



THE GLOBAL GOALS



August 2022

NL-CGIAR Event Report: Open for Business Strengthening CGIAR-private sector engagement for innovation and scaling

Report of a hybrid partnership event

April 12, 2022, The Hague, the Netherlands



Introduction

This report describes the main outcomes and insights from the hybrid NL-CGIAR Partnership Event that was held on April 12, 2022 in The Hague, the Netherlands. This landmark Partnership Event took place to strengthen the CGIAR-private sector engagement for innovation and scaling. The event provided an excellent opportunity for CGIAR and its partners (research, government, civil society and private sector organisations) to discuss, share experiences, evaluate and identify pathways for strengthening collaboration between CGIAR and the for-profit private sector. The report '[Open for business - Pathways to strengthen CGIAR's responsible private sector engagement](#)' was launched during the meeting where the Netherlands and CGIAR renewed their Strategic Partnership through the official signing of an MoU for 3 years. The Netherlands commissioned the report, which is authored by a team of both CGIAR and Dutch scientists.

In the opening address Myrtille Danse, Executive Director of the [Netherlands Food Partnership](#), highlighted the importance of the partnership between the Government of the Netherlands and CGIAR in the context of collaborating on the private sector engagement agenda for food system transformation to achieve sustainable food systems in low and middle income countries.

The event was moderated by Amanda Harding of [Convene](#), who ensured that a space was created where those participating in the event could hear about and share new insights through keynotes and case study presentations. They were thereby able to engage in thought-provoking discussions throughout different sections of the event programme.

The meeting had a hybrid character. The morning, including the signing of the MoU and the presentation of the Special Report, was attended live by about 45 participants in the Hague, and 140 online. The afternoon, with many case studies and in depth discussions on how CGIAR and the private sector can best implement partnerships was online, attended by 52 participants from various backgrounds. Around 30 people that had attended live meeting in the morning made use of the opportunity to participate in the online afternoon event from the venue in The Hague.

As the event was organised in a hybrid setting and most of the event is available to watch back online, this event report will not provide a complete overview of the subjects presented and discussed at the event. Rather, it provides some of the main highlights of the presentations and conversations. To help the reader, hyperlinks are provided throughout the document to the recordings of those sections and other related and relevant documents.

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1. Continuing a successful NL-CGIAR Strategic Partnership

Joining the conversation: **Kitty van der Heijden**, Director-General International Cooperations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; **Marije Beens**, Director-General Agro, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality; **Elwyn Grainger-Jones**, Managing Director, Institutional Strategy and Systems, CGIAR.

The first conversation of the event provided space to reflect on the long-standing relationship between the Government of the Netherlands and CGIAR as well as to consider its future. The Netherlands joined CGIAR in 1971 as a founding member. CGIAR has a long history of collaboration with leading Dutch universities, advanced research institutes and development organisations. Since the establishment of the 'Strategic NL-CGIAR Partnership' in 2015, through signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, the relationship of the Government of the Netherlands and CGIAR deepened from being mainly a funder and a recipient of funds to being strategic partners.

Elwyn Grainger-Jones shared that the collaboration between CGIAR and the Netherlands is not just about a funding relationship but also a thought partnership. In this partnership especially the engagement with food system thinking as well as efforts to strengthen CGIAR's partnership model have been essential elements of the partnership over the last years. Elwyn emphasised that **"institutions only remain relevant if they change at least at the speed at which the world is changing around them"**. Especially in the context of the urgent action needed to respond to climate change, CGIAR and partners need to consider how they will keep up and respond to rapidly changing needs.

Kitty van der Heijden highlighted the importance of the partnership creating space for research from the Netherlands and CGIAR to be shared and strengthened. Additionally she emphasized the need to look for impact on the ground and for the need for integrated system thinking.



Kitty shared that the importance of food security is on the rise: **“what we need to do is not just more ambition in terms of systems thinking but more action and linking that to national action pathways and adaptation to climate change”**, and she emphasised that it is up to the best scientists and the private sector together to make this happen.

Marije Beens provided insights on the need for public-private partnerships, stressing that: **“mobilising capacities of the private sector is essential to achieving the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals”**. She shared that at this moment the world is facing some of its biggest challenges: providing a growing population with enough, affordable and nutritious food, and the impact of climate change and other environmental challenges. Now more than ever it is visible how vulnerable our food system and its dependencies are (e.g. the consequences of COVID-19 and of the invasion in Ukraine). In this context Marije emphasises that the private sector can provide technical solutions and knowledge and can make impact together with research. What is needed is more ideas, more innovation and more strategic partners of which the private sector is one.

When looking into the future of the partnership, all spoke about the need to intensify the translation ideas into action. Elwyn accentuated the need for all to change the way we work, including science, institutions and policies. CGIAR has been in an extensive reformulation process itself and there is the urgency to get the new portfolio up and running. Marije mentioned that it remains important to highlight great examples and put into practice the best approaches to achieve the biggest impact. Kitty argued that **“we should move from PPP to triple S”**. Explaining that pilots, publications or PR should not be the main focus, but instead **System thinking, Solid partnerships** between science and policy, and **Scaling** (innovation, digital opportunities and new business models) should propel the way forward.



Following the conversation on the strategic partnership, a new [Memorandum of Understanding](#) was signed. The renewed MoU shows the continued commitment to collaborate towards the achievement of common objectives that contribute to transformational change in food, land and water systems around the world. The agreement focuses in particular on domains where CGIAR and Dutch partners have complementary expertise and promotes research impact through interdisciplinary research approaches, co-creation and downstream applied research partnerships, including private sector and civil society organisations. In order to stimulate more intense collaboration between the Government of the Netherlands, CGIAR and partners (including research institutes, private sector, civil society and government) several instruments will be developed.

[Click here to view the partnership conversation on signing of the MoU](#)

2. Keynote: Private Sector Engagement in CGIAR

Keynote speaker: **Juan Lucas Restrepo**, Global Director, Partnership and Advocacy, CGIAR

Juan Lucas Restrepo presented the current thinking of CGIAR on private sector engagement, starting with the fundamental changes in its strategy and implementation. [CGIAR](#) will deliver science and innovation that advances transformation of food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis, through three Action Areas:

1. Genetic Innovation
2. Resilient Agri-Food Systems
3. System Transformation

But this is only part of the story, **“It is about generating an enabling environment for impact where we learn from great history but understand that to meet societal challenges and environmental degradation we need to change our thinking and how we do business”**. Therefore the reform is also about how CGIAR connects to the ground and aligns efforts around a number of SDG related outcomes. Collaboration with partners is cross-cutting within the [CGIAR 2030 Research & Innovation Strategy](#), building on the network of current partners but also reflecting on CGIAR’s own role in a changing ecosystem. Recently [CGIAR published a prototype engagement framework](#), which means there is a single framework outlining the ambitions, guidelines and value propositions for how to drive engagement forward and partner up as a system.

The private sector is central to these efforts. Therefore a Private Partnerships for Impact unit is being set up. This unit will organise activities in a distributed manner around three main areas: capacity sharing, support services, and priority approaches for impact.

Juan Lucas reflected on the Special Report which was launched during the event (see page 7), highlighting the importance of the many cases, stories and experiences the recommendations of the report build on. The report has helped shape new ways for CGIAR to engage with the private sector to achieve impact at scale.

In a brief question and answer round Juan Lucas reflected on some of the main challenges of partnerships with the private sector. He mentioned that the culture in science (behaviour and incentives) needs to change to better understand that the private sector is a great pathway towards impact.

When it comes to the wide range of private sector partners in the current landscape, Juan Lucas elaborated that CGIAR knows the private sector landscape very well and considers the full landscape as important in developing the CGIAR framework. CGIAR needs to identify new pathways for engagement with the private sector for the coming years in order to understand and align with demand on the ground.

[Click here to view the keynote on private sector engagement in CGIAR](#) and [click here to view the presentation slides](#)

3. Case: Promoting stress-tolerant varieties at scale

Speaker: **Francesco Cecchi**, Postdoctoral fellow, Development Economics Group of Wageningen University and Research

Following the keynote on the private sector engagement strategy in CGIAR, a more practical example of what this can look like was shared with the audience. Francesco Cecchi explained the idea behind the 3-year research project funded through CGIAR and NWO-WOTRO; [ACRE Africa](#), by showing how they tried to interlink stress-tolerant crop varieties introduced by the private sector in Kenya with complementary risk mitigating inputs (innovative financial and advisory services provided by **ACRE Africa**).



One of the examples provided concerned the use of smartphones for picture-based insurance, which largely reduced the transaction costs of having to travel to the field to observe damage. Another example is picture-based advisory services, where farmers can send pictures to agronomists who subsequently provide advice. Also new in the programme was the 'model of delivery'. In the programme ACRE Africa champion farmers play a role as local opinion shapers. This resulted in increased adoption of these packages. At the same time, ACRE Africa learned that farmers were not willing to pay for the seed before delivery, whereas the private sector was disinclined to deliver the seeds without first receiving payment. Francesco revealed that programmes implementing such innovations must also be prepared to budget the costs for such innovation risks, arguing: **"we cannot always expect the smallholder farmers to pay for this innovation risk"**.

The **main lessons** learned regarding the partnership collaboration included:

- Importance of building trust and social capital between partners;
- Adaptive management in projects is important;
- Time and micromanagement has been very intensive and greater than thought initially;
- Long-term investments are high risk with potential high returns.

The **main recommendations** included:

- Need for flexibility in programmes, also from the donor side;
- Know that trust grows over time;
- Consider that not all private sector stakeholders have the capacity to micromanage programmes.
- Consider not all researchers have the specific managerial skills for these complicated programmes.

[Click here to view the presentation of the case](#) and
[click here to view the presentation slides](#)

4. Launch of Special Report: "Open for Business"

Speaker: **Marc Schut**, Senior Innovation and Scaling Scientist and Strategic Advisor Innovation, Scaling and Stage-Gating at Wageningen University and Research and CGIAR.

On behalf of the author and editorial team.

During the event, a new Special Report: ["Open for Business – Pathways to Strengthen CGIAR's Responsible Private Sector Engagement"](#) commissioned by the NL-CGIAR Strategic Partnership was launched. The report aimed to bring together experts from CGIAR and the Netherlands to develop actionable ways for CGIAR to strengthen collaboration with the private sector, especially in innovation and scaling.

Marc Schut provided a brief introduction to the report in his presentation. He explained that the private sector is recognized in the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy as an essential partner for innovation and scaling and that the One CGIAR transition offers a great opportunity for further improving the way in which CGIAR engages with the private sector to enhance its impact. At the same time, encouraging scaling and innovation partnerships with the private sector is strongly supported and advocated for by the Netherlands, who have a strong track record in developing such partnerships.



The Special Report elaborates on more than 10 case studies that describe how partners and CGIAR have already worked together. The case studies share some of the main lessons learned to inform current and future opportunities for CGIAR's engagement strategy. By building on these experiences, the Special Report addresses questions on five main themes concerning private sector engagement: (1) benefits of private sector engagement, (2) risks and challenges, (3) key principles, (4) key mechanisms and (5) institutional actions.

In his presentation Marc Schut elaborated on a few of the main lessons learned and recommendations as shared in the report:

- **Embrace opportunities** (capacity sharing, co-investment in innovation and scaling and advocacy for system transformation) and **manage risk** (there is a need to acknowledge them, take them seriously and manage them)
- It is important to not reinvent the wheel but work and **build on the rich experience and lessons learned** already available in CGIAR.
- **Empower CGIAR teams on the ground** to make private sector engagement happen. "Though centralised CGIAR principles and backstopping is important, the Special Report emphasises that real private sector engagement happens on the ground, by staff and partners, in the countries where CGIAR is working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".
- Explore **mainstreaming novel mechanisms** with the private sector to provide opportunities for kick-starting and boosting CGIAR-private sector engagement.

In terms of recommended next steps Marc Schut shared the following:

Step 1 - An organisational approach: the authors recommend looking at the organisational approach for private sector engagement in CGIAR. Thereby emphasising the need to ensure internal alignment on how to take this engagement forward.

- **Step 2 - Mandated Task force:** In addition, it is recommended to develop a temporary task force that can start a consultation process in CGIAR and with other external stakeholders to discuss the recommendations of this report and receive wider inputs.
- **Step 3 - Strategic action plan:** The input from the Special Report should contribute to a strategic action plan that can work in practice and explore setting up a one-stop-shop for CGIAR's private sector engagement. Such a one-stop-shop could host various support roles and functions, including a think tank and advisory board, provide legal and contracting support, facilitate a community of practice, lead capacity development, and facilitate monitoring, evaluation and learning. CGIAR should explore novel engagement mechanisms, such as innovation hubs, scaling accelerators, and co-investment arrangements, but should also ensure mechanisms can be tailored to different types of private sector in a range of contexts and regions.

[Click here to view the presentation of the Special Report](#) and
[click here to view the presentation slides](#)

5. In conversation with the private sector

Joining the conversation: **Maaïke Groot**, Manager public affairs and communication, East-West Seed, Thailand & the Netherlands; **Willemien van Asselt**, director international relations and cooperation, Topsector Agri & Food, the Netherlands; **Elwyn Grainger-Jones**, Managing Director, Institutional Strategy and Systems, CGIAR.

This session provided private sector perspectives, insights, experiences and advice reflecting on the information shared during the presentations earlier in the programme. Maaïke Groot reflected on why partnering is essential to their work from her experience from working in a family business focused on developing tropical vegetable seeds, East-West Seed (EWS). EWS aims to develop better vegetable varieties for smallholder farmers in tropical countries and cater to approximately 200 million farmers. They also train farmers through their knowledge foundation to get the most out of the provided seed. Maaïke emphasized that EWS need partners (NGO's, governments and research institutes) to be able to do this effectively. They cannot do this alone as a moderately sized company. **PPP partnerships are therefore crucial for reaching scale.**



Reflecting on some of the success factors for working with the private sector, Willemien informed the audience on the Dutch Topsector approach. The approach is two-fold: a big part concerns public-private research and development in the Netherlands for a mission driven agenda, while the other part concerns the connection with other countries based on what is done in the Netherlands. Thus, contributing to the establishment of private-public partnerships in these other countries as well. An important lesson learned is that it is therefore **“important to connect with the triple helix (private sector, research companies and governments) there as well”**. Thus also connecting across different scales.

When it comes to ambition and opportunities, Maaïke stressed the importance for research organizations of being careful to compete with the private sector. Research organisations need to make sure that their plans do not limit the initiatives, sustainability and investments made by the private sector. Another important focus mentioned by Maaïke is to work locally and understand local market dynamics. Additionally, Maaïke mentioned that it can be difficult and unattractive for private companies to work through a tender structure for projects. She sees the need for **more opportunities for co-creation** and increased understanding of the needs of the various organisations in the partnerships and the set timeframes for programmes. Willemien added that they are experimenting with different forms of partnerships, now experimenting by putting the companies in the driving seat and adding research to the company questions instead of the other way around. This emphasises the need to better understand what the private sector needs and what other partners can offer. Willemien mentions that she thinks that exchange between experiences and approaches used across borders will be important, seeing a role for CGIAR in this regard as well.

Elwyn Grainger-Jones underscores that we are now in a food system crisis. He explains that this crisis could be used as a moment to accelerate the food system transformation or it could be a moment to move backwards, through for example increased trade nationalism and environmental degradations.



To ensure that we move in the right direction Elwyn states that we need partnerships as **“there is just no way we can transform food systems if we operate alone”**. For CGIAR, it is thus important to strengthen partnerships with the private sector to ensure that innovation and thinking does not remain unused. As the private sector is the main actor on the ground, It is important to understand the needs of these private sector actors. Private sector actors are needed as a funding partner and for capacity sharing. CGIAR needs them for their innovation and as a scaling partner to reach impact at scale.

[Click here to view the conversation with the private sector](#)

6. Closing of the morning session

Closing statements made by: **Martin Kropff**, Global Director Resilient Agrifood Systems, CGIAR.

Martin Kropff reflected on the morning session by firstly emphasising the importance of the Special Report. Martin stressed that the timing could not be more perfect with the CGIAR Initiatives now being implemented on the ground. On the role of the private sector, Martin reflected on the many sensitivities and opportunities highlighted, stating: **“When we use all our brains together, we can do something”**. In addition, Martin highlighted some of his key takeaways for CGIAR from the morning session:

- We need action, in line with the Initiatives of CGIAR now being implemented
- Show examples of scaling with the private sector, and sharing lessons learned
- System thinking, scaling and science for impact is important and can be achieved by working together with the private sector
- Use the detailed recommendations of the Special Report to further shape the engagement strategy of CGIAR with the private sector.

He shared an overarching mission: **“together we have to ascertain that research helps to transform our agricultural food systems for more affordable, sufficient and healthy diets produced within planetary boundaries”**.

[Click here to view the closing of the morning session](#)

7. Opening of afternoon session and case examples

The afternoon session, which was facilitated through Zoom, followed up on the morning session by discussing the Special Report and its key recommendations and highlighting several existing and practical examples of private sector collaborations. As was highlighted in the morning session, sharing lessons learned and examples of partnerships with the private sector are seen as essential in strengthening engagement strategies. The afternoon session therefore specifically allocated time to three case studies to share some of the main insights and lessons learned. Some of the main insights are shared below.

CocoaSoils case study: Public-Private Partnership: A conveying mechanism for effective delivery

Speaker: Theresa Ampadu-Boakye, CGIAR - IITA

Theresa Ampadu-Boakye shared some of the main insights from [CocoaSoils](#). In this partnership several private partners participate in addition to donors, national research institutes and international research centres. The overall objective of this 5-year project is a sustainable cocoa supply sector with increased productivity of cocoa farms, efficient use of agricultural inputs and improved rural livelihoods while reducing the risk of cocoa-driven deforestation.

Theresa highlighted three of the **main outputs/outcomes**:

- Established convening platform for stakeholders across countries and partners.
- Established Satellite Trial sites, led by private sector partners to generate research recommendations.
- Development of training manuals together with the private sector.

Main lessons learned regarding partnering with the private sector were:

- Multi-stakeholder and multi-country approaches are key to address the many challenges faced by the cocoa industry.
- Partnerships with the private sector serve as an excellent avenue for sharing information and sustaining the dissemination of both existing and new research recommendations.
- The link between Research for Development and Partnership for Delivery provides a useful platform for country-level alignment, development, validation and integration of research recommendations.

[Click here to view the case presentation on CocoaSoils](#) and [click here to view the presentation slides](#)

Climate smart food systems fund case study: co-designing with investors science-based solutions to unlock capital.

Speaker: Godefroy Grosjean, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

Godefroy Grosjean shared some of the main insights from the Climate Smart Food Systems fund. The aim is to provide long-term expansion debt to innovative businesses operating in the food value chain in Asia Pacific, Latin America and Africa with the goal of mitigating climate change, reducing food loss and promoting climate change resilience of smallholder farmers.

Godefroy highlighted several of the main outputs/outcomes:

- Collaboration for science-based, reliable data (theory of change and impact KPIs).
- Tools for screening and sourcing of bankable projects. This reduces the transaction cost and bottlenecks in the pipeline towards bankable projects.

Main lessons learned regarding partnering with the private sector were:

- Partnership with the private sector should be intended to leverage science to facilitate the flow of capital to transform food systems.
- Shared ownership and systemic impact could lead to systemic/ecosystem change in sustainable finance.
- Demand driven research by working and engaging closely with private investors is essential to identify needs and design evidence-based responses to these needs.

[Click here to view the case presentation on climate smart food systems fund](#) and [click here to view the presentation slides](#)

CGIAR Scaling Fund case study: flexible and dedicated funding facilitated private sector engagement for scaling

Speaker: **Graham Thiele**, CGIAR - CIP

Graham Thiele shared some of the main insights from the Roots, Tubers & Bananas Scaling Fund. The Scaling Fund progressively filtered innovations and innovation packages to see which ones were most scaling ready and held internal competitions with external reviewers to indicate those innovations that would have the highest chance of success.

Graham shared some of the main lessons learned regarding partnering with the private sector:

- The flexible dedicated Scaling Fund enabled strategic collaboration with the private sector, improved scaling readiness and enhanced scaling.
- The Scaling Readiness approach allowed for the unpacking of innovation packages and provided opportunities to zoom in on bottlenecks with the private sector.
- The Scaling Readiness approach requires agile backstopping, facilitation of scaling processes and “scaling champions”.

[Click here to view the case presentation on CGIAR Scaling Fund](#) and [click here to view the presentation slides](#)

8. Main insights from parallel break-out sessions

Following the three case studies, all participants were invited to join one of the three breakout sessions and join a collaborative deep-dive on several important topics. The following presents some of the main outcomes of those group discussions, as shared to the plenary after the breakout sessions.

Breakout session 1: Guidelines for developing a one-stop-shop for CGIAR and/or a Private Sector Engagement Task Team

with Marc Schut (CGIAR) and session rapporteur Frans Verberne (NFP).

Three main points from the discussion were presented to the plenary:

1. **A one-stop shop should not be top down.** Especially to make it work in the local context, a tailor-made approach is required. Top down organisation risks reducing the opportunities for tailor-made approaches.
2. **Focus should include young entrepreneurs and small & medium enterprises.** It was reflected that partnerships with multinationals are considered 'easy', but that for working with individuals/entrepreneurs and small businesses novel mechanisms will be required.
3. **Dedicated funding and capacity is a requirement for success.**

To add on to these recommendations, several functions for the one-stop shop were shared as the main outcomes of the break-out session.

- It is important to learn from achievements at the start and further down the road.
- Linkages outside of CGIAR with others can increase shared learning from other experiences.
- Supporting scientists to communicate with the private sector, for example by setting in place intermediaries who can support these processes.
- Offering intelligence on what the private sector needs and linking to what CGIAR has to offer.
- Placing CGIAR scientists to work in the private sector, for those who would be willing.

"A one-stop-shop with strong decentralised mechanisms".

Breakout session 2: Lessons learned and your own experiences

with Sarah Cummings (Wageningen University & Research) and session rapporteur Kristina Röing de Nowina (CGIAR).

Three main points from the discussion were presented to the plenary:

- It is important to also involve the public sector and not just focus on the private sector.
- Discussions surrounded questions such as: **"what is the private sector**, particularly when looking at the situation in low and middle income countries?", **"How to make sure that activities reach everyone**, especially also the informal sector?". The notion of learning can be very important here, with the experiences shared in the Special Report being only the 'tip of the iceberg' in experiences that could inform CGIAR and others.
- Also a focal point of discussion was the question of how to manage the risk of engaging with the private sector. Also here focussing on what that entails specifically for the small and medium enterprises.

As a result of these discussions in the break-out session, several main conclusions were shared:

- Co4: co-learn (there is still a lot that we don't understand), co-design and co-develop (moving beyond a centralised approach), and co-investment (from both public and private sector).

- Everything that CGIAR puts out in the world should be scaling ready. This to minimise the risk of reducing the uptake and adaptation of innovations.
- **Activities need to be aligned with the specifics of the country.** In terms of the country's frameworks and needs, this establishes an enabling environment for the partnership that will be acceptance-ready. Actors to consider in this regard are Ministries, NARS and others in this field.

The main recommendations shared from these discussions are:

- Ensure that private sector actors co-create the engagement framework of CGIAR. This will facilitate a framework that is demand-driven and lays the foundation for the priorities and modalities for the future.
- Discussions surrounded questions such as: "what is the private sector, particularly when looking at the situation in low- and middle-income countries?", "How to make sure that activities reach everyone, especially the informal sector?". The notion of learning can be very important here, with the experiences shared in the Special Report being only the 'tip of the iceberg' of insightful experiences that could inform CGIAR and others.
- Also a focal point of discussion was the question of how to manage the risk of engaging with the private sector. With particular focus in the discussion on what such risks entails specifically for engaging with the small and medium enterprises.
- The role of farmers has to be understood and considered. Only through working in such a way can an adaptive innovative entrepreneurial approach be achieved.

"Always include farmers and the public sector with a forward looking adaptive and innovative approach"

Breakout session 3: CGIAR assets and its place in the Ag Tech and Innovation Ecosystem with **Jana Koerner** (previous CGIAR - Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, now **Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt**) and session rapporteur **Young Wha Lee** (CGIAR).

Three main points discussed were presented to the plenary:

- CGIAR's comparative advantage in bringing agricultural innovations to real world impact.
- Experiences on what has hampered effective engagement in the past.
- Skills and capacities. With focus on discussing what is needed to bring into the CGIAR system to promote demand driven research and private sector collaboration.

As a result of these discussions in the break-out session, several main conclusions were shared:

- CGIAR's comparative advantage concerns two elements: namely (1) the presence of CGIAR in hard-to-reach markets where there is inherently more risk for the private sector, (2) CGIAR's specialist knowledge in last mile delivery and adoption in relation to smallholder markets that has been gained over decades.
- CGIAR operations, with its multiple layers of decision making, would benefit from increasing the speed in its processes to align better with the timeline of the private sector.
- What would CGIAR need going forward? An operational model that will allow for an empowered team on the ground, the ability to form multidisciplinary teams for demand driven research, and an inventory of innovations.

The main recommendations shared from these discussions are:

- There is a need for an operational model that allows empowerment and agility, with empowered teams on the ground. Within this model flexibility to form different consortia depending on need in the scaling stage should be embedded. Additionally, there is a need for different engagement strategies with smaller local enterprises than available for large corporations.
- There is also a need for scientists in CGIAR to play a role in the formation of multidisciplinary teams for demand driven research. Additionally, an inventory of innovations from CGIAR to communicate outward and the scouting of external innovations to connect with CGIAR impact pathways would be of benefit.
- There is a need for specialist staff in CGIAR with private sector experience to facilitate the interface with the private sector.

“An operational model that allows empowerment and agility: empowered teams on the ground with a mandate, funds, and flexibility”

[Click here to view the presentations from the parallel break-out sessions](#)

9. Closing Remarks

Closing statements made by: Juan Lucas Restrepo, Global Director, Partnership and Advocacy, CGIAR

“Empowerment, agility and skills of CGIAR staff will be critical to succeed in this endeavour”

In his closing remarks, Juan Lucas Restrepo reflected firstly on the signing of the renewed MoU, stating that it will certainly provide the opportunity for mutual benefits and social capital for both the Netherlands and CGIAR. Secondly, he recognised the importance of all the conversations and input shared during the event as a means to strengthen CGIAR’s engagement strategy with the private sector. This is important, because partnership with the private sector is an important impact pathway for CGIAR to reach the 2030 goals. Juan Lucas specifically reflected on the launch of the Special Report, emphasising that the experiences and recommendations shared, also during the event itself, are recognised as a great effort that can support CGIAR in developing its private sector engagement strategy further. Juan Lucas stated that the Special Report provides a wealth of knowledge and experience that can only grow from this point forward. He emphasises the conversations during the event will make a valuable contribution in addition to the Special Report and will be included in strengthening CGIAR’s engagement strategy. To close the event Juan Lucas shared his gratitude to everybody that made this event possible and a success.

[Click here to view the closing remarks](#)



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