



FAO Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum)

New Food System Integrated Program to support the transformation of food systems into nature-positive, resilient and pollution free systems.

Online consultation intervention. 2023 April 8

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Thank you for the invitation to take part in the online consultation regarding the new Food System Integrated Program. On behalf of Solutions from the Land (SfL), I wish to present farmer perspectives on the proposed Change of Theory diagram, the draft Results Framework, and some overarching observations:

Overarching Observations: First of all, SfL is very pleased to see the concept of “integrated” in the title of this new program. We fully support this important integrated effort for farmers, ranchers, fishers, and foresters to improve agricultural and food production per unit of land and water and ecosystem/habitat enhancing production and management practices while concurrently delivering biodiversity, quality ecosystem services; increased food and nutrition security; robust rural livelihoods and a host of other SDGs.

To guide the development of this new 21st Century program, a traditional Theory of Change planning model is being proposed. However, the enormous challenges local and global agriculture and food systems are now facing and the outcomes we seek require that we adopt a *new approach, a change of theory*. The keystone of this new theory is the placement of farmers, ranchers, fishers, and foresters¹ at the center of all discussions and placing much greater emphasis on enabling policies, programs and market mechanisms that incentivize and reward them financially for delivering not just abundant high-quality nutritious food but concurrently the full range of ecosystem services that well managed farms can deliver. See [SfL recs for HLPE Vo- Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition](#) and [Candidate submission for VO draft of the HLPE 3rd Note on Critical Emerging and Enduring Issues SFL 2022.05.17](#)

¹ The phrase, “farmers, ranchers and foresters” encompasses farmers, ranchers, foresters, orchardists, graziers, aquaculturalists, and all those who are stewards of working landscapes. Working landscapes are agricultural croplands, grasslands, orchards and forests, vineyards, fisheries, and other lands and waters that are managed for livelihoods and the production of food, fiber, energy, and ecosystem services. The transformations that a farmer-led agriculture and food systems renaissance brings require broad collaboration with industries, academia, civil society, and policymakers to bring the best science and engineering innovations to system-level solutions.

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A 21st Century integrated program acknowledges that incentives, policies, and investments with “transformation” goals must utilize multiple strategies to integrate natural, human and financial resources, knowledge, and activities to accomplish the 17 SDGs (which include nature-positive, resilient and pollution-free systems). The Sustainable Development Goals are interdependent, the reduction of poverty and ensuring food and nutrition security that accompany transformed food systems are dependent on abundant and high quality water and soil resources, and producers who can make a living from farming using a variety of science-based technologies, innovations and approaches that can be used to adapt to local conditions while allowing the producer to pivot and quickly adjust and change management under increasingly variable weather and accelerated climate change conditions. **The SDGs cannot be achieved unless agricultural contributions are fully enabled. For agriculture to be successful, farmers must be successful in sustainably intensifying production of the full range of goods and services that come from well managed farming operations.**

Thus, **efforts to transform local and global food systems require active participation and leadership from farmers, fishers, ranchers, foresters—the keystone to abundant food systems and healthy agroecosystems.** To this end we urge that this global document and recommended country-specific development and implementation actions at the country level pro-actively invite and engage their farmers, fishers, ranchers, foresters—those people (women, men, small holders, producers of all ethnicities and scales of agriculture) who are at the beginning of the food system-as they develop their own country specific policies, programs, projects, and investments.

Suggested edits/modifications to text in red.

Change of Theory Diagram/revise this diagram to make it a 21st century “theory of change and transformation”.

- The **DRIVERS** box lists key factors that influence the current structure of the local and global food systems; these are neutral documented statements of human activities that are sources of influence. The **IMPACTS** box connected by arrow to these drivers only lists negative impacts; yet these drivers have both negative and positive impacts. Why have the positive impacts been omitted? It is important to identify both negative and positive impacts from these drivers. Transformation of the food system requires: 1) recognizing what is working, 2) what is not working at all, and 3) what is not working as well as we’d like and a modest shift in the driver or conditions could accomplish our goals. These positive impacts are sources of future opportunities to leverage and redirect resources to improve the systems. [for example, markets for ecosystem services]
- Two missing key IMPACTS of the drivers are **1) increased competition for water resources, and 2) increased competition for land resources**. How we address these two impacts will have outsized implications for whether a transformed food system can

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successfully produce an abundance of healthy, nutritious food. If sufficient water and land resources are not available to produce an abundance of food, a transformed food system has not accomplished its key goal. Nature-positive, resilient, pollution-free food systems must concurrently produce an abundance of food. The increasing scarcity of water and soil resources means that sustainable intensification of production approaches will be needed to produce all types of ecosystem services without expanding the agriculture and food system footprint into ecologically sensitive areas.

- The 2nd column, 3rd box in **BARRIERS** bullets the phrase “inadequate governance and engagement of multiple FS stakeholders.” Consider including producers of food in this. We know they are “stakeholders,” but they are more than stakeholders, they are the beginning of the food system, and without them there is no food to regulate, distribute or consume. Perhaps something like “**inadequate governance and active engagement of food system producers and directly affected FS stakeholders**”

BARRIERS. In 3rd box, insert the following bullet point

-**Lack of appreciation or valuation of ecosystem services delivered by producers**

- The 2nd column in the Change of Theory diagram is focused on “Barriers to Nature Positive Food Systems Transformation.” Please consider a **3rd column focused on “Enablers and Opportunities to Nature Positive Food Systems Transformation”**, as this would be beneficial as we consider how to best remake/transform current systems. This would reflect what is working and identify elements that would enable, could be modified or leveraged to accomplish transitions and transformation goals.
- **1st ORDER** outcomes column. 2nd box. Please add a 3rd bulletin outcome:
-**markets that actually incentivize production of ecosystem services**
- **1st ORDER** outcomes column. 3rd box. The “new and strengthened value chains & business models support FS sustainably” is an important outcome. Please add a 4th bullet outcome to this box , “**new and strengthened farmer/producer management systems and approaches support FS sustainable, resilient and nature-positive systems.**” This is needed to support Pathway 3 “widescale and sustained transformation of farm and landscape management, generating a critical mass of sustainably produced food.”

Results Framework for Food Systems Integrated Program.

- 1.1 Sustained and strategic multistakeholder partnerships. Under example of Collaboration frameworks and coalitions, Crop/commodity platforms². Not all farmers, especially small holder farmers belong to “platforms” that represent a specific crop or commodity. Often these platforms [which are very important] represent larger scale producers and are missing small holder farmers that produce a diversity of food crops.

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Consider retitling: **Crop/commodity producers and platforms; and in the footnote ² modifying to read: “² Such as agriculture and food producers, farmers, fishers, foresters, ranchers, and organizations that represent agriculture and food producers.”**

Example [4R Nutrient Stewardship - Solutions from the Land](#)

- 1.2. Enhanced national and international governance frameworks. Under examples, two bullets, consider the following modification (in red).

-“Capacities in government to plan and implement national FS transformation, including convening and facilitation of contributions of **FS stakeholders including agriculture and food producers and their value chains as well as other stakeholders.**

-Approach to problem solving is less government centric, more flexible with **multistakeholder collaboratives.** <https://solutionsfromtheland.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/AgRenaissanceReport.pdf>

- 3.1. Strengthened planning frameworks and capacities. Excellent indicator. Under examples, 2nd bullet consider inserting the word “working” before landscapes so it reads
“Tailored local governance mechanisms to sustainable food systems and **working** landscapes.”

The modifier “working” calls attention to the relationships between local “drivers” in the Theory of Change graphic representing population growth, land use and urbanization and the increasing competition for water and land resources (proposed in the IMPACT box) from these drivers and the need for agriculture and food production to co-exist with development and have access to water and land resources. These are agroecosystems i.e., working landscapes that offer multiple benefits to society and producers.

- 3.2. Sustainable and resilient approaches are mainstreamed and applied on the ground in farming.... Examples. Consider adding two additional bullets.

- Circular economy systems models and technologies that: 1) design out waste and pollution (recover discarded wastes for productive uses); 2) continually reuse products and materials; 3) protect and renew natural systems; and 4) provide for economic benefits

-All scales of producers have access to affordable innovations and technologies that support concurrent production of abundant food and nutrition; nature positive resilient systems; and robust livelihoods.

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* 4.1. Knowledge and innovations... Examples.

-Communities of practice established...consider identifying farmers/producers explicitly as stakeholder groupings that would greatly benefit from community of practice exchanges. This would accelerate adoption of on-farm nature positive resilient management. "...established at national and regional levels, consisting of groupings of stakeholders, such as farmer-to-farmer exchanges and other projects engaged in"

Consider adding a 5th bullet:

-Investments in science-based monitoring of local and region-specific agroecosystems over time to anticipate and manage local climate change induced tree and vegetation mismatch to ensure food crops and natural vegetation retain productivity and maintain biodiversity and essential ecosystem services.

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