

# Livestock and fish value chain transformation: an interdisciplinary process

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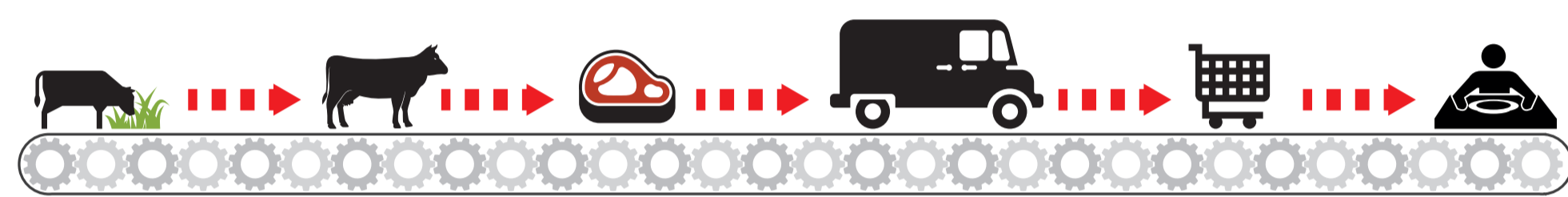
## Introduction

Years of publicly supported agricultural research for development has had limited impact on the ground, causing a paradigm shift:



Based on popular approaches in the 2000s - **people-centred innovation systems approach** and **agricultural value chains (VCs)** - the CGIAR Research Program on Livestock and Fish (L&F) adopted

### A solution-driven holistic value chain system approach



Using participatory methods to combine technical upstream interventions in animal health, feeding and genetics with institutional interventions.

### Vision

Transform the nutritional health, livelihoods and future prospects of the poor and vulnerable, especially women and children, through consumption of adequate affordable amounts of meat, milk and fish and through benefits from improved incomes and livelihoods by participating in the associated animal source food VCs.

## Objectives

(i) To synthesize L&F's experiences and lessons learned and (ii) to provide recommendations for future agricultural research for development programs.

## L&F Approach

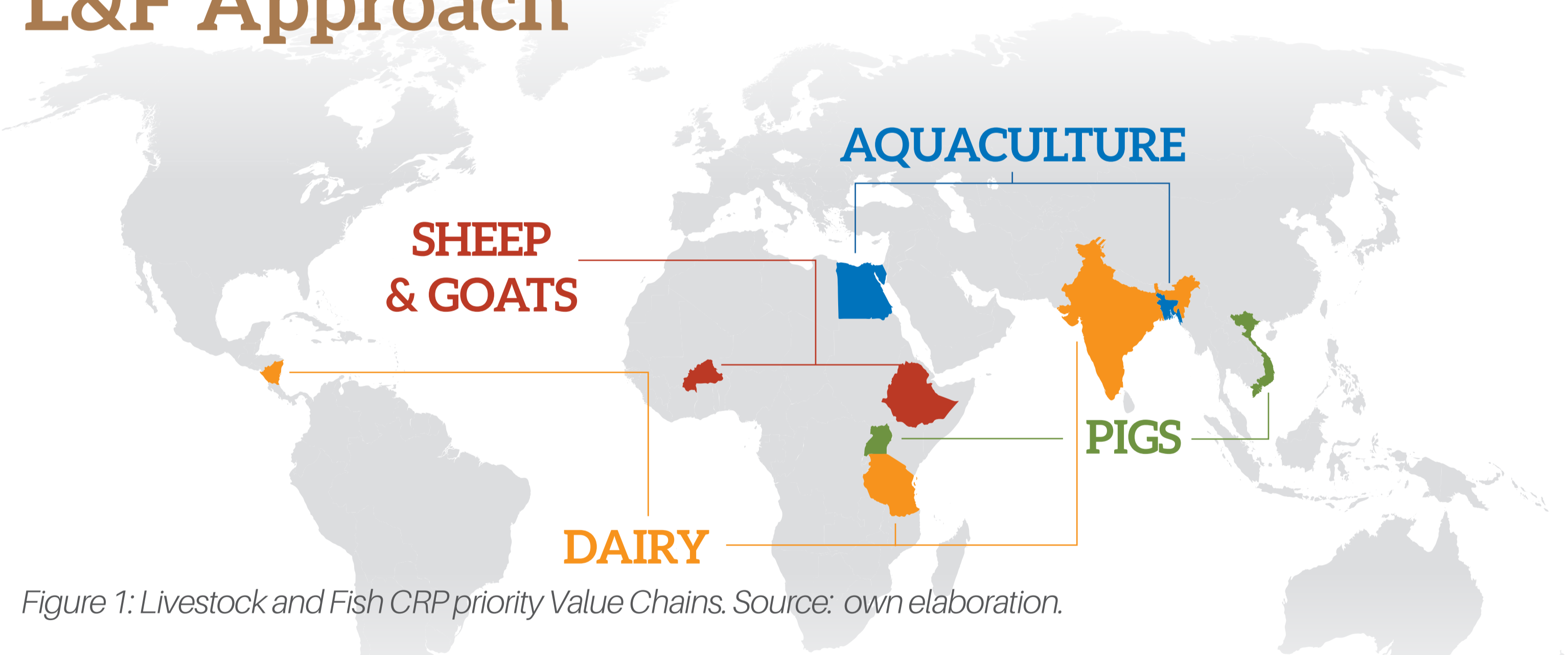
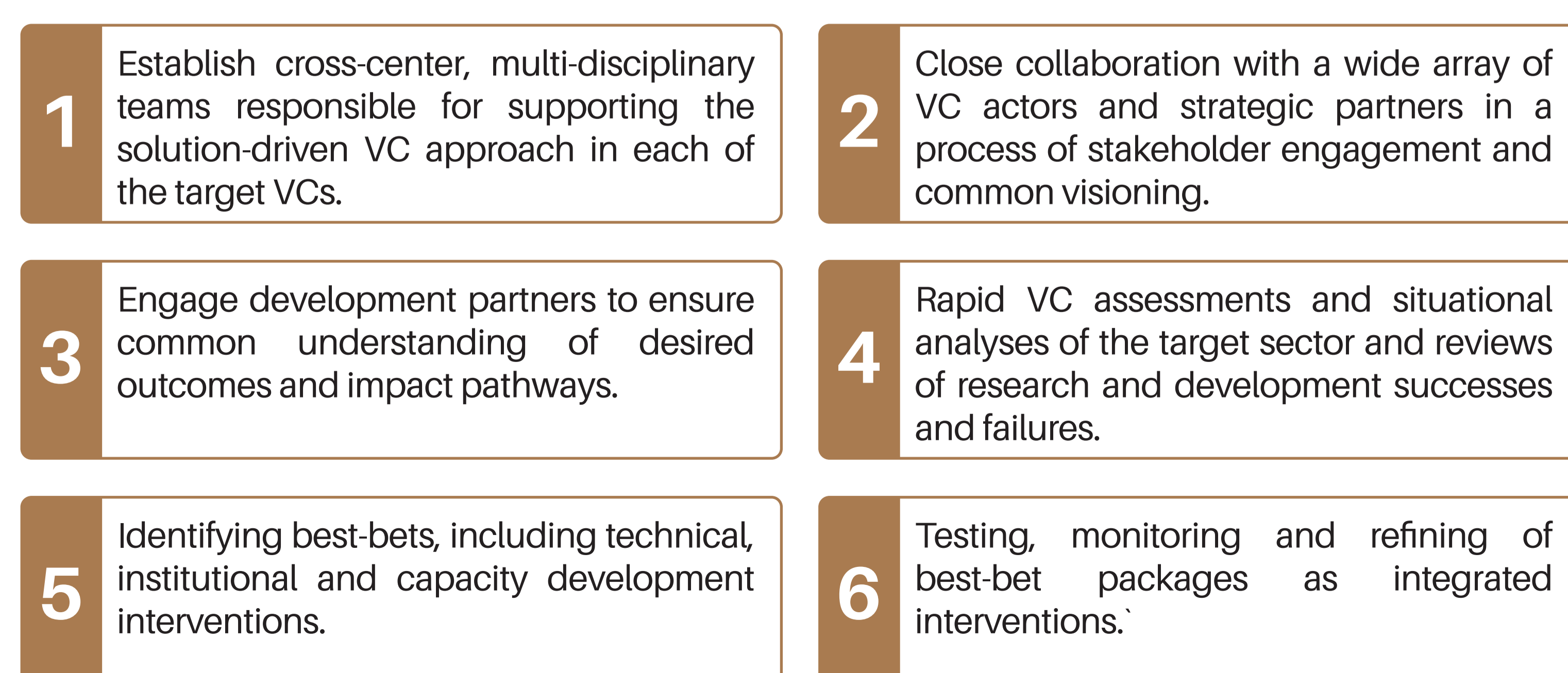


Figure 1: Livestock and Fish CRP priority Value Chains. Source: own elaboration.

VCs are seen as complex systems that are characterized by interactions among different actor groups within and around the VCs.

They thus include both direct (e.g. male and female farmers, feed retailers, processors, distributors, consumers) and indirect (e.g. financial institutions, extensionists) actors.

### Application of a 6-step-approach



## Our experience

We used a pragmatic adaptation of the 6-step-approach depending on the local context, available funding and partnerships. Towards the end of L&F, a facilitated discussion was organized with the VC coordinators and key staff to review underlying assumptions / hypotheses. For all the hypotheses, results were mixed with some positive and negative findings.

### 1. Interdisciplinary L&F teams ensure a fuller understanding of the VC system and the context in which it is operating:

**+** Such teams in combination with the VC system perspective and elaborated VC assessments provided a results-focused collaboration around solving the identified VC constraints and bottlenecks.

**-** Interdisciplinary research is a time consuming and complex process which is discouraged by lack of incentives for researchers.

### 2. The interdisciplinary assessments and integrated best-bet packages for VC transformation enabled research that has more relevance, urgency and applicability:

**+** Especially for the up-stream researchers, it meant a shift from having a specialist team on an interesting research problem to an interdisciplinary team working on an existing real-world development problem.

**-** The assessment phase required more time than originally anticipated. Non-alignment with existing in-house expertise and current funding streams causes further delays.

### 3. Consultation with stakeholders enhances people's and institutions' commitment and improves subsequent uptake and scaling out

**+** Cultivates common vision, ownership and capacity.

**-** Lack of action-orientation leads to fatigue and disinterest by partners and VC actors. Limited involvement of private sector and NGOs might hamper future scaling out.

### 4. The multi-country implementation of the L&F approach will produce International Public Goods (IPGs)

**+** Enabled cross-country comparisons and learning for similar VCs

**-** Robust research design was missing.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The approach is showing good promise:

- Long-term programmatic support with stable funding is needed for R4D process to mature and ensure wide-scale impact on the ground.
- Pragmatic adaptations are needed along the way.
- Having a strong interdisciplinary team (scientific expertise + non-research roles) to effectively engage with partners and collaborators on the ground is a necessary condition for success.
- Methodologies (VCA toolkit, best-bet selection protocol, ex-ante assessments) are ready to be applied more widely and reduce time spent on assessments before moving into action.
- Deeper involvement of the private sector and government partners is needed to stimulate large development interventions that will translate research into long-term impact at local, national or regional scale.
- A robust monitoring and evaluation system along the hypothesized impact pathways and testing underlying assumptions should be used for adaptive management. It would also enhance communication across R&D actors yield stronger evidence about factors contributing to or hampering the success of the approach.

Some of this work is now carried forward under the new Livestock & Fish CRPs.

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