> <p>A clearer framework regarding the scale and reach of planned interventions (including outputs), how these will be disseminated and used by different stakeholders will help track progress. The Accelerator might benefit from a more active approach to catalyze capacity sharing with a stronger endogenous engagement and involvement that has been shown to be more effective (pp. 86).</p>	<p>These comments are well noted and will be addressed during the Inception Phase, especially while developing the revised ToC, the workplan, and designing the Use Cases for the Accelerator.</p>
<p>Decolonization of science</p> <p>Articulating concrete actions for the “decolonization of science” and defining progress indicators would improve its legitimacy and effectiveness, making the proposal more compelling and aligned with CGIAR’s 2030 vision and funder expectations (pp. 14).</p>	<p>The Accelerator is already linking with an existing bilateral project and an ongoing multi-centre initiative on the very subject of decolonizing or localizing science. This program would serve as one of the early prototypes under AoW 1 and would generate best practices.</p>
<p>Research questions</p> <p>The research questions would be strengthened by explicitly stating the underlying hypotheses that will guide the work and how they will help address the emerging megatrends (pp. 85).</p>	<p>The Accelerator will include the hypotheses to the research questions during the development of its Workplan, which will include more details on ToC, Areas of Work, etc.</p>
<p>Linkages with other Programs and Accelerators</p> <p>A concern is how the accelerator will effectively work with and build on other capacity sharing activities at CGIAR (with other Programs and Accelerators) without duplication or competition (pp. 85).</p>	<p>The Accelerator will include a matrix analysis of Programs and other Accelerator during inception, to map Programs’ AoW and its own AoW, in order to define common interests in research questions or challenges, synergies, alignments, complementarities, and avoid duplication of actions.</p>
<p>Area of Work 1 Innovation lab: the requirement for development or adaptation of existing tools needs better justification with specific reference to assumption or drivers. It is exogenous in its description</p>	<p>The development of tools, prototypes, etc. (called solutions in the proposal) will result from setting up the Use Cases of the three Areas of Work. Ideally, this would be co-created with Programs, other</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>and would benefit from a clear strategy on how these will be actively used with stakeholders (pp. 86).</p>	<p>Accelerators and Partners involved in these Use Cases and would already bear some degree of endogeneity. However, we note that must be a clearer strategy on how to mainstream these solutions within CGIAR, support wider adoption and an explicit mechanism to capture feedback from users to adapt the solutions. This could be defined as a sub-area of Work under AoW 1 during workplan development.</p>
<p>Area of Work 2 Marketplace: it could be strengthened by explicit plan for how it will incentivize and engage users rather than being a clearinghouse (pp. 86).</p>	<p>This recommendation will be addressed while detailing the workplan for this AoW.</p>
<p>Area of Work 3 SSTC: a clarification on how the work will contribute to capacity sharing and innovation in different regions and context with clearer roles and responsibilities would improve the plan of work (pp. 86).</p>	<p>This recommendation will be addressed while detailing the workplan for this AoW.</p>
<p>Additional comments Traditionally, accelerators are considered catalysts for action, helping projects or businesses to scale up quickly. It might be good to clearly articulate the definition of the Capacity Sharing Accelerator and clarify the use of the terminology (pp. 87).</p>	<p>The three Accelerators developed a common document defining the nature and the role of an Accelerator, which they revisited during the Interim Directors and Deputies inception planning workshop in November 2024 in Nairobi. The Accelerators agreed to engage with each other more, to further define their commonalities, their specificities, and difference from the Programs. This is critical in communicating with our audiences so they can accurately understand the Accelerators and fairly assess their contribution to CGIAR wide impact during the lifecycle of the Portfolio.</p>

Genebanks

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>CGIAR’s unique role in genetic resources needs more clarity. Additionally, the claim that CGIAR holds a unique position in providing genetic resources is questionable, given the presence of well-managed local and national genebanks. The proposal should clarify the uniqueness among genetic resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an extremely important criticism. We feel that it is crucial that this statement be strongly rebutted since the global standing of the CGIAR genebanks underpins not just the Genebanks Program but CGIAR’s uniqueness as a whole and its capacity to improve agriculture on a global scale as well as the mission of stakeholders such as the Global Crop Diversity Trust and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Plant Treaty). This and several other viewpoints are potentially damaging and should be carefully corrected. Please see reasoning for this rebuttal: • While some national genebanks may be well-managed and certainly many of them conserve crop species that are not included in CGIAR genebanks, almost all of them (including the best) lack adequate resources to operate on a routine basis (e.g. to undertake viability monitoring, regeneration and distribution, prevent backlogs of materials in processing). CGIAR genebanks benefitted from stable funding for 12 years which has impacted significantly the status of the collections and capacity to operate. These findings are endorsed in two external reviews in 2017 and 2023. Concerns around regenerating ageing collections, safely duplicating them, and providing data from national genebanks is acknowledged in FAO’s State of the World Report on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agricultural and in country reports to the UN Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture’s Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources. • The role of national genebanks in international and, in some cases, national germplasm distribution is limited. CGIAR genebanks and breeding programs are responsible for nearly 90% of international exchanges under the standard material transfer agreement. This means that for the exchange of materials

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>between countries and continents, CGIAR's genebanks play a unique role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGIAR genebanks are not owned by any nation and their management by the international research Centres under the Plant Treaty ensures that any country is able to request and access these resources. This sets the CGIAR apart from all national genebanks who are governed by their country's implementation of the Plant Treaty. Since CGIAR Centres signed the Plant Treaty in 2006, their genebanks and breeding programs have distributed over 6 million samples of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) in over 60,000 standard material transfer agreements to recipients. These account to almost 90% of all distributions of PGRFA under the Plant Treaty. • Costing studies have been undertaken in partnership with the Global Crop Diversity Trust. CGIAR genebanks compare favorably in costs with three active genebanks based in Global North countries; according to a 2020 study, two of the benchmark genebanks have a per accession that is at least two times the average cost of CGIAR genebanks and the third had a similar per accession cost to CGIAR genebanks. • CGIAR and WorldVeg genebanks contribute more than 50% of the data on accessions available for distribution in Genesys, the online portal of genebank accession data (24% of total accessions listed or 37% of traditional landraces and wild species). Thirty-four countries outside Europe have provided data on Genesys. The majority of national genebanks have yet to publicly share passport and characterisation data relating to collections that they manage. Data availability is key in enabling an assessment of the relative composition of available collections. • Numerous national genebanks have requested CGIAR genebanks to manage or safety duplicate crop collections on their behalf. A

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>large majority of the national partners in a major diversity rescue project led by the Crop Trust funded by BMGF chose CGIAR Centres as hosts to duplicate their accessions. For roots and tuber crops this is particularly significant since these crops are expensive to conserve. CGIAR Centres that conserve clonal crop are at the forefront for cryobanking collections on a large scale. These protocols are shared with the national genebanks through workshops and student exchanges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGIAR and Crop Trust scientists interact continuously with national partners on a large scale and see firsthand the constraints under which they operate. Several national genebanks have been reviewed at some depth by the Crop Trust and CGAIR. There is overwhelming evidence that national genebanks require much more support to meet FAO genebank standards. • CGIAR’s genebanks are a recognised priority of the Crop Trust’s endowment fund disbursement strategy because of their effective management of globally unique collections. There are only four genebanks in the world to have reached performance targets, satisfactorily implemented a quality management system, to have been audited and reviewed at least twice and to receive a long-term partnership agreement (LPA) from the Crop Trust and they are all CGIAR genebanks. Six of the remaining eight genebanks to receive long-term grants (LTGs) are also CGIAR genebanks. No national genebank has reached performance targets or received long-term funding from the endowment. • The response of ISDC to the Genebanks 2-pager in May 2024 shows an understanding of CGIAR’s unique role, stating that <i>“the credibility of CGIAR genebanks as custodians of plant diversity is well-established, backed by decades of experience and internationally acknowledged capacity and expertise. This credibility is bolstered further by adherence to rigorous</i>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p><i>international standards and best practices in biodiversity conservation. Overall, CGIAR genebanks' long-standing track record and commitment to excellence emphasizes their credibility in safeguarding plant diversity for current and future generations. Its comparative advantage is evident—capacity and expertise, extensive collections, strategic location in diversity hotspots, and commitment to harmonizing processes to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.”</i></p>
<p>Conduct a thorough analysis of operational costs, including benchmarks and reduction targets.</p>	<p>Operational costs were analysed in depth in 2010 and 2020 in a joint initiative with the Global Crop Diversity Trust. These previous studies are used as a baseline for updating operational costs in 2024 for use in the workplan and budget for 2025-2030. The Crop Trust will undertake another costing study in 2030. The 2023 IAES external expert panel focused on genebank costs and reported a finding that there was evidence of cost savings since 2011. Genebanks’ operations have undergone detailed scrutiny and technical review thanks to the oversight of the Crop Trust in managing an endowment mechanism. The findings of a system-wide study of costs undertaken by the Crop Trust in 2020, highlighted that cost reductions should be focused on root, tuber, and banana crops, forages and trees, which are comparatively expensive. Efforts to rationalize roles and responsibilities for these crops across Centers should be considered. In addition, rather than focusing on processes, which are already well developed and efficient, cost-efficiencies should be sought by providing greater transparency and effectiveness in how Centre chargebacks are implemented, reducing non-attributable research support chargebacks that are included as a direct cost, and providing full control of the budget and retainment of staff to the genebank managers to enable and incentivize rationalization.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>The theory of change would benefit from better defined impact pathways and SMART goals. Clearly define the impact path and simplify the presentation of interactions, potentially by reorganizing sections. Establish SMART goals for accountability, develop clear KPIs and SMART targets to evaluate progress and effectiveness, particularly regarding accessibility and distribution of cryo-conserved materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no predetermined impact pathway in this instance – a reminder that genebanks are considered a service. They do not plan interventions or specific outcomes. The proposal attempted to describe the range of different potential impact pathways depending on the crop, region, and the relative resourcing of the crop breeding pipeline. As a service, it is more appropriate for genebanks to measure whether we are reaching users who can benefit from genebank services and whether those users are satisfied. The theory of change and impact pathways will be further developed in the Inception Phase. • Cryopreserved materials are designed as a long-term storage mechanism for the base collection. It is expensive (read; labour intensive) to introduce new materials into cryopreservation. Once it is stored in liquid nitrogen, its maintenance, however, is cheap and safe. It is, therefore, not the optimal storage mechanism meant for distribution and unlikely ever to be. Instead, the cryopreserved collection can act as the safety duplicate, and it can moreover facilitate the rationalize of the field and in vitro conservation forms. Those accessions that are not or hardly requested can be stored solely in cryopreservation. Its main purpose therefore is to vastly improve the long-term storage of roots, tubers, bananas and potentially other recalcitrant species and to facilitate the rationalization of overall genebank operations of these crops.
<p>Section on MELIA fails to include essential learning questions that would guide reflection and inform adaptive interventions. Establishing baseline information for various activities is critical for meaningful impact assessment. It becomes challenging to measure progress.</p>	<p>The genebanks monitoring system is well established in partnership with the Crop Trust and has been functioning well since 2014. Baselines were developed at that date and progress towards performance targets has been clearly shown and long-term grants have been awarded as a result. Further indicators will be developed for the remaining 15% of the activities described under AoW 2 & 5 during the Inception Phase. The genebanks are not research</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>programs and do not implement interventions in the same sense as other CGAIR Programs, this means research questions to guide genebanks work are not relevant. Long discourses on the measurement of genebanks' impact and on CGIAR genebanks impact are available on the Crop Trust website.</p>
<p>Clarify measurement criteria for process improvements. Provide rationale for chosen technologies and detail how various platforms integrate to enhance effectiveness. Set funding milestones to ensure support for additional activities.</p>	<p>Hundreds of small genebank process adjustments and improvements occur annually. These are extremely hard to monitor and document but a better job should be done to enable us to communicate such improvements to funders. This includes how Videometerlab and other imaging efforts are having an impact on identifying and characterising accessions and helping to make genebank data AI-ready. Much planning has been discussed and this AoW will be elaborated in detail in the inception Phase, including prioritization for funding.</p>
<p>Lacks clarity on co-design, particularly in defining roles and responsibilities among key partners.</p>	<p>The proposal was developed together with the WorldVeg and CIFOR-ICRAF. The Crop Trust, Plant Treaty and national partners were also involved in consultation and provided extensive feedback. The template (for a research program) was not ideal to describe the largest part of the work that is involved in the Genebanks proposal, which is the routine operations of the genebanks, cryobanking, work to improve protocols, related policy compliance and phytosanitary health. For more 80% of the proposal, there is no co-design element since it relates to CGIAR genebanks internal operations. AoW2 is designed to engage users to improve outreach and distribution of germplasm. This will involve codesign as the strategy is developed and implemented. AoW5 on capacity building with NARS by its nature depends entirely on developing activities in collaboration with national partners through regional entry points.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
<p>Details on cooperation and outreach are needed.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for partnerships with national research centres and advanced research institutes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is useful to distinguish cooperation with partners from outreach to users. Area of Work 2 describes the plans to develop strategic outreach to facilitate the use of the genebanks. These plans will be developed in detail as part of the Inception Phase. Cooperation with key partners such as the Plant Treaty, the Crop Trust, FAO Commission, and with CGIAR partners is described in the proposal (mainly in Area of Work 5) but there are many other types of partners working with the CGIAR genebanks. Details on cooperation with these partners will be provided in the Inception Phase. • We have been conducting regional workshops and promoting the implementation of regional networks with the objective to identify key partners on genetic resources conservation. Regional workshops were conducted in Asia and Africa, networks and CoPs were implemented in Latin America, and we plan to promote the continuity and scale of this work if adequate budget is made available.
<p>The focus should shift from increasing user numbers and seed requests to prioritizing core activities related to collection, conservation and distribution of genetic resources. CGIAR must identify regions where their interventions are truly needed. By emphasizing local capacity building and minimizing competition with national research efforts, CGIAR can foster sustainable agricultural development.</p>	<p>In measuring the efficacy of genebanks efforts to improve strategic outreach to users, genebanks might want to measure the frequency of new users requesting information, germplasm or support. This is a reasonable indicator but no doubt more thought could be put into how to measure the satisfaction of users and the usefulness of the germplasm distributed by genebanks. This can be considered in the Inception Phase. There is some paradox here since the reviewer goes on to say the focus should be related to “collection, conservation and distribution”. Monitoring the number of users does relate to distribution. Alternative metrics for the numbers of samples and accessions distributed are already monitored but have not been imposed as a performance target since there is no need to incentivize sending out more germplasm when sending out more precisely matched and potentially fewer samples is preferable. Conservation</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	activities are a major focus of the genebanks and are already well monitored through performance targets, audits and reviews. Again, it should be emphasized that the genebanks are not planning interventions. It is not a research program. There is no obvious competition with national research efforts. Germplasm is distributed from CGIAR genebanks upon request from the user. <u>CGIAR genebanks do not send out materials unsolicited.</u>
<p>Clearly define stakeholder roles and responsibilities, specify genebank mandates, and conduct a user study to understand real needs regarding seed traits and market demands.</p>	<p>It is understood here that the “stakeholder” refers to the genebank user. To ensure there is no misunderstanding, CGIAR genebanks do not send out germplasm unsolicited. They provide a service and only respond to users’ requests. The genebank has no role in determining what germplasm is distributed where. The genebanks do not carry out interventions or distribute germplasm where it is not specifically requested. They require information on the purpose of the request to ensure that the conditions of the Plant Treaty are being met and the germplasm distribution is for breeding, research, training, or conservation as expected under the Plant Treaty (germplasm is not provided for commercial use). AoW2 intends to develop methods to engage and advise users and respond better to their expressed needs in their efforts to select best-bet germplasm from the thousands of accessions available in the collections. Breeding for Tomorrow is better placed to conduct market intelligence to understand needs regarding seed traits and market demands.</p>
<p>Comparative advantage analysis of GHU is weak.</p>	<p>A comparative advantage analysis of GHUs would have to account for the fact that their work is a service for the CGIAR genebanks and breeding programs and cannot be undertaken by NPPOs or other providers, at least not without incurring a similar cost to the CGIAR. If phytosanitary controls were to be outsourced, they would have to be in-country by necessity. Bioversity already outsources GHU services. There may be other Centers that could do the same; but it is questionable whether costs would be lower, and the risks would be</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	considerably increased. This proposal would also not be impacted by outsourcing GHUs since the activities described would still have to be undertaken for the CGIAR.
<p>We recommend that Genebanks conduct a detailed comparative analysis to assess both internal and external partner capacity for species preservation and Germplasm Health Units. Consider collaboration with national/international genebanks that also comply with ITPGRFA where they have capacity to preserve species and direct CGIAR efforts to under-resourced regions for capacity development such as East and sub-Saharan Africa that are diversity hot spots. They should identify regions where their interventions are truly needed, as demonstrated by successful cases in countries like Mexico and Colombia. By emphasizing local capacity building and minimizing competition with national research efforts, CGIAR can foster sustainable agricultural development and direct precious resources to the most needed areas.</p>	<p>Detailed analysis of the contents of national genebanks and capacity needs are available in the country reports to the FAO Global Plan of Action, the State of the World report, compliance reports to the Plant Treaty, WIEWS database as well as in Crop Trust technical reviews of national genebanks. Any effort on the part of CGIAR to do further comparative analyses beyond what is already done would require careful consideration to determine whether any further information can be gathered without carrying out expensive on-site investigations and to consider what the added value and objectives of such a study would be. Barring very few exceptions, national genebanks rely on the national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) to provide phytosanitary control of germplasm entering and leaving nation states rather than having their own germplasm health units as CGIAR Centers have. Genebanks are not planning interventions or prioritizing interventions. The proposal describes in AoW5 the limited efforts of the genebanks to respond to capacity building needs that are expressed in submitted country reports, regional workshops and in projects such as those implemented by the Crop Trust. Countries and regions are not being prioritized at this stage.</p>
<p>Concrete actions, like identifying relevant germplasm and improving passport data, are needed.</p>	<p>AoW 2 focuses on improving passport data and tools for identifying relevant germplasm based on existing characterization and evaluation data. Leveraging advancements in sequencing and bioinformatics to identify relevant germplasm will depend on the bilateral funds. Plans for this area will be elaborated in the Inception Phase.</p>

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
Enhance focus on climate impacts.	Enhancing the focus on climate impacts is very relevant. One of the ways genebanks can do this is by associating climate-relevant data (e.g. georeference) with the accessions to aid their data-driven selection by users. This is one of the objectives of AoW2 and will be developed in the Inception phase.
Enhance focus on NUS.	There are some NUS in the collections, especially those of the same genera as major staples (e.g. <i>Vigna</i> , <i>Phaseolus</i> , small millets, etc). The involvement of WorldVeg would considerably expand the scope of the Genebanks' work by including 500 species of vegetables, including many NUS. Further genebanks could be involved if funding were available (e.g. CePaCT in Fiji manage the global collection of taro). Note that CGIAR genebanks will always remain responsible for the conservation and availability of the major staple crops and that resources cannot necessarily be moved from these to other crops especially given the frequency of requests for these crops. Regarding neglected crops, CGIAR genebanks have been working and advocating for them for decades, including crops such as millets, bambara groundnut, Andean roots and tubers, sweet potatoes and others. They can only have their scope increased if the genebanks budget commensurately increases. This is because CGIAR holds the genebanks collections in trust with the international community under the Plant Treaty and cannot decide on de-prioritizing crops that are already part of the scope of the collections and are under the agreement with the Plant Treaty. Moreover, to include crops in the genebanks must be approved by the Centers' Boards, if they are not under the mandate of the Center, and a clear budget for this is needed.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
Define how gaps will be identified.	Numerous gap analyses of collections in CGIAR genebanks have been published using geographic, taxonomic and trait data, and are used for directing collecting efforts where funds are available for such activities. During the Inception Phase, more detailed plans will be developed to work with national partners to jointly analyze genetic diversity of shared crops and identify priorities to build on the information already available from published studies and Global Crop Conservation Strategies published by the Crop Trust.
Critically evaluate the rationale behind increasing collection use.	An increased collection use is not a goal in itself; the objective is to enable the smarter and more targeted use of diversity for impact , which does not necessarily translate into more accessions being distributed. However, by strategically reaching out to new users and maintaining relations with existing users, there could be increased and more targeted use of the collections. It is true that poorly developed metrics in this area risks creating adverse incentives, and this should be avoided at all costs when the more detailed metrics are developed during the Inception Phase.
Avoid overstating the benefits of virus-free materials without addressing multiplication challenges.	There is a grave misunderstanding implied in the recommendation to “avoid overstating the benefits of virus-free materials without addressing multiplication challenges”. Genebanks are not suppliers of source seed for seed systems, although this may be requested of them especially for root, tuber and banana crops. They provide small amounts of germplasm of a wide range of accessions representing available crop diversity for a wide range of largely research and evaluation purposes, frequently to users from other countries. It is true that germplasm generally does need to be multiplied up in-country. However, if the germplasm from CGIAR arrives clean then in-country multiplication can only propagate existing in-country pathogens. This is true also for the source seed that CGIAR provides from breeding programs, which are also serviced by GHUs. CGIAR’s

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>reputation would be seriously damaged if it were responsible for the spread of pests and diseases from one country or continent to another. The reason that CGIAR genebanks and breeding programs have high levels of international distribution is because researchers are assured that requested materials will not be infected by new pathogens. There are few alternative sources, especially for roots, tubers and bananas, that can provide the same assurance.</p>
<p>AoW 2 - Enhance user engagement by establishing a feedback loop with national-level stakeholders. Clearly define the impact of increased user participation and set specific targets and funding needs for Output 2.2. Assess the feasibility of adopting new technologies for local genebanks and emphasize the role of universities in training future professionals on germplasm use.</p>	<p>There is much misunderstanding here. National users are the requesters of genebank materials and not passive participants. Users will not be identified by CGIAR genebanks. CGIAR genebanks will work to improve data resources so that materials can be selected by users more effectively for their own expressed needs. CGIAR will need to engage with users to see how we can improve data and accession-selection processes. The data models and systems that will be developed are for use by CGIAR genebanks and there is no ambition for local genebanks to adopt the data models and tools at this stage.</p>
<p>AoW 3 - In futureproofing the ABS policies, the impact of climate change will be largely overlooked.</p> <p>Benefit sharing could play an important role by channeling resources to the conservation (maintenance) and use of crop genetic resources for adaptation purposes especially where there are more adverse and urgent effects of climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not understand the first sentence “In future proofing the ABS policies, the impact of climate change will be largely overlooked.” Is this referring to the overall state of ABS policies currently under development in UN fora and nationally, or the approach to futureproofing ABS policies applicable to the CGIAR? For clarity, our intention, in bullet point 2 of Section 6.3.2 of our proposal was to describe CGIAR’s contributions to the development and adoption of future-proofed ABS policies at global and national levels. • We fully agree that benefit-sharing should support the use of genetic diversity for climate change adaptation. We do not necessarily agree that the ABS policies currently under development (or revision) will necessarily overlook climate

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
	<p>change adaptation. We are hopeful that they will not, and that we can play a proactive role in that regard. In the next paragraphs we consider the situation with respect to both monetary and non-monetary benefit sharing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plant Treaty - not CGIAR - oversees the benefit sharing mechanism. Past rounds of disbursements from the Plant Treaty’s benefit sharing fund have included support for using crop diversity for climate change adaptation. CGIAR Centers participated in some of the funded projects. It is likely that future rounds of projects supported by the Plant Treaty’s benefit sharing fund will also support climate change adaptation. CGIAR has been advocating under both the Plant Treaty and the CBD for creation of more concrete incentives for increased investment in the generation and sharing of such benefits, and for an improved framework for reporting on such benefit sharing. There are still openings for positive outcomes in this regard.
<p>AoW 3 - The emphasis of the policy work should be on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture because this is the mandate of the CGIAR.</p>	<p>There is a misunderstanding here. AoW 3 aims to ensure CGIAR’s own compliance with international policy and most specifically the Plant Treaty. CGIAR does not have a role in ensuring benefits from the Plant Treaty’s benefit sharing mechanism are made available to farmers to support on-farm conservation efforts adapt to climate change. The CGIAR must also be compliant with the CBD’s Nagoya protocol, which dictates how genetic resources and related digital sequence information from farmers’ fields and in situ sites may be shared across borders. The objectives and related indicators will be SMART.</p>

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<p>AoW - 4 What are the main challenges? Are they considering local capabilities from external partners? Are they considering working with academia for characterization and epidemiology? It is important to work together with national plant protection organizations (NPPOs).</p>	<p>All of these aspects will be planned and described in more detail during the Inception Phase; It should be clarified that the GHU service units serve CGIAR genebanks and breeding to ensure that handled and distributed materials are pathogen free.</p>
<p>AoW 4: The proponents need to be more specific about what “co-create and implement innovations and procedures” means; -what crops or pathogens? -What are the main challenges? Are they considering local capabilities from external partners? Are they considering working with academia for characterization and epidemiology? It is important to work together with national plant protection organizations (NPPOs).</p>	<p>Germplasm testing requires broad-specific tests to detect all known pathogens and convince NPPOs that germplasm is free from quarantine pests to get import or export permits from countries. All crop species conserved in CGIAR genebanks and utilized in CGIAR breeding programs, including VACS, are priority crops. Pests and pathogens affecting these crops in countries of operation are default priorities for GHUs. The main challenge is the dynamic nature of pests and pathogens, as new pathogens are found in countries of operations, which demands the evolution of testing procedures. Similarly, phytosanitary regulations applied for germplasm exchanges change with changes in phytosanitary status. Keeping GHU procedures agile is part of the GHU mission. GHU teams collaborate closely, particularly with NPPOs, to co-create fit-for-purpose solutions. Yes, GHUs partner with academic institutions to advance research on the epidemiology of seed-borne pests and develop preventive strategies. It includes leveraging cutting-edge technologies such as high-throughput sequencing (HTS) and multispectral imaging for enhanced detection and management.</p>
<p>AoW 5 - Clarify how to effectively use limited resources and consider direct funding to regional genebanks. Define "low-cost genotyping" and evaluate the benefits of outsourcing this.</p>	<p>The proposal notes: “building on a low-cost, joint initiative to genotype and share data on common bean diversity among national partners Latin America, further crops will be subject to similar analyses in Centers of crop diversity”. This means that a low-cost effort was undertaken as a model and will now be expanded to other crops and countries, leveraging internal capacity and partnership among national partners. Outsourcing low-cost genotyping is not</p>

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	being considered at this stage. It is not clear from the review what is meant by <i>“Additionally, the statement about maximizing limited resources lacks clarity, suggesting a disparity in support between large and regional genebanks. It proposes that funding should be directed to regional institutions directly, bypassing intermediaries”</i> and whether the recommendation really is to directly fund regional genebanks. It should be clear that this proposal is not intending to fund the establishment and running costs of regional genebanks that are not from CGIAR Centres.
AoW 5 - Empower local scientists through targeted training and use of public platforms for broader outreach, ensuring regional governance develops independently without reliance on external intervention.	Online training modules for appealing to a broader scientific public relating to conservation approaches is certainly appealing. However, there are other CGIAR programs and organizations outside the CGIAR who are better placed and who have already developed resources for community genebanks. CGIAR genebanks are ready to partner with those programs and organizations (e.g., Oxfam Novib), and have been doing some work related to community genebanks, as in CIP Genebank does in Peru, and nature positive projects to provide relevant experience to help develop such widely relevant training tools.
Balance innovation with stability by ensuring new technologies enhance practical processes.	AoW 1 represents the sustained and improved operations of the genebanks. This area represents more than 70% of the proposed budget and activities. New technologies will be targeted exclusively to enhance existing processes and accession selection.
Enhance the plan to include sub-Saharan African countries in capacity development efforts.	National genebanks in sub-Saharan Africa have been the focus of capacity sharing under the Genebanks Initiative and will continue to be a priority since capacity needs in the region are particularly acute. Planning for this region will be detailed in the Inception phase.

Feedback	Brief description of how feedback will be addressed
Statements that require correction	
<p>The core activities to maintain and conserve germplasm described in Area of Work 1 are fundamental and will be supported through Crop Trust endowment.</p>	<p>The Crop Trust provides support to the CGIAR through two types of agreement: LPA and LTG. The total of all grants to CGIAR Centres from the Crop Trust amount to USD 5.7 million. This amount is <u>not included</u> in the budget for Area of Work 1, which amounts to USD 22 million.</p>
<p>Most of the conservation efforts are made at the national (local level) with limited resources and capacity to climate change impacts (adaptation), especially in low-income countries.</p>	<p>Fewer countries now account for a larger percentage of the total world <i>ex situ</i> germplasm holdings. Many countries still lack adequate human capacity, facilities, funds or management systems to meet their <i>ex situ</i> conservation needs and obligations, and as a result, a number of collections are at risk.</p> <p>Greater efforts are needed to build a truly rational global system of <i>ex situ</i> collections.</p>
<p>The CBD is marginal for PGRFA.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The collection of PGRFA from in situ and on farm conditions, to be included in Article 15 collections under the Plant Treaty, needs to comply with national measures implementing the CBD and its Nagoya Protocol. This is why mutually supportive implementation of the CBD/Nagoya Protocol, and the Plant Treaty are the subject of numerous resolutions by both the CBD’s Conference of Parties and the Plant Treaty’s Governing Body. • Many NUS are not included among the 64 crops and forages covered by the Plant Treaty. So, accessing those materials and related traditional knowledge, -- even from national genebanks -- would be subject to the Nagoya Protocol. Recognizing the importance of CGIAR scientists’ complying with the CBD/Nagoya Protocol, in 2018, the CGIAR System Management Board and CGIAR Centers Director Generals adopted the ‘Guidelines to the Nagoya Protocol for the CGIAR Research Centers’ available at https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/02bb55e

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	<p>b-7ce0-47d2-8a1b-3e7617b1a4ff/content and the System Office included new fields concerning Centers' due diligence complying with national laws implementing the Nagoya Protocol in the template for Centers' annual reports on the implementation of the CGIAR Guiding Principles for Management of Intellectual Assets.</p>