



## Regions and Partnerships

### Developing and Deepening our Engagement

#### Purpose

This document presents an overview of the country and regional partnership engagement and co-creation process that will inform the CGIAR 2025-27 research portfolio design process, including critical engagement and co-creation points. The appendices outline related progress in deepening CGIAR's engagement with stakeholders in the regions and countries where it works.

The outcomes of the CGIAR 2025-2027 research portfolio design process are critical to the successful delivery of the vision and mission of CGIAR. To support the vision and ensure a demand-responsive portfolio, Regions and Partnership (R&P) Division will align to the design process proposed by the Science Groups, as set out in meeting document SC18-11b. The process includes five core components: content, quality of research for development, consolidation and coordination, financial mechanisms, integration with CGIAR Framework, be built through a transparent, inclusive co-creation process, and supported by strengthened partnerships and country and regional engagement.

#### Action Requested

The System Council's support is requested for the further development of the process that will inform the CGIAR 2025-27 research portfolio design and delivery process.

<p><b>Document category:</b> Working document of the System Council. There is no restriction on the circulation of this document</p>
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## Background

### Regions and Partners Value Proposition

1. Guided by the [CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy](#), the recently signed [CGIAR Integration Framework Agreement](#) (IFA), the corresponding organizational matrix structure, and the [report of the High-Level Advisory Panel](#) (HLAP)<sup>1</sup>, the Regions and Partnerships (R&P) Division has been establishing new and evolving roles and ways of working across CGIAR and conceptualizing the value it brings to partners, based on integration and systems thinking<sup>2</sup>.
2. As the newest node of CGIAR operations, R&P is an enabler of Research for Development at scale. It is valuable to CGIAR and the achievement of its mission because of its entrepreneurial business model that contributes to streamlining partnerships, co-creation, scaling, and impact delivery, for the entire organization.
3. Further, R&P provides the tools, systems, and channels for CGIAR to work better with, for and through its partners towards common goals. R&P is catalytic in that it propels CGIAR towards the duality of meeting demand-driven and immediate-term research needs from national institutions as well as enabling larger-scale social and environmental transformation through agriculture.
4. The R&P division contributes to meeting this duality of opportunity and delivering CGIAR's Research and Innovation Strategy by:
  - ensuring that CGIAR regional research portfolios align with region and country needs and priorities;
  - developing a common understanding of challenges and opportunities for food and nutrition, land, and water systems transformation, at country and regional levels, which allows CGIAR to collaboratively address demands, within its remits and competencies;
  - identifying research priorities per region/country, in close coordination with the global science groups, that are within the remits of the CGIAR global agenda;
  - bridging the gap between demand and delivery to ensure continuous learning across CGIAR;
  - enabling the adaptation, adoption, and up- and out-scaling of innovations and solutions;
  - ensuring a multiplier effect for CGIAR's research by channeling research innovations to regions and country spaces;
  - advocating and promoting an enabling environment for the delivery of innovations at the local, national, and international levels, based on shared knowledge and evidence;

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<sup>1</sup> Update on the implementation of the recommendations from the High-Level Advisory Panel (HLAP) on Country and Regional Engagement with the Global South available in Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from the Regions and Partnerships Strategy 2023-2025, which will be shared with CGIAR Executive Management, System Board and System Council in Q2 2023

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- ensuring capacity sharing and ownership of joint efforts towards delivery of research outputs and outcomes<sup>3</sup>, through South-South and Triangular cooperation; and
- championing engagement and partnership at country, region, continent, and global levels, and facilitating relationships and connections across spaces and co-creation efforts.

### Partner Dialogues

5. CGIAR's six Regional Directors (RDs) , supported by Country Conveners (CCs), have hosted a series of *Partner Dialogues* since the launch of the 2022-2024 research portfolio. The purpose was to formally introduce the CGIAR Research Initiatives to external partners and stakeholders and to launch a formal space to strengthen research capacity sharing and catalyze more attractive partnerships for impact in the Global South. Specific objectives were to:
  - i. Showcase CGIAR Research Initiatives in the region and garner feedback;
  - ii. Share the latest information on the One CGIAR reform, including the Engagement Framework;
  - iii. Initiate a structured space to regularly sit with partners and listen, learn, discuss, plan, review, and celebrate collaborative efforts that respond directly to local needs and aspirations; and
  - iv. Understand the needs of partners and opportunities to inform the policy and investment environment, together.
6. The Dialogues invited Ministers, Secretaries and dignitaries of relevant national governments, National Agricultural Research and Innovation Systems (NARIS) leadership, Ambassadors, country mission representatives, CGIAR senior leaders and Initiative leads and co-leads, academia, private sector, civil society, and other national actors in the food, land, and water, space, to share their perspectives on CGIAR's research and innovation agenda including the research portfolio. In the intervening time from these formal Partner Dialogues, CGIAR Country Conveners<sup>4</sup> have maintained relationships with these key stakeholders and coordinated their interactions with research initiative leaders, in-country.
7. While the structure and outputs<sup>5</sup> of the Dialogues took various forms, tailored to the needs of the region or country, they all provided CGIAR with early information and market intelligence on the 2022-2024 portfolio, including demands and priorities of countries and regions, existing gaps between demand and delivery, and potential enablers for adaptation, adoption, and scaling of technologies and innovations.
8. CGIAR also received highly relevant feedback from stakeholders on the engagement process and recognizes the need to amend the following aspects of engagement in the creation of the 2025-27 portfolio:

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<sup>3</sup> Update on One CGIAR Capacity sharing for development available in Appendix B

<sup>4</sup> A complete list of Country Conveners for 2023 is available in Appendix C

<sup>5</sup> A complete list of key recent region/country engagements and outputs for 2022-23 is available in Appendix D

- Structure and coordination of engagement with partners in each country prior to creating the CGIAR research portfolio;
  - Creation of a portfolio that helps to meet national priorities;
  - Coordination of action between and among Global Thematic Initiatives (GTIs) and Regional Integrating Initiatives (RIIs) that are operating in the same country,
  - Regularity of the cadence/ interval of engagement with partners that are involved in all CGIAR GTIs/ RIIs.
9. The R&P Division will capitalize on the outputs from the Partner Dialogues, including the intelligence generated and newly created tools, systems, and structured space, to facilitate a consistent and highly visible country and regional partnership engagement and co-creation process. This process will align with the emerging role and value proposition of the R&P Division in helping CGIAR achieve its ambition.

### Countries, Regions, Partners: engagement and co-creation process

10. The proposed 2025-27 portfolio development process suggests interactions with four identified stakeholder groups: Regional; System Board (SB) including Center Boards and System Council (SC); CGIAR staff members and their very close scientific partners; and the Independent Advisory and Evaluation Services (IAES). The R&P Division will focus on the engagement and co-creation process with regional stakeholders, including demand, scaling, and innovation partners in the six CGIAR geographic regions.
11. The first phase of the engagement and co-creation process will take place between May and October 2023 and will consist of a regional consultation process that will focus on aligning the initiatives to the needs of regions and countries. This process will be led by CGIAR Regional Offices and will be supported by a parallel impact orientation review led by Science Managing Directors and Impact Area Platform Directors. To drive efficiency but remain effective, the Regional Offices will look to incorporate the consultation sessions into existing events and meetings.
12. The consultations will build from the output documents of the Partner Dialogues, subsequent Country feedback reports, and other relevant information. The outputs of the consultation sessions will inform the 2025-2027 research portfolio and **deliver a templated approach for country engagement**. Steps in the process include:

#### Analysis:

- Collate outcome reports, communiques, and compacts from Partner Dialogues, to identify existing policy and strategy information.
- Analyze compacts and documents to determine where synergies and gaps lie.
- Review assessments of previous Dialogues for partner feedback and suggested improvements; especially feedback related to the size or diversity of the 2022-2024 portfolio.
- Review outputs of Review, Reflect, Refresh process of current portfolio with Science Groups.

**Planning:**

- Develop country engagement template, based on analysis.
- Identify planned region and country engagements across CGIAR.
- Identify professional facilitator and co-develop approach.
- Develop communication plan and dialogue branding.
- Test and revise approach with Science Groups, Country Conveners, and regional stakeholders.

## APPENDICES ON OTHER RECENT KEY ENGAGEMENTS

### Appendix A: Update on Implementation of HLAP recommendations

#### Background

1. In July 2022, the CGIAR System Board appointed an independent High-Level Advisory Panel (HLAP) to guide CGIAR in improving its strategic engagement with partners during its transition to One CGIAR. The Panel, constituted by two co-conveners, Uma Lele and Namanga Ngongi, and 10 additional internationally renowned experts, was tasked to “advise on fostering ownership of reforms and mechanisms for joint learning and engagement...” with partners across the regions in which CGIAR works. The HLAP delivered its recommendations on 11 January 2023 through its report, “[On Improving One CGIAR’s Strategic Engagement with Partners](#)”. The panel stressed the importance of CGIAR providing serious consideration to the recommendations, taking actions in a timely manner, and monitoring progress. CGIAR welcomed the report, acknowledging the need to improve the effectiveness of its engagement with partners in the Global South and to enhance their voice and participation.

#### HLAP Recommendations - Summary

2. The HLAP recommendations call for a wide-ranging reform of CGIAR’s approach to engagement and partnerships, translated into the following three main recommendations accompanied by 20 specific proposed actions:
  - I. Better orient the new One CGIAR model and the institutional arrangements being put into place toward improved engagement and partnership with key stakeholders,
  - II. Develop and implement a visible process for inclusive agenda-setting, co-design, and co-ownership of all aspects of One CGIAR’s programmatic efforts; and
  - III. Prioritize the establishment and urgent implementation of appropriate engagement modalities with Host Country Governments, as key partners in the One CGIAR transformation.
3. Furthermore, as part of their assessment, the HLAP reviewed and provided targeted comments on how to strengthen CGIAR’s proposed “[Engagement Framework for Partnerships & Advocacy – Toward Greater Impact](#)” that was published in March 2022.
4. The HLAP’s recommendations require consideration and response from the entire organization, as they touch upon its governance, frameworks, policies, guidelines, processes, behaviors, and overall institutional culture, cutting across all CGIAR’s operational structure.

Roadmap

5. The roadmap below proposes the steps for consideration and implementation of the HLAP recommendations, with an accompanying timeline and list of potential responsible divisions or units across CGIAR.

Task	Timeline	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
Engagement Framework – Revision (Version 2.0)	Q3 2023	Partnership & Advocacy <sup>6</sup>	Regions & Partnerships	All Units	System Council, System Board
Approval of Engagement Framework by CGIAR System Board, and endorsement by Systems Council	Q3 2023	Regions & Partnerships	Executive Managing Director	All Units	System Council, System Board
Revision and prioritization of recommendations, and assignment to divisions and units <sup>7</sup>	Q3 2023	Senior Leadership Team “Task Force”	Executive Management Team	All Units	System Council, System Board
Preparation of terms of reference, charters, plans and budgets for implementation <sup>8</sup>	Q4 2023	Divisions and units assigned	Executive Management Team	All Units	System Council, System Board
Initiate piloting, prototyping, implementation, and optimization of actions	Q4 2023	Divisions and units assigned	Executive Management Team	All Units	System Council, System Board
Design and deployment of a system for monitoring, evaluating, learning from, and reporting on actions	Q4 2023	Senior Leadership Team “Task Force”	Executive Management Team	All Units	System Council, System Board
Deployment of communications plan for informing key constituencies on progress	Q4 2023	Communications & Outreach	Executive Management Team	All Units	System Council, System Board

<sup>6</sup> The review of the CGIAR Engagement Framework falls under the purview of the Partnerships & Advocacy Global Group. CGIAR’s Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has, however, named high-level representatives from Regions (Temina Lalani-Shariff) and Research (Channing Arndt and Oscar Ortiz) to be integral members of the team who will deliver on the next version of the framework.

<sup>7</sup> This exercise will involve representation from across all functional divisions and units, led by a Task Force derived from CGIAR’s Senior Leadership Team. As a result, CGIAR will define which HLAP recommendations will be adopted, and if they will be deployed as short-, mid-, and long-term actions. Actions will have to be assigned for delivery to corresponding divisions and units across CGIAR.

<sup>8</sup> Divisions and units responsible for actions will have to define resources (financial, human, and other) required to implement the recommendations. Given the nature of the proposed actions, these may require changes in governance, frameworks, policies, guidelines, practices, and institutional culture.

## Appendix B: Update on Capacity sharing for development

### Background

1. The “[CGIAR 2030 Strategy for Research and Innovation](#)” identifies capacity development as a critical “impact pathway” to scale research and innovation, and accelerate global progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the context of the One CGIAR reform, a *Capacity Sharing for Development* (CapSha) function was established as a next-generation capacity development program that embraces mutual learning, co-development, sharing and exchange of evidence, innovations and technologies with partners. This approach differs from traditional programs focused on the unidirectional transfer of knowledge and skills.
2. Since early 2022, a task force, with representation from five Centers (the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, ICARDA, IITA, ILRI and IRRI), has been working to develop the CapSha function. Below are some of the primary outcomes from this task force to date, including securing and beginning the execution of a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

### CapSha Building Blocks

3. *Vision:* Well-capacitated NARIS<sup>9</sup> partners in the Global South that accelerate and deliver, alongside CGIAR and other partners, high-impact research and evidence-based solutions and innovations for food, land, and water systems transformation.
4. *Mission:* To facilitate demand-driven capacity sharing for development that empowers NARIS partners in Global South and CGIAR to co-develop and scale evidence-based solutions for food, land, and water systems transformation, sharing the risks and rewards.
5. *Overarching goal:* Enhance research, innovation, and scaling capacities at the individual (researcher), institutional (individual NARIS partners), and system (NARIS as a whole) levels, for both partners and CGIAR, through tailor-made country and regional-level interventions.
6. *Pillars of work and operational objectives:* CapSha plays a coordinating function across CGIAR, working collaboratively with other departments and units to deliver on:
  - i. Research, scaling, and policy engagement: Joint and/or aligned research, scaling, and policy engagement with NARIS partners.
  - ii. Education and Training: Research-driven education and training resources for students and practitioners.

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<sup>9</sup> NARIS are constituted by National Agricultural Research and Extension Services (NARES), research centers, academia, civil society organizations, and the private sector.



- iii. South-South and Triangular Cooperation: Sharing of knowledge, best practices, technologies, and innovations among Global South countries, and in partnership with countries from the north.
7. The CapSha task force has also made progress in defining: (1) modalities for CapSha; (2) a proposed set of KPIs for each operational objective; (3) a CapSha lifecycle; (4) CGIAR departments and units to take part in the CapSha lifecycle and collaboratively deliver on CapSha’s objectives; and (5) the CapSha function’s key external stakeholders.

**BMGF Grant**

8. The BMGF granted an amount of \$4.75M to CGIAR’s CapSha function for the period of 2023-2024, for the following actions:
- i. Proof-of-concept of joint research, scaling, and policy engagement with partners of NARIS, within select CGIAR Research Initiatives and geographies (\$3.5M); and
  - ii. Provision of core support for the construction the One CGIAR CapSha function (\$1.25M).
9. For the former grant objective, the CapSha task force worked with CGIAR Research Initiative leads to identify potential ideas and countries where to prototype the “Research, scaling and policy engagement” pillar of work. To date, the following ideas and geographies have been agreed upon:

Action Area	Research Initiative	Research Idea	Proposed countries	Proposed NARIS Partners
Resilient Agri-food systems	Excellence in Agronomy	Co-develop standards-based data and analytics ecosystems that can drive agile agricultural transformation - while building capacity to use these systems.	Ethiopia	Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR)
			Rwanda	Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB)
Genetic Innovation	All	Sorghum, pearl millet or groundnut breeding through Senegal's National Agricultural Research Institution (NARI), that has a long and successful history based on past collaboration with ICRISAT and CIRAD.	Senegal	Institut Sénégalais de Recherches Agricoles (ISRA)

10. Opportunities to engage with Research Initiatives from the System Transformation Research Action Area, particularly related to climate adaptation, are still being discussed with BMGF. Next steps include: (1) conducting consultations, in collaboration with Research Initiatives leads, Regional Directors and Country Conveners, with NARIS partners, and national and regional bodies, to “stress test” the proposed ideas, or search for new ones, whilst always seeking alignment with national/regional priorities;

(2) joint planning between selected NARIS partners and CGIAR Research Initiatives for the implementation of the research ideas; and (3) initiating pilot implementation by the selected NARIS partners.

11. Results to date from the latter grant objective were covered in the previous section on “CapSha Building Blocks”. Next steps include: (1) finalizing an ongoing stocktaking (internal CGIAR) and benchmarking (external environment) study commissioned to an external consultant, to better home in on CGIAR’s unique value proposition in the CapSha space; and (2) advance with a system wide CapSha strategy.

#### Other key CapSha fronts

- Advance engagement with the Genetic Innovation Research Action Area on aligning the proposed Breeding Academy with CapSha and connect with GIZ on potential funding opportunities.
- Continue to engage with members of the European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD), among other key groups, on areas of common interest in the CapSha space.
- Provide strategic guidance to CGIAR on how to embed CapSha priorities in the development of the next portfolio of Research Initiatives (2025-2027 CGIAR Business Cycle)
- Continue to work with CGIAR’s Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on finding a system-wide solution to the engagement with PhD students, given that doctoral programs tend to run longer and do not necessarily overlap with CGIAR’s business cycle.
- Continue to work with the Portfolio Performance Management Unit on CapSha monitoring and reporting within CGIAR’s Research Portfolio.

## Appendix C: 2023 Country Convenors

1. As an interim effort to provide country-based support to CGIAR Regional Offices and advance CGIAR's work in-country, the Regions and Partnership Division established interim Country Convener (CC) positions in June 2022. Individuals serving in these roles dedicate 20% of their time to promoting CGIAR's research and innovation and do so without any additional remuneration. Each CC is either assigned to a single country or to a cluster of countries. They are either Directors General (DGs) or their delegates in the case of CGIAR host countries. Alternately, individuals are selected through a competitive process from within CGIAR. These roles will remain in place until June 2023, while a more permanent and sustainable model is designed and implemented.
2. The CC role provides support to CGIAR Regional Offices to: a) engage with national partners and foster One CGIAR relationships in the country; b) provide support, information and market intelligence on the in-country context to facilitate alignment and resource mobilization; c) support development of country strategic frameworks through dialogue with country stakeholders and diagnostics to understand country needs and ensure alignment of the country's goals with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and; d) Coordinate engagement of CGIAR Research Initiative Leads and Co-Leads with stakeholders and ensure the alignment of CGIAR's Global Thematic Initiatives' outputs with country demands and priorities.
3. It is encouraging to note the progress that has been made in raising CGIAR's visibility and representation, through these roles, since June 2022. It has become clear that the role is critical to enable CGIAR's commitment to work with and through partners, to deliver on CGIAR's research and innovation agenda. In some countries, the role has led to the development of a mutual understanding of challenges and opportunities for food and nutrition, land, and water systems transformation, better alignment of CGIAR's research agenda with country and regional needs and priorities, and establishment of partnerships that facilitate the mobilization of additional resources, especially from governments.
4. In developing a sustainable, long-term model for this role and overall staffing for the CGIAR Regional Offices, the R&P Division will consider (i) Costing model, (ii) How to formalize country team roles and reimbursement of costs, (iii) Operational budget availability, (iv) Time commitment, (v) Research vs Engagement, (vi) Candidate profile, and (vii) Opportunity cost.
5. Currently, there are 34 interim CCs across CGIAR and listed below. This list will be updated and redistributed as these positions in countries are filled.

### Central, West Asia and North Africa (CWANA)

1. Uzbekistan Cluster – **Akmal Akramkhanov**, ICARDA, Regional Manager Central Asia & Caucasus, Senior Scientist
2. Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine Cluster – **Hassan Machlab**, ICARDA, Lebanon Country Manager

### East and Southern Africa (ESA)

1. Ethiopia – **Namukolo Covic**, ILRI, Director General’s representative (ILRI/DG delegate), CGIAR Regional Director of East and Southern Africa
2. Kenya – **Joseph Karugia**, ILRI, Focal Point ReSAKKS-ECA (ILRI/DG Delegate)
3. Madagascar – **Gaudiose Mujawamariya**, AfricaRice, Country Representative (AfricaRice/DG delegate)
4. Malawi – **Gbenga Akinwale**, CIP, Senior Project Manager
5. South Africa – **Inga Jacobs-Mata**, IWMI, Country Representative
6. Tanzania – **Regina Kapinga**, IITA, Head Advocacy and Resource Mobilization
7. Uganda – **Beatrice Ekesa**, Alliance Bioversity and CIAT, Senior Scientist and Country Representative
8. Zambia – **David Chikoye**, IITA, Southern Africa Hub Director
9. Zimbabwe – **Isaiah Nyagumbo**, CIMMYT, Senior Scientist, Regional Cropping Systems Agronomist

### Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

1. Central America Cluster – **Jenny Weigel**, Alliance Bioversity and CIAT, Sub regional Manager
2. Colombia – **Joe Tohme**, Alliance Bioversity and CIAT, Managing Director, Americas hub
3. Mexico – **Bram Govaerts**, CIMMYT, Interim Director General
4. Peru – **Stef de Haan**, CIP, Senior Scientist

### South Asia (SA)

1. Bangladesh – **Tim Krupnick**, CIMMYT, Country Representative
2. India – **Arun Pradiya**, WorldFish, Lead on Aquatic Foods in India
3. Nepal – **Manohara Khadka** – IWMI, Country Representative
4. Sri Lanka – **Lal Mutuwatte**, IWMI, Senior Regional Researcher

### Southeast Asia and the Pacific (SEA&P)

1. China – **Jianmin Xie**, CIP, Director China Center for Asia and the Pacific in Yangqin
2. Lao PDR – **Jonathan Newby**, Alliance Bioversity and CIAT, Country Manager Lao
3. Pacific Islands – **Danny Hunter**, Alliance Bioversity and CIAT, Senior Scientist
4. Vietnam - **Robert Cauldwell**, IRRI, Country representative Vietnam

### West and Central Africa (WCA)

1. Benin – **Manuele Tamo**, IITA, Principal Scientist and Country Representative
2. Burundi - **Joseph Bigirmana**, IRRI, Country Representative
3. Cameroon – **Cargele Masso**, IITA, Country Representative
4. Congo Brazzaville - **Zoumana Bamba**, IITA, Country Representative
5. Cote d’Ivoire – **Sali Atanga Ndindeng**, AfricaRice, Rice Development Sector Program Lead (AfricaRice/DG delegate)
6. DR Congo – **Lilyane Aganze**, IITA, Program Administrator
7. Ghana – **Olufunke Cofie**, IWMI, Country and West Africa Representative
8. Mali/Burkina Faso/Niger cluster – **Tahirou Abdoulaye**, IITA, R4D Director, SAHEL Africa Hub

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9. Nigeria – **Alene Mugisho M'Mishugi**, IITA, Executive Manager Youth in Agribusiness (IITA/DG delegate)
10. Rwanda – **Matieyedou Koniambigue**, IITA, Country Representative
11. Sierra Leone – **Michael Abberton**, IITA, Director, West Africa and Crop Improvement Lead

## Appendix D: Region and Country Engagements for 2022-23

1. The following is a summary of the most significant regional and country engagements that have taken place in 2022-2023 for CGIAR. As indicated in the first section of this paper, CGIAR Regional Offices will build on these engagements and work with the Science Groups to engage partners and stakeholders to derive stakeholder perspectives that can inform the CGIAR 2025-2027 Research Portfolio.

### Central and West Asia and North Africa (CWANA)

#### **COP28 consultations with UAE**

2. To position CGIAR for COP28, bilateral meetings have been held with key officials involved in the COP28 committee under the United Arab Emirates (UAE) presidency, including:
  - **Minister Razan Mubarak**, the UN Climate Change High-Level Champion for COP28, Head of Abu Dhabi Environment Agency since 2011, currently President of IUCN for the 2021 – 2024 term;
  - **Ministers Al-Meheiri and Mubarak**, the Director of the World Bank office, the UN Resident Coordinator, the UAE special envoy on climate change, the Khalifa Award
3. These meetings have revealed that the UAE Presidency's interests lie in : (i) elevating and mainstreaming the reporting on food systems transformation into the negotiations process, (ii) championing a framework on food security that is anchored in research, technology development and innovation, with a wider engagement of stakeholders at local, regional, and global levels, in particular youths, (iii) strengthening the interplay between climate change and biodiversity, prioritizing nature-based solutions, and ensuring that food system transformation attracts champions and funding at scale from private as well as public sectors.
4. The UAE Presidency as well as the office of the high-level champion of UN climate change further recognized and appreciated the leading role that CGIAR plays in research, sciences and innovation and welcomed its technical support to the food transformation workstream.
5. CGIAR proposed the following engagement actions to the UAE : (i) organizing a technical meeting followed by a high-level policy summit to present innovative climate technology solutions that can be deployed at scale; (ii) providing support through contributions to the Breakthrough Agenda Report and an advocacy initiative focusing on upscaling innovation and climate technology, (iii) activating the CGIAR coordination mechanism that was established for COP27 to ensure policy and messaging coherence and an active and effective participation in the COP process, and (iv) defining and presenting clear deliverables, responsibilities, and channels of communication with UAE for overall coordination efficiency, through a single CGIAR entry point.

## Continental Africa (CA)

The Regional Director Continental Africa (RD-CA) Office has been engaged, at the continental level, to increase the visibility of CGIAR and improve engagement with the following continental agencies:

### FARA

6. Two consultations of CGIAR and African Research and Innovation stakeholders, led by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and hosted by the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Abidjan (Abidjan I and II), in March and May 2022 respectively, discussed the modalities for strengthening the focus and co-ownership of the CGIAR reform with relevant African stakeholders and organization.
7. During these consultations, CGIAR sent a strong message on intensifying its partnership with key agricultural stakeholders in Africa to contribute to the transformation of food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis. Focus was on developing and scaling up and out appropriate innovations for impact. CGIAR also committed to facilitating this process with the appointment of a Regional Director for Continental Africa (RD-CA), who would liaise with all continental institutions such as the African Union Commission (AUC), AfDB, FARA, AGRA, etc.
8. [The communiqué resulting from this meeting](#), signed by principles of AUC, AfDB, FARA and CGIAR, in August 2022, lays out the key principles and core values to address concerns raised by African stakeholders. Each of them reiterated their commitment to ensuring the delivery of the recommendations from the Abidjan I and II consultations. The communiqué called for the elaboration, by FARA and CGIAR, of a Plan of Action for the operationalization of the seven principles and core values.
9. The ToR for a consultant to lead the development of the Action Plan, building on a draft framework already established, was jointly developed by the RD-CA team and FARA, and the consultant has been recruited to finalize the Action Plan.
10. Furthermore, actions with FARA include the following :
  - Dialogue that would lead to the develop an Engagement Framework and a Memorandum of Understanding (AU-FARA-CGIAR) that will facilitate CGIAR’s engagement especially with Sub-Regional Organizations in Africa (CORAF<sup>10</sup>, ASARECA<sup>11</sup>, CCARDESA<sup>12</sup> and AARINENA<sup>13</sup>).

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<sup>10</sup> West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development

<sup>11</sup> Association for Agricultural Research in East and southern Africa

<sup>12</sup> Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa

<sup>13</sup> Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa

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- Discussions on ways to enhance knowledge of African Research and Innovation Stakeholders on the operations and structure of One CGIAR in Africa and to identify best-fit partnership models with African research and innovation institutions, which will contribute to achieving zero hunger in Africa. For this CGIAR, with the support of FARA, is conceptualizing its participation in the 8<sup>th</sup> African Agribusiness and Science Week (AASW8) consultations in Durban South Africa, from 5-8 June, organized by FARA. CGIAR's participation during these consultations will be characterized by: (i) the intervention of top-level Managers of CGIAR at high-level sessions, to reiterate the commitment of CGIAR in working with FARA and key research and innovation institutions in Africa to unfold the CGIAR research and innovation agenda in alignment with the Continental agenda; (ii) the organization of a plenary session that will: a) hone in on CGIAR's strong message of intensifying partnership with African Research and Innovation Stakeholders to accelerate the transformation of food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis, with focus on the development and scaling up and out of appropriate innovations, b) allow the presentation and endorsement of the Action Plan being developed to respond to the recommendations of the Abidjan I and II consultations, and c) raise the voice of stakeholders working in partnership with the CGIAR; and (iii) the organization of side events to share and exchange knowledge with African research and innovation stakeholders on impactful research innovations generated by CGIAR's research portfolio.

### AfDB

11. At a high-level meeting organized by AfDB in February 2023, in Dakar, Senegal, 44 Country agriculture compacts were presented by high-level authorities of these countries (Presidents/Ministers of Agriculture). CGIAR committed to (i) strengthen partnership with the AfDB to respond to the ambition of achieving zero hunger in Africa, (ii) work with African agricultural stakeholders to scale-out impactful CGIAR innovations and (iii) support countries in the implementation of the 44 country agricultural compacts. The RD-CA is currently facilitating the provision of support, through IITA/TAAT managers in their engagement with officials of AfDB, to implement the Country Agriculture Compacts. The process has generated a first batch of "priority countries" for AfDB for Country Compacts development. To further intensify CGIAR's engagement in countries, the RD-CA and team are working with the TAAT Project, through its Clearinghouse based in Cotonou, to share this list of countries with CGIAR RDs covering the three regions of Africa.

### AUC

12. CGIAR was positioned as an important agri-food systems partner both at regional and country levels, during the launching of the UN-Nutrition Strategy at the African Union, 31 October 2022. This resulted in an invitation to the RD- ESA from the Executive Secretary of UN-Nutrition to explore ways in which UN-Nutrition could work with the CGIAR at country level, with links with CCs recognized as a potential entry point.



Discussions are ongoing to identify countries the UN is interested in working with before the intervention of CGIAR.

13. CGIAR shared knowledge with African research and innovation stakeholders, through participation in a CAADP Partnership Platform session on research, innovation and education in nutrition-sensitive agriculture for sustainable agriculture and food systems development, co-convened by IFPRI and AKADEMIYA in partnership with AUDA-NEPAD, ILRI and FARA. The information shared revolved around the following elements: a) State of research and innovation in African food system; b) the role of education in building sustainable and resilient food system in Africa; c) the state of art in methods and tools to undertake research on food and nutrition security from a food systems context; and d) the capacity to synthesize and communicate evidence to guide the design, implement, and monitoring of relevant food and nutrition security strategies and technical and institutional capacities research and innovation in food systems context.
14. Dialogues held between the RD-ESA and AUC authorities in Agriculture, revealed the latter's interest in partnering with CGIAR to establish a space for the continuous use of evidence generated through research carried out by CGIAR to reshape the post-Malabo Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)<sup>14</sup> agenda to support food systems transformation. Work is ongoing to establish the framing of such a space.
15. The RD-ESA in November 2022 established and proposed a draft CAADP - One CGIAR Collaborative engagement plan suggesting two main entry points for engagement on the African continent as follows: (i) through CGIAR CCs and related country functions linking to the CAADP process at country level; and (ii) through the Regional Directorates linking to African Union Regional Economic Communities and their CAADP processes as well as those at the continental level. Further discussions during a CAADP Partnership Platform (CAADP-PP) meeting held on November 29, 2022, which brought together Country CAADP Focal Points and CGIAR CCs, for the first time in the history of the AUC and CGIAR, and coordinated by the RD-ESA, identified specific entry points through which CGIAR could contribute to accelerating the CAADP process towards food systems transformation at continental level. Work is on-going on framing the partnership to meet this objective.

### East and Southern Africa

16. Key recent engagement with countries since September 2022 has delivered the following results:

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<sup>14</sup> The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), is an Agenda 2063 continental initiative that aims to help African countries eliminate hunger and reduce poverty by raising economic growth through agriculture-led development.

- Concerns raised over the representation of African interests in CGIAR, seeming lack of transparency on CGIAR funding and the transition process, and inadequate working relationships between CGIAR and National Agricultural Research Institutions (NARIs) have led to several consultations and dialogues in the region between the RD-ESA and CCs and different categories of stakeholders particularly the sub-regional research organization in Eastern and Central Africa - ASARECA, the National Agricultural Research Organization in Uganda – NARO, and key funders in the region (USAID, BMGF). These concerns are being addressed through the development of country level engagement strategies that will provide principles of engagement jointly developed with these institutions in Uganda, and that will be contextualized to address similar issues in other countries in the region. As regards concerns raised on the governance of CGIAR, it was recommended by NARO that it is critical that the CGIAR considers the representation of NARIs or SROs in CGIAR's governance structures to quickly address these concerns.
- One CGIAR relations in countries fostered and strengthened through the coordination of country dialogues in Ethiopia around CGIARs initiatives in the ESA region (Sustainable Animal Productivity for Livelihoods, Nutrition and Gender inclusion (SAPLING) in Ethiopia, Sustainable Intensification of Mixed Farming Systems (SI-MFS), One Health).
- Development of the Ethiopia country strategic framework through dialogue with country stakeholders and carrying out diagnostics to understand country needs and to ensure alignment of the country's goals with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Ethiopia Country Convenor was invited to become a member of the Development Partners Group (DPG), which and facilitates engagement and policy dialogue with the Government of Ethiopia.
- Improved alignment amongst CGIAR research initiatives in country and with country demands and priorities, coordinated engagement of CGIAR Research Initiative leads and co-leads and their teams with country stakeholders, during a virtual One CGIAR consultation held in November 2022.
- Increased visibility of One CGIAR in Ethiopia and Zambia, through the One CGIAR launching ceremonies that brought together key high-level agricultural stakeholders in the region including government ministers and funders and revealed the potential of CGIAR's game changing research solutions to transform the countries agriculture by 2030 and boost its scientific contribution to government's agriculture plan.

### Latin America and the Caribbean

17. The RD-LAC engaged in the following dialogues with various stakeholders at country and regional levels, which resulted in the collection of relevant information and marketing intelligence to shape the development of country engagement frameworks,

the alignment of CGIAR’s agenda to country needs and priorities, and identify opportunities for bilateral funding of research and innovation actions in countries.

- Participation in the AgriLAC Regional Integrated Initiative *Pause and Reflect Workshop*, held in January 2023, at CIMMYT in Mexico where the CGIAR initiative teams gathered to take stock of the first year of implementation and discuss feedback from partners and stakeholders.
- Participation in a regional consultation for the Transformative Future for Waters Systems global forum in South Africa, in partnership with the Interamerican Development Banks (IDB) and the Organization of American States (OAS).
- Participation in a country level engagement with Peru’s National Water Authority seeking CGIAR, IWMI and CIP’s support in strengthening the country’s hydric resources management.
- Co-convening of a hybrid seminar and interinstitutional dialogue with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), on the IDB’s flagship report “Competing in Agribusiness in Latin America” in February 2023 in Mexico, involving the participation of 100+ people from across the region and speakers from CGIAR Centers including the Alliance, CIMMYT, CIP and IFPRI.
- Attendance at Embrapa’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Brasilia in April 2023 where dialogues were initiated with the new government to strengthen collaboration with the CGIAR with a particular focus on providing support to Brazil’s upcoming G20 Presidency in 2024 and COP30 in 2025.
- Co-convening and co-sponsoring with the Interamerican Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) and the World Bank, in May 2023, in Costa Rica, the first Regional High-Level Dialogue on Science, Technology, and Innovation in Agrifood Systems in Latin America, with the active participation of CGIAR-LAC, Alliance, CIMMYT, CIP and IFPRI.
- Dialogues initiated between December and April 2023 with two sub-regional development banks with potential interest in partnering with CGIAR; the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

### West And Central Africa

18. The RD-WCA engagement in dialogues with the Executive Directors of two sub-regional research organizations in Africa, CORAF and ASARECA, which resulted in enhancing their understanding of the CGIAR Regional Director function and its potential for facilitating CGIAR’s engagement and collaborative actions as well as strengthening partnerships with SROs, in Africa.

## South Asia

19. The CGIAR Regional Director's Office for South Asia (RDO-SA) hosted the following engagements to raise the profile of One CGIAR in the region and establish the new office.

### Regional partner engagement

20. **Partnership Dialogues** – working with Center-based staff, the Partnerships and Advocacy Global Group and the Global Events team, the RDO-SA developed a template for Partnership Dialogues. This standardized approach was based on a theory of deliberate dialogue with an objective to introduce the new CGIAR research portfolio and begin an on-going process of continuous feedback with key stakeholders. The Partner Dialogues were held in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, with a shorter online portfolio introduction completed for Sri Lanka. Results of these Dialogues were compiled into a communique that is shared with partners and will form the basis of the next Dialogue leading into the 2025-2027 CGIAR portfolio design process.
21. **Research Initiative launches** – RDO-SA attended and offered opening remarks and an overview of One CGIAR at the launch of 6 Global Thematic Initiatives and the Regional Integrative Initiative for South Asia (TAFSSA), to support researchers and partners.

## India

22. **G20 and G7 engagement** – India holds the G20 presidency in 2023. Following from CGIAR's previous involvement with the G20 process, the RDO-SA has represented CGIAR alongside Global and Science Groups in their presence at the Sherpa track meetings on Agriculture. This includes engaging with the Indian G20 secretariat, providing CGIAR groups with relevant regional and national context and attending and contributing to the Deputies meetings and resulting communiques. In Q2 2023, RDO-SA and CGIAR colleagues will be working with ADBI to host a side-event at the G20 Agriculture Minister's meeting in June 2023.
23. **National and state-level Ministerial engagement** - RDO-SA office facilitated One CGIAR's participation in a meeting with the Indian Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare held in Hyderabad, India, in January 2023. All One CGIAR Centers agreed to present together at this meeting. This enabled an integrated overview of innovations and technologies that are readily available from across the One CGIAR network and that could be implemented at pilot or at scale within a 12–24-month window. The approach emphasized combining the strengths of various Centers to meet the Government of India's needs and ambitions and understanding how available CGIAR technologies align with the ambitions of the Department of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare (DAFW) and how CGIAR can bring those ambitions to fruition with priority initiatives in 2023 and beyond. Immediate outcomes from the meeting, include four Centers that have received requests for additional proposals from national and state governments and at

least one Center that has already secured an additional project worth USD\$ 200,000.

24. The same engagement model is being used to respond to a request by the Uttar Pradesh Council of Agricultural Research (UPCAR), Government of Uttar Pradesh (UP) during a one-day high level meeting of CGIAR Centers, ICAR centres and State Agricultural Universities, organized at Lucknow, on April 25, 2023. Uttar Pradesh is the fifth largest state in India and is anticipating a USD \$1trillion dollar economy by 2040.
25. **World Bank Knowledges series** – the RDO-SA has been a regular contributor and invited speaker at this year's Knowledge series as well as recommending additional CGIAR speakers. Hosted by the World Bank and engaging a wide variety of stakeholders across India, this series has been exploring practical options for transforming food, land, and water systems in India.
26. **Board Chair visits** – RDO-SA hosted both the outgoing and incoming Chair of the System Board. Dr Marco Ferroni and Dr Claudia Sadoff visited in September 2022 and Prof. Lindiwe Sibanda visited in February 2023. During these visits, the Chairs were able to meet with the Indian Minister of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, the Secretary of Agriculture as well as with the Director General of Indian Council for Agriculture Research (ICAR). During both these visits, CGIAR leadership were able to meet with other high-level stakeholders as well to allay fears and questions about One CGIAR and the transition.

## Bangladesh

27. **High Level Advisory Panel (HLAP)** – Successfully secured the membership and participation of the Minister of Agriculture, Government of Bangladesh on CGIAR's High level Advisory Panel (HLAP).
28. **PARTNER Program** – From Q3 2022 to Q1 2023, RDO-SA and the Bangladesh CGIAR Country Convenor worked closely with the Government of Bangladesh and their seven national implementing agencies to provide technical input into a USD \$500M World Bank-supported program to transform food systems in Bangladesh. The program was approved by the Government of Bangladesh in March 2023. RDO-SA and the Bangladesh CGIAR Country Convenor are now working with each of the national implementing agencies to build out more detailed workplans and determine specific work that will be awarded to CGIAR. At the same time, work is underway with all Bangladesh-based Centers to map the processes necessary to enable this program of work. Current estimates suggest that this program may result in USD \$8-10M in technical advice and research, spread across several CGIAR Centers.

## Systematization of One CGIAR in South Asia

29. **Quarterly Country Convenor meetings** - with three interim Country Convenors appointed of the six countries in the South Asia region, we have established quarterly meetings, plus weekly individual meetings to align across all countries on common

goals, initiatives, and priorities in each country.

30. **India Country Representative meetings** – In the absence of a Country Convenor for India, RDO-SA hosts a quarterly meeting with all Center-based country representatives to align on common ways of working and shared goals.
31. **Systems & processes** – to begin to operationalize One CGIAR in the region, RDO-SA and the Country Convenors have been working to introduce initial common processes and systems. Among these are a common events and government meetings calendar, common One CGIAR presentations and proposals. Planned for Q3 and Q4 2023 is an effort to showcase One CGIAR work through social media and a communications campaign as well as hosting a One CGIAR policy dialogue.

### South-East Asia and the Pacific (SEA&P)

#### Developing One CGIAR China strategy

32. CGIAR Centers have had a long history of successful engagement with China, characterized by strong mutual exchange and meeting the needs of China for agricultural research and development, which experienced a decline since the mid-2000s. With emerging opportunities related to improving China's engagement in One CGIAR initiatives, which will raise China's financial contribution (US\$ 1 mil. in 2006; 5 mil. in 2017-2019; 4.05 mil. in 2020-2021) and exploring new collaboration modalities in and with China, there is a strong need to reinvent CGIAR's partnership with China. Focus will be on re-evaluating the role of China in rolling out CGIAR's agenda research and innovation agenda and the engagement of CGIAR in China.
33. In response to this, SEA&P, assisted by other CGIAR units, notably the Partnership and Advocacy (P&A) and the Innovative Finance and Resource Mobilization (IFRM) units, embarked on developing a new strategic partnership with China, based on the following considerations:
  - i. Developing a new vision for CGIAR's partnership with China through defining a strategic partnership between CGIAR and China focused on SDGs that focus on key topics of mutual interest such as eliminating hunger and improving food security, eliminating poverty, greener and sustainable development, and coping with global climate change, among many others, Identifying and leveraging the comparative advantages of agricultural R&D of CGIAR relative to China including for example CGIAR's global network which is of interest to China, developing a strong engagement strategy with China, and leveraging China as a global leader in agricultural R&D, and partnering in/harnessing China's global initiatives to mobilize more funding for CGIAR in the future.
  - ii. Adopting CGIAR's engagement and partnership framework, which consists of seven guiding principles for CGIAR partnerships
  - iii. Asserting CGIAR as a strategic partner of China in priority areas where they both have comparative advantages in supporting China's agricultural modernization

- and food systems transformation and other international initiatives with important synergies and implications for DCs in the region and globally.
- iv. Reaching an agreement, in principle, on the common CGIAR-China agenda in 2023, developing a framework for strategic partnership and action plan in 2023-2025 and envisioning a full implementation of CGIAR-China strategic partnership in 2026-2030 and beyond.
34. These considerations were endorsed by SLT at the end of February and have been shared with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the Republic of China (MARA) and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science (CAAS).
  35. SEA&P is in the process of engaging stakeholders in formulating the strategy document which will be shared with MARA/CAAS in late April 2023 for endorsement in May 2023 and consultations with relevant ministries (Foreign Affairs, Finance, Commerce) and the China Aid Agency and others in June and July 2023.
  36. The strategy document will be revised in August 2023 based on feedback before seeking CGIAR's and China stakeholder endorsement, followed by a high-level workshop to launch the strategy document in the Fall of 2023.