



## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

### PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO UNDERTAKE SCALING WEEK 2026

**RFP NUMBER: ILRI/EOI-001/2026**

**PO Box 30709 - 00100**

**Old Naivasha Road, Nairobi, Kenya**

#### Key Dates

1. Advertisement	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
2. RFP Submission deadline	COB 18 <sup>TH</sup> March 2026 EAT
3. Clarification submission Email	<a href="mailto:ilriprocurementkenya@cgiar.org">ilriprocurementkenya@cgiar.org</a>
3. Submission Email	<a href="mailto:ILRI-EOIscalingweek@cgiar.org">ILRI-EOIscalingweek@cgiar.org</a>

## Background

Scaling Week is CGIAR's annual flagship gathering focused on the science and **practice of scaling agricultural and food system innovations** in low- and middle-income countries and is particularly strategic to [CGIAR's Scaling for Impact Science Program](#). It convenes a diverse community of researchers, funders, practitioners, policymakers, and private-sector actors working at the interface of science, delivery, and impact.

Since its inception, Scaling Week has deliberately moved away from a traditional conference format. It is designed as a co-created, experience-led event, prioritising interaction, community building, peer learning, and real-world exchange over formal presentations. Participants are encouraged to shape their own journey through the week, engage across disciplines and institutions, and form connections that continue beyond the event itself.

The event serves multiple purposes at once:

- strengthening a global scaling community,
- enabling meaningful networking and partnership-building,
- supporting shared learning across sectors, and
- creating space for honest reflection on what works, what fails, and what needs to change in scaling practice.

For Scaling Week 2026, CGIAR is seeking experience designers who can translate complex, science-based content into an engaging, human, and memorable collective experience, while preserving the event's core ethos of openness, experimentation, and participant ownership. The consultancy will be expected to build on lessons from previous editions while bringing fresh perspective, creativity, and coherence to the overall event journey.

### **What Scaling Week is not**

Scaling Week is not a traditional conference with back-to-back panels, long keynote lectures, or a focus on polished presentations. It is not a marketing event, trade fair, or showcase driven by branding or one-way messaging. The week is also not designed around rigid agendas or tightly scripted sessions that leave little room for emergence, adaptation, or participant ownership.

Experience designers should therefore not propose formats that rely primarily on passive audiences, stage-heavy production, or generic event templates. Instead, Scaling Week values approaches that are flexible, participatory, and grounded in real interaction — where learning, connection, and action emerge through playful and experiential design rather than instruction.

# Terms of Reference

## Strategic Experience Design Consultancy

### 1. Background

Scaling Week is CGIAR's annual flagship gathering focused on the science and practice of scaling agricultural and food system innovations in low- and middle-income countries. Coordinated through ILRI, the event convenes a diverse global community of researchers, funders, practitioners, policymakers, and private-sector actors working at the interface of science, delivery, and impact.

Scaling Week is intentionally designed as a participatory, experience-led convening rather than a traditional conference. It prioritizes interaction, community building, peer learning, and real-world exchange over formal presentations. Participants are encouraged to shape their own journey, engage across disciplines, and form connections that extend beyond the event.

For Scaling Week 2026 (22-24 September 2026), ILRI seeks a **Strategic Experience Design Consultancy** to design and facilitate a coherent, engaging, and systems-aware participant journey that translates complex, science-based content into a meaningful collective experience.

### 2. Objective of the consultancy

The objective of this consultancy is to design and deliver the overall experience architecture and facilitation framework for Scaling Week 2026.

The consultancy will:

- Develop a coherent narrative arc and participant journey across the full duration of the event;
- In collaboration with the ILRI Scaling Week project team, design a balanced program architecture that integrates structured crowd-sourced and curated sessions and participant-led formats;
- Create mechanisms that enable participant ownership while maintaining coherence and quality;
- Facilitate key elements of the event, including show running and/or MC roles as appropriate;
- Ensure the event supports learning, connection, reflection, and action; to do so, include experience design elements such as 'moments of awe' and play strategically.

This is not a conventional event management assignment. It is a strategic experience design consultancy requiring systems-thinking, participatory design expertise, and the ability to co-create within institutional parameters.

### **3. Scope of services**

The consultancy will work iteratively and collaboratively with ILRI, other CGIAR centers, the Scaling Week Advisory Committee (when requested), and relevant program and delivery partners.

The scope of services includes the following interrelated components:

#### **A. Conceptual experience architecture and narrative design**

- Develop an overarching experience architecture and coherent narrative arc for Scaling Week 2026.
- Guide key stakeholders through structured deep dives into the objectives and principles of Scaling Week to ensure the event is purpose-driven, meaningful, and aligned with its community ethos.
- Articulate a clear participant journey across the full duration of the event, from arrival through closing and post-event reflection.
- Ensure that all activities are connected through a coherent and nuanced narrative that enhances the overall message and contributes to playful and experiential learning.
- Translate complex, science-based themes into accessible, human, and memorable collective experiences.

#### **B. Iterative co-creation and crowd-sourced program design**

- Lead iterative conceptual planning and structured co-design sessions with CGIAR teams and the wider Scaling Community.
- Design mechanisms for structured crowd-sourcing and participant-led session formats, ensuring space for emergence while maintaining coherence and quality.
- Develop an appropriate balance between curated program elements and participant-driven contributions.
- Ensure that the agenda is expertly balanced in depth, breadth, and richness - without overwhelming participants and allowing for moments to connect.
- Remain open, flexible, and iterative throughout the design process, adapting to evolving objectives, constraints, and community inputs.

### **C. Creative program architecture and experiential design**

- Deliver a program design rooted in engagement, interaction, collaboration, play, and fun.
- Ensure the event feels “unconference-like” in spirit, while maintaining professional rigor and clarity of purpose.
- Propose session formats and design interventions that may include (but are not limited to) the use of arts, music, games, creative facilitation techniques, and immersive elements.
- Weave in “pockets of wow” - surprising and imaginative moments that enhance memorability and emotional connection.
- Suggest a comprehensive agenda that includes space for networking, social interaction, informal connection, and reflection outside of core technical sessions.
- Offer experience elements beyond the core program that enrich the overall event landscape.

### **D. Facilitation, show running, and on-site experience delivery**

- Design and facilitate key session events and plenary moments.
- Serve in roles such as showrunner and/or MC, ensuring diversity in facilitation style and presence.
- During the event, facilitate on-the-ground coordination between event delivery teams, including structured check-ins and information sessions as needed.
- Ensure smooth experiential flow and alignment across days, tracks, and parallel sessions.
- Coordinate closely with teams responsible for logistics/operations, communications, branding, and production to ensure design integrity during implementation.
- Where necessary, manage and advise on the engagement of creative contributors.

### **E. Ongoing dialogue and institutional alignment**

- Engage in and facilitate ongoing dialogue with ILRI team, the Advisory Committee (when requested), and delivery contractors to ensure integration of design vision with operational realities.
- Participate in coordination meetings to align experience design with governance structures and institutional parameters.
- Maintain close collaboration with internal teams responsible for logistics, communications, and event operations.

## **F. Engagement, learning, and continuous improvement**

- Integrate mechanisms for feedback and reflection during the event.
- Contribute to learning and growth through iterative adaptation leading up to and during the event.
- Facilitate a structured post-event debrief session.
- Provide a short written report summarizing key observations, reception of the creative elements, and recommendations for future editions.

## **4. Deliverables**

### **1. Program and session design**

- A cohesive, co-created program architecture integrating curated and crowd-sourced elements.
- A clearly articulated narrative arc and participant journey across the event.
- Detailed session designs and participatory formats aligned with Scaling Week's community-centered and "unconference-like" ethos.
- Facilitation design logic for plenaries, transitions, and cross-cutting moments.

### **2. Master run of show**

- A comprehensive Run of Show outlining sequencing, facilitation roles (including showrunner/MC), and responsibilities.
- Clear articulation of flow, transition moments, and coordination touchpoints.
- Alignment points between experience design, logistics/operations, communications, and production teams.

### **3. Implementation of experiences**

- Delivery of agreed facilitation and show running roles during Scaling Week.
- Execution of designed activities with experiential integrity and narrative coherence.
- On-site coordination and structured check-ins with delivery teams.
- Management or advisory support for additional facilitators or creative contributors, as needed.

### **4. Design and setup of campus (event location)**

- Conceptual design guidance for event spaces to support engagement, interaction, and participant ownership.
- Integration of experiential elements beyond formal sessions.
- Close liaison with logistics/operations and production teams to ensure spatial coherence with the overall design.

## 5. Post-event report and debrief

- A short written report assessing the effectiveness of the experience design, including integration of curated and crowd-sourced elements.
- One structured debrief meeting with the organizing team, including recommendations for future iterations.

## 5. Qualifications

- Ability to deliver an event design that is based on collaboration, co-creation, crowd-sourcing and community-centered ideas.
- Proven track record in creative experience design, particularly in crafting unique, memorable events with meaning.
- Demonstrable experience in designing and delivering events that build connection, engagement and participation.
- Strong portfolio showcasing a capacity for creativity in delivering event agendas that are a balance of depth, breadth and the freedom to flow.
- Flexibility to adapt and iterate in changing and stressful situations.
- Intercultural competence and sensitivity.
- Highly engaging and diverse facilitation and engagement skills, and demonstrated ability to coordinate, time-keep and deliver an on-point event on the ground.
- The consulting team should be staffed with profiles that can deliver the above, as well as staffing at the event itself which will allow for team members to play roles around “showrunner” as well as MC.
- The selected consultancy is expected to manage the hiring of additional local providers or facilitators as needed.

## 6. Submission requirements

This procurement will follow a two-stage process:

### **Stage 1: Expression of Interest (EOI) – Technical Proposal Only**

Interested consultancies are invited to submit a **technical proposal only** at this stage. No financial proposal is required.

The technical proposal (maximum 3 pages, excluding annexes and portfolio links) should describe the consultancy’s understanding of the assignment and proposed approach, including:

- Understanding of the Scaling Week context and objectives;
- Proposed experience design methodology and creative process, including approach to integrating curated and crowd-sourced program elements;
- Approach to collaboration and co-creation with CGIAR/ILRI teams and relevant stakeholders;
- Overview of the proposed team composition, roles, and relevant experience (minimum of three team members);
- Confirmation of availability from May 2026 through the event dates (September 2026), including post-event debrief activities (with time commitment expected to increase closer to the event);
- A link to a portfolio/folder showcasing relevant past experience in strategic experience design or comparable convenings.

Based on the technical evaluation, a shortlist of the highest-ranked consultancies will be invited to participate in Stage 2.

## **Stage 2: Closed Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Shortlisted consultancies will be invited to:

1. Participate in a structured virtual clarification and interview session (maximum 60 minutes) with the ILRI technical team and Procurement team. The session will be recorded for procurement documentation purposes.
2. Submit a financial proposal in line with the indicative budget range.

The session will also provide shortlisted firms with the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the assignment and ILRI's intent and ambitions for the event.

The selected consultancy is expected to be contracted and onboarded by early May 2026

## **7. Selection process**

### **Stage 1 – Expression of Interest (EOI)**

All eligible technical proposals submitted in response to the Expression ) will be evaluated based on technical quality only.

The technical evaluation will assess:

- Understanding of the assignment and Scaling Week context;
- Quality and originality of the proposed experience design approach;
- Quality of the proposed Methodology for co-creation and integration of curated and crowd-sourced elements;
- Relevant experience and portfolio;
- Team composition and facilitation capacity.

Based on the technical assessment, a shortlist of the highest-ranked consultancies will be invited to participate in Stage 2.

Only shortlisted consultancies will proceed to financial evaluation.

## **8. Submission and contact information**

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the closed email [ILRI-EOIscalingweek@cgiar.org](mailto:ILRI-EOIscalingweek@cgiar.org) as specified in the official solicitation notice.

All requests for clarification must be submitted in writing to the same contact address by the deadline indicated in the solicitation. Responses to clarification questions will be shared with all prospective bidders to ensure equal access to information.

Late submissions will not be considered.

## **Evaluation Criteria and Weighting**

### **Strategic Experience Design Consultancy – Scaling Week 2026**

This procurement follows a two-stage process and a Quality- and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) method. Final contract award will be based on the highest combined technical and financial score.

### **Stage 1 - Mandatory Documentation**

Firms participating in the EOI are required to submit the following **MANDATORY** documents

- Attach a copy of a valid Certificate of business incorporation/registration or equivalent
- Attach a copy of a valid tax compliance certificate or equivalent
- Provide an official document from your national companies registry confirming current ownership structure and directors (e.g., CR12 for Kenya-registered firms, or equivalent certificate of incorporation or registry extract for international firms).
- Company profile (Company history, contacts i.e. email, telephone, postal address, physical address, and services).

## Stage 1 – Technical evaluation (EOI)

At Stage 1, technical proposals only will be evaluated. No financial proposals are submitted at this stage.

All eligible technical submissions will be assessed against the criteria below.

Each criterion will be scored on a scale of 1–5:

- 1 = Poor / does not meet expectations
- 3 = Satisfactory / meets expectations
- 5 = Excellent / significantly exceeds expectations

### Technical evaluation criteria (Stage 1)

Criterion	Description	Weight
<b>Understanding of the assignment and context</b>	Demonstrated understanding of Scaling Week as a community-driven, participatory convening operating within institutional and governance parameters, and the role of strategic experience design in enabling learning, connection, and action.	15%
<b>Creative approach and experience architecture</b>	Quality, originality, and coherence of the proposed experience design concept, including integration of curated and crowd-sourced elements, narrative arc, and overall participant journey.	20%
<b>Methodology and co-creation process</b>	Clarity, feasibility, and adaptability of the proposed methodology, including structured co-creation, stakeholder collaboration, integration across multiple tracks and partners, and ability to operate under evolving constraints.	15%
<b>Relevant experience and portfolio</b>	Demonstrated experience delivering comparable multi-stakeholder convenings of similar scale and complexity, with participatory and experiential formats.	15%
<b>Team composition and facilitation capacity</b>	Appropriateness of proposed team roles and expertise, including facilitation capability, showrunner/MC capacity, and demonstrated ability to manage live delivery under dynamic conditions.	15%

### **Total technical score (Stage 1): 80%**

Based on the technical evaluation, the highest-ranked consultancies will be shortlisted and invited to Stage 2.

Only shortlisted consultancies will proceed to financial evaluation.

### **Stage 2 – Interview and final evaluation**

Shortlisted consultancies will:

- Participate in a structured virtual clarification and interview session (maximum 60 minutes), recorded for procurement documentation.
- Submit a financial proposal.

The interview will not introduce new evaluation criteria. It will be used to validate, clarify, and refine technical scoring, particularly regarding feasibility, collaboration style, and facilitation presence.

Following clarification discussions, shortlisted consultancies may be invited to refine and resubmit final proposals prior to final evaluation.

### **Budget**

The indicative budget range for this consultancy is USD 30,000–40,000. This range is indicative only. Consultancies are invited to propose what they can deliver within this range, aligned with the ambition and complexity of the assignment. The proposed budget should include all costs required to deliver the agreed scope of services, including any additional creative contributors, facilitators, or experiential elements proposed by the consultancy. The final agreed budget may be refined following Stage 2 clarification discussions to ensure appropriate alignment between scope, delivery approach, and value for money, in accordance with ILRI procurement policies.