



**GOUVERNEMENT**

*Liberté  
Égalité  
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**CGIAR**

# CONSOLIDATED PLAN OF ACTION FOR CGIAR - FRANCE RELATIONS





# PREAMBLE

Considering:

1. The 2030 Agenda and its core Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the Paris Agreement on climate change, were major multilateral commitments of the international community in 2015.
2. The strengthening of these multilateral commitments through the conclusions and recommendations of the two Global Sustainable Development Reports (GSDR 2019 and 2023) stressing the importance of transforming economic and social systems, including food systems, to meet the 2030 Agenda targets, while calling for fast-tracking of innovative solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity protection and combating land degradation through tripartite North-South and South-South partnerships.
3. The UN-driven transformation of food systems spurred by the September 2021 UN Food Systems Summit devoted to this issue.
4. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres' July 2023 call for increased investment in "research, data, innovation and technological capacities, including closer ties to science, experience and expertise" as a global priority.
5. The Marseille Declaration (March 8, 2022) on international cooperation in research and innovation (R&I).
6. The common challenges of CGIAR and France, particularly poverty reduction, combating gender inequality, food insecurity and malnutrition, while safeguarding natural resources, soils and biodiversity, against the backdrop of climate change.
7. The cooperation of CGIAR and France with UN agencies in Rome, Geneva and Nairobi.
8. The expertise and mission of CGIAR, a global research partnership for a food-secure future, with the mission of 'Ending hunger by 2030—through science to transform food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis'.
9. CGIAR's intention to double its resources, in line with its global objectives and the Ceres2030 Report, which points out that by doubling their investments from now to 2030, donors could help end hunger, double smallholder farmer incomes and protect the climate.
10. The consolidation of the unified One CGIAR structure through the approval of the CGIAR Integrative Partnership Framework Agreement by the boards of all CGIAR Centers on February 22, 2023, thereby implementing the reform endorsed at the 9th meeting of the CGIAR System Council in November 2019, aimed at tackling the challenges of the 21st century.
11. The pivotal roles of French institutions such as CIRAD, IRD, INRAE and higher agricultural education institutions, with their research, development and expertise activities in agriculture, food, environment and climate spheres.
12. France's commitment to strengthening its policy of sustainable inclusive investment, as well as its leadership role in combating climate change, enhancing rural development and food security, particularly as part of the European DeSIRA initiative and DeSIRA+, its second phase.
13. CGIAR's decision to set up its headquarters in Montpellier—a hub of excellence for development-oriented agricultural research—alongside international and French research and higher education institutions that join forces within Agropolis International.

14. The Headquarters Agreement signed between France and CGIAR in 2013, guaranteeing privileges and immunities for CGIAR, and recognizing its headquarters in Montpellier. This agreement was amended by an addendum in the form of an exchange of letters signed in Paris on January 4, 2017 and in Montpellier on January 9, 2017, when the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers became the CGIAR System Organization. Moreover, the Occitanie Region provided CGIAR's headquarters free of charge and financed their construction.
15. The Strategic Partnership Agreement between French agricultural research and higher education organizations and the CGIAR System Organization signed in March 2019.
16. The first 2020-2022 Action Plan between CGIAR and France signed on February 4, 2021, which was tacitly renewed for the 2023-2025 period.

Further considering that:

1. It is important that CGIAR is supported and fostered by the country hosting its headquarters to enhance its visibility as an international organization, while being nested in a network of French, European and international institutional, financial and scientific partnerships. This includes support for its commitment and recognition as an essential player to complement initiatives of United Nations agencies regarding food—FAO, IFAD and WFP.
2. It is important to strengthen CGIAR's presence in the country hosting its headquarters, in an active network of higher education and agricultural research institutions.
3. It is important for CGIAR and France to share a long-term strategy and strengthen their cooperation in development-oriented agricultural research, as well as their participation in international and regional platforms bringing together scientists and policymakers.
4. It is important that France is recognized as a member of the CGIAR System Council and that the System Organization will be a fully-fledged member of the Integrated Partnership, including within the Global Leadership Team and the Integration Coordination Independence process.

Within this scope, France and CGIAR are committed to renewing their Action Plan around three main pillars:

1. Structuring ambitious open partnership modalities according to the objectives and the five areas of action outlined in the Strategic partnership statement that was drafted and signed in Paris, on March 22, 2019, by leaders of French agricultural research and higher education institutions and the Chair of the CGIAR System Management Board.
2. Scientific diplomacy.
3. Funding and support for the implementation of partnership research and training programs.

# OBJECTIVES

France and CGIAR pledge to strengthen their ethical, balanced and sustainable cooperation while promoting the involvement of partners from the South in ambitious scientific collaborations in a range of fields.

These actions aim to:

- Promote the **transition of agricultural and food systems** so as to be able to tackle the complex challenges of climate change, food and nutrition security, natural resource preservation and land degradation, while focusing on intermeshed scientific fields in order to maximize synergies based on the complementary expertise of French and CGIAR research teams.
- Strengthen an **ambitious partnership** for research project collaboration by facilitating the posting and/or exchange of researchers within French and CGIAR teams, the organization of joint events (e.g. the Montpellier Global Days in March 2024), the development of mechanisms to promote research (e.g. the International Innovation Hub) and training, networking, and sharing of research and innovation support infrastructures.
- Foster **balanced tripartite** collaboration between French institutions, CGIAR and scientific communities of countries in the Global South.

This Action Plan structured around these three pillars involves three French ministries, i.e. the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry in charge of Higher Education and Research and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, alongside CGIAR, which is committed to enhancing its relationships with French organizations, agencies and the aforementioned ministries.

Pillar 1 is at the core of the Action Plan, as provided for in the Strategic Partnership statement, which commits the relevant French research organizations and CGIAR. Pillars 2 and 3 serve as institutional support mechanisms to promote and facilitate the implementation of Pillar 1.

## PILLAR 1

# STRUCTURING AMBITIOUS OPEN PARTNERSHIP MODALITIES

This pillar is based on the Strategic Partnership statement, while underpinning all existing bilateral framework agreements between CGIAR and French organizations and agencies.

CGIAR, alongside its research centers and programs, and French research institutions supported by their line ministries and agencies, will work together to develop and implement large-scale collaborative projects. These projects will be designed within a coordinated and consolidated framework aligned with the priorities of partner countries and France's sustainable and responsible investment policies. These projects must **contribute to meeting two key objectives**:

- **Transitioning agricultural and food systems** to boost resilience to climate change.
- **Improving food and nutrition security**, incorporating one or more of the following levers: agroecology, territorial-based approaches to socioecosystems, systemic approaches to sustainable plant and animal production, plant genetics and fair sustainable seed production systems, nutrition and dietary diversification, the role of school catering programs and the One Health approach.

Ambitious balanced partnership modalities are needed to meet these objectives:

- **Linkage of Global South institutions**, CGIAR Centers, and French institutions, and potentially other international partners in co-constructed, at least tripartite, partnerships.
- Integration of **training programs, capacity sharing through research, and knowledge-exchange initiatives** favoring mutual technical and scientific support between researchers in countries of the Global South and their partners.
- Leveraging of **French, European, and international funding** to support these projects while striving to diversify investment tools in the joint science and innovation program for the 2025-2030 period.

In this framework, the projects will leverage complementary expertise and synergy from French research institutions, CGIAR Centers, national research systems in the Global South that have expressed interest in:

- Co-designing and **engineering European and international research projects**, including impact assessment, supported by France and, where possible, European funding, with additional CGIAR support in leveraging major international donors.
- Building, coordinating, and promoting global strategic initiatives and coalitions, beyond just the scientific aspects, e.g. PREZODE, TSARA, One Forest Vision, One Water Vision, ACPI Initiative on agroecological crop protection, the IRC Soil Carbon Consortium or—as in the framework of the International Innovation Hub or Montpellier Process (following the Montpellier Global Days co-organized with CGIAR)—with platforms advocating and showcasing shared outcomes at major international events, such as UN environmental convention COPs and support for CGIAR's involvement as an observer in key bodies and events of the G7 and G20 presidencies.

- mobilization of INRAE, L'Institut Agro and Agreenium, alongside CIRAD and IRD (historical CGIAR partners) which will serve as key facilitators, working closely with CGIAR Science Programs and Accelerators to tackle global research challenges.

Partnerships between French institutions, CGIAR Centers, and national research systems in the Global South may also include additional European and international scientific and academic partners to increase the impact of these strategic projects and initiatives. A project co-design approach that addresses the specific needs of partner countries, while maintaining a strong scientific foundation, will be a key to the success of these strategic initiatives.

For CGIAR, the System Management Office (SMO) in Montpellier will oversee and facilitate coordination and consistency between projects, programs and initiatives within CGIAR's overall strategy. For France, the Commission for International Agricultural Research (CRAI) will serve as intermediary for all collaborations, with each initiative managed by the relevant institutions in partnership with CGIAR's Integrated Partnership framework. CGIAR SMO and CRAI will publish an annual report and collaboration roadmap to ensure alignment and strategic planning (see below).

These large-scale projects, initiatives and mechanisms will leverage many existing collaboration frameworks, which will be further strengthened and expanded.

## PILLAR 2

# SCIENTIFIC DIPLOMACY

Scientific diplomacy has become a **strategic lever** to strengthen international cooperation and address global challenges such as climate change, food security and nutrition, along with the preservation of natural resources and land. As part of the collaboration between France, CGIAR and Global South partners, **scientific diplomacy** plays a key role in supporting research initiatives, fostering innovation, and strengthening ties between scientific communities across different regions, as well as between scientific communities and other society actors.

### Strengthening International Scientific Cooperation

**Recent science diplomacy advances** highlight the importance of an open ethical cooperation framework that fosters research freedom, as well as the global sharing of scientific knowledge and data. Specifically:

- **Open Science** is now a worldwide trend, thereby facilitating the dissemination of research results and more inclusive collaboration. France is highly committed to initiatives that promote access to scientific data and publications, in line with the **UNESCO** Recommendation on Open Science.
- Strengthening **tripartite partnerships** between Global North countries, international institutions such as CGIAR, and Global South countries helps address key scientific challenges, such as climate change adaptation, the transition to sustainable agricultural and food systems, biodiversity conservation and sustainable water resource management. This partnership model is especially relevant for tackling specific challenges of Global South countries.
- Improving the modalities of the **interface between research and public policymaking**, particularly through the promotion of the Montpellier Process, which brings together a global, inclusive and action-oriented community of practice. This initiative aims to enhance the use of academic and non-academic knowledge in decision-making processes at local, national and international levels.

### Mobilizing International Forums

France leverages its influence in international forums to promote the pivotal role of scientific research while strengthening its partnership with CGIAR in tackling global challenges.

In partnership with CGIAR, France will support international policymakers in platforms such as the World Water Forum, the Conference of the Parties on Climate, Biodiversity and Desertification, UN conferences on food systems, alongside G7 and G20 working groups for the purpose of carrying out coordinated actions. These efforts will raise awareness among policymakers and financial stakeholders on scientific, technological, social and organizational innovations in agriculture, natural resource management and climate-related issues. This collaboration could be further strengthened at summits and conferences led by France, such as the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in Paris in March 2025, the One Health summit in 2025, the French G7 presidency in 2026 and the Africa-France Summit in Kenya in 2026.

In this sense, a coordination body has been set up and will convene in advance to be anticipatory with regard to events on the international agenda of shared importance.



## Integrating Science Diplomacy in the French National Strategy

France is also involved in integrating science diplomacy into its national research and development strategy. The **Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs**, in collaboration with the Ministry in charge of Higher Education and Research, the **Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty**, and the institutions involved in the 2019 Strategic Partnership statement, contributes to:

- **Encouraging and recognizing the scientific contributions** of Global South partners in international research programs, particularly through collaborations with CGIAR Centers and by co-building coalitions to promote scientific data integration in the formulation of national, regional and global policies, practices and investments.
- Promoting an **ethical balanced approach** to scientific cooperation, while ensuring that knowledge and innovations derived from these partnerships benefit Global South countries and are aligned with their development priorities.
- Facilitating **reciprocal balanced student and researcher mobility** between relevant institutions.

## Annual Awareness and Promotion

On a yearly basis, France and CGIAR are involved in high-level **awareness-raising activities**, bringing together the scientific community, policymakers, and international financial institutions to foster and highlight their collaborations and influence policymaking. These activities include joint **scientific conferences**, publications in high-impact international journals, promotion of key scientific areas and research findings, and expert contributions to public policy discussions. They also participate in **major international events**, such as the Conference of the Parties to the three Rio environmental conventions, G7, G20, initiatives launched under the One Planet/One Ocean Summits, and science-policy initiatives such as the Montpellier Process. As part of the implementation of this joint action plan, a multi-year program for these initiatives is developed by the CGIAR System Organization and Chief Scientist, and the CRAI member institutions and ministries.

In conclusion, **scientific diplomacy** between France, CGIAR and Global South partners is founded on recent advances in open cooperation and international forums to enhance the impact of scientific knowledge in addressing major challenges of the 21st century.

## PILLAR 3

# IMPLEMENTATION FUNDING AND SUPPORT

French support is provided through:

1. Co-financing of collaborative research projects, in accordance with Section 1 of this Action Plan:
  - through contributions channeled to the dedicated CGIAR Trust Fund Window, which finances CGIAR's major research programs;
  - or through European projects;
  - or through projects under the *Fonds Equipe France* initiative;
  - or, if applicable, through AFD's contribution to the CGIAR Trust Fund Window 3, which finances more targeted projects, provided that AFD's intervention conditions are met.

In these different cases, in accordance with Component 1 of this Action Plan, the projects must:

- at least involve Global South institutions, CGIAR Centers, and French institutions;
  - focus on one of the three priority themes—'agriculture and climate change', 'agroecological transition', or 'nutrition and sustainable food systems'—as defined in the 2019 Strategic Partnership statement;
  - be aligned with France's defined intervention priorities.
2. Promoting—as host country and long-standing CGIAR supporter—its importance to other donors under the imperative of ensuring full funding for its 2025-2030 Science and Innovation Program.
  3. Supporting strategic actions aimed at cross-cutting scientific coordination of projects and programs, joint initiatives and common activities carried out as part of the Montpellier Process, or other initiatives developed in the vein of this Action Plan (e.g. support for the Transformative Partnership Platform on Agroecology, the international PREZODE initiative [Preventing Zoonotic Disease Emergence], or similar mechanisms that may emerge in the Nutrition field, for instance).
  4. Hosting researchers from French institutions in CGIAR Centers and hosting CGIAR scientists in France in accordance with the host institutions' applicable rules and procedures.
  5. Assigning a French research expert to the CGIAR System Organization in Montpellier. This expert will support analyses of international development-oriented research programs and their impact assessment. He/she will also facilitate a privileged relationship with French stakeholders as part of the implementation of the Action Plan. The terms of reference for this position will be defined by CGIAR in agreement with France, which will propose several candidates for the role. CGIAR will be responsible for selecting and evaluating the French expert's performance and will communicate the results of this evaluation to France once a year.

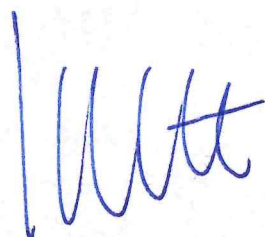
CGIAR, the French ministries and organizations plan to implement a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the Action Plan, while being overseen by the System Management Office and CRAI. A meeting schedule will be drawn up, with meetings being held at least once a year. This annual review meeting will be accompanied by a high-level scientific seminar to showcase research that is being conducted under the Action Plan.

## RENEWAL

This Action Plan strengthens existing collaborations while also paving the way for new initiatives to tackle emerging challenges. It covers the 2026-2028 period and may be renewed once by tacit agreement for an additional three years—subject to mutual agreement—to ensure continuity and the strengthening of scientific collaborations between France, CGIAR and Global South partners.



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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with delegation of signatory authority referred to in article 7 of the Regulation on Authorizing Environment of CGIAR System Organization

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