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Trade-offs: The Value of Understanding the Consequences of Choices



Independent
Science for
Development
Council

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Fact Sheet 2

TRADE-OFFS WITHIN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS

ISDC leads various rigorous, science-based activities guided by the principle of independence to support the One CGIAR reform. The 2020 approved workplan focuses on delivering thought-leadership to the System on **trade-off analysis and analytics, and how these can best serve in the research strategy and program modalities design.**

Making informed and evidence-based management portfolio decisions to deliver One CGIAR's mission, *Ending hunger by 2030—through science to transform food, land and water systems in a climate crisis*, requires consideration of potential trade-offs among intended impacts.

ISDC engaged global experts to develop a trade-off analysis report that built on a recent foresight synthesis and ISDC consensus building. The aim was to investigate the possible impacts of different CGIAR future investments across the One CGIAR's five impact areas, along with plausible alternative development pathways. The report reviewed the conceptual foundations of trade-off analysis, described current data and modeling tools from farm to global scales, and identified their strengths and limitations.

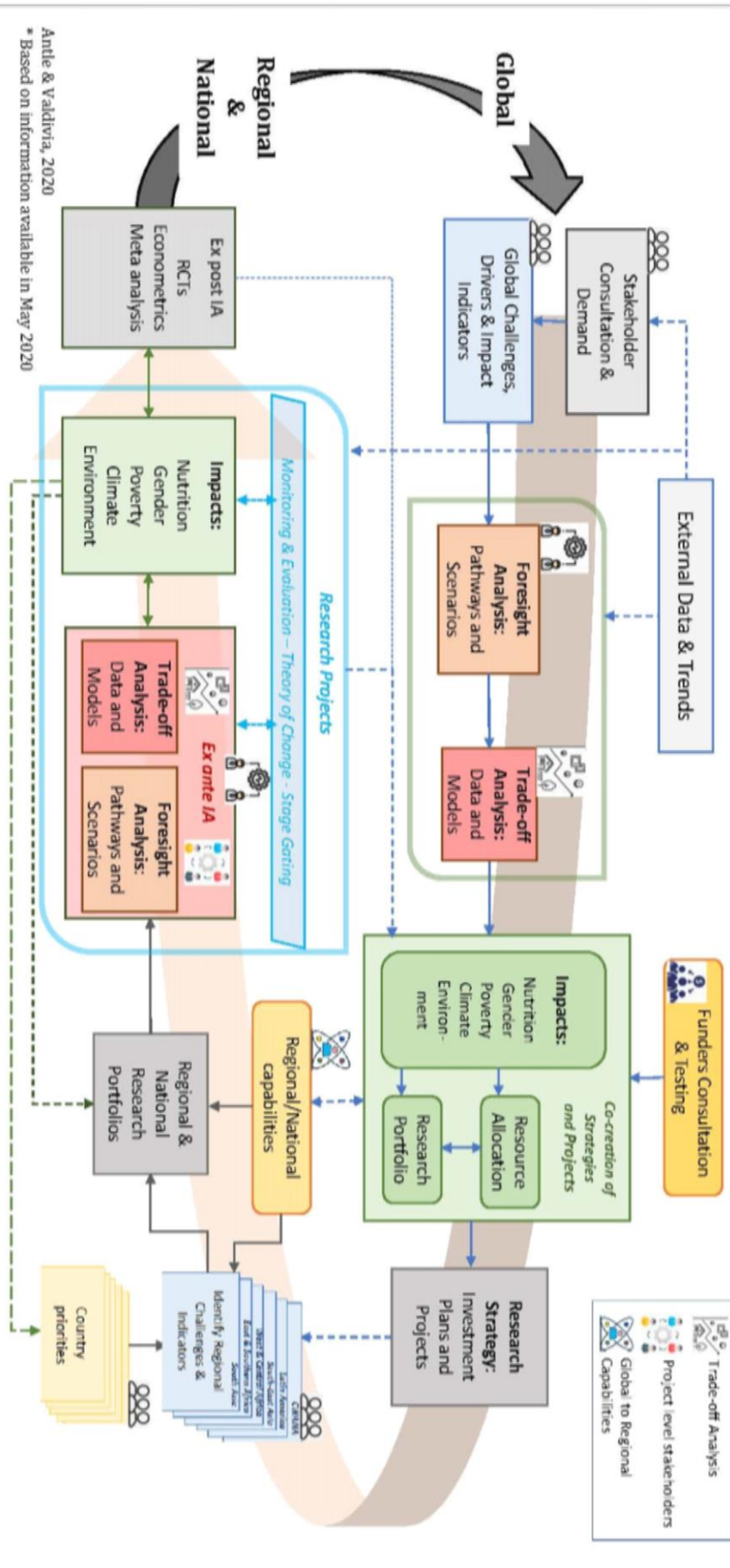
TRADE-OFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Using the trade-off analysis report, ISDC members developed the following recommendations for One CGIAR. They are designed to be consistent with the new research modality recommended to the System Council by the Systems Reference Group in 2019.

1. One CGIAR should integrate the two types of analytical approaches—foresight analysis and trade-off analysis—into all its ongoing decision-making and priority-setting processes.
2. To deal with complexity and uncertainty in agrifood systems, foresight analysis and trade-off analysis implementation should respect the principle of parsimony by using the simplest scientifically-sound approaches that fit the problem domain.
3. One CGIAR should build a strategy for capacity building to ensure the effective use of foresight analysis and trade-off analysis by all its governance, management, and research teams.

The following figure portrays the use of foresight analysis and trade-off analysis in One CGIAR's ongoing research management processes.

Foresight and Trade-off Analysis in One CGIAR Priority Setting, Research Portfolio Design, and Monitoring & Evaluation



Antle & Valdivia, 2020
 * Based on information available in May 2020