



## WORKSHOP REPORT

# The 2024 CGIAR Ukama Ustawi Research Initiative Pause and Reflect Closeout Workshop

Mombasa, Kenya | February 4-6, 2025

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We also recognize the continued support and collaboration of national and regional partners, whose engagement ensures that the solutions developed are responsive to local needs, strengthen innovation systems, and contribute to building more resilient agrifood systems.

### About CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I) program

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

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

### About CGIAR

CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food secure future.

Visit <https://www.cgiar.org/research/cgiar-portfolio> to learn more about the initiatives in the CGIAR research portfolio.



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# Acronyms

AoW – Area of Work

CIAT – International Center for Tropical Agriculture

CIMMYT - International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center

CoS -Community of Spirit

CSA - Climate Smart Agriculture

CGIAR - Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

EOIO - End of Initiative Outcome

ESA– East and Southern Africa

GESI - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

ILRI - International Livestock Research Institute

IWMI - International Water Management Institute

IPSRI - Initiative Performance and Scaling Results

MELIA - Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Impact Assessment

PRMS - Performance Reporting Management System

RIs - Regional Integrated Initiatives

S4I - Scaling for Impact

SME - Small and Medium Enterprise

UU - Ukama Ustawi initiative

WP's – Work Packages of the (UU) Ukama Ustawi Initiative

## 1. SUMMARY

### **Ukama Ustawi: Diversification for Resilient Agribusiness Ecosystems in East and Southern Africa**

East and Southern Africa (ESA) is a climate hotspot, with more than US\$45 billion in agricultural production at risk from higher temperatures, shorter growing seasons, and more extreme droughts and floods. Maize, a staple crop covering up to 75% of cropland in parts of the region, is particularly vulnerable, projected to face yield declines of 15%, among other climate impacts. Many of the affected areas already have serious levels of hunger and malnutrition, with the highest burden experienced by women and youth from marginalized, vulnerable communities.

The current decade is critical for strengthening food, land, and water systems in ESA. The region's agribusiness ecosystem has been identified as a crucial engine for agricultural and economic development, climate change adaptation, and gender and youth empowerment. Investment in innovation, capabilities, and supportive environments is essential for driving sustainable growth.

Ukama Ustawi (UU) is currently supporting climate-resilient agricultural livelihoods and agribusiness ecosystems in 12 East and Southern African countries to help millions of vulnerable smallholder farmers transition from maize-mixed systems to sustainably intensified, diversified, and de-risked agrifood systems.

A critical delivery mechanism is the UU's large network of partners consisting of farmers, NARES, government agencies at all levels, research institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and regional organizations. The UU Community of Spirit (UU CoS) is designed to:

- Engage and align: The creation of more synergies between work packages; better coordination of work across the different work packages and synergetic and efficient delivery of the Initiative
- Strengthening relationships and collaboration: Intentionally build team spirit and interaction across work packages to create foundations for strong working relationships.
- Information and knowledge sharing: Understanding respective technical capacities and interests of the UU community.
- Build leadership capacity: Empowering young researchers, especially women, to grow in their roles and develop their expertise so they are developed to become senior researchers and work package leads in the future.

Since its inception in 2021, the UU leadership team has drawn on and fed back into the UU CoS. A critical part of this has been the adaptive management mechanisms in the CGIAR, Pause and Reflect. The first Pause and Reflect was held in 2023, reflecting on 2022, and the second in 2024, reflecting on 2023, each with about 100 participants from across the region. This report presents the third event with reflections on 2024.

The Ukama Ustawi "Pause & Reflect" Workshop provided a critical opportunity for participants to assess the progress, challenges, and future direction of the Initiative. Chaired by the Initiative Lead, Dr. Inga Jacobs-Mata (International Water Management Institute (IWMI)), the workshop underscored the importance of collaboration, strategic scaling, and impact-driven implementation.

Participants, consisting of the Initiative leadership team, highlighted the necessity of aligning and continuing UU's successes in the six regional programs making up the new Scaling for Impact Program, ensuring coherence in scaling strategies, and leveraging partnerships for greater efficiency. Discussions emphasized the need for realistic goal setting, prioritization of high-impact activities, and improved financial planning, as budgetary uncertainties beyond 2025 remained a concern.

Key success factors in UU were collaboration among Work Package teams, integrating fieldwork with impact pathways, and ensuring that private sector engagement plays a vital role in program sustainability. Challenges in scaling efforts were identified, including gaps in technical assistance, structural inefficiencies in the small and medium enterprise (SME) accelerator program, and the need for better synergy across the CGIAR portfolio. The importance of gender mainstreaming was also emphasized, with participants calling for more deliberate integration of gender considerations rather than treating them as secondary concerns.

The workshop further explored the most appropriate communication strategies to amplify the impact of Ukama Ustawi's work, advocating for authentic storytelling, targeted media engagement, and stakeholder-focused messaging. A unified narrative is essential to demonstrate the tangible benefits of interventions and maintain credibility with donors, policymakers, and beneficiaries. The Impact Assessment presentation provided valuable insights into the reach of UU's interventions, revealing a gap between awareness and adoption.

Discussions on budgetary allocations highlighted the need for careful financial planning, with a focus on aligning resources with strategic priorities. The Scaling for Impact workplan review emphasized integrating scaling pathways across the Areas of Work, improving enabling environments, and strengthening impact delivery. The need for clear methodologies, cross-sector collaboration, and continuous adaptation was reiterated as critical success factors for achieving long-term sustainability.

Moving forward, the key recommendations include enhancing cross-team synergies, refining technical assistance planning, re-evaluating the accelerator program's structure, fostering strategic partnerships, and leveraging evidence-based policy advocacy. The workshop concluded with a commitment to embedding these reflections into actionable strategies, ensuring that Ukama Ustawi legacy continues to drive meaningful impact in agricultural innovation, gender equity, and sustainable development across targeted regions.

## **2. DAY 1 (February 4, 2025)**

### **2.1 OPENING REMARKS BY DR. INGA JACOBS MATA**

The workshop commenced with a warm welcome from Inga Jacobs-Mata, who reflected on the collective achievements of the team over the past three years. She acknowledged the strong collaboration and impact generated by their work, emphasizing the successful attainment of their targets. Inga underscored the importance of synergy among different teams, highlighting that bringing them together would enhance overall success.

As the Initiative transitions into a new phase, she called for introspection on past accomplishments and a strategic focus on communication with partners, streamlining efforts, and setting a clear direction for future activities. She emphasized the necessity of demonstrating the impact of their work on a global scale and aligning the science program with other regional initiatives. Inga also introduced the concept of a regional scaling hub, urging participants to consider its implications and the accountability measures required for its success. The session concluded with a call to prioritize key countries and activities that would have the most significant impact, fostering greater coherence and integration across the six regional Initiatives now merging.

### **2.2 PARTICIPANTS, REFLECTIONS**

Participants contributed valuable insights on how to enhance the coherence of the Scaling for Impact Program, emphasizing the need for a unified narrative across different regions. The importance of aligning the six regional initiatives into a global Program was highlighted, ensuring seamless integration across sectors and facilitating knowledge-sharing. Participants also stressed the necessity of mapping bilateral projects and, despite uncertainties of how bilateral mapping will work across the CGIAR Portfolio.

Concerns were raised about variations in regional Initiatives and the need to adapt to these differences. The discussion also touched on setting clear timelines and focusing on measurable outcomes while avoiding duplication of efforts in the new Program. Given the demanding nature of the scaling program, participants suggested identifying key priorities and quick wins that can be effectively executed within the available resources. Budgetary considerations were a significant point of discussion, with concerns about long-term financial clarity. While 2025 budgets are confirmed, the outlook for the next five years remains uncertain, necessitating strategic decision-making to ensure efficiency. Participants agreed that thematic mapping should guide resource allocation, relying on Centers to develop budgets accordingly.

The session concluded with a consensus on the need for realistic goal setting, strategic prioritization, and effective collaboration in the region, globally, across Centers and AoW to drive meaningful impact in the coming years.

## **2.3 REFLECTING ON ENHANCING COLLABORATION**

The session focused on evaluating the effectiveness of collaboration within teams and with external partners. Participants discussed the challenges and opportunities in working together, the essential ingredients for successful partnerships, and strategies to improve synergy across different work packages and initiatives. The session provided a platform to analyze past experiences, identify key lessons, and explore how to enhance future collaborations for greater impact.

The discussions reinforced the need for intentional collaboration, strategic scaling, and effective partnership management.

Participants agreed that going forward, there is a need for collective commitment to refining implementation strategies, strengthening demand-driven approaches, and ensuring sustainable impact across different geographies and WPs.

### **2.3.1 Key Discussion Points**

#### **2.3.1.1 Building Effective Collaboration**

Participants acknowledged that initial challenges for impact pathways were mitigated through fieldwork, which helped establish trust by directly engaging with farmers and communities. The importance of integrating fieldwork with impact pathway thinking was emphasized as a way to achieve results more efficiently. There was consensus on the need to ensure all WPs are interconnected to optimize the effectiveness of collaboration.

The discussion also highlighted the necessity of leveraging existing government structures and institutional networks to align efforts with broader development goals. The success of UU was attributed to its ability to work collectively across Centers, fostering an environment where partners could be open and flexible in their approaches without waiting for ideal conditions to start impactful work.

#### **2.3.1.2 Scaling for Impact and Demand-Driven Approaches**

Scaling programs require effective demand signalling to other programs and ensuring adaptability in work plans. Participants reflected on the need to make workplan adjustments easier while maintaining a demand-driven approach. Private sector engagements (for example in Ethiopia) were cited as a crucial element in supporting small-scale farmers and fostering sustainability.

There were discussions on how UU could support other programs temporarily while maintaining autonomy and preventing dependency.

Participants stressed the importance of creating an enabling environment by leveraging in-house expertise and aligning innovative solutions with strategic priorities. A key challenge raised was how to expand the UU model by translating its effectiveness and core values.

## 2.3.2 Challenges in Program Implementation

### 2.3.2.1 Technical Assistance and Accelerator Programs

The discussion revealed that technical assistance within WP3 was highly resource-intensive, and initial budgeting had not adequately accounted for this demand. To enhance planning and support, lessons from previous cohorts should inform future program design. There was a proposal to develop a pool of technical assistance providers within an expanded model, ensuring sustained expertise and availability.

Participants debated the structure of the SME accelerator program, with a shift from a six-month to a year-long model being considered. The previous nine-month model primarily focused on upfront funding, but a revised approach is needed to ensure continuity, integration, and sustained trust-building with partners. There was also concern about some businesses staying long in accelerator programs, with divergent views on whether long-term support fosters sustainability or creates dependency.

### 2.3.2.2 Partnership and Integration

Successful partnerships were recognized as dynamic and context-specific, requiring continuous assessment and strategic alignment. Participants discussed the need for proper impact assessments, due diligence protocols, and graduation paths for businesses in the accelerator programs. There was an emphasis on integrating science programs with bilateral projects to enhance high-impact activities. Creating evidence-based policies to support program bundling was suggested as a strategy to influence high-level policymakers and drive systemic change.

### 2.3.2.3 Key Takeaways and Next Steps

- Enhance fieldwork integration: Strengthening the linkage between impact pathways and fieldwork ensures trust-building and efficient project execution.
- Improve technical assistance planning: Budgeting for technical support must be more comprehensive to align with actual program needs.
- Re-evaluate accelerator program structure: Assessing different models and their sustainability implications is necessary for long-term impact.
- Foster strategic partnerships: Building trust-based, flexible partnerships will enable cross-regional synergy and optimal resource utilization.
- Strengthen private sector engagement: Engaging private sector players will help drive sustainability and scaling efforts.
- Leverage evidence-based policy advocacy: Generating research-backed policies will help influence decision-making and create structured guidelines for future programs.
- Refine due diligence mechanisms: Developing stringent selection and evaluation criteria will ensure only suitable beneficiaries receive long-term support.
- Mainstream demand-driven approaches: Programs should be adaptable to market and sector needs, to maximize impact and scalability.

## 2.4 IN-DEPTH REFLECTION – BLOCK 1

This session was moderated by Dr. Evan Girvetz (Alliance Bioversity-CIAT), UU Initiative Co-Lead, Principal Scientist and Global Program Leader. The session focused on an in-depth reflection on collaboration among teams and partners. The discussion aimed to identify challenges, explore best practices, and refine strategies to enhance collective impact. Participants shared insights drawn from their experiences, analyzing past approaches and deliberating on ways to optimize working relationships for future success.

### 2.4.1 Key Discussion Points and Reflections

**Integration and Impact Pathways:** Participants acknowledged that when the project was proposed, there was some resistance. However, fieldwork integration with farmers and communities helped establish an impact pathway, strengthening trust and linkages. The need for structured impact pathways from the outset was emphasized, as this could accelerate progress and facilitate better coordination.

### 2.4.2 Collaboration and Scaling for Impact

A key success factor identified was the ability to work together effectively across regions and initiatives. Unlike other programs with separate components, Ukama Ustawi adopted a collaborative approach, allowing teams to be flexible and adapt quickly. This approach fostered vulnerability, trust, and innovation among partners. The challenge now lies in scaling this model while maintaining efficiency.

### 2.4.3 Working with Government and Private Sector

**Facilitating Realistically,** teams need to work through government structures to align with existing policies and frameworks. In Ethiopia, for example, private sector engagement was instrumental in supporting small-scale farmers. There was consensus on the importance of creating an enabling environment by leveraging in-house expertise, supporting successful innovations, and ensuring alignment with national priorities.

### 2.4.4 Strengthening the SME Accelerator Program

Participants reflected on the effectiveness of the SME accelerator model. The program initially adopted a nine-month approach, but insights from past experiences suggest that a longer duration (one year) may be necessary for meaningful impact. Key considerations included:

- The need for a structured graduation path for SMEs to prevent dependency.
- Technical assistance alignment with investment priorities to enhance SME attractiveness.
- Building a pool of technical service providers to support future accelerator cohorts.
- Conducting due diligence and impact assessments to ensure SMEs are well-suited for the program.
- **Enhancing Partnerships and Synergies:** Effective partnership management was identified as critical for success.

There is a need for:

- Strengthening bilateral collaborations and optimizing high-impact activities.
- Developing frameworks for bundled partnerships where countries with similarities collaborate.
- Ensuring that entry points for different countries are context-specific for effective implementation.
- Conducting partner satisfaction surveys to assess effectiveness and refine strategies.
- **Strategic Communication and Policy Engagement:** Communication was highlighted as a key ingredient for success. Raising awareness of project activities from field-level implementation to high-level policy engagements is necessary for visibility and credibility. Additionally, packaging policies that support scaling and presenting them to policymakers could enhance the sustainability of initiatives.
- **Flexibility, Agility, and Long-Term Planning:** Participants emphasized the importance of agility in adapting to emerging challenges and opportunities. The CGIAR process was cited as an example of continuous revision and long-term planning, leading to significant impacts, for example, 3million farmers in Zimbabwe adopted conservation agriculture.

## 2.5 IN-DEPTH REFLECTION ON UU – BLOCK 2

This session was moderated by Dr. Inga Jacobs-Mata (IWMI), UU Initiative Lead, Director of Water-Growth and Inclusion. The session provided an opportunity for participants to evaluate the progress, challenges, and opportunities related to innovation integration, scaling strategies, and collaborative efforts across teams, the importance of structured follow-ups, cross-team collaboration, gender mainstreaming, and knowledge integration to enhance CGIAR's impact. It also explored the need for establishing clear strategies and structures, leveraging expert support when needed, and ensuring that all programs align with overarching goals will be critical in moving forward.

### 2.5.1 Key Discussion Points and Reflections

#### 2.5.1.1 Lack of Follow-up on Innovation Integration Insights

Participants expressed concerns over the absence of a deliberate follow-up mechanism after innovation integration workshops. Despite valuable insights and recommendations emerging from these workshops, there was no concrete action taken due to the lack of a clear scaling strategy and action plan, as well as understanding of accountability. Moving forward, a structured approach is needed to ensure that recommendations are implemented effectively.

#### 2.5.1.2 Strengthening Inter-team Synergy and Collaboration

Teams find it easier to implement actions when supported by other teams with different capacities.

It was also noted that there is a need for:

- Enhanced synergy among teams to leverage the support of the scaling team. This includes fostering collaboration from the conceptualization stage to implementation.
- Post-IPSR workshops should establish a dedicated team comprising private and public sector stakeholders to support the scaling process.
- Addressing trust in CGIAR's work is critical, as it will inform future engagement strategies and collaboration efforts.

#### 2.5.1.3 Addressing Bottlenecks and Overcoming Challenges

Identifying and prioritizing bottlenecks should be a key strategy in advancing programs. WP5 initially faced obstacles due to a lack of integration with the broader project, leading to inefficiencies and lost time. Ensuring alignment of CGIAR with all WPs is essential to avoid redundancy and maximize efficiency. Mainstreaming Gender in Program Design and Implementation: Gender should not be treated as a patchwork but must be deliberately mainstreamed in all programs from the design stage.

Package 5 initially operated under the assumption that gender equates to female participation, which influenced its approach. A broader and more inclusive perspective is needed. A well-integrated gender component requires a common research question that defines both scientific and demand-driven objectives.

#### 2.5.1.4 Leveraging contextual knowledge and cross-team learning

Programs should not rely solely on other teams' experiences and successes but must integrate their unique insights to ensure contextually relevant solutions. Additionally, there is a need to synthesize experiences from different geographies and teams to maximize benefits from both successes and challenges and pursue improved inter-group collaboration to harness the collective value of different programs in a mutually beneficial manner.

### **2.5.1.5 Enhancing structural and process alignment**

Teams should move away from siloed operations to develop integrated strategies that facilitate knowledge-sharing and technical capacity-building. Establishing clear structures and processes for collaboration among different groups, teams, and programs will enhance efficiency and effectiveness

### **2.5.1.6 Utilizing specialist consultants for technical support**

Engaging specialist consultants in key areas such as scaling, policy, and marketing could provide valuable expertise where CGIAR lacks internal capacity. Such engagements should be short-term, project-specific and based on clearly identified needs. A CGIAR-wide needs assessment should be conducted to identify technical and professional capacity gaps and inform the creation of an expert database.

## **2.6 REFLECTIONS ON INNOVATION INTERGRATION AND SCALING**

Moderated by Inga, the session provided an opportunity for participants to assess the integration and scaling of UU-promoted technologies across the various countries. The session was structured into two main parts: a discussion on previous innovation integration efforts and a presentation on the impact assessment of UU interventions.

### **2.6.1 Challenges and Lessons Learned**

Participants expressed concerns on the lack of deliberate follow-up after a previous innovation integration workshop. While insightful recommendations were generated, the absence of a clear scaling strategy and action plan hindered their implementation. Teams noted that collaboration across different units significantly enhances the ease of implementation and that synergizing efforts would allow for more effective scaling in future.

The discussion also underscored the need for stronger collaboration between teams at the conceptualization and implementation stages. Participants suggested forming teams that include both private and public sector stakeholders to back up the scaling process. The session further emphasized the importance of identifying bottlenecks early on and prioritizing their resolution to facilitate program advancement.

### **2.6.2 Gender integration in scaling strategies**

One of the critical areas of discussion was the integration of gender considerations. It was noted that in some cases, gender had been approached in a patchwork manner rather than being deliberately mainstreamed. Teams acknowledged that gender should be a core component of program design, ensuring that a comprehensive gender assessment is conducted to address barriers effectively.

There was also reflection on Work Package 5, which faced challenges due to a lack of integration with the broader project. Additionally, it was said there had been a misconception equating gender considerations solely with female participation, which impacted operational approaches. To address this, teams were encouraged to collaborate more closely with the gender team, align work plans, and find a common research question to drive scientific and demand-driven gender considerations.

### 2.6.3 Cross-team collaboration and structural considerations

Participants recognized the necessity of working across teams and geographies to leverage diverse experiences. Avoiding siloed work was identified as key to ensuring cohesive strategies and knowledge-sharing. There was a call to establish well-defined structures and processes to foster seamless collaboration across work groups, teams, and programs.

This also highlighted the opportunity to engage specialist consultants for specific expertise areas such as scaling, policy, and marketing. However, participants stressed that this should only be pursued when internal CGIAR capacities are insufficient. To optimize external expertise, a CGIAR-wide needs assessment was proposed to map technical and professional capacity gaps and establish a database of experts.

## 2.7 IMPACT ASSESSMENT PRESENTATION

Presented by Hambulo Ngoma (CIMMYT), titled “Many Partners, Big Numbers? Estimating the Reach of UU Interventions in ASA”. The presentation was based on a comprehensive survey conducted with Geopoll to assess the impact of UU’s interventions in the ASA to estimate the extent of UU’s reach in promoting agricultural innovations across ASA regions. It provided insights into the adoption of UU-promoted technologies across different countries. The report leveraged data from multiple countries, analyzing adoption rates, influencing factors, and overall impact. The study sought to answer critical questions regarding how effectively UU interventions have been disseminated and adopted by target communities. It also highlighted the increasing demand from donors and partners to demonstrate value for money.

### 2.7.1 Methodology

The study employed the Cochran sample size formula. This methodology enabled the researchers to determine a statistically valid sample size for data collection. Additionally, a training manual was developed to ensure uniformity among enumerators across different countries.

### 2.7.2 Key Findings

- **Awareness vs. Adoption:** A significant gap exists between awareness levels and actual adoption of interventions. While many people are aware of UU interventions, translating this awareness into effective adoption and use remains a challenge.
- **Geographical Reach and Usage Trends:** Among the countries studied, Zimbabwe recorded the highest number of people using various interventions, compared to Ethiopia, Kenya, and others. Training and agronomic interventions emerged as the most common avenues through which people interacted with UU.
- **UU Reach and Beneficiaries:** The study estimated that 1.05 million people across different countries are aware of UU interventions, with Kenya leading in awareness levels. The total number of beneficiaries stood at 164,363, including direct beneficiaries and spillover effects. Without spillovers, approximately 125,000 individuals benefited from the UU initiative. Over 70% of the beneficiaries were concentrated in Malawi, Kenya, and Zimbabwe.
- **Adoption of Bundled Innovations:** Despite high awareness levels, the adoption of bundled innovations remains low. This highlights the need for strategies aimed at encouraging greater adoption and sustained usage of interventions. Areas with higher adoption rates showed positive effects on agricultural productivity and sustainability. Technologies that promoted climate resilience were particularly well received, indicating growing interest in sustainable farming practices.
- **Sampling and Awareness Levels:** The study was conducted across five countries, surveying a sample of 6,500 individuals representing 12.5% of rural populations. Of the surveyed population, 1.05 million (8.4%) were aware of UU activities. Although awareness of promoted interventions was significantly high, adoption and long-term utilization remained comparatively lower.

- Challenges identified: The study highlighted major challenges, including low awareness levels, limited access to credit, and infrastructural barriers, which hindered the scalability of UU interventions. Addressing these issues was emphasized as crucial for enhancing impact. However, assessing impact has been complicated due to the absence of embedded evaluation frameworks.

Link: [Hambulo Ngoma \(CIMMYT\), Many Partners, Big Numbers? Estimating the Reach of UU Interventions in ASA](#)

### **2.7.3 Discussions and Reactions**

Following the presentation, participants engaged in a robust discussion, reflecting on the findings and identifying actionable steps to improve adoption rates. Participants noted that there is need for:

- Increased stakeholder engagement to bridge gaps in adoption and enhance collaboration with policymakers and financial institutions to create an enabling environment.
- Strengthening extension services and farmer training to enhance awareness including targeted awareness campaigns to increase farmer engagement.
- Exploring innovative financing models to support smallholder farmers in accessing UU-promoted technologies.
- Ensuring localized approaches to technology dissemination to address context-specific challenges.
- Leveraging digital platforms for knowledge-sharing and training.
- Conducting periodic impact assessments to track progress and refine strategies.

The discussion also underscored the need for continuous reflection and adaptation to maximize impact in the agricultural sector across ESA regions.

## 3. DAY 2 (February 5, 2025)

### 3.1 COMMUNICATION: Telling the Impact Story Through Publications

The session focused on developing robust communication strategies to effectively narrate UU's success stories and demonstrate its impact. Participants engaged in group discussions to identify target audiences, suitable communication channels, key messages, and media engagement strategies.

Participants identified strategic pathways for effective messaging, audience engagement, and media relations. As UU transitions to Scaling for Impact, these insights will be instrumental in ensuring continuity, enhancing visibility, and strengthening stakeholder relationships.

#### 3.1.1 Identifying Target Audiences

The workshop underscored the importance of tailoring communication efforts to different stakeholders. Key audiences identified included:

- Donors: To demonstrate impact and accountability for funding.
- Public and Private Sector Partners: To foster collaborations and policy influence.
- Smallholder Farmers: To share best practices and successful interventions.
- CGIAR Internal Audiences, including the Chief Scientist: To align messaging with broader organizational goals and to raise awareness on the transition from UU to Scaling for Impact and its implications.

#### 3.1.2 Effective Communication Channels

Participants highlighted the need for diverse and context-specific communication channels to maximize reach and engagement. Recommended channels included:

- Radio: A widely accessible medium, especially for smallholder farmers.
- Native storytelling formats: Leveraging traditional oral storytelling to resonate with local communities.
- Creative visual mediums: Posters, infographics, and videos for enhanced engagement.
- CGIAR publications and journals: Ensuring scholarly documentation of impact.
- Opinion pieces: Sponsored articles in leading regional publications, such as the recently published piece in *The East African* and an upcoming full-page feature for Science Week.

#### 3.1.3. Developing a Unified Master Narrative

A key takeaway from the session was the need for a compelling master narrative that presents a cohesive and authentic story of UU. The narrative should emphasize the tangible impact of UU's work at the grassroots level, demonstrate the value and effectiveness of donor support and ensure consistency in messaging across all communication platforms.

#### 3.1.4. Media Engagement Strategy

The workshop emphasized the critical role of media engagement in amplifying UU's visibility and ensuring accurate storytelling. A region-wide media training program will be implemented to equip journalists with knowledge about CGIAR programs, enabling them to report effectively on UU's initiatives. Media engagement will be tailored to specific regional contexts to account for unique local dynamics. A significant aspect of this engagement will be to raise awareness about the transition from Ukama Ustawi to Scaling for Impact.

It was reported that *The East African* (a weekly regional publication) had published a sponsored opinion piece a while back and there is another already paid-up full page which will be utilized for the upcoming Science Week.

### **3.1.5 Internal Communication for Organizational Transition**

To facilitate a smooth transition, internal communication efforts will focus on preparing staff members by educating them on the implications of the shift to Scaling for Impact. Transparent and proactive communication will be key to ensuring staff alignment with the new strategic direction.

### **3.1.6 Budgetary Considerations and Call to Action**

Participants acknowledged that budget constraints could impact communication activities. Therefore, strategic planning and resource allocation will be essential in implementing the proposed communication strategies effectively. Additionally, all communication efforts should include clear calls to action, ensuring that audiences understand their role and the desired responses to UU's messages.

### **3.1.7 Ensuring Authenticity and Trust**

A strong emphasis was placed on maintaining authenticity in UU's communication efforts. Trust-building with stakeholders requires transparent storytelling that accurately reflects UU's achievements and challenges and thoughtful messaging that aligns with stakeholders' needs and expectations.

## **3.2 PROPOSED PUBLICATION TOPICS**

The session was moderated by Esther Kihoro (ILRI). Several potential themes for publications were identified, including:

- Impact of Community of Spirit (CoS): Showcasing collaborative successes.
- Field Stories: Narratives from digital initiatives, accelerator programs, and enabling environment efforts.
- Place-Based Scaling: Illustrating the farm-to-fork approach and its global significance.
- Scaling Collaborations: Highlighting partnerships with technology providers and other stakeholders.
- Building Capacity and Culture: Exploring training initiatives, community engagement, and field visits.
- Process Documentation: Capturing lessons from successful initiatives to inform future scaling efforts.

### **[UU Proposed Publications](#)**

The next steps involve implementing the proposed strategies while maintaining authenticity, ensuring resource efficiency, and driving meaningful engagement across all levels.

## 4. DAY 3 (February 6, 2025)

### 4.1 TYPE 1 REPORT

This session started with a presentation by Manisha Shresta on the output and outcome level reports of the various WPs highlighting achievements of the last 3-year reporting cycle (2022-24) against targets. Participants interacted with the report and sought clarifications on various issues which were well addressed by the presenter.

Participants were tasked with completing and submitting reports from all WPs to Manisha for compilation in the PRMS Outcome Indicator module. The urgency of providing comprehensive details, including partner contributions and cumulative value achieved by the end of 2024, was emphasized.

To ensure accuracy and credibility, all teams were required to provide evidence-based narratives illustrating the impact of UU initiatives. Participants contributed key data to feed into the outcome indicator module, capturing significant progress made in nutrition and agricultural sustainability.

#### 4.1.1 Key Achievements and Insights

The discussions highlighted the substantial reach and influence of UU across Kenya, Malawi, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania. Among the notable outcomes:

- 100,000 farmers have adopted Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices, with a strong emphasis on inclusivity—40% of the beneficiaries being women and 40% youth.
- Half of these farmers (50,000) have incorporated biodiversity-friendly practices, excluding irrigation and mechanization due to the absence of direct impact evidence.

#### 4.1.2 Conclusion and Next Step

Notably, 60,000 consumers have reported improved personal and household nutrition as a result of UU interventions. A crucial part of the session involved aligning the current progress with UU's theory of change.

Participants cross-checked findings with the theory of change board to ensure coherence in impact assessment and future planning. Financial mobilization efforts were also reviewed, with USD 7 million in debt, equity, and grants currently in the pipeline. A letter from WP3 was shared with Manisha as supporting evidence, detailing commitments from grant providers, equity investors, and impact innovators poised to drive further development and expansion of UU's initiatives.

## **4.2 PARALLEL SCALING FOR IMPACT (S4I) BUDGET STATUS**

Masud Rana (CIMMYT), presented the budget status for the Scaling for Impact (S4I) Program, outlining the principles guiding CGIAR's budget allocation. The budget is based on the last three-year cycle historical Center allocation (2022- 2024) and is shared at the Program level.

The session discussions underscored the importance of aligning budgetary allocations with strategic priorities while ensuring efficiency in implementation. Emphasis was laid on a clear understanding of financial constraints and the need for careful planning to maximize impact. Moving forward, the team is expected to operate within the presented budget framework while optimizing resources to achieve meaningful outcomes.

### **4.2.1 Budget Planning and Considerations**

Participants engaged actively with the budget presentation, seeking clarification on specific areas. Rana addressed all concerns to the satisfaction of the members. It was agreed that the team would proceed with the budget as presented, with Rana tasked to share the final Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) UU budget work plan for S4I. The CGIAR portfolio for 2025 is set at USD 288,699,895 distributed to Centers for implementation.

Participants were reminded to handle the budget details with sensitivity and to avoid sharing snapshots of the data outside the room.

### **4.2.2 Prioritization and Strategic Planning**

With an allocated USD 8.299 million for 2025 priorities, the team was advised to plan accordingly, considering anticipated budget cuts. Emphasis was placed on prioritizing impactful activities that align with the program's objectives. As there are only ten months left to execute the planned work for the year, the team was encouraged to be strategic in connecting activities across different areas of work.

### 4.3 WORKPLAN DEEP DIVE

This session was an in-depth review of the integration of UU activities into the Scaling for Impact workplan in preparation for the next week which brought together all WPs Leads and Co-Leads in Nairobi for the Program kick-off.



Figure 1: S4I AoW Diagram

A major component of the discussion was achieving impact through financing by working with international organizations, such as the World Bank. This approach requires personnel with scaling expertise to unlock investments in scaling opportunities. Most of the work will be downstream, ensuring practical application and sustainability. The Program follows a bottom-up approach, emphasizing regional uniqueness while maintaining a unified strategy for achieving common outputs.

The current global political climate poses challenges, necessitating the exploration of alternative partnerships. Participants emphasized the need to develop a common methodology and conduct thorough diagnostics to refine their approach. Additionally, strategic experts should be engaged to design more effective work strategies. While program budgets are still under discussion, careful financial planning will be essential to ensuring that funding contributes to all AoW effectively.

### 4.3.1 Enabling Environment and AOW3 Challenges

A significant focus of the discussion was the Enabling Environment Lab, a crucial component expected to drive significant impact. AoW 4, however, remains underdeveloped due to the specialized expertise required to bridge existing gaps. The amplification effect of program activities must be incorporated into AoW 4 to enhance overall effectiveness.

### 4.3.2 Gender and Diversity Inclusion in Scaling for Impact

Strategies for gender and diversity inclusion are being integrated into all AoWs. Participants highlighted the importance of aligning gender and diversity efforts across different work areas to ensure a cohesive approach. A more effective articulation of these strategies is required to eliminate disconnects. Moreover, it is essential to demonstrate that the available funding has a tangible impact across all work areas. Collaboration across different areas will be crucial for seamless and effective program implementation. Selection of work bundles must be cross-checked against desired outcomes to ensure alignment with program objectives.

### 4.3.3 A Summary of the Areas of Work

The session provided valuable insights into refining UU's strategic direction and integration in the S4I Program. By focusing on key priorities, leveraging partnerships, and ensuring adaptive management, the program is better positioned to drive impactful scaling in agrifood systems across multiple regions. Continued collaboration and alignment of efforts will be essential in achieving UU's objectives within the available resources.

#### 4.3.3.1 Area of Work 1: Engage & Empower

This area focuses on aligning research with scaling by responding to regional and country-based stakeholder demands through adaptive management and demand signaling. The key steps identified for this initiative include:

- Developing a protocol for country engagement.
- Conducting a quantitative panel survey to collect demand data.
- Analyzing and synthesizing findings, followed by validation through qualitative methods such as focus groups.
- Establishing a digital dashboard for demand intelligence, though this may not be completed in 2025.
- Engaging with other CGIAR programs through Pause & Reflect (P&R) processes for feedback on work plan development.
- Formulating country-specific strategies.

**Considerations:** A proposal was discussed to have a CGIAR center contribution or 'tax' to support common-good initiatives beyond just S4I. The team recommended focusing efforts on two countries—Ethiopia, Kenya, and Zambia—while also exploring Customer Relationship Management (CRM) dashboards that could facilitate co-investment and collaboration with the Digital Transformation Accelerator.

#### 4.3.3.2 Area of Work 2: Pathways to Scale in Agrifood Systems

Scaling efforts must be realistic in terms of budget, personnel, and available resources. Three primary impact pathways were identified: public sector extension services, private sector, and digital channels. These pathways will address production, market, consumption, and climate systems.

##### Key Actions

- Co-design, evaluate, refine, and amplify tailored innovation bundles and scaling pathways.
- Enhance collaboration with CGIAR programs, accelerators, and large bilateral projects.

#### 4.3.3.3 Area of Work 3: Enabling Environment

To facilitate scaling, improvements in policies, market systems, business capacities, and institutional frameworks must be made while addressing normative barriers.

##### Zambia Case Study

In Zambia, the team identified mechanization and diversification as key priorities. Key stakeholders include farmers, service providers, financial partners, mechanization suppliers, and digital advisory firms. A comprehensive demand mapping exercise was recommended, including:

- Defining a mechanization strategy.
- Identifying networks and key collaborators.
- Conducting an innovation system assessment.
- Developing an action plan.

The existing Living Labs were proposed as a starting point for testing scaling pathways. However, exit strategies must be well thought out to avoid duplication and ensure alignment with other scientific programs.

**General Considerations:** Given budget constraints, the need to focus on high-impact areas was emphasized. The impact delivery pathway is expected to be finalized and submitted by April, covering innovation bundles and mechanization strategies in Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia.

#### 4.3.3.4 Area of Work 4: Achieving Impact

This AoW aims to establish a global clearinghouse for ready-to-scale innovation bundles. Discussions revolved around aligning agribusiness acceleration efforts with impact investors, considering budget reallocation from AoW2 to AoW4, and supporting the NBO Scaling Hub.

- **Next Steps** Align agribusiness acceleration graduation and fund management with impact investors.
- Assess budget movement from AoW2 to AoW4, with ABC and IWMI evaluating fund allocation.
- Explore contributions to the NBO Scaling Hub from ABC and IWMI.

#### 4.3.3.5. Area of Work 5: Learning from Impact

Integrating scaling strategies into AoW2 was a major theme. Collaboration between IPRS, AoW3 Enabling Environment, and AoW2 teams is crucial for refining approaches and sharing knowledge across regions.

### **Key Action points:**

- Develop an overarching framework for assessing and addressing barriers to scaling.
- Highlight successes and failures in East and Southern Africa.
- Establish a scorecard system for assessing enabling environments and identifying interventions.
- Develop an EE methods toolbox starting with Gender Equality, Social Inclusion (GESI), and government tools.
- Strengthen the enabling environment through:
  - Agripreneur models in Kenya for fostering production-market linkages.
  - Local Service Providers (LSP) models for mechanization services in at least one country per region.
  - Public extension strengthening in Ethiopia.
- Support private sector agribusiness acceleration initiatives.

### **4.3.3.6 Cross-Cutting**

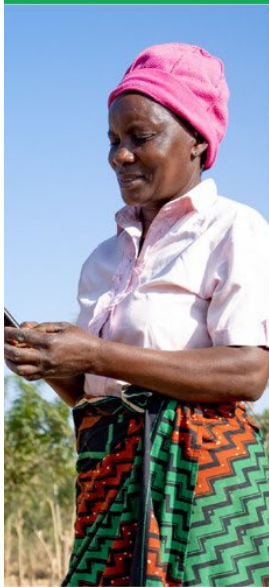
Several overarching issues and operational considerations were discussed, including:

- Operational costs for the Regional Scaling Network.
- Communications and marketing efforts, including media training.
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Impact Assessment (MELIA).
- Coordination of efforts across workstreams.
- Contributions to the public good, particularly in demand articulation under AoW1.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Ukama Ustawi Pause & Reflect Workshop 2024, served as a vital space for critical assessment, collaborative planning, and strategic foresight. Through open dialogue, the workshop fostered deep reflection on past achievements, ongoing challenges, and future priorities. Participants underscored the need for stronger cross-team collaboration, deliberate gender mainstreaming, and structured approaches to scaling and innovation integration. As the initiative transitions into the Scaling for Impact program, sustaining momentum will depend on adaptive management, evidence-based advocacy, and unified action across regions and work packages. The shared commitment to learning and continuous improvement positions Ukama Ustawi to leave a lasting legacy in advancing sustainable agriculture across East and Southern Africa.

# ANNEX A. PROGRAM



## PROGRAM

### Ukama Ustawi Pause and Reflect 2023

6 February 2024

09:00 – 18:00 EAT | Azage Room

09:00 - 09:20

#### Welcome

**Facilitator:** Dr Inga Jacobs-Mata, Initiative Lead and IWMI Director of Water-Growth and Inclusion

**Welcome:** Dr Namukolo Covic, ILRI Director General's Representative in Ethiopia

**Opening Remarks:** Dr Maya Rajasekharan, Alliance Bioversity & CIAT (ABC) Managing Director for Africa

09:20 - 09:50

#### Ice Breaker

Playful Solutions

09:50 - 11:00

#### UU Overview and Highlights from 2023

**Speakers:** UU Leadership Team/Partners

11:00 - 11:20

#### Tea Break/Group Photo

11:20 - 12:20

#### Networking Activity

Playful Solutions

11:20 - 12:20

#### Networking Activity

Playful Solutions

12:20 - 13:00

#### Role of the RILs in Linking CGIAR Science and Impact in Regions

Dr Maya Rajasekharan, ABC Managing Director for Africa  
Dr Evan Girvetz, Ukama Ustawi Initiative Co-Lead and CIAT Principal Scientist and Global Program Leader

13:00 - 14:00

#### Lunch

14:00 - 16:00

#### World Cafe: Cross-WP Collaboration for 2024

16:00 - 17:00

#### Group Feedback Session

Nora Hanke-Louw, UU Project Coordinator, and Deputy Country Representative, IWMI South Africa

17:00 - 17:30

#### Day's Reflection

Playful Solutions

18:00

#### Cocktail

Venue: IRLI Main Cafeteria



## PROGRAM

### Ukama Ustawi Pause and Reflect 2023

7 February 2024

09:00 – 18:00 EAT | Azage Room

09:00 - 09:30

#### Opening Remarks

Pedro Chilambe, CIAT, UU WP 2 Co-lead, Research Team Leader, Climate Action  
Dr Harold Roy-Macauley, CGIAR Managing Director, Regions and Partnerships

09:30 - 10:30

#### Working in Partnerships to Transform Agrifood System

Partner Survey Result Feedback, Nora Hanke-Louw, UU Project Coordinator, and Deputy Country Representative, IWMI South Africa  
Moderated by Dr Inga Jacobs-Mata, Initiative Lead and IWMI Director of Water-Growth and Inclusion

10:30 - 11:00

#### Tea/Coffee Break

11:00 - 12:00

#### World Cafe: Country Coordination

**Group 1:** Konso Room  
**Group 2&3:** Azage Room  
**Room 4&5:** Info Center Room

12:00 - 12:30

#### Group Feedback Session

Facilitator: Nora Hanke-Louw, UU Project Coordinator, and Deputy Country Representative, IWMI South Africa

12:30 - 13:30

#### Lunch

13:30 - 17:30

#### Innovations: The Diversity & Transformation Game

Playful Solutions

16:30 - 16:50

#### Closing & Vote of Thanks

Dr Ojongelakwah Enokwenwa Baa, IWMI Postdoctoral Fellow - Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Agribusiness, Governance and Inclusion  
Dr Blessing Mhlanga, CIMMYT, PDF, Cropping Systems Agronomist, SAS  
Pedro Chilambe, CIAT, Research Team Leader, Climate Action  
Vote of Thanks: Dr Inga Jacobs-Mata, Initiative Lead and IWMI Director of Water-Growth and Inclusion



## PROGRAM

### Ukama Ustawi Pause and Reflect 2023

8 February 2024

09:00 – 18:00 EAT | Azage Room

09:00 - 09:20

#### Opening Remarks

Dr Inga Jacobs-Mata, Ukama Ustawi Lead, and Director Water, Growth and Inclusion, IWMI

09:20 - 10:20

#### Country Convenor Experiences in ESA: Lessons Learned on Implementation of CGIAR Initiative Portfolio In-country

ESA Country Convenors

10:20 - 11:00

#### Role of Country Convenors in Science Coordination Under the RII

Interactive discussion between ESA Country Convenors and UU Leadership team

#### Wrap-Up

Agreement on next steps

09:20 - 11:30

#### Parallel Session: Communication Working Session

Facilitator: Phindiwe Nkosi, Communications and Knowledge Management Expert, IWMI

#### Hybrid Working Session: Maximise Communications for UU in 2024



11:30 - 11:45

#### Group Photo

11:45 - 12:30

#### Media Engagements

UU WP Leads, ESA Country Convenors attending in person

12:30 - 13:30

#### Lunch

13:30 - 14:00

#### UU in Ethiopia: In-focus

Dr Amare Hailelassie, Initiative Ethiopia Lead, IWMI Principal Researcher for Sustainable and Resilient Food Production Systems

14:00 - 15:00

#### ILRI Campus Tour

15:00 - 17:00

#### Side Meetings

## ANNEX B. PRESENTATION LINKS

[UU Overview and Highlights from 2023](#)

[Role of the RIIs in Linking CGIAR Science and Impact in Regions](#)

[UU Playful solution Game report](#)

[2024-01-10 UU Pause and Reflect Updated list.xlsx](#)

[Pictures from Ukama Ustawi Pause and Reflect 2023 meeting](#)

[Hambulo Ngoma \(CIMMYT\), Many Partners, Big Numbers? Estimating the Reach of UU Interventions in ASA](#)

# ANNEX C. PARTICIPANTS

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