CGIAR

INITIATIVE ON
Sustainable
Healthy Diets

A man cleans the pavement in front of his shop, which displays a variety of fruits for sale in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Sustainable Healthy Diets conducted surveys in 2023 of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) selling food directly to consumers in a woreda of Addis Ababa and Butajira. The data helped researchers to understand more about how MSMEs manage their businesses, the type of healthy foods they sell, their own nutritional awareness, and the constraints they might face in selling more healthy foods.

Credit: panoglobe / Shutterstock

CGIAR Research Initiative on
Sustainable Healthy Diets

Annual Technical Report 2024

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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..

Boundaries used in the maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of CGIAR concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city, or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Borders are approximate and cover some areas for which there may not yet be full agreement.

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) software ChatGPT was used to support the editing of parts of this report, specifically to improve clarity, grammar, and style. ChatGPT was not used to generate the content of the report. All edits made with AI assistance were reviewed and validated by the authors to ensure accuracy, coherence, and alignment with the original intent.

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CGIAR Technical Reporting 2024

CGIAR Technical Reporting has been developed in alignment with CGIAR's Technical Reporting Arrangement. This annual report ("Type 1" Report) constitutes part of the broader CGIAR Technical Report. Each CGIAR Research Initiative/Impact Platform/Science Group Project (SGP) submits an annual "Type 1" Report, which provides assurance on progress towards end of Initiative/Impact Platform/SGP outcomes.

As 2024 marks the final year of this CGIAR Portfolio and the 2022-24 business cycle, this Type 1 Report takes a dual approach to its analysis and reporting. Alongside highlighting key achievements for 2024, the report also provides a cumulative overview of the 2022-24 business cycle, where relevant. This perspective captures the evolution of efforts over the three-year period. By presenting both annual and multi-year insights, the report underscores the cumulative impact of CGIAR's work and sets the stage for the transition to the 2025-30 Portfolio.

The 2024 CGIAR Technical Report comprises:

- **Type 1 Initiative, Impact Platform, and SGP Reports:** These annual reports present progress towards end of Initiative/Impact Platform/SGP outcomes and provide quality-assured results accessible via the CGIAR Results Dashboard.
- **Type 3 CGIAR Portfolio Practice Change Report:** This report provides insights into CGIAR's progress in Performance Management and Project Coordination.
- **Portfolio Narrative:** Drawing on the Type 1 and Type 3 reports, as well as data from the CGIAR Results Dashboard, the Portfolio Narrative synthesizes insights to provide an overall view of Portfolio coherence. It highlights synergies, partnerships, country and regional engagement, and collective progress.
- **Type 2 CGIAR Contributions to Impact in Agrifood Systems: evidence and learnings from 2022 to 2024:** This report offers a high-level summary of CGIAR's contributions to its impact targets and Science Group outcomes, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for the three-year business cycle.

The Portfolio Narrative informs the 2024 CGIAR Annual Report – a comprehensive summary of the organization's collective achievements, impacts, and strategic outlook.

Elements of the Type 2 report are integrated into the CGIAR Flagship Report, released in April 2025 at CGIAR Science Week. The Flagship Report synthesizes CGIAR research in an accessible format designed specifically to provide policy- and decision-makers at national, regional, and global levels with the evidence they require to formulate, develop, and negotiate evidence-based policies and investments.

The diagram below illustrates these relationships.

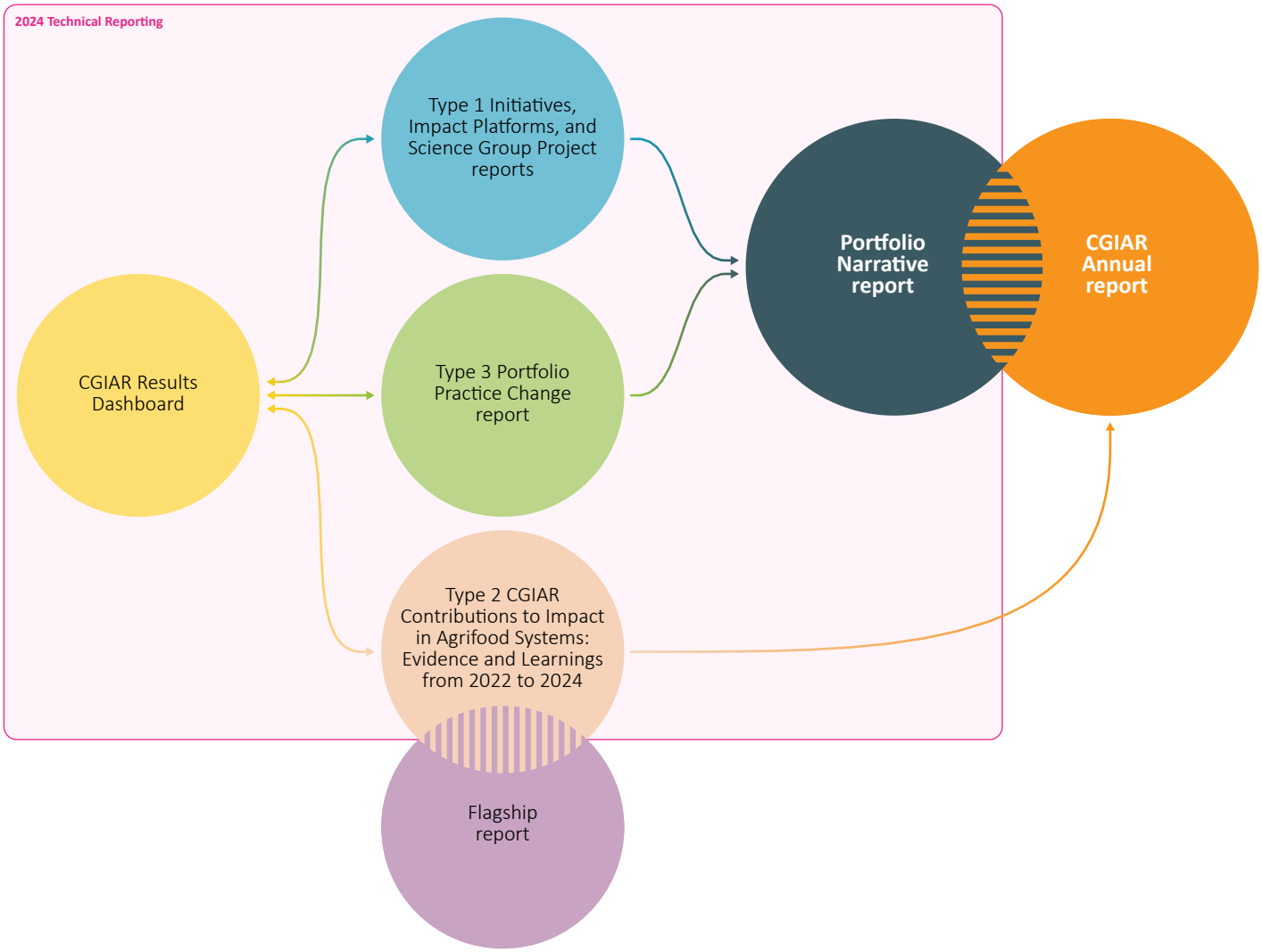


Figure 1. CGIAR's 2024 Technical Reporting components and their integration with other CGIAR reporting products.

Section 1: **Fact sheet, executive summary and budget**

Initiative name	Sustainable Healthy Diets through Food Systems Transformation
Initiative short name	Sustainable Healthy Diets
Initiative Lead	Inge Brouwer (I.Brouwer@cgiar.org)
Initiative Co-lead	Mark Lundy (m.lundy@cgiar.org)
Science Group	Systems Transformation
Start – end date	01 January 2022 – 31 December 2024
Geographic scope	**Countries** Bangladesh · Benin · Ethiopia · Guatemala · Honduras · India · Senegal · The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
OECD DAC Climate marker adaptation score[1]	**Score 2: Significant** 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[1]	**Score 1: Significant** 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[2]	**Score 1B: Gender responsive** 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	https://www.cgiar.org/initiative/sustainable-healthy-diets/

[1] 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.
[2] 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 (2022–2024) set out to advance national food systems transformation for sustainable healthy diets in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam by combining high-quality interdisciplinary research with strategic partnerships. Co-led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT (the Alliance), in collaboration with Wageningen University and Research (WUR) and the International Potato Center (CIP), the Initiative aimed to produce actionable evidence and strengthen stakeholder capacities to support healthier and more sustainable dietary choices.

Over three years, the Initiative generated 164 knowledge products, nearly half of which were peer-reviewed articles, working papers, briefs, and tools. It delivered short-term training to more than 1,300 individuals, supported eight doctoral students, and contributed to the development of 31 innovations, six of which were in use by external actors by the end of 2024. The team engaged in nearly 40 policy dialogues, conferences, and learning exchanges, all designed to raise awareness and build capacity across a wide range of national, regional, and international stakeholders. Through these activities, the Initiative significantly expanded its influence and visibility in the global discourse on food systems transformation.

The Initiative collaborated with a set of core partners known as Strategic Partners in each target country. In Viet Nam, partners included the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the National Institute of Nutrition, and the Institute for Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development. In Ethiopia, it worked with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, and the Ethiopian Public Health Institute. In Bangladesh, the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit and the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council were key collaborators. These relationships allowed the Initiative to align closely with national policy priorities, respond in real time to government needs, and reach food system stakeholders to advocate for sustainable healthy diets solutions.

The Initiative was structured around five Work Packages (WPs), each addressing a distinct aspect of food systems transformation. WP1 and WP2 focused on consumers, their food environments, and micro, small, and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs). These teams generated detailed data on adolescent diets, retail food environments, and barriers that MSMEs face in providing sustainable nutritious foods. Although the Initiative did not have sufficient time or resources to test and scale solutions during this phase, it developed several promising interventions, such as media-based nutrition messaging, tools to assess food safety perceptions, and bundled strategies addressing affordability and desirability of sustainable nutritious foods.

WP3 addressed governance and political dynamics. It produced conceptual frameworks for understanding the politics of food systems transformation and analyzed stakeholder narratives in Ethiopia, Viet Nam, and Honduras. While full publication of this work is pending, initial findings revealed that dominant narratives often favor production-focused solutions at the expense of dietary diversity and inclusivity. WP3 also developed Food System Country Profiles and guidance for multistakeholder engagement, helping decision-makers align actions across sectors.

WP4 used scenario modeling to examine trade-offs between health, environmental, and socioeconomic outcomes under different dietary futures. National-level analyses were conducted in Bangladesh and Viet Nam, with global implications. Findings underscored the risks of unchecked dietary transitions, particularly increased red meat consumption, and highlighted policy pathways that promote balanced, sustainable diets. Interactive dashboards were piloted for use by policymakers in both countries to explore the implications of different food system scenarios.

WP5 served as the Initiative's engine for scaling and institutional engagement. It developed stakeholder maps, e-learning courses, and self-assessment tools that informed national planning processes. The Training of Trainers (ToT) program, a major output of Sustainable Healthy Diets, was co-designed with country partners to build policy-relevant capacity. By the end of 2024, the program was embedded within subnational implementation strategies in Viet Nam and set to expand in Ethiopia, pending the finalization of a national training manual.

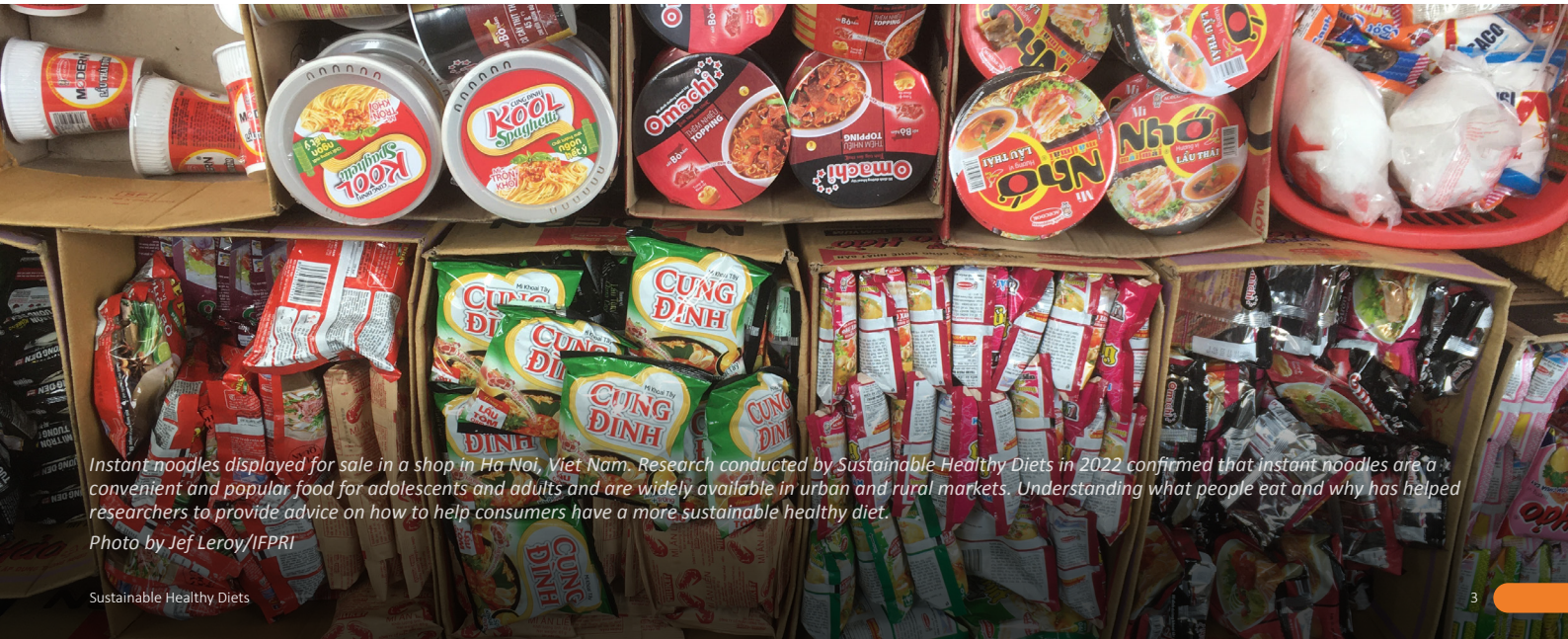
The Initiative did not fully reach the End of Initiative outcomes (EOIOs) related to the implementation of tested solutions. This was due to a combination of program design, resource limitations, and the inherently long timeline required for meaningful systems change. In Bangladesh, progress was further constrained by political instability and lack of a unified food systems transformation plan.

Through its emphasis on urban and peri-urban consumers, MSMEs, and the broader food environment, the Initiative marked a shift from CGIAR's traditional rural production focus. Its collaborative efforts with other CGIAR Research Initiatives—such as Resilient Cities, Foresight, and Fruit and Vegetables for Sustainable Healthy Diets—resulted in joint innovations and broader knowledge sharing. A cross-Initiative seminar series on food environments and dietary assessment further extended CGIAR's role in this emerging research area.

Looking ahead, the Sustainable Healthy Diets Initiative provides a solid foundation for future engagement under the CGIAR 2025–2030 Portfolio. Its contributions to policy, practice, and capacity sharing—though still evolving—represent critical steps toward transforming food systems to deliver sustainable healthy diets for all.

	2022	2023	**2024**
PROPOSAL BUDGET	$10.22M	$11.88M	**$12.90M**
APPROVED BUDGET [1]	$6.37M	$11.21M [2]	**$11.83M** [2]

[1] The approved budget amounts correspond to the figures available for public access through the Financing Plan dashboard.
[2] These amounts include carry-over and commitments.



Instant noodles displayed for sale in a shop in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. Research conducted by Sustainable Healthy Diets in 2022 confirmed that instant noodles are a convenient and popular food for adolescents and adults and are widely available in urban and rural markets. Understanding what people eat and why has helped researchers to provide advice on how to help consumers have a more sustainable healthy diet.

Photo by Jef Leroy/IFPRI

Section 2: **Progress 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.

CHALLENGE STATEMENT

- Food systems are not providing sustainable healthy diets for everyone, everywhere. Healthy diets are unaffordable for 3 billion people. Poor quality diets are associated with all forms of malnutrition and 11 million premature adult deaths each year. Food systems contribute significantly to environmental degradation and biodiversity loss and are responsible for more than 25 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Employment in food systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, is often informal, with precarious working conditions disproportionately affecting women and youth. Shifts in diets—driven by income changes, urbanization, women's employment, technological advancements, food marketing, and public policy—are reshaping food environments. Increasingly, food environments promote cheap, ultra-processed, and unhealthy foods, worsening public health.
- The 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit highlighted the urgent need for research and action and an increased focus on sustainable healthy diets in food systems transformation processes. Governments are aware of the need, and donors recognize that focusing solely on food production is insufficient for achieving sustainable healthy diets.
- Despite growing recognition of this need, progress is hindered by significant knowledge gaps and a lack of accessible, evidence-based tools for decision-making. Critical gaps include understanding of consumer demand for healthy diets; solutions to address constraints in delivering affordable, sustainable nutritious foods; and evidence on power and governance dynamics and the goals and incentives of different food system actors.
- Sustainable Healthy Diets is the only CGIAR Initiative with the primary goal of ensuring sustainable healthy diets for everyone, everywhere through food systems transformation. Starting from an innovative, consumer-focused perspective, we aim to identify effective policy options through research; strengthen capacity; and develop robust metrics and tools that support stakeholders to transform food systems toward sustainable healthy diets, improved livelihoods, gender equity, and social inclusion.

SPHERE OF **CONTROL**

Work Packages

Work Package 1

Consumers and their food environments

Work Package 2

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

Work Package 3

Governance and inclusive food systems

Work Package 4

Trade-off scenario analysis

Work Package 5

Catalyzing food systems transformation

SPHERE OF **INFLUENCE**

End-of-Initiative Outcomes

End-of-Initiative Outcome 1

1 2 3 4 5 Stakeholders initiate implementation of at least two solutions to increase the demand for sustainable healthy diets and/or to deliver sustainable nutritious foods.

End-of-Initiative Outcome 2

1 2 3 4 5 Stakeholders initiate implementation of at least two solutions to tackle gender and youth equality and social inclusion in food systems.

End-of-Initiative Outcome 3

1 2 3 4 5 Stakeholders show increased ability to engage in governance and political economy issues and/or to navigate trade-offs in food systems transformation.

End-of-Initiative Outcome 4

1 2 3 4 5 Stakeholders improve the design and implementation of the national roadmap towards food systems transformation for sustainable healthy diets.

Action Area Outcomes

Systems Transformation

1 2 **1** · Implementation partners (e.g. NARES, NGOs, private companies) actively support dissemination, uptake, and implementation of CGIAR innovations.

2 **2** · CGIAR partners develop and scale innovations that contribute to the empowerment of women and other social groups in food, land, and water systems.

1 2 3 4 **3** · Research institutions, government analytical units, and scaling partners in the Global South have improved knowledge, skills, access to data, capacity to develop tools, innovations, and undertake research to support transformation of food, land and water systems contributing to livelihood, inclusion, nutrition, environmental and climate objectives.

1 2 3 4 **4** · National and sub-national government agencies use CGIAR research results to design or implement strategies, policies and programs which have the potential to transform food, land and water systems contributing to livelihood, inclusion, nutrition, environmental and climate resilience objectives.

3 4 **5** · National and local multi-stakeholder platforms are strengthened to become more effective and sustainable, addressing development trade-offs and generating strategies for effective food, land, and water systems transformation.

SPHERE OF **INTEREST**

Impact Areas

Nutrition, Health & Food Security

1 2 3 4 5 · End hunger for all and enable affordable health diets for the 3 billion people who do not currently have access to safe and nutritious food.

Poverty Reduction, Livelihoods & Jobs

1 2 3 4 5 · Lift at least 500 million people living in rural areas above the extreme poverty line of US $1.90 per day (2011 PPP).

· Reduce by at least half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

Gender equality, Youth & Social Inclusion

1 2 3 4 5 · Offer rewardable opportunities to 267 million young people who are not in employment, education, or training.

· Close the gender gap in rights to economic resources on, access to ownership of, and control over land and natural resources, for more than 500 million women who work in food, land, and water systems.

A Bangladeshi woman, Sheuli Begum, does her daily grocery shopping at her local market in Bangladesh. Research published by Resilient Cities and Sustainable Healthy Diets in 2024 reported that the percentage of the population unable to afford a healthy diet fell from 65 to 48 percent from 2017 to 2022 in Bangladesh. Currently, 82 million people are unable to afford a healthy diet in the country.

Credit: G.M.B. Akash/Panos Pictures

Summary of progress against the theory of change

Sustainable Healthy Diets aspired to combine high-quality nutritional and social science research capacity with development and policy partnerships to generate innovative food system solutions that would help consumers make healthier, more sustainable choices about what to eat. We worked closely with national partners responsible for the design, implementation, and monitoring of their country's national action plans for food systems transformation ("national plans") and formally engaged in collaborative activities to strengthen stakeholder capacity to engage in national food systems transformation processes.

This Initiative was co-led by IFPRI and the Alliance, in close collaboration with WUR and with contributions from CIP. The Program Committee consisted of the Initiative Lead, Deputy Lead, the Leads and Co-Leads of all five WPs, supported by the Program Manager.

In the three target countries—Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam—we 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 called Strategic Partners. In Viet Nam, our Strategic Partners were the Viet Nam Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the National Institute of Nutrition, and the Institute for Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development. In Ethiopia, they included the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, and the Ethiopian Public Health Institute. In Bangladesh, they were the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit in the Ministry of Food, and the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council.

The immediate results of our mixed methods research, capacity sharing, and engagement activities are illustrated in Section 4. Over three years, our Initiative published 164 knowledge products (50 percent were peer-reviewed journal articles), delivered short-term training for more than 1,300 people, and supervised eight doctoral dissertations. We organized or participated in nearly 40 science-policy dialogues, scientific conferences, South-South exchanges, consortiums, and seminars for national, subnational, regional, and global audiences. All of the reported engagements enhanced national engagement in our target countries and/or kept the sustainable healthy diets agenda visible in the food systems transformation research and policy landscape. Thirty-one

innovations were in various stages of co-development and six of those innovations were reported as in use, meaning others outside of CGIAR were using the innovation and/or benefiting from it. In this report, we refer to innovations as solutions.[1]

The short- and medium-term changes we expected to result from our outputs are illustrated in the WP theories of change (Section 3). We expected our outputs would (1) make stakeholders aware of different food system challenges and the potential solutions that would result in sustainable healthy diets before (2) these stakeholders—mainly national governments—would demonstrate a willingness to use the evidence in their decision-making. As stakeholder awareness changed and they demonstrated a growing willingness to use evidence, these changes were expected to lead to the four EOIOs illustrated in the figure by 2024, which described stakeholder actions to implement solutions and changes in their abilities and awareness.

For **EOIO 1 and EOIO 2**, stakeholders did not begin to implement any solutions tested by our Initiative in the three-year timeframe. We did not reach this ambitious target in three years for several reasons, partially because of program design. Primary data collection and analysis are time intensive, particularly for dietary data and the food environment data collected by the WP1 and WP2 teams. Conducting more than one survey per year was not feasible for the team and our in-country partners. A related reason was that there were not sufficient financial or human resources for the implementation of solutions, which is also not the comparative advantage of CGIAR. Rather, we looked for promising food environment solutions that met our criteria, and were either in design or already being implemented by likeminded partners in the three countries that were willing to partner with us on an evaluation.

Surprisingly, it was challenging to identify promising solutions that met our criteria. Potential solutions needed to: (1) be feasible, (2) have a plausible theory of change (TOC), and hold promise to be (3) scalable, and (4) transformative, meaning they would do more than fix a single problem and instead radically reshape the current situation for people's diets.

For example, solutions that solely focus on consumer behavior are necessary, but not sufficient, to change diets enough to transform food systems. One of our studies of a televised video drama with nutrition messages in Ethiopia found that the changes in average household consumption of fruit and vegetables were positive—consumption of fruits and vegetables increased by 9 percent—but the nature of the behavior change was not enough to dramatically influence the food system. In other cases, national food-based dietary guidelines, a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages, and food labels with nutrition facts were promising transformative solutions, but they were not yet being implemented in our target countries in ways that we could evaluate.

For these reasons, we did not achieve either of these EOIOs, but we did make significant progress in generating new evidence for governments to use. Some of this evidence is described in Section 3 and includes new information about the food environments, diets, and their interlinkages among adolescents; characteristics of MSMEs and their barriers to increase supply of nutritious foods; national food environment policies and strategies in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and the lack of such policies and strategies; framing of political issues in systems transformation; and the socioeconomic, environmental, and health impacts that different diets would have on national populations.

Our active engagement with Strategic Partners in the three target countries gave us confidence that we will be able to move forward with a set of promising solutions to test in the future and that, eventually, these solutions will be implemented by stakeholders.

For **EOIO 3**, we designed an assessment in 2024 to collect data on this outcome to assess whether this change occurred. However, by midyear, most of the Program Committee became involved in the proposal writing process for the new CGIAR Portfolio (2025–2030), human resources were limited, and the Program Committee decided not to move forward with the evaluation. Upon further reflection, the Program Committee also felt that the timing was too early to measure the outcomes of interest.

In the three years of our Initiative, we generated the most results for the outcomes in the WP5 TOC and for **EOIO 4**. In Viet Nam and Ethiopia, the national governments approved their national plans, set up governance structures to implement and monitor these ambitious multisectoral plans, and began implementing them. Importantly, these national plans clearly identify healthy diets as an important objective of both countries' food systems transformation plans, alongside other economic and environmental objectives. Our Initiative's in-country presence enabled us to respond in a timely manner to requests by Strategic Partners for technical support. By the end of 2024, we reported eight policy outcomes, seven of which were related to milestones in the national policy processes in Viet Nam and Ethiopia. Our key results story in Section 7 provides more detail about outcomes achieved in 2024 in Viet Nam.

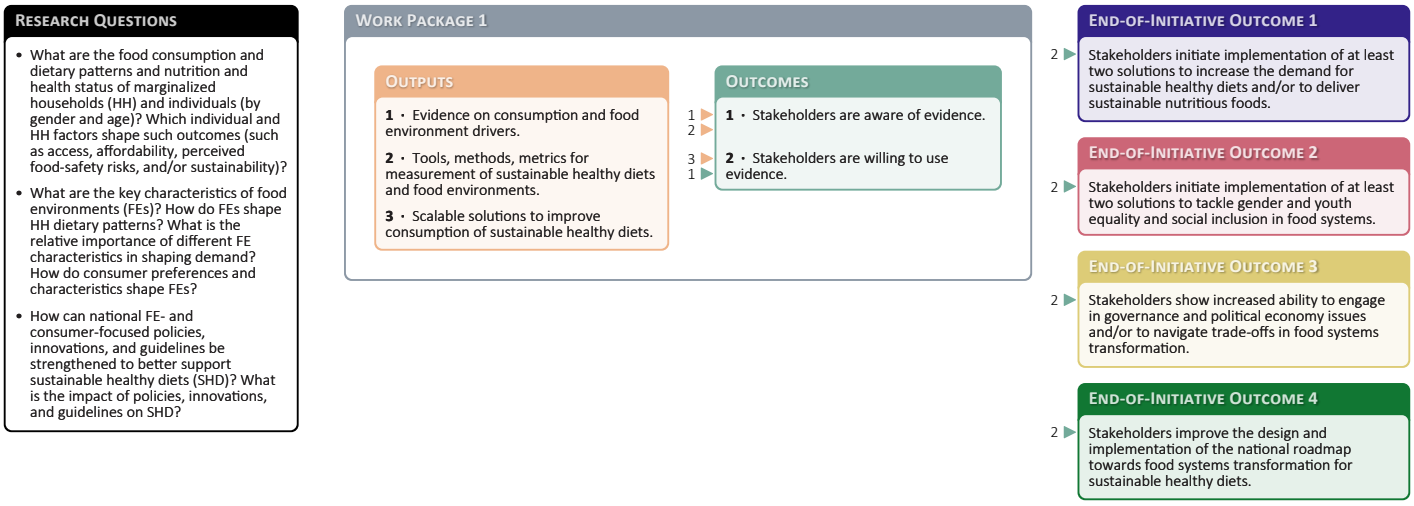
For the Initiative overall, progress was slower in Bangladesh due to several factors. Unlike in the other countries, the government of Bangladesh did not intend to develop a singular national plan for food systems transformation. Therefore, the policy entry point for our Initiative was less clear than in the other two countries. Existing organizations in Bangladesh also provided support very similar to that offered by our Initiative. In 2023, our activities fell behind due to lack of in-country presence of a Country Coordinator, limiting our ability to respond in a timely manner to partner requests. In 2024, Bangladesh's political landscape changed significantly. Some activities were stalled during the weeks of political unrest. Once the interim government was in place and positions filled, our engagement resumed.

We also learned that the TOC developed for the Initiative was less relevant and useful for adaptive management. Not all the necessary elements were phrased clearly or appropriately, nor were all the right elements included in the right place. In most cases, the expected changes ("awareness" or "willingness") were not evaluable with the capacity and resources of our Initiative or reasonable to expect in the shortened timeframe. To credibly report results for such outcomes—evidence that stakeholders were aware of or willing to use evidence—we could have surveyed national government actors working on food systems transformation policies or used discourse analysis tools to track changes, for example. At the time, our Initiative was already relying on inputs from national government actors for research activities, and we did not want to burden them further with requests resulting from an evaluation. We will apply these lessons learned in the next CGIAR Portfolio.

[1] Our Initiative defines food system solutions as technologies, products, practices, processes, programs, policies, or a combination of these. Solutions are concentrated in the food environment and are expected to have positive impacts on sustainable healthy diets, with special attention to the diets of women and youth in LMICs.

Section 3: **Work Package progress**

WP1: Consumers and their food environments



Work Package 1 progress against the theory of change

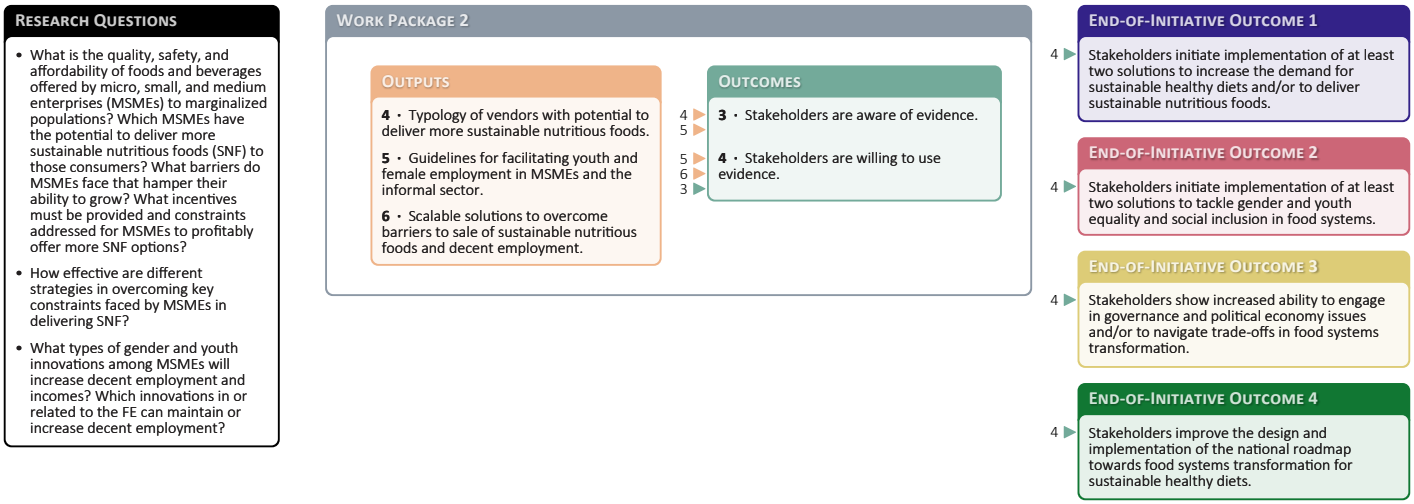
The underlying assumption for the research in WP1 was that governments need evidence to better understand the individual and food environment factors driving consumer food choices so they can design and implement effective solutions that support sustainable healthy diets for everyone, everywhere.

In consultation with national partners, WP1 selected adolescents as a target group for its research because their diets and interactions with the food environment are an understudied area and, as a population, changing their diets could be transformative for the food system. WP1 conducted qualitative studies and quantitative surveys in Viet Nam and Ethiopia, generating rich data on the dietary intake of adolescents and their mothers, household food consumption, and household and individual factors driving dietary and food consumption behaviors. The surveys included detailed mapping of the food environment that adolescents are exposed to by studying all outlets in the neighborhoods where adolescents live and attend school. The key messages were that adolescents had low consumption of healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables. In these settings, unhealthy foods were within easier reach than healthy options and adolescents who engaged with the food environment for a larger proportion of their dietary intake also consumed less healthy diets.

After three years, WP1 generated data that provide answers to the first two sets of research questions and reported numerous results related to all three outputs. For example, 46 percent of all the knowledge products reported by our Initiative in 2024 contributed to the WP1 outputs. In 2024, the theme of IFPRI's Global Food Policy Report was food systems for healthy diets and nutrition. Several chapters featured evidence from Sustainable Healthy Diets, and the global and regional launch events drew further attention to our work. Several of the reported engagement and capacity-sharing activities helped to ensure that what we were learning about diets and the food environment was reaching the right audience. In three years, eight results were reported for the output on solutions to improve consumption of sustainable healthy diets, some jointly with WP2. These were, in CGIAR terminology, innovations in various stages of development, including animations and video dramas with health promotion messages, a tool to characterize the diversity of foods that retailers offer to consumers, a prototype of a scale to assess food safety experiences and concerns of consumers, and bundled market- and consumer-oriented interventions to address key barriers in the food environment—affordability and desirability—to sustainable healthy diets.

Although important preparatory discussions with partners took place to identify solutions, WP1 did not realize the last set of research questions related to testing and evaluating solutions that nudge consumers to healthier diets in the Initiative's short timeframe, the reasons for which are explained in Section 2.

WP2: Micro, small, and medium enterprises and the informal sector



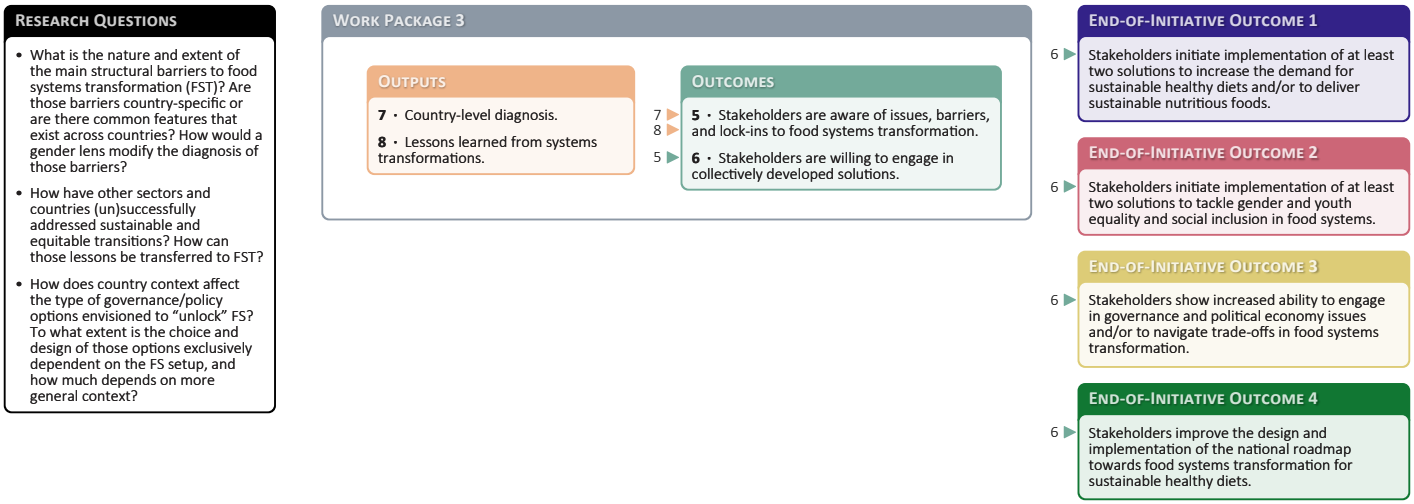
Work Package 2 progress against the theory of change

Similar to WP1, WP2 was designed to deliver evidence that governments need to better understand the nature and extent of healthy and unhealthy foods being sold by MSMEs and other informal actors, and what barriers they perceive limit their ability to offer healthy foods to consumers. The next step was to use this evidence to design and implement effective solutions to support MSMEs to offer sustainable nutritious foods to everyone, everywhere.

The quantitative surveys in Viet Nam and Ethiopia, completed with WP1, generated rich datasets on the foods that MSMEs in rural, peri-urban, and urban areas sell to consumers, as well as information about the MSMEs themselves, how they operate, and who they employ. Our research found that in both Viet Nam and Ethiopia, many women work in the food sector, but very few young people do. This finding challenged an assumption in our TOC. MSMEs selling food in Viet Nam and Ethiopia may not be the right sector to promote youth employment or decent employment for women. In Ethiopia, more than 53 percent of surveyed MSMEs were owned and operated by women, but a significant majority were one-person enterprises. In these sites, MSMEs may have the potential to deliver food at lower cost and contribute to gender and social inclusion through self-employment, but the scope of MSMEs selling food, especially those run by women, to generate additional employment appears to be limited.

By the end of 2024, the data provided answers to the first set of research questions and all three sets of outputs. WP2, like WP1, did not realize the other two sets of research questions related to testing and comparing different solutions in this three-year timeframe, the reasons for which are explained in Section 2. The team published a collection of working papers, briefs, and project notes describing the foods sold, business practices, and employment characteristics of MSMEs in urban and peri-urban Viet Nam and Ethiopia. Two results were reported for the output on solutions to overcome barriers to the sale of sustainable nutritious foods. These were, in CGIAR terminology, innovations in various stages of development and included bundled market- and consumer-oriented interventions to address key barriers in the food environment—affordability, acceptability, and desirability—to sustainable healthy diets using a combination of coupons, promotional campaigns, loyalty cards, and nutrition education.

WP3: Governance and inclusive food systems



Work Package 3 progress against the theory of change

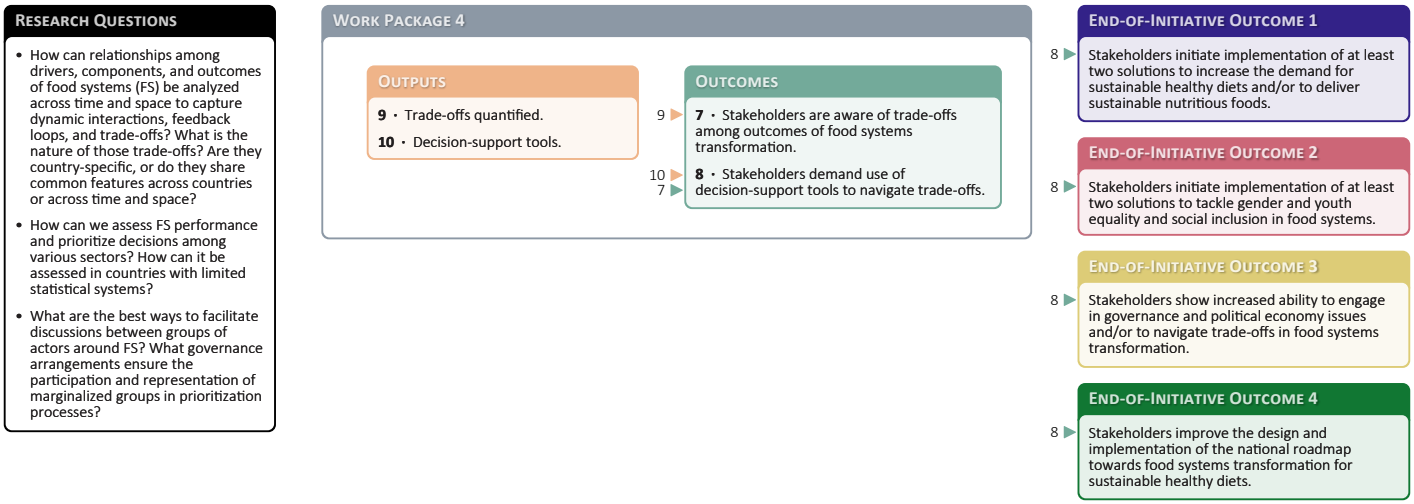
The objective of WP3's research was to identify the structural barriers that impede the food system's ability to contribute to healthy diets, fair livelihoods, and sustainable environments. In three years, the team generated several conceptual pieces of work that improve our understanding of the different political dimensions of food systems transformation and the barriers that hinder progress toward sustainability. In 2024, the team published two frameworks, one on the politics and processes of food systems transformation and another that can be used to define and analyze barriers to food system sustainability. This work provided answers to the first two sets of research questions. We explain in Section 2 the reasons for which the WP3 outcomes were not achieved in the three-year timeframe.

Narratives underpin any kind of public and private sector policies and practices. It is important to understand them before they can be revised in ways that promote a new vision. The dominant narratives that have shaped our current food system tend to focus on single priorities, such as increasing production, often to the detriment of other needs, or focus on tackling issues in isolation rather than looking at how multiple challenges could be solved together. A second part of WP3's work involved interviewing stakeholders in the Initiative's focus countries and documenting their perceptions. By the end of the three years, this work had been completed in Viet Nam, Ethiopia, and Honduras, but not yet published. For example, in Ethiopia, analysis of the interviews with 29 stakeholders indicated that dietary diversity and food insecurity were perceived as the most important issues in Ethiopia's food system. When publicly available, this work will provide answers to the last set of research questions about the role of country context.

Results that contributed to both sets of outputs included the Food System Country Profile, a concise snapshot that decision-makers in Ethiopia and Honduras have used to steer food systems transformation processes. In Honduras, a secondary target country for our Initiative, the team adapted the methodology to use with stakeholders in Balfate and Gualaco to develop municipal food system profiles. This work built on CGIAR's active, multiyear engagement to foster and facilitate multistakeholder processes for food systems transformation in Honduras.

In general, current resources for food system actors focus more on what needs to be done rather than how it can be done effectively. A qualitative methodology published by WP3 filled that gap and provided practical recommendations for supporting effective multistakeholder processes. It was built upon published frameworks and the building blocks assessment guide developed by the UN, starting with five best practice principles for multistakeholder processes.

WP4: Trade-off scenario analysis



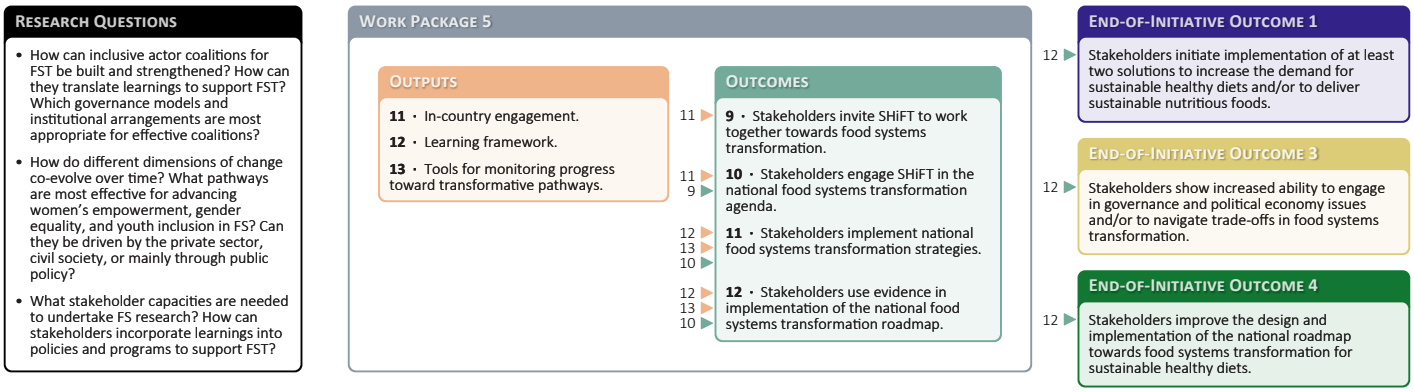
Work Package 4 progress against the theory of change

WP4 was built on the premise that an important step in the transition toward sustainable food systems is a recognition that desired outcomes, such as healthy diets, fair livelihoods, and a sustainable environment, are likely to be achieved only through managing trade-offs among these different goals. WP4 investigated trade-offs using a combination of quantitative approaches and scenario analysis at the national level, in Bangladesh and Viet Nam, and globally. The models rely heavily on large amounts of data. Due to limitations of secondary data availability, the team was not able to start analysis at the national level in Ethiopia during this three-year period.

After three years, the team generated data that provide answers to the first two sets of research questions and reported numerous results related to both outputs. For example, in Bangladesh, the team compared three different dietary scenarios. The analysis revealed that one scenario is likely to lead to unhealthy diets and negative environmental impacts due to increased red meat consumption. The other two scenarios will produce more socioeconomic, health, and environmental benefits, but the expected population growth in Bangladesh by 2040 will require an increase in overall food production. Their findings emphasize the need for balanced policies to sustainably meet future food production needs for healthier consumption. Specifically, the research suggests a combination of strategies such as public awareness campaigns, improved food labeling, and financial incentives to encourage healthier eating. Additionally, interventions to reduce food waste and promote sustainable agricultural production will help mitigate environmental costs.

Two different online interactive tools ("dashboards") were piloted for policymakers in Bangladesh and Viet Nam. The dashboards allow users to dive deeper into the results from the WP4-led foresight studies analyzing the trade-offs between environmental, health and socioeconomic indicators of different food scenarios, for example, in Bangladesh up to 2040 and 2050. The dashboards were part of WP4's aims to promote the use of decision-support tools that stakeholders can use to navigate food system trade-offs in a fairer, more inclusive, and more equitable way.

WP5: Catalyzing food systems



Work Package 5 progress against the theory of change

By design, WP5 was the core capacity sharing, outcome delivery, and scaling vehicle for this Initiative. In our three-year phase (2022–2024), WP5 focused primarily on in-country engagement and generating evidence and documenting lessons learned that answered the third set of research questions around the stakeholder capacities necessary for supporting food systems transformation. Section 5 features more results achieved from our intentional approach to partnerships with national governments.

We established an initial set of in-country engagement activities for all three target countries, which expanded over time as priorities evolved. This included an e-course on food systems governance, stakeholder maps of food system actors, and a capabilities self-assessment completed by the Strategic Partners. These core activities contributed results to all three sets of outputs. These outputs supported numerous actions taken by the Strategic Partners from the design to approval of national plans, the inauguration of governance structures needed to implement the plans, and the launch of novel multisectoral partnerships. The realization of most of WP5's expected outcomes was largely facilitated by the in-country presence of our Sustainable Healthy Diets Country Coordinators and the strong links they built to actors involved in their national policy processes. This model for country engagement is also one of our Initiative's reported solutions, or innovations in use.

Another significant outcome was the development of a ToT program on food systems transformation for sustainable healthy diets. The ToT program, co-designed with Strategic Partners, fills identified gaps in awareness of how sustainable healthy diets can be achieved through food systems transformation and builds skills in how to apply food system approaches in policy processes. Experts from our Initiative continue to provide support when requested, but in two countries, the ToT program transitioned into a largely partner-led activity that will grow in 2025. By the end of 2024, the program in Viet Nam had been incorporated into the subnational implementation strategy and more than 300 more people had been trained. In Ethiopia, the next levels of the program will be rolled out after the Ethiopia Food Systems Training Manual and facilitators' guide are finalized by the Ministry of Agriculture. In Bangladesh, the program was designed, but training for the first cohort has not yet happened. The WP5 team from WUR examined our Initiative's capacity-sharing experiences and explored what capacities are needed to drive food systems transformation in a working paper.

Vegetables for sale in a market in Khulna, Bangladesh.
Credit: Samuel Stacey/WorldFish

Work Package progress rating summary

WORK PACKAGE	PROGRESS RATING & RATIONALE
1	Delayed Progress fell slightly behind the Plan of Work and Budget (POWB) and TOC in terms of testing solutions. Activities started more slowly in Bangladesh than in Viet Nam or Ethiopia.
2	Delayed Progress fell slightly behind the POWB and TOC in terms of testing solutions. Activities started more slowly in Bangladesh than in Viet Nam or Ethiopia.
3	On track Progress largely aligned with the POWB and TOC. Country-level diagnosis work was completed, but not yet published.
4	On track Progress largely aligned with the POWB and TOC, although activities never started in Ethiopia.
5	On track Progress largely aligned with the POWB and TOC. Tools for monitoring national processes had not yet been fully developed because the time was not yet right in the three countries.

Definitions

On track

- Progress largely aligns with Plan of Results and Budget and Work Package theory of change.
- Can include small deviations/issues/delays/risks that do not jeopardize success of Work Package.

Delayed

- Progress slightly falls behind Plan of Results and Budget and Work Package theory of change in key areas.
- Deviations/issues/delays/risks could jeopardize success of Work Package if not managed appropriately.

Off track

- Progress clearly falls behind Plan of Results and Budget and Work Package theory of change in most/all areas.
- Deviations/issues/delays/risks do jeopardize success of Work Package.

Section 4: **Quantitative overview of key results**

This section provides an overview of results reported and contributed to, by the CGIAR Initiative on Sustainable Healthy Diets from 2022 to 2024. These results align with the CGIAR Results Framework and Sustainable Healthy Diets's theory of change. Further information on these results is available through the CGIAR Results Dashboard.

The data used to create the graphics in this section were sourced from the CGIAR Results Dashboard on 04 April 2025. These results are accurate as of this date and may differ from information in previous Technical Reports. Such differences may be due to data updates throughout the reporting year, revisions to previously reported results, or updates to the theory of change.

Overview of results by category

Outputs

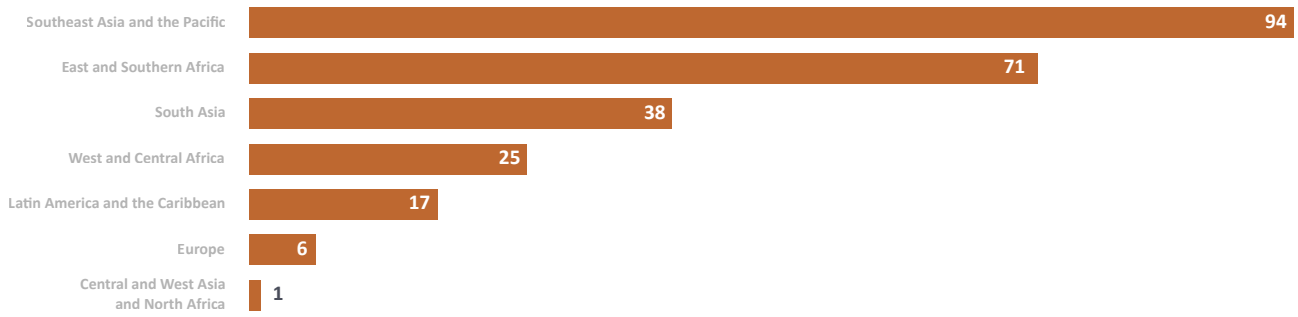
- Knowledge products 170
- Other outputs 41
- Capacity sharing for development 36
- Innovation development 28

Outcomes

- Policy change 9
- Innovation use 6
- Other outcomes 3

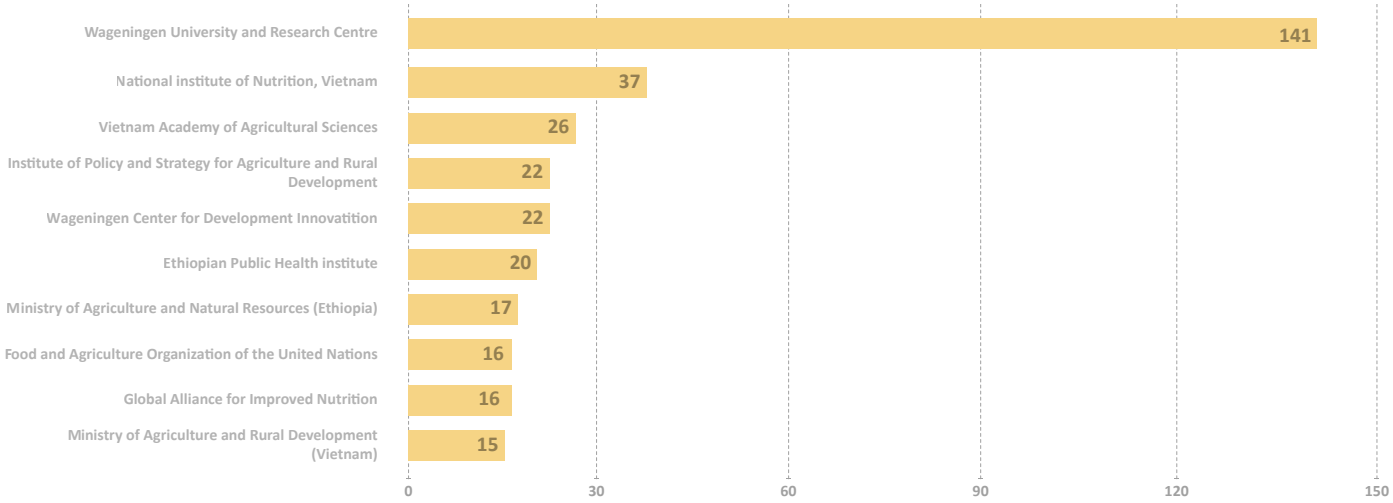
From 2022–2024, Sustainable Healthy Diets reported nearly 300 different results across all the CGIAR results categories contributing to outputs and outcomes in the theory of change.

Geographic distribution of reported results



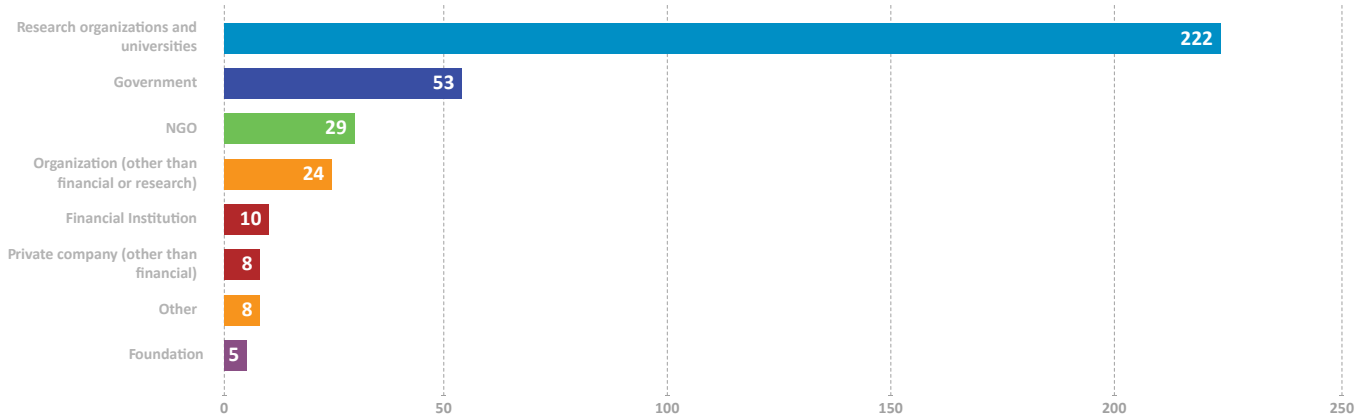
The Initiative's reported results were relevant to many regions, but particularly to the regions where the target countries were located: Southeast Asia and the Pacific (Viet Nam), East and Southern Africa (Ethiopia), and South Asia (Bangladesh). One result can be relevant to more than one region and may therefore be represented multiple times.

Number of results by top 10 contributing partners



The Initiative achieved the reported results in close collaboration with partners across the globe.

Number of results by partner typology



Achieving sustainable healthy diets for everyone, everywhere requires multisectoral collaboration. To achieve results, the Initiative aligned our work with a diverse range of partner types, particularly national partners in the target countries.

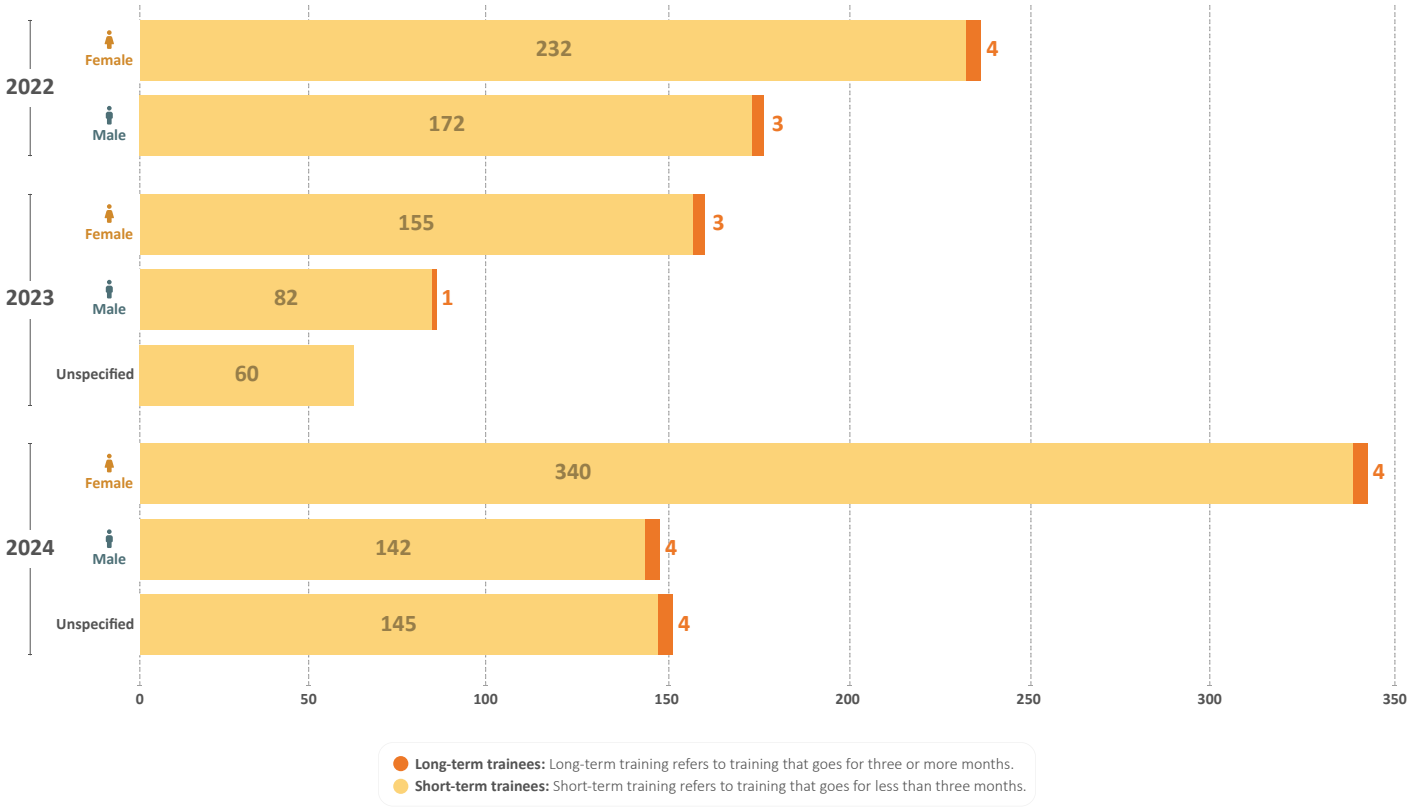
Top 12 knowledge products by Altmetric score

Title	Publication type	Score	Year
The state of food systems worldwide in the countdown to 2030	Journal Article	**564**	**2023**
Four ways blue foods can help achieve food system ambitions across nations	Journal Article	**272**	**2023**
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**	**2023**
Food system interventions for nutrition: Lessons from six program evaluations in Africa and South Asia	Journal Article	**77**	**2024**
Resilience and food security in a food systems context	Book	**76**	**2023**
Food prices and wages of the poor: A cost-effective addition to high-frequency food security monitoring	Journal Article	**44**	**2024**
Aquaculture governance: five engagement arenas for sustainability transformation	Journal Article	**41**	**2023**
Food consumption-production response to agricultural policy and macroeconomic change	Journal Article	**39**	**2022**
How do food safety concerns affect consumer behaviors and diets in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review	Journal Article	**38**	**2022**
Defining barriers to food systems sustainability: A novel conceptual framework	Journal Article	**36**	**2024**
Resilience – and collapse – of local food systems in conflict-affected areas; reflections from Burkina Faso	Journal Article	**35**	**2024**
Food inflation and child undernutrition in low and middle-income countries	Working paper	**33**	**2022**

All the reported knowledge products were authored by researchers from Sustainable Healthy Diets. In the absence of clear criteria, the Sustainable Healthy Diets Program Committee consistently followed a set of internal criteria to determine which knowledge products to report annually to CGIAR. If the knowledge product was country-specific, it had to cover one of the current phase 1 target countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, or Viet Nam). If it covered another country, it had to include methods, tools, or metrics relevant or of interest to Sustainable Healthy Diets or include solutions that could be relevant or of interest to the target countries. As a

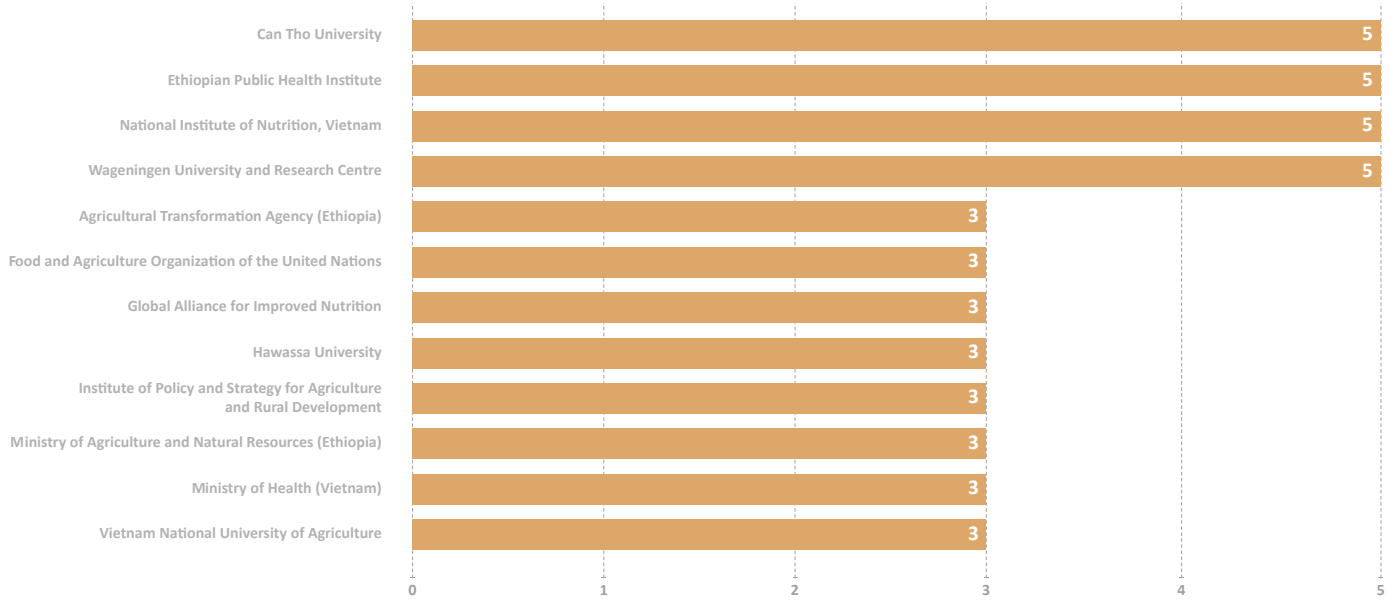
result, the reader may see knowledge products on this list that are outside the geographical scope of Sustainable Healthy Diets.

Number of individuals trained by the initiative



In the Initiative's three years, more than 20 students, many from low- and middle-income countries, completed postgraduate degrees on topics that contributed to the research questions for Sustainable Healthy Diets and were supervised by Initiative researchers. Some students were supported by CGIAR resources. Training actors to be equipped and influential in their national food systems transformation processes was an important objective of Sustainable Healthy Diets. More than 1,000 people completed short-term training offered by the Initiative.

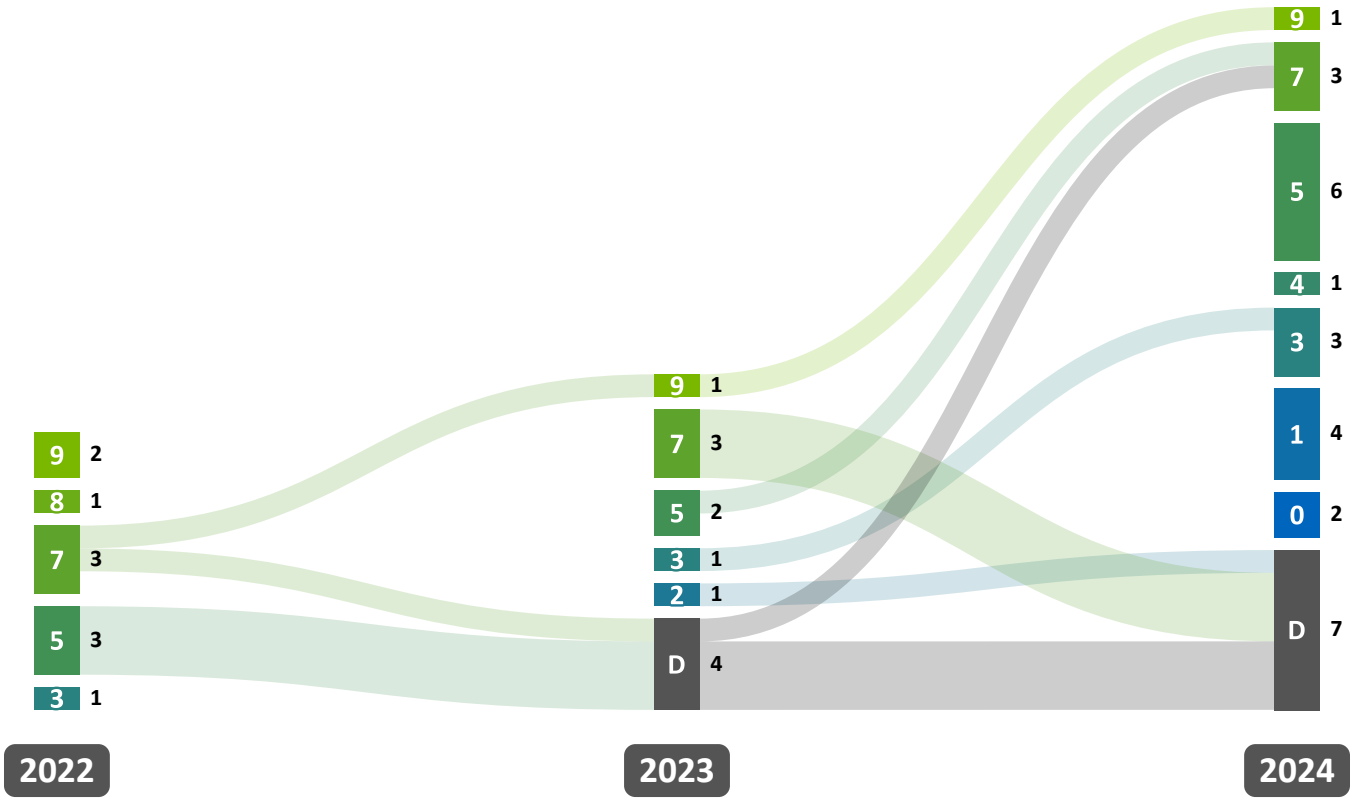
Partners involved in designing and/or delivering capacity sharing activities



The capacity-sharing activities conducted by Sustainable Healthy Diets were often designed and implemented with partners.

Number of innovations and their readiness levels

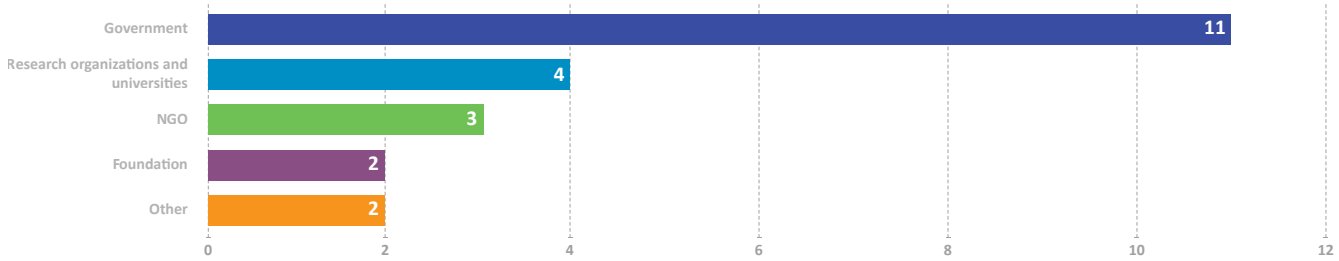
		Pipeline overview # of innovations
9	**Proven Innovation** The innovation is validated for its ability to achieve a specific impact under uncontrolled conditions	1
8	**Uncontrolled Testing** The innovation is being tested for its ability to achieve a specific impact under uncontrolled conditions	0
7	**Prototype** The innovation is validated for its ability to achieve a specific impact under semi-controlled conditions	6
6	**Semi-Controlled Testing** The innovation is being tested for its ability to achieve a specific impact under semi-controlled conditions	0
5	**Model/Early Prototype** The innovation is validated for its ability to achieve a specific impact under fully-controlled conditions	10
4	**Controlled Testing** The innovation is being tested for its ability to achieve a specific impact under fully-controlled conditions	1
3	**Proof of Concept** The innovation's key concepts have been validated for their ability to achieve a specific impact	3
2	**Formulation** The innovation's key concepts are being formulated or designed	1
1	**Basic Research** The innovation's basic principles are being researched for their ability to achieve a specific impact	4
0	**Idea** The innovation is at idea stage	2



9 Proven Innovation · 8 Uncontrolled Testing · 7 Prototype · 6 Semi-Controlled Testing · 5 Model/Early Prototype · 4 Controlled Testing · 3 Proof of Concept · 2 Formulation · 1 Basic Research · 0 Idea · D Discontinued

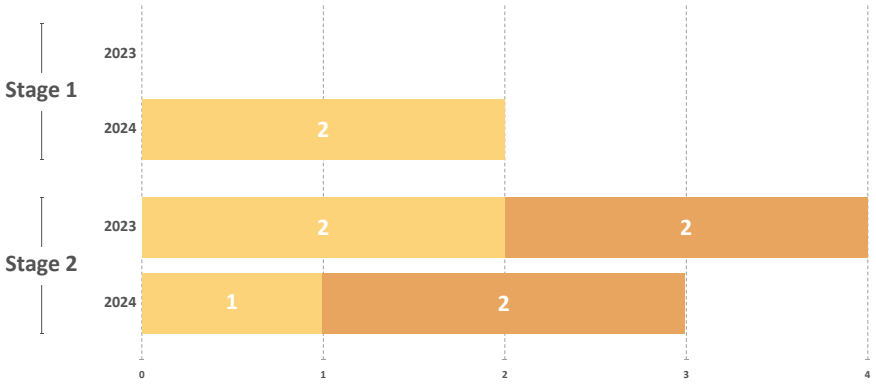
Sustainable Healthy Diets reported nearly 30 food system innovations in different stages of development over the three years of the Initiative. Nearly all of the innovations were designed to contribute to changing consumption patterns toward sustainable healthy diets and included a mix of policy, organizational, and institutional innovations; capacity development innovations; and a few technological innovations.

Anticipated type of users of food environment innovations



Most of the reported innovations were expected to be used by governments, particularly governments in the target countries of Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam.

Policies by stage and by type



STAGE 1
Research taken up by next user, policy change not yet enacted.

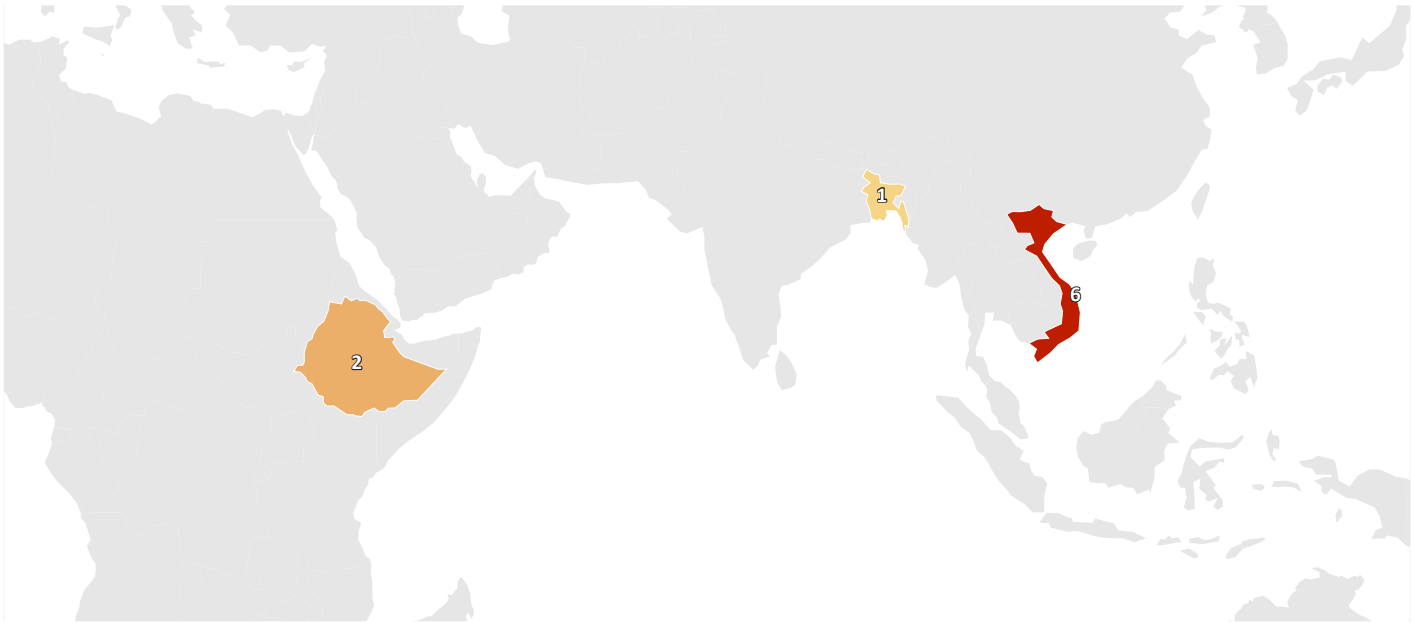
STAGE 2
Policy enacted.

POLICY OR STRATEGY
Policies or strategies include written decisions on, or commitments to, a particular course of action by an institution (policy); or a (government, NGO, private sector) high-level plan outlining how a particular course of action will be carried out (strategy). These documents show the intent of an organization or entity. Examples are country growth strategies, country agricultural policies, organization strategic plans or road maps. This could also be observed as information campaigns (e.g., for improved diets). These documents set the goalposts but then require other instruments for implementation.

PROGRAM, BUDGET OR INVESTMENT
These are implementing mechanisms that often follow from a strategy, policy or law. There is typically a well-defined set of actions outlined over a specific period of time and with a specific budgetary amount attached. National Agricultural Investment Plans is an example, the budget within a ministry is another, investments from the private sector fit here, as well as programs launched by public, private and NGO sectors.

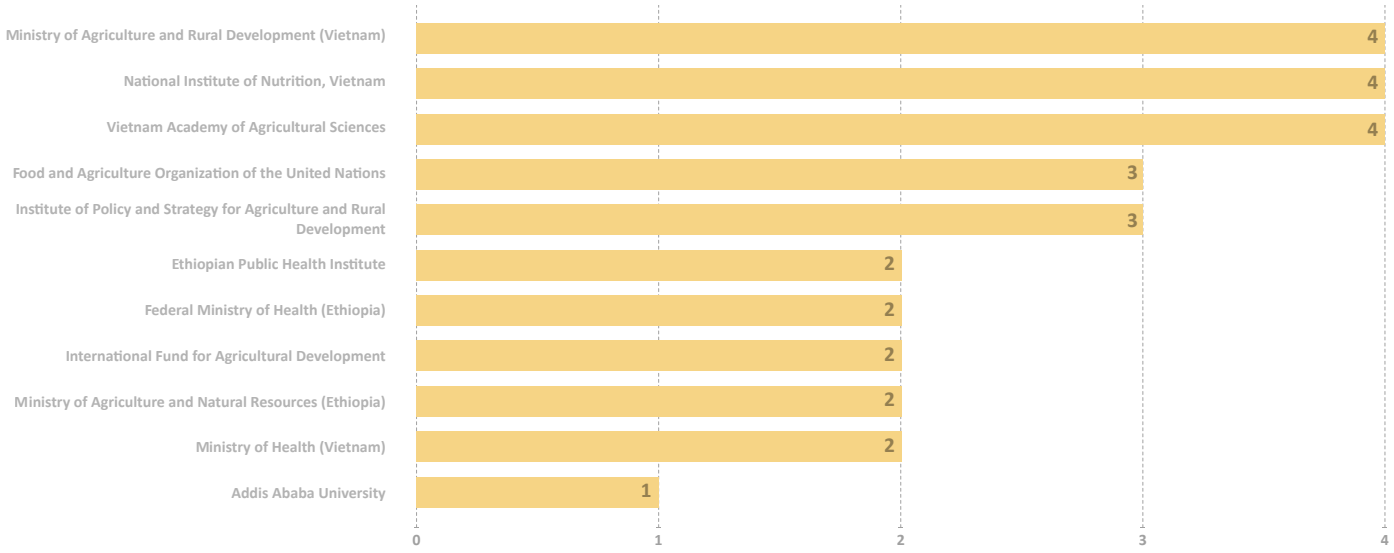
Sustainable Healthy Diets reported nine results that contributed to policy changes in the target countries where we worked—Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam. By the end of the three years, seven of these policy changes were at stage 2, which means that CGIAR evidence has been taken up and a policy change has been enacted. The reported policy changes fell into two CGIAR categories, policy or strategy and program, budget, or investment. Some examples of reported policy changes included the commencement of the development of a national plan of action for food systems transformation by the government of Bangladesh in 2024; the official launch of an innovative multilateral partnership in Viet Nam to accelerate transparent, responsible, and sustainable food systems transformation in 2024; and in 2023, recognition by the Healthy Diet Coalition, a government-led platform, that implementation of Ethiopia's first food-based dietary guidelines would be one of their important activities.

Geographic location of policy changes



All of the reported results that contributed to policy changes were in our target countries of Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam. Most of the reported policy changes (66 percent) related to the approval of and subsequent steps in the implementation of Viet Nam's National Action Plan for Transparent, Responsible, and Sustainable Food Systems Transformation (2022–2030).

Partners contributing to policy changes



Reported results that contributed to policy changes were, in nearly all cases, led by national partners in our target countries of Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam. Most of the reported policy changes (66 percent) related to the approval of and subsequent steps in the implementation of Viet Nam's National Action Plan for Transparent, Responsible, and Sustainable Food Systems Transformation (2022–2030). The Initiative's Strategic Partners in Viet Nam—the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD); the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, a think tank for MARD; and the National Institute of Nutrition—are lead institutions in those policy processes.

Women shopping in a convenience store in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. In recent years, there has been a rapid rise in the number of convenience food stores to meet the demand of middle-income consumers.

Credit: Vu Ngoc Dung/ILRI

Section 5: **Partnerships**

Partnerships and Sustainable Healthy Diets's impact pathways

The national food systems transformation pathway documents developed by UN Member States for the 2021 UNFSS served as the entry point for Sustainable Healthy Diets in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam. We viewed the National Food System Convenors—the government officials appointed and mandated by their governments to organize the food system dialogues and prepare the pathway documents—as the most influential partners to engage with. We formalized partnerships with these Convenors and stayed regularly engaged with them, providing specific support as they reached several significant political milestones in their food systems transformation processes. One of our underlying assumptions was that systems transformation requires substantial coordinated action across sectors and actors to organize, align strategically, and share capacity. Therefore, in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, the partnership also included government departments from nutrition and public health, even though they were not Convenors.

Most of the reported outcomes from 2022 to 2024 were results achieved with our Strategic Partners in relation to the design or implementation of their national plans. For example, the nearly finalized Ethiopia Food Systems Training Manual and facilitators' guide will serve as the basis of trainings on food systems offered by government and nongovernment partners, including the food systems ToT program co-designed with in-country partners. The Ministry of Agriculture was convening the preparation of the manual and invited our Initiative to be part of the writing team. We made significant contributions to the chapters on introducing food systems, consumer behavior, and food systems governance, adding evidence-based reasoning that positions sustainable healthy diets as a key outcome. In Viet Nam, the rollout of Levels 2 and 3 of the ToT program expanded our partnerships with academic institutions—Can Tho University and Hanoi University of Public Health, in particular—and with subnational government departments in Dong Thap and Son La provinces.

The approach was not perfect. In the three year period, we were not able to fully realize our ambition to develop meaningful partnerships with likeminded civil society organizations, such as consumer groups, activist groups, or with the private sector, nor were we able to catalyze multisectoral collaboration in Bangladesh between the National Convenor, the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit, and the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council. Nevertheless, based on the results achieved, we believe that our approach proved to be a strategic starting point for meaningful engagement.

WUR was an important knowledge partner in all five WPs. In addition to being the only non-CGIAR member of the Program Committee, WUR contributed to many activities and results described in all three annual technical reports. In Year 3, their expertise in food systems transformation capacity-sharing methods and programs enabled us to respond to partner-led demands for a ToT program, one of our signature achievements. Their willingness and ability to pivot priorities and resources made it possible to accelerate the design and rollout of a ToT program, which, in the case of Viet Nam and Ethiopia, was incorporated into the government-led implementation strategy of their national plans.

Participants engage with materials developed for the training of trainers (ToT) program on food systems at a Share Fair event in Can Tho, Viet Nam. The ToT program employs a cascading model. The first step, referred to as Level 1, involves training a cohort of expert trainers who then train the next cohort (Level 2). Level 2 trainers repeat this process with the following cohort (Level 3), expanding the program's reach. In Viet Nam, the program reached Level 3 in 2024. It was co-developed by Sustainable Healthy Diets and national partners from the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the National Institute of Nutrition, and the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development.

Credit: Phan Duc Lap/CTU Media

Portfolio linkages and Sustainable Healthy Diets's impact pathways

This Initiative focused on consumers and their food environments 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 had a unique focus on MSMEs as potential distributors and vendors of sustainable nutritious foods. We collaborated with other CGIAR Research Initiatives that shared our focus on diets, consumers, the food environment, nutritious foods, and nutrition and health outcomes in the countries where we worked.

For this year's report, we reported a set of urban nutrition profiles from Bangladesh and Ethiopia and two innovations in development with the **CGIAR Research Initiative on Resilient Cities**. Since Year 2, researchers from both Initiatives have been developing a scale to assess food safety experiences and concerns. The focus is not to objectively assess or quantify food safety risks or how nutritionally adequate diets are. Instead, this measure will capture the subjective food safety experiences and concerns of consumers and how consumers respond to these concerns in choosing their diets. By the end of Year 3, the team completed background research in three countries and identified an initial set of candidate scale items. The next phases of the project will refine the scale and field test it in surveys around the world.

The second innovation with **Resilient Cities** involved an intervention to deliver safer food and promote healthier diets, which was still at a very early stage of development by year's end. The proposed plan was to design and measure the effectiveness and costs of a synergistic vendor- and consumer-oriented strategy to improve food safety, the livelihoods of food vendors, and the diets of adult women and youth from low- and middle-income families in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The design called for two approaches: the first was a market-oriented strategy to strengthen wet markets and for associated informal food vendors to deliver safe and nutritious foods, and the second was a consumer-oriented intervention to empower and encourage consumers to demand safer and higher-quality foods. Opportunities for funding this intervention will be pursued in 2025.

Upon invitation by the **CGIAR Regional Initiative on Transforming Agrifood Systems in South Asia**, we joined the Delivering for Nutrition in South Asia 2024 Conference. The conference, organized by IFPRI in collaboration with 30 national, regional and global co-hosts, was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The theme of Connecting the Dots Across Systems was based on the High-Level Panel of Experts' conceptual framework on food systems for diets and nutrition, and emphasized the interconnectedness of food production, distribution, consumption, and outcomes in addressing complex nutrition and food security challenges.[1] Our Initiative contributed financial resources to the conference, participated as speakers and panelists, and sponsored partners from the region to attend in person.

In Viet Nam, our Initiative and part of the **CGIAR Research Initiative on Asian Mega-Deltas** shared many of the same nutrition partners. Research teams from the Alliance that were involved in both Initiatives helped to identify complementarities across the government-led nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems transformation agendas. Similarly, the joint results reported with the **CGIAR Research Initiative on Foresight** came from individual researchers' engagement in both Initiatives.

Lastly, one additional cross-CGIAR Portfolio achievement was a hybrid seminar series to exchange information on food environment and dietary assessment research with the academic community. Researchers from three CGIAR Research Initiatives—Sustainable Healthy Diets, **Fruit and Vegetables for Sustainable Healthy Diets, and Resilient Cities**—launched the series in 2023. To date, the distribution list includes more than 200 people from across CGIAR and local and global partners of the Initiatives. In 2024, six seminars were given by experts from outside CGIAR, with an average attendance of 30 people for each seminar. The topics included food environment concepts and frameworks; measurement issues in neighborhood food environments, urban food environments, and children's exposure to advertising for unhealthy foods; and policy engagement around school food environments and healthy food policies, nearly all from LMICs. In the organizing committee's self-reflection, the team felt that the seminar series had been successful in enabling CGIAR to be more engaged and visible in this emerging field of research. The seminar series will continue in 2025.

[1] Figure 1 on p.26 in https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/4ac1286e-eef3-4f1d-b5bd-d92f5d1ce738/content

Girls eat the lunches they brought from home at Hidassie School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
Credit: Midastouch/Global Partnership for Education

Section 7: **Key result story**

Strengthening capacity for food systems transformation in Viet Nam

Capacity-strengthening efforts in Viet Nam equipped 300+ stakeholders to lead local food systems transformation toward sustainable healthy diets.

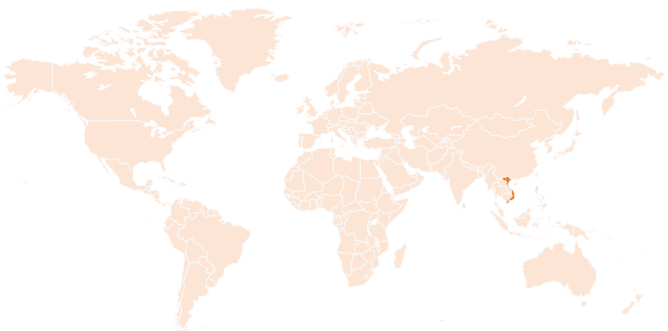
Collaborative learning in action at a training of trainers (ToT) workshop in Dong Thap, Viet Nam. This provincial-level training targeted local government officials in Dong Thap and was led by expert trainers from Can Tho University and Ho Chi Minh City University of Medicine and Pharmacy. The ToT program on food systems was co-developed by Sustainable Healthy Diets and national partners from the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the National Institute of Nutrition, and the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development.

Credit: Dinh Minh Triet/CTU Media

Primary Impact Area

Other relevant Impact Areas targeted

Geographic scope



Countries: The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

Contributing Centers

Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT · IFPRI

Contributing external partners

Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD)

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Viet Nam) (MARD) · Ministry of Health (Viet Nam) (MOH) · Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences (VAAS) · Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPSARD) · National Institute of Nutrition · Viet Nam (NIN) · Centre for Agrarian Systems Research and Development (CASRAD) · Dong Thap Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) · Son La Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) · People's Committee of Dong Thap Province · People's Committee of Son La Province · People's Committee of Moc Chau District · Can Tho University (CTU) · Hanoi University of Public Health · Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry · Wageningen University and Research (WUR)

With support from CGIAR's Research Initiative on Sustainable Healthy Diets, Viet Nam launched a multisectoral food systems partnership and operationalized national goals in two provinces. More than 300 trained stakeholders are now driving evidence-based change, ensuring food systems deliver sustainable healthy diets through inclusive policies, coordinated efforts, and long-term capacity strengthening.

Faced with rapid urbanization, environmental pressures, and shifting dietary patterns, the government of Viet Nam has recognized the need to reshape the way its food is produced, distributed, and consumed. Following the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, the government developed the National Action Plan for Food Systems Transformation towards Transparency, Responsibility and Sustainability by 2030 (NAP-FST). However, implementing this national vision for food systems transformation requires strong coordination, investment, technical capacity, and a shared approach across sectors and governance levels.

To advance Viet Nam's ambitious agenda, the CGIAR Research Initiative on Sustainable Healthy Diets formalized partnerships with National Food System Convenors, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences, and the National Institute of Nutrition. Together, they are accelerating Viet Nam's progress toward sustainable healthy diets by strengthening stakeholder collaboration, supporting provincial-level policy translation, and building long-term capacity for food systems transformation.

In 2024, MARD partnered with three other ministries to launch the Partnership Agreement for Transparent, Responsible, and Sustainable Food Systems Transformation in Viet Nam (FST Partnership). With more than 40 national and international partners, the agreement created a platform for policy alignment, knowledge sharing, and resource mobilization. Sustainable Healthy Diets was instrumental in designing the partnership and continues to contribute evidence through technical working groups.

Recognizing the need for coordinated action at the subnational level, MARD identified Dong Thap and Son La as pilot provinces to operationalize the NAP-FST. Sustainable Healthy Diets, together with its Strategic Partners, participated in a national intersectoral working group assigned by MARD to support each province in identifying priority areas, developing provincial NAP-FST implementation plans, and establishing a framework for monitoring and evaluation. Throughout this process, stakeholder consultations ensured local ownership and alignment with Viet Nam's sustainability and nutrition goals.

To sustain this momentum, a Training of Trainers (ToT) program was co-designed by Sustainable Healthy Diets and in-country partners, equipping stakeholders with the tools to address food system challenges. The program was scaled to the provincial level in 2024, enabling more than 300 expert trainers to facilitate learning among government officials, researchers, and other food system actors.

The impact of these activities is far-reaching. At the national level, the FST Partnership filled a critical gap in coordination, providing a structured mechanism for government ministries, departments, and agencies to work together more effectively. At the subnational level, stakeholder consultations introduced food system concepts to local actors, encouraging cross-sector collaboration and evidence-based decision-making.

The ToT program created a sustainable network of trained professionals, enabling capacity sharing across multiple levels of government and academic institutions. The shift to partner-led training ensures expertise remains within national institutions and expands over time.

In collaboration with government partners, Sustainable Healthy Diets played a key role in supporting food systems transformation in Viet Nam. Strengthened partnerships, evidence-based policies, and expanded training opportunities established a strong foundation for continued progress. These efforts empowered national and subnational stakeholders to lead the implementation of the NAP-FST, making strides toward food systems that deliver sustainable healthy diets for all in Viet Nam.

> The Level 1 ToT provided me with essential knowledge and skills for food systems transformation, benefiting my career as Vice Director of CASRAD and my role as a mother feeding my children healthy diets. It enabled me to contribute to the NAP-FST, led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and conduct Level 2 training for local staff in Son La province, promoting food systems transformation for the well-being of people and the planet.
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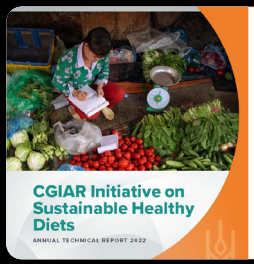
> PHAM Thi Hanh Tho, Vice Director of Centre for Agrarian Systems Research and Development, Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences



2022 key result story

Capacity sharing to support food systems transformation

2023 key result story

Research and collaboration lay the foundation for food systems transformation in Vietnam

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INITIATIVE ON
Sustainable
Healthy Diets

A female vegetable seller prepares vegetables for sale at the Dong Xuan market in Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

Credit: UN Women Asia and Pacific