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ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

SECURING WOMEN'S RESOURCE RIGHTS THROUGH GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES

In 2020, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) invited a consortium of the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) to work with selected IFAD projects to promote and strengthen women's land rights through the integration of gender transformative approaches (GTAs) in rural development interventions by improving policies, tools and practices.

<https://www.cifor.org/wlr>

https://www.ifad.org/en/gender_transformative_approaches

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Contents

BACKGROUND	1
1. DESCRIPTION OF THE WRR PROJECT LOGIC	2
2. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT M&E FRAMEWORK	7
3. ADDRESSING GTA PILOTS' M&E CHALLENGES	9
4. CONTRIBUTING TO THE BROADER KNOWLEDGE AND EVIDENCE BASE IN THE FIELD OF GTA	11
5. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	12

Background

The project “Women’s Resources Rights” (WRR) through Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA), funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), aims to assist women and girls engaged in ongoing IFAD-supported initiatives in rural settings across eight target nations: Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, and Uganda. The project utilises innovative and participatory GTAs to enhance the acknowledgment and safeguarding of women’s land and resource rights in these

countries, fostering an enabling environment conducive to women enjoying these rights. This is achieved by involving key stakeholders at local and national levels, facilitating capacity-building, and ensuring that insights from GTA pilots inform policy decisions, programmes, and projects. The project also aims to establish evidence-backed recommendations and share best practices for integrating GTAs into IFAD’s global portfolio and advocacy strategy.

This brief provides an overview of the **monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approach** employed for a GTA project, outlining the M&E strategy used and offering recommendations and hands-on tools for similar initiatives to enhance effectiveness, while fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

The development of a robust M&E system and plan is critical for a project like this for several reasons, such as accountability and transparency, learning and adaptation, effective resource

allocation, evidence-based decision making, stakeholder engagement, and demonstrating impact or long-term sustainability, among others. A first step is to articulate the project’s logic.



1

Description of the WRR project logic



The project had a logical framework at inception, outlining its main parts, connections, and intended changes related to behaviours, practices, and knowledge among key groups such as policymakers, development practitioners (including IFAD), women, girls, and community leaders. This, in turn, was meant to contribute to long-term impact.

SOME KEY M&E TERMS USED WITHIN THE WRR INITIATIVE



IMPACT: Changes in a situation in terms of social, economic or any other benefits that respond to identified development needs of the target population under a long-term vision.



HIGH-LEVEL OUTCOME: Systems level change, which can imply a systems transformation, i.e., a decisive, irreversible (disruptive) change in one or more of the system's defining characteristics, so its structure or behaviour is irreversibly changed, or systems improvement, i.e., improving how the entire system functions or operates without changing its fundamental structure or behaviour.



END-OF-PROJECT OUTCOME: Systemic changes in policy, practice, and investment decisions required for achieving the project's High-level Outcome and expected to be observed by the end of the project.



OUTPUT: Products and services produced, or competences and capacities established directly as a result of project activities.



STAKEHOLDER: Agencies, organisations, groups, or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the project.



INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME: Describes how the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of an individual, group, or institution will change if the programme is extremely successful. Intermediate outcomes are phrased in a way that emphasises behavioural change.



ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY: Ways and means through which the project will engage with, influence, and/or develop the capacity of each key stakeholder, so that the outcomes associated with each is achieved.



ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS:

Assumptions and risks are conditions that could affect the progress of the project but are not under the direct control of project management.



THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC):

An explicit, testable model of how and why change is expected to happen along an impact pathway in a particular context. A basic project ToC identifies the context and key actors in a system and specifies the causal pathways and mechanisms by which the project aims to contribute to outcomes and impacts.

While a project's logical framework is a valuable tool, it may not be sufficient on its own to fully capture the complexity and nuances of how a project like WRR aims to achieve its expected impact. This is where a project's Theory of Change (ToC) comes into play, complementing a logical framework by providing a more comprehensive and contextually nuanced understanding of how a project aims to achieve its intended impact. It encourages a deeper exploration of the assumptions, pathways, and external factors that contribute to the project's success, making it a valuable tool for effective planning, implementation, and learning.

There is also growing evidence in the literature indicating that projects which engage in a

participatory process of developing a ToC during their inception and actively utilise the ToC for monitoring progress and making adaptive adjustments achieve better results (Belcher et al. 2019; Davel et al. 2020). Therefore, early in the project's lifecycle, it is important to construct a ToC as an additional step to brainstorm and clarify the diverse pathways through which impact is expected to occur. This process aims to identify crucial underlying assumptions that will be tested during implementation and leverage the ToC as a guiding tool for monitoring progress and supporting adaptable management.

To facilitate this effort within the WRR initiative, a series of online workshops were organised and led by the project's M&E Lead, using Miro as an online collaborative workspace. This approach enabled members of the project team (project manager, gender specialists, country leads), spread across various geographical locations, to effectively collaborate, brainstorm, and leverage each other's insights regarding the contextual dynamics of the selected countries and the key stakeholders that need engagement. The process of developing the ToC facilitated a shift for team members from a broad, high-level perspective of the project to a more focused examination of tangible activities taking place on the ground (e.g., gender and socio-legal analysis in each country, national workshops with key stakeholders, etc.). This shift in focus helped the team to identify the pathways through which these activities translate into observable changes in the behaviours and knowledge of the targeted users and stakeholders. To guide the discussion, a list of facilitating questions were addressed by the team.



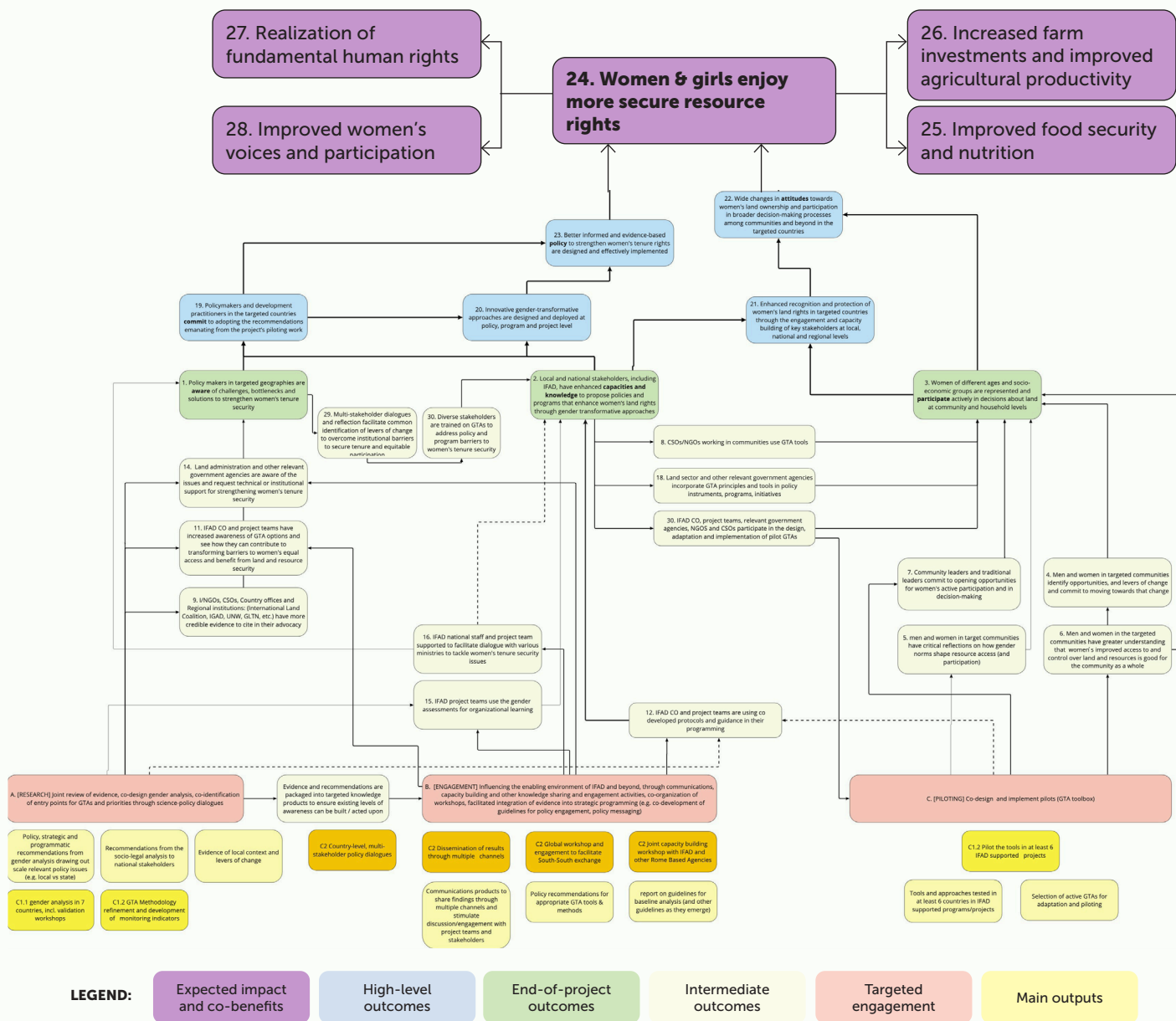
SET OF FACILITATING QUESTIONS ADDRESSED DURING TOC DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

- 1. WHO WILL DO WHAT DIFFERENTLY AS A RESULT OF THE GENDER ANALYSIS, THE PILOTS, NEW EVIDENCE GENERATED, INCREASED AWARENESS, AND WHY?** (Think, for instance, in terms of increased commitments to women's land rights and related policies, increased capacities and willingness to use GTAs in interventions – e.g., a ministry actively starting a policy initiative informed by the pilots).
- 2. WHAT WILL THE NEW EVIDENCE BE USED FOR?** (Think, for instance, in terms of how the evidence can inform new project design, partnerships, policy initiatives, raising awareness to the topic among other researchers or the public, agenda-setting).
- 3. WHAT NEW RELATIONSHIPS WILL THE PROJECT'S OUTPUTS BUILD? HOW? HOW WILL THESE NEW RELATIONSHIPS CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS?**
- 4. DO YOUR PLANNED OUTPUTS AND INTENDED OUTCOMES LOGICALLY CONNECT? HOW?** To this end, after having formulated the envisaged results on intermediate outcome and End-of-Project outcome levels, go backwards along the impact pathway, and think through whether some specific research and engagement or piloting activity would be helpful to implement.
- 5. WHAT ARE THE UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND WHY THIS CHANGE IS EXPECTED TO OCCUR?**

Developing a project ToC is an iterative process. At the end of the sessions, the team developed a ToC diagram and narrative delineating how, why, and where the specific array of research and engagement activities the project intends to implement are anticipated to initiate or contribute to a change process. This process is inherently nonlinear, complex, and multifactorial in nature. During extensive discussions, the team delved into various aspects, with a particular focus on delineating the boundaries between what fell within the project's sphere of control

(project outputs) and what resided in its sphere of influence (behaviour change of key actors) and interest (impact). The team sought to establish a clear analytical framework that accurately captured what the project would be accountable for by the end of its lifetime, while acknowledging its broader impact potential beyond immediate control. This comprehensive approach ensures a nuanced understanding of the project's scope and potential, fostering effective planning, implementation, and assessment.

Figure 1: WRR project ToC diagram, use the following Miro [link](#) to access the diagram



OVERARCHING WRR PROJECT TOC NARRATIVE

To enhance the recognition and protection of WRR in targeted countries and contribute to the creation of conditions that enable women's enjoyment of land rights over time, the WRR project integrates **(A) Research**, **(B) Engagement**, and **(C) Piloting**.

The project activities are divided into two components. In target countries, Component 1 (C1) aims to provide evidence (from, e.g., gender analysis, socio-legal analysis, analysis of local context and levers of change, etc.) to formulate useful and timely policy, strategic,

and programmatic recommendations. Thus, outputs of C1 primarily contribute to **(A) Research**, and **(C) Piloting**. On the other hand, outputs of **Component 2 (C2)** (e.g., dissemination and knowledge-sharing events, capacity-building workshops, communication products, etc.) primarily contribute to **(B) Engagement** and support the validation of C1-generated findings and the dissemination of policy recommendations through multiple channels.

The Research is primarily based on providing evidence from a range of research outputs and lessons learned from pilots and operates through strategic Engagement with key stakeholders (e.g., I/NGOs, IFAD, land administration, and other relevant government agencies, practitioners, academia/researchers) to enhance their **awareness and understanding** of the challenges, bottlenecks, and solutions to strengthen women's tenure security (**End-of-Project Outcome 1**).

It also aims to increase their **capacities** to propose policies and programmes that aim to enhance women's land rights through GTA (**End-of-Project Outcome 2**). The piloting of GTAs primarily aims to empower women so that they participate more actively in decisions about land (**End-of-Project Outcome 3**) and also to increase **capacities of others to implement GTA solutions**.

In the longer run, policymakers would increasingly commit to adopting recommendations emanating from the project's research and piloting work. This commitment would strengthen the design and implementation of impactful policies, programmes and projects that tackle issues

related to WRR, enhancing the recognition and protection of women's land rights in targeted countries. Concomitantly, this would lead to wide changes in attitudes towards women's land ownership and participation in decision-making processes, contributing to women and girls fulfilment of their resource rights (**expected long-term impact**).

Several assumptions underpin the ToC of the WRR project. A key assumption is that key actors in each targeted country, particularly relevant government agencies, are receptive to the evidence-based scientific knowledge generated through the project's research and piloting activities and shared with them. Understanding the value of innovative GTAs may contribute to better-designed policies, programmes, and projects. It is also assumed that all actors are willing to engage in the adaptation and implementation of the tools and approaches promoted by the project, and that the communities see value in participating in project activities.

A ToC diagram illustrates how and why the above-mentioned desired changes contributing to long-term impact are expected to happen.

The project's ToC functions as the primary analytical framework. Once developed, the emphasis shifts to translating it into tangible actions, particularly at the country level, where various specific obstacles and opportunities are likely to shape change pathways. This translation occurs through planning, monitoring, adaptive management, and continuous learning. The ToC serves as a guiding framework, aligning and directing these activities to ensure that the project stays on course to achieve its goals.

2

Development of the project M&E framework



Building on the project logframe and ToC, outcome indicators were clearly defined to monitor progress and assess the achievement of outcomes and impact.

A project M&E system typically follows three functions, as detailed in its M&E plan:



Monitoring and documenting the delivery, relevance, and quality of project activities:

This includes engagement strategies and their efficient and effective translation into the project's outputs (e.g., monitoring activity and output delivery);



Tracking and providing evidence on the extent to which expected outcomes associated with the project's ToC are unfolding:

This involves supporting reviews and adaptation of its change pathways as relevant (e.g., tracking outcomes).



Evaluating the project's expected impacts on women's land and resources rights:

This encompasses impact evaluation.

The project's design, expected results, stakeholders involved, and implementation modalities will determine the most appropriate M&E approaches, tools, and processes to systematically collect necessary data (quantitative and qualitative). This may include field visits, annual reviews, mid-term reviews, knowledge sharing sessions, etc.

In the case of the WRR project, various monitoring tools were developed to be light, user-friendly, and time efficient. At the outcome level, the WRR project toolkit helps to monitor:

- 1 Knowledge gains among target groups,
- 2 Enhanced capacity to propose new and better-informed policies and programmes, as well as
- 4 More active women's participation in decision-making processes.

The toolkit includes:



Stakeholder engagement management matrix and outcome influence log (SEM/OIL):

The main purpose of the SEM/OIL is to enable team members to record and keep track of their engagement activities with key stakeholders. It provides a place to document who they are engaging with, when, where and how. Additionally, it provides a place to document instances and evidence of influence in the target country, especially when engagements lead to a shift in a stakeholder's practice, priority, or knowledge from a business-as-usual scenario. Key headings include "name of the person 'influenced'," "description of the observed influence", "how the influence came about", "actual/potential significance of the influence on outcome achievement," and "available evidence." A dedicated OIL email address was established to facilitate easy sharing of relevant insights and networking results, such as feedback received on early GTA pilot results presented at global conferences.



Event and training feedback surveys:

These surveys aim to capture the effectiveness of transferring new knowledge and building capacity for targeted participants, including local communities, policy makers and development practitioners. Survey results help assess knowledge gains and provide useful recommendations for enhancing learning (lessons learned).



Semi-structured interviews:

Conducted at baseline, mid, and endline, semi-structured interviews gather in-depth descriptive information. They play a crucial role in assessing the reach and influence of the project. For instance, during the initial phase of the project (March 2022), specific questions were added to interview questionnaires used with project staff to inform several outcome indicators at baseline. Examples include, (1) "What tools and approaches have you used to assess barriers and constraints?" and (2) "Have you used any particular tools or approaches to monitor and evaluate how the project has successfully addressed (or not) normative barriers to women's resources rights?"



Gender monitoring worksheet:

Derived from the *Field guide to Adaptive Collaborative Management and Improving Women's Participation* (CIFOR, 2014), this tool evaluates gender equity within meetings and workshops. It goes beyond assessing the gender balance of attendees, delving into the depth of their involvement and input in discussions and decision-making processes.

Monitoring and evaluation has the potential to be a more valuable exercise for all involved, if the indicators are designed to inform progress towards climate change adaptation and building climate resilience.”

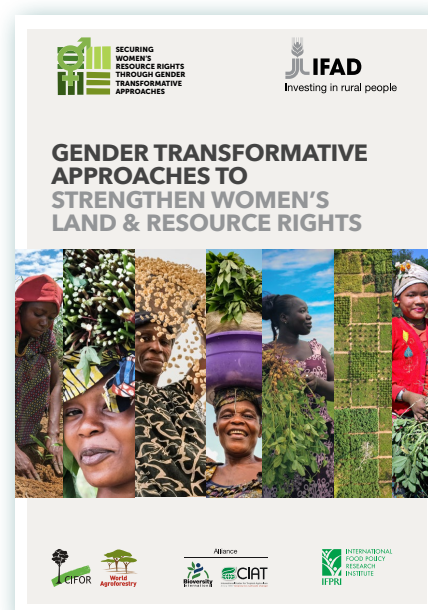
NAP Global Network

3

Addressing GTA pilots' M&E challenges



As the **WRR project entered its piloting phase in each targeted country**, the remaining timeframe was limited. Achieving significant and sustainable changes, especially transformative change, in gender norms and behaviours related to women’s land and resource rights requires long-term efforts and systemic changes. By the end of 2023, the pilots aimed to lay the groundwork for sustained progress towards gender equality. Additionally, the piloting phase aims at providing clearer conceptualisation of the goals of change, distinguishing whether they were directed at inclusion, empowerment, or transformation (refer to the [GTA brief](#)).



Furthermore, this phase involves the development of GTA tools and the training of projects, donors, and government entities for their effective implementation. Specific M&E efforts could help demonstrate potential results in, for instance:



Increased awareness and knowledge:

Pilot participants may gain knowledge about gender issues, understanding the effects of harmful gender norms, and recognising the benefits of promoting gender equality in land and resource rights, and develop a clear conceptual and practical understanding of pathways to transformative change.



Increased skills: Participants in pilots and training workshops will acquire skills in implementing GTA tools for WRR.



Behavioural changes: Participants may start adopting more equitable behaviours, such as sharing household responsibilities, challenging gender biases, and promoting gender equality within their spheres of influence.



Increased agency and empowerment:

By challenging societal norms and expectations, participants may gain confidence, voice, and decision-making power in their personal and professional lives.



Strengthened networks and partnerships: GTA pilots could eventually facilitate the formation of networks and partnerships among participants and communities committed to promote gender equality.



Identification of challenges and lessons learned:

The pilot phase can help identify challenges, barriers, and gaps in the implementation of GTA interventions. Lessons learned from the pilots can inform future programme design, highlighting areas for improvement, and strategies for overcoming obstacles.

A series of online meetings between country project leads and country-level IFAD and project offices were conducted to collaboratively design the GTA pilots. Subsequent meetings between project leads and the M&E team focused on agreeing upon realistic monitoring plans, considering the diverse country contexts and inherent challenges in achieving significant progress in gender equality within existing time and resource constraints. The design and implementation modalities of the pilots led to the development of tailor-made M&E tools to monitor and learn from their results. Possible M&E approaches included:



Surveys:

Conducting pre-post pilot surveys to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviours related to gender equality and WRR.



Interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs):

Utilising interviews and FGDs to gain more in-depth insights into participants' changes in attitudes and behaviours. This included the collection of feedback and testimonials, capturing perceptions of the impact of GTA. "After" interviews with informants included in the early semi-structured interviews, were asked about their use of assessment tools and approaches.



Observation and documentation:

Engaging in direct observation of pilot activities (workshops, community events, etc.) to provide real-time information on participants' engagement, dynamics, and behavioural changes.

Throughout the GTA pilots across Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, and Uganda, there was a notable emphasis on strengthening capacities through diverse training and networking activities. These

pilots also shared the common objective of collaboratively developing and testing new approaches and tools, or directly integrating these tools into existing frameworks. Consequently, the M&E of the pilots placed specific emphasis on assessing the acquisition of knowledge and gauging the interest and readiness of participants and key stakeholders to adopt the newly trialled GTA approaches and tools. Additionally, country teams incorporated follow-up questions for IFAD project teams, establishing a basis for comparing their input against the insights provided in the gender analysis.

4

Contributing to the broader knowledge and evidence base in the field of GTA



Two essential objectives of M&E are accountability and learning. Ensuring effective learning from the diverse pilots and the outcomes they produced required to develop a standardised method for documenting the design, processes, methodologies, challenges, and results of each pilot.

This material will be shared through a series of knowledge-sharing and reflection events from October 2023 to February 2024. The aim is to foster an open dialogue about what worked well, areas for improvement, and unexpected insights gained from pilots. These events will create an opportunity for cross-pollination of ideas, sharing of lessons learned, and the identification of common themes and challenges.

5

Key recommendations



The M&E process for the WRR project, particularly during the GTA piloting phase, has proven to be a complex yet essential effort.

Drawing insights from this experience, several key recommendations for the M&E of similar GTA and WRR initiatives are outlined below:



Actively involve the project team in developing a robust ToC for the project.

This foundational step serves as a roadmap guiding the project's objectives, strategies, and desired outcomes, ensuring alignment and clarity in its overall direction.



Implement an M&E system that rigorously tests the underlying hypotheses of the ToC.

This process involves generating data to validate the assumptions and pathways through which impact is expected to be achieved, providing crucial insights into the project's effectiveness.



Develop a suite of tools capable of capturing softer types of outputs

These tools should effectively document changes at the individual, community, or stakeholder group levels, reflecting the project's influence on positive change, even in more subtle ways.



Design tools to capture instances where knowledge products are effectively taken up and used.

This data helps demonstrate the project's impact on knowledge dissemination and utilisation among stakeholders.



Share lessons widely

So that lessons learned can benefit similar projects operating within comparable country contexts.



INITIATIVE CONSORTIUM



The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) envision a more equitable world where trees in all landscapes, from drylands to the humid tropics, enhance the environment and well-being for all. CIFOR and ICRAF are CGIAR Research Centers.



Climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and malnutrition. These four interconnected global crises have put at stake the wellbeing of our planet for years. Fueled by COVID-19, their impact on agriculture, landscapes, biodiversity, and humans is now stronger than ever. Reversing this negative trend is a challenge, but also an opportunity for bold choices and integrated solutions. Established in 2019, the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) was created to address these four crises, maximizing impact for change at key points in the food system.



The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) provides research-based policy solutions to sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. Established in 1975, IFPRI currently has more than 600 employees working in over 50 countries. It is a research center of CGIAR, a worldwide partnership engaged in agricultural research for development.

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