

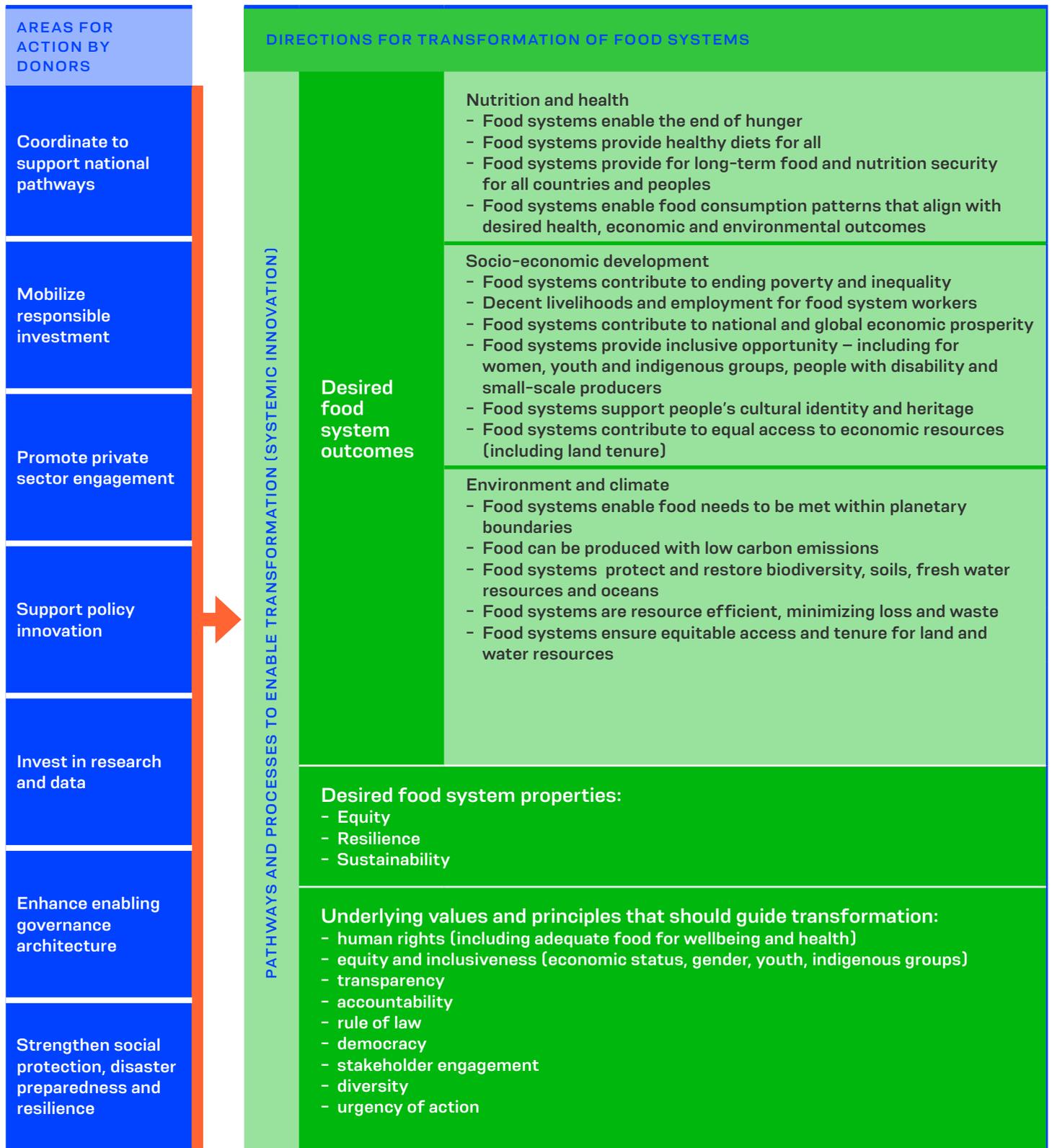
4 Catalysing change: Areas for action by donors

The following section outlines seven areas for action by donors to support food systems transformation (see [FIGURE 5](#)). These areas focus on the catalysing role that donors can play in helping to create an enabling environment for food systems change. They have been identified and developed through the GDPRD's background work and events related to the FSS, reviewing the outcomes of the FSS, and subsequent interviews with donors and others closely involved in the FSS. The Board of the GDPRD has endorsed these areas as a guiding framework for donors to use in considering how their policies, programming and coordination with other actors could best respond to the challenge of transforming food systems to accelerate progress on the SDGs.

The areas for action are cross-cutting and necessary for leveraging change across all aspects of food systems transformation. In reference to the framework for food systems transformation discussed above in [FIGURE 4](#), the action areas are focused on the "how" of transformation. These areas are deliberately not intended to be a listing of all the topic areas that donors see as being critical to food systems transformation, such as nutrition, gender, climate, biodiversity, land tenure, youth or resilience. These cross-cutting topics are all illustrated on the right-hand side of [FIGURE 5](#), and are taken as being fundamental to transforming food systems.

Donors have a particular responsibility to help ensure that food systems transformation is underpinned by attention to inclusion, non-discrimination and human rights, to ensure benefits for all those who live in poverty, suffer from hunger and malnutrition, are in vulnerable situations or experience marginalization. Donors will need to orient their support for food systems transformation to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, calls for building back better and greener, the United Nations Climate Change and Biodiversity Conferences ([UNFCCC COP26](#), [UNCCD COP15](#) and [CBD COP15](#)) and the [Nutrition for Growth Summit](#), considering CFS guidelines and recommendations.

FIGURE 5
The link between the priority areas for donor actions and directions for transformation of food systems



4.1 Strengthen coordination among donors and other actors to support national pathways for food systems transformation

The need for coordinated efforts to support national pathways for food systems transformation has emerged as one of the key pillars for taking the outcomes of the FSS forward. Eighty-one governments mentioned improved coordination in

their statements. Effective coordination at national levels also requires coordination at regional and global levels. The policy settings, consumption patterns and trading relations of individual countries can have large interdependencies and impacts on the overall global food system. Despite the principles set by the aid effectiveness agenda, donor coordination remains challenging and is arguably becoming more driven by donors' domestic priorities. The food systems agenda reinforces the importance of country-led and donor-coordinated principles for effective development assistance.

Most crucially, all of the elements of coordination need to acknowledge the national priorities of recipient countries and, in many cases, the national pathways described above. Many interview respondents emphasized the need for donors to be adaptive to national country contexts and to "follow the lead" of recipient countries. Donors should invest not only

in coordinated programming and projects but also in leadership and stakeholder partnership capacity-building to ensure that inclusivity and alignment are possible within countries as well.

To support coordination at the national level for a sustainable food systems transformation, donors can:

- Support collective efforts to further develop national food systems transformation pathways, as appropriate
- Align donor country investments with national pathways and other national plans and strategies to ensure a balanced coverage of national priorities across the investments of individual donors
- Engage actively in national-level donor, sectoral and United Nations coordination mechanisms, and encourage such mechanisms to operate with a food systems perspective

DONORS SUPPORTING NATIONAL PATHWAYS

“ Having donors pursue [coordination] through national pathways or supporting national priorities rather than their own national interest... To reinforce being able to leverage the UN system as a whole at the country level...There are things that they have control of and can make a contribution to, but [coordination's] going to require also for them a change in thinking.”

GDPRD member

- Increase collective or aligned donor investments to support the country-level analysis and planning needed to develop, guide, monitor and adapt national pathways and other national development plans or strategies, as relevant
- Invest in ongoing multistakeholder dialogue and analysis of the longer-term implications and impacts of food systems trends and scenarios
- Catalyse, identify, support and scale up niche innovations that may have the potential to contribute to a food systems transition and positively disrupt existing and unsustainable models, including support for territorial approaches
- Balance investments in field-level direct poverty alleviation projects with support for initiatives aimed at tackling the underlying structural barriers to food systems change
- Individually and collectively invest more efforts in learning lessons from field-level projects about food systems transformation and connect these lessons to national-level policy learning processes with particular attention to policy coherence
- Align and leverage COVID-19 recovery and social protection programming to support national pathways and food systems transformation.

The FSS and statements by heads of state have reinforced how critical food systems are to achieving the 2030 Agenda, and place food systems alongside other perspectives from which the SDGs can be viewed and implemented. This implies a need for donors to ensure their overall portfolio of development investments is balanced in terms of sufficient support for food systems-related investments. Better tracking mechanisms are needed to monitor overall donor support for food systems, building on existing protocols and processes. At the same time, the concept of coordination needs to be unpacked and clarified. Coordination includes aligning investments in specific geographies or topics to avoid duplicating or conflicting with the efforts of other donors or the host government. It also requires communicating with a variety of actors to ensure that individual donor investments are adding up to a sum that is more than the constituent parts, avoiding the creation of fragmented programming and policy. The GDPRD can support communication and alignment between donors, based on shared principals, which can complement more formal coordination mechanisms.

Philanthropic funders can play an important role in supporting food systems innovation. In some contexts they are able to support new initiatives outside established development agendas and the politics of bilateral aid programmes. Several respondents, mostly those not directly within the donor community, noted the energy and innovation coming from some philanthropic donors, in part because their incentive structures are different and they are less embedded in overtly political systems that contribute to domestic and international development priorities. However, philanthropic funders may also pursue their own agendas in ways that add to the challenge of donor coordination. Further, as shown in the GDPRD Stocktaking Report on Donor Contributions to Food

PARTNERSHIPS VS. COORDINATION

“ Coordination does not necessarily translate into partnership. Partnerships intentionally solve problems together. Coordination is having the right level of visibility of each other’s work, but partnerships are about working together towards one goal.”

FSS organizer

Systems, traditional bilateral donors contribute more than 10 times more to food systems aid activity than do philanthropic donors, emphasizing the need for donors of all types to work together and coordinate across their own strengths and perspectives to maximize impact.

4.2 Mobilize responsible investment in food systems from the public and private sectors

Transforming food systems will require billions of dollars in new investments. Most of this will need to come from responsible investments by the private sector. However, donors, national governments and public development banks have critical roles to play in catalysing such investment and in creating an enabling investment

environment. The [Food and Land Use Coalition](#) has estimated that transforming food systems to deliver healthy people, a healthy planet and a healthy economy will require between US\$300 and US\$350 billion per year for the next decade – but this could also generate potential economic gains of US\$5.7 trillion annually. Meanwhile, the [Ceres 2030 report](#) estimated that an additional US\$14 billion of donor funding, leveraging US\$33 billion of national government expenditure, will be needed to achieve SDG 2 alone.

To support these financing demands, a FSS coalition to support public development banks to engage more effectively in food system transformation has been formed, led by IFAD. The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) has committed itself to transformative food security finance. The World Bank Group has established a Food Systems 2030

umbrella trust fund with the aim of helping to steer trillions of dollars of investment into the agriculture and food sectors. Donors need to focus on how they can leverage responsible investment from the private sector and better coordinate public and private investments.

To support responsible investment in food systems, donors can:

- Support the replenishment of international and regional financial institutions, ensuring attention to responsible investment in food systems transformation, and particularly to family farmers and smallholders
- Provide resources for blended financing which integrates grant, concessional and commercial financing to mobilize and de-risk private investments in contexts where the barriers and risks would otherwise be too high
- Support national governments to develop responsible enabling business environments in the agriculture and food sectors
- Support the development of all forms of necessary infrastructure, particularly in poorer and marginal areas, to improve the economic conditions and competitiveness of the agriculture and food sectors in those areas

MOBILIZING AND DEFINING RESPONSIBLE AND EQUITABLE INVESTMENTS

“ Focus on equity and inclusion because...it is assumed that if you have stronger coordination, you mobilize more responsible investments, invest in research and the systems, that might come automatically. But sometimes, it doesn't. All these could lead to inequalities if not done right.”

FSS contributor

- Work domestically and collectively with partner governments on how to bring about a change in support measures for the agriculture and food sectors to better incentivize sustainable food systems
- Work collectively to ensure that climate finance is increasingly leveraged to address challenges in the food systems and the needs of rural people experiencing poverty and/or marginalization
- Support value chain development projects which create the conditions and investable project propositions for private financing
- Renew collective efforts across donors, the financial sector, governments and development agencies/non-governmental organizations to provide the financial and business support services needed by the micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprise (MSME) sector
- Encourage conscious efforts across all sectors to integrate the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems into investments and business practices
- Encourage and provide appropriate support to multistakeholder agriculture and food sector roundtable initiatives
- Invest in focused initiatives that support the particular financing needs of women and youth entrepreneurs
- Support IT innovation focused on improving the finance and insurance needs of small-scale and vulnerable producers, including the scaling up of microinsurance schemes.

Responsible investment needs to be mobilized but also defined, possibly by the “what” of the framework presented above, and then all types of investors need to be supported in figuring out how to make their investments responsible. Several interview respondents noted that there is a key role here for donors, since public financing and financial institutions are much closer to the global governance processes that are currently framing food systems transformation than are private finance institutions and investors. If donors can engage private finance, both in terms of sharing information and evidence, and in terms of de-risking certain types of responsible investments, it is much more likely that private investors will take a responsible approach to investing. There are potential opportunities for responsible investments to support the national pathways, coalitions or game changing solutions that emerged from the FSS.

4.3 Promote engagement of private sector actors and value chain innovation

The production, processing and distribution of food is largely a private sector exercise, from the smallest family producers and microentrepreneurs through to the largest agribusiness corporations. Food systems will not change without fundamental change in the business models and practices of the agrifood sector. As highlighted by the Summit’s report, A Small Business Agenda, there is tremendous potential for the

micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprise (MSME) sector to play a critical role in transforming food systems and create better jobs and livelihoods. Meanwhile the market power and financial resources of larger firms are critical for helping to shift consumer attitudes and preferences, develop sustainable and equitable supply chains, invest in research, and embed responsible and transparent business practices.

To engage the private sector and support value chain innovation, donors can:

- Support initiatives which bring private sector actors to the table with policymakers, civil society and researchers to explore sustainable food system solutions
- Facilitate the co-design of policy mechanisms between the private sector (including larger firms, MSMEs and farmers' organizations), national governments and other stakeholders
- Support a strong civil society voice helping to hold business to account and raise consumer awareness
- Catalyse the investment in physical infrastructure needed for a viable MSME sector, such as roads, electrical grids, and internet and mobile phone infrastructure, with a focus on areas with high levels of rural poverty and inequality
- Support environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive value chain and sector development by investing in the processes that enable coordination among value chain actors and the collective implementation of sustainable and equitable practices
- Invest in public-private partnerships, which can extend the reach of resilient market-based solutions to poorer producers and communities through inclusive business models
- Invest in human capacity needed to innovate and diversify value chains by supporting agricultural education, advisory services, vocational training programmes and institutions, providing technical assistance and investing in technology transfer
- Prioritize capacity-building for MSMEs to build and expand existing localized value chains and create an enabling environment, with a specific focus on women, youth and other underrepresented entrepreneurs
- Pilot innovative credit and insurance programmes that can increase stability in value chains and decrease vulnerability of individual producers and processors
- De-risk investment by the MSME sector and market relations between larger firms and small-scale suppliers
- Support research that improves the viability and efficiency of value chains for new, sustainable products that can contribute to healthier diets.

Change in business models and practices will be driven in part by the interests, priorities and ethics of the private sector itself, in part by government policy and in part by pressure from consumers and civil society. This occurs in an iterative way over time, and the right support from donors can help to accelerate progress.

There is huge diversity in the food systems private sector, from global multinationals and larger domestic firms through to informal microenterprises. They all operate with vastly different incentives, capacities and constraints yet are highly interconnected through both input and output markets. Creating incentives for sustainable food systems practices across the entire sector while ensuring that smaller enterprises, and the employment they can bring, are not crowded out by larger firms is a critical challenge for the development sector.

Working in partnership with the private sector, and in particular with larger firms, can be difficult for development organizations and agencies. There is often concern over reputational risk. The speed at which the private sector moves is often faster than that at which donors are able to respond, and there may be diverging core interests. Further, the staff of development organizations often lack business knowledge and language skills to engage effectively with the private sector, and private sector actors may not fully appreciate the legitimate constraints and accountability of public sector financing. However, there is significant experience from numerous market development programmes and public-private partnerships over the last two decades to derive best practices. A key challenge for donors and the private sector is to learn from and build from these experiences to establish a new generation of responsible investments that can scale up the collaborative solutions.

4.4 Support policy innovation

Substantial shifts in national policies will be needed to create the incentives to drive a transformation of food systems. In essence, policy changes are needed to help correct the significant market externalities and perverse incentives that currently exist in the food economy. Most interview respondents focused on the need for innovative policies around repurposing agriculture sector support, removing market distortions and shifting other types of incentives for both producers and consumers, as well as the importance of overall policy coherence. Policy innovation should focus on setting minimum standards for nutrition, sustainability and livelihoods in the short term while creating incentives to achieve more ambitious longer-term goals.

Food systems thinking needs to be integrated into national planning processes, overall economic policy and sector strategies. Policy changes are specifically needed to strengthen public awareness and education, including through labelling, reorient sector support, improve food nutritional and safety standards, create a more enabling business environment for responsible investment, improve rural infrastructure, align taxation and support measures with desired food systems outcomes, and support national innovation and research programmes. Policy innovation also requires a strong evidence base to make the case for doing things differently, while the science-policy interface requires investments in research that can demonstrate benefits, trade-offs and system properties, and translation of this research into actionable policy.

To support such policy innovation and implementation, donors can:

- Align with other donors to support national-level food systems policy innovation processes, including applied research, stakeholder engagement and capacity development
- Invest in cross-country food systems policy learning at regional and global scales, including South-South and triangular exchange
- Invest in the research, economic modelling and information synthesis needed to support policy transitions and better understand overall cost-benefits and how to manage trade-offs
- Support the development of alternative policy scenarios for pilot countries that could help to illustrate the longer-term benefits of possible transition pathways
- Encourage and support governments in designing policies for a better food environment and healthy and responsible consumption
- Ensure that donor-supported research through national and international research institutions is sufficiently focused on the political economy and policy aspects of food systems and undertaken in ways that are relevant for policymakers and advocacy groups
- Work to ensure coherence between donor countries' own food systems-related policies and policy change in partner countries, particularly in relation to sector support, trade and regulations governing business practices
- Repurpose subsidies to ensure alignment with intended food systems outcomes and underlying principles
- Support institutional innovation to improve access to finance and technology transfer.

Food systems may often not be the policy priority of interest groups, politicians or policymakers. Achieving policy change to improve food systems will often require linking food systems issues to other policy issues that may have a higher priority – including, for example, climate change, economic development, employment, health, security and defence, or migration. Employment, food prices and climate change are “relevant political opportunities” as one respondent put it, and donors should be mindful of those opportunities both within their domestic policy context and the policy contexts of recipient countries. Another important theme from the FSS was that food markets do not reflect the true cost of food in terms of impact on the environment, impact on health or paying decent incomes for those who produce food or work in the sector.

The need for such a broad-based and deep shift in policies presents politicians and policymakers with a profound challenge. The vested interests of powerful groups are closely tied to the existing policy regime and patterns of public expenditure. Strong constituencies for change must be developed with widespread stakeholder consultation and engagement. A phased transition of policy will be needed to enable sectors to adjust to avoid political backlash. Ultimately, political will is needed to transition into a policy regime that is in the longer-term food system interests of society at large.

4.5 Invest in research and data systems

Relevant research and improved data and evidence will be critical to underpin food systems transformation. However, research programmes need to be more multidisciplinary, aligned with system-wide challenges and better integrate technical, institutional and political forms of innovation. Research must be embedded within a wider concept of systemic innovation with a strong science, policy and society interface. Further, to provide system-relevant knowledge, more effort is needed to synthesize research in ways that make it relevant for decision-making.

A clear message from the FSS and interview respondents is the need to orient both research and data systems to the SDGs and the agreed indicators of impact that are a part of the 2030 Agenda. From a research point of view, this means focusing on systems-oriented research questions and designs, and being sensitive to context and cross-cutting themes such as gender and equity. From a data systems point of view, this means ensuring that data can be harmonized to contribute to ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the SDGs.

ACCESSIBILITY AND USE OF DATA

“ I think we need much more investment in data and evidence and research...but you must also require that this data is being used for informed decision-making – that is, just being made widely accessible so that it’s empowering, not just to governments, but to farmers, to policymakers and other stakeholders.”

FSS contributor

To target investment in research and data on food systems, donors can:

- Align and coordinate on consistent metrics for food systems outcomes and ensure that data can be disaggregated by gender and age whenever possible, with special attention to the most vulnerable
- Increase and target funding for the OneCGIAR and other research programmes and institutions to reflect context-specific needs and priorities
- Support research systems and approaches which connect directly with the needs of small-scale producers and focus on research uptake and the scaling of innovation
- Ensure funding and support for the CFS’s High Level Panel of Experts, as a strong and recognized science-policy interface promoting food systems
- Support training programmes in data management to empower countries to retain full control of their own data
- Build the data management and reporting infrastructure to maximize data use and transparency, including data dashboards and other public reporting
- Coordinate to ensure an overall research and data agenda and that all key aspects are being adequately funded on a consistent basis over time
- Increase support for foresight and scenario work to contribute to national planning efforts
- Maintain and expand unified United Nations statistical systems that can present and link food systems-relevant data

- Support national agricultural research systems, national statistical capacities, and data collection and reporting infrastructure
- Support a shift towards new areas of research to enable food systems outcomes
- Channel local knowledge, citizen science and indigenous genetic resources into research and innovation wherever feasible
- Balance the keeping of data and genetic resources as a public good while creating incentives for private sector investment in sustainable food systems research.

In general, data-gathering and national statistical systems remain limited in terms of being able to provide integrated information on the status and trends of the key drivers, activities and outcomes of food systems. This significantly hampers evidence-based policymaking and the ability of policymakers to be adaptive and responsive to changing situations. With increasing turbulence and uncertainty in the world, illustrated by the impacts of COVID-19, real-time monitoring of key food systems parameters will become more important for adaptive policymaking. New mobile technologies, remote sensing, big data, computer modelling and collective sense-making technologies – with due regards to data privacy and safety – all offer tremendous potential for improving data systems. Donors should pay particular attention to issues of inequality in access to new technologies, data and information, without which further marginalizes vulnerable populations and remote communities.

There is an opportunity to align the food systems transformation framework emerging out of the FSS with the SDGs in terms of the “what,” so that the existing evidence base can provide the starting point for more targeted research on food systems needs in specific contexts. This alignment of metrics should ideally be a part of broader coordination efforts at global, regional and national levels.

KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION AND TRANSFER

“ I think the key here is actually having donors and development partners be able to disseminate, transfer a lot of skills and a lot of knowledge and a lot of evidence that they already have, and to be able to support especially developing countries to make a better use of such a system, because in the end, for it to be sustainable, those countries need to have the capacity to be able to do these things.”

GDPRD member

A somewhat related challenge is the lack of transparency and sharing back to recipient countries of monitoring and evaluation data for use by recipient country policymakers over time. There is also a clear need for research in non-traditional areas, including post-harvest loss, value chain logistics, fortification and other improved processing techniques, and a broader range of appropriate digital technologies. The crucial leadership role that the OneCGIAR plays in the research space is widely acknowledged. Interview respondents emphasized the need for increased investment in the system to enhance and expand the context-specific evidence generated from CGIAR and other partners’ research efforts.

4.6 Strengthen governance for food systems transformation

The current problems of food systems, highlighted in much of the FSS process and outputs, emphasize that governance mechanisms are struggling to deliver the decisions needed, from local to global scales, to transform food systems. What the FSS process has also illustrated well is how critical the engagement of different sectors and interests is for creating a collective understanding of the challenges, generating innovative solutions and following through with action. Ultimately, national governments will need to take transformative policy decisions. However, this is only possible if social, business and political support for changing food systems has been mobilized.

Further, given the complexity of food systems, effective policymaking requires solutions and directions to be co-developed with actors across the entire food system. The food systems dialogues, made possible through donor funding, have illustrated the benefits and potential of widespread stakeholder engagement. Given the varied levels and sectors in which transformative action is required, governance will probably need to be polycentric, formal and informal, inclusive and adaptive over space and time. Accountability and stocktaking on intended and actual food systems outcomes are critical elements of an effective food systems governance architecture.

Food systems governance is diverse and multifaceted. It includes, for example, coordination of sectors, national policymaking, decision-making in agribusiness firms and financial institutions, community engagement and planning at the local government level, multistakeholder roundtable commodity platforms, trade bodies and the functioning of multilateral institutions, including the CFS. The FSS did not call for any change to the global food systems architecture. However, there are numerous ways in which food systems governance mechanisms can be strengthened and improved from local to global levels by, for example, enhancing capacities to understand and analyse food systems, increasing transparency and accountability, and increasing engagement, dialogue and coordination between different actors and interest groups.

A key element of food systems governance is to ensure that the interests and voices of all groups are equitably heard, considered and responded to, with particular attention to the concerns of women, youth, small-scale producers, family farmers, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, minorities, local communities and all those living in poverty.

To support improved food systems governance, donors can:

- Encourage and support effective multistakeholder engagement processes at local and national levels, which includes building capacity to design and facilitate such processes within government and by non-state actors
- Encourage and support cross-ministerial and whole-of-government mechanisms to help drive national food systems transformation
- Provide resources for the voices and interests of groups that are experiencing poverty or marginalization to be effectively represented in any multistakeholder or policy development forums and processes

- Collaborate with the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub to ensure an effective follow-up to the implementation of the Summit's outcomes
- Maintain and strengthen support for the CFS and its High Level Panel of Experts, including by ensuring that resources are available for their policy role, substantive analytical work and effective monitoring and reporting, as well as by following the CFS's policy guidance
- Support regional intergovernmental forums, multistakeholder networks and think tanks, as relevant, which can help to strengthen regional cooperation on food systems transformation – for example, on issues of trade, policy innovation, cross-boundary natural resources management or scientific collaboration
- Keep food systems and related issues as priority issues for consideration by leaders in the G20 and G7, and forge connections with other forums and summits – for example, COP27+ and the World Economic Forum
- Encourage and support the reformed CGIAR system to provide food system-wide and policy-relevant research and analysis
- Maintain and strengthen support for civil society organizations (including producer organizations, consumer groups, women's forums, youth groups and indigenous groups) that are working on food systems, and enable them to bring a balancing power and accountability to the interests of business and the State
- Explicitly and consistently leverage global and national accountability mechanisms related to the SDGs, and climate change mitigation and adaptation, for food systems transformation.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR LEVERAGING CHANGE

“ The Global Donor Platform has the capacity to encourage both single-stakeholder work and multistakeholder work. It also has money and opportunity that can actually encourage this work within the context of strategy development in countries. So the donors, by connecting with ministers and by the virtue of the resources they have, can create both the political cover and context and also some of the resourcing necessary for this work to be done.”

FSS contributor

Strengthening or re-imagining governance structures and mechanisms will require political will at all levels. Donors will need to work towards removing silos from their budgets and investments, and ideally will need to address perverse policies and governance mechanisms within their home country settings. Recipient country national governments will need to reconsider the organization and coordination of ministries and other government agencies, to facilitate integrated policy and programming. All of these shifts will need to include a commitment to processes that reflect the underlying principles necessary for equitable, sustainable and resilient food systems transformation. Donors can help create political will for structural transformation and associated changes in governance through a combination of incentives, expectations and leadership.

The specific structure of food systems governance mechanisms at national and global levels is likely to need to be improved and will include a mix of existing and new approaches. In interviews, some donors highlighted the need to leverage existing institutions and mechanisms: **“Our take is that we don’t have time for building something different. We have to strengthen and support what already exists.”** The key existing governance mechanism at the global level is the CFS with its High Level Panel of Experts which provides support for global alignment and space for the science-policy interface. However, innovative investments and levers for change may also require innovations in governance structures. The critical role of appropriate governance mechanisms to drive pathways for food systems transformation at the country-level was emphasized. Governance at all levels is related to accountability, which points to the need for global coordination, as well as alignment of data collection systems to ensure consistent measurement of indicators of change.

4.7 Strengthen universal social protection mechanisms, disaster preparedness and emergency relief programmes

The critical importance of enhancing the resilience of food systems to protect against future shocks was a core message from the FSS. This is particularly important in terms of protecting the nutrition and livelihoods of poorer groups in society and those who live in vulnerable contexts. This need has been highlighted by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and recent droughts and locust plagues. It becomes even more important in the context of the impacts of climate change, including increasing extreme weather events, climate-related natural disasters, rapid biodiversity loss and changing patterns of pest and disease outbreaks. Social protection mechanisms are a key to being able to uphold human rights, which includes the right to a standard of living adequate for health and wellbeing, including adequate food. The **GDPRD Stocktaking Report on Donor Contributions to Food Systems** shows donors increasing their expenditure on emergency relief responses, without increasing expenditure on measures to build greater resilience. This is obviously an unsustainable approach over the longer term.

SOCIAL PROTECTION WILL ALWAYS BE NEEDED

“ There’s the third group that are starting from such a low base. They are so much affected by externalities that the only thing that works for them is social protection, whether these are groups in conflict, whether these are the landless, whether these are the urban, poor and informal settlements, there is no other way other than social protection.”

FSS organizer

To support universal social protection, disaster preparedness and emergency relief programmes, and enhance food system resilience, donors can:

- Support partner countries to develop and implement universal social protection measures fit for the specific needs of those living in poverty and/or in vulnerable contexts
- Integrate measures to protect food production and distribution, and sustain adequate nutrition in times of crisis, including through school meals programmes
- Support the development of innovative forms of insurance to reduce the vulnerability of farmers and MSMEs
- Integrate resilience and disaster preparedness programming into country strategies and projects related to agriculture, human and ecological health, biodiversity and climate
- Increase funding for research and learning on building food systems resilience to decrease vulnerability
- Help to strengthen national, regional and global early warning, foresight and scenario processes to enable more proactive responses to potential risks or emerging crises
- Ensure adequate and equitable resources for rapid emergency responses, including local sourcing of food and other supplies
- Better integrate development and humanitarian programming in a nexus approach, to build resiliency and decrease vulnerability to future crises and hazards
- Promote the institutionalization of appropriate labour standards in the governance of food systems to support equity of economic opportunity, enabling workers to earn a decent income and to ensure worker health and safety.

Despite its importance, social protection was not a strong theme of the Summit process and not extensively mentioned by interview respondents, who focused more on the need to link emergency relief to longer-term resilience-building. There is, however, a consistent message that universal social protection can provide emergency crisis response, facilitate faster and more inclusive socio-economic recovery and enhance long-term resilience against future shocks. Equally important, there will always be a need for social protection for the most vulnerable, and those programmes should include a food systems approach to thinking about improving resilience and equity.

