



Tracking the implementation of CFS policy recommendations on agroecological approaches

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The global food system is characterized by a confluence of challenges, among which include demographic changes, climate change, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and competition over renewable resources. Agriculture accounts for 60 percent of terrestrial biodiversity loss, 33 percent of soil degradation, 61 percent of the depletion of commercial fish stocks¹ (UNEP, 2016), and an estimated 34 percent of GHG emissions. Moreover, with an estimated 3.1 billion people unable to afford a healthy diet in 2020 nearly 670 million people projected to be hungry in 2030, and the growing concerns around equity and social justice, the global food system is moving in the wrong direction,² and a profound transformation is needed at all scales.³

It is against this backdrop that the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) requested its High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) to produce a report on *“Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition”* to inform its discussions during

the Forty-sixth CFS Plenary Session in October 2019 and adopted a set of policy recommendations at CFS48 in June 2021. There is no universal pathway for achieving food systems transformation.

The Transformative Partnership Platform on Agroecology, working with the Research and Innovation Working Group of the Agroecology Coalition, has developed and is currently testing, with stakeholders, a tool to track how governments, national and sub-national are implementing the five policy recommendations. We reviewed the 62 specific recommendations detailed in the five CFS recommendations (2021)⁴ and defined core focus areas (priority action) that best summarize the essence of each recommendation and fully embrace the 13 HLPE (2019) agroecological principles.

The five policy recommendations are integrative and embrace multiple principles with some repetition across recommendations. For example, Policy recommendation #3: **Foster the transition to resilient and diversified sustainable agriculture and food systems through agroecological approaches**, encompasses 9 out of the 13 principles: recycling, input reduction, soil health, animal health, biodiversity, economic diversification, social values

1 UNEP, 2016. Food Systems and Natural Resources. <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/7592>

2 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable*. Rome, FAO.

3 HLPE. 2019. *Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition*. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome.

4 CFS 2021. *Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition*. https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2021/Documents/Policy_Recommendations_Agroecology_other_Innovations/2021_Agroecological_and_other_innovations_EN.pdf

and diets, fairness and connectivity. The policy recommendations represent an internationally accepted set of high-level policy goals but are watered down from the HLPE report itself as a result of obtaining the agreement of a large group of countries during the policy convergence process. The HLPE report emphasizes the importance of lock-ins (or outs) constraining agroecological transitions and what is required to foster them. It is essential, therefore, to consider things that can constrain progress in each area as well as actions that promote transition and to not only look at the extent to which these recommendations are implemented but also what more may be being done beyond them. It is also vital to obtain a civil society perspective on what is and is not being implemented. We propose a matrix for tracking implementation across CFS's five policy recommendations, with 23 suggestive priority action areas. The priority actions proposed here are derived as the most parsimonious set around which

stakeholders – governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, private sector, research, and academic institutions – can build policies, programs, and investment and monitoring plans for agroecological approaches that deliver sustainable food systems.

This tracking tool is a “ground zero assessment” of existing policies, strategies or laws and, hence, a basis for encouraging dialogue and consensus building to support priority actions and, more importantly, for tracking progress in policy and institutional change for the agroecological transformation of food systems. The country's status or relevant policies are evaluated against whether they create perverse incentives for agroecological transition and go beyond the CFS policy recommendation, as well as the perspective of relevant civil society stakeholder organizations.

CFS Policy Recommendation	Priority Action	Country Status (relevant actions) ⁵ :	Target(s) ⁶	Indicator(s) ⁷	Who is responsible
			TBC during national consultations	TBC during national consultations	
1. Lay or strengthen, as appropriate, the policy foundations for agroecological approaches to contribute to sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition.	1.1 Promote the integration of agroecological approaches in policies and plans that address agriculture and food system challenges in the local context by strengthening the resilience of food systems.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
	1.2 Strengthen public policies to harness market mechanisms to enable sustainable agriculture and food systems by considering economic, environmental, and social, including public health, externalities, trade-offs, and synergies.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
	1.3 Enhance policy coherence and coordination of agroecological approaches across health, agriculture, environment, trade, and finance sectors, which impact food systems and nutrition outcomes.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
1.4 Strengthen policies, programmes, and actions that address root causes of gender inequality, in particular laws and policies to support inter alia equal access to natural resources, finance, and public services, respecting and protecting women’s knowledge.					
Measures creating perverse incentives					
Measures that go beyond policy recommendation					
Civil Society perspective					

5 List relevant actions

6 List targets and timeframe for their achievement for each action or bracketed set of actions where appropriate

7 Consideration for developing indicators

- a. Is the indicator relevant and most appropriate to measure/track/report?
- b. Can the indicator be observed, counted, self-reported or otherwise measured?
- c. Does the indicator define the change you expect to see?
- d. What is the baseline? Status may be taken as the baseline.

CFS Policy Recommendation	Priority Action	Country Status (relevant actions) ⁵ :	Target(s) ⁶ TBC during national consultations	Indicator(s) ⁷ TBC during national consultations	Who is responsible
2. Establish, improve, and apply comprehensive performance measurement and monitoring frameworks to encourage the adoption of agroecological approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition.	2.1 Encourage data collection and analysis at the national level, documentation of lessons learned, and information sharing at all levels to support evaluation of the performance of agroecological approaches.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
	2.2 Undertake holistic assessments of employment conditions, dietary diversity, nutritional outcomes, women's empowerment, and income stability.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
	2.3 Assess and document the contribution of agroecology to FSN at national and global levels, working in collaboration with member countries.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
2.4 Encourage data collection, documentation, and information sharing on agroecological principles and practices to foster transitions toward sustainable food systems.					
Measures creating perverse incentives					
Measures that go beyond policy recommendation					
Civil Society perspective					
3. Foster the transition to resilient and diversified sustainable agriculture and food systems through agroecological approaches.	3.1 Raise awareness and advocate for the importance of diversified production systems and healthy diets that integrate livestock, aquaculture, cropping, and agroforestry, as appropriate, to enhance resilient livelihoods and promote sustainable production for healthy diets.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				

CFS Policy Recommendation	Priority Action	Country Status (relevant actions) ⁵ :	Target(s) ⁶ TBC during national consultations	Indicator(s) ⁷ TBC during national consultations	Who is responsible
	3.2. Promote, based on agroecological approaches, alternatives to chemical pesticides and greater integration of biodiversity for food and agriculture, especially encouraging the removal of highly hazardous pesticides.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
	3.3 Strengthen responsible investment and social innovation in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises that support sustainable agriculture and food systems and retain value locally, especially small-scale producers and women.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
	3.4 Support market and social innovations (including the use of digital technologies) that strengthen linkages between urban communities and rural farmers by capturing a high proportion of the value of production locally.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
	3.5 Raise awareness of the contribution of agroecological approaches to achieving most of the SDGs and to advancing the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) to achieve sustainable and climate-resilient food systems at the national and global levels.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				

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	3.6 Consistent with national contexts, recognize the value of and strengthen support for agroecological approaches that promote recycling, regeneration of soil health, and optimizing and reducing, where appropriate, reliance on external inputs.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
4. Strengthen research, innovation, training, and education and foster knowledge co-creation, knowledge sharing, and co-learning, on agroecological approaches.	4.1 Considering national contexts and regulations, encourage increased resource allocation in public research and responsible investments in private research that promote evidence-based balanced investment towards enhanced support for agroecological approaches.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
	4.2 Develop and support transdisciplinary research and innovation platforms that foster co-learning between researchers and practitioners, primarily through farmer-to-farmer networks and communities of practice.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
	4.3 Promote and enable responsible investment in participatory research and innovation on agroecological approaches, primarily to address the specific needs of vulnerable groups, with their active engagement.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				

CFS Policy Recommendation	Priority Action	Country Status (relevant actions) ⁵ :	Target(s) ⁶ TBC during national consultations	Indicator(s) ⁷ TBC during national consultations	Who is responsible
	4.5 Support horizontal sharing of knowledge and experiences building on existing producer organizations and networks focusing on women, youth, and local and indigenous communities.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
5. Strengthen institutions or stakeholder engagement, create an enabling environment for empowering people at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition and people in vulnerable situations, and address power inequalities in agriculture and food systems.	5.1 Embed property rights for small-scale producers and indigenous peoples through formal legal and regulatory frameworks.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
	5.2 Ensure participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups at all levels of decision-making in the food system				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
	5.3 Promote the empowerment of women, mainly small-scale food producers, and family farmers, and their organizations, by supporting collective action, negotiation, and leadership skills to increase access to and equity in control over land and natural resources, according to national legislation.				
	Measures creating perverse incentives				
	Measures that go beyond policy recommendation				
	Civil Society perspective				
5.4 Strengthen linkages between urban communities and food production systems that favour transitions towards sustainable food systems by including consumer cooperatives and multi-stakeholder platforms focused on local and regional markets.					
Measures creating perverse incentives					
Measures that go beyond policy recommendation					
Civil Society perspective					

Annex 1

1. Lay or strengthen, as appropriate, the policy foundations for agroecological and other innovative approaches to contribute to sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition

The priority actions are summarized from 14 recommendations, the four priority actions underscore the need for integration of agroecological approaches in plans and policies; inter-sectoral policy coordination and coherence of agroecological approaches; strengthening programs and policies that address gender inequality, market mechanisms, as well as access to productive resources.

2. Establish, improve, and apply comprehensive performance measurement and monitoring frameworks to encourage the adoption of agroecological approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition.

The four priority actions underpin the basis for developing comprehensive performance metrics for assessing and monitoring policies, decisions, and investments in agroecological approaches and for evaluating/quantifying food systems' environmental, social, and economic impact.

3. Foster the transition to resilient and diversified sustainable agriculture and food systems through agroecological approaches

The priority actions are summarized from 25 specific recommendations. The six priority actions focus on support for integrated

production systems (crops, agroforestry, fish, livestock) to enhance biodiversity and recycling, and regeneration of soil health, support for the market and social innovations that improve linkages between, consumers and producers, and especially small producers, and the promotion of healthy and diversified diets based, as far as possible on locally produced food.

4. Strengthen research, innovation, training, and education and foster knowledge co-creation, knowledge sharing, and co-learning on agroecological approaches

The priority actions are derived from 14 specific recommendations, the five priority actions focus on mobilizing public and private sector funding for research, capacity building, dissemination, and extension support for agroecological approaches and addressing the power imbalance around the generation, validation, dissemination, and application of knowledge.

5. Strengthen institutions or stakeholder engagement, create an enabling environment for empowering people most at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition and people in vulnerable situations, and address power inequalities in agriculture and food systems

The four priority areas focus on strengthening property rights, participation of all stakeholders through cooperatives and other multi-stakeholder platforms, and support for gender transformative policies to promote an inclusive and just transition and transformation of the food system.

About the Agroecology TPP

The **Agroecology TPP** convenes a broad group of scientists, practitioners and policymakers working together to accelerate agroecological transitions. Since its **official launch on 3 June 2021**, the TPP has begun addressing knowledge gaps **across eight domains** that will support various institutions and advocacy groups in key decision-making processes. Its online **'Community of Practice' on GLFx** is open to all, providing a space for members to share their insights, knowledge and experience.

This partnership was founded by CIRAD, The Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, BioVision, UNEP, FAO and CIFOR-ICRAF.