



CGIAR

**RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON**

**Agriculture for
Nutrition
and Health**

LED BY **IFPRI** 

Strategies for Transformative Partnerships

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FOREWORD

CGIAR seeks to ensure that its agricultural research better and more directly serves the needs of the poor. In its new vision (CGIAR SRF 2010), CGIAR commits to reduce poverty and hunger, improve human health and nutrition, and enhance ecosystem resilience through high-quality international agricultural research, partnership, and leadership. The adoption of a system-level outcome to improve human health and nutrition is new for CGIAR, and the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) has been developed to directly and strategically address this new CGIAR commitment.

The starting point for A4NH is that agricultural practices, interventions, and policies can be better adapted and redesigned to improve health and nutrition benefits and to reduce health risks. Agriculture will need to develop and expand to meet the food needs of a growing population from a finite resource base. How agriculture develops to meet this need will have real consequences on the health and nutrition of people. Thus, A4NH will work at the interface of the agriculture, nutrition, and health sectors.

Moreover, the emphasis placed in CGIAR's vision that research should contribute more effectively to development outcomes and impacts, has prompted the proposal of three impact pathways – value chains, programs, and policies – through which agricultural research can contribute to improved nutrition and health outcomes and impacts. In accepting this impact pathway approach, the A4NH program recognizes that fundamental changes in partnerships and capacity development will be required. As a first draft, this document aims to lay out the strategies and principles necessary for successful engagement in partnerships that will lead to enhanced impact on the ground.

During the development of the A4NH research proposal, stakeholder inputs were important in guiding the vision and scope of the research program. Now, as we move forward into planning and implementing A4NH, we are again asking for the inputs of stakeholders. In this draft partnership strategy, we have proposed ideas across essential stages of the partnering process. As an important next step, we are circulating this initial draft widely for the purpose of receiving constructive comments that will contribute to the development of a comprehensive strategy for developing and maintaining effective A4NH partnerships.

Innovative partnership practices will be imperative if this new agricultural research program is to contribute to improving health and nutrition for the poor. We look forward to your advice and guidance on how these partnerships can make a difference and be truly transformative.

John McDermott

Director, CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH)

1. Our common challenges

Hunger, malnutrition, and poor health are persistent development challenges that form the focus of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH). While agriculture has made remarkable advances in the past decades, progress in improving the nutrition and health of poor farmers and consumers in developing countries continues to lag behind. Thus, CGIAR introduced a new system-level outcome of improving nutrition and health to its long-standing outcomes of reducing poverty, improving food security and the sustainable use of natural resources. A4NH is a research program in CGIAR's research portfolio that is specifically designed to address this new CGIAR system-level outcome.

In taking on this new challenge, the A4NH program recognizes that transformative partnerships will be central for success. Transformative change is required to:

- Forge cooperation between agriculture, nutrition, and health sectors so they work together in new ways, understanding the contributions that each sector can make and how they can work together to achieve more;
- Strengthen the capacity of national research organizations and scientists in these sectors to provide knowledge, evidence, and direction to country, regional, and global development goals; and
- Build new relationships between researchers and development implementers and enablers for faster progress in achieving development outcomes and impacts.

The problems of poor nutrition and health are urgent. Contributions to improve nutrition and health in different contexts will be varied and need to be captured from a range of possible sources. For agriculture, the principle premise is that agricultural practices, interventions, and policies can be adapted and redesigned to maximize health and nutrition benefits and to reduce health risks.

One of A4NH's most important formative tasks is to engage with key partners around a common partnership strategy and according to a set of partnership principles. Our assumption is that better nutrition and health outcomes and impacts cannot be achieved without transforming current partnership approaches. That will include working in partnerships from the inception of an idea all the way through implementation of research findings. Yet, partnership development requires the right set of skills. The existing research that comes together under A4NH already works with an extensive network of partners, which will be adapted where needed. Some of the partnerships that exist are excellent, but some may benefit from improvement. There remain great opportunities for many national research and development partners to expand their roles and responsibilities across the spectrum of agriculture, nutrition, and health research for development.

The A4NH proposal used stakeholder inputs to guide its vision and scope. However, as we start to plan and implement the program, it is critical that we engage our partners in a systematic and specific process of defining a partnership strategy and agreeing on partnership principles. The strategy needs to incorporate strategic thinking, clear objectives and impact pathways, and systematic processes. Principles need to consider capacity, equity, performance, and new behaviors. This strategy and principles document begins by briefly describing the research program and its components. It then addresses the principles for partnerships around this program and some key steps for moving forward in the planning, development, and management of transformative partnerships.

2. The A4NH research program

The starting point for A4NH is that agricultural practices, interventions, and policies can be better adapted and redesigned to maximize health and nutrition benefits and reduce health risks. The primary focus of A4NH will be to contribute to improving human nutrition and health. To achieve this goal, A4NH will bring together research and development professionals across the agriculture, nutrition, and health (ANH) sectors to jointly tackle key challenges and design joint solutions.

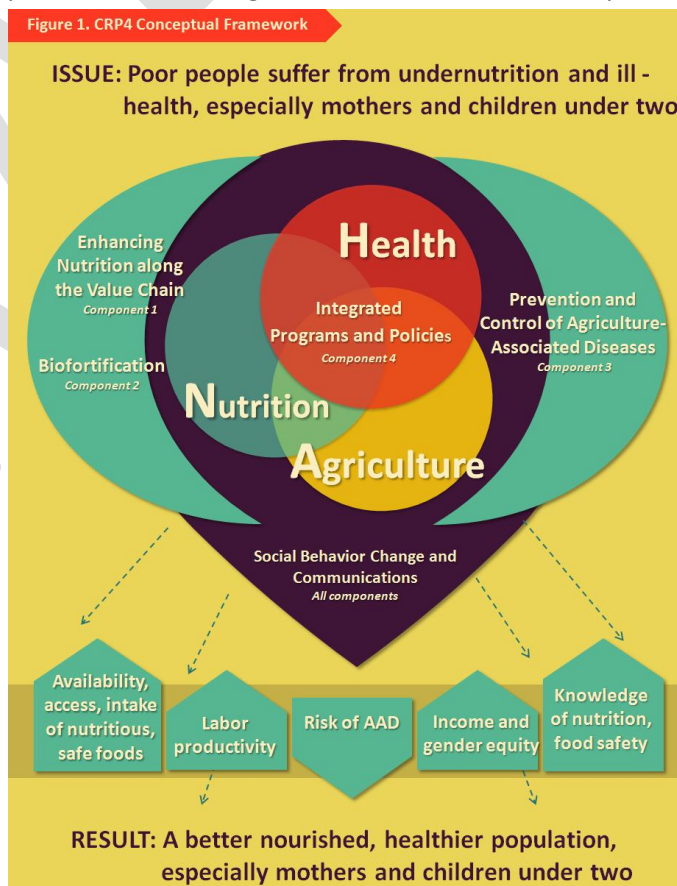
A4NH Strategic Goal

A4NH is a research program that **works to accelerate progress in improving the nutrition and health of poor people** by identifying, developing, and supporting synergies among agriculture, nutrition, and health through four key research components: value chains, biofortification, control of agriculture-associated diseases, and integrated agriculture, nutrition, and health-related programs and policies.

A4NH Strategic Framework and Research Components

The key development challenges that the program will address are the stubborn problems of undernutrition and ill health that affect millions of poor people in developing countries. A4NH will leverage agriculture to improve the nutrition and health of poor through four research components (see Figure 1). Component 1 focuses on opportunities to improve nutrition along value chains to increase the poor's access to nutritious foods. Component 2 aims to improve the availability, access, and intake of nutrient-rich, biofortified staple foods for the poor. Component 3 addresses food safety issues along the value chain, including the control of zoonotic diseases and the better management of agricultural systems to reduce the risk of human diseases. Component 4 addresses the need for integration among the agriculture, nutrition, and health sectors, at both the program and policy levels.

These four components were selected based on discussions and brainstorming with representatives from 12 CGIAR centers and a wide range of partners who participated in the A4NH planning meeting in July 2010. Their selection arises from the recognition and consensus that poor diet quality and related micronutrient deficiencies are now the most pressing nutritional problems affecting the poor. Similarly, the severe disease burden from food-borne infections and zoonotic diseases is associated with changes in agricultural practice and policy, and therefore requires agricultural solutions. As agriculture is the main livelihood strategy for the poor, it is they who are disproportionately affected by these health and nutrition problems. For A4NH to adequately tackle these challenges, the program team carefully assessed the opportunities that exist within the current (and



future) research portfolio of CGIAR and its partners to leverage agriculture to improve nutrition and health, and to exploit their potentially powerful synergies to achieve the common goal of improving the nutrition and health of the poor.

3. Overview of our main research areas

Value Chains for Enhanced Nutrition—will focus on increasing the demand for nutritious foods among poor rural and peri-urban households, and on identifying leverage points along the value chain where innovative nutrition interventions can be incorporated to stimulate both the supply and the demand for nutritious foods. It will build on work on value chains carried out by the CGIAR and other partners on nutritious (usually high-value) foods. Specifically, it will:

- Develop innovative approaches and tools to analyze the value chain, using a “nutrition lens” combined with a consumer focus
- Implement research to identify leverage entry points to enhance the nutritional value of select nutrient-rich foods along the value chain
- Develop tools to assess and correct information asymmetries regarding nutrition among different value-chain actors, including consumers

This component’s impact will result from (i) enhanced nutritional knowledge and awareness created among value chain actors, including consumers, and (ii) the greater selection of safe and affordable nutrient-rich foods available and accessible to the poor through informal and formal markets.

Biofortification—will develop and test biofortified, nutrient-dense staple crops and make these novel crops available to the poor and undernourished. This component incorporates the HarvestPlus Program which has developed a range of staple crop varieties with increased micronutrient levels and assessed their adoption and nutritional efficacy. The future focus will be on mainstreaming nutrient improvement into crop breeding programs and accelerating the delivery of micronutrient-rich crops through a variety of agri-food chains. This program plans to have a profound impact in lowering the prevalence of iron, zinc, and vitamin-A deficiencies over the next six years.

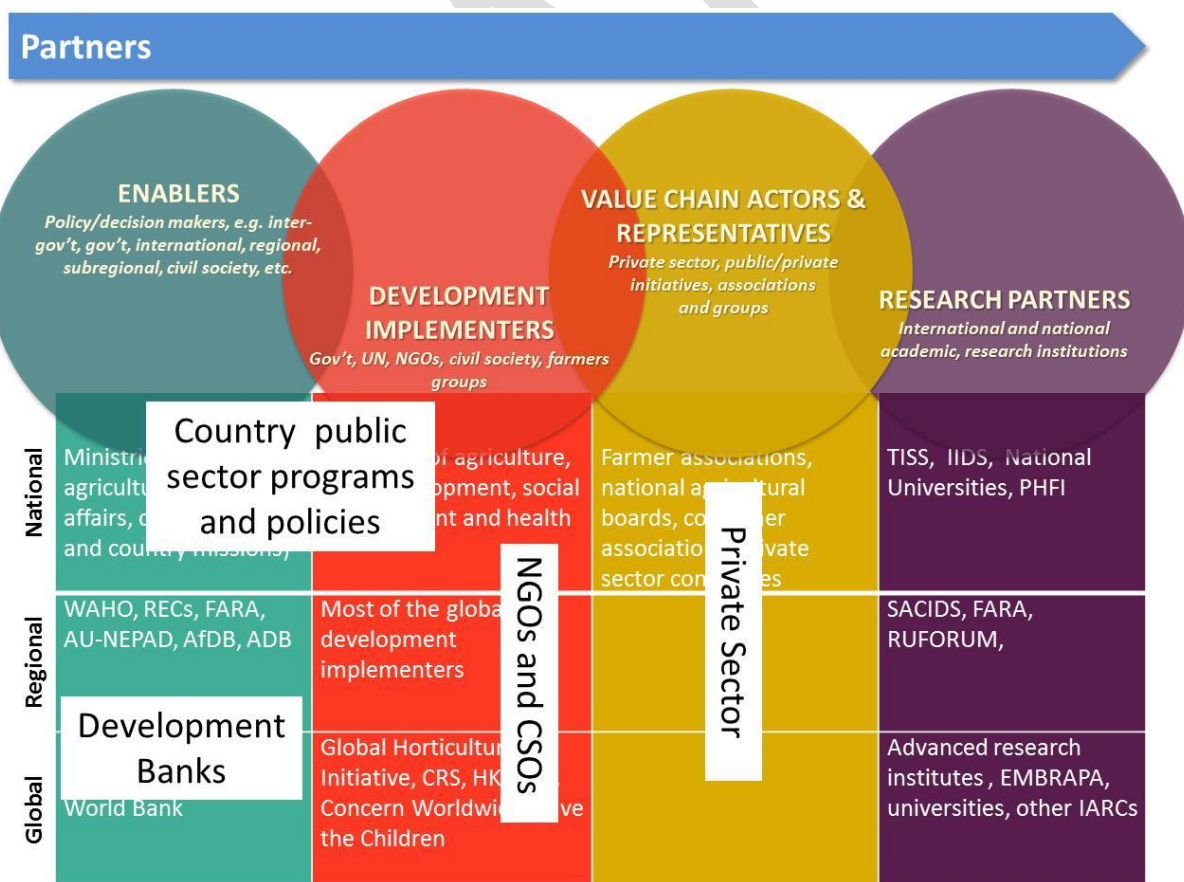
Prevention and Control of Agriculture-Associated Diseases—will enhance the health of poor communities by assessing, preventing, and mitigating agriculture-associated health risks through research for improved food and water safety; control of pathogens that can be transmitted from animals to humans (zoonoses); and management of agroecosystems for better health. This component will find and develop solutions and innovations to reduce the risks of agriculture-associated diseases; understand and support appropriate institutions and incentives that will make these efforts sustainable; assess the impact of interventions; and develop communications and advocacy strategies that will enable the uptake and use of those interventions.

Integrated Agriculture, Nutrition, and Health Programs and Policies—will exploit and enhance the synergies between agriculture, nutrition, and health through operational and policy research that permits (i) more effective integrated community-level programming, and (ii) the cultivation and strengthening of an enabling policy and institutional environment to support relevant action. This component will harness both the synergy of integrated programming and the potential for sustained policy commitment to best realize the benefits of agriculture, nutrition, and health.

While the research areas were designed to target the current priority research issues, they build on past research investments from CGIAR and partners. For this reason, some research areas are more advanced than others, which means they have done more of the basic research, have generated knowledge and technologies that are ready (or near ready) to go to scale, and are in the process of building relationships with key implementers and enablers who will take them to scale. Other research areas, such as those responding to gaps in the current portfolio, need more time to refine research agendas, consult partners, and evaluate their potential for impact before making significant investments in generating outputs with a high probability of going to scale.

4. Partnerships – essential for sustainable solutions to improve nutrition and health through agriculture

Partners outside of CGIAR play essential roles in every research area, as reflected by their significant share of the A4NH budget. A4NH is committed to a partnership process that incorporates strategic thinking, systematic processes with partners, innovative behaviors and resources, and implementation of best partnership performance practices. Though research plays an essential and catalytic role in the achievement of nutrition and health development outcomes and impacts, researchers must partner with and support others effectively for progress to be achieved. One way that this is achieved is through the alignment of development budgets to support effective scaling up of research outputs.



Depending on their roles, partners are classified into four broad categories: **enablers, development implementers, value chain partners, and research partners** (see Figure above). Some partners can play different roles at the same time. **Enablers** include policy and decision makers as well as investors who are all involved in the creation of enabling environments at different national, regional, international, and global levels. **Development implementers** such as government departments and ministries, the United Nations and other global initiatives, NGOs, civil society organizations, and farmers' groups, play critical roles in development programming. Also included in this category are value chain partners such as private-sector companies, public-private initiatives, associations, and groups that focus on the quality and safety of foods in value chains. **Research partners** include both advanced and developing-country research institutes and academic institutions at the national and international level that are involved in agriculture, nutrition, and health.

5. Next steps –

The challenges outlined for agriculture, nutrition and health require urgent action. Research is just one element for sustainable solutions. You can learn more about progress in A4NH and hear the views of some of our current partners by looking at our [2012 Annual Report](#).

As we develop the second phase of A4NH activities, we want to engage new and innovative partners. Please contact with us with your ideas and thoughts.

John McDermott (j.mcdermott@ccgiar.org) A4NH Director

Further details of the A4NH program can be found at www.a4nh.cgiar.org.