



24th CGIAR System Council Meeting
10–11 June 2026, Antalya, Türkiye

Agenda Item 15 Update on Culture and Engagement

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Issue date: 1 June 2026

Purpose: For consent agenda/information
 For discussion
 For discussion and decision
 Other (specify)

Requested action: Oversight

Executive summary: The following update reports on the latest workforce data collection from all CGIAR Centers as of December 2025, with a focus on gender, diversity and inclusion.

The analysis shows trends over the previous five years of data collection, including areas of progress, and identifies gaps in gender balance across career pipelines and workstreams. The update also highlights related Culture and Engagement initiatives that support a more inclusive workplace culture, including leadership development, wellbeing, and the need to facilitate real-time people data collection, in alignment with Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES) recommendations.

The update makes a compelling case for continued attention to diversity targets and other measures to proactively support better gender balance and address inequalities.

Draft decision point: N/A

Supporting materials: • Pre-read
 • Pre-read presentation slides

Prepared by: Rebecca Williams, Director of People & Culture

Culture & Engagement Progress

1. Common Job Framework Project

The Common Job Framework is a strategic initiative designed to strengthen CGIAR's ability to develop and deploy its talent and plan its workforce.

By establishing a unified structure for job families, job grades, standard job descriptions, and competencies, the project provides a foundation for more coherent organizational design, workforce analysis, leadership development and clear career paths across Centers.

The project is in the pipeline for approval by the Global Leadership Team; however significant progress has been made with the majority of Centers involved and continues to scale in a phased approach.

2. CGIAR Progress Index

The CGIAR Culture and Engagement (C&E) Progress Index is in the final stages of completion with a view to launching in Q4 2026 and will measure Center-level progress in each of the Outcome Areas of the C&E Action Plan 2025–27.

Outcome Areas include:

- Inclusive Leadership
- Inclusive Workplace Culture
- Diverse Representation
- Accountability

The rating for each outcome area will reflect a composite score made up of indicators tied to the approved areas of work in the Action Plan, resulting in better measurement of System-level impacts.

3. LEAD Together–Leadership Development Programme

The LEAD Together Pilot has successfully concluded:

Strategic Highlights:

- Delivered at scale: ~125 leaders engaged across CGIAR; 101 completed an 11-month, multi-modal leadership journey aligned to CGIAR's 2030 Strategy
- Strong impact and endorsement: 94% of participants would recommend the program; average rating 4.4/5; measurable capability gains (7–15%) in critical areas including leading through complexity, collaboration, and systems thinking

- Tangible leadership shifts: Increased confidence, inclusivity, and cross-boundary collaboration — strengthening leadership effectiveness in a partnership-driven environment
- System-level value created: Established a connected, cross-Center leadership community, reinforcing trust, alignment, and a shared leadership language across CGIAR

The next step is to scale and institutionalise by using pilot evidence to embed leadership development as a core organisational capability. We are currently working with the Centers to source nominations for the 2026 cohort with a target launch of July–August 2026.

In addition, there is proactive effort to activate our alumni network, to leverage graduates as mentors, role models, and contributors to future leadership and mid-manager programs

4. Middle-Management training

The Middle Manager Development Programme targets a critical execution layer. The objective is to strengthen middle managers as the key link between CGIAR strategy and delivery — shaping performance, culture, and partnerships. The programme has been shaped on evidence-based design, building on system-wide diagnostics and extensive consultation with all Centers, the program addresses capability gaps across Centers through customizable modules tailored to specific learning opportunities.

The intention is to drive consistency at scale and establish core people-management fundamentals to improve management quality and alignment across CGIAR with an emphasis on behaviours, ethics and integrity.

The model will be flexible and scalable, with a standardised core with modular adaptation, enabling relevance across diverse contexts while maintaining coherence and cost efficiency

Key to sustainability of the programme is to build internal capability, hence the programme will be delivered via a Train-the-Trainer approach to embed leadership development internally and reduce reliance on external delivery and costs.

It is designed for impact with clear measurement of behavioural and organisational outcomes to inform scale-up and investment decisions. Target launch in partnership with Centers by June–July 2026.

5. Staff Wellbeing Initiatives

A Wellbeing event calendar for 2026 has been developed based on evidence and staff input, integrating insights from both the 2025 wellbeing session feedback and the 2025 Engagement Survey results. This data-driven approach ensures that the programme is tailored to CGIAR's organisational context and workforce needs.

As of end April, three wellbeing sessions have been delivered — The Science of Wellbeing: Coping, Caring, and Thriving, Building Stronger Workplace Relationships: Constructive Feedback, and Conflict Resolution Skills — attracting 649 registrations and 295 active participants.

The events will continue to expand to address priority topics identified by staff, including burnout prevention, emotional intelligence at work, and effective time management.

In parallel, building on the success of the first cohort of certified Mental Health First Aiders, we are partnering with CGIAR Centers to extend this certification opportunity to all People & Culture staff, strengthening internal capability to provide early support and foster a psychologically safe workplace culture. Coordination is currently underway to ensure effective rollout and alignment across Centers.

6. IAES Recommendation 8: CGIAR People Database

Following the Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES) set of recommendations for the Culture & Engagement action plan, a key recommendation is important to note.

‘Seek a Global Leadership Team (GLT)-supported mandate and governance framework to enable responsible integration of people data with program performance (and, where relevant, financial) data.’

During the OneCGIAR reforms the People Database project was put on hold. However, the technological infrastructure for receiving live Center data and mapping it to a common format was completed. Seven out of 13 Centers shared data at that time.

Barriers cited by others, included a lack of system-wide data governance; no clear mandate from the Executive Leadership; and resource limitations (human and technological).

Proceeding with this recommendation will require a GLT discussion and mandate as a next step to move forward. The benefits of this would ensure that data is securely and effortlessly shared in real-time, accuracy is strengthened and provide insightful reports to inform data-driven solutions. In addition, automated data extraction would improve time lags, data accuracy, integration with other data and support further cross-Center collaboration.

The outcomes of the most recent workforce data collection demonstrate the need for enhanced real-time data to support initiatives, deepen analysis, identify trends, and assess underlying drivers, particularly in efforts to support enhanced gender balance in the workforce.



System Council Meeting Culture & Engagement: Workforce Data

June 2026

Presented by Rebecca Williams
CGIAR System Organization

Director of People & Culture



CGIAR Global Workforce

8,390

Staff

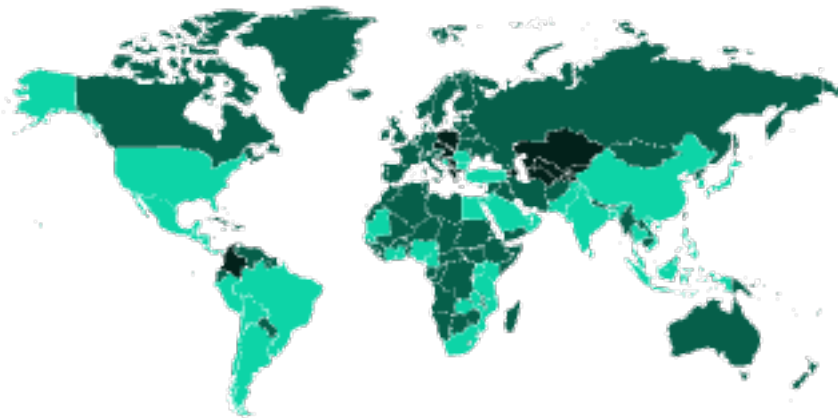
Work across 12 Centers and the CGIAR System Organization



71

Countries CGIAR works in

Extends CGIAR's global impact across six continents



123

Nationalities Represented

Reflect the multicultural perspectives we bring to our work

36%

Women in research

Over half of our staff work directly on research. 36% of research staff are women.



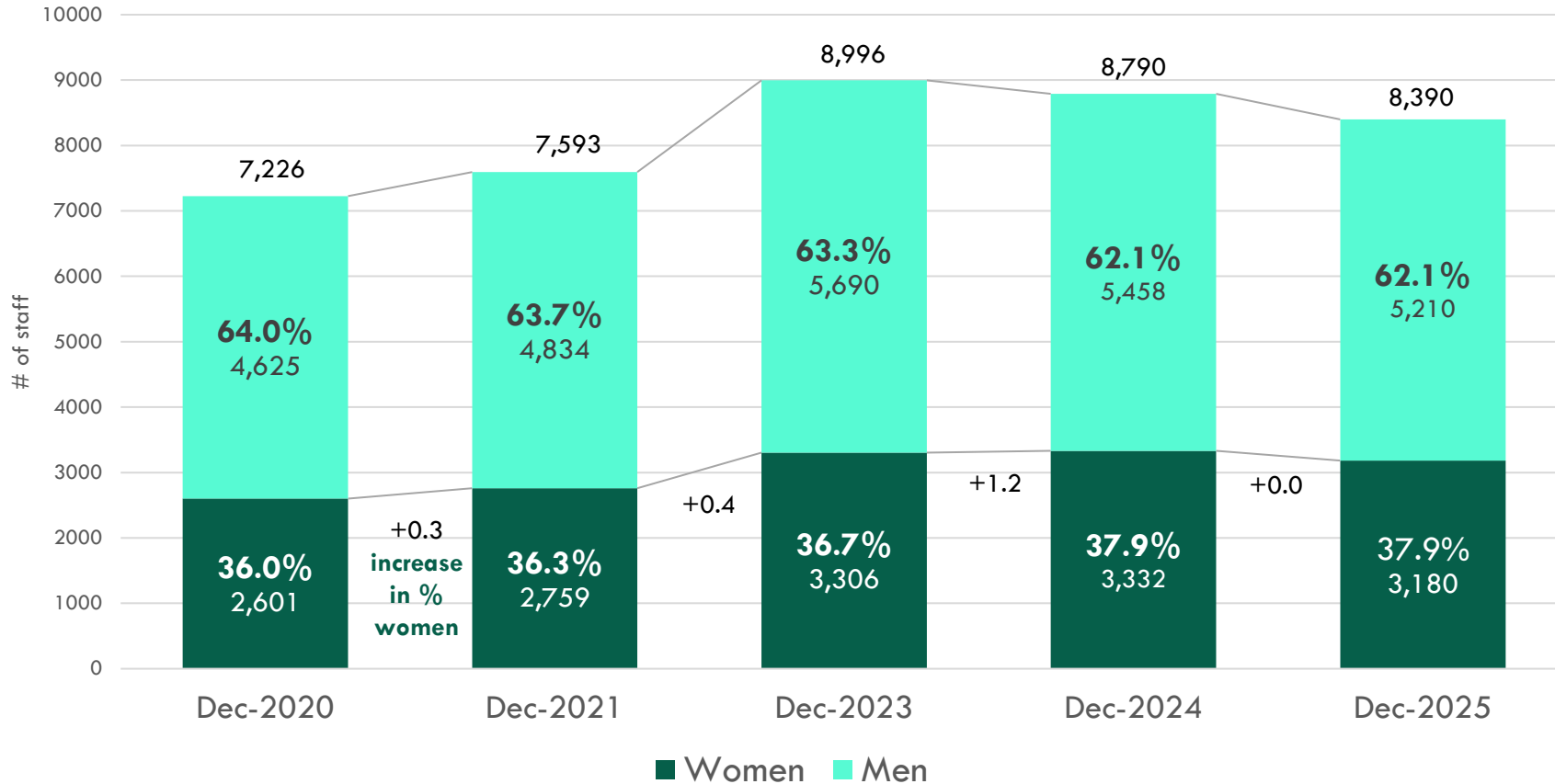
38%

Women overall

CGIAR's highest proportion to date of female staff has been maintained for two consecutive years



Gender Parity Progress – maintained...but not improved



2023–2024 saw the largest annual gender parity progress to date (+1.2 pts).

While this did not improve in 2024–25, it was **maintained** in a second year of downsizing.

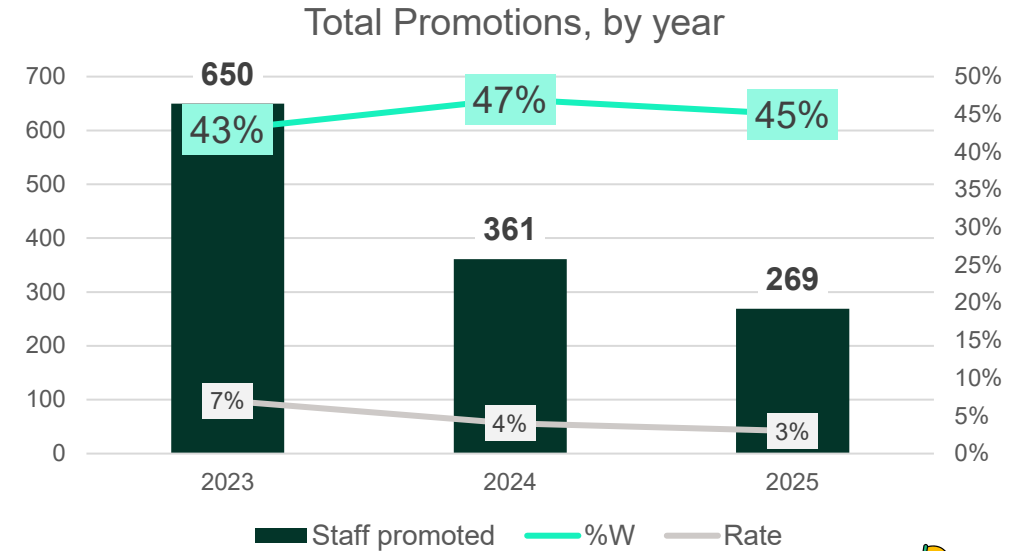
5 years since this data collection launched the proportion of women has increased only 1.9 percentage points from 36% to 37.9%

Promotions – also remained gender-balanced in the face of significant declines

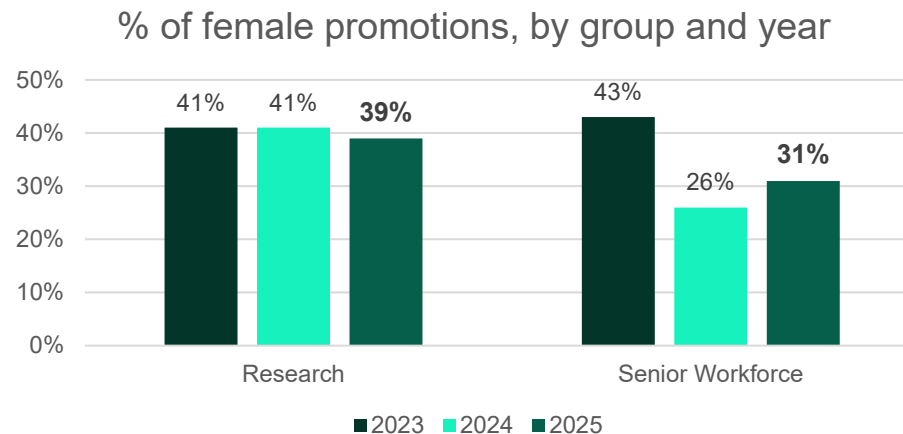
Promotions declined for the last 2 years. In 2025, they were less than half their 2023 level (269 v. 650). In 2023, 7% of staff experienced a promotion, vs. 3% in 2025.

Despite these declines, promotions of women held steady at 43–47%.

- Research promotions of women remained stable, with a small decrease in the % of women.
- Senior promotions of women were higher in 2025 than in 2024

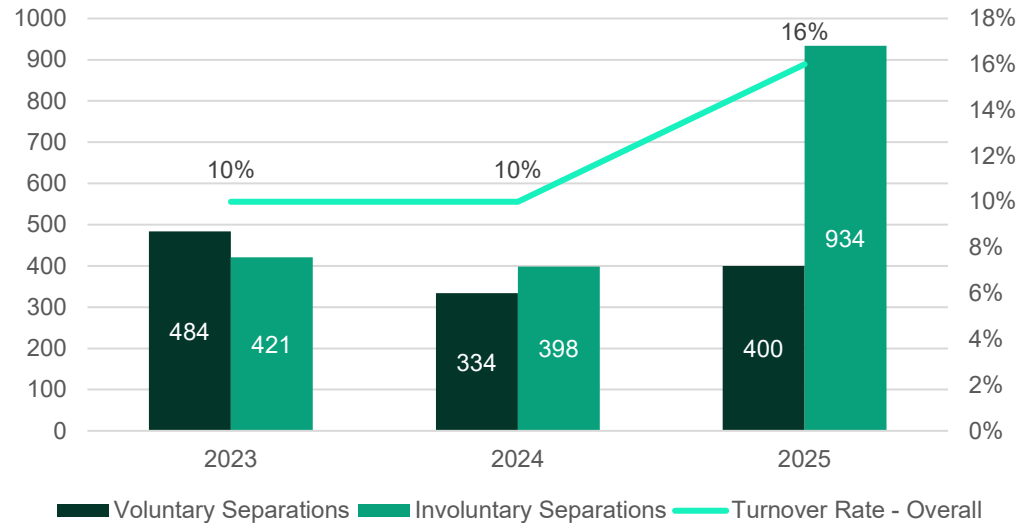


In general women are promoted in greater proportions than their representation — making promotions an area of strength in advancing gender parity at CGIAR.



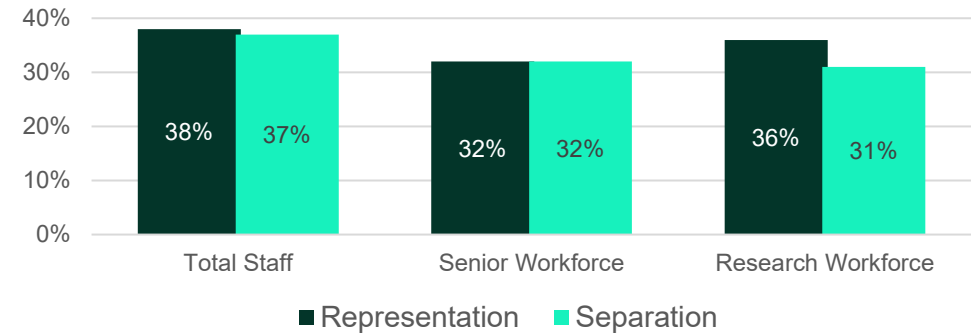
Separations — while women’s retention is in line with their representation — they are leaving in greater proportions for growth/career opportunities

The number of involuntary separations dramatically increased in 2025 — more than doubling from previous years. **But, women were not disproportionately impacted by this**, with their share of separations on par with their share of the workforce (see right).



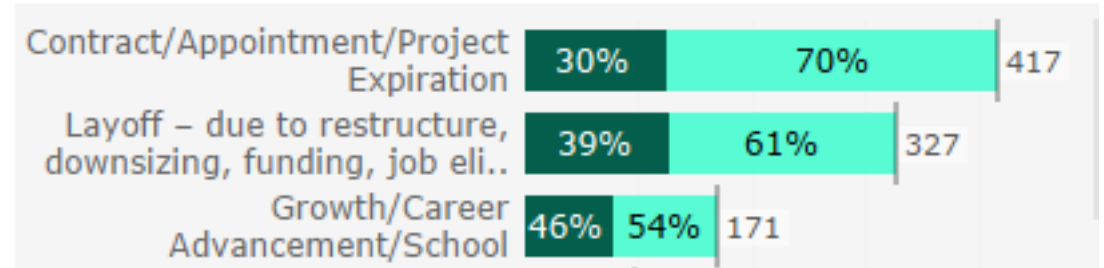
	2023	2024	2025
Total Separations	905	913	1,334

2025 Women’s Share of Separations compared to their Representation



Women’s share of contract expirations and layoffs was also below or in line with their representation levels. However, women are disproportionately leaving for **growth/career advancements** reasons.

Top 3 Reasons for Separation — 2025

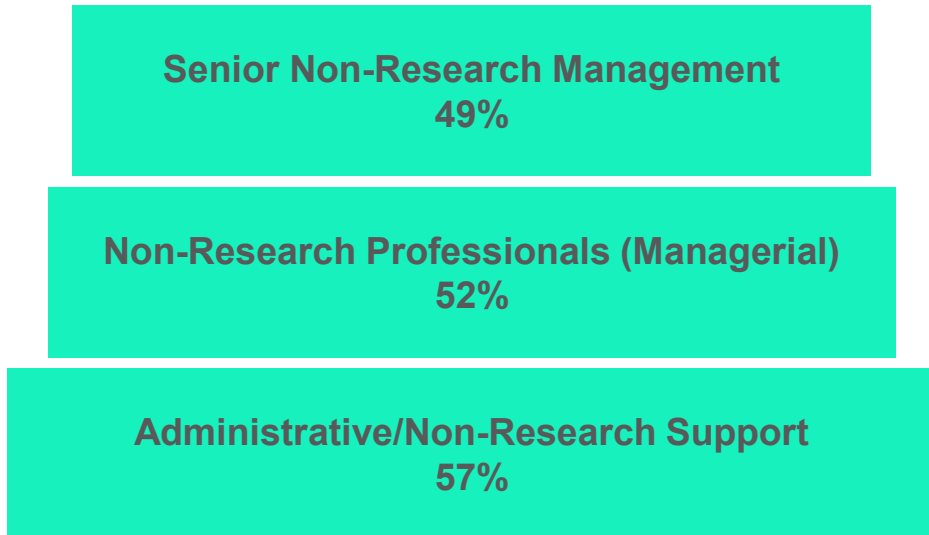


■ Female | ■ Male

Non-Research and Research Career Pipelines

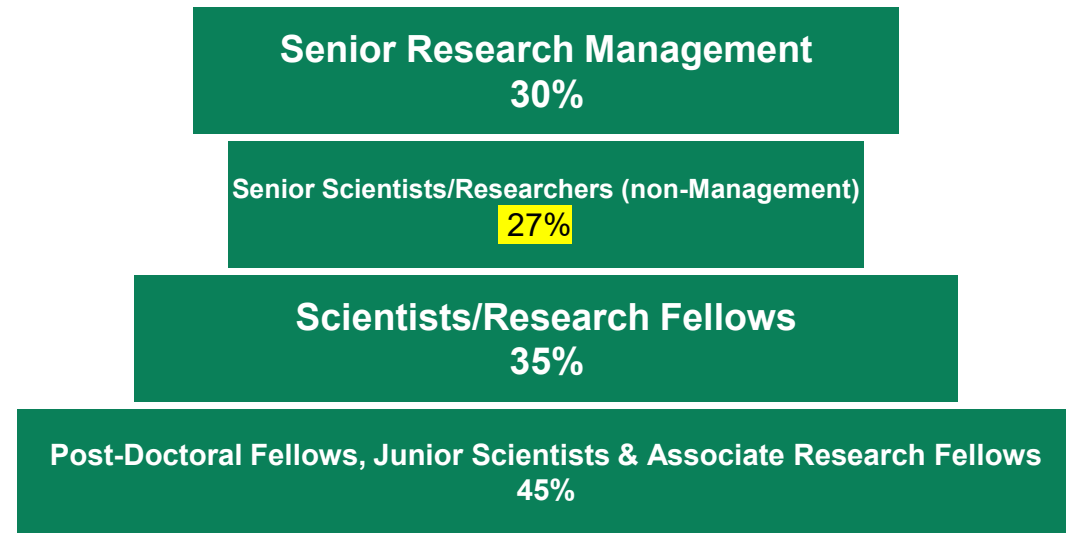
Non-Research

Women make up nearly half or more of each level of the non-research career pipeline.

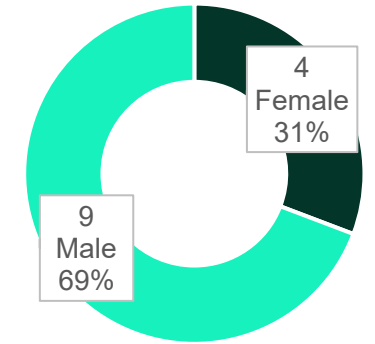


Research

Gender balance fluctuates far more in the research pipeline. While near parity at the post-doc entry level (45%), their proportions subsequently fall to a third or less at the higher levels.



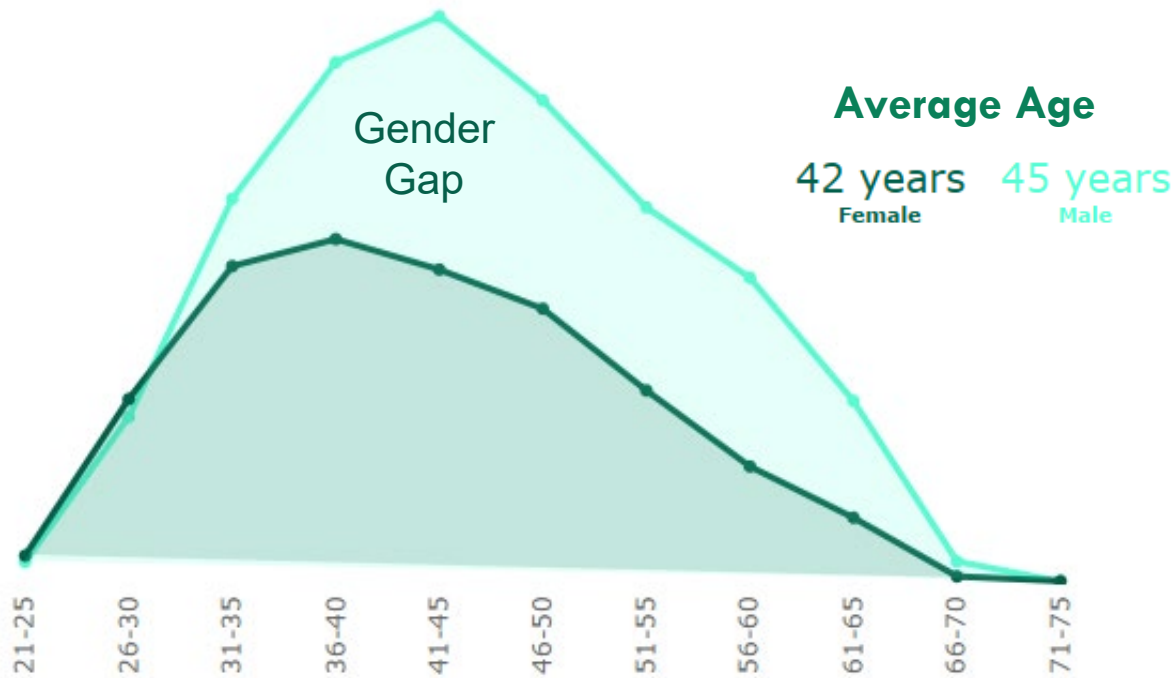
Gender Balance of Science Program Directors



Gender gap persists for age and family

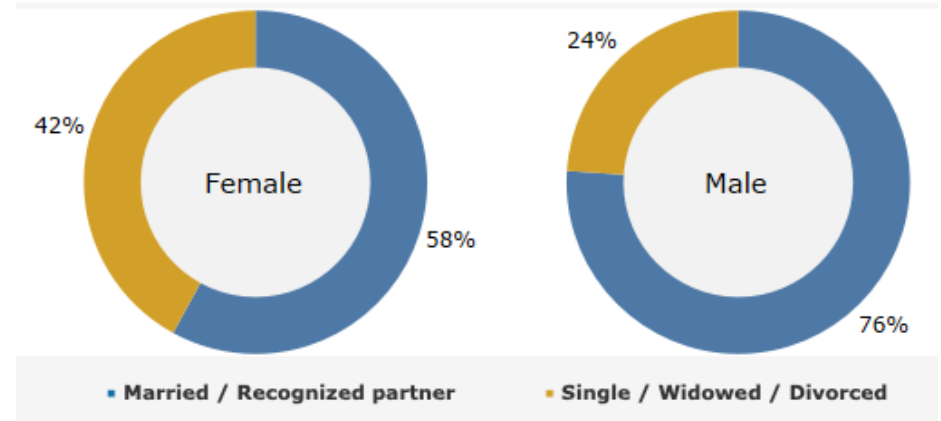
Young women and men, up to the age of 30, join CGIAR in equal numbers (women even slightly outnumbering men as of 2025). After age 30, a gender gap emerges that continues to widen and remains large until the age of 70.

Female staff continue to be more likely to be single/widowed/divorced (42% v 24%) and have fewer dependents (0.6 v 1.1) than their male counterparts - a trend that has been found since reporting began looking at this area in 2020.



Average # of Dependents
 0.6 Female 1.1 Male

Marital Status



NOTE: There is no positive value placed on having dependents or a partner. But if all things are equal, we would expect men and women to have similar partner rates and dependents. This is not what the data shows.

Gender Parity Progress by Workforce Group (WG)

Yellow highlight indicates peak %W

Workforce Group	Dec-20	Dec-21	Dec-23	Dec-24	Dec-25	2024–2025 change	2020–2025 change
Executive Leadership*	25%	23%	39%	14%	21%	7%	-4%
Center Senior Leadership Team (excluding DG)	29%	30%	35%	32%	39%	7%	10%
Senior Non-Research Management	40%	47%	54%	53%	49%	-4%	9%
Senior Research Management	25%	27%	30%	32%	30%	-2%	5%
Senior Scientists/Researchers (non-Management)	25%	25%	25%	26%	27%	1%	2%
Non-Research Professionals (Managerial)	51%	50%	53%	51%	52%	1%	1%
Scientists/Research Fellows	35%	33%	38%	36%	35%	-1%	0%
Senior Research Support	24%	26%	40%	42%	43%	1%	19%
Post-Doctoral Fellows, Junior Scientists & Associate Research Fellows	39%	45%	43%	44%	45%	1%	6%
Research Support	37%	35%	35%	35%	35%	0%	-2%
Administrative/Non-Research Support	56%	57%	56%	56%	57%	1%	1%
Operational Support	18%	17%	16%	13%	14%	1%	-4%

Areas for celebration:

- 5/12 WGs are at their highest proportions of women to date.
- The two highest levels of leadership made the largest gains of 7 percentage points each since 2024
- All but four levels increased their 2024 proportions of women (one of these was and is at gender parity).

*The size of Executive Leadership widely varied from 2020–2025. The 39% was achieved when the number of positions at this level nearly doubled during the OneCGIAR transition.



Target-setting: Recommendations

A multitude of factors impact gender balance (e.g. occupational segregation, cultural barriers, discrimination, etc.). While limitations exist, we can aspire towards progress being made by each area against itself over time and in relation to external benchmarks. **This requires establishing targets.**

Progress matters, not the starting point!

Recommendations to keep targets realistic:

1. Ensure progress is made in **areas against themselves over time**
2. Where applicable, compare gender balance to **external benchmarks** (e.g. national or industry labor participation rates by sex).

Suggested Target Groups

Progress Index can track gender parity progress made against previous year for areas of interest for the Integrated Partnership Board (IPB). Suggested target groups:

- **Overall staff**
- **Center Senior Leadership WG 1&2 or staff BG 11+**
- **Women in research (Research WGs)**
- **Women in Research Management or Program Directors**

Thank you!

