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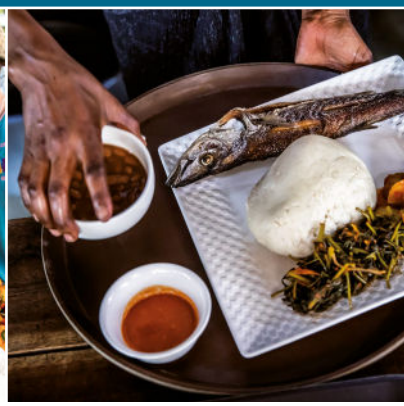
# RETHINKING OUR FOOD SYSTEMS

## A GUIDE FOR MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION



One planet eat with care

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Cover photos: these photos showcase different components and stakeholders of food systems across the globe. Understanding what they look like and how they interconnect and influence each other is key to ensuring a transition towards more sustainable food systems.

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# List of abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **CNA** | French National Food Council (*Conseil National de l'Alimentation*) |
| **CSAM** | Montreal Food System Council |
| **DAFM** | Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine |
| **FAO** | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| **FC2A** | From Commitment to Action |
| **FtMA** | Farm to Market Alliance |
| **M&E** | Monitoring and evaluation |
| **MSC** | Multi-stakeholder collaboration |
| **PPS** | Public Policy Secretariat |
| **SCALA** | Scaling Up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture |
| **SDG** | Sustainable Development Goal |
| **UN** | United Nations |
| **UNDP** | United Nations Development Programme |
| **UNEP** | United Nations Environment Programme |

# Terms and definitions

The terms and definitions below reflect some of the key concepts pertaining to multi-stakeholder collaboration in its intersection with food systems transformation, as specified by the Consultative Group that informed the development of this document and subsequent reviewers.

**Co-creation:** The practice of collaboratively designing and/or developing a programme, policy or initiative, involving multiple stakeholders.

**Collaboration:** The act of working with one or more people to create or achieve something.

**Competencies:** The ability to apply or use a set of related knowledge, skills and abilities required to successfully carry out certain tasks.

**Consensus:** Working through differences to reach a mutually satisfactory position.

**Coopetition:** The idea of two or more competitors joining forces in a way that benefits all parties involved, for example by collaborating to grow awareness of the issues that they are aiming to address.

**Coordination:** The deliberate act of directing two or more people involved in an activity to work together in a structured manner.

**Externality:** A "positive or negative consequence of an economic activity or transaction that affects other parties without this being reflected in the price of the goods or services transacted[1, p.72]."

**Food policy:** All the policies that influence food systems and what people eat.[2]

**Food systems:** "All the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes[3, p.29]."

**Food systems dialogues:** As part of the United Nations (UN) Food Systems Summit, stakeholders were invited to debate and collaborate towards a better future, based on three established modalities: 1) Member State Summit Dialogues, organized by national governments; 2) Global Summit Dialogues, in parallel with global events on major topics of discussion; and 3) Independent Summit Dialogues, organized by individuals.[4]

**Food systems transformation:** A concept that relates to the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with "transformation" referring to the need for the change to be intentional and profound, based on factual understandings and societal agreements and aimed at achieving outcomes at scale.[5]

**Governance:** "Formal and informal rules, organizations, and processes through which public and private actors articulate their interests and make and implement decisions[6, p.27]".

**Political economy analysis:** Deals with "the interaction of political and economic processes in a society: the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time[7, p.102]."

**Sector:** Refers to either a policy area (e.g., economic, social, cultural, environmental sector); a distinct field or theme of economy (e.g., agriculture, education, health sector, etc.); or a specific sub-sector (e.g., fisheries, livestock, nutrition).[8]

**Stakeholder:** A term "used to designate any person or group who has a stake, i.e. an interest, whether financial or not, in an issue. It refers to any person or group who is affected by or can affect the situation or issue at stake, as well as the achievement of an organization's objectives[9, p.35]."

Some consider that the term stakeholder "hides the immense differences in rights, roles, responsibilities, interests, motivations, power and legitimacy among the partners. […] Not every stakeholder has an equal stake and each category of stakeholders faces distinct challenges. [...] Additionally, they argue that, in the perspective of the realization of the right to adequate food, a fundamental distinction has to be made between right-holders, citizens, particularly the most vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition, and duty-bearers, mainly states that have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the right to adequate food. [...] Therefore, [some] authors call for using the more political term actor[9, p.35]."

**Sustainable food system:** A food system "that ensures food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition of future generations are not compromised[3, p.31]."

**Sustainable food systems approach:** An approach that "considers food systems in their totality, taking into account the interconnections and trade-offs among the different elements of food systems, as well as their diverse actors, activities, drivers and outcomes. It seeks to simultaneously maximize societal outcomes across environmental, social (incl. health) and economic dimensions[10, p.12]."

**Trade-off:** A gain for a system outcome (e.g., economic development) resulting in a loss for another (e.g., environmental sustainability).

**United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021:** A 2021 summit that brought together stakeholders from all corners of society to bring about plans for the transformation of the world's food systems, convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs by 2030.[4]


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## Introduction

The *Global Sustainable Development Report* identified food systems transformation as one of the key accelerators to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations Food Systems Summit Dialogues highlighted the need for more constructive relationships among policymakers, the business community, civil society, and academia and research institutions to resolve the challenges confronting food systems – from food insecurity, malnutrition and rural poverty to biodiversity loss and climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine and food inflationary pressures have also been reminders of the need to adopt a multi-stakeholder approach for building a resilient food system that can cope with disruptions.

Food systems involve complex challenges, which call for a systemic, multi-level and multi-stakeholder participatory approach for addressing interrelated issues across economic, social and environmental dimensions: the so-called food systems approach. Therefore, multi-stakeholder collaboration needs to be an essential pillar of the food systems approach and the transition to sustainable food systems.

Against this background, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme jointly created this guide to consolidate learnings and tools gathered from within and beyond the three agencies to contribute to the growing canon of knowledge on how to improve multi-stakeholder collaboration for sustainable food systems transformation.

This is the first time that three UN agencies actively working in the field of food systems have come together to consolidate and distil learnings, best practices and tools on multi-stakeholder collaboration. Additionally, the development process of the guide benefited from a consultation process that validated the approach and learnings to make it a comprehensive document that can be used in many situations.

The aim of the guide is to support those interested or engaged in convening, implementing, facilitating or supporting a multi-stakeholder initiative that contributes to the sustainable transformation of food systems, at different levels.

## Methodology and structure of the guide

The methodology used in the guide has leveraged an analytical review of selected literature, an international consultation process with experts on the topic, and a testing of the guide in Uganda. The core structure of the guide comprises five topics, entitled "Building Blocks."

The Building Blocks provide users with specially selected tools and resources, as contained in the guide's Annex 1, which provides additional knowledge specific to each Building Block's theme. Annex 2 presents a "Building Block assessment" tool that can be used to apply the recommendations of this guide.

### >> Building Block 1: Fostering broad multi-stakeholder participation

The first Building Block focuses on the inclusion of different actors at multiple levels to better align agendas, and eventually actions, across sectors, jurisdictions and spheres. Broad engagement across multiple areas – from government, producers, civil society, industry and science – is needed to design an agenda for food systems transformation.

Stakeholders can be grouped in several categories under broad headings: public sector, private sector, civil society and international community. Carrying out due diligence to ensure that the relevant stakeholders are included is most relevant at the inception phase. The identification and inclusion process is nonetheless ongoing during dialogues, and stakeholders may enter and exit at different stages. The process can be made more systematic by applying a stakeholder mapping and analysis, as described under Building Block 1.

### >> Building Block 2: Ensuring a good understanding of the food system

Once a quorum of relevant stakeholders has been established, the second Building Block will need to ensure that a systems approach is taken to identify the opportunities and challenges facing the food system. This process also requires a neutral space for evidence-based policy, technical and process discussions. This requires a comprehensive examination of the food system, informed by cross-fertilized data, qualitative evidence, and Indigenous Peoples' and local knowledge. An appraisal of existing food systems policy frameworks and governing institutions is also important.

Building Block 2 builds on insights from stakeholder mapping and analysis under Building Block 1. Timely sharing of relevant and easily understood data, evidence and findings are also critical for informing deliberations, as discussed under Building Blocks 3 and 4.

### >> Building Block 3: Nurturing inclusive and effective collaboration

The third Building Block discusses a well-functioning governance system for the initiative, with appropriate decision-making processes that are shared among different stakeholders and multiple levels.

Modes of governance can take on different shapes such as food policy councils, food coalitions or committees, food policy task forces, food alliances, food system networks, food labs, food systems urban task forces and so on. Governance arrangements can also take on a multitude of forms, depending on power structures, systems' entry points, the institutions involved, resources and capacities.

Governance mechanisms based on respectful relationships, trust in the collaborative process, inclusiveness and the capacities of stakeholders to represent their constituents are also discussed. Reciprocity, mutual understanding, trust and reputation, transparent rules of representation, and delegation are also core assets that are emphasized. Good governance practices will enhance a sense of ownership, contribute new knowledge and lead to new partnerships.

### >> Building Block 4: Defining a compass and a roadmap

Multi-stakeholder collaboration dialogues require well-defined objectives so that the process of engagement is organized and transparent, and investments and resources for solutions can be mobilized. Key conditions for success are clear definitions of the roles of all stakeholders and of the sharing of resources, responsibilities, risks and benefits. As such, defining a shared and agreed set of norms and rules is essential for the development of a clear vision, a strategy and action plan, and a participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning system.

### >> Building Block 5: Securing sustainability of collaboration

To guide a multi-stakeholder initiative beyond short-term financing and project-bound objectives and towards its contribution to food systems transformation, the fifth Building Block underscores the need for institutionalization and long-term funding. This calls for accountability of stakeholders' actions on follow-up as well as financing.

Ultimately, a food systems approach to policymaking and action requires continuous collaboration among food systems actors, including governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The task is not easy: decisions related to food systems, given their complexity, often entail addressing power imbalances and making compromises. The interdependence of the Building Blocks shows that it is not merely about bringing science-based evidence and other types of knowledge to the table, but also about complicated social interactions among vested agendas and constituents, the deliberations of which need to be carefully guided.

Through an iterative and flexible process of identifying problems and discovering how to best address them, stakeholders – including national governments – can improve their abilities necessary for transitioning to sustainable food systems.


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# Introduction

Worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, the share of undernourished people worldwide increased from 8 per cent in 2019 to 9.8 per cent in 2021. In 2020, nearly 3.1 billion people were not able to afford a healthy diet, and in 2021 some 828 million people faced hunger.[11] Disruptions to the supply and trade of food products caused by the conflict in Ukraine, and the resulting pressures on food inflation, are likely to exacerbate the rates of hunger and undernourishment in the coming years, further compromising the Right to Food.

Additional challenges facing global food systems today include:

- An estimated 14 per cent of food is lost during production, storage, transport, processing and distribution[12], with an additional 17 per cent wasted downstream.[13]
- Obesity and excess weight are increasing in all regions of the world.[11]
- As the world population grows to an estimated 8.6 billion by 2031[14], mainly in developing regions, global food consumption is expected to increase by 1.4 per cent[15] over the decade.
- Food systems account for an estimated 30 to 34 per cent[16] of global greenhouse gas emissions, with around 71 per cent[17] of this originating from agriculture and land use-related activities. This means that increases in food production under the status quo would cripple the chance of meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change.[18]

The food insecure in developing countries shoulder most of the burden as pressures on natural resources increase and as climate change makes food production less predictable. At the same time, failure to find decent jobs for young people will complicate other hurdles, such as migration flows and social instability.[19] These challenges are compounded by a system that is characterized by inequalities, with production patterns biased against small producers in less developed countries.[20, 21]

As the world's largest economic system, measured in terms of employment and livelihoods, food systems can and must offer solutions and opportunities to address these challenges. Around 1 billion people[22] are employed through food systems production, harvesting, services, processing, and distribution, and another 3.5 billion people[23] earn their livelihoods through them.

The *Global Sustainable Development Report*[5] identified food systems transformation as one of the key accelerators to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, underscoring the role that governance plays in catalysing transformational change.

## The UN Food Systems Summit

In the context of the United Nations Decade of Action, the UN Secretary-General convened the UN Food Systems Summit in New York in September 2021. The aim of the Summit was "to launch bold new actions to transform the way the world produces and consumes food, to deliver progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals[4]", and to identify systemic approaches that interconnect solutions and challenges in and beyond the food system.

The UN Food Systems Summit also marked the launch of a series of national multi-stakeholder initiatives, in the form of National Dialogues, designed to place the reform of food systems at the top of the policy agenda. The National Dialogues resulted in governments and national stakeholders galvanizing around the development of "living documents," described as National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation. The National Pathways were designed to focus on "…those sections of society who have the least resources and influence, and tend to be the hardest to reach[24]."

The clear message underpinning the dialogues of the UN Food Systems Summit has been the need for more constructive relationships and the development of more elaborate linkages among policymakers, the business community, civil society, and research and education to resolve the challenges confronting food systems – ranging from food insecurity, malnutrition and rural poverty to biodiversity loss and climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine and food inflationary pressures have been hard reminders of the need to adopt a "joined-up thinking" multi-stakeholder approach for building a resilient food system that is capable of coping with disruptions in the long term and past 2030.

In particular, the UN Food Systems Summit emphasized the need to diversify and deepen stakeholder engagement. The fora defined food systems governance as the process by which societies negotiate, implement, and evaluate collective priorities, suggesting the need to review decision-making processes at all levels, including civil society and the private sector. The event also underscored the need to foster inter-ministerial coordination and facilitate effective multi-level governance.

The UN Food Systems Summit set the stage for global food systems transformation to achieve the SDGs. It contributed to the growing realization that policies designed in isolation of one another are unlikely to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and beyond. Unless global food systems transformation is accelerated, the stark challenges facing our food systems are likely to increase. This transformation is no easy task and requires a departure from business as usual.

## Multi-stakeholder collaboration

Ultimately, food systems involve complex challenges, whose scale and nature call for a systemic, multi-level and multi-stakeholder participatory approach across economic, social and environmental dimensions. Multi-stakeholder collaboration (MSC) therefore needs to form an essential pillar of the food systems approach and its role in achieving a transition to sustainable food systems.

An MSC initiative can be defined as "*any collaborative arrangement among stakeholders from two or more different spheres of society (public sector, private sector and/or civil society), pooling their resources together, sharing risks and responsibilities in order to solve a common issue, to handle a conflict, to elaborate a shared vision, to realize a common objective, to manage a common resource and/or to ensure the protection, production or delivery of an outcome of collective and/or public interest*[9, p.40]."

This does not mean that MSC will be easy, simple or even be successful, but it does offer a way to address complex challenges involving the stakeholders needed to have a chance of success.

Yangikurgan rayon, Namangan province, Uzbekistan. Farmers care for their apple gardens thanks to modern drip irrigation technologies they got with support of FAO project "Promotion of water saving technologies in the Uzbek water scarce area of the transboundary Podshaota river basin".
Photo: ©FAO/Rustam Shagaev

# About this guide

This guide has been developed by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). UNEP, FAO and UNDP have come together to consolidate learnings and tools gathered from within and beyond the three agencies to contribute to the growing literature and canon of knowledge on how to improve MSC for food systems transformation.

This is the first time that three UN agencies actively working in the field of food systems have come together to consolidate and distil learnings, best practices and tools on MSC. Additionally, the development process of the guide benefited from a consultation process that validated the approach and learnings to make it a comprehensive document that can be used in many situations.

This guide is intended for all those interested in learning about and contributing to better MSC for food systems transformation. It targets organizations of all types (public, private, civil society), tasked with organizing and convening MSC initiatives that are inclusive of government and essential non-governmental actors committed to contributing to the sustainable transformation of food systems.

While there is an emphasis on ensuring representation of marginalized and vulnerable groups, the guide can be adapted and applied in different formats (multi-stakeholder platforms, public-private partnerships, etc.). It can also be adapted to institutional settings, intra-institutions or within institutions. Ultimately, the guide aims to support national and international multi-stakeholder initiatives contributing to the follow-up to the UN Food Systems Summit and to the implementation of the National Pathways.

## Methodology

The methodology for this guide has leveraged an analytical review of selected literature and a consultation process. The literature review appraised key publications on the general topic of multi-stakeholder governance, but in particular leaned on food policy literature. The review enabled principles and good practices to be cross-referenced and consolidated for more efficient guidance, in addition to direct references to targeted tools selected especially for each sub-topic. The guide also incorporates recent recommendations from international fora under the aegis of the UN Food Systems Summit 2021.

The consultative process, held to validate the guide's findings, involved three rounds of consultation with a group composed of noteworthy international, regional and national experts, as referenced in the acknowledgements. This group provided guidance, inputs and references that were, as appropriate, incorporated into the guide.

The consultation held in Uganda involved the SCALA (Scaling Up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture) programme focusing on the usefulness of the guide itself, with feedback reviewed and incorporated in the different sections of the guide.

## Structure

Five "Building Blocks" provide the core structure of the guide, as follows (see >> Figure 1):

- Building Block 1 provides guidance on the identification, selection and inclusion of stakeholders, with a focus on broad multi-stakeholder participation.
- Building Block 2 guides the reader on an analysis of the food system, to ensure a good understanding of how it works.
- Building Block 3 shares insights on the types of governance approaches for MSC, with a focus on inclusive and effective collaboration.
- Building Block 4 discusses how the process can be practically translated into action, to serve as both a compass and a roadmap.
- Building Block 5 refers to the institutionalization and funding of MSC initiatives, with the aims of ensuring the sustainability of collaboration.

**Figure 1. Graphical representation of the guide's Building Blocks**

The five Building Blocks are not sequential steps of multi-stakeholder collaboration and can be adapted as needed. However, the guide does adopt a linear sequential flow of steps that may be useful for "start-up" MSC initiatives. The guide concludes with the key findings identified by the authors when carrying out the research.

To supplement the main text, Annex 1 of the guide highlights a range of tools to support facilitators and participants with deeper guidance on a specific topic. Each Building Block section provides a link to the direct source of the tools provided in the annex. These tools can be applied during an MSC initiative based on the following:

- preference and learning needs of the participants of the MSC initiative;
- resources available (time and budget): for instance, comprehensive food systems assessments can be more time-consuming and expensive compared to rapid appraisals;
- skills, capacities and preferences of facilitators: if there is a team, or organization supporting the creation or improvement of the MSC initiative, one tool might be preferred over the other.

Annex 2 contains a checklist of questions, customized to the content provided under each Building Block, and serves as an ongoing monitoring tool that can be used alongside the recommendations provided.

Every multi-stakeholder initiative is unique and may be part of an ongoing process. For this reason, the lessons and recommendations outlined in the guide text, and the tools listed in Annex 1, are provided as guidelines for action, and not as a definitive instruction manual. The guide can therefore be used flexibly, based on the needs identified by the respective MSC initiative.

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# Building Block 1

## Fostering broad multi-stakeholder participation

The complexity of food systems requires the engagement and coordination of multiple actors representing a range of sectors to deliver solutions. Involving non-governmental stakeholders in decision-making processes can stimulate cross-sectoral coordination and improve its effectiveness.

A critical part of planning and designing MSC initiatives involves understanding which stakeholders need to be involved, as well as their role and contribution to the food system. Stakeholders' mandates, and their objectives and motivations for participating in a collaborative process, also need to be clear.[25] The legitimacy of any collaborative initiative stems from diverse representation, including typically marginalized groups.[26,27] MSC infers that each stakeholder contributes with its resources, experience, knowledge and expertise.[28]

Stakeholders convened for multi-stakeholder initiatives will require mandates, legitimacy and capacities to represent their constituencies. Building Block 3 provides guidance on strengthening capacities.

Food systems stakeholders considered for a multi-stakeholder initiative can be categorized as follows:

- public sector, including national and subnational institutions;
- private sector, including associations of small and medium-sized agrifood enterprises, large agribusinesses and inputs, business and financial service providers;
- civil society, including community-based, grassroots, Indigenous Peoples' groups and non-governmental organizations, consumers and citizens associations;
- organizations representing small, medium and large producers (farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolks, forest dwellers);
- other food systems workers, including informal actors;
- international community, including development partners and donors;
- academia and knowledge institutions, including those funded by and responding to the research interests of the other stakeholders;
- media.

# 1.1 Engaging different food systems stakeholder groups

## Public sector: who should sit at the table?

Depending on their scope and function, MSC initiatives can operate within governments, work independently as non-profit, grassroots organizations, or have a hybrid status as entities managed by both government and community organizations. The inclusion of representatives of the public sector is fundamental for legitimacy, for political (and financial) support, and to endorse and implement policy-related work resulting from the MSC initiative.

Representatives of different sectors of national and subnational institutions, and planning authorities, can be considered for selection, depending on the goals and needs of the MSC initiative. A good understanding of the power relations, decision-making processes and capacities of the public actors is also needed, taking care to avoid over-representation.

MSC initiatives can improve cross-sectoral dialogue and policy coherence, requiring the inclusion of a range of ministries such as Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Health, Energy, Forestry, Environment, Social Development, Economy and Finance. Box 1, for example, describes an intergovernmental coordination mechanism in Serbia that carries

**Box 1** **Lessons from newly emerging multi-stakeholder processes in Serbia and Moldova**[29]

Serbia and Moldova have recently begun adopting multi-stakeholder collaboration for formulating and implementing innovation policy, also in relation to the agriculture and food domain. The adoption of such a multi-stakeholder-led innovation programme was hindered by factors such as frequent changes of government and public sector reforms. However, the process has gained more traction in Serbia due to several factors.

The first relates to the existence of an intergovernmental coordination mechanism under the form of the Public Policy Secretariat (PPS). The institution fulfils many roles, including the analysis of policy documents to ensure coherence and alignment and the provision of methodological and analytical support to government institutions for designing policy proposals. The PPS actively coordinated ministries and aligned the plan resulting from the dialogue with other national policies to ensure no overlap. The PPS also helped align the multi-stakeholder process with the World Bank's support areas in the country, thus ensuring synergy of financial resources.

Another important element has been support from high-level state officials. To facilitate the process, an inter-ministerial working group was formed with representatives from all relevant ministries, overseen by the prime minister's cabinet. This validated the importance of the process and stimulated ministries to coordinate. Such high-level backing was lacking in Moldova, where the programme ran under the mandate of a single ministry and lacked inputs from many relevant ministries, despite an invitation for inputs.

out policy reviews to ensure alignment, provides methodological and analytical support to government institutions on policy design, and also actively coordinates ministries.

The involvement of statistical and other public knowledge/data-producing entities is also needed so that data are made available for the food systems diagnosis (see >> Building Block 4). Mechanisms can be established for updating, managing, sharing and interpreting data to support decision-making across sectors and ministries

Recognition and support from high-level authorities, such as the prime minister's cabinet or the mayor's office, has also been identified as a critical success factor in MSC initiatives. Box 1 describes that in Serbia an inter-ministerial working group formed with representatives from all relevant ministries, and overseen by the prime minister's cabinet, validated the importance of the process and stimulated ministries to coordinate. This type of high-level engagement was not as successful in Moldova, where the programme was run by a single ministry.

Finally, initiatives can also include public food-related technical units, such as food safety agencies, veterinary services, marketing boards and agricultural extension departments. These agencies are often closer to local stakeholders such as agribusiness or producers and have experts knowledgeable about their challenges and needs.

Table 1 provides a summary of the different typologies of public sector actors that should be included in MSC initiatives working on food systems transformation.

**Table 1. Typology of public sector actors usually included in MSC initiatives working on food systems transformation**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Representatives of different sectors of national institutions** | Usually technical representatives from the ministries dealing with food-related issues: Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Forestry, Health, Energy, Environment, Social Development, Trade, Economy and Finances, etc. |
| **Representatives of different sectors of subnational institutions** | Representatives from the mayor's office, local development agencies, etc. |
| **High-level political representatives** | Usually includes a high-level politician at the national level, and the mayor (or their representative) at the subnational level |
| **Cross-ministerial coordination structures** | For example, food and nutrition inter-ministerial committees, inter-ministerial coordinating platforms, etc. |
| **Statistical and other public knowledge/data-producing entities** | Usually involves at least national statistical offices |
| **Food-related technical units** | For instance, food safety agencies, veterinary services and agricultural extension departments |

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 1** provides a list of tools and resources to engage the public sector.

## Private sector: engaging a diversity of actors across the food system

In addition to the role that producers (farmers, herders, fisherfolks, forest dwellers) play in food security, the food system is served by an array of other private sector actors such as processors, traders and retailers; as well as enterprises outside the food supply chain, such as banks and financial institutions. These enterprises provide agriculture inputs and services to farmers, in addition to ensuring the transportation, processing and retailing of food and agrifood products across the food system. They are also characterized by a diversity of sizes and structures – from micro and medium-sized companies to large multinationals – and they operate under a range of informal, semi-formal or formal business structures. Agrifood enterprises also contribute multiple benefits for and beyond the food system – generating employment for women and young people, offering affordable and nutritious foodstuffs for local communities, connecting small farmers to markets, and investing in rural infrastructure.[30-34]

Facing highly competitive and international markets, and influenced by policies and investments promoting conventional farming practices and unsustainable business models, agrifood enterprises strive for cost-efficiency, which can lead to the externalization of negative costs including social and environmental costs.[35] The results of these trends, as evidenced by climate change and dietary health-related illnesses, necessitate constructive engagement among the private sector, governments, donors and non-governmental organizations to catalyse responsible, sustainable and inclusive business.[36]

Table 2 describes some common, interrelated challenges in engaging the private sector in MSC initiatives, and possible ways to tackle them.

**Table 2. Common challenges in engaging the private sector in MSC initiatives and possible ways to tackle them[36-39]**

| Challenges | Approaches to engagement |
|---|---|
| **Capacity gaps.** The heterogeneity of private sector actors means that they have different capacities to engage in MSC. This capacity is shaped by internal resources (e.g., skills, finance) and external conditions, such as formal policies, power structures, culture or relationships.<br><br>While big companies can find it easy to make their voices heard in dialogues, micro, small and medium agro-enterprises, especially in developing countries, might lack representation. This is due in part to the high level of informality of the sector, and to some extent to the absence or weaknesses of representing bodies. | Build the capacity of micro, small and medium agro-enterprises and informal firms to engage in MSC through enabling the overall business environment.<br><br>Governments and the development community can facilitate collective action among firms to aggregate their interests (such as through business associations) and better make their voice heard. Building Block 3 provides more insights into capacity-building for MSC engagement. |

Table continues on the next page >

| Challenges | Approaches to engagement |
|---|---|
| **Lack of incentives.** The bulk of companies, especially informal, micro and small companies, have insufficient incentives and time to engage in MSC, particularly when a weak business environment requires constant problem solving. | Make the business case for companies' involvement, focusing the dialogue on practical issues relevant to firms and highlighting that engagement can lead to improved commercial viability.<br><br>Support institutional strengthening of collective associations that can also represent the concerns of micro and informal firms. |
| **Conflicts of interest or unaligned objectives.** Firms should benefit from the collaboration, which is not inherently a conflict of interest, although conflicts can arise. For instance, by taking part in the MSC initiative, firms can gain access to information that offers them unfair commercial advantages. Enterprises may be engaged in activities that are in conflict with sustainable development objectives.<br><br>Additionally, the fast-acting and risk-taking approach of firms can clash with the slower bureaucratic requirements of public institutions and funding. | Apply recommended principles for managing conflicts of interest[36], including keeping a conflicts of interest risk register, communicating with partners on possible conflicts of interest and ensuring transparency on internal decision-making.<br><br>Carry out due diligence appraisals of participants. This can also help identify deal breakers and issues that need to be resolved before entering the collaboration.<br><br>Insights gained from the political economy analysis (Building Block 1) can flag any potential conflict of interest. Also see >> Building Block 3 on managing conflicts of interest. |
| **Lack of trust.** There can be mistrust and misunderstanding between the private sector and other groups of actors. The government and civil society can be suspicious of the motives of the private sector. The private sector can distrust the government, particularly in contexts of a weak business environment, extensive bureaucracy and political interference.<br><br>There is also often mistrust within the private sector itself, linked to the idea that competitors cannot collaborate. | Attract well-known persons with moral authority to convene actors. Use focal points such as chambers of commerce or other local agencies as a route to reach and engage businesses. The involvement of legitimate and neutral brokers can also help actors gain confidence in the process (see >> Box 9 for an example).<br><br>Explore "coopetition" opportunities, which are at the base of the most successful food clusters.<br><br>Raise awareness about the benefits of collaboration by sharing success stories and using field visits. Showcase concrete results from initial phases of collaboration.<br><br>Monitor and evaluation of the partnership can help to hold stakeholders accountable to each other.<br><br>Advocate and support the process of conversing and collaborating, which in itself is of great value and enables firms and actors to develop relationships with each other. |

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 1** provides a list of tools and resources to engage the private sector.

## Producers and their associations: different typologies, capacities and organization levels

Producers are a heterogeneous group with high diversity in terms of their legal status, factors of production, commodity foci, land size, and livelihoods orientation. Small-scale producers and family farmers are particularly important groups to include in an MSC initiative, as they produce an estimated 80 per cent of the world's food in value terms, with farms that are smaller than two hectares producing roughly 35 per cent of the world's food.[40] Women also represent on average 43 per cent of agricultural labour in developing countries.[41] However, producers, in particular smallholders and women, are often at a disadvantage when it comes to participating in decision-making processes.[42]

Challenges hampering producers' participation can include the absence of legal recognition of the right to participate; the absence of appropriate mechanisms to facilitate their participation; the lack of political will; and limited access to information and financial support.[42] To encourage their long-term meaningful engagement in MSC initiatives, it is crucial to strengthen the capacity of small producers, particularly for women and young people.

Building Block 3 provides more insights into capacity-building for MSC engagement (see also related tools and resources in >> Annex 1, Building Block 3).

As part of community-based nutrition education sessions, beneficiaries of FAO Productive Social Contract / Cash+ pilot project learn how to improve traditional dishes to enhance their dietary diversity and address nutritional needs. Photo: ©FAO/Karina Levina

## Including informal actors in multi-stakeholder collaborative initiatives

The food system is the largest employer in many developing countries.[22] However, people's engagement in MSC initiatives is hampered, as the majority of actors are micro, small and medium-sized enterprises[43], ranging from local food kiosks, street vendors, bakeries, and family-owned restaurants to food manufacturers or processors. In many contexts, the informal food sector is also dominated by women workers.[44] While these actors bring important local, territorial intelligence and "real-life" experiences, their influence in the system, and opportunities for gender empowerment, are hampered due to their informality and to their lack of organized representation and voice in MSC initiatives.[45]

Box 2 provides an example from Lusaka, Zambia of how micro and informal actors, including women, can be engaged to successfully inform and participate in agenda setting and action alongside city councils in order to develop sustainable and healthy food systems at the urban level for all income groups. This example also describes the application of food systems mapping, which can be an important tool for identifying underrepresented actors and bringing them or their champions into MSC initiatives (see tools and resources in >> Annex 1, Building Block 2).

**Box 2** **Meaningful engagement of the informal sector in the multi-stakeholder Food Change Lab of Lusaka, Zambia**[46-51]

Zambia's capital city of Lusaka sees urban residents from all income bands buy fresh and primary processed food from informal food markets on a daily basis. However, the markets often lack adequate infrastructure, storage facilities and access to running water. The majority of informal traders are women.

The multi-stakeholder Food Change Lab was one of several initiatives that led to the formation of the Lusaka Food Policy Council in 2020, following a detailed stakeholder mapping of Lusaka's food system – including formal and informal stakeholders. The Lusaka Food Policy Council was established to depart from usual patterns of expert-driven policies and interventions by putting citizens at the centre, particularly through the participation of low-income people and informal market players.

Representatives in the initiative came up with ideas for ensuring the availability of healthy and safe food for low-income consumers. A training was also developed for informal traders to increase their knowledge on the nutritional value of the food sold in addition to events aimed at improving the diversity of food produced and consumed, also supported by Lusaka City Council and the Nutrition Council. The initiative has led to increased demand for sustainable and healthy food by low-income consumers, especially women and youth.

## Civil society: from community and grassroots associations to international non-governmental organizations

Civil society organizations include non-state stakeholders such as non-governmental member-based organizations and social movements. Civil society organizations vary in nature, with some examples including charities and foundations, community and grassroots organizations, consumers' associations, women and Indigenous Peoples' groups, labour unions and environmental organizations. Civil society organizations can help bring to the discussion important issues such as healthy diets, gender inclusion, decent employment and environmental issues[52], contributing to a comprehensive assessment.

However, the participation of all non-governmental organizations cannot be considered the same, with efforts needed to include the direct representatives of marginalized groups.[53] Also there is the risk that "civil society" participation could be skewed in favour of non-governmental organizations that are better resourced and with better capacities. In addition, some non-governmental organizations may lack a clear mandate for the groups they are representing.[54] Consumers are also an important actor in the agrifood system, but their voice can also be absent from the dialogue table. Involving consumers' organizations in MSC initiatives can help to raise awareness among citizens of the opportunities and challenges facing the food system and the role they can play in shaping a sustainable food system.

Community-based conflict resolution communities in Kanem gathering to fight against malnutrition. Photo: ©FAO/SFC

Consumer organizations represent a wide and diverse body of citizens and can therefore play a role in advocating with governments and the private sector on the elimination of hazardous and exploitative practices along agrifood food chains. They are also able to promote healthy diets and to bring valuable consumer insights and market intelligence to multi-stakeholder fora, while also using consumer campaigns to educate and influence sustainable consumption patterns.[55]

Box 3 provides an example from France of a national consultation organized by the French National Food Council, including consumers associations and Citizen Councils using "debate kits" to facilitate dialogues at the community level.

A stakeholders mapping phase (see tools and resources in >> Annex 1, Building Block 1), can help initiatives to characterize different civil society organizations, thereby ensuring a varied representation of the diverse groups found across the food system.

**Box 3** **CNA citizen consultation mechanisms in France**[56,57]

The French National Food Council (*Conseil National de l'Alimentation* or CNA) brings together the main representatives of the French food system to make recommendations on key food issues for public authorities and society.

In July 2021, the members of the CNA decided to work on the topic of food insecurity through a modality open to citizen participation. A working group called the "citizen participation unit" was set up to design the consultation process. It proposed a participatory mechanism composed of two tools:

- "Self-supporting" debates – organized by partners such as communities – whose objective is to receive citizens' observations, analyses and proposals. The CNA developed a "debate kit" for citizens who would like to organize a self-supported debate.
- A citizens' panel comprising people facing food insecurity.

For both tools, the leading question was: "What must be done so that each person has dignified access to sufficient, quality food?"

## International and regional agencies, development partners and donors

International and national research institutions are usually heavily engaged in setting the agenda, guiding the organizational design, and providing funding, technical assistance, legitimacy and other resources.[45]

In developing countries, catalytic funding of MSC initiatives working on food systems is often provided by large international donors, UN agencies, and international non-governmental organizations. This means that funding is often time-bound and project- or programme-based. As a result, MSC initiatives can disintegrate once the project funding has ended and if collaboration has not been sufficiently institutionalized (see >> Building Block 5).[45]

## Academia and knowledge-based organizations – including Indigenous Peoples' knowledge

National agricultural and food research institutes[58] play the important role of analysing data and evidence to inform dialogues and decision-making processes. MSC initiatives linked with research projects can also be catalysed, started and/or driven by international research institutions such as the CGIAR agencies (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, International Food Policy Research Institute, Alliance of Bioversity & the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, etc.). These agencies also work closely with national and international universities.[45] Research and knowledge-based organizations are important partners for continuous learning, knowledge development, monitoring, evaluation and generating research-related outputs.

The research community also plays an important part in innovation and potentially also in the monitoring and evaluation of the MSC activities/plans. Connecting research institutes with local stakeholders such as agribusinesses, Indigenous Peoples, civil society organizations or producers can yield many benefits, such as helping to ensure the commercialization of research outputs and facilitating the development of solutions for territorial challenges.[59]

## Media

Media, either public or private, including social media, can help to make the case for sustainable food systems by influencing and fostering a mindset shift in societies. The media can research stories on issues related to the local food system, farmers' markets, local food policy, and local food practices and culture. These stories can shed light and raise awareness on crucial issues related to sustainable food systems.[60]

# 1.2 Ensuring wide and inclusive multi-stakeholder representation

## Assessing and balancing representation around the table from the outset

The governance structure of the MSC initiative and the stakeholder selection and inclusion process play a role in ensuring a diversity of views and in balancing power relations among participants. For instance, to ensure appropriate representation, the CONSEA (*Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*) initiative in Brazil, in its 2013-2016 composition, allocated more than 30 out of the 40 seats to social movements, non-governmental organizations and small producer association groups.[61]

Inclusiveness and broad representation can also be influenced by the timing and sequence of stakeholder inclusion. For instance, inclusiveness and representation is still an area of concern for the food policy council of Berlin, Germany (Ernährungsrat Berlin), even after years of operation and several attempts to engage marginalized groups. Those engaged in the process acknowledged the need to build a more diverse group during the initiative's inception. The collaboration began with primarily academic groups, which subsequently made it difficult to include other actors as the initiative evolved. This is a challenge recognized by food policy councils and collaborative processes in different geographic locations.[62] An MSC initiative should be seen as an evolving process that adapts, asking constantly "who is missing?" and including new actors as the process evolves and as needed.

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 1** provides a list of tools and resources to engage underrepresented groups.

## Different scales and levels of engagement

Many national-level multi-stakeholder initiatives operate at the regional and city level in collaboration with municipalities and networks, including additional stakeholders. The national level provides the enabling environment for decentralized policymaking and the framing for the agenda at the subnational level. Likewise, most urban MSC initiatives, such as food policy councils, have a geographical scope that goes beyond the limits of the city, to include a city-region or sub-regional focus.[56]

Box 4 describes the role of the Montreal Food System Council (CSAM) in using the city-region as a base for harnessing multi-stakeholder collaboration from the international to the subnational levels to inform the city's food policies and programmes. Examples of such networks include, at the international level, the CITYFOOD Network (on resilient city-region food systems) and, at the national level, the Sustainable Food Places Network in the United

Kingdom. These networks help food policy councils share knowledge and experiences to make progress and create a food movement that can participate in debates and political processes at the national or international level.[63]

**Box 4** **The Montreal Food System Council´s multi-level network**[56, 64]

The Montreal Food System Council (CSAM) was founded in 2018 in response to a citizens' call for a food consultation body. Its priorities include improving market access for local produce, reducing environmental footprints, reducing food insecurity, improving nutrition and working towards structural projects and intersectoral collaboration.

CSAM's scope of action is the city-region and mostly includes local organizations among its members. However, the initiative's systemic approach acknowledges the importance of building connections with organizations and networks at all levels: international (the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact), national (CSAM included the national association Sustainable Food Network in the consultation of its 2020-2022 action plan), subnational (the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of the region of Quebec) and city-region (CSAM coordinates with the Eastern Montreal Food Network and other local networks and organizations).

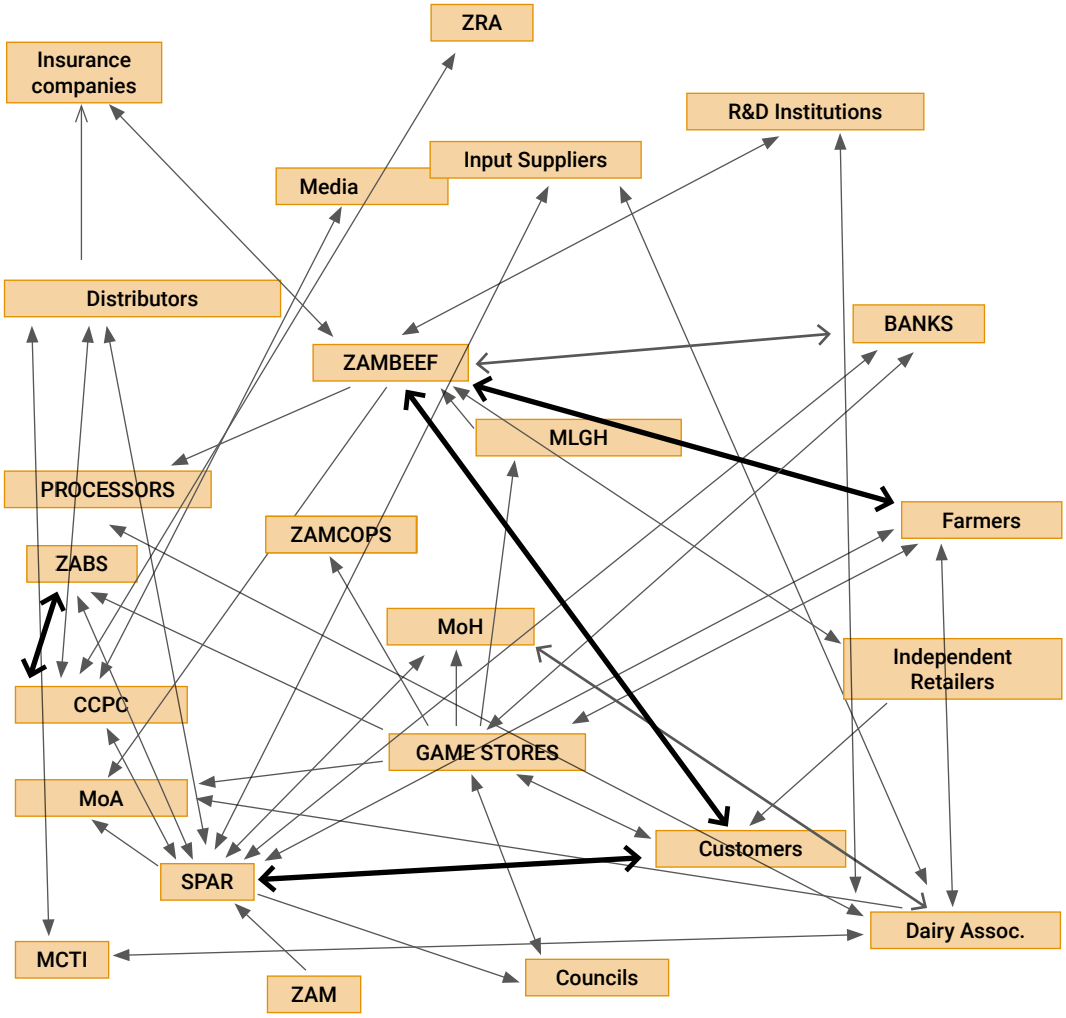
## Conducting a food systems stakeholders mapping and analysis

Preliminary mapping and categorization of stakeholders, identifying their motivations for engagement, should characterize the initial steps of an MSC initiative. The identification and inclusion of stakeholders should then continue throughout the collaborative process (see >> Building Block 2).

The mapping can also include an analysis of the political economy dimension, to gauge power dynamics and the actors' interests in maintaining or changing the status quo. The analysis can help to inform resistance that might be faced, or to identify coalitions of support for the initiative.[65]

For example, in the first phase of the Lusaka City Region Food Systems project in Zambia, an action plan to reinforce the city's approach to food security and nutrition included stakeholder mappings and analysis. A Net-Map tool (see >> Annex 1, Building Block 1) was applied to understand the actors involved in the system, whom they represented, their level of influence, how they were linked to each other, and their institutional goals. Over 35 stakeholders from different sectors and areas were invited to participate, with inception activities focused on building relationships among participants and increasing their understanding of the complexity of the city's food system. Figure 2 shows a map of Lusaka's food system stakeholders and their relationships.

## Figure 2. Map of Lusaka´s food system stakeholders and their relationships using the Net-Map method[66]




Notes: CCPC = Competition and Consumer Protection Commission; Dairy Assoc. = Dairy Association of Zambia; Game stores = a multinational retail chain; MCTI = Ministry of Commerce Trade and Industry; MLGH = Ministry of Local Government and Housing; MoA = Ministry of Agriculture; MoH = Ministry of Health; Spar = an international retail brand; ZABS = Zambia Bureau of Standards; ZAM = Zambia Association of Manufacturers; Zambeef = the largest vertically integrated food retailing brand in Zambia; ZAMCOPS = Zambia Music Copyright Protection Society; ZRA = Zambia Revenue Authority.

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 1** provides a list of tools and resources to conduct stakeholder mapping and analysis.

Photo: ©FAO/Jorge Rodríguez

# Building Block 2

## Ensuring a good understanding of the food system

Taking a systems approach to informing multi-stakeholder dialogue with evidence-based analysis and data is essential to create better policies for food systems.[67] The lack of evidence to support decision-making is considered one of the main causes of unsustainable practices.[67] Using a systems approach brings academic and scientific knowledge complemented with other types of knowledge, such as traditional and Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and local and territorial intelligence (lived experience of vendors, consumers, etc.).

Research shows that well-functioning MSC initiatives working on food systems policy usually conduct a comprehensive participatory food systems diagnosis[56], as a foundation for further engagement and discussions.

There are many different tools for conducting a comprehensive and participatory food systems diagnosis (see >> Annex 1, Building Block 2). These types of assessments can be time-consuming and expensive, as they can involve gathering primary data. They can gather secondary data from across the whole food system and build connections to leverage what is already available.[53]

4 March 2016, Istanbul, Türkiye - Turkish chef Didem Senol working with her team at the kitchen of her restaurant in Istanbul. Photo: ©FAO/Samuel Aranda

## 2.1 Characteristics of food system assessments

The aim of a comprehensive food systems assessment is to identify the main factors that characterize the food system and potential trade-offs across the outcomes resulting from interventions in the system; the links between systems (especially environmental, socio-economic and health); and the main policies influencing the food system. These assessments can also incorporate a stakeholder mapping as described in section 1.2. Box 5 describes the topics that the Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation suggests for consideration in food system assessments.

**Box 5** **Topics for analysing food systems proposed by the Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation**[10]

Topics to consider when undertaking food system assessments include:

- **Analysis of the food and agriculture system and its impacts** (including environmental, social, health and economic impacts). The analysis has the scope to highlight interlinkages among food systems elements. The Collaborative Framework identifies key elements to be measured in *Twelve key facts for a national or subnational food systems assessment* and gives *Suggestions of additional methods for more in-depth analyses of food systems.*
- **Analysis of policies and initiatives** (and their coherence). Reviewing existing policies and regulatory frameworks, including subsidies, is essential to identify enabling factors and obstacles to the achievement of more sustainable food systems. The Collaborative Framework provides guiding questions for the review.
- **Analysis of existing institutions within food systems.** The goal is to identify the institutions and bodies that are linked to the governance of the food system and to analyse their relationships. The analysis will involve assessing their roles, mandate, power, and related actions, policies and regulations. This should also consider pre-existing institutional and governance arrangements, including whether there are (or were) other similar multi-stakeholder initiatives in the target area. Doing this will prevent duplication and allow the MSC initiative to benefit from previous work.
- **Recommendations for priority/focus areas and policy responses.** An assessment should include recommendations that constitute the starting point for collaborative dialogue. Taking a food systems approach should help evaluate trade-offs in policy options, as drivers and outcomes will be comprehensively assessed. Throughout the policy planning process, the objective should be to mitigate trade-offs among social, economic and environmental aspects, and to prioritize the best triple-win solutions for society. Trade-offs must be negotiated among food systems actors.[68]

An analysis of trade-offs is also important to include in the assessment. A trade-off refers to a gain for one objective resulting in a loss for another. For instance, gains in agricultural production may come at the expense of nature conservation.[65] Certain public subsidies can also result in environmental trade-offs.[69] Choosing the right mix of policies and practices can minimize trade-offs and even generate "trade-ons," meaning accomplishing multiple goals simultaneously.[70] Since trade-offs can also affect the distribution of benefits and costs, creating losers and winners, any food systems intervention is likely to be opposed by certain groups. Win-win solutions are rare, so strategies are needed to better manage trade-offs.[65] Box 6 describes a trade-off analysis carried out in Kenya for the indigenous vegetable sector.

A wide portfolio of methods is available to weigh trade-offs and synergies among sustainability objectives, including simulation methods, optimization methods, multi-criteria analysis, spatially explicit methods, integrated methods and stakeholder-centred methods.[71] Conventional economic cost-benefit analysis aggregates effects into net benefits, which can obscure trade-offs and the distribution of outcomes among stakeholders.[72] True-cost accounting methods are better suited for this analysis because they identify negative externalities, including economic, health, environmental and social effects.[73]

**Box 6** **Trade-off analysis using a food systems approach in Kenya[65]**

Researchers conducted a trade-off analysis to understand how a policy shift towards increased support for indigenous vegetables would interact with the food system in Nakuru County, Kenya. The research team selected seven sustainability indicators for the analysis: economic (agricultural gross domestic product and poverty), social (undernourishment, undernutrition and equity) and environmental (climate adaptation and soil quality).

The team found that seed support achieves the most impact on almost all sustainability dimensions; for instance, better indigenous vegetable seeds would encourage crop diversification. Continuing government support for maize (the business-as-usual scenario), however, is detrimental to most indicators. For instance, higher support for maize translates into lower financing or resources (e.g., land) available for other crops.

The research also included a political economy analysis followed by a stakeholder analysis to define engagement strategies suitable to each group. This involved determining the degree of interest and influence of stakeholders with respect to the objectives. The researchers found, for instance, that the pressure of powerful players (e.g., larger-scale maize producers) to maintain the status quo is strong, but building an alliance among the Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Education could help address this.

Since some trade-offs might only emerge during implementation, the researchers stressed the need for constant monitoring.

## 2.2 Choosing the right methodology to assess food systems

Many tools and methodologies can be used to assess food systems. The main differences relate to:

- quantitative-qualitative balance
- degree of detail
- geographical focus
- level of involvement of stakeholders in the mapping/analysis.

Carrying out a comprehensive food systems assessment is a resource-intensive exercise. The Food Systems Decision-Support Toolbox[74] provides guidance on how to make choices about the design of food system analysis. The choice of approach will depend on specific needs and on the time and resources available.

The City Region Food System Toolkit[75], for instance, highlights several steps, covering: an initial scan of secondary data and stakeholder interviews or focus groups for an identification of priority issues, as well as gaps for further research with primary data collection. This is followed by additional data collection and research and may involve the re-interpretation of secondary data. Well-designed data display is then developed in order to share the results of the assessment phase and prepare multi-stakeholder action planning.

16 August 2016, Hissar, Tajikistan – FAO project enhanced government's capacities in Agrarian Reform and support the development of the agriculture and rural sector in Tajikistan.
Photo: ©FAO/Nozim Kalandarov

Box 7 describes an analytical food systems mapping in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) that supported the identification of: key food value chains; main stakeholders and their role within the system; distribution and movement of financial, information and knowledge flows; and key natural resources for the sustainability of the system. The participatory approach that was implemented also reinforced the coordination among ongoing initiatives.[76]

**Box 7** **Participatory food system mapping in Bolivia (Plurinational State of)**[76,77]

As part of a broader research project in Kenya and Bolivia (Plurinational State of), the Bolivian geographical area where the Amazon basin meets the Andes was designated to test a methodology for participatory mapping of food systems. Within the selected area, a network of organic producers and consumers called Agroecological Platform for the Tropics, Subtropics and Chaco was chosen.

Using the Mapping Local Food Webs Toolkit as inspiration, a participatory methodology for food systems mapping was developed in collaboration with local students, researchers and stakeholders. The resulting mapping methodology followed four phases: 1) preparation of maps of the study area, 2) field research visits to stakeholders and important locations for food systems' activities, 3) workshop in which stakeholders developed a visual representation of their food system and 4) preparation of stakeholders' power/interest matrices.

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 2** provides a list of tools and resources to conduct food systems mapping and analysis.

Photo: FAO/Luis Tato

# Building Block 3

## Nurturing inclusive and effective collaboration

Beyond convening a range of food systems stakeholders and assembling data and evidence to inform the dialogue, MSC initiatives need to be carefully managed and facilitated to ensure that deliberations will result in concrete outcomes for food systems transformation. The "how" of collaboration requires four key ingredients, which are explored in this Building Block:

1. establishing the governance structure
2. enhancing facilitation and communication
3. managing power imbalances
4. working through conflict.

23 February 2017, Rome Italy - Workshop: Accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women with 7 country coordinators from the UN Joint Programme (FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN Women), FAO headquarters (Iraq Room). Photo: ©FAO/Giuseppe Carotenuto

## 3.1 Establishing the governance structure

The governance structure for MSC initiatives refers to an assembly of institutional processes, rules and structures that guide the decision-making and coordinate the initiative's actions. Often, MSC is initiated by one or a few individuals or organizations who want to raise awareness about an issue and attract other stakeholders.[78] However, as the MSC initiative progresses, dedicated structures are needed to facilitate the process and coordinate among stakeholders.

Box 8 describes possible governance set-ups, such as a steering committee, working groups, backbone organizations, or platform structures, variations of which can be adopted depending on the activities that need to be carried out and on the maturity of the MSC initiative.[79]

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 3** provides a list of tools and resources to start the process.

**Box 8** **Possible governance structure set-ups for an MSC initiative**

The governance set-up for an MSC initiative may include:

- **A steering committee**, which generally involves representatives of the relevant stakeholders' groups[80] (see >> Building Block 1). Selecting individuals for membership should be made with careful consideration of their suitability, gauging their acceptability to the wider stakeholder group that they represent.[81] To ensure the higher-level political backing needed for success, high-level government representatives such as ministers can also be considered.
- **Working groups or task teams**, which are smaller teams that may be created to work on specific topics and/or details such as writing strategic documents based on dialogues, or performing specific studies, such as monitoring and evaluation, etc.
- **A support structure** to provide practical assistance for fundraising, organizing meetings, developing networks, and coordinating actors and actions. This support structure can be based in a neutral organization, or it can be an independent entity, such as a **secretariat, backbone organization or platform**. Each kind of organization providing backbone support brings certain advantages and disadvantages.

The MSC initiative also needs to consider how to connect with the wider context. It may, for instance, act as an intermediary of already-established initiatives, or it may merge with other initiatives.[82] This is important to avoid overlaps and to leverage synergies. Whatever the choice of governance structure, the structure needs to be approved by all stakeholders to ensure the legitimacy of the initiative[76] and a transparent, accountable and inclusive process.

The following considerations can be referred to when designing a governance structure for MSC initiatives:

## Managing bias

When making choices about whom to include in the process, it is important to consider whether unintentional bias is at play.[83] Unconscious bias will work against the MSC initiative's commitment to diversity and inclusion. A key step to overcoming the challenge is to become aware of these biases and to commit to addressing them.[84] Individuals can take the perspective of vulnerable groups and imagine what challenges they might face. Avoiding making quick decisions and judgements can also reduce bias.[84]

## Ensuring inclusiveness

Quotas such as requirements for women or vulnerable/underrepresented groups in membership are recommended.[85] However, women and other vulnerable people should not be considered homogenous groups. It is important to consider differences not only across stakeholder groups but also within them, and to comprehensively address all barriers that may impede people to participate in the MSC initiative. This means ensuring that decision-making processes and participation are not unfairly influenced by any forms of identity.

Another way to improve inclusivity is structuring the MSC initiative with several levels and nested decision making, such as with sub-groups, working groups or subcommittees, as described in Box 8. This will provide more leadership positions and space for participation. Creating separate groups may also encourage some vulnerable populations, such as women, to share freely.[85]

## Managing decision-making processes

Some common ways to make decisions within MSC initiatives include negotiation, quorum or majority voting.[63,86] Participants may prefer to decide by voting, but this option should be carefully considered, as majority voting can become "a way of imposing the views of the majority on the minority, leaving minority stakeholders disempowered, angry or silent[81, p.57]." The paragraphs below provide guidance on how decision-making processes can be undertaken, with Table 3 providing a breakdown of consensus-based versus managed decision-making to help address different challenges associated with the number and diversity of stakeholders.

## Achieving consensus

Achieving consensus is commonly associated with the goals of MSC initiatives, since it can mitigate conflict, foster compliance and stakeholder ownership, encourage cooperation, and contribute to trust building and joint learning.[87] However, by aiming for consensus, MSC initiatives may sacrifice a diversity of views and types of knowledge. This is because it can pressure less powerful participants to give in to more powerful actors.[88,89] It is important to

build awareness that working with difference and through conflict can be valuable and creative – and, when done well, can lead to better outcomes that are more likely to be successful.[25]

The bottom line is that the MSC initiative should not be seen solely as a space in which universal consensus should be reached, but also one that encourages the deliberation of various views and interests.[90] By allowing debate, and making differences explicit, the attitude towards other opinions may be adjusted, "increasing the room for manoeuvre regarding what is possible[81, p.58]."

## Managing operations

More administrative or routine decisions can be undertaken by a coordination unit, also known as a backbone unit[25], specifically established and funded to manage the MSC initiative. A specific unit is desirable when there is a large number and diversity of stakeholders involved.[91] When this is the case, coordinators need to make sure that the process does not lose its multi-stakeholder character; autonomous decisions need to have clearly defined and limited boundaries that are agreed by all stakeholders.[81] When in doubt, coordinators should refer decisions to the whole group or relevant sub-groups.[81]

**Table 3. How consensus-based and managed decision making help to address different challenges associated with the number and diversity of stakeholders[92]**

| Decision-making approach | Number of stakeholders | Diversity of stakeholders |
|---|---|---|
| Managed by a coordinator (e.g., backbone organization) | **Practices to deal with the inability to observe actors and interactions** | **Practices to create a sense of ownership of the initiative** |
| | Divide workload and assign roles | Formulate project vision |
| | Connect stakeholders | Showcase the MSC initiative |
| | Initiate meetings | Showcase results |
| | Stimulate initial encounters | |
| Consensus-based | **Practices to address lack of coordination among actors** | **Practices to foster legitimacy** |
| | Motivate key contributors and foster commitments | Discuss differences among stakeholders and raise awareness about them |
| | Create smaller teams | Provide flexibility |
| | Monitor progress | Stimulate bottom-up collaboration |
| | | Facilitate relationships |

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 3** provides a list of tools and resources to set up a well-functioning governance structure.

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 3** provides a list of tools and resources to support collaborative leadership and partnership management.

## 3.2 Enhancing facilitation and communication

An important contribution to MSC initiatives is the role of facilitation in terms of planning, guiding and managing group events or processes to ensure that goals are met.[92] Effective facilitation was identified as a critical success factor in the Effective Collaborative Action Guide[27] from UNDP's Green Commodities Programme.

The facilitation role should fulfil a number of interdependent functions: convenor, motivator, communicator; subject matter specialist and most importantly as a catalyst to stimulate dialogue and debate for creative solutions.[78] One person may not be able to fulfil all these roles. For instance, in its MSC work, the Centre for Development Innovation puts in place facilitation teams, usually including women and men from different cultural and professional backgrounds.[78] Consideration should also be given to gender, culture and professional background.[92]

Facilitation also strongly depends on contextual and cultural factors. The services of a professional, impartial mediator that participants trust is likely to be needed in situations characterized by a lack of trust among stakeholders. In instances where power is unequally distributed, and where some people lack incentives to participate, a charismatic leader who is known locally and accepted, and trusted by all, is more likely to be important.[93]

Box 9 provides an example of how a neutral broker facilitated the initiation of a multi-stakeholder process.

**Box 9** **Neutral broker facilitating multi-stakeholder collaboration[94]**

Initiating collaboration requires special skills and understanding of the situation; it may depend, for instance, on senior staff and their charisma and capabilities. Some players may not be able to get a collaborative process underway without third-party support. For example, Zambian Breweries were affected by local communities disposing of waste in the river that provided them with water. The company was not able to initiate collaboration to protect the springs, until Germany's GIZ came in as a neutral broker, facilitating cooperation between the business and local community.

Facilitators also have an important role to play in addressing power inequalities so that proper representation and collaboration can be ensured; and in managing diverging interests so that agreements can be reached.[95] The ideal traits and skills of a professional facilitator are described in Box 10. Because one facilitator may not have all of the competencies listed in the box, a facilitation team may be required or specialist consultants may be recruited to cover skills gaps in the facilitation.

**Box 10 Ideal traits and skills of a professional facilitator**

A professional facilitator should ideally have the following traits and skills:

- Relational competencies such as patience, empathy, honesty and deference.[96,97]
- Ability to engage in, and to encourage participants to use, systems thinking and strategic foresight[92] so that discussions cover topics related to systemic change and working with complexity. This, for instance, requires that facilitators and stakeholders have the ability to look at "wholes" and relationships.[27]
- Subject matter expertise on at least one aspect of the agrifood system, which could be, for example: Indigenous Peoples' and traditional knowledge; agroecology; natural resource management; food security and nutrition; or agribusiness.
- Cultural and gender sensitivity to address a lack of participation by marginalized groups.[85]
- Knowledge with methods to prevent or overcome conflicts and power struggles; these include roundtable discussions, joint initiatives, mediation, training, education and joint fact-finding.[95]
- Familiarity with using different tools to develop participants' common understanding, language and definition of relevant issues.[98]
- Strategic communication such as strategic planning, operational planning, monitoring and evaluation design, data collection and analysis, sense-making and reporting results.[92]

Facilitators in charge of organizational matters such as designing the meetings need to provide space for all stakeholders to contribute, taking into consideration the logistical needs of participants and the style and format of meetings.[79] For instance, meeting formats can unintentionally contribute to biases.[85] Thus, a range of meeting formats and communication styles should be considered to promote inclusion and interaction.

Information can be shared and discussed through formal presentations or facilitated group discussions. Participants can contribute online, or in person. The type of information also needs to be considered and the level and delivery mode for sharing scientific or technical data. Information and discussions may also need to be translated in national or local languages.[79]

Participants representing stakeholder groups also need to take responsibility for ensuring that they are adequately representing the voice of their constituents.[98] This may require creating opportunities to involve their groups, such as awareness-raising events or training.[98]

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 3** provides a list of tools and resources to ensure successful facilitation.

## Communication styles and tools as levers for stakeholder engagement and inclusion

Communication is a core pillar of any MSC initiative, requiring a variety of processes to engage people and develop understanding, consensus, ownership, meaningful alliances and strong partnerships.[92] Communication takes place on a range of levels – for instance, through individuals, where the quality of personal interactions will depend on the extent to which individuals listen and engage in dialogue; as well as collectively, where stakeholders develop and communicate a common message to contribute to change.[25] Several challenges that can adversely affect communication include: divergent views and preconceived ideas, not listening to others, lack of trust, and an unconducive environment for sharing experiences and discussion.[78,92]

24 November 2021, Albinia (Tuscany), Italy - Workers of La Selva organic farm preparing canned vegetables. Photo: © FAO/Victor Sokolowicz

## Considerations for a communication strategy

Developing a communication strategy for the MSC initiative can contribute to achieving its goals, and can include developing a shared vision; making sense of findings; facilitating learning; and ensuring accountability. A well-thought-out strategy will also ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups, who may face challenges accessing technology. For instance, radio broadcasts or social messaging platforms such as WhatsApp may be more successful in reaching rural areas than in-person meetings.[85]

Another important consideration relates to the messages conveyed, as technical or academic language may not be understood by everyone. Sharing of information should be done in a way that is accessible to all stakeholders. Ensuring that communication is inclusive may require working with education and communication experts at the local level.[95] Effective communication also fosters accountability, with several communication tools[63] described in Box 11.

**Box 11** **Communication tools to foster accountability[63]**

- Organization of events, workshops, seminars, conferences, etc. to inform the public of its activities.
- Newsletter with news and events: These may include short articles, reports and news aimed at raising awareness and educating readers on the initiative's work.
- Social networks and website: Social media, blogs and virtual networks and website can be used to share information about initiative vision, objectives and reports.
- Relationships through the MSC initiative members: Establishing relationships between different food systems actors is one of the objectives of MSC initiatives. The participants themselves can create alliances and encourage communication across the food system.
- The communication process can also benefit from having a "visual identity[81]" or logo – an image used to convey the vision of the MSC initiative and promote its work to the outside world.

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 3** provides a list of tools and resources to encourage effective communication.

## 3.3 Managing power imbalances

Power imbalances are inherent to collaboration among stakeholders with different levels of resources and influence, with concerns that collaborative practices can reinforce, rather than mitigate, unequal power relations. For instance, people in government, large non-governmental organizations or scientific communities have more time and resources and so are better able to articulate their views and interests than marginalized people who may lack confidence to join discussions.[89] This could lead to the more powerful actors strengthening their interests. These power inequalities are compounded by the prevailing idea that scientific knowledge is superior to other types of knowledge such as traditional or Indigenous Peoples' knowledge.[89]

Additionally, when aiming for consensus, the MSC can hide fundamental differences among stakeholders in terms of power, access to resources, vulnerability and risk.[89] It is important to allow for a diversity of views and interests. In addition to the need to recognize these sources of bias, there are various ways to empower weaker and underrepresented actors, both within and beyond the MSC initiative level.

### Strengthening stakeholders' capacity to actively engage

When some stakeholders do not have the capacity to participate, or to participate on an equal basis, decision-making will be dominated by the more powerful actors. This may also undermine the commitment of some stakeholders and pose risks to long-term objectives.[99] Capacities required are a combination of soft and hard skills (see >> Building Block 3 on building competencies), the development of which can also be dependent on a range of circumstances[100], such as culture, formal and informal policies, and resources.[92] Some stakeholder groups – such as women, Indigenous Peoples, smallholders and young people – may lack the capacity to actively engage in initiatives, possibly necessitating dedicated resources to ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders.[35]

Stakeholders may also be invited to participate in an initiative based on their subject matter expertise, such as in food systems; fisheries; food safety; biodiversity; or knowledge about local and Indigenous Peoples' communities. MSC initiatives will also require people from the public sector who are well versed in related pro-policymaking competencies and processes.[92]

A number of short- and long-term actions can be taken to address weaknesses in stakeholders' capacities, described as follows.

#### Action 1: Ensuring an enabling environment that is conducive to engagement

Government political will, in addition to an enabling policy framework that recognizes vulnerable groups and their needs, is essential for actively engaging marginalized groups in MSC initiatives.[101] A supportive policy mix targeting small producers can include, for

instance, financial and technical support, the facilitation of collective action and skills development. When the wider environment is not conducive to inclusivity, the MSC initiative may need to dedicate efforts to advocating for policies that bring about the necessary conditions for empowering actors, such as the recognition or formalization of underrepresented stakeholders as actors in regulatory frameworks.

## Action 2: Appraising power imbalances

Recognizing power imbalances in order to strategically deal with them will involve an appraisal of the different degrees of power among actors, their source of power and how they use their power.[102] For instance, the government's power stems in part from its public decision-making authority; the private sector's from its financial resources and access to markets and consumers; and non-profit organizations' from their relationships with civil society.[103] A stakeholder appraisal will also inform the stakeholder mapping phase, discussed under Building Block 1, to actively ensure the inclusion and capacity of marginalized groups to engage actively in deliberations.

## Action 3: Stimulating collective action

Dealing with power differentials is particularly challenging when stakeholders do not have the ability to organize themselves to be represented in collaborative processes.[93] For instance, remote smallholder farmers may find it difficult to organize themselves into a cooperative, or small agribusinesses may lack incentives to aggregate their interests through a business association. In this case, enabling policies can include the provision of incentives to stimulate collective action.

## Action 4: Building the competencies and skills for MSC

Organizations supporting the MSC initiative can also set up learning activities to fill in knowledge gaps to, for instance, foster systems thinking and increase the confidence of members. Learning can also be promoted by mixing together people from diverse areas of expertise, so that participants can gain knowledge about different disciplines; for instance, "policy people" and "field people"[78] might be blended in discussion groups.

Participating in the MSC initiative itself is an activity in which members can learn from experience through a continuous process of monitoring, evaluation and learning – through experience, training or other activities. By generating a "feedback loop of participation[85]," members can enhance their skills and become more confident in their own abilities to participate more actively in discussions.

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 3** provides a list of tools and resources to deal with power differences.

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 3** provides a list of tools and resources to build competencies and skills for MSC.

## 3.4 Working through conflict

Within the MSC initiative, conflict is almost inevitable, as stakeholders will have different personalities, interests, power, values and perspectives.[78] A lack of trust is a common challenge.[103] Conflict itself can be a reason for establishing an MSC initiative.[78] In these cases, a neutral broker such as a local non-governmental or development organization can convene actors to solve the conflict. A "sense of urgency" can be created, which can place pressure on stakeholders to resolve a conflict or a common problem.[104-106]

While making explicit divergent views and debating them in MSC initiatives is important, conflict may also impede discussions and progress in achieving the initiative's goals, necessitating that a conflict is handled constructively by providing a safe space for debate and potential disagreements.[78,104] Box 12 provides an overview of techniques and tools for conflict management.

**Box 12 Techniques and tools for conflict management**

**Shared group identity**

Developing a shared group identity and common vision can enable partners to see past their differences (see >> Building Block 4).

**Synchronized de-escalation**

This useful method refers to one partner offering a small concession to signal its good faith with other partners invited to reciprocate, which can eventually build trust and provide a way for stakeholders to move into a problem-solving mode.

**Mediation**

Mediation involves a neutral third-party who helps parties to transform a dispute into a cooperative interaction through: "a) effective communication, b) less obstruction, c) orderly discussion, d) confidence in one's ideas coupled with support for the ideas and concerns of other participants, and e) coordinated efforts to resolve the conflict[107, p.86]." Mediators can do this by having one-to-one conversations with each party and then bringing everyone together to convey the information needed to reach an agreement.[81]

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 3** provides a list of tools and resources to manage divergent interests and conflicts.

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 3** provides a list of tools and resources to overcome the most common challenges of MSC.

Photo: ©FAO/Miguel Schincariol

# Building Block 4

## Defining a compass and a roadmap

Coherent and joint decision-making needs to build on shared visions and strategies. Different stakeholder groups often share deeper values and interests in the bigger picture. Developing visions for the future is a good way of finding shared ambitions and sparking inspiring collaboration[28], which is a fundamental determinant for the success of an MSC initiative.[56]

Once the vision is set, a strategy will describe how the goals of an MSC initiative can be achieved. The strategy provides the foundation for the action plan, which should outline concrete steps, resources and instruments needed to achieve the objectives. Moving from vision to action involves an iterative process in which stakeholders learn by doing and adjust the process as they better understand what works and what does not work.

Stakeholders should be involved at each step of the process, including vision setting, strategy development, action formulation and implementation, as well as monitoring, evaluation and learning.

This section examines concrete ways to help stakeholders agree on a shared vision and, from that, develop realistic action plans with a clear strategic view behind them.

26 October 2018, Guayaquil, Ecuador – Multi-partners “Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI)” to promote sustainable fisheries management practices aimed at building vibrant coastal communities in Ecuador. Photo: ©FAO/Camilo Pareja

## 4.1 The importance of building a shared vision and strategy

An essential part of the MSC process is to develop a common vision among stakeholders regarding the outcome. The vision should ideally be conceived during the early stages of the process through a dialogue involving all the participants.[108] Developing a vision within the initiative helps participants align around a shared cause, building a healthy base for planning.[109]

A vision that aligns different and conflicting interests and considers and manages trade-offs will be more robust and ultimately will have the following advantages, as it will:

- be more resilient and able to resist government changes;
- improve policy coherence, leaving less room for ministries to develop separate and conflicting strategies and plans;
- make it easier for the private sector and civil society to communicate with the public sector on different sectoral issues, given that they all reflect the same shared aspirations.

A vision is usually supported by a statement describing the aspirations and ambitions of the MSC initiative over 5 to 10 years. Although developing a vision document is essential to describe the vision in detail, a short and clear statement can also attract interest and consensus.

There are several “best practices” for developing a vision.[110] For instance, it is key for everyone in the MSC initiative to meaningfully engage in the visioning process. When the platform is too large, the process can be initiated by a smaller group or leadership body, followed by a series of opportunities for others to provide feedback.[110] Champions are also crucial. A champion is a person, or a group of persons, that strongly support the initiative’s objectives and, due to their trustworthiness and strong commitment, can attract interest and wide consensus around a certain idea.

Table 4 provides examples of strategies that can foster the development of a common vision among different stakeholders.

**Table 4. Strategies to foster the development of a common vision among stakeholders[111]**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Defining common objectives and fostering the development of collective identity** | Identify common interests and make clear what the collaboration aims to achieve.<br>Agree on the forms and spaces of collective work. |
| **Fostering relationships among strategic stakeholders and sectors** | Identify and liaise with existing alliances.<br>Approach institutions that address the same issues. |
| **Promoting formalized agreements and ways of collaboration** | Create long-term agreements and clear objectives.<br>Establish formal entities with full stakeholder representation.<br>Establish citizens' committees for outreach that favour interaction among stakeholders. |
| **Involving the government and the research community** | Form inter- and trans-disciplinary working teams.<br>Establish collaborations between academics and communities to undertake participatory research.<br>Contact researchers and establish agreements based on affinities and commitments. |
| **Fostering the participation of minority and vulnerable groups** | Create a common language (avoid technical or academic terms that are not easily understood by everyone).<br>Establish project guidelines with gender equality.<br>Generate activities and projects for different vulnerable groups. |

## Defining a theory of change to translate the vision into a strategy

The vision creates the basis for the strategy, which is the long-term roadmap explaining how and by which means the MSC initiative's vision will be achieved. To deal with complexity, a theory of change, as described in Box 13, is a useful approach to developing a strategy. For example, the theory of change explicitly states how different parts of the food system are expected to respond to the initiative's activities and outputs. It is informed by the food systems analysis (see >> Building Block 2) and influenced by the stakeholders' beliefs and assumptions about how change happens.[112]

**Box 13 What is a theory of change?[112]**

A theory of change will define the boundaries of the respective system or sub-system that it aims to influence (e.g., a value chain, or a region), as well as the transformation objectives for this system, and the routes through which these objectives are to be achieved. The theory of change can appear technical and difficult to understand for participants not familiar with organizational planning. In this case, the MSC initiative can work with stories, providing a narrative explanation to show why and how change is intended to happen.

With time, as the process moves along and activities are implemented, stakeholders will gain a better understanding of the situation, in which case the theory of change will need to be revised. Box 14 discusses how the Farmer to Market Alliance in East Africa analysed its effectiveness compared to its theory of change. The results showed where the alliance had played a key role in improving farmers' access to finance, increasing sales, and access to farm inputs and training. They also showed challenges related to improving the theory of change, with regard to compliance with contracts between farmers and buyers.

By "regularly revisiting and revising the theory of change and its assumptions, [multi-stakeholder platforms] build a better understanding of the system they are trying to influence and how they can effect change[112]." The need to revise the theory of change, strategy and actions is detailed under Building Block 4 on monitoring, evaluation and learning.

**Box 14** **Theory of change of the Farm to Market Alliance[113,114]**

The Farm to Market Alliance (FtMA) is a partnership of six agri-focused organizations working to achieve sustainable food systems by creating links between the public and private sector, and empowering farmers. The alliance has engaged over 100 private sector partners and reached over 200,000 farmers in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia.

In 2017, FtMA, in collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies, analysed its effectiveness compared to its theory of change, with a focus on Tanzania. This exercise presented an opportunity for FtMA to improve the alignment between its evaluation framework and strategy, and highlighted the alliance's key success factors. The results of the analysis showed the areas where FtMA had played a key role in improving farmers' access to finance, increasing sales via predictable markets, and accessing farm inputs and training.

The analysis also showed some challenges and reflections for FtMA to improve its theory of change. For example, the theory of change assumed that farmers and companies would deliver on their contracts, but evidence showed that some farmers did not perceive the benefits of contracts, leading to a lower-than-expected delivery.

The food systems analysis provides the foundation for developing a theory of change, which in turn can provide the basis for the vision, the strategy and consequently the action plan.[92] Any planning document that follows is guided by the vision and should explicitly refer to it and be aligned to the strategy. Box 15 provides an example of the London Food Board's contribution to the development of the London Food Strategy, which, when first drafted, received feedback from around 150 organizations and thousands of citizens; this informed the final London Food Strategy published in December 2018.

**Box 15** **London Food Board's contribution to the development of the London Food Strategy**[115]

The London Food Board is a local MSC initiative, hosted by the Greater London Authority. The Food Board is composed of actors representing a wide variety of organizations and sectors within London's food system. Its activities include contributing to the development and implementation of local food strategies and advising the Mayor of London and Greater London Authority on food issues that affect Londoners.

In collaboration with the Greater London Authority, the London Food Board developed a draft of the London Food Strategy. During the summer of 2018, the draft was published, and a public consultation was launched. The document received feedback from around 150 organizations and thousands of citizens. After a thorough review of the inputs, the London Food Strategy was published in December 2018.

The final strategy is structured in themes (food at home and food security, shopping and eating out, role of community settings and public institutions, pregnancy and childhood, urban farming, and environment). Each section then provides information on what the mayor will do to deliver and support change, what activities will be conducted by external partners, and what citizens can do to contribute to change.

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 4** provides a list of tools and resources to build a shared vision.

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 4** provides a list of tools and resources to develop a strategy.

17 October 2019, Rome, Italy - CFS 46 Side-Event on data and information systems can empower family farmers, advance goals of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDFF) and guide better policy. Photo: ©FAO/Giuseppe Carotenuto

## 4.2 Moving from strategy to action

Once the MSC initiative has completed the relevant consultations, analysis and strategy development, members of the initiative, their organizations and partners will need to engage in advocacy. An advocacy campaign will ensure that the messages, and recommendations from the initiative, are mainstreamed to the wider stakeholder group, as well as to high-level public and private sector decision-makers for possible adoption.

Once validated by stakeholders, the strategy will require an action plan. A comprehensive action plan can include the following[108]:

- **Well-defined objectives** (with quantified measures representing the desired results over a given time frame), target groups and beneficiaries. A good practice is that of setting objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART).
- **A mix of measures and instruments to achieve these goals.** Such instruments can be legal, economic, communicative and educative in nature; for instance, Dubbeling and de Zeeuw[116] give examples of instruments for urban agriculture.
- **A well-defined institutional framework** – that is, the actors to be involved and mechanisms for coordination, along with financing sources for its operationalization, implementation and monitoring.

Box 16 describes action points for a multi-stakeholder systems roadmap developed by a project in Colombia, Peru and Ecuador, in which UNDP supported governments and companies in contributing to a reduction in deforestation from agricultural commodities in key forested eco-regions.

**Box 16** **Moving from commitment to action[117]**

From Commitment to Action (FC2A) is a UNDP flagship initiative piloted in Colombia, Peru and Ecuador to support governments and companies to accelerate a reduction in deforestation from agricultural commodities in key forest eco-regions. At the centre of the project was the collaborative development of a roadmap for each country, highlighting current policies and investments, and further actions needed, to fulfil the commitments made by these countries' governments and companies to reduce deforestation from commodities.

The FC2A analysis, the result of a year-long multi-stakeholder research process, suggests a range of actions that would make a difference in tackling the persistent gaps that impede progress.

>

The following insights, all centred on a systemic approach, have been identified as key contributors to success, ranging from overarching considerations to action on the ground:

1. Think more systemically – especially in getting every stakeholder around the table to ensure joined-up working. Involve more than just the usual parties, including a broader range of government ministries, to ensure that everyone recognises and protects sustainable use of forest areas, and applies frameworks or guidelines developed for zero deforestation.
2. Consider the geography – step up planning and coordination across the different levels of national, regional and local government on issues such as land-use planning and ensure that a more systemic approach to coordination is employed here too. Make sure that systems for land mapping, zoning and monitoring are completed and adapted for use by local authorities and communities.
3. Enforce sanctions for deforestation and inappropriate land-use change, with penalties and effective deterrents. Strengthen the capacity of the national/local police, the courts and institutions to deal with perpetrators and enforce due diligence.
4. Develop alternative agricultural planning models that integrate the sustainable use and management of forest resources with production of commodities such as dairy, beef and cocoa. Private sector engagement to support zero deforestation supply chains through good purchasing practices and pricing mechanisms will recognise and reward this.
5. Recognise natural assets such as forests as potential drivers for sustainable economic growth.

If actions from the plan are negatively impacting on any societal goals, then the intervention needs to be reconsidered or redesigned, or mitigation measures may need to be taken.[108,118] Implementation of small pilot activities early in the process may give the space for learning by doing, providing knowledge for the design of longer-term activities.[116]

If adopted by the government, the action plan can become an official policy document. Inserting priority actions under the institutional mandates and budgets of relevant ministries and institutions can also contribute to mainstreaming the outcomes of the MSC initiative and food systems approaches more generally within the government. This will require the sharing of resources, including human and financial. Joint budgeting and sharing of responsibilities across ministries can contribute to ensuring cross-sectoral integration and encouraging inter-ministerial ownership of the plan (see also >> Building Block 5).

Box 17 discusses a multi-stakeholder initiative known as the Bolivian Municipal Food Security Committees, which has been spearheading Bolivia's (Plurinational State of) first urban food policies. This has resulting in the translation of many policy proposals by the Committees into municipal laws, and of planning documents into the Development Strategy of the Department of La Paz and the National Urban Policy.

**Box 17** **Bolivia's (Plurinational State of) Municipal Food Security Committees, moving from strategy to action**[119]

In Bolivia (Plurinational State of), multi-stakeholder working groups known as Municipal Food Security Committees, led by the local organization Fundación Alternativas with the support of international organizations, have been spearheading the development of the country's first urban food policies. The committees bring together a variety of actors – including representatives from civil society organizations, academia, producer's associations, traders, food entrepreneurs, and government officials – who work together to address myriad issues such as food system inequalities and disruptions (including those related to recurring social-political conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic) as well as the urbanization of local food systems.

Committees meet on a monthly basis and are structured around thematic working groups, including food education, gender equity, responsible consumption, urban-rural linkages and metropolitanization. This thematic approach has helped to conduct thorough stakeholder analysis, design participatory systems of cooperation, engage a greater number and more diverse set of participants, draw in different levels of government and simultaneously address multiple food system challenges. These are all characteristics that ensure that all food systems proposals are multi-dimensional in scope.

Since 2013, the committees have drafted more than a dozen food policy proposals that have been presented to local, state and national audiences. Many have either been mandated into municipal laws or made their way into official planning documents, including the Development Strategy of the Department of La Paz and the National Urban Policy. Proposals reflect a diversity of food system voices, only putting forth that which all participants agree upon.

The Bolivian Municipal Food Security Committees apply a series of participatory stakeholder and power analysis tools, such as the Stakeholder Identification Tools and Stakeholder Analysis Importance and Influence Matrixes. These tools help the committees to identify and engage potential members and food system transformation champions and key players, to whom policy proposals will be presented once the outreach and advocacy work begins. In tandem, committees conduct thorough legislative analysis to ensure thematic relevance to national and/or subnational legal frameworks while ensuring that proposals are designed to reach the policy objectives of each intended audience and/or level of government. These strategies have ensured that proposals are relevant and have been a key factor for their adoption.

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 4** provides a list of tools and resources to move from strategy to action.

## 4.3 Participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning

Once action plans, as described above, have been put into motion, a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system will be required to continuously monitor the initiative's success and to evaluate learnings for any adjustments needed to the strategy. The M&E process will also require the allocation and embedding of resources (i.e., time, funds and human resources) within the action plan.[116] When technical competencies on M&E are not available, capacity-building from development partners may be provided, or expertise hired.[120] It is also important that M&E is internalized in the initiative, so that it is not perceived as a standalone reporting task.[105]

29 May 2018, Torit, South Sudan - FAO Agropastoral field schools (APFS) project provided a flexible and responsive platform for building the knowledge and skills of farmers and livestock keepers of all ages in South Sudan. Photo: ©FAO/Stefanie Glinski

Two key functions of M&E are transparency and accountability. Reporting on performance and results can be used to be accountable to funding partners, to staff and stakeholders, and ultimately to the intended clients or beneficiaries.[92]

The process might begin with an evaluation of the MSC initiative itself, to understand the elements that allow such collective action to work well.[121] This means, for instance:

- looking at communication between stakeholders,
- reviewing progress made with respect to commitments,
- analysing changes in participating organizations and the degree of their participation,
- exploring opportunities to foster mutual accountability,
- promoting learning and redesign or adjustment of the initiative partnership to better align it with updated objectives.[116,121]

In terms of evaluating results that impact food systems transformation, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also provide a comprehensive list of indicators on which the MSC initiative can be built.

Box 18 provides a list of useful criteria against which actions can be evaluated.

**Box 18** **List of criteria to determine the merit or worth of an initiative**[122]

The following is a list of useful criteria against which actions can be evaluated:

- **Relevance:** the extent to which the intervention is sensitive to the economic, environmental, equity, social, political economy and capacity conditions in which it takes place.
- **Effectiveness:** the extent to which the intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives.
- **Impact:** the extent to which the intervention has generated, or is expected to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended effects (including social, environmental and economic).
- **Coherence:** the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.
- **Efficiency:** the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.
- **Sustainability:** the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.

In addition to these general considerations, M&E requires taking into account several factors.

- **A diversity of tools and methods for M&E for consideration**, as one single approach will not be able to deal with complexity.[105,123] The tools contained in Annex 1 offer a list of M&E approaches that can capture interconnectedness and dynamic interrelationships, embedded norms, beliefs and values, or complex causal processes.[124] In addition to quantitative indicators, qualitative approaches that capture people's perceptions about a subject (e.g., the initiative's impact) are also needed to explain the "why" behind numbers.[105]

- **M&E should be seen as a continuous process**, which serves to identify unintended consequences (both positive and negative), also assessing performance, in order to inform adjustments to the action plan or the MSC initiative.[112] This will allow those in charge of the process to continuously revise the vision, strategy (including the theory of change) and the action plan in accordance with changes in the targeted food system.[112]

- **Engaging stakeholders**, not only in the design and implementation of the intervention, but also in the conceptualization of M&E itself, is necessary for impact.[92] This means that stakeholders involved in, or affected by, the initiative's activities also take part in selecting the indicators to measure changes, in collecting information and in evaluating findings. This will help enhance a sense of ownership of the process among stakeholders.[120]

A Woman sells vegetables and fruits on the road near Kant 20 km from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on 22 August 2016. Photo: ©FAO/Vyacheslav Oseledko

Box 19 provides an example of community involvement in the M&E process for the Association of Indigenous Cabildos of Northern Cauca, Colombia, where the community is actively involved in selecting indicators and recording progress. The process has served as an exercise of collective learning, to become part of the community's collective memory.

**Box 19** **Community involvement in M&E: The experience of the Association of Indigenous Cabildos of Northern Cauca, Colombia**[125,126]

The Association of Indigenous Cabildos of Northern Cauca (ACIN), founded in 1994, currently represents 22 local authorities and is in charge of developing plans, strategies and projects in representation of the communities of the territory.

During the formulation of its first development plans, the ACIN put in place an M&E system, ensuring the communities' active involvement during the implementation, management and oversight phases. The M&E systems appraise all development sectors. Indicators are also defined by the communities. Additionally, simplified methodologies are used to facilitate local uptake. Communities are then able to assess and record progress at different levels and to adjust goals or re-formulate new strategies as required.

The project cycle is led and discussed by assemblies: three-day meetings with representation of all demographic groups (e.g., women, men, adults, youth, leaders, government officials, etc.) and sectors (education, health, development, agriculture, environment, culture, etc.) from each community.

Some of the key impacts include increased engagement of communities, increased public accountability, improved decision-making and managing among community members, and increased horizontal power relations within the region. Ultimately, the process serves as an exercise of collective learning: M&E findings become part of the community's collective memory. Learnings are then fed back into ongoing processes and are re-evaluated during future assemblies.

- **M&E as part of the learning processes**. Learning requires critically reflecting on experiences. By doing this, stakeholders increase their capacity to carry out self-assessments, becoming more empowered to better contribute to the initiative.[120] As the initiative moves forward and the learning occurs, stakeholders will increasingly gain capacity to deal with complex food systems challenges. The MSC initiative staff, leaders or development partners can act as facilitators of learning, encouraging such reflection processes at the individual, group and organizational levels.[120] Box 20 lists guiding questions for the reflection process.

**Box 20** **Questions for stakeholders' critical reflection on experiences**[92]

- What succeeded or failed?
- Why have we succeeded or failed?
- What are the implications for the initiative/organization?
- What action(s) can we take now to make improvements for the future?

- **Communicating and disseminating learning for M&E.** Knowledge-sharing and learning instruments can include case studies documenting successes and failures, periodic meetings to share knowledge and lessons learned, study tours or exchange visits, and dissemination of technical literature on improved practices. Contribution or "snapshot" stories can describe changes in the food system at a specific point in time, discussing the "why," the "how" and the role of the MSC initiative.[112]

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 4** provides a list of tools and resources for participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Photo: © FAO/Jean Bonogo

# Building Block 5

## Securing sustainability of collaboration

Ensuring the long-term sustainability of MSC initiatives requires some level of institutionalization and accountability, as well as financing, monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes, as described in the previous section.[56]

## 5.1 Ensuring institutionalization

Although long-term MSC initiatives working on food systems are usually independent, they generally show some level of institutionalization.[56] This require three key interrelated elements[127]:

1. The legal form, with several legal forms that are possible depending on local laws. For example, the initiative can be a registered association, a foundation or a non-profit limited liability company.

2. The governance structure, which should be kept as simple as possible.

3. Funding, which can initially be provided through seed funding while more long-term supporters are identified. As the initiative's needs change, so too will resource requirements, which is why funding will often remain a challenge.[128]

Government buy-in is also important, as it can legitimize the initiative, promote coordination between stakeholders, improve public sector delivery and accountability, and improve access to public resources while also contributing to speeding up the translation of the MSC initiative's outputs into policies, or regulations as needed.[129]

In Ireland, for instance, a multi-stakeholder committee is convened every 5-10 years to develop the country's national agrifood strategy. The committee includes representatives from across the sector, including farmers, fishers, foresters, processors & manufacturers from the food and drink sector, as well as public sector agencies and academia. It is facilitated by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) under an independent chair. During the course of the five-year cycle, the strategy's monitoring process is overseen by DAFM, who chairs an implementation group comprised of ministries across government and the agencies involved in agrifood.

Despite various changes in government, the multi-stakeholder strategy process has successfully seen the development of back-to-back strategies over three decades with the integration of lessons adapted in each strategy cycle to ensure ongoing improvement. Interviews with those involved in the process have pointed to high-level ministerial buy-in and oversight of the process, transparency and a strong consultation process. In-kind secretariat support from DAFM was also acknowledged as an important contribution for the coordination of the committee.[130]

The sustainability of MSC initiatives shows great diversity, ranging from initiatives that are integrated into public institutions or are part of local government, to others that are completely independent. Food policy councils are a good example of how MSC initiatives can adapt to the local institutional context.[63] In the United States, the many food policy councils are registered as independent of local government. They can, however, be "sanctioned" by the government through a resolution or city ordinance, or be created as a sub-committee of the local government.[129]

Initiatives can also be integrated into government agencies or decentralized government, which, depending on the national political milieu, can either reinforce their legitimacy or weaken their perception as a neutral consultative body. In the United States, it was found that the integration of a food policy council into a local government body provides easier access to government staff and enhances coordination between local/subnational/city departments with food system-related responsibilities.[63]

Once an initiative is considered part of the public system, it will have to participate in and adhere to bureaucratic processes and requests. Support for the initiative's work may also wane depending on the agenda of the incumbent government. Where the initiative is housed is also relevant, as it may be subsumed into the institutional silo of a local administration, potentially losing its unbiased systems approach.[131]

Food councils in the United States typically operate as non-profit organizations that are independent of local government, although public sector representatives actively participate in their consultations and dialogues. In Canada, the Toronto council claims that this hybrid model has created a "culture of change" within the government and has expanded the capacity and relevance of the local food movement while changing municipal policies.[63] While food councils are not institutionalized per se, they provide an innovative governance example of a neutral space in which civil society plays a key role while being recognized and valued by the government.

## 5.2 Financing multi-stakeholder collaboration

Most multi-stakeholder initiatives operate with limited resources, and their sustainability often relies on access to long-term resources to fund activities and overheads such as technical assistance and communications. Seed funding can support the initial period of functioning. After that, the funders attracted might change, and they may prefer to support short-term projects rather than long-term advocacy and networking efforts. Government and foundation resources may no longer be available. More staff might be needed as the initiative grows. All these reasons make funding challenging.[128]

A backbone support unit can coordinate efforts to secure funding.[25] A small, experienced fundraising subgroup can also be established to lead the process.[81] Support can be leveraged from academic partners to assist in research and grant collaboration, as fundraising requires time and resources. Fundraising should also be seen as a shared responsibility of all the MSC initiative stakeholders.

For example, Organic Denmark is a national membership association that has contributed to the doubling of Denmark's organic agricultural areas between 2007 and 2020, and organic food now has around a 13 per cent market share in the country's retail sector.[132] The association has an annual budget of some €8 million, around 75 per cent of which originates from public or public-private sources and is linked to projects. Implementation plans received substantial funding; for example, the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy provided €267 million to support farmers in converting land to organic agriculture.[56]

Another option is diversifying sources of funding (e.g., from across different sectors such as health, environment or community development) and requesting small amounts from multiple government agencies and/or foundations.[127,128] Stakeholders may have different views on funders to approach, which can lead to internal tensions. Leaders and facilitators of MSC initiatives will have to enable debate, ensure transparency and build consensus to find "neutral" donors willing to support the initiative.[81]

Human resource needs should also be adequately assessed and included when formulating the MSC initiative's budget. In the case of food policy councils, the majority are reliant on volunteer work, which can be a constraint. If the council is part of a public institution, it may be able to more easily access public funds.[63]

Developing a budget to guide the allocation of the funds can be made in relation to the envisaged structure and activities of the initiative. For example, the Ghent en Garde Policy Council, an advisory body for food policies in the City of Ghent, Belgium, has a yearly budget of €85,000, which is funded by the city council. Most of the budget is used to support local projects, and a portion covers the organization of meetings, public events and communication activities. The participation of the council's around 32 members in meetings is financed privately by each organization.[56]

The budget for a food policy council is documented as covering income and expenses (including staff, office and meeting supplies), travel, training publications, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and fixed expenses. Additionally, a budget line with estimated expenses can be included to support the participation of a diversity of actors, some of whom may not always have access to resources.[128] The financial host of the MSC initiative is the organization responsible for accounting, financial reporting and holding funds. It could be the host of the MSC initiative, a trusted group member, or an external entity. In any case, it must be acceptable to all group members and to potential donors.[81]

**>> Annex 1, Building Block 5** provides a list of tools and resources for financing MSC initiatives.

Discussion with rural women. Agriculture in Nepal. Photo: ©FAO

# Conclusion

This guide has been developed for individuals, teams and organizations tasked with convening and facilitating multi-stakeholder initiatives of all scales and types related to the sustainable transformation of food systems. In particular, it has been conceived for national and international initiatives contributing to the follow-up of the UN Food Systems Summit. MSC initiatives usually gather stakeholders who are commonly motivated to solve a shared problem in the food system. Doing this collectively in an inclusive and transparent way is a necessary first step to inform further stages, including the management of trade-offs arising from any intervention.

In structuring the guidance around five Building Blocks covering the main overarching tasks involved in any type of multi-stakeholder initiative, this guide delves into the various challenges that facilitators or conveners can face during the process, and provides suggestions, ideas and examples of how they might be managed.

Building Block 1 emphasizes the important step of ensuring a correct balance in the stakeholder representation, and capacities, relative to the topics to be discussed.

In doing so, it provides an easy segue into Building Block 2, which explores the important learning nexus between discussion and the use of evidence and data that will emerge from food systems assessments. It shows the importance of including not only scientific knowledge that is understandable, but also local and Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, so that a cross-fertilization of data, including quantitative and qualitative, can allow for multiple perspectives to emerge. This process can also be useful in addressing difficult-to-measure indicators such as sustainability and inclusivity.

Building Block 3, in providing recommendations on the "how" aspects of collaboration, shows the importance of managing power asymmetries, and how to best engage with each stakeholder group, in particular empowering marginalized voices and the underrepresented. However, doing this requires particular competencies on the part of the facilitator and/or team that is managing the process, such as subject-matter expertise and abilities to foster systems thinking.

Building Block 4's guidance on the conversion of ideas generated during stakeholder discussions into plans and action underscores financial and human resource needs, providing ideas and examples on diversifying and combining sources of finance. Efforts invested in liaising with other related initiatives are also encouraged to maximize impact and to reduce fragmentation and duplication of efforts. The guide also highlights the importance of embedding monitoring and evaluation into action plans from the outset, so that knowledge arising during implementation can be adapted and the plans adjusted.

Building Block 5, in suggesting ways that can contribute to the sustainability of an initiative, discusses the advantages and disadvantages of different types of institutional partnerships and alignments.

Ultimately, the guide demonstrates that food systems transformation requires continuous collaboration among food systems actors, including governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The task is not easy: decisions related to food systems, given their complexity, often entail addressing power imbalances and making compromises, which can take time.

The interdependence of the Building Blocks shows that it is not merely about bringing science-based evidence and other types of knowledge to the table, but also about complicated social interactions among vested agendas and constituents. Through an iterative and flexible process of identifying problems and discovering how to best address them, stakeholders – including national governments – can improve their abilities necessary for transitioning to sustainable food systems

Photo: ©FAO/Luis Tato

# Annex 1

## Tools and resources to guide multi-stakeholder collaboration for food systems transformation

Note: This guide does not recommend one specific tool or resource over the other. The selection should be made by the MSC members, in a participatory and collaborative way, depending on the stage and needs of the MSC initiative.

Building Block 1

# Fostering broad multi-stakeholder participation

## Tools to engage the public sector

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Partnering Toolkit: Practical Tools for Strengthening IFAD's Partnerships[39] | Outlines key elements of partnerships with the government that require constant attention and review, careful negotiation, and high levels of political and cultural sensitivity, and gives ideas about how to tackle challenging situations. |

## Tools to engage the private sector

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Guidance Notes[133] | Complements the Effective Collaborative Action methodology, providing specific guidance for working with the private sector in collaborative action spaces. |
| Value Beyond Value Chains[134] | Provides guidance and case studies on why private sector engagement is key to transformation, and on how private sector actors have engaged beyond their value chains to achieve their collective outcomes. |
| Partnering Toolkit: Practical Tools for Strengthening IFAD's Partnerships[39] | Outlines key considerations for creating successful partnerships with the private sector and explains due diligence processes. |
| The SDG Partnership Guidebook[36] | Outlines key elements to understand businesses as a partner, their incentives, their key characteristics and the implications for MSC. |
| Engaging with Small and Medium Agrifood Enterprises to Guide Policy Making: A Qualitative Research Methodological Guide[33] | Includes an interview protocol that aims to gauge how national policy impacts on the operations of these enterprises and how various business model components link with sustainable development objectives. The methodology was applied in the rice sector of Kenya and Senegal[32,34]. |

## Tools to engage under-represented groups

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Getting It Right: A Guide to Improve Inclusion in Multi-stakeholder Forums[85] | Explains how to operationalize the inclusion of under-represented groups, focusing on women and Indigenous Peoples. Provides several tools designed to operationalize inclusion at specific trigger points where action is most effective. |

## Tools for stakeholder mapping and analysis

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| A Guide to Effective Collaborative Action[25] | Provides advice on analysing and prioritizing stakeholders to make sure the right people are in the room. The stakeholder mapping exercise proposed provides a step-by-step approach to: 1) identify interested/interesting parties and their role in the sector; 2) analyse their interests and potential role in the collaborative initiative; 3) prioritize the most important stakeholders; and 4) determine how best to engage them. |
| The MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-stakeholder Partnerships[78] | Suggests four tools for stakeholder mapping:<br>▪ The Stakeholder Identification tool offers a fast visual overview of the most relevant stakeholders and their relationships. Possibilities include a Venn diagram or Spider web network analysis.<br>▪ The Stakeholder Characteristics & Roles Matrix helps make an "initial sweep" of stakeholders and their characteristics, and to identify the roles of stakeholders. Small groups can fill out this matrix to systematically analyse the most important stakeholders, their stakes, what they can contribute to the success of the MSP, and whether they are influential or not.<br>▪ The Net-Map tool is a participatory interview technique that combines social network analysis, stakeholder mapping, and power mapping. Net-Map helps people understand, visualize, discuss and improve situations in which many different actors influence outcomes.<br>▪ The Stakeholder Analysis Importance & Influence Matrix captures how much influence each stakeholder has over the relevant issues or possible MSP objectives, and their level of interest in the issue. It can be used when initiating an MSP, but also to review the situation in an established MSP. It specifically helps to identify (potential) stakeholders who might not yet be on board. |
| Multi-stakeholder Management: Tools for Stakeholder Analysis: 10 Building Blocks for Designing Participatory Systems of Cooperation[135] | Suggests 10 building blocks to conduct a stakeholder analysis:<br>1. Identifying key stakeholders<br>2. Stakeholder mapping<br>3. Stakeholder profiles and strategic options<br>4. Power and power resources<br>5. Stakeholders' interests and scope for action<br>6. Influence and involvement<br>7. Force field analysis<br>8. Building trust<br>9. Exclusion and empowerment<br>10. Gender (cross-cutting building block on gender equality in development) |

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| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub: Toward Sustainable Food Systems[136] | Provides tools for stakeholder identification and engagement and for stakeholder analysis for network building, platform creating, and lab design for food system transformation. |
| Facilitating Multi-stakeholder Processes: A Toolkit[137] | Provides six tools to foster stakeholder engagement:<br>1. **The stakeholders mindmap tool:** to depict a quick map of the main stakeholders and the categories/sectors they belong to.<br>2. **The stakeholders categorisation tool:** to map key stakeholders based on how they affect or are affected by interventions.<br>3. **The stakeholders analysis based on Influence and Interest tool:** to understand the level of influence and interest of key stakeholders, and to make sense of stakeholder dynamics and strategize for higher engagement.<br>4. **The stakeholders analysis based on Position and Needs tool:** to know stakeholders' needs and their position in relation to the initiative, and also to make sense of stakeholder dynamics and strategize for higher engagement.<br>5. **The levels of participation and quality of engagement tool:** to strategize about how to engage stakeholders in different ways at different stages of the initiative.<br>6. **The stakeholders engagement plan tool:** to develop a broader and deeper understanding of key stakeholders, and to identify strategies that incentivize a more active and collaborative role of key stakeholders. |

Building Block 2

# Ensuring a good understanding of the food system

## Tools for food systems mapping and analysis

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| City Region Food System Toolkit[75] | Provides guidance on how to assess and plan for sustainable city region food systems. Includes practical tools and examples from 11 cities on how to:<br>▪ Define and map the city region;<br>▪ Collect data on the city region food system;<br>▪ Gather and analyse information on different city region food system components and sustainability dimensions through both rapid and in-depth assessments;<br>▪ Use a multi-stakeholder process to engage policymakers and other stakeholders in the design of more sustainable and resilient city region food systems. |
| Catalysing the Sustainable and Inclusive Transformation of Food Systems: Conceptual Framework and Method for National and Territorial Assessments[138] | Provides an initial systemic view of the performance of the national food system and its potential contributions to a sustainable food economy. Combining quantitative evidence, qualitative appraisals, and participatory analysis, assessment results will help orient policy dialogue on long-term food system challenges and identify a range of options for their sustainable transformation. The rapid assessment includes six main steps:<br>▪ Step 0: Preparing the assessment<br>▪ Step A: Framing the issues<br>▪ Step B: Documenting and analysing available data<br>▪ Step C: Consulting key informants to identify the most serious challenges to spatialize the diagnosis, and identify the main actors and activities<br>▪ Step D: Sharing, discussing and reaching a common understanding of spatially differentiated food systems<br>▪ Step E: Summarizing the food system analysis at the national and subnational level |
| Rapid Urban Food System Appraisal Tool (RUFSAT)[39] | Provides guidance on conducting urban food systems assessments developed in the context of the FAO's Developing Sustainable Food Systems for Urban Areas. The tool consists of:<br>▪ a master guide for collecting and analysing secondary data and conducting policy audits<br>▪ tailored surveys for key actors (consumers, producers, processors, retailers, wholesalers, etc.)<br>▪ a reporting protocol. |

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| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Urban Food System Assessments for Nutrition and Healthy Diets[140] | Defines seven steps for the operationalization of the food systems assessment for healthy diets:<br>1. Identify a "core team"<br>2. Undertake secondary analysis<br>3. "Select" questions and modules to be included for the assessment<br>4. Collect primary data and conduct analysis<br>5. Conduct key informant interviews<br>6. Geo-mapping<br>7. Disseminate the findings of the assessment. |
| Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) Monitoring Framework[141] | The Pact is a narrative on the role of cities in contributing towards sustainable urban food systems. The MUFPP includes a **Framework of Action** articulated in a set of 37 recommended actions organized around six categories: Governance; Sustainable diets and nutrition; Social and economic equity; Food production (including urban-rural linkages); Food supply and distribution and Food waste. The **Monitoring Framework** was developed to support cities in the formulation and monitoring of urban food policies. It provides a set of indicators, with at least one indicator for each of the 37 recommended actions, for a total of 44 indicators. |
| The Food Systems Decision-Support Toolbox[74] | Collates different tools and methods that can be used for food system analysis. It is specifically based on systems thinking for food system analysis, with the aim to formulate actionable recommendations that can bring about systemic change. The proposed food system analysis process includes five steps and a set of tools that can be used at the different stages:<br>▪ Defining Policy Objectives (Why this food system analysis?)<br>▪ Analysis of Food System Actors<br>▪ Analysis of Food System Characteristics<br>▪ Analysis of Food System Behaviour<br>▪ Recommendations |
| A Comprehensive Food Systems Diagnostic Approach to Inform Policymaking Toward Sustainable Healthy Diets for All[142] | Provides a toolkit to conduct an action-oriented food systems diagnostic at the country level to inform policy development and implementation. The Food System Transformative Integrated Policy (FS-TIP) initiative proposes to start the diagnostic analysis with a qualitative overview describing the context and highlighting some of the root causes of food systems issues. The second part is structured along three levels and aligned to the UN Food Systems Summit Action Tracks and Action Areas for their outcome orientation (21 indicators are suggested across the Action Tracks, plus one cross-cutting indicator, for a total of 22 indicators). |
| Mapping Food Systems: A Participatory Research Tool[76] | Provides a method of participatory food system mapping; the method consists of an iterative process of reflection and discussion between the research team and the key stakeholders of a given food system, in which they jointly identify the system's main features: most important actors, activities, benefits and externalities, and geographical spaces. |

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| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub: Toward Sustainable Food Systems[136] | Provides guidance for food system mapping, including tools to conduct an inventory of trends, showcases, (potential) breakthroughs, policies, and stakeholders, and also food system visioning and research and innovation visioning, which can reveal what changes are desired and needed looking into the future. |
| Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation[10] | Suggests two complementary methods that can support the analysis of trade-offs in decision-making processes and the construction of future scenarios within a food systems context:<br>▪ **Life Cycle Thinking (LCT) and Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)** are assessments that support the identification of the potential environmental impacts with the greatest significance (called sustainability hotspots) through the life cycle of a product or system.<br>▪ **The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB)** initiative supports governments to quantify the economic benefits provided by nature by providing a comprehensive economic evaluation of the eco-agrifood systems complex, and demonstrating that the economic environment in which farmers operate is distorted by significant externalities, both negative and positive, and a lack of awareness of dependency on natural, human and social capital.<br>The first step to correct for these "hidden costs" is to redefine the value of food through **True Cost Accounting (TCA)** to address externalities and other market failures. TCA reveals the true value of food by making the benefits of affordable and healthy food visible and revealing the costs of damage to the environment and human health. The second corrective step is **true pricing**: incorporating externalities in prices to align market incentives with social values. |
| Facilitating Multi-stakeholder Processes: A Toolkit[137] | Provides three tools for systems analysis:<br>1. **The systems mapping tool:** to make sense of how the system "works," its boundaries and how constituent parts relate to each other.<br>2. **The influence matrix tool:** to make sense of how factors influence each other, identifying leverage points/critical factors.<br>3. **The feedback loops tool:** to make sense of how the behaviour of a factor affects the behaviour of other factors, and consequently the whole system. |

Building Block 3

# Nurturing inclusive and effective collaboration

## Tools to start the process

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation[10] | Recommends four actions to build food systems transformation, with the first one being to identify an individual or group of food systems champions and build momentum, before initiating a multi-stakeholder process for dialogue and action. Activities to identify and engage a champion or group of champions include:<br>▪ Call attention to and advocate for the need to adopt a different approach to food and agriculture policies – a food systems approach<br>▪ Raise awareness and speak at public events to spread the message concerning the key benefits of systemic thinking<br>▪ Organize trainings on the food systems approach<br>▪ Seek buy-in of high-level representatives. |
| Cultivating Inner Capacities for Regenerative Food Systems[143] | Based on the latest evidence, this report presents a rationale for the cultivation of inner capacities of food systems' stakeholders. Fostering these transformative cognitive, emotional, and relational qualities and skills, and the ability to address mindsets, beliefs, values, and worldviews, enables the necessary expansion and deepening of a conscious relationship with the world. As such it presents a crucial complementary approach to external solutions – such as farming inputs and agricultural technologies, economic incentives, laws and policies – towards achieving regenerative food systems. |
| The MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-stakeholder Partnerships[78] | Provides guidance for the initiation phase of MSC and suggests in particular to:<br>▪ Clarify reasons for an MSP<br>▪ Undertake initial situation analysis (stakeholders, issues, institutions, power and politics)<br>▪ Establish an interim steering body<br>▪ Build stakeholder support<br>▪ Establish the scope and mandate<br>▪ Outline the process. |
| FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub: Toward Sustainable Food Systems[136] | Provides guidance to run a food lab or living lab, with supportive tools for each step of the process, including the initiation phase. |

## Tools to set up a well-functioning governance structure

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| A Guide to Effective Collaborative Action[25] | Recommends establishing a backbone support unit or Secretariat, as the foundation required to support the multi-stakeholder work. Depending on the funding, size of the effort and needs, the backbone could include the following human resources:<br>▪ Leadership<br>▪ Skilled Facilitation<br>▪ Project Coordination<br>▪ Event Organizing/Online Collaboration<br>▪ Communications<br>▪ Political Lobbying/Networking<br>▪ Private Sector/Stakeholder Engagement<br>▪ Logistics and Administration |
| FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub: Toward Sustainable Food Systems[136] | Provides guidance to run a food lab or living lab, with supportive tools for each step, including the lab design, which suggests three possible lab governance models:<br>▪ Small core team, changing actors involved in activities<br>▪ Broader core team, with ambassadors that stay involved throughout process<br>▪ Lab connects to existing established or emerging networks. |
| Creating Local Food Policy Councils: A Guide for Michigan's Communities[86] | Provides a list of possible structures for local food policy councils. Although their structure is very diverse, three different coordination levels can be found:<br>▪ **The steering or executive committee or Board**, made up of selected experts or representatives of the local food sector, and advising on food policy issues. It usually makes strategic decisions and oversees the fulfilment of the council's objectives and action plan.<br>▪ **The Assembly**: Some food policy councils have a Board and also a larger assembly space where all members meet. In this space, information is shared on initiatives, policies, or processes occurring in the city or geographical area of operation. It is in this space that the council's lines of action are planned, reviewed and discussed.<br>▪ **Subcommittees or working groups:** These groups may operate on a permanent basis on specific topics, or be established in response to a particular need to address a concrete issue. |
| Facilitating Multi-stakeholder Processes: A Toolkit[137] | Provides two tools to establish the MSC initiative's governance system:<br>1. **The governance system diagram tool:** to promote a relational dynamic and decision-making environment that contributes to a shared vision and coordinated action among stakeholders.<br>2. **The roles and responsibilities for mutual accountability tool:** to define roles and responsibilities for each governing body. |
| Unconscious Bias Training[144] | Provides guidance to assess unconscious bias (also known as implicit associations) based on the Implicit Association Test (IAT), one of the most popular and well-known studies. The IAT allows for detecting unconscious bias based on several factors including race, gender, sexual orientation and national origin. |

## Tools for collaborative leadership and partnership management

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| The MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-stakeholder Partnerships[78] | Provides guidance for developing a good style in both formal and informal leadership roles. MSPs are all about enabling people to work together, to take responsibility and to become empowered to tackle difficult issues. This means that an MSP requires collaborative leadership with a range of players taking on various leadership roles. The guide suggests that an MSP needs the following six types or areas of leadership.<br>▪ **Convening leadership**: These are people who are able to articulate and frame the issues in ways that motivate stakeholders to come together. They are generally respected and trusted figures who are able to build relationships across different stakeholder groups.<br>▪ **Constituency leadership:** Leaders of stakeholder groups need to actively engage with their constituency and genuinely represent the group's interests.<br>▪ **Supporting leadership**: MSPs will often need support and acceptance from powerful people who may not be directly involved – for example, a government minister or the CEO of a participating organization. People in leadership positions that lie outside the direct process will often be needed to help make the necessary resources available.<br>▪ **Organizing leadership:** This includes arranging events, organizing field visits, mobilizing resources, setting up websites, setting up meetings and many others.<br>▪ **Informing leadership**: Leadership is needed to identify what information is needed and to ensure that it is gathered and communicated in ways that the stakeholders can understand and relate to.<br>▪ **Facilitation leadership:** The effective use of participatory methods and tools dramatically improves collective learning between stakeholders, and thus the effectiveness of the overall process. Leadership is needed to open up space for the use of facilitation methods. And the facilitation itself is an important form of leadership.<br>▪ Additionally, achieving food systems transformation requires a departure from traditional top-down, hierarchical and linear approaches to implementing change. **Systems Leadership** is a set of skills and capacities that any individual or organization can use to catalyse, enable and support the multi-stakeholder process of systems-level change. |

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| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| A Guide to Effective Collaborative Action[25] | Lists four essential practices that work together to build the right mindset, heartset and action orientation for effective collaborative action, highlighting the importance of the "how" when transforming systems. The first essential practice is to **Build systems leadership capacity**. The guide looks at this as a practice focused on empowering people to lead transformation at three levels: 1) within themselves, 2) within their institutions and 3) within the system.<br><br>Capacity building in this area involves exploring the interconnections between inner work, collective transformation and system transformation. Key capabilities include self-awareness, awareness of others, self-inquiry and collaborative inquiry, along with other multidisciplinary skills. This practice is based on the understanding that each individual has the power to be a change agent and leader. Systems change should impact all three levels. Four tools that can support this practice are suggested:<br>1. System Change Education: a comprehensive list of tools, competencies, frameworks and approaches to systems leadership.<br>2. Systems Leadership Skill Builder: this skill builder helps leaders identify five types of systems within which they could be operating, along with common roadblocks and skills and attributes to develop.<br>3. Learning Journeys: site visits to relevant locations or places with great potential, usually best when conducted in small groups of up to five people.<br>4. Systems Leadership Training: expert training videos on systems leadership for the Green Commodities Community. |
| Systems Leadership for Sustainable Development: Strategies for Achieving Systemic Change[145] | Introduces the **CLEAR Framework for Leading Systems Change**, pointing to five key elements of the systems change process:<br>1. Convene and Commit<br>2. Look and Learn<br>3. Engage and Energize<br>4. Act with Accountability<br>5. Review and Revise |
| Cultivating Inner Capacities for Regenerative food Systems[143] | Presents a rationale for the **cultivation of inner capacities** of food systems' stakeholders. Fostering these transformative cognitive, emotional, and relational qualities and skills, and the ability to address mindsets, beliefs, values, and worldviews, enables the necessary expansion and deepening of a conscious relationship with the world. Presents a crucial complementary approach to external solutions – such as farming inputs and agricultural technologies, economic incentives, laws and policies – toward achieving regenerative food systems. |
| Changing Food Systems: What Systems Thinking Means for Designing and Implementing International Development Programmes to Catalyse Change in Food and Agricultural Systems[146] | Outlines 10 identified steps to integrating systems thinking into efforts in transforming food systems, with the understanding that systems thinking is a critical leadership skill to catalyse change. |

## Tools for successful facilitation

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub: Toward Sustainable Food Systems[136] | Provides guidance to run a food lab or living lab, with supportive tools for each step, including a guide for multi-stakeholder event design, providing inspiration materials that can be used by facilitators to let participants enter "safe spaces" for inclusive and equal knowledge exchange, co-creation and participation in food system transformation. |
| The MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-stakeholder Partnerships[78] | Provides guidance for successful facilitation (Chapter 6). The 60 facilitation tools have also been compiled in a companion document to The MSP Guide to enable easy storing and sharing. The guide suggests that successful facilitators are often active bridging agents, interlocutors or innovation brokers who have a certain gravitas in their specialist area and are respected and trusted. Good facilitators generally know what they are talking about; they have technical knowledge of the domain and a network they can mobilize.<br>A facilitator can play many roles including providing visionary leadership, nurturing a network, getting things organized, selling a new idea, creating space for dialogue, and running effective meetings. If these roles are filled in an MSC initiative, they can overcome many barriers to collaborative innovation.<br>The facilitator is a:<br>▪ convenor who brings together the relevant actors and stimulates interaction;<br>▪ moderator who gets the stakeholders to collaborate by managing their differences and supporting processes of mutual learning;<br>▪ catalyst who stimulates stakeholders to think outside the box and develop and implement new and bold solutions. |
| Facilitating Multi-stakeholder Processes: A Toolkit[137] | Provides several tools and methods, grouped under six different facilitation approaches, for example:<br>▪ Circle of chairs<br>▪ Conference expert panel<br>▪ Focus groups fishbowl<br>▪ Margolis wheel<br>▪ Open space<br>▪ World café<br>▪ Group interactions: energizers, plenary, subgroups, trios, pairs, walking dialogues<br>▪ Learning trips and immersions<br>▪ Prototyping and design thinking |

## Tools for effective communication

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| A Guide to Effective Collaborative Action[25] | Lists four essential practices that work together to build the right mindset, heartset and action orientation for effective collaborative action. Highlights the importance of the "how" when transforming systems. The third essential practice, effective communication, works on three levels:<br>▪ Personal: On an individual level, it is about how you listen and dialogue with stakeholders who might see things very differently.<br>▪ Collective: Within the group of stakeholders working on the collaborative effort, it is about ensuring that key messages are developed collectively so that there is a single narrative; in larger efforts, this can take the form of a communication working group.<br>▪ System: When communicating with the system or community we are trying to impact, making change happen requires thoughtful and coherent storytelling; this can influence wider circles and enable the tipping point that sustains the transition and helps it scale.<br>Three tools are suggested for effective communication:<br>1. Communication and Systems Change: identifies five ways in which systemic change communications strategies can vary from traditional communications strategies.<br>2. The Four Levels of Listening; and<br>3. Deep Listening: listening is key to many aspects of effective collaborative action. |
| The MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-stakeholder Partnerships[78] | Suggests four techniques to foster effective communication:<br>▪ **Dialogue versus debate:** Dialogue is a conversation in which people think together in a relationship, suspend their judgment and together create something new (new social realities).<br>▪ **Non-violent communication:** Rosenberg developed an alternative way of communicating that encourages us to focus on what we and others observe, how we feel about it, what our underlying needs are, and what each of us would request from others, or from ourselves.<br>▪ **Powerful questions and active listening:** Active listening means clearing your mind as much as possible and being fully attentive to the other person – without judgment, prejudice, or foregone conclusions.<br>▪ **Cultural issues and communication:** The ways of interacting that respect the cultural preferences of the other participants. Some things that can be done to ease communication between cultures: The first rule of thumb is to know who is in the room. |
| FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub: Toward Sustainable Food Systems[136] | Provides guidance to develop a tailor-made communication strategy to effectively engage with the different stakeholders. Also outlines an exercise to prepare communication with stakeholders, in order to develop empathy for the various stakeholders to engage in transformative work. Puts forward the "deep listening" exercise, which builds on Theory U's principles of communication with the "mind," "hearth" and "will," and the self-monitoring of this (journaling). Communication on the level of the "will" helps actors of a transformative network to create connections between one another, as well as between themselves (their own drives and goals) and the (actions of the) transformative network. |

## Tools to deal with power differences

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| A Guide to Effective Collaborative Action[25] | Lists four essential practices that work together to build the right mindset, heartset and action orientation for effective collaborative action. Highlights the importance of the "how" when transforming systems. The second essential practice is **Learn how to work with power**. To build this capacity, it is important to understand how equity, representation and distribution of resources has not only played a role in creating the issue being addressed, but also how these realities might influence the group's aim to be more inclusive and effective in future efforts to change the system. Powerful interests can become blocks to change, and specific strategies may be needed to manage this and keep moving forward. Three tools are suggested to work with power:<br>1. Power Ranking: experiential exercise that allows the group and individuals to see and discuss how people are influential in the hierarchy of a group and its impact.<br>2. Stakeholder Power in Food Systems: this exercise gives a deeper understanding of the role of stakeholders in the food system, visualizing the relative importance and influence of each stakeholder as well as their place within the food system.<br>3. Power: A Practical Guide to Facilitating Social Change: a handbook that encompasses a number of activities and "how-to's" for understanding power and how to work with it in a group. |

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| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Tools for Analysing Power in Multi-stakeholder Processes[102] | Offers both tools for thought and tools for action. Tools for thought often focus on a few questions around a bit of theory. Tools for action usually involve different steps, leading to a certain product. Both types of tools can be used alone (by you as an action learning facilitator in a research role) or with groups (by you as an action learning facilitator in a facilitating role). These tools can be used together with seven key research and action questions to analyse power dynamics:<br>1. **Who are the key actors involved?** Actors have different degrees of power and influence. We need to understand these degrees and the bases and use of power.<br>2. **What are the interests/goals of the different actors?** Different interests/goals of actors can conflict with each other, while MSPs have joint objectives, aspirations and interdependencies to different degrees. This might be a source of strength, conflict, grievance, (in)effectiveness.<br>3. **How is the problem framed, by whom?** Through the agenda-setting capacity, power shows itself in MSPs; participatory and empowerment processes are needed to balance the levels of influence of all actors in the MSP.<br>4. **What are their key resources (material and non-material), and how does the control over resources affect actors' ability to exercise influence? What are (resource) dependencies?** Different actors have different access and control over various resources: material, immaterial, political, economic, social, individual, organizational, etc. that determine their influence in the MSP, and their capacity to realize their interests.<br>5. **What are the rules that regulate decision-making?** – Who sets the decision-making rules? How do the decision-making rules affect actors´ access to the decision-making? How is influence being used? (against your own interest/persuasion/marketing/ etc.). This question links the MSP to its "institutional" side: what are the rules that govern, how and by whom are they being set, how are they enforced, arbitrated and sanctioned?<br>6. **To what extent are these interests/goals reflected in outcomes of decision-making (reputation/perception) and in the outcomes of the collaborative undertaking?** This is the expression of the results of the "power" processes within the MSP. |
| The SDG Partnership Guidebook[36] | Provides a tool to identify and explore sources of power and design appropriate mechanisms to address, and actions to mitigate power imbalances (Tool 6). |
| Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Processes: A Toolkit[137] | Includes some guidance on how to identify power dynamics, strategies for action, and useful tips on how to deal with power imbalances among stakeholders using the Power Cube concept. |

## Tools to build competencies and skills for multi-stakeholder collaboration

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| The Fit for Partnering Framework[148] | Identifies the key organizational processes, systems, commitments and capacities that are crucial to an organization's ability to partner and maps them against four organizational areas: Leadership & Strategy, Systems & Processes, Skills & Support and Partnering Culture. Using this framework can support an understanding of how ready the organization is to build effective and sustainable partnerships. |
| Institutional and Organizational Analysis and Capacity Strengthening[149] | Provides guidance on how to engage with Smallholder Institutions and Organizations (SIO) by assessing their level of maturity and capacity and defining an approach for engaging with them and strengthening them. The process starts by carrying out a rapid analysis of the existing SIOs both through secondary data and interactions with local communities (including local leaders, government and project staff, non-governmental organizations, etc.). The rapid analysis comprises three main steps, resulting in the development of a capacity development plan.<br>▪ a quick scan of the external factors<br>▪ an inventory of existing SIOs<br>▪ a rapid maturity assessment and an initial capacity needs assessment. |
| Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer[150] | Covers basic aspects of the UNDP approach to capacity development and offers guidance on how to strengthen capacities. UNDP sees capacity development as a **transformation** process through which individuals, organizations, and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time. |
| Sustainable Food Systems: Concept and Framework Course[151]<br><br>FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub: Toward Sustainable Food Systems Educational Modules[136]<br><br>WUR Food Systems e-course: 2022[152] | Provide e-learning courses/training modules on Sustainable Food Systems, designed to equip stakeholders with the knowledge and tools required to apply systems thinking to complex food systems challenges in an integrated manner. |

## Tools to manage divergent interests and conflict

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| A Guide to Effective Collaborative Action[25] | Lists four essential practices that work together to build the right mindset, heartset and action orientation for effective collaborative action. Highlights the importance of the "how" when transforming systems. The third essential practice is **Work through conflict**. Creating a positive tone around conflict and setting the expectation that it will be managed and addressed is critical to building trust without hidden agendas. The focus of this practice is on increasing the collaborative's capacity to see conflict as something to work with in order to move the collective forward and even connect the group more strongly together. Three useful tools are suggested for this practice:<br>1. Multiple Perspectives: an experiential exercise that helps a group see an issue from as many vantage points as possible, which can help diffuse tension and open conversation around difference.<br>2. Conflict Style: this exercise generates insights on how different conflict-handling styles affect interpersonal and group dynamics and empowers participants to select the appropriate conflict-handling style for any situation.<br>3. Paired Walk: this exercise involves walking and talking with someone as a way to practice listening, generate understanding and foster collaboration. |
| The MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-stakeholder Partnerships[78] | Gives three perspectives that help recognize and deal with conflict: exploring causes of conflicts, a continuum of conflict and interest-based negotiation.<br>▪ Different underlying **causes** require different solutions.<br>▪ Situate the conflict in a **continuum** depending on its **intensity**.<br>▪ **Interest-based negotiation** is usually more effective in addressing conflict in MSPs by negotiating and developing a good deal. A good deal means a deal that is: 1) clear, 2) acceptable and attractive to all parties, and 3) better than each party's best alternative. The key point of this method is to look beyond the stated positions of the different parties to discover their real interests. |

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| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Stakeholder Collaboration: Building Bridges for Conservation[95] | Indicates that to address conflicts and power struggles, facilitators should work on understanding the causes of conflicts between stakeholders, addressing the difficulties associated with process-level collaboration between conflicting groups, and establishing the basis for collaboration. It indicates that the most effective methods for conflict resolution include:<br>▪ **Meetings and roundtable discussions** with the intention of bringing together parties with opposing interests to work through conflicts and try to reach agreements or at least help the parties concerned to better understand the underlying causes of the conflict.<br>▪ **Joint initiatives** that address joint concerns, including those of stakeholders who are not necessarily involved in the conflict.<br>▪ **Mediation** provided by third-party professionals who will help address issues and conflicts at an impasse.<br>▪ **Training** in negotiation, creative problem solving and conflict resolution techniques can develop stakeholders´ capacity to support and participate effectively in collaborative efforts.<br>▪ **Awareness-raising and education** can increase the understanding of conflicts by stakeholders, who often tend to lose awareness of conflicts, even more so if they are involved in them. Education can facilitate the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values and help people contribute constructively to a collaborative process.<br>▪ **Joint fact-finding** requires stakeholders to work together to conduct research on situations involving disagreements. Consensus-building requires groups to reach an agreement based on information obtained from a variety of sources. The process of creating a common ground for discussion can help stakeholders get to know each other and build trust. |
| The SDG Partnership Guidebook[36] | Gives tips on **value maximization negotiation,** to collectively grow the pie to generate the greatest value for all. The guide also suggests the following principles for managing **conflicts of interest (COI):**<br>▪ Clearly establish the key principle behind COI: no stakeholder should gain undue, illegitimate, or disproportionate benefit from their involvement in the initiative, and harm to or by partners should always be avoided.<br>▪ Appreciate that potential conflicts of interest are inevitable and not inherently negative, and keep an updated, non-prejudicial COI risk register to clearly identify potential COIs.<br>▪ Put in place approaches to track and reduce the risk of potential COIs becoming actual COIs, and robust mechanisms to identify when/where they do.<br>▪ Have clear procedures for dealing with COIs that do arise.<br>▪ Communicate extensively internally across all partners, staff and stakeholders to build awareness and help develop an anti-COI culture and behaviours (including updating the risk register).<br>▪ Use transparency to reduce unwarranted perceptions of COI: communicate externally as much of your internal decision-making as possible, as well as your full COI approach. |

## Tools to overcome common challenges

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Partnering Toolkit: Practical Tools for Strengthening IFAD's Partnerships[39] | Identifies seven common challenges in partnerships and suggests ways of dealing with them:<br>▪ What if partners are not delivering to expectation?<br>▪ What if no action plan has been developed to back up a higher-level good intention to partner?<br>▪ What if essential staff leave the organization?<br>▪ What if externalities disrupt the work plan of the partnership?<br>▪ What if poor staff performance needs to be tackled?<br>▪ What if you suspect serious violations of the Code of Conduct?<br>▪ What if there are issues with partner recognition?<br>In any of these situations above, "principled negotiation" can help the MSC initiative to negotiate a way forward. The five key elements of principled negotiation are:<br>▪ Separate the people from the problem<br>▪ Focus on interests (what they really want) rather than positions (what they think the solution is)<br>▪ Generate a variety of options before settling on an agreement<br>▪ Insist that the agreement be based on objective criteria<br>▪ Establish the best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA). |
| The SDG Partnership Guidebook[36] | Provides a "troubleshooting" section (tool 5) to support partners to deal with internal partnering challenges. |
| 10 Dangers to Collective Impact[147] | Identifies 10 pitfalls often occurring in MSC initiatives and gives guidance on how to avoid them.<br>1. Strategy drift<br>2. Culture drift<br>3. Treating workgroups like committees<br>4. Lack of transparency<br>5. Having the wrong people at the table<br>6. Lack of accountability<br>7. Funder and political hijacking<br>8. Managing a network like an organization<br>9. Insufficient time frames<br>10. Lack of adaptive leadership<br>To avoid these dangers, the author shares three lessons: 1) Clear Strategy Guides Clear Commitment, 2) Form Follows Function, and 3) Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast. |

Building Block 4

# Defining a compass and a roadmap

## Tools to build a shared vision

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| The MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-stakeholder Partnerships[78] | Introduces the "Visioning" tool to help in co-creating a shared direction and vision that is broad enough to engage a wide group of different stakeholders. The group creates a vision answering the question: "What do we want to see in place in 5-10 years as a result of this MSP?" After reviewing the context, individuals brainstorm vision elements, which are shared, clustered and named. Eventually, all the elements are combined in one vision sentence; this can be a collection of opportunities rather than a traditional vision statement, which runs the risk of being too narrow and excluding people too early on. |
| FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub: Toward Sustainable Food Systems[136] | Provides guidance to run visioning activities. |
| Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Processes: A Toolkit[137] | Provides five tools to build a shared vision:<br>1. **The four dimensions of change tool:** to understand and explain how change may happen as a result of the initiative, and to make sense and strategize about ways to promote interactions between different dimensions to align them towards the objectives and desired change.<br>2. **The theory of change tool:** To develop a theory of change that frames thinking and action as regards to the desired change and contribution.<br>3. **The assumption analysis tool:** To learn about and adjust the assumptions used to design and implement the initiative.<br>4. **The assumption risk analysis tool:** to assess in advance the consequences that assumptions may have in relation to interventions (risk analysis).<br>5. **The assumption assessment framework:** to assess the success of contributions by periodically measuring a set of key assumptions related to the contributions. |

## Tools to develop a strategy

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Building Blocks of Strategy[153] | Recommends five key actions related to the five building blocks of a strategy:<br>▪ **Look outside to identify threats and opportunities**. To do so, it is necessary to form a team, avoiding people who may be complacent or attached to the status quo.<br>▪ **Look inside at resources, capabilities, and practices.** These are critical, and it is often overlooked that a strategy will only be successful if the set of people and other resources in the organization are in line with it.<br>▪ **Consider strategies for addressing threats and opportunities:**<br>▫ Identify alternatives: often a combination of alternatives can provide a more robust strategy<br>▫ Check all the facts and challenge assumptions<br>▫ Look for missing information<br>▫ Examine the different strategy options with the most experienced people.<br>▪ **Build a good "fit" among strategy-supporting activities.** Each activity must promote the other on the path to achieving an objective.<br>▪ **Create alignment.** Once the strategy has been developed, it is necessary that each person in the organization understands it and the importance of his or her role in making the strategy work. |
| The Strategy Diamond[154] | Consists of five dimensions that address key features any strategy must have:<br>▪ **Arenas**: Where are we going to act?<br>▪ **Vehicles**: How will we get there?<br>▪ **Differentiators**: How will we win in the market?<br>▪ **Sequence**: What will be our speed and sequence of movements?<br>▪ **Economic logic**: How will we make our profits? |
| The Integrated Cascade of Choices[155] | Management model that guides organizations to succeed in the context in which they operate. According to the authors, strategy is a coordinated and integrated set of five elements:<br>▪ **Aspirations** (what do we understand as success?)<br>▪ **Where** are we going to operate?<br>▪ **How** are we going to succeed?<br>▪ **What core capabilities** are needed to succeed?<br>▪ **What management systems** are needed to support the capabilities?<br>The model states that the five elements are interdependent and reinforcing, so in the event that any of the choices do not fit, it will be necessary to review all other elements to ensure that the strategy is successful. |
| SWOT Analysis[156] | Strategic planning technique used to help a person or organization identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to business competition or project planning. It is sometimes called situational assessment or situational analysis. |

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| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| The Theory of Change Framework | Provides an outline of desired changes and the actions needed to implement them. When developed through a quality process, it supports strategy development, continuous improvement, and stakeholder engagement. Theories of change usually describe in a logical way the connections and relationships between inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. In the context of MSPs, it is typical to expect that a complex set of activities will contribute to the desired change and that the catalytic effects of MSP activities will lead to long-term results. Spending time exploring different pathways to change is useful and important when considering the unique contribution of an MSP. The Hivos Theory of Change stepwise approach[157] and the WUR Theory of Change guides[158] are useful for MSC initiatives. |

## Tools to move from strategy to action

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation[10] | Describes the steps to develop an action plan for sustainable food systems, which should be coherent with the results of the food systems assessment and discussions within the multi-stakeholder platform. The steps are:<br>1. Select priority areas<br>2. Define objectives and SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)<br>3. Select policies and interventions<br>4. Approve the Action Plan for SFS. |
| The MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-stakeholder Partnerships[78] | Introduces the Scenario Planning tool to make predictions about what the organization's future might be based on independent driving forces that drive change. The model suggests an analysis based on uncertainties and different scenarios, motivating creativity and forward thinking. The process of scenario planning can be guided by the following guidelines:<br>▪ Identify your **driving forces**<br>▪ Identify your **critical uncertainties**<br>▪ Develop a range of **plausible scenarios**<br>▪ Discuss the **implications**. |
| Must-Win Battles Model[159] | Suggests identifying up to five critical challenges that really matter to the organization. These "battles" to be prioritized must show the following five features:<br>▪ Make a **real difference**<br>▪ Be **market-focused** (or context-focused)<br>▪ Generate **enthusiasm**<br>▪ Be **specific and tangible**<br>▪ Be **achievable**. |

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| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| The Selection of Priority Areas Model[160] | Stipulates that of the three essential and interdependent variables of objectives, resources, and time, **resources** are the most important as they make it possible to meet an objective within a given time frame. The methodology involves creating a matrix where possible initiatives are listed, and the organization indicates the resources (time and money) needed to achieve its related objectives. Prioritization is done by determining how to best allocate available resources taking into account potential time constraints. The resulting matrix becomes a strategy document that aligns the team and helps circumvent disagreements. |
| Integrated Sustainable Development Goals (iSDG) Model[161] | Policy simulation tool designed to help policymakers and other stakeholders make strategic policy decisions. It is focused on the integration of policy interventions in different areas and their impact on Sustainable Development Goals. The tool is initially based on a participatory analysis of the (food) system (or any other system). There are many other modelling tools, such as the ComMod: The Companion Modeling approach, for collective decision-making. |
| Time Management advice[162] | Outlines three specific skills needed for successful time management:<br>▪ **Awareness**: thinking realistically about time, understanding that it is a limited resource.<br>▪ **Organization**: designing and organizing goals, plans, schedules, and tasks to use time effectively.<br>▪ **Adaptation**: controlling the use of time while performing activities, including adapting to interruptions or changing priorities. |
| Collaborative Action Mechanisms for Forest Positive Agricultural Commodities[163] | Reviews four impact briefs that identify collaborative mechanisms used in multi-stakeholder platform work in Paraguay, Indonesia and Liberia on soy, beef and palm oil. |

## Tools for participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| A Guide to Effective Collaborative Action[25] | Suggests the "Signals of Change" framework, a qualitative exercise to track early signals of change related to the individual and collective journey of transformation. The framework helps us to see qualitative outcomes, document essential practices adoption and identify contributions to the overarching vision and goals. It is a way of identifying and documenting progress towards systemic change. Recognizing these signals as they happen can generate impetus to keep going, and provide feedback on direction, as well as a way to talk about the impact the effort is having on the individuals, community and system. Beyond inspiring reflection and adaptive action, this self-assessment tool offers a way to support accountability through the development of a baseline and documentation of progress over time towards effective collaborative action. |

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| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Enhancing the Effectiveness of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms[164] | Gives readily applicable guidelines to assess both the MSC initiative and its effectiveness. The guidelines can be followed using capacities and data/evidence already present in most MSC initiatives. |
| The Food Policy Council Self-Assessment Tool: Development, Testing, and Results[165] and the Food Policy Capacity Assessment Toolkit[166] | Puts forward a methodology to assess food policy council practices and members' perceptions on leadership, the extent of active participation, council climate, structure, knowledge sharing, relationships, members´ empowerment, community context, synergies and impacts on the food system. |
| How Are We Doing? A Tool to Reflect on the Process, Progress, and Priorities of Your Multi-stakeholder Forum[167] | Gives a simple tool that enables participatory reflective self-monitoring in multi-stakeholder forums. Its objective goes beyond a simple assessment of indicators, inviting participants to discuss and reflect on their answers. The purpose of this reflection is to learn from the past, consider progress and obstacles to further progress, and collectively plan how to achieve the multi-stakeholder forums' goals in the future. |
| Partnering Toolkit: Practical Tools for Strengthening IFAD's Partnerships[39] | Identifies nine key criteria and associated questions for checking the health of a partnership:<br>1. Purpose: Are our partnering goals, values and objectives clearly articulated, agreed on, and still relevant?<br>2. Results: Are we delivering on our expected partnership results and impacts?<br>3. Value: Are we receiving value as an organization from our involvement in the partnership?<br>4. Governance: Are roles, responsibilities and work processes clearly agreed on and documented, and are they being followed?<br>5. Leadership: Is the partnership being led in an effective, responsive and flexible way?<br>6. Engagement: Is there sufficient commitment, engagement and trust from the partner organizations?<br>7. Resources: Are there sufficient financial and human resources and facilities for the partnership to deliver on expectations?<br>8. Equity: Is the partnership equitable, transparent and accountable for all partners?<br>9. Process: Are communication, planning, team development, meeting and monitoring processes adequate and effective? |
| The SDG Partnership Guidebook[36] | Provides the **partnership health check tool** to review the "health" of the partnership, determining areas for discussion and improvement; and the **value assessment framework** to assess the value created by the MSC initiative, and at what cost. |
| A Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation[10] | Provides a reference checklist for a food systems approach to policymaking and implementation that includes a specific section about food systems multi-stakeholder platforms covering leadership, inclusive council climate, breadth of active membership, member empowerment, knowledge, systemic approach and perceived impact. |

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| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Multi Stakeholder Platforms as System Change Agents[112] | Sets out how MSC initiatives can better use existing and new evidence and processes to assess their system-change role. The guidance is presented as four steps for assessing effectiveness, plus six tips or lessons for putting these steps into practice.<br>**Four steps:**<br>1. Define effectiveness question<br>2. Develop or refine the theory of change<br>3. Identify evidence of effectiveness and gaps<br>4. Set out the contribution story<br>**Six tips:**<br>1. Participation<br>2. Strategic embedding: Use what is learned to guide strategy<br>3. Recurrent revision of the theory of change<br>4. Engaging funders<br>5. Global to national to local theory of change: Use layered theories of change<br>6. Monitoring unintended consequences |
| Creating Local Food Policy Councils: A Guide for Michigan's Communities[86] | Suggests several tools for evaluating multi-stakeholder interventions:<br>▪ **RE-AIM** is an online tool used to assess the impact of an intervention on individuals and the community around its reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, maintenance, and contextual factors, whether you are planning, implementing or evaluating a project.<br>▪ **Random moment sampling** is one way to quickly evaluate whether or not efforts have made a difference in the community by conducting dot surveys.<br>**Secondary data sources** can be used to assess the impact of an intervention when the MSC initiative does not have the time or funding for a more detailed evaluation. As conditions are not controlled, findings from secondary sources may not necessarily be attributable to the actions of the MSC initiative. |
| A Framework for Program Evaluation[168] | Describes six connected steps: engage stakeholders, describe the programme, focus the evaluation design, gather credible evidence, justify conclusions, and ensure the use and share of lessons learned. |
| Choosing Methods and Processes for Evaluation[169] | Offers a range of approaches to evaluation and provides guidance to choose methods and processes. |
| Rigorous, Science-based Monitoring Framework[170] | Defines the architecture for a comprehensive monitoring agenda covering five thematic areas (diets, nutrition, and health; environment and climate; livelihoods, poverty, and equity; governance and resilience; and sustainability) and their component indicator domains. Indicators for analysis of food systems performance and accountability should be selected through an inclusive process. |

Table continues on the next page >

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results[171] | Can be used in the monitoring, planning, and evaluation process. It helps MSC initiatives understand the critical role of monitoring to prove the performance of programmes and projects, and to steer the implementation process towards the intended results. |
| UNDAF Companion Guidance: Monitoring and Evaluation[172] | Provides practical steps and tools for the UN system to adopt an integrated approach to monitoring and evaluation within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Lists and explains fundamental steps to plan the monitoring and evaluation of initiatives. Reviews key concepts such as indicators, baselines, objectives and provides tips for the construction of indicators that will feed into the resources and results matrix. |
| Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation[10] | Provides suggestions of Agenda 2030 indicators that can directly or indirectly support the monitoring of outcomes from sustainable food systems policies (see >> Annex 2). |
| Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) Monitoring Framework[141] | Provides a range of tools for MUFPP implementation and monitoring based on the experiences of three pilot cities: Antananarivo, Nairobi, and Quito. The guide provides an explanatory booklet, guidelines for 44 indicators, and resources designed for use in workshops or planning discussions that support the step-by-step process. |
| The MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-stakeholder Partnerships[78] | Identifies seven principles that effective MSCs should have, the seventh of which is **Foster participatory learning** by creating learning environments that are safe, yet challenging enough to encourage people to think innovatively and creatively. The authors recommend the **Reflection** tool, as participants' engagement is enhanced if they reflect on the group work and link it to their daily work. The Reflection Methods Practical Guide for Trainers and Facilitators[173] can be consulted on the topic. |
| FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub: Toward Sustainable Food Systems[136] | Suggests using the Dynamic Learning Agenda (DLA), a method to facilitate reflection and learning in action to overcome complex and difficult change processes through the analysis of barriers and opportunities and the formulation of learning questions for food system transformation. |
| Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Processes: A Toolkit[137] | Provides five tools for reflection and learning between the actors involved.<br>1. The 4 rooms of change tool: to identify what needs to be improved in a change-oriented initiative.<br>2. The 4 ways for reflective practice tool: to reflect on actions and to find ways to improve the professional or organisational performance.<br>3. The learning and change navigation chart: to have an overall understanding about how the initiative can be improved, and adapt it to emerging changes.<br>4. The indicator checklist: to check how inclusive and participatory the M&E system of the initiative is.<br>5. The contribution assessment framework: to assess the success of interventions by periodically measuring a set of indicators linked to the contributions.<br>Also provides a series of collective learning questions for each chapter: systems thinking, stakeholder engagement, shared vision, multi-stakeholder governance, learning and change, and multi-stakeholder dialogue facilitation. |

Building Block 5

# Securing sustainability of collaboration

## Tools for financing multi-stakeholder collaboration

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Funding Food Policy Councils: Stories from the Field[128] | Gives concrete suggestions related to funding that are interesting for any MSC endeavour:<br>▪ Engage funders from a variety of angles (health, environment, community development, etc.) for maximum support.<br>▪ Reach out to funders with distant but related priority areas.<br>▪ Diversify support by requesting small amounts from multiple government agencies and/or foundations.<br>▪ Understand which food system issues resonate most with your target audiences.<br>▪ Demonstrate success to attract additional resources to your council.<br>▪ Collaborate with other MSC initiatives to reduce duplicative efforts.<br>▪ Expand initiatives across the county and other jurisdictional boundaries to be eligible for state or regional funding, as well as enhance policy collaboration and systems change.<br>▪ Extension positions can play a key role in networking stakeholder groups and attracting support for food system policy changes.<br>▪ In some instances, funders interested in policy, advocacy, and systems change, provide the impetus for the launch of MSC initiatives<br>▪ Model funding transitions on successful ones by other community groups and coalitions.<br>▪ Leverage support from academic partners to assist in research, grant collaboration and other council activities |

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| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Doing Food Policy Councils Right: A Guide to Development and Action[174] | Presents an example of an FPC budget with some basic budget lines to consider:<br>**Income**, whether from foundations, governments, special activities, donations, or cooperation.<br>**Expenses**, which may vary from case to case, but should include<br>▪ staff: coordinator, facilitator, external consultants, communicator, etc.<br>▪ office supplies, telephone expenses, stationery (printing and copying)<br>▪ travel<br>▪ training (to build soft and hard skills of staff and participants)<br>▪ meeting supplies, and support (refreshments, stationery, etc.)<br>▪ publications (editing, layout, printing)<br>▪ Monitoring and evaluation, and reporting<br>▪ fixed expenses<br>Additionally, a budget line with estimated per diems should be included to support the participation of the most economically disadvantaged actors who do not have the capacity to finance their attendance. |
| Practice Guidance: Building Long Term Sustainability In Multi-Stakeholder Platforms[175] | Provides a list of options for long-term MSP funding after initial donor funding ends. These include voluntary donations, stable government funding, fees or export tax. Combining several of these options represents a fully resourced scenario for MSP financial sustainability. |


# Annex 2

## Building blocks assessment guide

# Building Block 1
# Fostering broad multi-stakeholder participation

## Engaging different food systems stakeholder groups

**see >> section 1.1 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

- Are the following stakeholder groups included in the MSC initiative?
  - Public sector
  - Private sector
  - Producers and their associations
  - Other food systems workers
  - Civil society
  - International agencies and partners
  - Research and knowledge-based organisations
  - Media
- Have you included marginalized and underrepresented groups? Do you have a process for continuously asking who might be missing; and take action towards including them?
- Have you included stakeholders from all relevant sectors (agriculture, nutrition, health, environment, finance, etc.)?
- Have you ensured high-level political buy-in?

## Conducting a stakeholders mapping and analysis

**see >> section 1.2 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

- Have you conducted a stakeholder mapping and analysis?

# Building Block 2
# Ensuring a good understanding of the food system

## Characteristics and objectives of food system assessments

**see >> section 2.1 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

- Have you conducted an analysis of the problem(s) using a food system lens?
- Is the problem analysis linked to social, environment and economic sustainability aspects?
- Have you done an analysis of policies and initiatives, along with existing institutions within current food systems?
- What type (s) of knowledge were included in the assessment (was it not just scientific, but also local and from Indigenous Peoples)?
- Does your assessment include recommendations for priority/focus areas and policy responses based on an analysis of trade-offs and synergies of potential interventions?
- Have you analysed who may support and who may be against changing the existing situation in order to come up with more realistic interventions?
- Have you conducted an analysis of potential trade-offs and synergies?

## Conducting a food systems mapping and analysis

**see >> section 2.2 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

- Have you conducted a food systems mapping and analysis? Tools and methodologies used to assess food systems are numerous. The following four areas help differentiate how to focus the analysis and what tools to employ.
- Do you need a quantitative or qualitative analysis? Or both?
- What level of detail is needed?
- What is the geographical focus: is it focused on urban rather than national level food systems?
- What level of involvement of the stakeholders in the mapping/analysis do you want or need?

# Building Block 3
# Nurturing inclusive and effective collaboration

## Governance structure of the MSC

**see >> section 3.1 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

**Starting the process**

- Have you identified your champions, clarified the reasons for the initiative and done an initial situational analysis?
- In this analysis, have you considered other related MSC initiatives and the best relationship to them?

**The governance system**

- Have you established a well-functioning governance structure (steering committee, secretariat, working groups, etc.)?
- Do you have shared agreement on the model (processes, rules, structures) needed to guide decision making and coordinate actions so stakeholders achieve their common interests?
- Have you ensured that vulnerable and minority groups are equitably represented at all levels?
- Have you put in place mechanisms that enable all stakeholders to contribute on an equal basis?

## Key ingredients of collaboration: facilitation and communication

**see >> section 3.2 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

**The key role of facilitators**

- Have you distinguished between facilitation activities and skills required to conduct them?
- Are the different roles assigned to specific people or organizations, considering the required skills?

**Ensuring effective communication**

- Do you have a communication strategy and plan?
- Are communication channels accessible to all stakeholders and does the language used – both internally and externally – accommodate stakeholders of all backgrounds?

## A challenging side of MSC: managing power imbalances and conflict

**see >> section 3.3 and 3.4 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

**Dealing with power differences**

- Do you understand how power differences affect the MSC initiative's ability to be effective?
- Do you have ways to mitigate these differences?
- Have you designed in ways to:
  - Acknowledge and make explicit different types of power?
  - Recognize processes that can reinforce power structures to prevent them?
  - Be intentional about redressing power imbalances through the structures and processes underpinning the MSC initiative?

**Building competencies and skills for MSC**

- Does the MSC initiative have the right set of related knowledge, skills and abilities required to successfully carry out certain technical and strategic tasks?
- Is there a plan to balance the learning through experience and hiring certain capacities?

## Managing diverging interests, conflicts and common challenges of MSC

**see >> section 3.3 and 3.4 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

**Managing diverging interests and conflict**

- How prepared are you to address and handle conflict constructively?

**Addressing common challenges**

- Every MSC initiative will face challenges; are you equipped to manage through them?

Building Block 4

# Defining a compass and a roadmap

## The importance of building a shared vision and strategy

**see >> section 4.1 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

- Does the MSC initiative have a shared vision? Was it developed through open dialogue and debate?
- Is there a strategy or a long-term roadmap explaining how and by which means the MSC initiative's vision will be achieved?
- Have you built in a process that recognizes the vision and the strategy are living elements and will need to be adjusted at a later stage as things progress?

## Moving from strategy to action

**see >> section 4.2 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

- Do you have well defined objectives (SMART goals) with a mix of measures and instruments to achieve these goals?
- Do you have a well-defined institutional framework, i.e., actors to be involved and mechanisms for coordination, along with financing sources for its operationalization, implementation and monitoring?
- Are you considering first piloting activities that may require big investments?
- Have you reviewed action plans over time and stopped any actions with negative consequences?

## Participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning

**see >> section 4.3 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

- Have you allocated resources and made concrete arrangements for conducting monitoring and evaluation (M&E), ensuring that stakeholders are engaged at each step of the M&E process?
- Have you conducted meetings with stakeholders to determine indicators of success: what information do you need to understand if the activities have been successful?
- Is there a continuous learning process in place to capture learning and incorporate it?

Building Block 5

# Securing sustainability of collaboration

## Ensuring institutionalization

**see >> section 5.1 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

- Have you considered the advantages and disadvantages of different governance models for the MSC initiative?
- Have you considered possible options of legal form depending on local laws?
- Regardless of the governance model, have you ensured the government's buy-in to legitimize the MSC initiative?

## Financing multi-stakeholder collaboration

**see >> section 5.2 in guide, and >> Annex 1 with relevant tools**

- Does the MSC initiative have an estimated five-year operating budget?
- Has there been a fundraising group identified that can conduct efforts to secure the needed funding?
- Has there been a collective decision about which donors/sources of funding to approach?
- Does the MSC initiative have diversified sources of funding?

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# RETHINKING OUR FOOD SYSTEMS

## A GUIDE FOR MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION


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