




# CGIAR Research Initiative on **Sustainable Healthy Diets**

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**Disclaimers**

This publication has been prepared as an output of the CGIAR Research Initiative on Sustainable Healthy Diets. Any views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and are not necessarily representative of or endorsed by the CGIAR System Organization.

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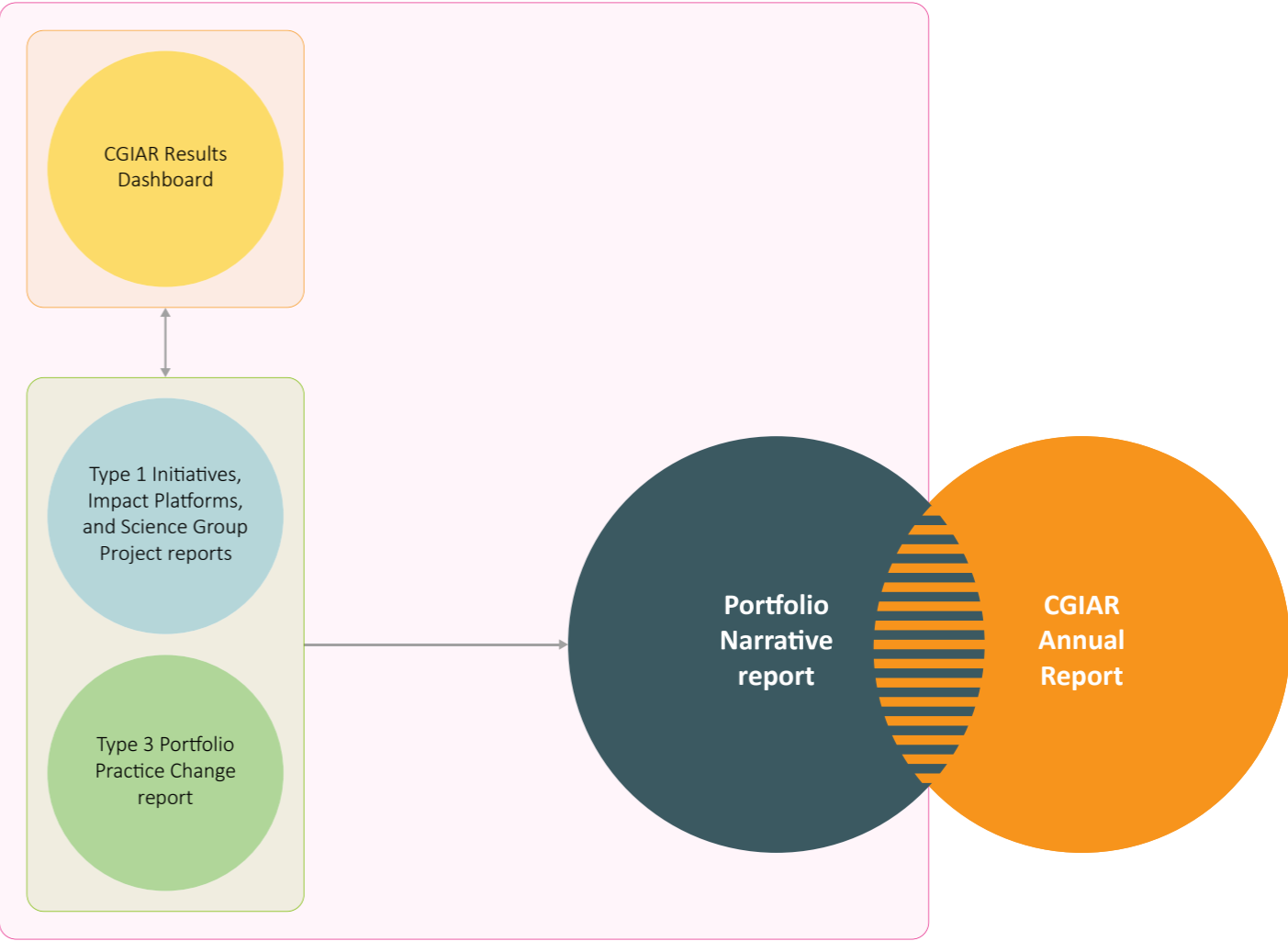
CGIAR Technical Reporting 2023

CGIAR Technical Reporting has been developed in alignment with the [CGIAR Technical Reporting Arrangement](#). This Initiative report (“Type 1” report) constitutes part of the broader [CGIAR Technical Report](#). Each CGIAR Research Initiative submits an annual “Type 1” report, which provides assurance on Initiative-level progress towards End of Initiative outcomes.

The [CGIAR Technical Report](#) comprises:

- Type 1 Initiative, Impact Platform, and Science Group Project (SGP) reports, with quality assured results reported by Initiatives, Platforms and SGPs available on the CGIAR Results Dashboard.
- The Type 3 Portfolio Performance and Project Coordination Practice Change report, which focuses on internal practice change.
- The Portfolio Narrative, which draws on the Type 1 and Type 3 reports, and the CGIAR Results Dashboard, to provide a broader view on Portfolio coherence, including results, partnerships, country and regional engagement, and synergies among the Portfolio’s constituent parts.

The CGIAR Annual Report is a comprehensive overview of CGIAR’s collective achievements, impact and strategic outlook, which draws significantly from the Technical Report products above. For 2023, the Annual Report and Technical Report will be presented online as an integrated product.



Section 1: Fact sheet and budget

Initiative name	Sustainable Healthy Diets through Food Systems Transformation
Initiative short name	Sustainable Healthy Diets
Initiative Lead	Inge Brouwer ( <a href="mailto:I.Brouwer@cgiar.org">I.Brouwer@cgiar.org</a> )
Initiative Co-lead	Mark Lundy ( <a href="mailto:m.lundy@cgiar.org">m.lundy@cgiar.org</a> )
Science Group	Systems Transformation
Start – end date	01/01/2022 – 31/12/2024
Geographic scope	<b>Countries</b> Bangladesh · Benin · Ethiopia · Guatemala · Honduras · India · Senegal · The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
OECD DAC Climate marker adaptation score <sup>1</sup>	<b>Score 1: Significant</b> The activity contributes in a significant way to any of the three CGIAR climate-related strategy objectives – namely, climate mitigation, climate adaptation and climate policy, even though it is not the principal focus of the activity.
OECD DAC Climate marker mitigation score <sup>1</sup>	<b>Score 1: Significant</b> The activity contributes in a significant way to any of the three CGIAR climate-related strategy objectives – namely, climate mitigation, climate adaptation and climate policy, even though it is not the principal focus of the activity.
OECD DAC Gender equity marker score <sup>2</sup>	<b>Score 1B: Gender responsive</b> On the top of the minimum requirements for 1A, the Initiative/project includes at least one explicit gender equality outcome and the Initiative/project team has resident gender expertise or capacity. The Initiative/project includes indicators and monitors participation and differential benefits of diverse men and women.
Website link	<a href="https://www.cgiar.org/initiative/sustainable-healthy-diets/">https://www.cgiar.org/initiative/sustainable-healthy-diets/</a>

<sup>1</sup> The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) markers refer to the OECD DAC [Rio Markers for Climate](#) and the [gender equality policy marker](#). For climate adaptation and mitigation, scores are: 0 = Not targeted; 1 = Significant; and 2 = Principal.

<sup>2</sup> The CGIAR Gender Impact Platform has adapted the OECD gender marker, splitting the 1 score into 1A and 1B. For gender equality, scores are: 0 = Not targeted; 1A = Gender accommodative/aware; 1B = Gender responsive; and 2 = Principal.

These scores are derived from [Initiative proposals](#), and refer to the score given to the Initiative overall based on their proposal.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CGIAR Research Initiative on Sustainable Healthy Diets collaborates with national partners in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam to steer food systems in a positive direction. By combining quality research with policy partnerships, the Initiative endeavors to catalyze innovative solutions that empower consumers to make healthier, sustainable dietary choices.

In its second year of operation, Sustainable Healthy Diets made significant strides in realizing its theory of change (TOC), marked by collaborative efforts with Strategic Partners and the publication of 54 knowledge products. Through comprehensive surveys in Viet Nam and Ethiopia, the Initiative gained critical insights into adolescents’ dietary habits and food environments, highlighting prevalent challenges such as the dominance of unhealthy food options.

The Initiative’s research outputs not only shed light on promising solutions and lessons from other sectors but also provided valuable evidence to enhance the demand for sustainable healthy diets and improve the delivery of nutritious foods by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Moreover, collaborative activities with Strategic Partners aimed to raise awareness and navigate governance and political economy issues in the food systems transformation process.

Noteworthy achievements include supporting the development and implementation of Viet Nam’s National Action Plan for Transparent, Responsible, and Sustainable Food Systems Transformation and the development of a Training of Trainers program to bolster expertise in food systems governance. Furthermore, the Initiative’s Gender Research Strategy underscores its commitment to addressing inequalities and promoting social inclusion within food systems.

Sustainable Healthy Diets conducted a Reflect exercise to evaluate outcomes and foster collaboration among stakeholders. Looking ahead, the Initiative will remain guided by its unwavering commitment to evidence-based research and strategic partnerships, which steer food systems transformation in a positive direction towards sustainable healthy diets.

	2022	2023	2024
PROPOSAL BUDGET ▸	\$10.22M	\$11.88M	\$12.90M
APPROVED BUDGET <sup>1</sup> ▸	\$6.37M	\$11.21M <sup>2</sup>	\$8.24M <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The approved budget amounts correspond to the figures available for public access through the [Financing dashboard](#).

<sup>2</sup> This amount includes carry-over and commitments.

<sup>3</sup> This amount is an estimation of the 2024 annual budget allocation, as of the end of March 2024.

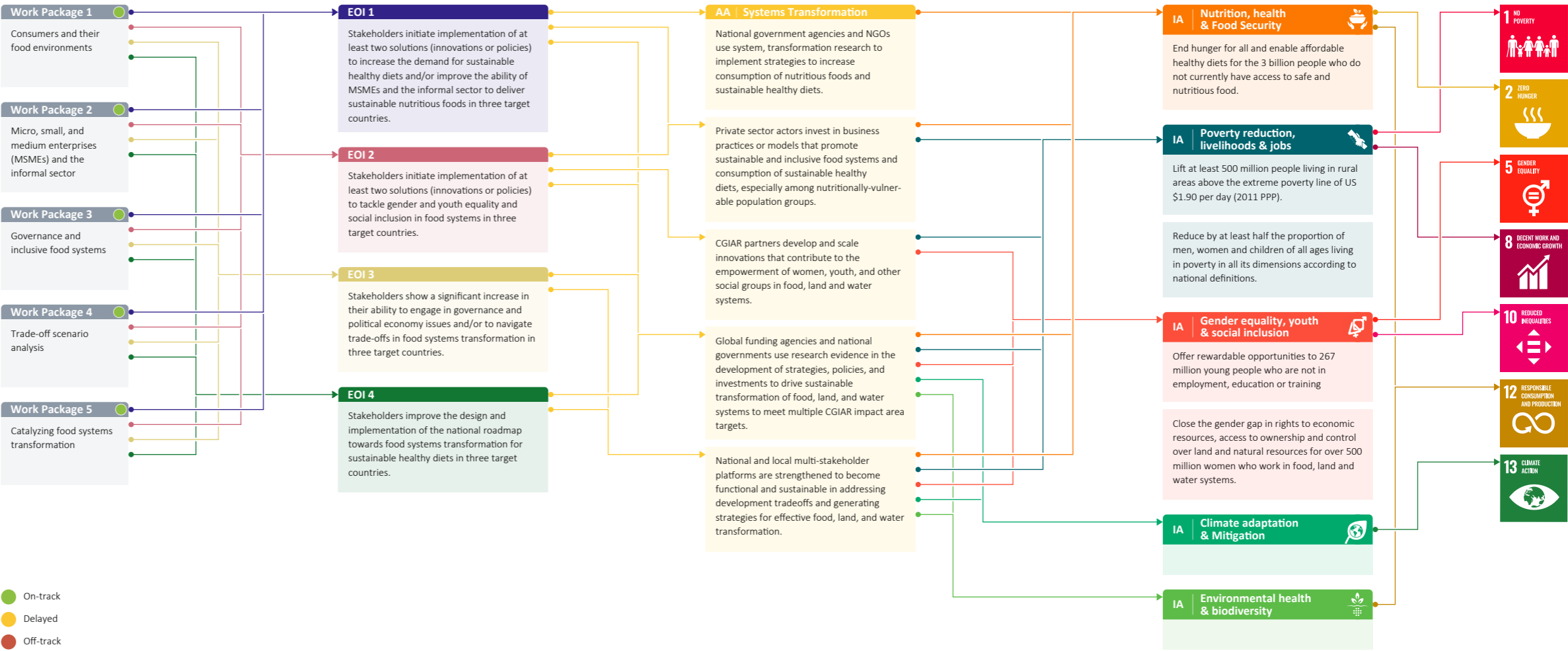


A family in Khulna, Bangladesh eating lunch together. Part of their lunch includes mola, a small indigenous fish.  
Credit: Yousuf Tushar/WorldFish from Flickr

Section 2: Progress on science and towards End of Initiative outcomes

Initiative-level theory of change diagram

This is a simple, linear, and static representation of a complex, non-linear, and dynamic reality. Feedback loops and connections between this Initiative and other Initiatives' theories of change are excluded for clarity.



EOI | End of Initiative outcome  
AA | Action Area  
IA | Impact Area  
SDG | Sustainable Development Goal

**Note:** A summary of Work Package progress ratings is provided in Section 3.



Students at the Yirba Yanase Primary and Secondary School in Hawassa, Ethiopia, receive their lunch from the canteen supported by the Global Partnership for Education. Sustainable Healthy Diets is exploring with partners how to work with school canteens to make school meals healthier and more diverse for adolescents. Credit: Global Partnership for Education/Translieu from Flickr

## Summary of progress against the theory of change

Sustainable Healthy Diets combines high-quality nutritional and social science research capacity with development and policy partnerships to generate innovative food systems solutions that help consumers make healthier, more sustainable dietary food choices. We work closely with national partners involved in the implementation of their country's food systems transformation agenda and formally engaged in cooperative activities to strengthen stakeholder engagement in food systems transformation.

This Initiative is co-led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), in close collaboration with Wageningen University and Research (WUR) and with contributions from the International Potato Center (CIP). The Program Committee consists of the Initiative Lead, Deputy Lead, the Leads and Co-Leads of all five Work Packages.

In the three target countries — Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam — Sustainable Healthy Diets has established partnerships with key national actors responsible for implementing the follow-up actions to the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) process, a group we call Strategic Partners. In Viet Nam, our Strategic Partners are the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), the Viet Nam Academy of Agricultural Sciences (VAAS), and the Institute for Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPSARD). In Ethiopia, they are the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI), the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Health. The partnerships in Bangladesh with the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) and the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) will be formalized in 2024.

We expect to contribute to development outcomes by influencing changes in policy and practice of key stakeholder groups as defined in our theory of change (TOC) through activities that enhance policy exchange, strengthen capacity sharing and deliver high-quality research. Our progress in Year 2 towards these short-term outcomes, called End of Initiative (EOI) outcomes, is summarized in the next table. The rest of this section provides some progress highlights.

Two large, complex surveys in Viet Nam and Ethiopia were completed in Year 2. Both were conducted in collaboration with local partners, NIN and the Mekong Development Research Institute in Viet Nam and EPHI and Laterite in Ethiopia. Across both countries, this has generated food environment data from more than 5,000 households and 10,000 food outlets and unique insights into adolescents, their mothers and their food environments and the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) selling food. Using the Global Diet Quality Score to evaluate adolescents' diets, [preliminary analysis](#) suggests that Vietnamese adolescents had a moderate risk of nutrient inadequacy, with adolescents in rural areas at a higher risk than urban areas.<sup>1</sup> In all study areas, shops selling sugar-sweetened beverages and processed foods were nearer to adolescents' homes than shops selling fruits or vegetables, especially in urban areas. Advertisements for unhealthy foods and drinks were more common in rural areas than in urban and peri-urban areas. Informed by this evidence-based research and in consultation with Strategic Partners and other stakeholders, we will begin identifying and evaluating scalable solutions in Year 3, or in other words refining our research agenda on innovations and policy processes. The expected outcome is to see **stakeholders initiate implementation of at least two solutions (policies or innovations) that address one or more of our goals for food systems transformation** (see table).

The 54 knowledge products (61% are peer-reviewed journal articles) published in Year 2 provided evidence on (a) promising solutions to improve consumption of sustainable healthy diets and/or overcome barriers limiting the provision of sustainable nutritious foods (22% of the total); (b) lessons learned from other sectors transformations (22% of the total); and (c) consumption and food environment drivers (11% of the total). This new evidence will contribute to building the body of research needed to test **solutions to increase the demand for sustainable healthy diets and/or improve the ability of MSMEs and the informal sector to deliver sustainable nutritious foods** (see table).

Several of this year's results demonstrate how Sustainable Healthy Diets engaged with Strategic Partners to raise awareness of the complex issues in the food systems transformation process. Through collaborative activities, we expect **stakeholders to enhance their ability to engage in governance and political economy issues and navigate tradeoffs** (see table). For example, the policy baselines in Viet Nam and Ethiopia have been completed. Events will be planned in Year 3 for policymakers and other stakeholders, to raise awareness of political economy issues and specific country barriers and lock-ins to food systems transformation. Relatedly, in Year 2, part of our modelling research process involved consultations with experts in Bangladesh and Viet Nam to validate model assumptions, assess trade-offs associated with food systems transformation and explore with users how results can inform policy decisions.

Keeping in step with multi-sectoral food systems policy processes is a high priority and is how we intend to **support stakeholders to improve the design and implementation of their national roadmap** (see table). For example, in Viet Nam, 2023 marked an important milestone in food systems transformation. In March, the Prime Minister approved Viet Nam's National Action Plan for Transparent, Responsible, and Sustainable Food Systems Transformation (2022–2030), also known as the FST-NAP. In the months leading up to the approval, Sustainable Healthy Diets provided technical support to MARD, the Ministry responsible for drafting the FST-NAP. Now, all levels of government are seeking guidance from MARD on how to implement the policy. MARD believes that multisectoral coordination will be key and invited the Sustainable Healthy Diets Country Coordinator to join a technical team tasked with conceptualizing a Food Systems Partnership, a governance mechanism that will improve the implementation of the FST-NAP.

After Sustainable Healthy Diets launched an e-course on Food Systems Governance in Year 1, Strategic Partners requested face-to-face follow-up training. In Year 2, this Initiative and the Strategic Partners in Viet Nam and Ethiopia agreed that the best way forward would be to jointly develop a new Training of Trainers (ToT) program on food systems to increase the pool of in-country experts. At the same time, the ToT program would complement national policy processes like the implementation of the FST-NAP in Viet Nam and the National Food Systems Roadmap in Ethiopia, by filling identified gaps in awareness and how to apply food systems approaches in these specific, and more general, policy processes. By the end of 2023, both countries had held [design workshops](#) and in Viet Nam, [the first cohort of 20 new experts](#) had completed the training.<sup>1</sup> This is just one more example of the capacity sharing activities co-led by partners and this Initiative to mobilize strengths and resources of in-country partners to increase the ability to use evidence and advocate for a strong focus on sustainable healthy diets in policy processes.

We view food systems transformation as an opportunity to understand and address the inequalities that are both a cause and an outcome of unsustainable and unjust food systems. The Gender Research Strategy describes how our research is oriented to have maximum impact on **gender equality, opportunities for youth, and social inclusion in food systems** (see table). One of the underlying assumptions of this Initiative's research is that MSMEs can and are willing to provide decent employment for youth. However, in Viet Nam only a small percentage of MSMEs surveyed had any youth employees, and if they did, most were part-time. This finding suggests the assumption in our TOC may be wrong and contradicts common development narratives about youth employment. Also in Viet Nam, the survey results indicate that although female vendors make up a significant share of vendors offering nutritious and healthy food to consumers, the scale of business is limited. The research suggests that the supply of sustainable nutritious foods is not the challenge, business practices are, and this applies to men and women. Looking ahead to Year 3, these findings will inform discussions with stakeholders and the research agenda on innovations.



A female street food vendor sells food in Hanoi's Old Quarter in Viet Nam. Sustainable Healthy Diets is studying how food vendors could contribute to the delivery of sustainable nutritious foods. Credit: UN Women Asia and the Pacific from Flickr

Sustainable Healthy Diets conducted the Reflect exercise in two parts (Section 7). From June-July 2023, the Work Package Leads took a closer look at the outcomes in the TOC and had a series of discussions about the expected results and how these could be measured. In November 2023, Sustainable Healthy Diets held its [first research partner meeting](#) for nearly 60 researchers and support staff from all participating CGIAR institutions and WUR.<sup>2</sup> Following two days of internal discussions, the Strategic Partners from Ethiopia and Viet Nam joined the meeting to [reflect on the collaborations within the two countries](#).<sup>3</sup>

Progress by End of Initiative Outcome

**EOIO 1: Stakeholders initiate implementation of at least two solutions (innovations or policies) to increase the demand for sustainable healthy diets and/or improve the ability of MSMEs and the informal sector to deliver sustainable nutritious foods in three target countries.**

**Generating evidence:** Completed survey data collection in urban, peri-urban, and rural sites in Viet Nam and in urban and peri-urban sites in Ethiopia. Qualitative data collection has been completed in Viet Nam and will begin in Ethiopia in 2024.

**Identifying potential solutions:** Through a combination of efforts that will continue in 2024, the Initiative has been consulting with local and global partners to identify promising innovations or policy processes for which research could begin in Year 3 and beyond.

**EOIO 2: Stakeholders initiate implementation of at least two solutions (innovations or policies) to tackle gender and youth equality and social inclusion in food systems in three target countries.**

**Generating evidence:** Primary data collected in Viet Nam and Ethiopia will generate comparisons of dietary quality between adolescents and their mothers, between adolescent boys and girls, and between individuals living in different settings. Preliminary data analysis from Viet Nam suggests that MSMEs may not help increase youth employment, but MSME interventions focusing on women and disadvantaged populations are worth testing.

**Identifying potential solutions:** As above for EOIO 1.

**EOIO 3: Stakeholders show a significant increase in their ability to engage in governance and political economy issues and/or to navigate tradeoffs in food systems transformation in three target countries.**

**Characterizing current understanding:** Completed policy baselines in Viet Nam and Ethiopia. A joint food environment policy landscape with IPSARD highlighted the policy areas where the Government should focus to guide the Vietnamese food system toward healthier and more sustainable outcomes; modelers advanced simulation approaches to understand tradeoffs in the short- and long-term process of dietary change in Bangladesh and Viet Nam.

**Raising awareness:** Developing an interactive tool, which will be ready in 2024, to provide policymakers with access to the results of trade-off modelling from Viet Nam.

**EOIO 3: Stakeholders improve the design and implementation of the national roadmap towards food systems transformation for sustainable healthy diets in three target countries.**

**Country engagement in Viet Nam and Ethiopia:** Strategically built on the political momentum triggered by the approval of the FST-NAP in Viet Nam and by the new governance structure in Ethiopia in several concrete ways described in this year’s report, through the leadership of the Country Coordinators and country engagement with Strategic Partners.

**Country engagement in Bangladesh:** Activities fell even further behind in 2023 due to lack of in-country staff presence. With new staff in place at the start of Year 3, this will change.

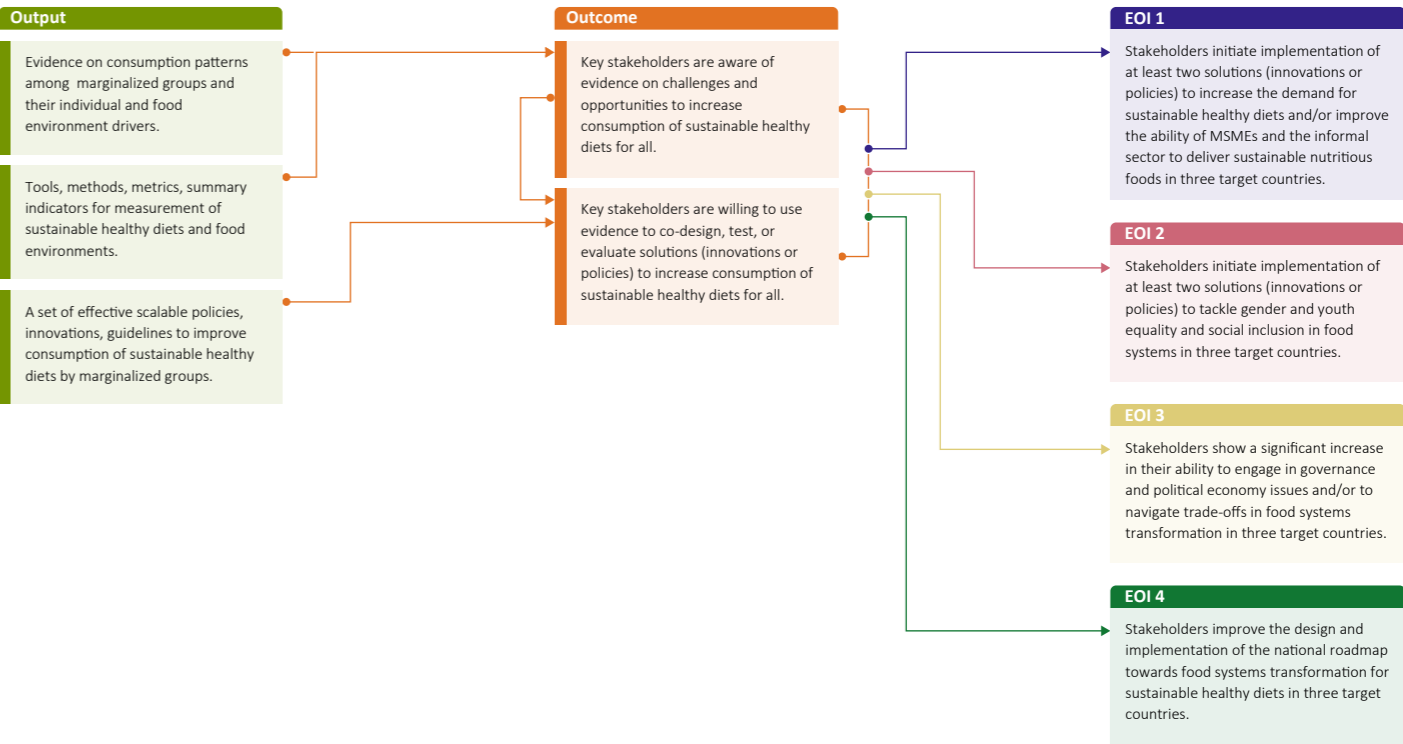


A woman sells vegetables she grew on her farm at a roadside market in Ethiopia. Sustainable Healthy Diets research is examining what growth constraints vendors face in delivering more sustainable nutritious foods and if men and women face different constraints. Credit: Tumuluru Kumar/IFPRI from Flickr

Section 3: Work Package progress

WP1: Consumers and their food environments

On track



Work Package 1 progress against the theory of change

In 2023, the WP1 team conducted qualitative and quantitative surveys in Viet Nam and Ethiopia. Surveys focused on dietary intake of adolescents and their mothers, household food consumption, and household and individual factors driving dietary and food consumption behaviors. In addition, [our surveys](#) included detailed mapping of the food environment the adolescents are exposed to by studying all outlets in the neighborhoods where the adolescent lives and goes to school.<sup>1</sup>

Researchers conducted in-depth analyses of the Viet Nam data and of similar data collected previously in Accra (Ghana).<sup>2</sup> [Preliminary findings](#) in these two countries show that unhealthy foods are within easier reach than healthy options and that adolescents who engage with the food environment for a larger proportion of their dietary intake also consume unhealthier diets.

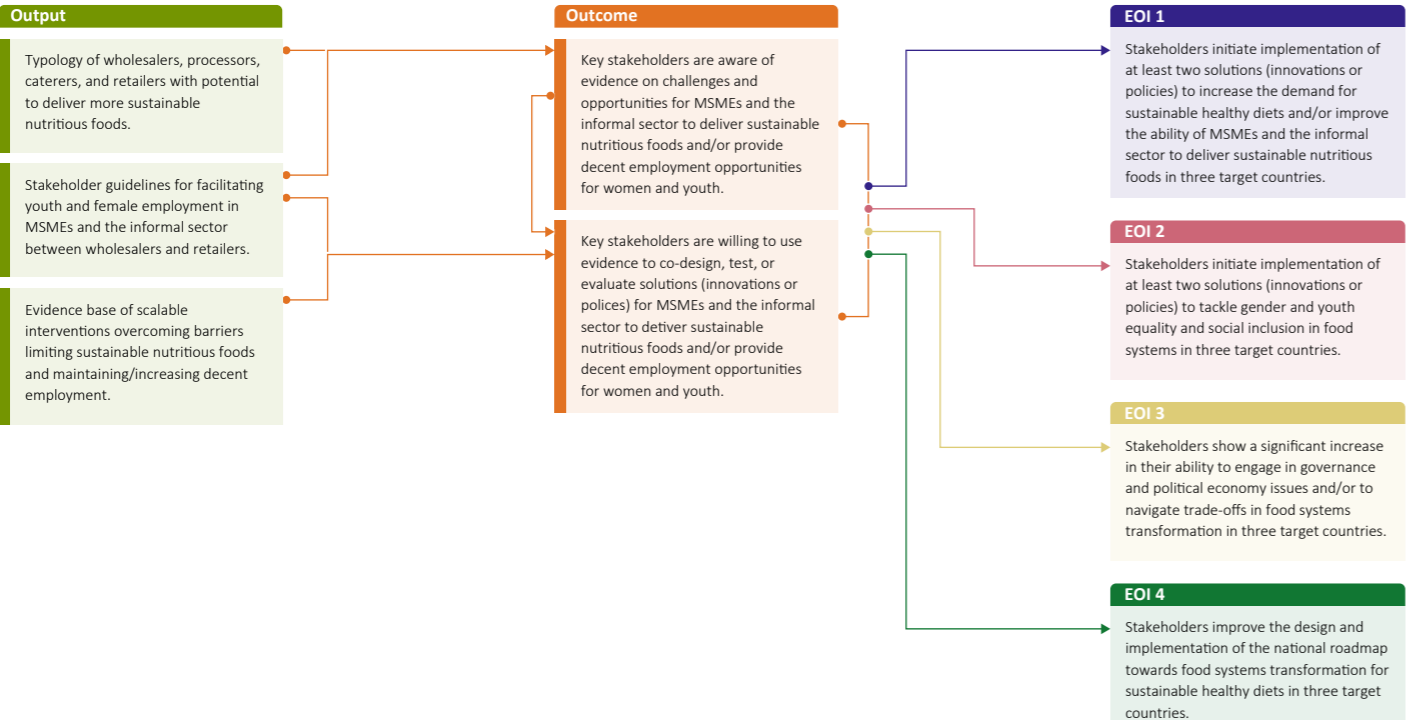
These findings contribute significantly towards this Work Package’s Objectives 1 and 2, i.e. a better understanding of consumer behavior

and the consumer food environment. The collected data and findings will also contribute to Objective 3 which focuses on testing and evaluating innovations that seek to nudge consumers to healthier diets. It is clear that innovations that solely focus on consumer behavior (and do not address the characteristics of the food environment) are not likely to be sufficient to substantially increase diet quality.

Our work in WP1 directly contributes to the CGIAR Impact Area on Nutrition, Health, and Food Security as we learn about personal and household factors and characteristics of the food environment that determine the consumption of sustainable healthy diets which in turn contribute to improved nutritional status. This year’s WP1 activities will also contribute to the CGIAR Impact Area on Gender Equality, Youth, and Social Inclusion as we have collected data that will allow us to compare the dietary adequacy between adolescents and their mothers, between adolescent boys and girls, and between individuals living in different settings.

WP2: Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and the informal sector

On track



Work Package 2 progress against the theory of change

Substantial progress was made towards an improved understanding of assumptions underlying Work Package 2’s TOC and answering the key research questions, at least in Viet Nam. In 2023, researchers conducted surveys of MSMEs in the food environment in Viet Nam and Ethiopia and published three papers describing the Viet Nam survey.<sup>1</sup> Viet Nam data analysis suggested a widespread ability of vendors to source more sustainable nutritious foods, while only half thought it would be worthwhile to try to sell more. Food vendors lacked clear nutrition knowledge and consumer demand is a clear constraint. The research found many women working in the sector, but very few youth, suggesting MSMEs in the food environment are a conduit towards increasing women’s employment, but not youth employment.

These findings directly speak to Objective 1 of Work Package 2, helping us identify MSMEs that can sell more sustainable nutritious foods, and are helping shape thinking about innovations we are identifying to evaluate in Objectives 2 and 3. From an employment

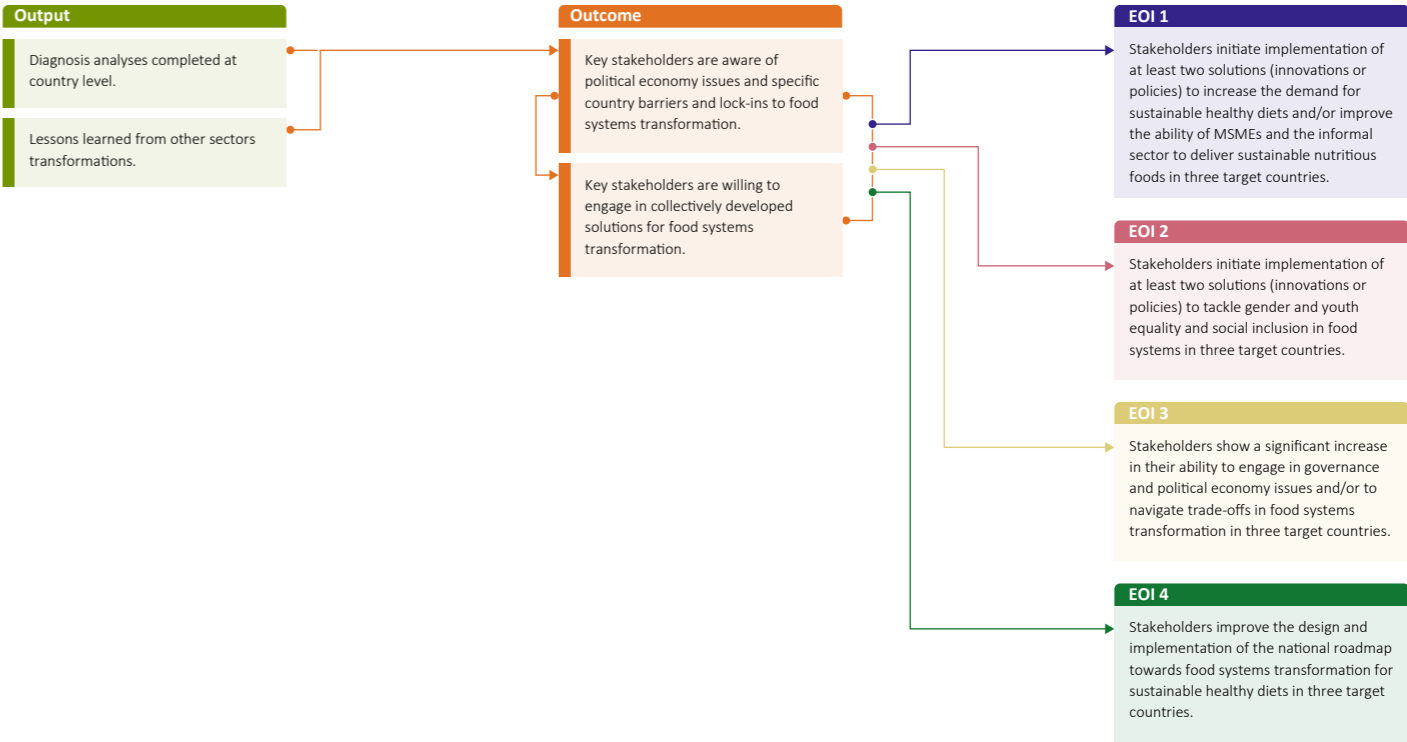
perspective, the results suggest we should modify assumptions behind Output 3, which relates to facilitating youth and women’s employment in the food environment; whereas our research can help guide stakeholders towards improved work for women, the lack of youth in the sector makes their inclusion difficult.

The results contribute to progress in three CGIAR impact areas. First, we are beginning to better understand jobs and livelihoods available among food outlets (CGIAR Impact Area on Poverty Reduction, Livelihoods, and Jobs). Second, we learned about aspects of MSMEs that can help increase the availability of sustainable nutritious foods, helping contribute to improved nutritional status (CGIAR Impact Area on Nutrition, Health, and Food Security). And while MSMEs within food environments may not help increase youth employment, interventions will be designed continuing to focus on women and social inclusion of disadvantaged populations (CGIAR Impact Area on Gender Equality, Youth, and Social Inclusion).

<sup>1</sup> [Description of MSME Survey in Viet Nam](#); [Characterization of MSME Outlet Types in Viet Nam](#); [Gender and MSMEs](#).

WP3: Governance and inclusive food systems

On track



Work Package 3 progress against the theory of change

Work Package 3’s premise is that the changes critically needed to redirect national food systems towards more sustainable outcomes and healthy diets may not happen if key political and institutional dynamics leading or generating lock-ins and barriers to changes are not recognized and addressed. Processes that systematically exclude competing technologies, alternative views, and innovative practices create internal resistance that prevent the necessary changes. In Year 2, Work Package 3 has made substantial progress in relation to those issues, both conceptually and empirically.

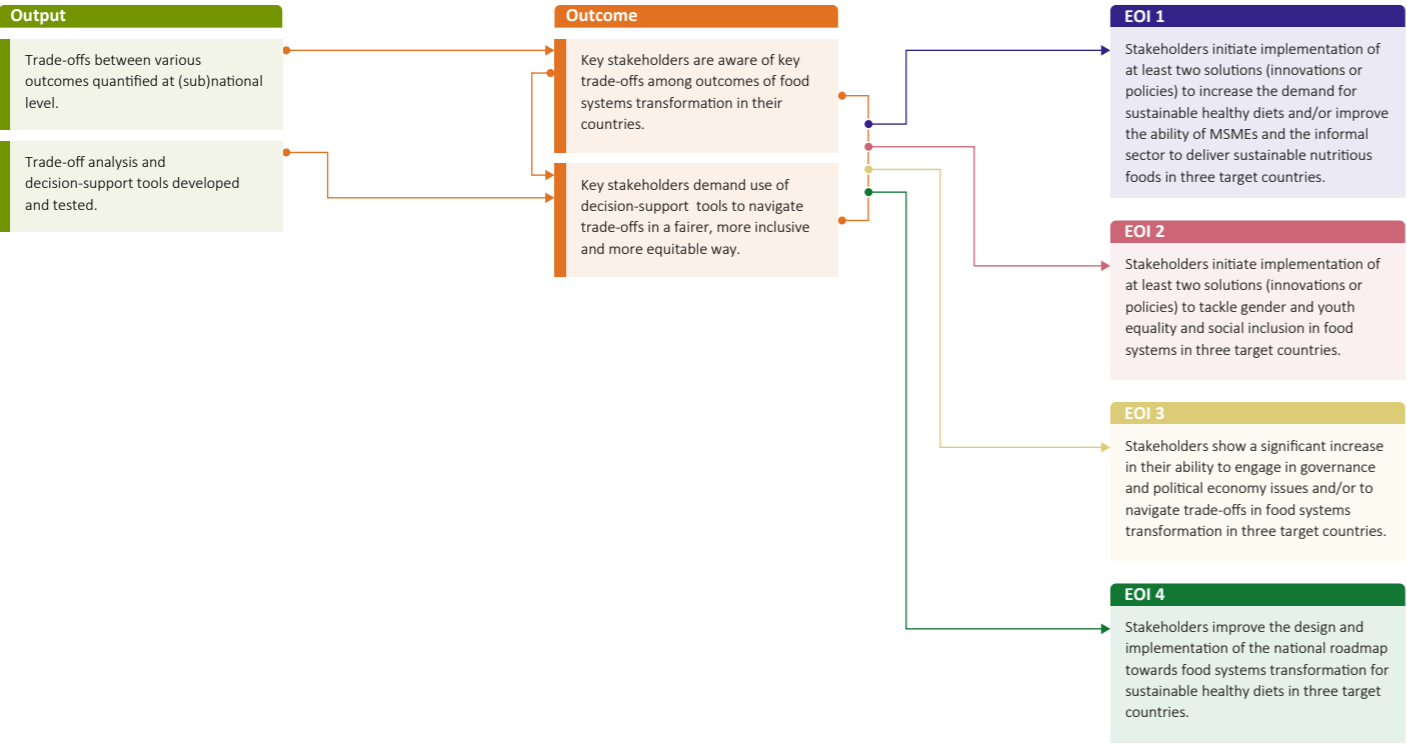
Conceptually, our work led to a better understanding and a more holistic overview of the different political dimensions of food systems transformation, highlighting in particular the importance of four domains where changes are required simultaneously: (i) Powers, discourses and knowledge; (ii) Culture, social norms and behaviors; (iii) Capacity and financial resources, and (iv) Technological innovation. In these domains, transformation will need to follow

four steps to be complete: Identify resistance to change in the current regime; create and maintain new momentums; convert these new momentums into sustainable options; and finally, manage unavoidable trade-offs, reduce incoherence, and prioritize actions.

Empirically, the policy baseline, which had been successfully implemented in Viet Nam, Ethiopia and Honduras in 2022-2023, is now being analyzed. The results will provide critical information about the perception of key stakeholders on the nature of the main issues affecting the food systems in their respective countries and the existence of potential barriers to change. In parallel, IPSARD, a Strategic Partner in Viet Nam, invited Work Package 3 to conduct a [policy landscape analysis](#), which revealed the degree to which food environment policies in this country support (or not) to the adoption of sustainable healthy diets for all.<sup>1</sup> All these different pieces of work contribute directly to Outcome 3.1 of the TOC and will inform Outcome 3.2..

WP4: Trade-off scenario analysis

On track



Work Package 4 progress against the theory of change

Work Package 4 investigates the trade-offs related to food systems transformation using a combination of quantitative approaches and scenario analysis at national and global level. In 2023, the research activities mainly took place in Bangladesh and Viet Nam, while initial preparations were made to expand research into Ethiopia. Contributing to Objective 1, two studies were prepared to assess trade-offs between socio-economic, environmental and health outcomes in the Bangladesh food system using simulation models. [Results were presented](#) at various occasions.<sup>1</sup> In addition, first steps were taken to undertake a similar study in Viet Nam. To raise awareness, improve capacity and support engagement of stakeholders (Objective 3), our research process involves consultations with experts and the organization of a stakeholder workshop in Hanoi to validate assumptions and input data, share preliminary results and explore how the results of the study can be used to inform decision support tools, such as online interactive

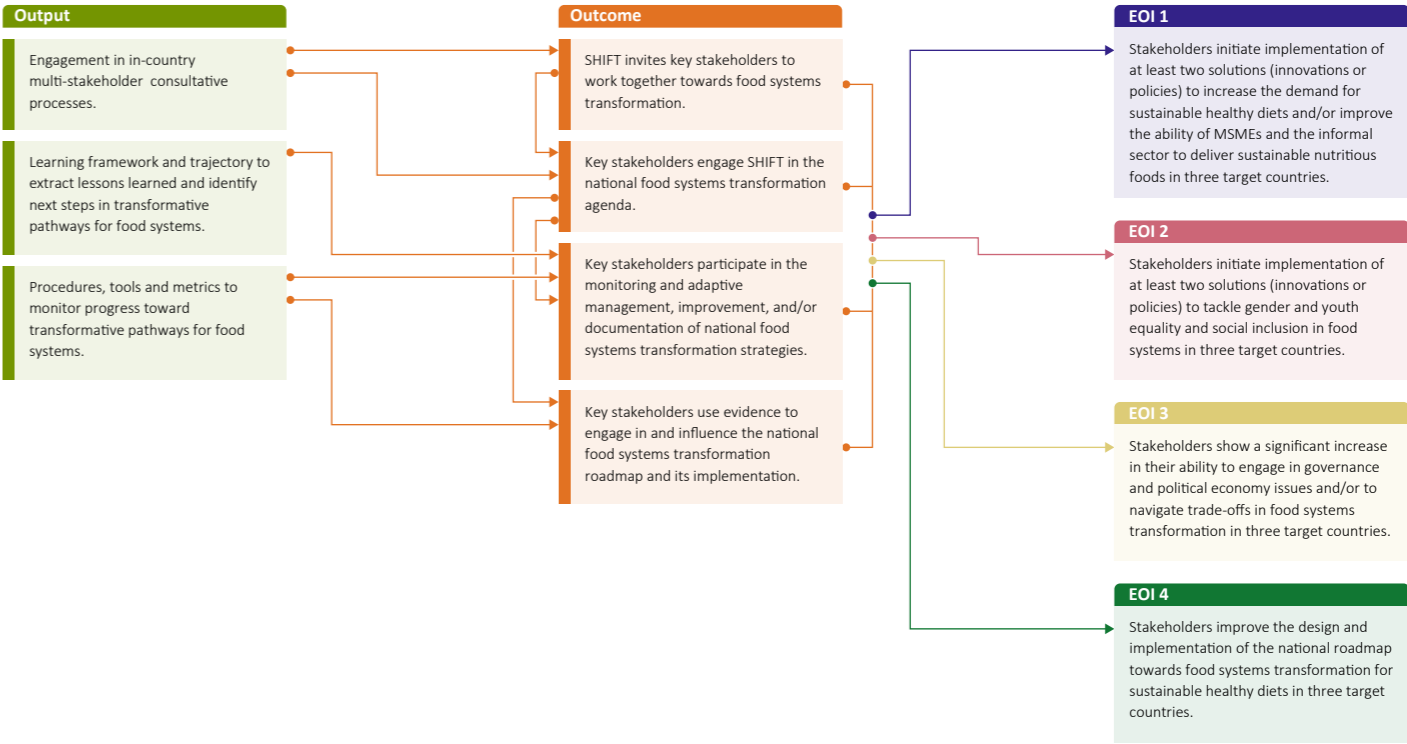
tools, to assess policy implications and obtain insights on potential trade-offs (Objective 2).

In addition to the country case-studies, we started with a systematic literature review to investigate the different ways trade-offs are being defined and used in the context of food systems transformation. The review is complemented with an identification and analysis of publicly available datasets, which can be used to test and develop trade-off methodologies.

Finally, a new tool was published that measures diet quality and explores how policies drive dietary change. The [Reference Diet Deprivation \(ReDD\) index](#) measures the incidence, breadth, and depth of diet deprivation across multiple, essential food groups in a single indicator, and can be integrated into a national economic simulation model to examine changes in household diet quality under different scenarios.<sup>2</sup>

WP5: Catalyzing food systems transformation

On track



Work Package 5 progress against the theory of change

The primary goal of Work Package 5 is to identify, co-design, and support context-specific pathways for food systems transformation toward sustainable healthy diets in the target countries. Operating at the core of Sustainable Healthy Diets, Work Package 5 seeks to ensure stakeholder engagement and capacity sharing and build on emerging research insights.

This Initiative's responsive approach to country-driven actions that integrate sustainable healthy diets in national food systems transformation agendas guides the [country engagement strategy](#).<sup>1</sup> In both Ethiopia and Viet Nam, our engagement led to several exciting results described in this report. In Bangladesh, country engagement stalled, delaying other activities, but will get back on track in Year 3. In-country partners participated in key events such as the 2023 UNFSS +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) and the United Nation's 28th climate change conference ([COP28](#)) and Sustainable Healthy Diets provided inputs so that they could advocate for a focus on sustainable healthy diets.<sup>1</sup>

Another aspect of Work Package 5 research focuses on how stakeholders can incorporate lessons learned into policies and programs that support food systems transformation. Stakeholder engagement has been documented and monitored since 2022, with an established protocol resulting in summary reports. In Viet Nam, this work contributed to the FST-NAP. A cross-country stakeholder analysis will be completed in Year 3 to map all actors involved in the food system.

Our third research question is centered on capacity sharing for food systems research and transformative pathways. In Year 2, the [e-course on Food Systems Governance](#) inspired a new ToT program tailored to in-country contexts.<sup>1</sup> In Year 3, implementation will start in Bangladesh, continue in Ethiopia, and training will cascade to the next level of trainers in Viet Nam. A learning framework protocol was developed and findings will be drafted in Year 3 to document lessons learned from Sustainable Healthy Diets research and practices.

WORK PACKAGE	PROGRESS RATING & RATIONALE
1	<div><div></div><div>Progress rating</div></div> <p>Activities are largely on track in two of the three countries. Two large household surveys were completed in Viet Nam and in Ethiopia alongside (ongoing) qualitative research to generate new evidence on food consumption drivers.</p>
2	<div><div></div><div>Progress rating</div></div> <p>Activities are largely on track in two of the three countries. Two large surveys were completed in Viet Nam and in Ethiopia alongside several case studies from both countries. The research has generated data that can help to identify which MSMEs and informal sector actors have the potential to deliver more sustainable nutritious foods to marginalized consumers and which interventions could be effective for delivering more fruits and vegetables, in particular.</p>
3	<div><div></div><div>Progress rating</div></div> <p>Activities are largely on track in two of the three countries. The policy baselines were completed in Viet Nam and in Ethiopia, which were designed to capture the early stage of the food systems transformation policy process (the agenda setting). Through interviews with key policymakers and agenda influencers, their views and perceptions provide a much more dynamic and forward-looking analysis than conventional policy analyses.</p>
4	<div><div></div><div>Progress rating</div></div> <p>Activities are largely on track in two of the three countries. The trade-off analysis and development of decision-support tools are ongoing (unpublished) in Bangladesh and in Viet Nam. The work is likely to expand to Ethiopia just before the end of Phase 1.</p>
5	<div><div></div><div>Progress rating</div></div> <p>Activities are largely on track in two of the three countries. Although work has accelerated in Viet Nam and in Ethiopia, partner engagement stalled in Bangladesh due to lack of in-country staff and that has slowed the continuation of this Initiative’s engagement in national food systems transformation processes and activities there.</p>

Definitions

<div><div></div><div>On track</div></div> <div><div>✓</div><div>Annual progress largely aligns with Plan of Results and Budget and Work Package theory of change.</div></div> <div><div>✓</div><div>Can include small deviations/issues/delays/risks that do not jeopardize success of Work Package.</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>Delayed</div></div> <div><div>⚠</div><div>Annual progress slightly falls behind Plan of Results and Budget and Work Package theory of change in key areas.</div></div> <div><div>⚠</div><div>Deviations/issues/delays/risks could jeopardize success of Work Package if not managed appropriately.</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>Off track</div></div> <div><div>✗</div><div>Annual progress clearly falls behind Plan of Results and Budget and Work Package theory of change in most/all areas.</div></div> <div><div>✗</div><div>Deviations/issues/delays/risks do jeopardize success of Work Package.</div></div>
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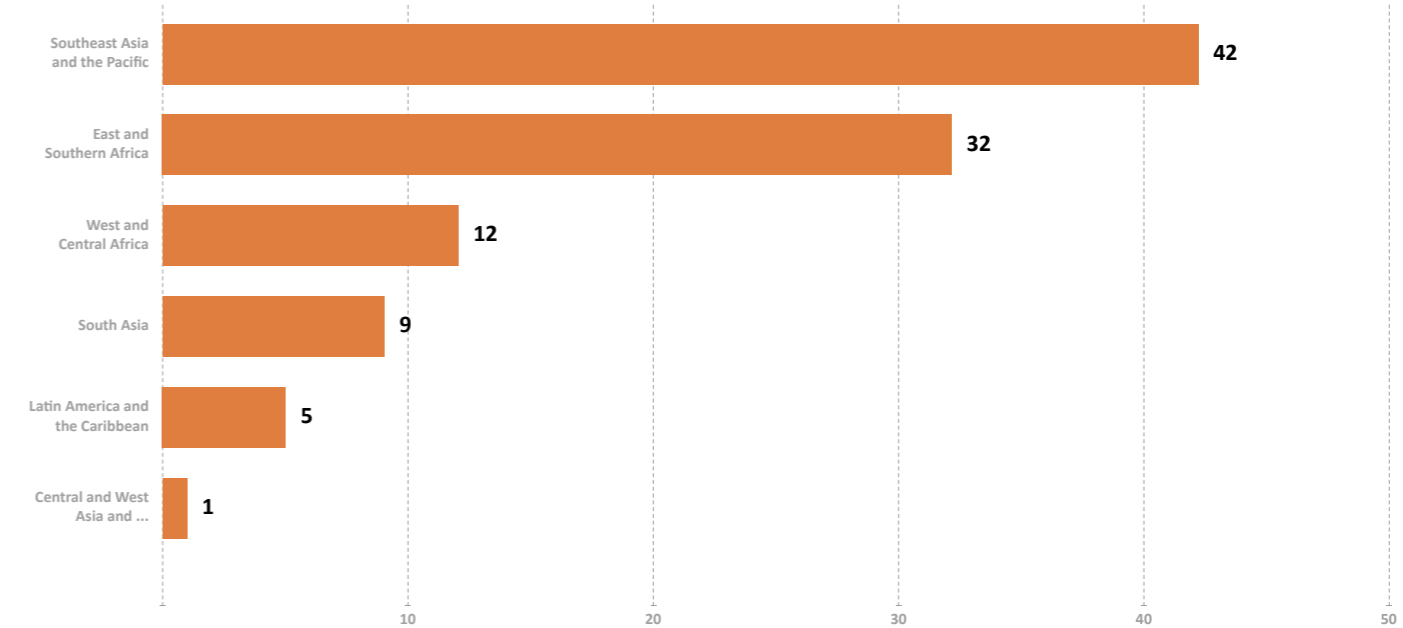
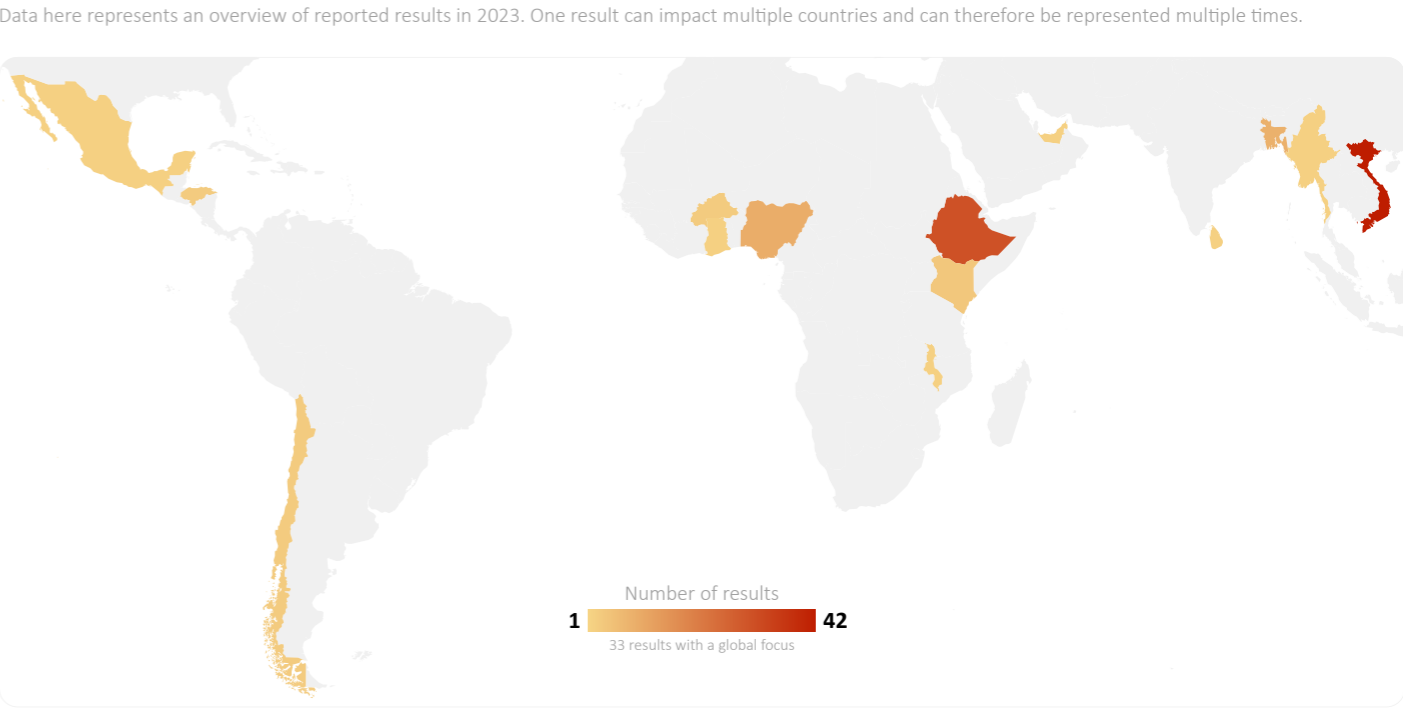
Section 4: Key results

This section provides an overview of results reported by the CGIAR Research Initiative on Sustainable Healthy Diets in 2023. These results align with the CGIAR Results Framework and Sustainable Healthy Diets’ theory of change. Source: *Data extracted from the [CGIAR Results Dashboard](#) on 15 April 2024.*

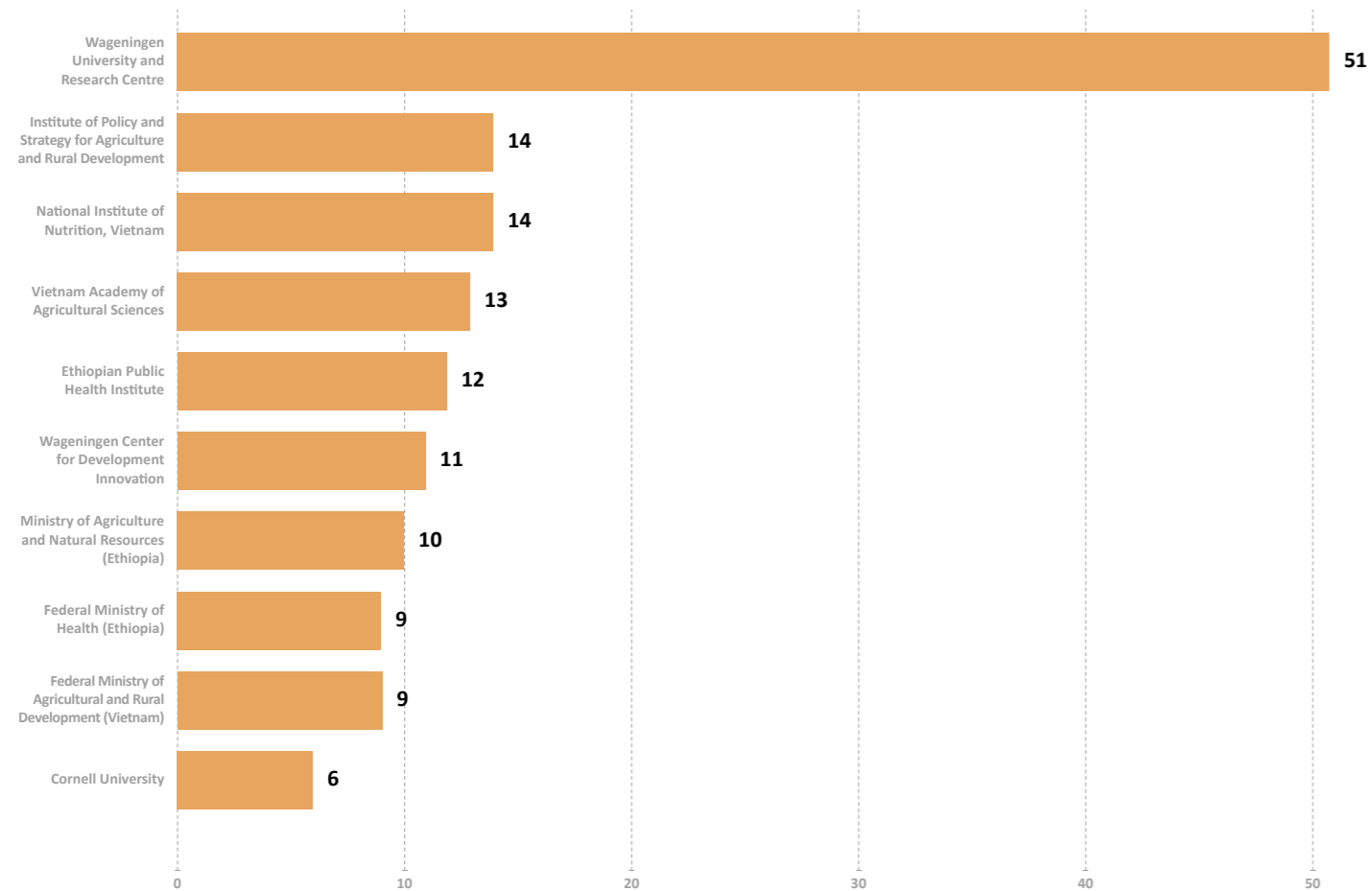
OVERVIEW OF REPORTED RESULTS, BY TYPE



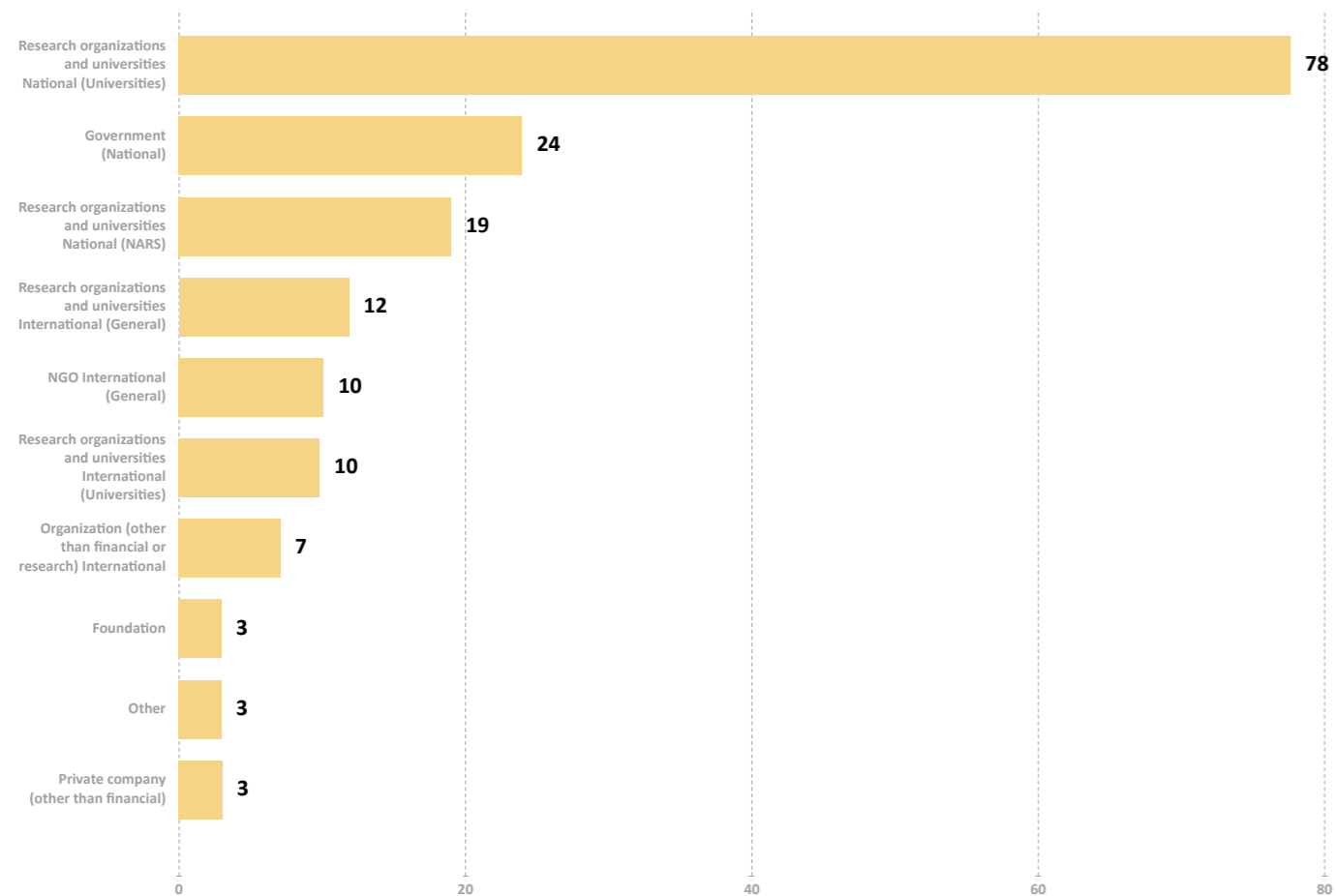
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTED RESULTS



## RESULTS BY CONTRIBUTING PARTNER

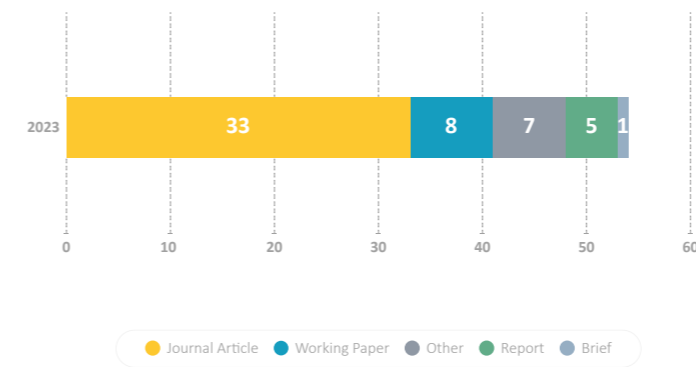


## RESULTS BY PARTNER TYPE



## NUMBER OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS BY TYPE AND THEIR ALTMETRIC ATTENTION SCORE

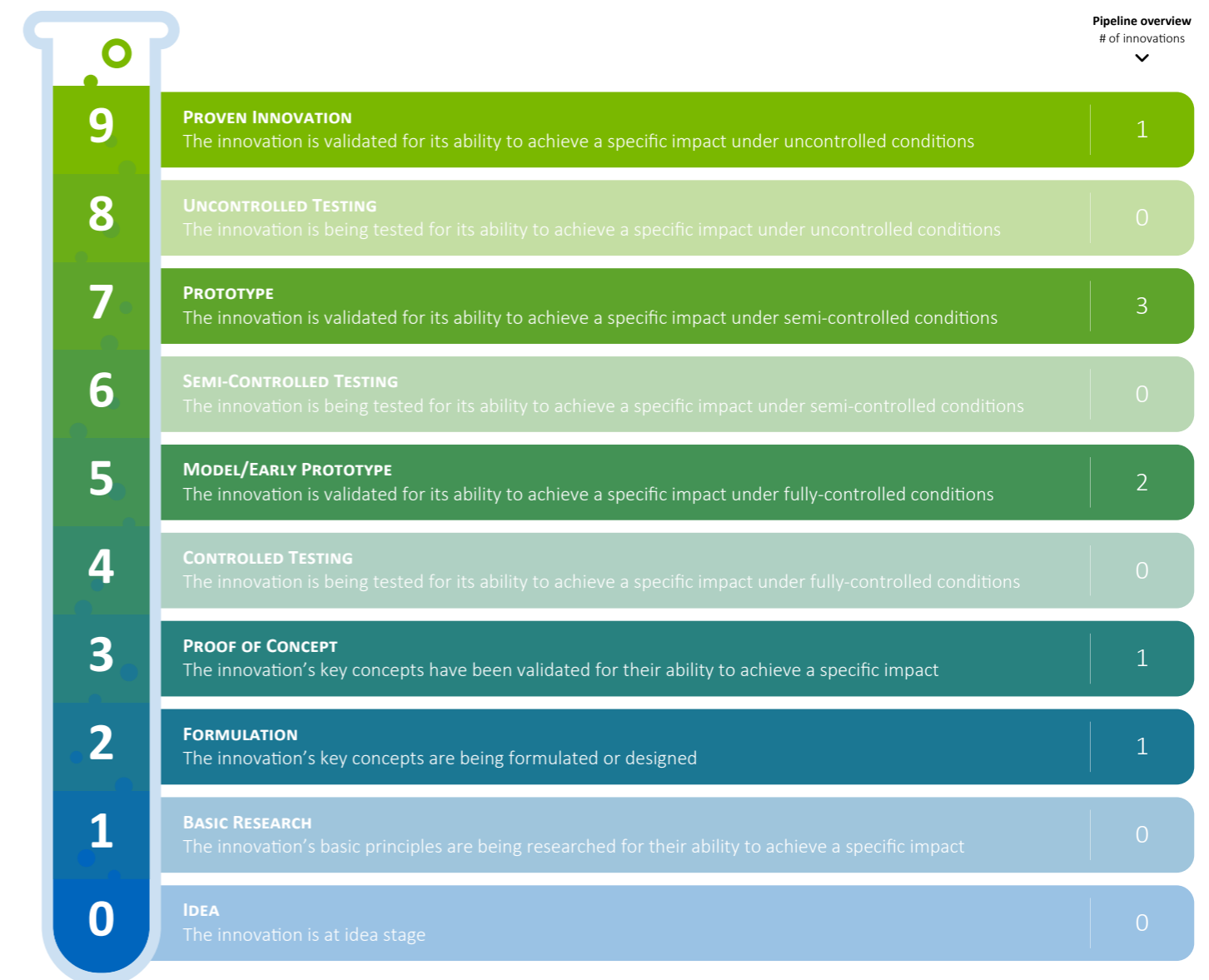
### Knowledge products by type



### Knowledge products with an Altmetric Attention Score



## NUMBER OF INNOVATIONS BY READINESS LEVEL



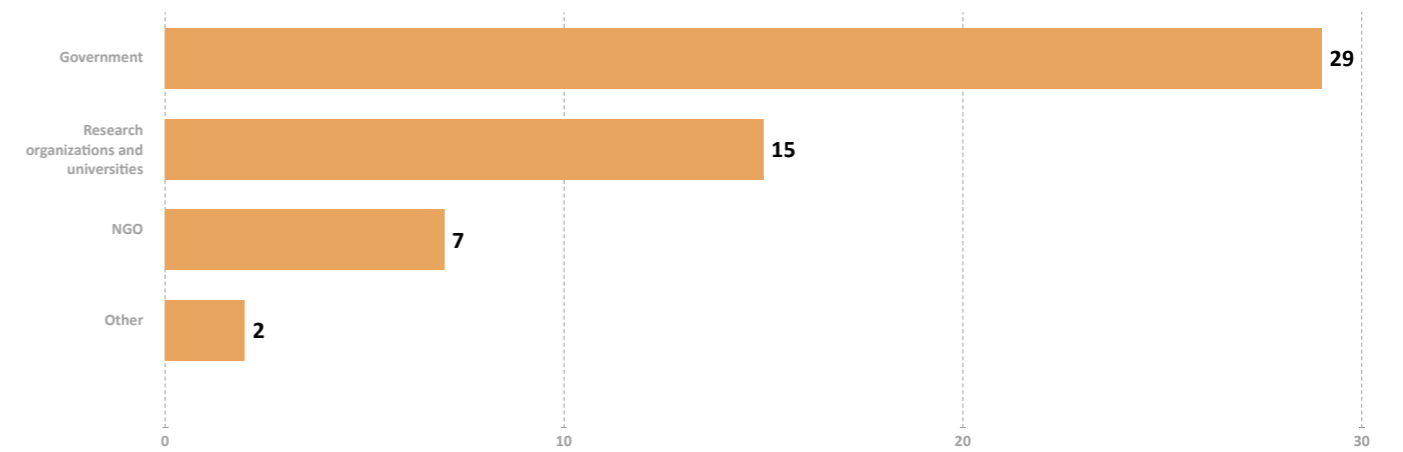
TOP 12 KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS BY ALTMETRIC SCORE

The state of food systems worldwide in the countdown to 2030	Journal Article	564
Four ways blue foods can help achieve food system ambitions across nations	Journal Article	271
Changes in children’s and adolescents’ dietary intake after the implementation of Chile’s law of food labeling, advertising and sales in schools: A longitudinal study	Journal Article	78
Resilience and food security in a food systems context	Book	76
Aquaculture governance: five engagement arenas for sustainability transformation	Journal Article	41
Measuring consumption over the phone: Evidence from a survey experiment in urban Ethiopia	Journal Article	30
Measuring changes in diet deprivation: New indicators and methods	Journal Article	29
Food inflation and child undernutrition in low and middle income countries	Journal Article	29
Using free Wi-Fi to assess impact of COVID-19 pandemic on traditional wet markets in Hanoi	Journal Article	24
Inclusive diets within planetary boundaries	Journal Article	15
Fruits and vegetables for healthy diets: Priorities for food system research and action	Book Chapter	15
The DQQ is a valid tool to collect population-level food group consumption data: A study among women in Ethiopia, Vietnam, and Solomon Islands	Journal Article	11

All the reported knowledge products are authored by researchers from Sustainable Healthy Diets. In the absence of clear criteria, the Sustainable Healthy Diets Program Committee follows a set of internal criteria to determine which knowledge publications to report annually to CGIAR. If the knowledge product is country-specific, it must cover one of the current, phase 1 target countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, or Viet Nam). If it covers another country, it must include methods/tools/metrics that are relevant or of interest to Sustainable Healthy Diets or include innovations that could be relevant or of interest to the target countries. This is why the reader may find a knowledge product in this list from outside the geographical scope of Sustainable Healthy Diets.

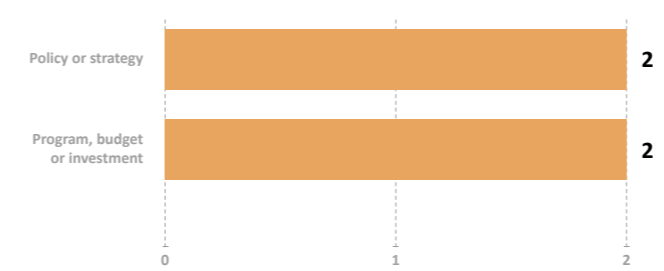
INNOVATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT

Innovation users by institution types

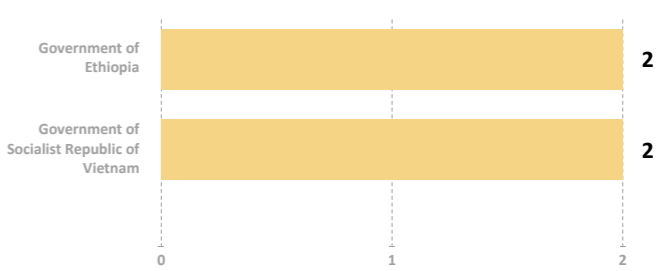


POLICY CHANGES

Policies by type



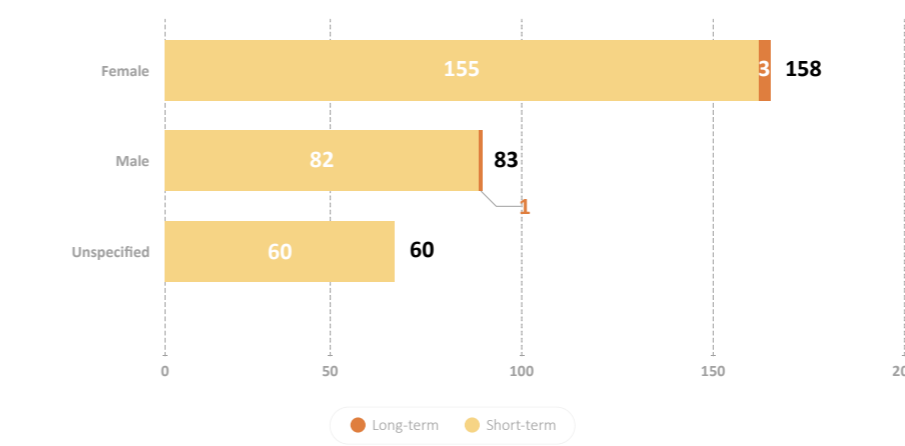
Organizations whose policy has changed



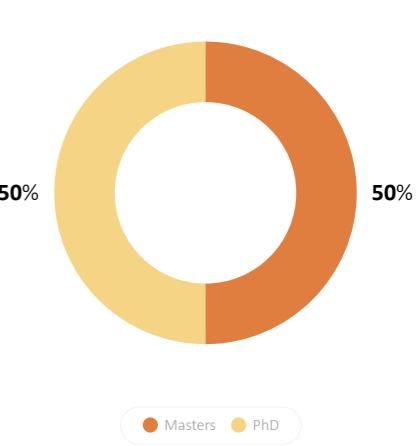
CAPACITY SHARING FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS



Trainees



Further education





Customers line up to purchase injera from a vendor in an open-air market in Butajira, Ethiopia. Injera, a round, spongy bread typically made with teff flour, is an important part of the diet in Ethiopia.  
Credit: Jef Leroy/International Food Policy Research Institute

## Section 5: Partnerships

### Partnerships and Sustainable Healthy Diets' impact pathways

Eight of the nine outcomes in this year's report were achieved in collaboration with our six Strategic Partners in Viet Nam and Ethiopia, listed in Section 2. The outcomes represent important markers of how food systems transformation processes in Viet Nam and Ethiopia are being designed and implemented to set the course of action towards sustainable healthy diets for all.

Other partnership achievements in Year 2 included the signing of an MoU with the three Strategic Partners in Ethiopia and the launch of the Country Coordination Unit (CCU). In Viet Nam, the [4th Global Conference of the One Planet network's Sustainable Food Systems Programme](#) provided an opportunity for Sustainable Healthy Diets and in-country partners to advocate for sustainable healthy diets as an important goal of food systems transformation and present joint research.<sup>1</sup> In one session, researchers from this Initiative and IPSARD described their food environment policy landscape study, which highlighted the policy areas where the Government should focus to guide the Vietnamese food system toward healthier and more sustainable outcomes.

Year 2 of Sustainable Healthy Diets coincided with UNFSS+2. The UNFSS Country Convenors in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam invited the Country Coordinators from Sustainable Healthy Diets to participate in the preparations for UNFSS+2. In Viet Nam, the Sustainable Healthy Diets Country Coordinator was part of the [official national delegation at UNFSS+2](#).<sup>2</sup> Prior to UNFSS+2, Sustainable Healthy Diets facilitated a [cross-country knowledge exchange](#) between Bangladesh and Viet Nam so partners could share lessons learned on implementing their national sustainable food systems agendas.<sup>3</sup>

WUR continues to be an important knowledge partner in Sustainable Healthy Diets. In addition to being the only non-CGIAR member of the Program Committee, WUR has contributed to many activities and results described in this report. Their expertise in food systems transformation capacity sharing has enabled Sustainable Healthy Diets to respond to partner-led demands for a ToT program in Viet Nam and Ethiopia, both of which will grow in Year 3.

The French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD) and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) have been working with this Initiative on

research activities in Viet Nam on adolescents and their food environment and the characterization of MSMEs and their labor structures. Through their facilitation role in the Markets and Agriculture Linkages for Cities in Asia (MALICA) platform, a [joint workshop](#)<sup>4</sup> was held in November, which gave Sustainable Healthy Diets an opportunity to share preliminary research results with



Country Coordinators work in each target country to manage the relationship with key national partners known in Sustainable Healthy Diets as Strategic Partners. From left to right are Jainal Abedin, Country Coordinator for Bangladesh; Tuyen Huynh, Country Coordinator for Viet Nam; and Belay Terefe Mengesha, Country Coordinator for Ethiopia.  
Credit: Ngan Phan, Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT

stakeholders and to learn more about the needs and interests for food systems innovations in Viet Nam.

These partnerships are consistent with what was described in the proposal. Looking ahead to Year 3, we will engage new partners from other government institutions, NGOs, and academia to increase awareness of evidence generated by Sustainable Healthy Diets, implement the research agenda on innovations and policy processes, and expand the ToT program, in particular.

Section 6: CGIAR Portfolio linkages

Portfolio linkages and Sustainable Healthy Diets’ impact pathways

This Initiative focuses on consumers and the food environment in rural, peri-urban, and urban areas, a marked difference from CGIAR’s traditional focus on production and smallholder farmers in rural areas. Within the food environment, we also have a unique focus on MSMEs as potential distributors and vendors of sustainable nutritious foods. We collaborate with the CGIAR Research Initiatives that focus on diets, consumers, the food environment, nutritious foods, and nutrition and health outcomes in the countries where we work.

In Year 2, researchers from three CGIAR Research Initiatives - Sustainable Healthy Diets, Fruit and Vegetables for Sustainable Healthy Diets, and Resilient Cities- launched a hybrid seminar series to exchange information on food environment and dietary assessment research. More than 200 people have been added to the distribution list, which includes researchers from across CGIAR and local and global partners of the Initiatives. Relatedly, researchers from the same three Initiatives launched an internal lab group to exchange information on food environment and dietary assessment research; support harmonization of tools, methods, and approaches; and identify opportunities for synergies or joint work across the CGIAR Research Initiatives with a strong interest in this topic. In Year 3, the focus will pivot to presentations on preliminary results and methodological challenges and expand to include sessions on specific bilaterally funded food environment research projects led by Initiative researchers.

The 8th annual Agriculture, Nutrition & Health (ANH) Academy Week was held in June, online and onsite in Lilongwe, Malawi. The program for the annual global gathering of researchers, implementers,

policy-makers, and funders featured online Learning Labs followed by a full hybrid scientific conference. CGIAR was a co-host of the 2023 event and Sustainable Healthy Diets plus two other CGIAR Research Initiatives alongside the NUTRITION Impact Platform had various [roles in this global conference](#) that reached more than 1400 people working at the interface of agriculture, nutrition, and health.<sup>1</sup> Part of CGIAR’s financial support made it possible for several speakers from low- and middle-income countries to attend the event in-person.

Sustainable Healthy Diets has been responsive to requests from the NUTRITION Impact Platform in their convening role. For example, this included cooperation in planning and participating in panels and/or seminars at the ANH Academy Week, the Micronutrient Forum, and COP28.

The joint results with the CGIAR Research Initiative on Foresight reflect individual researcher engagement in the Food Systems Countdown Initiative, a high-level collaborative effort to monitor global food systems, and complementary research on the development of [the ReDD index](#), a tool to measure diet quality and explore how policies are driving dietary change.<sup>2</sup>

Looking ahead to Year 3, researchers from this Initiative and Resilient Cities will validate a food safety experience tool in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, where both Initiatives have ongoing research. Guided by the Systems Transformation leadership, members of Sustainable Healthy Diets, Fruit and Vegetables for Sustainable Healthy Diets, and Rethinking Markets will continue to strategize how to position the work of the three initiatives in the post-2024 iteration of the CGIAR portfolio.



Man selling vegetables in a local vegetable market in Khulna, Bangladesh.  
Credit: M. Yousuf Tushar, Flickr

Section 7: Adaptive management

RECOMMENDATION	SUPPORTING RATIONALE
Implement strategies to circumvent inherent asymmetries in partnerships.	<p>The short timeframe in which the Initiative is expected to deliver in Phase 1 already represented one significant barrier to equitable partnerships; the reorganization of the post-2024 CGIAR portfolio introduces another significant barrier. We are taking different approaches to overcome this challenge. One, members of the Program Committee will visit the target countries for face-to-face meetings with Strategic Partners to clarify expectations, adjust 2024 work plans, and discuss priorities related to research on the food environment, sustainable healthy diets, and food systems transformation processes that they would like to see CGIAR tackle in the next iteration of the portfolio.</p> <p>Our partners in-country are under pressure to achieve their food systems transformation aspirations. The regular CCU meetings in Viet Nam and Ethiopia have helped to build clarity within the Initiative on the national agendas. In 2024, the CCUs will meet regularly in all three countries. In Viet Nam and Ethiopia, face-to-face meetings with Strategic Partners will be held to discuss the relevance of findings from primary data collection to national agendas and identify overarching narratives that relate to the provision of sustainable healthy diets to all.</p> <p>The new ToT program on food systems provides a strategic capacity sharing opportunity to complement national policy processes like the FST-NAP in Viet Nam and the National Food Systems Roadmap in Ethiopia. The Work Package 5 work plan for 2024 was adjusted so that the team can spend more time working with in-country partners to design, implement, and monitor this program in all three target countries.</p>
Pursue collaborations with other Initiatives working on relevant food environment and food systems transformation topics.	<p>Guided by the Systems Transformation leadership, members of Sustainable Healthy Diets, Fruit and Vegetables for Sustainable Healthy Diets, and Rethinking Markets will continue to strategize how to position the work of the three initiatives in the post-2024 iteration of the CGIAR portfolio.</p> <p>Researchers from Sustainable Healthy Diets and Resilient Cities will validate a food safety experience tool in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, where both Initiatives have ongoing research.</p> <p>The Initiative will continue to support the efforts that started in Year 2 mentioned in other places in this report, like the seminar series and the lab group.</p> <p>The initiative will explore possible linkages with the CGIAR Research Initiative on Asian Mega Deltas on subnational food systems interventions in the Mekong Delta region of Viet Nam.</p>
Deliver high-quality research.	<p>Refining and implementing the research agenda on innovations and policy processes will be a high priority in 2024. Several consultations with Strategic Partners and other stakeholders are already planned for early-2024 to try and align this area of research so it fills relevant gaps in the respective national food systems transformation agendas in the target countries. Possible innovations include specific food environment interventions at the household and school level as well as policy processes that seek to deliver greater multisectoral coordination and investments at the national and subnational scale.</p>
Re-examine the theory of change.	<p>We will review and, where necessary, update the outputs in specific work packages to reflect lessons learned and emerging opportunities. Given the slow start of activities in Bangladesh may imply changes need to be made in the EOI outcomes. This process will take place during the re-plan window.</p>

Section 8: Key result story

Advancing food systems transformation in Viet Nam

Sustainable Healthy Diets provided technical assistance to partners shaping the national food systems transformation agenda in Viet Nam.



Woman calculating figures at Long Bien Market, Hanoi  
Credit: UN Women Asia and the Pacific, Flickr

Primary Impact Area



Other relevant Impact Areas targeted



Contributing Initiative

Sustainable Healthy Diets

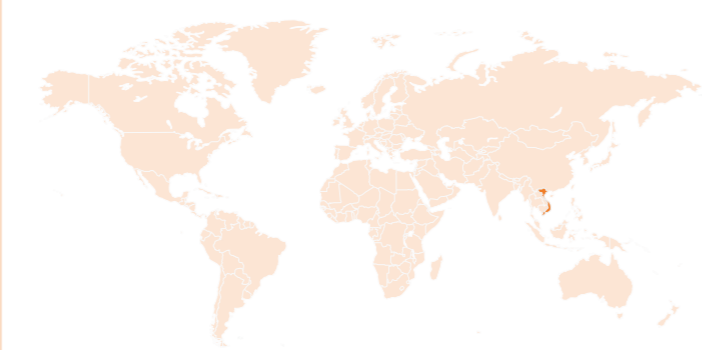
Contributing Centers

Alliance of Bioversity International · CIAT

Contributing external partners

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development · Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences · Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development · National Institute of Nutrition · Wageningen University and Research

Geographic scope



Viet Nam

The Government of Viet Nam approved a new National Action Plan for Transparent, Responsible, and Sustainable Food Systems Transformation (2022–2030) in April 2023. This new direction provided a window of opportunity for Sustainable Healthy Diets to provide evidence-based resources and capacity sharing models to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and other national partners in their efforts to anchor sustainable healthy diets as a key outcome of the plan’s implementation, alongside economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability.

The Government of Viet Nam views transforming food systems as the most principal and important task in ensuring national food and nutrition security. At the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, the President of Viet Nam committed to transform and develop the country’s food system to be more transparent, responsible, and sustainable, meeting food security and nutrition requirements for both domestic and export markets.

One of the first steps in the government’s new strategy was the National Action Plan for Transparent, Responsible, and Sustainable Food Systems Transformation (2022–2030), (FST-NAP), which was approved by the Prime Minister in April 2023. The development of the FST-NAP was the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and with its approval, MARD has become the lead government agency in its implementation.

It is in this policy environment that national partners supporting MARD, like the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences (VAAS) and the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPSARD), invited Sustainable Healthy Diets to participate in this collaborative process. This enabled the Initiative to share evidence-based resources and participate in policy dialogues to anchor sustainable healthy diets as a key outcome of the plan’s implementation, alongside economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability.

The Prime Minister’s approval of the FST-NAP was announced at the 4th Global Conference of the Sustainable Food Systems Program, which took place from April 24–27, 2023, in Hanoi. CGIAR researchers played an important role in advocating for the global conference to be held in Viet Nam. By hosting the event, Viet

Nam was able to showcase their ongoing work on food systems transformation, positioning them as a global thought leader. It also helped build momentum to finalize the approval of the FST-NAP.

Since then, MARD recognized that establishing formal structures and governance would be critical to implementing the FST-NAP. The idea for a Food Systems Partnership that will enhance collaboration among and across relevant Ministries, sectors, and partners was born. Through five technical working groups, the Partnership will help to develop mechanisms for subnational levels of government to implement different aspects of the FST-NAP. MARD invited the Initiative’s Country Coordinator to join the group designing the concept for the country’s Food Systems Partnership and how it will operate. The group’s task will be completed in 2024 and the Food Systems Partnership and its five technical working groups will become fully operational.

Analyzing existing regulatory frameworks is a crucial part of the next steps of implementation. At the request of IPSARD, Initiative researchers contributed to a policy landscape analysis that examined whether the country’s existing food environment policies are conducive to achieving sustainable, resilient, healthy, and inclusive food systems. By identifying gaps in existing policies and providing evidence-based recommendations, the Initiative supports Viet Nam’s government in developing and restructuring current and future food systems targets to improve diets, for example.

The food systems concept and what food systems transformation means is not well-understood across Viet Nam. The lack of understanding can hamper effective implementation. After completing the e-course on Food Systems Governance, national partners suggested that Sustainable Healthy Diets work with them to develop a training of trainers (ToT) program on food systems to build capacity and collaboration to implement the FST-NAP. By the end of 2023, experts from VAAS, IPSARD, the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), and Sustainable Healthy Diets co-designed and launched the ToT program and the first set of twenty trainers received their certificate and and begin to to cascade the training to the next level of trainers.



The concept of healthy food and diets is very new. It did not exist in the relevant policies in Viet Nam before. We only learnt this though the policy dialogues on food systems by Sustainable Healthy Diets. Now, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development confirms that agriculture also has to respond to diets and healthy foods and it’s not just the role of the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Dao The Anh, Vice-President of Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences



#### Front cover photo

Floating market in Viet Nam  
Credit: Quang Nguyen Vinh, pixabay

#### Back cover photo

Nighttime view of an open-air market in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from a flyover bridge.  
Credit: K.M. Asas / World Bank from Flickr



INITIATIVE ON  
Sustainable  
Healthy Diets