



CGIAR SYSTEM
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE
REPORT 2018

PREFACE

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Agriculture is at the heart of both the problems and solutions that link nutrition to climatic and environmental change. These immense challenges demand novel solutions, putting research for development at the center of shared agendas for action and transformation.

Weather records were broken across the world in 2018 as tropical and temperate countries alike experienced unprecedented floods, heat and wildfires. Meanwhile, evidence mounted that the world is not doing enough to manage global environmental change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [1.5°C Report](#) gave stark notice of the need for rapid action to avert a deep climate crisis. Related reports from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) on [land degradation and biodiversity](#) amplified messages of crisis and urgency.

As these existential environmental threats captured policy attention, both hunger and food shortages were again on the rise. 2018 marked the third year of the reversal of the multi-decade global progress on food security, with Latin America suffering an upturn in hunger alongside Africa and Asia; climate variability and extremes were identified as key drivers globally. The [2018 Global Report on Food Crises](#) found that climate disasters were responsible for a third of households in distress over the past year.

CGIAR, active in a global network of partners for agricultural research and development, made critical research contributions to supporting broad-based food security in the face of rapid environmental change during 2018. Drawing on its key assets – scientific skills, unique infrastructure including genebanks, and a worldwide reach – CGIAR worked with partners to generate nearly 1,000 scientific innovations and approximately 1,900 peer-reviewed publications over the year.

The primary value of this science is its contribution to positive impact on people's welfare. 2018 saw the publication of a compilation of 25 rigorous impact assessment studies of CGIAR work from the prior five years.

Demonstrated impacts of CGIAR research included a long-run reduction in infant mortality, at 3-5 million infant deaths averted per year, as well as sustained increases in both gross domestic product (GDP) and farmer incomes across multiple countries. Additional impact studies published in 2018 showed, for example, clear impacts of drought-tolerant maize varieties on household incomes and food consumption in Africa's most populous countries, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

Major headway was achieved in 2018 through the approval of the Crops to End Hunger Initiative (CtEH), established and funded to modernize plant breeding across all relevant CGIAR Research Centers, using a common set of diagnostic, planning and priority-setting tools. The System-wide role of gender equality research was also reinforced with strong support from Funders. Other advances included new strategies on biofortification, and exploration of new strategic areas for cross-Center collaboration, such as anti-microbial resistance and rapid response to emerging pests and diseases.

Managerial innovation at the System level was a hallmark of 2018. Among the significant achievements was the development of a process for three-yearly business planning cycles across the CGIAR System. This led in turn to the approval of the 2019-2021 CGIAR Business Plan, which outlines ten priority areas of action. Among other priorities, the Business Plan set in motion the genesis of a 2030 Plan – an opportunity to achieve greater focus and coherence across CGIAR's research portfolio, delivery mechanisms and institutional arrangements. The Plan will be in place for the 2022-2030 business cycles, to align with the world's serious collective efforts to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With regard to funding, flows into Window 1 and 2 stabilized in 2018, in tandem with a heightened sense of shared purpose between Funders and CGIAR. Members of the System Council and the System Management Board came together towards the end of the year to initiate a collaborative System Reference Group dedicated to the design of the 2030 Plan. In

addition, the System Council agreed a set of principles to improve the connections between CGIAR and its scientific and advisory services in terms of efficiency, mutual communications, links between science and development, and ownership of advice.

Special effort was made over the year to improve the consistency and quality of learning across the System. For the first time the full set of shared research, funded through the pooled funds (Windows 1, 2 and 3) and associated bilateral grants, was planned and reported via a common online software system using standard definitions and criteria, with quality assurance at System level. These tools provide

the means for a more accurate System-wide view by Funders and other observers, plus, equally valuable, enhanced communication and shared learning among CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs) and Platforms.

Moving from 2018 into the new business cycle, CGIAR remains dedicated to research and partnerships that reduce poverty, enhance food and nutrition security, and improve natural resources. Innovation and ingenuity in how CGIAR works and what it produces will be at the heart of playing a meaningful role in the global push to reach the SDGs in a climate-challenged world.



A vegetable vendor in Lizulu Market in Lilongwe, Malawi. Photo: Melissa Cooperman/IPPRI



CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food-secure future. CGIAR science is dedicated to reducing poverty, enhancing food and nutrition security, and improving natural resources and ecosystem services. Its research is carried out by 15 CGIAR Research Centers 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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