

Embracing theory of change

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What is this talk about Theory of Change?

- Accountability and need to explain how our activities will lead to the impact we want
 - We used to use **logical framework** (logframes)
 - Focus on activities and outputs with leaps of faith to objectives and goals
 - **Theory of Change** framework adopted by CGIAR
 - More emphasis on how outputs will translate into impact
 - Understanding how change will happen and assumptions we are making
 - Being mainstreamed for M&E and learning
- Learn to talk the ToC !!
- Theory !??! Isn't that what science is about: explaining cause & effect??

Health warning



- No agreed standard interpretation or presentation
 - An art form – as many different interpretations as there are people working with ToC
 - Focus on the general spirit, not on the details
- Needs to explain:
 1. Our cause-effect logic
 2. Our responsibility
 3. How change happens at all levels

At the Core: Our theory of why it will work (IBLI example)



A possible SOLUTION

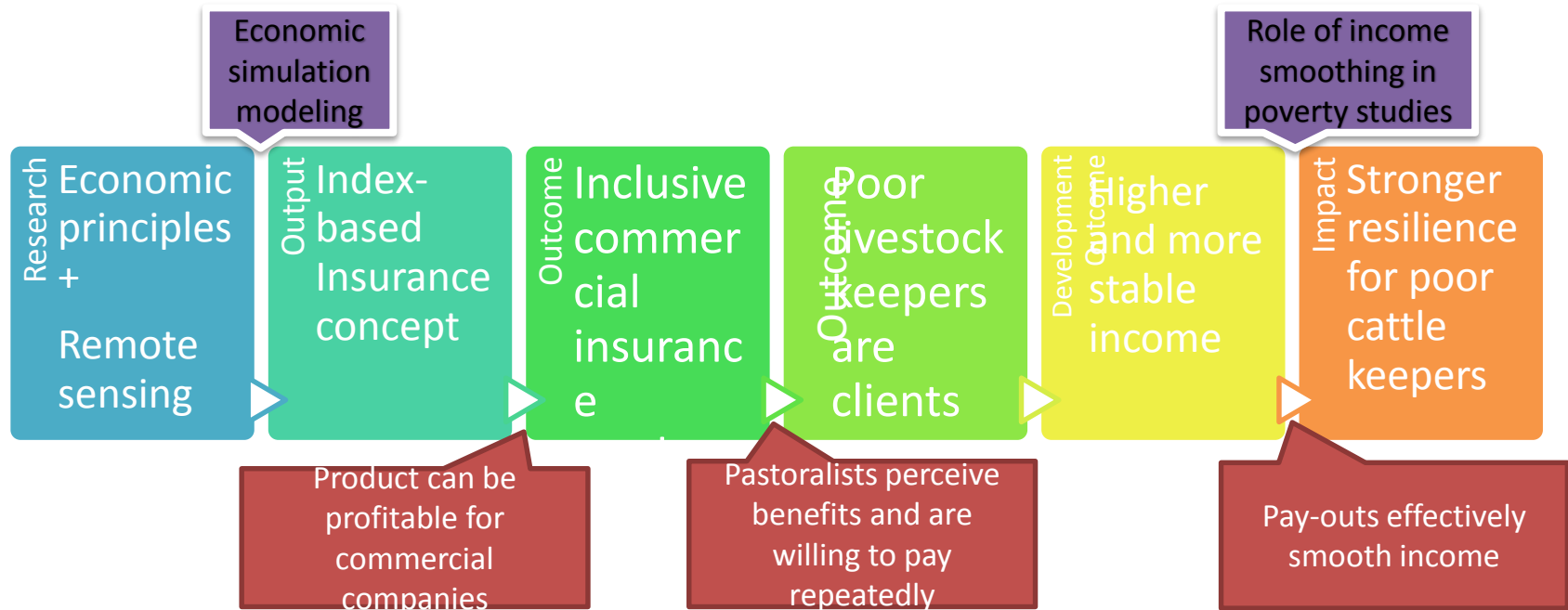


The GOAL

At the Core: Our theory of why it will work (IBLI example)

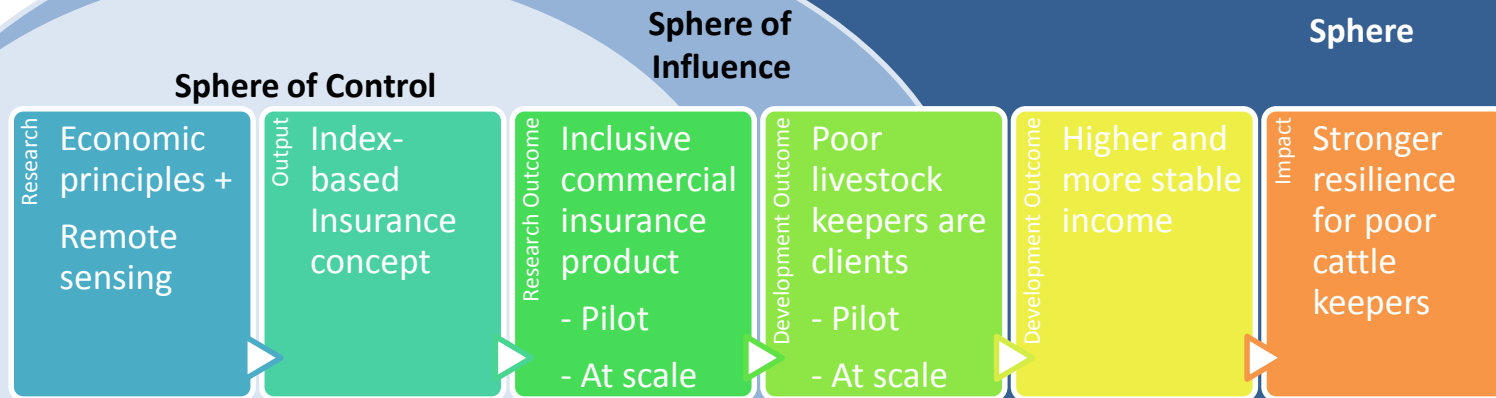


At the Core: Our theory of why it will work (IBLI example)

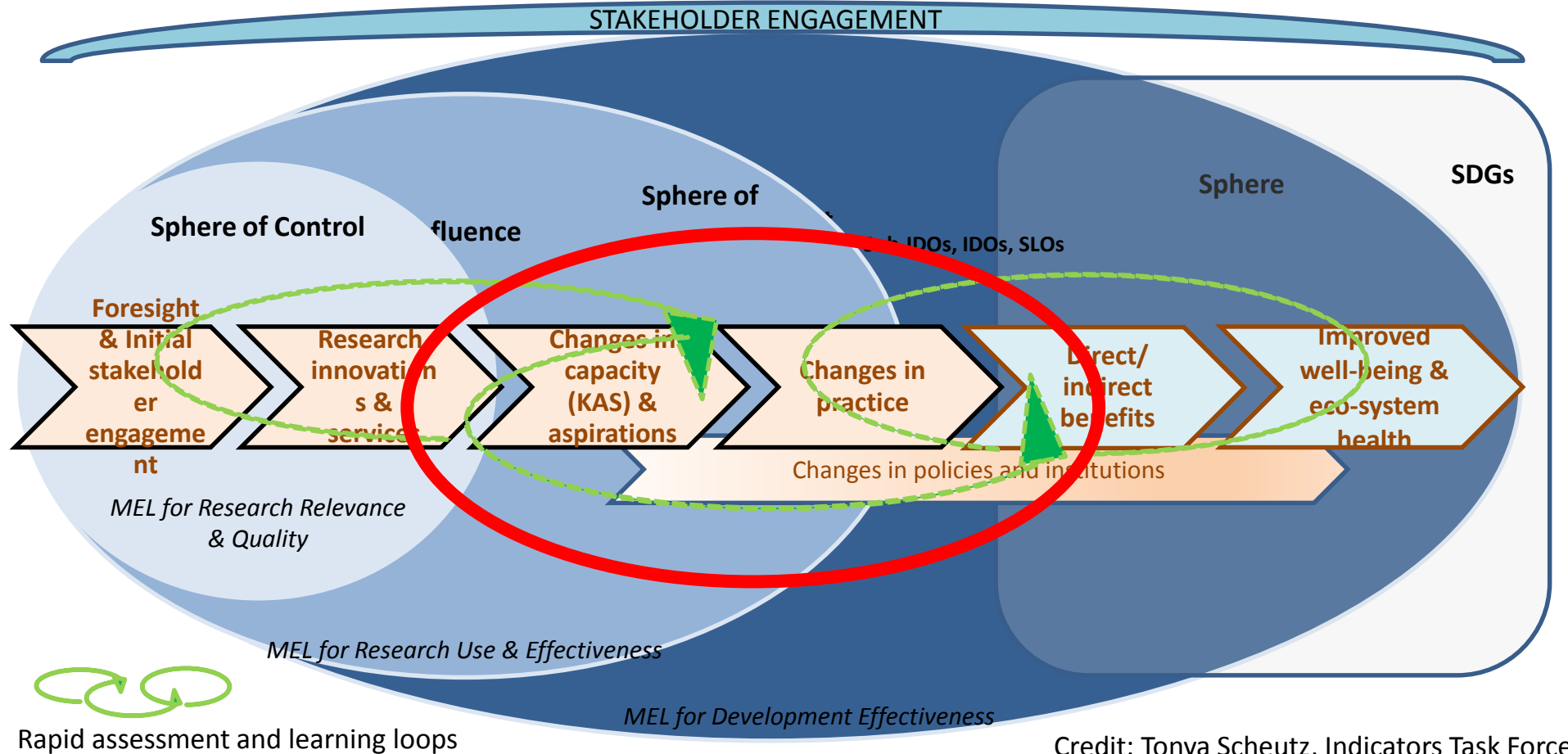


- What evidence supports this theory?
- If evidence is weak, what assumptions are we making?

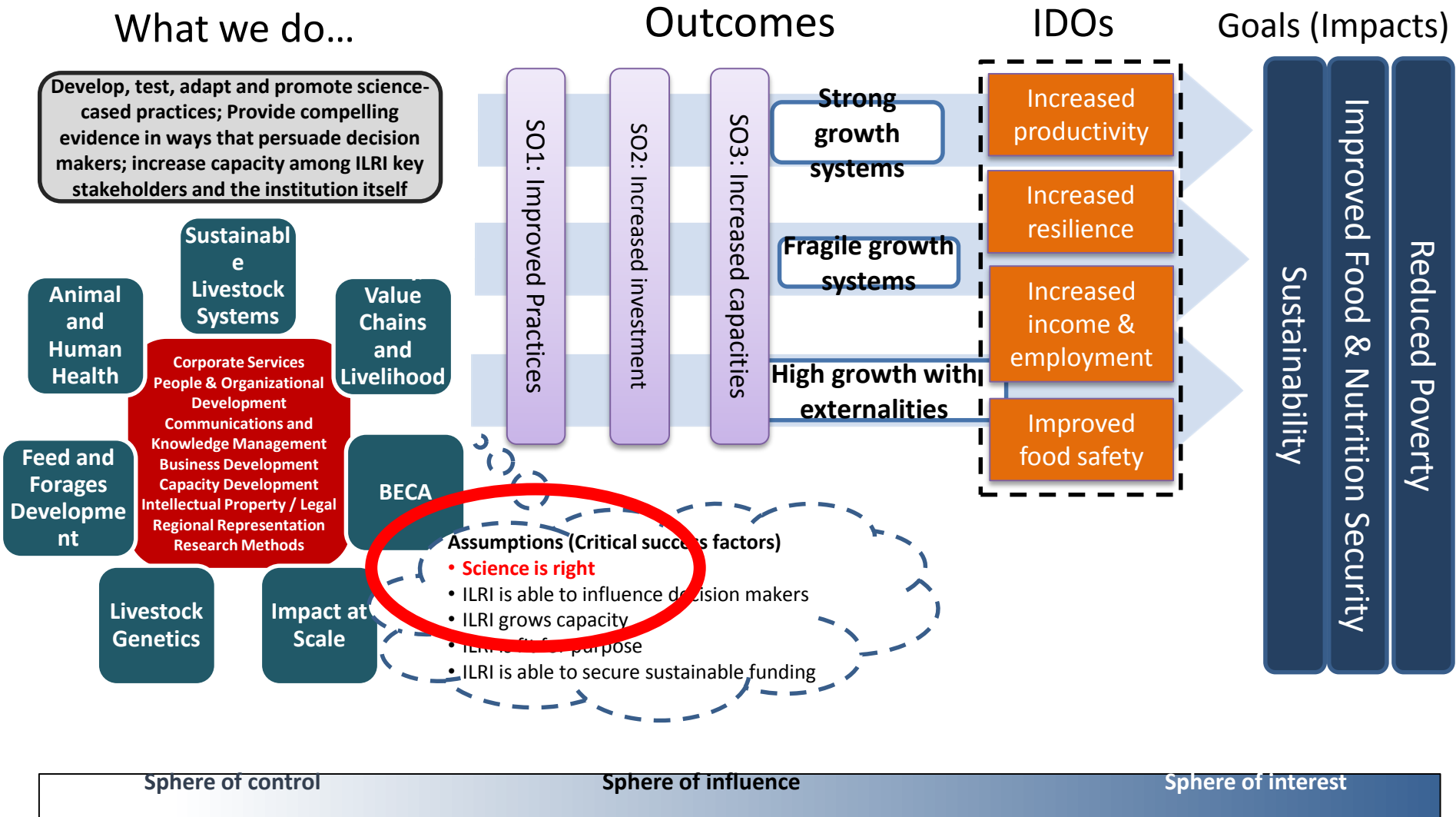
Setting it in an Impact Pathway: How? Who?



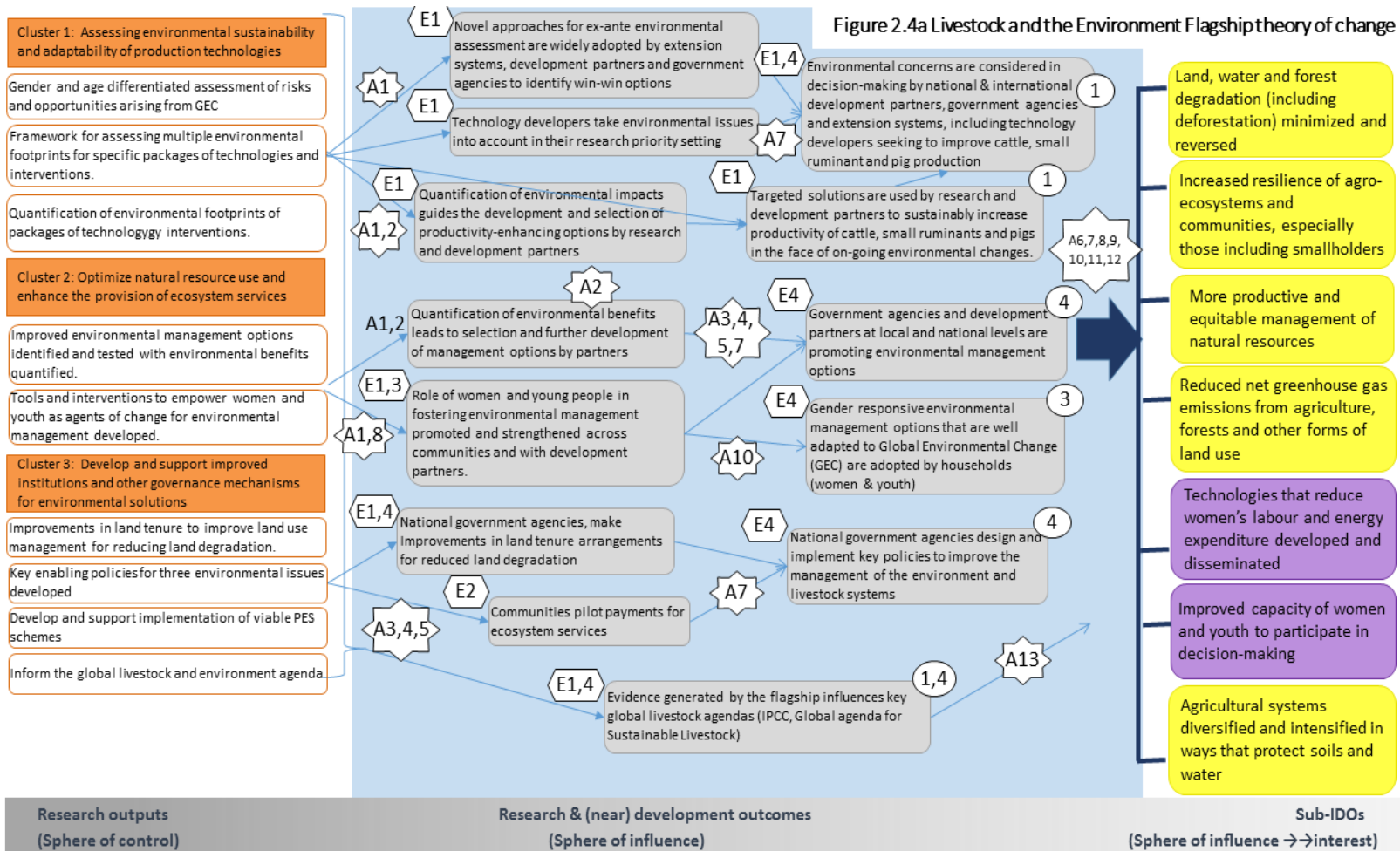
Highlighting how change will happen



An initial ILRI theory of change



Livestock CRP Flagship ToC



Why is it important for us to talk the ToC?

- Being applied to guide our planning at various levels: ILRI, programs, CRPs
- Makes us keep an eye on **impact** and how it will be achieved
- Plays to our training as **scientists**
 - Emphasizes the role of **evidence**
 - **Challenge our assumptions**
- **Can make us more convinced and more convincing!**

Thank You!

Extracted from:

**Strategic overview of CGIAR
Research programs Part I. Theories
of Change and Impact Pathways
(December 2012), ISPC**

Box 1. Definitions of key terms used in this document

Logic models (logical frameworks) – Link inputs and activities to outputs, outcomes and impacts in a visual presentation. Logic models do not provide insights into causality. The detail tends to be in the activity and output levels. Assumptions and risks that are part of a logical framework presentation tend to be outside the control of the program. Logic models follow an agreed presentational form.

Impact pathways – Build on logic models by giving more detail on the contribution of each activity on its path to impact. Impact pathways unpack the links between outcome and impact. Impact pathways are commonly presented graphically.

Theory of change (TOC) – Presents an explicit identification of the ways by which change is expected to occur from output to outcome and impact. The TOC questions the assumptions about causality underlying the relationships between outputs, outcomes and impact. In TOC the assumptions present the mechanisms of change. There is no single method or presentational form agreed for TOCs.

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ILRI thanks all donors and organizations who globally supported its work through their contributions to the **CGIAR system**

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