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## Leveraging agroecological transitions: Experiences from the CGIAR initiative on agroecology

MARCELA QUINTERO<sup>1</sup>, VERONIQUE ALARY<sup>2,4</sup>, SARAH FREED<sup>3</sup>, AYMEN FRIJA<sup>4</sup>, LISA FUCHS<sup>5</sup>, SARAH JONES<sup>1</sup>, CHRISTINE LAMANNA<sup>5</sup>, GUILLERMO ORJUELA<sup>1</sup>, SIMONE STAIGER<sup>1</sup>, CLAUDIA TRISTAN<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*The Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, Colombia*

<sup>2</sup>*SELMET, CIRAD, INRAE, Institut Agro, Université Montpellier, France*

<sup>3</sup>*World Fish, Cambodia*

<sup>4</sup>*International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Tunisia*

<sup>5</sup>*Center for International Forestry Research-World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), Kenya*

### Abstract

Agroecology is defined by a set of principles that can enhance food system resilience, equity, and sustainability. These principles imply changes in the way food is produced, how farmers are connected to the rest of the food system, and how food reaches consumers.

The CGIAR Initiative on Agroecology works in “Agroecological Living Landscapes” (ALLs), where diverse food system actors are convened to work towards commonly agreed agroecological transition pathways with focus on: i) evidence building, assessing what agroecological innovations work best, where, why, and for whom, ii) agroecological business opportunities and financial mechanisms for local enterprises, iii) strategies and action plans that encourage, and support behavior change oriented to agroecology, and iv) suitable agroecological policies and policy integrations.

Examples from three countries showcase how systemic and participatory approaches in ALLs support different agroecological transitions:

**Kenya:** The ALLs, located in the Murang’a / Machakos corridor are related to the advancement of sustainable production systems including practices such as plant-based biopesticides, farmyard manure, terraces, water harvesting and agroforestry. The transition pathway includes strengthening farmers’ networks and connectivity to markets, and the creation of inclusive business models in prioritized value chains (mango and green leafy vegetables). This work is connected to country-level efforts led by the Inter Sectoral Forum on Agroecology and Agrobiodiversity (ISFAA) to develop a national agroecology policy.

**Tunisia:** The transition pathway focuses on various production systems that interplay in the ALL situated in the transect El Kef-Siliana: Crop-livestock, olive agroforestry, and honey and carobs systems. Innovations aim at crop diversification and rotation, feed management to cope with forage scarcity during dry periods, input reduction, and recycling, coupled with business model improvements (I.e., valorizing the Tunisian olive oil in the market). Like Kenya, the initiative supports the development of a national strategy, in this case for crop-livestock systems.

**Peru:** The focus of the ALL located in Ucayali is to enhance the sustainable production of organic cocoa systems including agricultural diversification of smallholders farming, increased inclusivity of the current business models, and scaling the approach in the region

with greater support from policy makers and investors. In support of the transition, ALL actors agreed to explore carbon markets as a complementary financial strategy for the transition.

The initiative developed and now applies a Holistic Localized Performance Assessment Framework comparing the status of agroecological principles across contexts and setting a baseline for monitoring progress. Studies of past agroecological initiatives in the ALL regions distil the key determinants for behavioural change.

**Keywords:** Agroecology, agroecological transitions, Global South