



Responding to Covid-19 CGIAR's contribution to global response, recovery and resilience

Food systems under threat – from a crisis originating in a dysfunctional food system

The Covid-19 pandemic – itself the result of mismanaged food, land and water systems – is exposing weaknesses in food systems, societies and economies around the world.

The health risks of the pandemic, combined with the social and economic impacts of measures to stop the spread of the disease – such as social isolation directives, travel bans, and border closures – are posing threats to food, nutrition, and water security, as well as continued progress on global goals to end poverty and hunger, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Without substantial emergency relief, [140 million people could fall into extreme poverty](#), potentially increasing [hunger and malnutrition for millions](#). [Women, youth, migrant workers](#), and poor [urban populations](#) are among those most significantly impacted.

The global response to the pandemic must be swift and science-based, harnessing new and existing knowledge. Solutions need to be coordinated across sectors to provide immediate **response** and assistance for those most in need, ongoing and inclusive support in **recovery**, and – perhaps most importantly – future **resilience** to all shocks – including climate extremes.

The Covid-19 crisis presents an unprecedented opportunity for humanity to '**build back better**' – particularly in the food systems at the root of the pandemic. The crisis has demonstrated how quickly society can fail – but also that collective positive change in human behavior is possible at scale and speed. CGIAR will join its network of partners to co-lead global debate and action on what 'building back better' looks like for food, water and land systems.

A moment of opportunity for One CGIAR to make a difference

The crisis occurs as CGIAR undergoes pivotal change. An **integrated leadership and Board** in place this year can support the level of collaboration required for an integrated global and in-country response. The new **2030 Research Strategy** will be a tool to address the new context that this crisis generates, an opportunity to show the flexibility and depth of CGIAR expertise to address challenges that demand multidisciplinary solutions.

CGIAR's rapid response to Covid-19

CGIAR, in coordination with global, national, and local partners, has responded by actively sharing its [existing and emerging knowledge and experience](#) to address the challenges posed by Covid-19. At the **country level**, CGIAR is supporting governments' responses to Covid-19. In Bangladesh, for example, CGIAR is working with local partners to monitor food, labor, input, supplies and prices, and to advise on appropriate policies, with an emphasis on mitigating Covid-19 impacts on the most vulnerable members of society.

At the **global level**, CGIAR is working together with UN agencies and other development partners. For example, a collaboration with IFAD is exploring phone survey-based assessments for understanding the impacts of Covid-19 on rural households' livelihoods and food security, while work with WHO on sleeping sickness, a deadly endemic disease with a zoonotic interface, is transferring lessons useful for the current pandemic.

Stepping up CGIAR's global contribution

Around two-thirds of the current CGIAR research portfolio has immediate relevance to the COVID-19 response, and all CGIAR research is relevant to global efforts to build back better. The work of most immediate relevance encompasses **four research pillars**: (1) Food systems; (2) One Health (the human, animal, and environmental health interface); (3) Inclusive public programs for food security and nutrition; and (4) Policies and investments for crisis response, economic recovery, and improved future resilience.

By immediately **pivoting the current CGIAR program of work**, CGIAR can leverage its sets of tools and evidence to help countries cope with the effects of the pandemic. For example, CGIAR is deploying economic models to assess the impacts of Covid-19 on poverty and food security, livestock data analytics to support efforts to develop a Covid-19 vaccine, assessments of the risks and benefits of wet markets, and monitoring of the effectiveness of nutrition programs during the pandemic.

CGIAR aims to establish a "**CGIAR Covid-19 Hub**" for the coordination, across CGIAR and key partners, of major streams of relevant research, engagement and communications. The Hub will be run in partnership with the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

Short-term response, medium-term recovery and long-term resilience

In the **short term (up to 12 months)**, CGIAR research will deliver research across the four pillars to support crisis **response**, providing evidence and tools for immediate decision-making and action to support food availability and access, One Health interventions, and public programs, policies and investments at scale. High-frequency, on-the-ground monitoring data and scientific evidence will help policy makers and implementers assess the underlying preparedness and resilience of societies to provide adequate and diverse food for, and to protect, different segments of their communities.

For the **medium term (up to 18 months)**, innovations will target crisis **recovery**, contributing to a better understanding of the impacts and trade-offs of the crisis response. Research evidence is critical to determining and prioritizing effective, gender-sensitive, and socially inclusive action to ensure food and nutrition security. Country "deep dives" with Covid-19 impact modeling and analyses will assist governments with reassessing policy priorities under Covid-19. One Health risk-based approaches to agriculture-environmental management and emerging zoonoses, as well as anti-microbial resistance, will be essential.

For the **long term (up to 24 months and beyond)**, CGIAR will widen its focus to build greater **resilience** into food, land, and water systems. CGIAR science will generate evidence and tools to prevent and respond both to emerging disease threats and to comparable food system shocks. The aim to '**build back better**' – not return to business as usual following the Covid-19 crisis – is a priority for a united CGIAR in its efforts to transform food systems to meet global goals on food security, sustainable development and climate change.