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"Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation: Trade-offs and synergies"

Innovation scaling for equitable food systems transformation: Introducing an innovation bundle profiling tool to enhance scalability

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Abstract

While growth and innovations in the food sector have improved food security and livelihoods, food systems have strained natural resources and gains made were not necessarily equal amongst actors and farmers. The CGIAR Rethinking Food Markets Initiative aims to provide evidence on what types of bundled innovations, incentive structures and policies are most effective for creating more equitable sharing of income and employment opportunities, while reducing the food sector's environmental footprint. Scoping studies on food system innovations were conducted in seven countries (Ethiopia, Nigeria, Uganda, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, Honduras and Guatemala) and combined with participatory workshops to co-design innovation bundles and interventions. This led to the development of an innovation bundle profiling tool which allows research teams to capture information on bundle components and characteristics, the bundling process, and to identify potential scaling pathways for enhancing impact. The tool was piloted in Honduras for an innovative commercialisation scheme to increase coffee quality and prices. The results provided a detailed overview of required actor relationships and resources for bundle testing and scaling; a market-led scaling strategy for the bundle, in which research for development plays a partnering role, supporting scaling actors with evidence on impacts. As part of adaptive management and process tracing, the profile entries shall be revised regularly to reflect novel insights and adjusted strategies. The profiling tool is applicable to any innovation bundle aimed at transforming food systems. The openly accessible tool is modular and user friendly. It is useful for researchers who are in the stage of developing or refining an innovation bundle as well as those who want to prepare for or reflect on their scaling success or failure. The profiling tool serves to enhance innovation bundle scalability, constituting an important catalyst for food systems transformation.

Keywords: CGIAR, co-design, coffee, Honduras, market-led scaling, process tracing, R4D, value chains

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