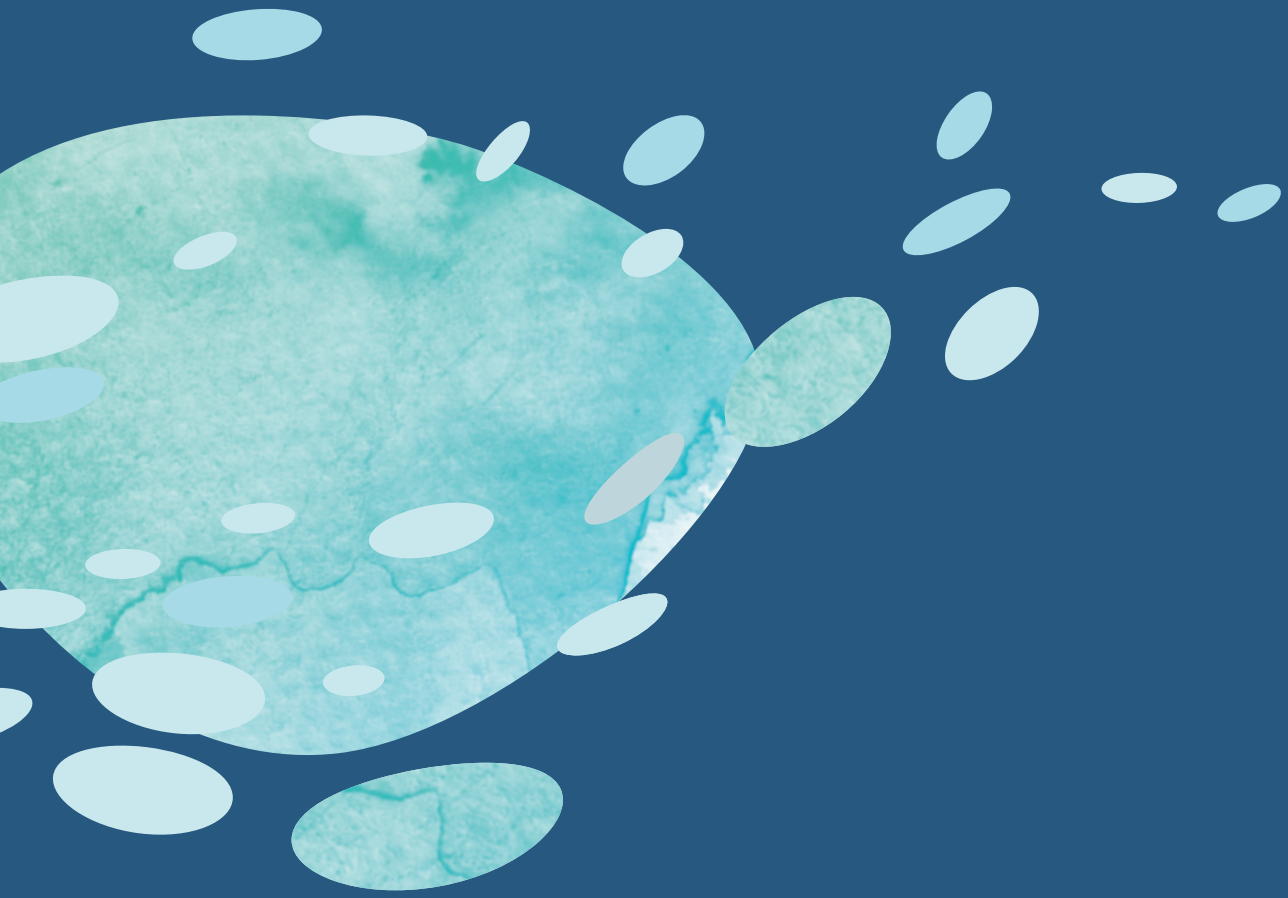
IWMI
International Water Management Institute

Sustainability Strategy

2024–2030





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Foreword

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is committed to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and upholding the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact. This Sustainability Strategy (2024–2030) reflects IWMI's ambition to align its operations and research with global climate targets, drawing on the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) framework to guide its approach to emissions reduction.

As a global leader in research for development on water security, IWMI recognizes the urgent and interconnected challenges of climate change, environmental degradation and social inequality. This strategy was developed in response to these challenges and is designed to place sustainability at the core of institutional decision-making and operational practice.

Guided by the IWMI Strategy 2024–2030, the Sustainability Strategy provides a framework for stewardship that ranges from our carbon, water, and waste footprint to social sustainability and governance. The strategy identifies critical institutional drivers, sets prioritized actions, and establishes measurable targets aligned to our broader mission and environmental and social stewardship objectives.

The formulation of this strategy has been a collaborative effort. It draws on the expertise of IWMI's global team of researchers and professionals, as well as valuable contributions from consultants and stakeholders across our network, reflecting IWMI's commitment to partnership, transparency, and shared responsibility in driving sustainability outcomes.

The Sustainability Strategy builds on progress achieved by IWMI to date, while recognizing that the road ahead will demand sustained commitment, innovation, and collaboration. This document is both a roadmap for action and a call to collective engagement.

We invite our partners and stakeholders to join us on this journey – contributing ideas, offering feedback, and co-creating solutions that advance a more sustainable and resilient future for all.



Mark Smith
Director General

Executive Summary

The Sustainability Strategy (2024–2030) of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) provides a coherent framework for advancing environmental and social responsibility and operational sustainability. Aligned with the Science Based Targets initiative and the shared ambition of the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C, the strategy embeds sustainability considerations into all levels of decision-making and organizational practice.

As a member of the United Nations Global Compact since 2019, IWMI upholds our commitment to the Ten Principles related to human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption. Our research portfolio contributes to global efforts in addressing climate change, ensuring water and food security, and safeguarding biodiversity, with a focus on sustainable and inclusive development. Our own operations must align with this impact.

The strategy is designed to serve as a practical and engaging tool for both internal and external stakeholders, encouraging collective ownership of IWMI's sustainability vision. By identifying risks, opportunities and measurable benefits, the strategy supports informed decision-making and delivers institutional and societal values.

This Sustainability Strategy draws on the IWMI Vision and Mission, aligned with those of CGIAR, and is grounded in IWMI's Sustainability Directive. A comprehensive review of IWMI's operations has identified key areas contributing to the organization's environmental footprint and social impacts. These insights inform the strategy's structure, which includes Organizational Performance Indicators (OPIs), clear targets for 2030, and implementation mechanisms for priority areas as identified below:

Table 1
Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Priority Areas for OPI Development

Environmental	Social	Governance
Climate Change Mitigation	Learning, Development and Engagement	Sustainability Program Oversight
Energy Consumption	Internal Program Participation	Stakeholder & Partner Engagement
Renewable Energy Usage	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)	Policy Compliance & Training
Sustainable Travel	Health, Safety & Wellbeing	Transparency & Disclosure
Supply Chain Environmental Sustainability	Recognition & Motivation	
Sustainable Water Management		
Sustainable Waste Management		

The OPIs and their targets form the basis for performance monitoring and continuous improvement. Implementation is powered by critical drivers of sustainability including leadership commitment, institutional accountability, staff engagement, and regular performance reviews.

This strategy represents more than a document; it is a dynamic, actionable roadmap that guides IWMI's contribution to a climate-resilient, environmentally sustainable future.

01 Introduction

The impacts of climate change are accelerating, bringing shifting rainfall patterns, intensified land and water degradation, and increasing risks to ecosystems and livelihoods. As a CGIAR research center, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is committed to confronting these urgent and complex challenges through our world-class research complemented by our institutional leadership in sustainability.

This Sustainability Strategy (2024–2030) is a central component of that institutional leadership, reinforcing our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

The strategy outlines the drivers and impacts of sustainability, Organizational Performance Indicators (OPIs), targets, and implementation mechanisms that address critical impact areas, including carbon emissions, energy use, water and waste management, procurement practices (both green and ethical procurement), and travel. It goes beyond ensuring compliance with relevant legislation to guide our contribution to environmental and social stewardship – seeking to reduce our ecological footprint, enhance our resilience to climate change impacts, uphold ethical practices and inclusive development, and do our part to help bring humanity back within planetary and regional environmental boundaries.

In support of these sustainability priorities, we adopt internationally recognized greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting approaches to identify and manage emissions across our operations and value chain. The Greenhouse Gas Protocol categorizes GHG emissions under three scopes, as described in Table 2.

Table 2

Scope 1, 2 and 3 greenhouse gas emissions

Scope 1 Direct emissions generated from on-site facilities or from the activities an organization owns or controls.	
	**Scope 2** Indirect emissions generated from purchased energy.
Scope 3 All other indirect emissions generated up and down the value chain, but not controlled or owned by the organization.	

Introduction

Regarding our environmental responsibility, building on an institutional journey initiated in 2019 and using 2023 as a baseline, all IWMI offices have a shared goal of achieving a 42% reduction in Scope 1 and Scope 2 carbon footprint and a 25% reduction in Scope 3 carbon footprint by 2030. This goal translates to an approximate 6% annual reduction in emissions from Scopes 1 and 2, and a 4% annual reduction in emissions from Scope 3. Progress assessments may take organizational growth in staffing and operational scale into account, while IWMI's overall emissions reduction commitments remain aligned with SBTi requirements.

The strategy will be implemented through a suite of targeted policies and operational plans, each designed to address high-impact areas while fostering institutional accountability and continuous improvement. Its scope covers IWMI headquarters, regional offices, and operational projects in more than 50 countries, ensuring that sustainability principles are consistently applied throughout the organization.

1.1 Alignment within CGIAR and IWMI

IWMI's Sustainability Strategy will support the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy, which clearly defines CGIAR's aspirations for sustainable development in its vision:

A world with sustainable and resilient food, land and water systems that deliver diverse, healthy, safe, sufficient and affordable diets, and ensure improved livelihoods and greater social equality, within planetary and regional environmental boundaries.

CGIAR's efforts to achieve the Vision are guided by its mission:

To deliver science and innovation that advance the transformation of food, land and water systems in a climate crisis.

Aligned with CGIAR, IWMI's vision is a water-secure world. Our mission is to undertake research and innovation in partnerships for collective action that advances the transformation of water systems for sustainable, just, and climate-resilient development. Accordingly, we are taking active measures to ensure our own operations contribute to sustainable and resilient systems, serve social equality, and have a minimal environmental footprint.

The Sustainability Strategy is guided by the IWMI Strategy 2024–2030 and our Sustainability Directive. The directive sets out IWMI's overarching commitments and strategic direction for reducing our environmental footprint and operationalizing the environmental and social Principles of the UN Global Compact. The directive is structured around 13 achievable principles that guide institutional action and define our sustainability ethos. The directive's principles serve as the foundation of this Sustainability Strategy, providing guidance for implementation, monitoring, and continual learning as we work to embed sustainability throughout our global operations.

IWMI has identified, and is monitoring, more than 150 OPIs as part of its Organizational Growth Strategy, including sustainability-related OPIs under Objective SUS1: Sustainability measures result in improved environmental and sustainability outcomes. The OPIs presented in this Sustainability Strategy align with this objective, ensuring that sustainability performance is consistently measured, tracked, and acted upon. Progress against these OPIs is reported through the IWMI Annual Report and the UN Global Compact Communication on Engagement.

02 Understanding Our Sustainability Footprint

The process of creating the Sustainability Strategy began with identifying the key areas that contribute to IWMI's environmental footprint and social impacts. First among these areas was our organization's GHG emissions.

2.1 Calculating Emissions

In preparing this strategy we have benefited from five years of IWMI-wide emissions data. We have also employed the framework and guidance of the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) and Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

IWMI's data was coded and analyzed using internally developed Sustainability Accounting Codes aligned with Scope 1, 2, and 3 emission categories. We identified the organization's Scope 3 emissions as the largest contributor by far.

Table 3

Shares of Scope 1, 2, and 3 greenhouse gas emissions in IWMI's operations

Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3
Example: Emissions from: • IWMI vehicles • Generator set fuel combustion • Lubricant oil usage • Refrigerant refilling • Fire extinguisher refilling • PNG consumption • LPG consumption	**Example: Emissions from** electricity purchased by IWMI offices	**Example: Emissions from:** • Air travel and accommodation • Purchased goods and services • Transportation and distribution • Waste generation • Employee commute
~7%	~8%	~85%

Scope 3 emissions primarily arise from two key domains:

- **Procurement,** including goods and services that contribute significantly to our organizational carbon footprint.
- **Air travel,** particularly in support of collaboration across our global offices and participation in scientific conferences and engagements.

To address these, IWMI's green procurement initiative will reduce Scope 3 emissions institution-wide. A key step will be the assessment of environmental performance among registered vendors, supported by capacity strengthening through training and awareness initiatives.



2.2 Preparatory Engagement: Internal

Stakeholder engagement is the other foundational element of the Sustainability Strategy. We recognize the importance of meaningful collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders to drive inclusive planning, as well as effective implementation and continuous improvement. Our engagement aimed to build a shared understanding of IWMI's sustainability objectives and how to encourage individual and collective behaviors that align with our values.

Figure 1
Step-by-step process for engaging internal stakeholders



In response to a call from the Director General, IWMI staff, research groups, and consultants provided suggestions on improving the organization's sustainability performance. Feedback was gathered through written messages, discussions, and expert consultations on environmental topics.

All suggestions were considered and prioritized based on their implementation timeframe and potential impact, including through a triple bottom line assessment of scalability and impact. The final and ongoing step—integrating these actions into IWMI staff's daily operations—is covered in section 11.

2.3 Preparatory Engagement: External

Figure 2
Step-by-step process for engaging external stakeholders



We separately conducted a structured questionnaire-based survey to evaluate sustainability practices among our suppliers and contractors. The survey, administered via Google Forms, covered five thematic areas:

1. Organizational commitment
2. Certifications and awards
3. Product sustainability attributes
4. Resource management and corporate responsibility
5. Packaging

Analysis of the results revealed that product suppliers tend to have a higher emissions footprint compared with service providers, underscoring the need for differentiated evaluation frameworks. We therefore developed two tailored scoring systems.

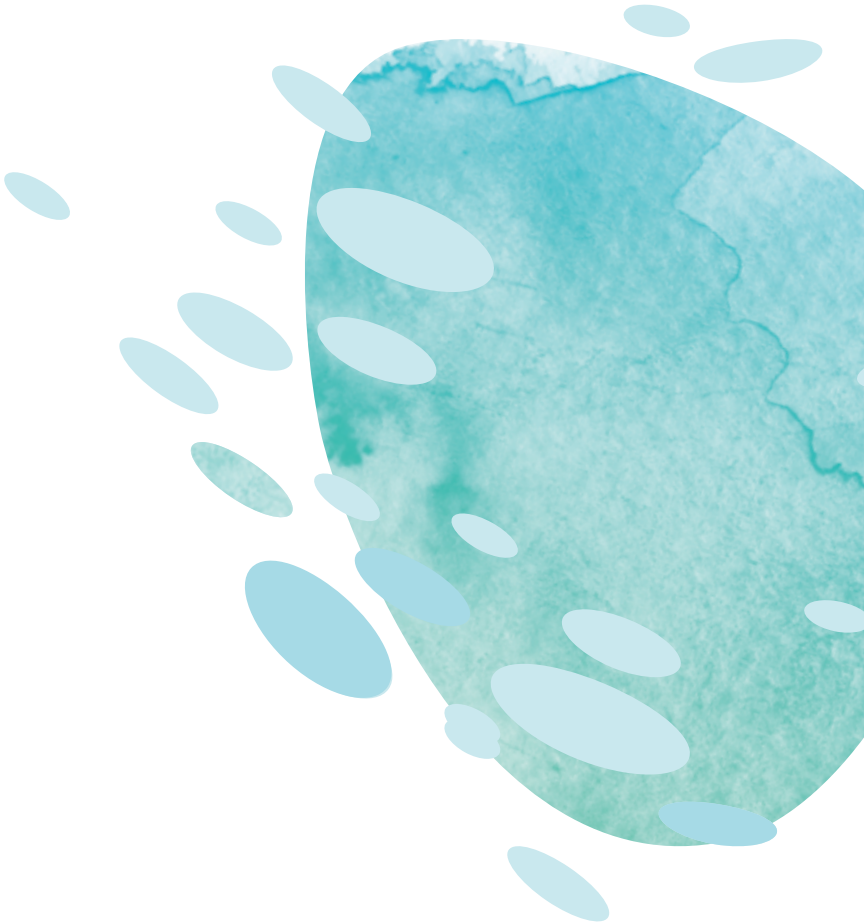
Product suppliers and service providers are each evaluated for their sustainability performance and scored out of 100. Each supplier's sustainability score is then considered as part of the procurement evaluation process, along with other criteria such as value for money.

Ongoing training and awareness work within the supply chain is covered in section 11.

2.4 Key Areas of IWMI's Sustainability Footprint

The key areas that contribute to IWMI's sustainability footprint emerged during the above preparatory processes. These are:

- GHG emissions from energy use
- GHG emissions from travel
- Procurement practices (requiring both green and ethical procurement)
- Water use
- Waste management
- Social impacts on employees, communities, and stakeholders
- Engagement of stakeholders and partners in governance for sustainability



03 Risks of Inaction, Benefits of Action

IWMI's Sustainability Strategy aims to mitigate a number of substantial risks that lie in ignoring the organization's sustainability footprint. At the same time, implementing sustainability will deliver a broad range of environmental, institutional, and societal benefits, and will position IWMI as a sustainability leader. The impacts will reflect the effectiveness of our operations, research innovations, and stakeholder collaborations.

This section outlines the risks of inaction and the benefits we see in understanding and reducing IWMI's sustainability footprint. Here we focus on the future to illustrate where we aim to be following implementation of the measures identified in the strategy.



Environmental Footprint

⚠️ **We risk incurring negative environmental externalities across the value chain.**

✅ We benefit by measuring our environmental footprint across key impact areas and planning targeted interventions to reduce it. Beyond IWMI itself, sustainability standards for procurement can enhance efficiency and minimize environmental footprint within our supply chain.



Social Impact

⚠️ **We risk falling short of our commitments to uphold human rights, ethical practices, and inclusive development.**

✅ We benefit when we engage all stakeholders, ensure ethical compliance in all projects and throughout the supply chain, and support gender equality and social inclusion, enhancing IWMI's mission for sustainable, just, and climate-resilient development.



Operational Efficiency and Cost Savings

⚠️ **We risk incurring long-term costs from inefficient resource utilization.**

✅ We benefit by making efficient resource utilization central to our sustainability approach, including our energy, water, and material consumption. These green practices will improve operational efficiency and result in long-term cost savings without compromising research or service quality.



Organizational Reputation

⚠️ **We risk eroding IWMI's reputation among funders, research partners, and communities by not showing credible commitment to sustainability.**

✅ We benefit by showing sustainability leadership, which will facilitate collaboration, interest, and trusting stakeholder relationships wherever IWMI works.

Risks of Inaction, Benefits of Action



Access to Donor Funding

⚠️ **We risk being overlooked by donors that increasingly prioritize organizations demonstrating climate and environmental leadership.**

✅ We benefit as IWMI's sustainability credentials improve our eligibility and give us a competitive advantage when applying for funding opportunities.



Staff Engagement and Retention

⚠️ **We risk experiencing a downturn in staff engagement and talent retention if IWMI is not a values-driven workplace.**

✅ We benefit when we offer opportunities for continuous professional development, well-being initiatives, and meaningful participation in the organization's sustainability effort.



Risk Management and Institutional Resilience

⚠️ **We risk losing long-term adaptive capacity and resilience.**

✅ We benefit from sustainability integration that strengthens IWMI's risk preparedness. A sustainability focus can allow us to identify, assess, and mitigate risks to protect the organization's assets, revenues, and operations. Lessons learned from disruptions can enhance our organizational resilience.

04 Drivers of Sustainability

IWMI recognizes critical institutional drivers of progress toward sustainability and has integrated many of these into the commitments of the Sustainability Directive. This section outlines the drivers of sustainability performance within IWMI that contribute the most to long-term impact.

Organizational Commitment

From the Director General to staff at all levels, there is a shared commitment throughout IWMI to advancing the organization's sustainability objectives. We accept responsibility for the impacts of our operations, including carbon, water, and waste footprints, and address them systematically. Country Representatives and Country Managers, along with administrative and financial personnel, play a pivotal role in operationalizing this commitment through active participation and regular reviews of progress.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is central to IWMI's sustainability approach: we promote participatory research, maintain open communication, celebrate success, and build trust to ensure shared ownership of sustainability initiatives. This includes our collective action on sustainability with peer institutions, environmental professionals, and global networks. As described in section 2, the perspectives of internal and external stakeholders have enhanced the relevance and robustness of this strategy, and both types of stakeholders will continue to contribute feedback and collaboratively strengthen the implementation of sustainability actions.

Evidence-Based Action Planning for Sustainability Impact

IWMI has adopted evidence-based approaches to set ambitious and measurable sustainability targets and OPIs, informed by the SBTi and other global standards, and framed around environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. Through our prioritization process we have selected feasible actions offering the greatest sustainability impact. We are committed to integrating these actions across all operational units and functions and throughout our value chain, with the understanding that all our choices contribute positively or negatively to IWMI's sustainability footprint.

Monitoring and Reporting

Transparent monitoring, reporting, and communication are core principles of IWMI's sustainability efforts. IWMI's carbon emissions are independently assessed every year. These emissions are benchmarked against the 2023 baseline year to assess progress and identify trends in line with our emission reduction commitments. All findings undergo third-party verification by IWMI's external auditor and are reported publicly through the UN Global Compact platform. This platform and an Annual Sustainability Report are the two major channels of external reporting on our sustainability actions at large. Internal communication is supported via the IWMI newsletter, sustainability dashboards, and senior management updates, inviting broad engagement and collective ownership in our sustainability journey.

Continuous Improvement

IWMI's senior management engages regularly with staff and Sustainability Task Teams to review progress and integrate feedback for continuous enhancement of our sustainability performance, including the implementation of the Sustainability Directive and Sustainability Strategy. At the end of this process in 2030, a comprehensive review of the strategy will ensure adaptive alignment with the evolving organizational and environmental context. In particular, the emission reduction action plan will be reviewed annually to incorporate stakeholder feedback and new evidence, and IWMI aspires to ultimately achieve carbon neutrality, which is a long-term vision driven by a culture of research, innovation, and ongoing learning. Recognizing the dynamic and evolving nature of sustainability science, we will invest in capacity building and training to enable effective integration of sustainability principles into our projects and operations.





“IWMI is committed to minimizing the environmental impacts of our operations”

05 Environmental Footprint Reduction Plan

IWMI is committed to minimizing the environmental impacts of our operations across seven areas (see Figure 3). It should also be noted that research and innovation for environmental sustainability underpin all strategic areas; they are therefore integrated throughout and not presented as a separate category.

Figure 3

IWMI's environmental footprint action areas



5.1 Climate Change Mitigation

Through our strategic actions, we aim to significantly reduce IWMI's institutional carbon footprint and reinforce our leadership in climate-responsive operations.

IWMI will reduce our GHG emissions, as measured in tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_2e). We will track this under the three scopes of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (see Table 2).

OPI 1: Total GHG emissions in tCO_2e per year.
Target 1: Achieve a 42% absolute reduction in Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions by 2030 from the 2023 base year, aligned with the 1.5˚C pathway.

Target 2: Achieve a 25% absolute reduction in Scope 3 GHG emissions by 2030 from the 2023 base year, aligned with the well below 2˚C pathway.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Carbon budgets and targets:** Develop department-level carbon budgets and targets to ensure accountability is distributed across the institution.
- **Monthly data tracking:** Establish a fixed monthly reporting deadline for the submission of emissions data to ensure timely and consistent tracking.
- **Regular monitoring and coordination:** Conduct regular virtual meetings with regional offices to review progress on implementation of targets and promote institutional alignment.
- **Integration into institutional performance systems:** Embed emissions reduction targets into annual planning and performance review processes at both individual and departmental levels, including through the system of sustainability OPIs.
- **Resource allocation:** Designate financial resources within operational budgets to fund emissions reduction initiatives.

5.2 Energy Efficiency

IWMI will implement and promote energy-saving practices and technologies.

OPI 2: Year-on-year reduction in total electricity consumption.
Target: Achieve a 3% year-on-year reduction in electricity consumption.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Consumption monitoring and auditing:** Establish a robust framework for regular monitoring of energy consumption across IWMI's facilities, with periodic energy audits to identify opportunities for savings and improvements.
- **Adoption of energy-efficient equipment:** Through procurement policies, encourage the purchase and use of equipment with high energy-efficiency ratings.
- **Staff engagement:** Foster a culture of energy consciousness through continuous staff engagement, awareness campaigns, and practical guidance to encourage behavioral changes, such as switching off lights and air conditioners when not in use and optimizing appliance use to reduce energy waste.
- **Building management systems:** Deploy systems in IWMI facilities for centralized, real-time control of heating, ventilation, air conditioning, lighting, and power systems.
- **Green building practices:** Incorporate sustainable architectural and design solutions into IWMI infrastructure, including use of energy-efficient materials and maximization of natural light and ventilation.

- **Reduction of digital carbon footprint:** Develop strategies to energy-optimize servers, data storage, and network systems, and promote digital practices that minimize energy consumption across virtual operations, including cloud-based computing and artificial intelligence.
- **Recognition of energy champions:** Drive internal momentum by celebrating staff members who demonstrate leadership in energy efficiency as "Energy Champions."

5.3 Renewable Energy Usage

IWMI will adopt and promote renewable energy sources.

OPI 3: Percentage of offices with renewable energy use.
Target: Achieve a 10% annual increase in IWMI-owned and long-lease offices using renewable energy.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Monitor grid renewable energy share:** Track the annual renewable energy share of grid electricity at each IWMI office. Use this information to assess the need and business case for additional on-site renewable energy, such as solar PV, based on utility reports and generation mix data.
- **Identification and integration of renewable energy solutions:** Proactively explore and assess opportunities to integrate renewable energy technologies such as solar and wind across IWMI operations.
- **Solar energy installations at owned facilities:** Where IWMI owns the infrastructure, prioritize the installation of solar energy systems.

5.4 Sustainable Travel

IWMI is committed to minimizing the environmental footprint of organizational travel by embedding sustainability principles into all mobility-related operations.

OPI 4: Carbon emissions from company-owned vehicles in tCO_2e per year.
Target: Achieve a 6% annual reduction.

OPI 5: Carbon emissions from air travel in tCO_2e per full-time equivalent employee per year.
Target: Achieve a 4% annual reduction.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Travel policy:** Review the IWMI Travel Policy to ensure it aligns with our sustainability commitment and aspirations, including promoting efficient travel, direct flights, and low-carbon alternatives.
- **Route optimization and travel justification:** Encourage trip planning to combine multiple tasks per journey to reduce unnecessary travel.
- **Promote virtual meetings:** Select virtual meetings as the preferred option for internal meetings and external engagements whenever travel is not essential.

- **Fleet electrification:** Replace old vehicles, prioritizing hybrid or electric vehicles, and set criteria to phase out high-emission vehicles.
- **Air travel carbon budgeting:** Include air travel within overall departmental carbon budgets, which discourage unnecessary trips while still allowing for flexibility on how to stay within budget.
- **Regional delegation:** Assign regional representatives for events and missions to reduce the need for long-distance travel.
- **Green travel procurement:** Prioritize travel partners with demonstrated commitments to environmental sustainability and collaborate with airlines adopting sustainable aviation fuels and low-emissions technologies.

5.5 Supply Chain Environmental Sustainability

IWMI will strengthen environmental responsibility throughout our supply chain by aligning procurement practices with a set of sustainability standards.

OPI 6: Percentage of new suppliers screened against IWMI's environmental sustainability standards.
Target: Minimum of 80% of new suppliers are screened annually.

OPI 7: Percentage of high-value suppliers (>USD 100,000 per year) compliant with IWMI's environmental sustainability standards.
Target: Achieve a 5% year-on-year increase.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Policy integration:** Incorporate green procurement principles into IWMI's Procurement Policy to formalize sustainability commitments.
- **Supplier sustainability standards:** Create a set of standards for environmental sustainability covering suppliers' demonstrable low-impact practices, such as reduced packaging, recycled content, and resource-efficient production.
- **Supplier questionnaires:** Administer environmental sustainability questionnaires to assess suppliers' practices and apply a scoring matrix to evaluate products and services for evidence-based procurement decisions.
- **Vendor education and engagement:** Offer training and support for vendors to adopt sustainable practices and maintain regular dialogue to jointly identify and advance sustainable sourcing opportunities.
- **Sustainable supplier directory:** Create and update a vetted list of suppliers to guide procurement decisions.

5.6 Sustainable Water Management

IWMI is committed to advancing the efficient and sustainable use of water resources within our operations as well as across our research portfolio. In the IWMI Strategy 2024–2030, the Strategic Focus Area on Managing Water Sustainably contributes broadly to this area through the wide-ranging impacts of research activities. We are complementing this focus with organizational initiatives in IWMI's own offices.

OPI 8: Volume of water conserved through IWMI's operational efficiency initiatives.
Target: Achieve a 2% per capita reduction in water use year-on-year.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Water audits:** Conduct regular water audits and monitor consumption patterns to inform targeted reduction strategies.
- **Rainwater harvesting:** Install rainwater harvesting systems at suitable locations for nonpotable water uses.
- **Water-efficient fixtures:** Install fixtures such as low-flow taps in high-use areas, including washrooms, canteens, and gardens.
- **Greywater and wastewater use:** Recycle greywater for landscape irrigation and pilot systems for reusing wastewater in secondary applications.
- **Water storage:** Rehabilitate unused infrastructure and build new infrastructure, such as underground reservoirs, to store and use rainwater for gardening.

5.7 Sustainable Waste Management

IWMI is committed to reducing waste sent to landfill by adopting the circular economy and ensuring environmentally responsible waste management across our operations and research. In the IWMI Strategy 2024–2030, the Strategic Focus Area on Managing Water Sustainably contributes research efforts to issues of waste reduction and the circular economy.

OPI 9: Reduction in total waste sent for disposal.
Target: Achieve a 5% year-on-year reduction in waste sent for disposal.

OPI 10: Percentage of recyclable waste sent for recycling.
Target: Achieve at least 70% of recyclable waste sent for recycling annually.

OPI 11: Eliminating single-use plastics from IWMI facilities.
Target: Progressively eliminate avoidable single-use plastics from all IWMI facilities to achieve a complete phase-out by 2030, while ensuring that all meetings and events remain 100% free of avoidable single-use plastics.

Environmental Footprint Reduction Plan

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Country-level assessments:** Develop a specific country-level assessment method and roadmap for achieving the target.
- **Improved sorting and disposal:** Raise awareness among staff and janitorial teams on proper waste separation and disposal practices.
- **Composting:** Compost organic waste such as food scraps and coffee grounds for landscaping use.
- **Mandatory recycling:** Establish mandatory recycling protocols and collaborate with local recycling providers.
- **Waste audits:** Conduct waste audits to identify opportunities for reducing, reusing and recycling materials.
- **Plastic-free guidelines:** Develop and implement guidelines to reduce single-use plastics and promote sustainable alternatives for procurement, suppliers, and events.

06 Social Commitments

Our social commitments extend across the engagement of communities and stakeholders, as detailed below. We also prioritize employee well-being, education, training, diversity, and inclusion, all of which are addressed in the IWMI Organizational Growth Strategy with specific commitments and actions.

6.1 Learning, Development, and Engagement

IWMI is committed to building a sustainability conscious workforce by promoting continuous learning, enhancing staff awareness, and encouraging active employee engagement through sustainability training, recognition programs, and awareness initiatives.

OPI 12: Total number of staff training hours conducted on sustainability topics (e.g., water stewardship, energy efficiency, climate-smart practices).
Target: Conduct a minimum of eight training hours per staff member per year.

OPI 13: Percentage of staff attending each sustainability training session.
Target: Achieve a minimum of 60% attendance per session annually, with targets to increase attendance gradually in the following years.

OPI 14: Percentage of staff participating in sustainability recognition programs.
Target: At least 70–80% staff participation annually.

OPI 15: Number of sustainability awareness materials produced and shared annually (e.g., posters, flyers).
Target: Produce and share at least 10 awareness materials annually.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Training on sustainability:** Plan annual sustainability trainings, track attendance, and update content to reflect emerging sustainability trends and organizational priorities.
- **Staff participation in trainings:** Communicate training sessions and review participation data to optimize content and accessibility for improved engagement.
- **Staff participation in recognition programs:** Promote programs through internal channels, ensure easy access for all staff, recognize participants publicly, and collect feedback to improve future engagement.
- **Sustainability awareness materials:** Plan and produce sustainability materials aligned with key themes, involve staff in creation, share via multiple channels, track engagement, and update content periodically.

6.2 Internal Program Participation

IWMI aims to strengthen internal engagement and accountability for sustainability by embedding sustainability responsibilities into relevant roles within Sustainability Task Teams and encouraging voluntary participation in Working Groups. Through clear ownership, collaboration, and coordinated action, IWMI seeks to ensure effective implementation of sustainability initiatives and progress toward its organizational sustainability objectives.

Social Commitments

OPI 16: Percentage of Sustainability Task Team members actively contributing to assigned action items.
Target: Achieve a minimum of 70% participation.

OPI 17: Percentage of Sustainability Working Group members actively contributing to assigned action items.
Target: Achieve a minimum of 70% participation.

OPI 18: Percentage of annual sustainability action items planned by the Sustainability Working Group completed on time.
Target: Achieve a minimum of 80% on time annual completion.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Roles and accountability:** Assign clear responsibilities and deadlines for each action item and coordinate tasks.
- **Monitoring and follow-up:** Track progress via a dashboard, review status in meetings, and follow up on pending items.
- **Engagement and recognition:** Encourage participation, acknowledge active members, and highlight contributions through internal communications.
- **Guidance and support: I**ncorporate suggestions, comments, and inputs from consultants or Sustainability Working Group involvement into planning and execution; provide reminders and coordination to ensure timely completion.

6.3 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

IWMI is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace by promoting gender balance, strengthening staff capacity on GESI, and integrating GESI considerations into its research and knowledge products.

OPI 19: Employees ratio of female to male (%).
Target: Maintain female employee representation at 40% or above throughout the year.

OPI 20: Number of GESI capacity-strengthening and awareness programs for IWMI staff.
Target: Conduct a minimum of three GESI capacity-strengthening and awareness programs for IWMI staff annually.

OPI 21: Number of GESI-focused knowledge products published by IWMI staff since the beginning of the year (by issue date).
Target: Publish a minimum of 20 GESI-focused knowledge products annually.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Workforce and culture:** Strengthen inclusive workplace practices by addressing barriers to participation, representation, and career progression.
- **Capacity and knowledge:** Provide regular GESI training, awareness sessions, and learning opportunities for staff and managers.
- **Monitoring and improvement:** Track and evaluate GESI performance through workforce data, training participation, and knowledge product monitoring.
- **Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration among researchers and teams to generate GESI-focused publications, reports, and other knowledge products.

6.4 Health, Safety, and Well-Being

We are committed to fostering a safe, healthy, and supportive workplace by proactively managing risks, complying with occupational health and safety requirements, strengthening emergency preparedness, and promoting a strong safety culture. Through these efforts, we aim to prevent workplace incidents and safeguard the well-being of our employees, contractors, and visitors.

OPI 22: Number of work-related injuries resulting in lost work time.
Target: Zero lost-time injuries annually.

OPI 23: Percentage of maintenance staff following mandatory safety protocols (e.g., risk assessments, personal protective equipment, travel advisories).
Target: 100% compliance for all maintenance staff.

OPI 24: Percentage of offices with updated emergency response plans and drills.
Target: 100% of facilities conduct at least one emergency drill annually.

6.5 Recognition and Motivation

Recognizing and encouraging sustainability contributions helps strengthen employee engagement and promote a culture of sustainability across IWMI. Through structured recognition initiatives, we aim to acknowledge and motivate staff contributions toward advancing sustainability practices.

OPI 25: Number of sustainability recognition programs implemented
Target: Implement a minimum of four sustainability recognition programs annually

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Structured recognition programs:** Design and implement recognition programs (e.g., “Most Sustainable Department,” “Green Champion of the Month”); define eligibility criteria and evaluation methods; and communicate programs and results to all staff.
- **Continuous feedback and improvement:** Gather feedback from staff to refine recognition programs, adjusting criteria, incentives, and communication approaches based on participation trends and staff feedback.

07 Governance

The governance oversight of the Sustainability Strategy aligns with IWMI's governance instruments and organizational policies. A dedicated Sustainability Working Group within the 2024–2030 Organizational Growth Strategy leads the strategic direction on sustainability. This working group is led by the head of facilities and administration and sponsored by the chief operating officer.

7.1 Sustainability Program Oversight

Effective management oversight and performance monitoring are essential to ensure the successful implementation and continual improvement of the Sustainability Strategy by strengthening accountability, supporting informed decision-making, incorporating timely stakeholder feedback, and driving the effective delivery of sustainability initiatives across IWMI.

OPI 26: Percentage of Sustainability Working Group meetings achieving quorum.
Target: At least 90% of Sustainability Working Group meetings achieve quorum each year.

OPI 27: Percentage of approved, agreed, or feasible sustainability consultant recommendations implemented within agreed timelines.
Target: Achieve 100% implementation within agreed timelines.

OPI 28: Percentage of staff satisfied with sustainability initiatives.
Target: Achieve at least 80% staff satisfaction.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Working Group meetings:** Develop an annual meeting calendar in advance, share meeting minutes without delay, and establish a tracking dashboard for attendance, discussion topics and follow-ups.
- **Implementation of approved/or agreed consultant recommendations:** Maintain an approved recommendations register with deadlines and assigned owners, conduct periodic progress reviews (e.g., monthly or quarterly), integrate recommendation follow-ups into Working Group meetings, discuss reasons for delays or obstacles, and act promptly for resolution.
- **Staff feedback mechanisms:** Conduct staff surveys to assess satisfaction and awareness and use the results to improve sustainability initiatives.

7.2 Stakeholder and Partner Engagement

Collaborative sustainability partnerships enable IWMI to combine its scientific expertise with the resources and capabilities of external organizations to jointly implement sustainability initiatives that create shared value and deliver lasting environmental and social benefits.

OPI 29: Number of new sustainability partnerships established
Target: Establish at least one new sustainability partnership annually

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Potential sustainability partners:** Set clear criteria, assign a lead for outreach, include partnerships in annual plans, and track progress from initial contact to formal agreement.

7.3 Policy Compliance and Training

Promoting supplier awareness and compliance with IWMI's sustainability expectations is essential for strengthening responsible procurement practices. Through supplier engagement, policy acknowledgment, and capacity-building initiatives, we aim to foster responsible business conduct and encourage the adoption of sustainable procurement practices across our supply chain.

OPI 30: Percentage of suppliers acknowledging the IWMI Code of Conduct.
Target: 100% of suppliers acknowledge the IWMI Code of Conduct.

OPI 31: Number of supplier awareness sessions conducted on green procurement.
Target: Conduct at least two supplier awareness sessions annually.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Supplier contracting:** Include the IWMI Code of Conduct in all supplier contracts and obtain formal acknowledgment; maintain a record of acknowledgments, integrate it into supplier onboarding, and send reminders to non-responsive suppliers.
- **Training and participation:** Organize and deliver supplier awareness webinars on green procurement practices, invite suppliers, send reminders to enhance participation, and share training materials with participants.

7.4 Transparency and Disclosure

Transparent, timely, and credible sustainability reporting strengthens accountability and stakeholder trust. Through regular ESG and GHG emissions disclosures, we aim to communicate our sustainability performance in line with recognized reporting and assurance requirements.

7.4.1. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Disclosure

OPI 32: Number of ESG disclosures published (e.g., Sustainability Report, sustainability section in Annual Report, UN Global Compact Communication on Engagement).

Target: Publish at least one ESG disclosure annually

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Reporting calendar:** Establish an ESG reporting calendar, use a standardized data template, collect data from headquarters and regional offices, align disclosures with recognized frameworks, and coordinate internal review before publishing the Sustainability Report.

7.4.2. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Disclosure

OPI 33: Report GHG emissions with assurance in accordance with Sri Lanka Standard on Assurance Engagements (SLSAE)
Target: Publish an externally assured GHG emissions report within the agreed organizational reporting timeline each year.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

- **Regular data collection:** Collect GHG emissions data quarterly, continuously follow up with regional offices, coordinate with external auditors for assurance, review and approve the report internally, and publish the verified report.

08 Implementation Framework

This Sustainability Strategy is not a static document. It is a dynamic operational roadmap that guides our actions toward achieving measurable environmental and social objectives. Effective implementation is central to the success of the strategy and involves a systematic approach to prioritizing, resourcing, and executing sustainability initiatives.

The implementation framework is designed around two primary criteria: the time required to implement an action and the expected environmental or social impact. Short-term, high-impact actions are prioritized to deliver tangible results early in the implementation cycle. Resource allocation, including budget, staffing and infrastructure, is guided by this prioritization to ensure effective execution.

When it comes to mitigating climate change, IWMI is committed to achieving real GHG emissions reductions without relying on carbon offsetting, in concerted alignment with the SBTi. This necessitates a robust, data-driven action plan that is both practical and ambitious. All actions will be designed to produce measurable reductions in GHG emissions.

The implementation process is overseen by senior management, with responsibilities clearly defined and distributed across departments. Each initiative has an assigned lead responsible for execution, performance tracking, and reporting. Management provides oversight, guidance, and the necessary tools to ensure delivery is timely and aligned with strategic goals.

“Effective stakeholder engagement is essential for the successful implementation of IWMI’s Sustainability Strategy”



09 Implementation Challenges

IWMI recognizes that the successful implementation of the Sustainability Strategy requires addressing a range of challenges and risks:

- **Communication and engagement:** Ensuring the strategy is effectively communicated and adopted across all IWMI offices may be challenging. Continuous staff engagement and capacity-building are critical to overcoming the risk of inconsistent implementation.
- **Competing priorities:** Short-term operational or financial goals may at times take precedence over longer-term sustainability objectives, hindering sustained progress toward the targets set here for 2030.
- **Data management:** There is a risk that OPI data may only be recorded intermittently, leading to gaps in monitoring and delayed interventions or adaptations.
- **Resource constraints:** Limited financial and human resources could affect the scale and speed of strategy implementation, impacting overall effectiveness.
- **Global disruptions:** Unpredicted conditions such as pandemics, geopolitical conflicts, economic instability, and natural disasters may affect operations, travel, resource consumption, and emissions performance, requiring periodic review and adjustment of sustainability actions.



10 Monitoring, Reporting, and Review

Monitoring

Monitoring progress is a foundational component of IWMI's sustainability agenda. This is why the Sustainability Strategy establishes a comprehensive set of OPIs for ESG impact areas, including GHG emissions, energy, water, waste, gender equality, and health and well-being.

The targets are distributed across departments and individuals, from assigning carbon budgets for air travel to organizing strategic partnerships. The Sustainability Working Group will develop high-level action plans to define the specific actions, timelines, and resource needs. Progress will be visualized on internal dashboards and in the quarterly sustainability newsletter to promote awareness and accountability.

Sustainability Task Teams will coordinate with their respective regional offices and IWMI headquarters to monitor progress. They will have responsibility for collecting data while they act as sustainability champions in their regional offices, alongside country representatives. Annual benchmarking against the 2023 baseline will ensure consistency, and any negative trends should prompt immediate corrective action.

Reporting

An independent third-party calculates IWMI's annual carbon footprint, which is verified by an external auditor. Results are submitted through the UN Global Compact platform.

An Annual Sustainability Report is also published to provide stakeholders with a transparent overview of performance and progress against stated objectives.

Review

The strategy undergoes periodic review to assess its relevance, responsiveness to emerging challenges, and alignment with IWMI's evolving goals. External experts, including sustainability consultants, are engaged to provide independent assessments. Review findings inform updates to the strategy, and all revisions are communicated to relevant stakeholders to maintain transparency and shared commitment.

11 Ongoing Engagement

Effective stakeholder engagement is essential for the successful implementation of IWMI's Sustainability Strategy. Engagement must go beyond strategy dissemination to foster active participation, mutual accountability, and continuous dialogue. IWMI promotes a two-way, inclusive communication process that empowers stakeholders to contribute meaningfully to shared sustainability goals.

To do this, IWMI employs a variety of participatory methods including consultations, workshops, collaborative activities, thematic competitions, and knowledge-sharing events. These efforts are tailored to different stakeholder groups and aim to cultivate a culture of environmental responsibility throughout the organization and our networks.

Engagement with Staff

IWMI recognizes staff as key agents of change and integrates sustainability into daily institutional culture through the following measures.

- **Decentralized targets:** Cascading institutional sustainability OPIs to regional offices and individual departments, reinforcing shared responsibility.
- **Sustainability champions:** Identifying green champions within teams to promote low-impact practices (for example, reducing paper use.)
- **Surveys and feedback mechanisms:** Conducting periodic staff surveys to gather ideas and enhance employee participation in sustainability efforts.
- **Awareness and recognition initiatives:**
  - Organizing activities around key environmental days
  - Publishing a quarterly "Green Newsletter" with staff contributions
  - Hosting sustainability-themed quiz programs
  - Establishing an annual rewards program recognizing outstanding sustainability contributions by individuals and departments
- **Departmental integration:** Assigning each department tailored sustainability targets to track performance and guide action.

Engagement with Project Partners

IWMI's collaboration with research partners, donors, and academic institutions is critical to advancing sustainability. Engagement mechanisms include:

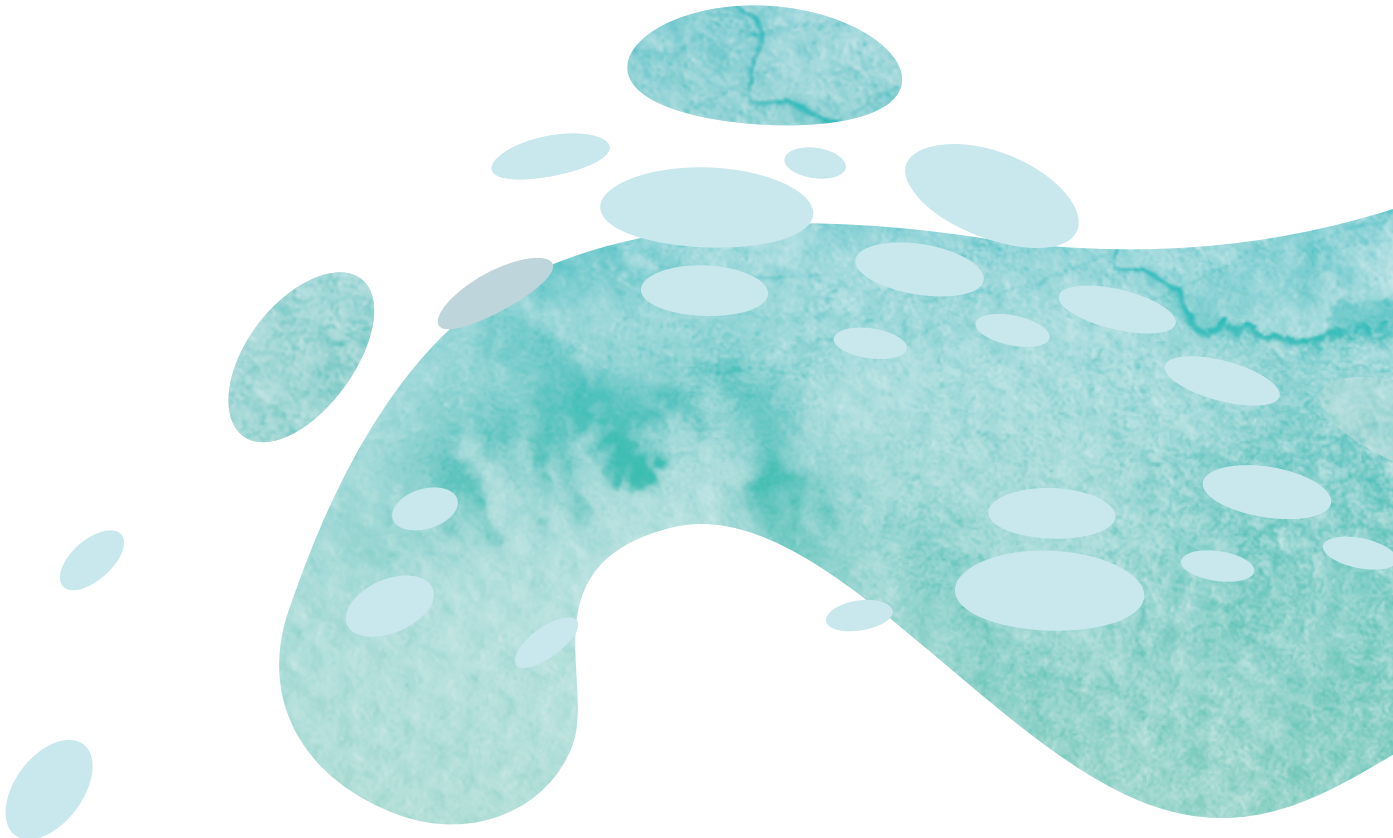
- **Collaborative dialogue:** Facilitating open discussions with partners to co-develop sustainability solutions and integrate environmental objectives into joint activities.
- **Sustainability in proposal design:** Encouraging the inclusion of low-carbon and resource-efficient practices in project design (for example, virtual meetings in place of travel.)
- **Knowledge exchange and capacity building:** Participating in and organizing workshops and conferences that highlight best practices in carbon reduction, efficient water and land use and sustainable waste management.

Through these diverse engagement strategies, IWMI ensures that sustainability is embedded not only in our research and operations but also in the collective actions of our extended stakeholder network.

Engagement with Suppliers

To foster environmental responsibility within our supply chain, IWMI conducts targeted training sessions for vendors. These sessions aim to:

- **Promote compliance:** Encouraging and supporting vendors to improve their performance against IWMI's Supplier Sustainability Standards
- **Capacity building:** Enhancing suppliers' capacity to address common implementation challenges
- **Teaching the benefits:** Demonstrating how sustainability can translate into business value and opportunities



12 Call to Action

Sustainable growth requires a deliberate effort to mitigate the negative environmental and social externalities of organizational operations. IWMI's Sustainability Strategy reflects our institutional commitment to the Paris Agreement through our alignment with the UN Global Compact and the SBTi.

This commitment is not merely about producing reports or meeting targets, but about embedding sustainability in our organizational culture and operations. We acknowledge the implementation challenges but remain resolute in our mission to generate impact through responsible action.

We call upon governments, civil society, the private sector, and development partners to collaborate with us in advancing sustainable practices. Collective action is essential to protect our planet, ensure human well-being, and create resilient productive systems for the future.



IWMI

International Water Management Institute

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is an international, research-for-development organization that works with governments, civil society and the private sector to solve water problems in developing countries and scale up solutions. Through partnership, IWMI combines research on the sustainable use of water and land resources, knowledge services and products with capacity strengthening, dialogue and policy analysis to support implementation of water management solutions for agriculture, ecosystems, climate change and inclusive economic growth. Headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, IWMI is a CGIAR Research Center with offices in 16 countries and a global network of scientists operating in more than 55 countries.

www.iwmi.org

CGIAR

CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food-secure future. CGIAR science is dedicated to transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis. Its research is carried out by 13 CGIAR Centers/Alliances in close collaboration with hundreds of partners, including national and regional research institutes, civil society organizations, academia, development organizations and the private sector.

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