

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 20 May 2021 10:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Enabling game-changing innovation and next-generation entrepreneurs in the EU
CONVENED BY	Thought For Food Foundation, FoodDrinkEurope, Mateusz Ciasnocha & Janina Peter
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/14088/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	No borders

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

35

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18

10 19-30

23 31-50

2 51-65

0 66-80

0 80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

17 Male

18 Female

0 Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

6 Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

1 Agro-forestry

4 Environment and ecology

1 Trade and commerce

3 Education

2 Communication

1 Food processing

3 Food retail, markets

5 Food industry

2 Financial Services

1 Health care

1 Nutrition

2 National or local government

1 Utilities

2 Industrial

Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

7 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

2 Large national business

3 Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

1 Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

1 Local Non-Governmental Organization

2 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

7 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

1 Member of Parliament

Local authority

3 Government and national institution

1 Regional economic community

United Nations

International financial institution

7 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

-We made sure to invite a diverse set of participants -The curator reminded everyone to be respectful, embrace diversity, actively listen & act according to these principles -Our facilitators were briefed in advanced, everyone had the training, so they could make sure to incorporate the principles in each of our discussion groups

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

-Even though, we had some opposing views, everyone was recognized and treated respectfully -We followed a multi-stakeholder approach, inviting everyone involved "from farm to fork" -We built new connections, complemented each other's work and will keep discussing

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The European Union aims to be at the forefront of global food sustainability, including initiatives such as the European Green New Deal, as well as working towards achieving the aims of the 17 SDGs.

This Dialogue explored the role of innovation in meeting food sustainability challenges, and how to create an enabling environment that will allow next-gen entrepreneurs, start-ups and business to bring forward the game-changing solutions needed.

This Dialogue brought together and heard perspectives from diverse stakeholders based in the EU, looking to include next-generation innovators, farmers, scientists, public and private sector representatives, civil society representatives, activists, as well as stakeholders in other areas of the food and agriculture industry. In alignment with the goals of the Action Tracks and the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021, this Dialogue aimed to explore the opportunities for innovation in the EU to transform food systems.

ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- ✓ Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- ✓ Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- ✓ Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- ✓ Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Human rights
- ✓ Women & Youth Empowerment
- ✓ Policy
- ✓ Data & Evidence
- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Trade-offs
- ✓ Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

1. There are several challenges that require urgent action in the food systems, such as climate change, unsustainable farming practices (impacting soil, water quality, and biodiversity), access to quality food and the complexity of food value chains, where sustainability issues are predominant. There is a feeling of urgency that will require R&I to foster transitions to a more sustainable and equitable world.
2. Small actors in the food system need a greater voice, that goes from the small farmer to the individual consumer and includes SMEs which are the majority of the food systems actors (99%) and are often not accessing the innovation being produced by researchers and innovation providers. It is key also to understand the sectoral and regional/cultural aspects of food systems, thus a multistakeholder approach is needed at different levels (global, European, national, regional), and shall be facilitated by policy makers. It was noted that multinationals (e.g. seed companies) are relevant in the discussion, but must not be allowed to 'abuse' their power.
3. Behaviour and attitude is as important as technology. Many solutions discussed were less technical, and more behavioural: Communication and cooperation between science providers and implementation actors, policy and financial support to the food systems R&I ecosystem, more design systemic solutions that connects the food system challenges, the role of young entrepreneurs and start-ups in the food systems R&I, or multi stakeholder commitments to achieve greater goals using R&I.
4. Empower consumers through education which can impact acceptance of innovation. Science-based education on food and how it is produced is key, particularly targeting consumers (and policymakers), and starting from schools. Empowering consumers from being 'passive' to 'active', includes better product information. The concept and understanding of food systems is not well understood, and the role of all actors in a value chain (producers, processors, distributors, consumers etc.) needs to be better explained, and a holistic solution sought.
5. We need to more prominently include startups and next-generation innovators in food systems transformation. Innovation comes faster than regulation, and the next-generation has the tools and skillset to enable this shift towards more sustainable food systems for all. As digital natives, the next-generation inherently understands the importance of digitalization and data-driven decision-making. The next-generation also embodies the key attitudes needed to facilitate this food systems change - openness, willingness to adopt alternative business models (circular economy, cradle to cradle), and nimbleness to adapt quickly to changes and navigate through ambiguity (especially in the times of COVID-19). Young entrepreneurs embody all of these behaviors to create innovative and new products and services using (and even re-using) existing resources with a greater focus on sustainability. The regulatory framework (transparent, science-based, pragmatic) needs to allow innovations into the market.
6. Money is important. Farmers need an income, food businesses need to make a profit, and consumers need affordable food. No farmer has a problem with having fewer cattle if he/she has the same income, but they also need legal clarity and stability. Farmers will also be more willing to grow a wider variety of crops – if the market is there.
7. But profit must not be the only consideration. Business must be supported by governments to pursue sustainable practices and to do 'what is right for the world' not just what will make the most money. Business should be rewarded for doing good and called out for failing.
8. Solutions must be multi-stakeholder. Solutions must be tailored, policies must be inclusive and multi-stakeholder approaches and listening must underpin all approaches. Everyone must contribute as much as they can, we need to foster a dialogue among everyone involved.
9. Solutions must not come in isolation. That is to say there must be a supply chain approach where the complexities and needs of different actors – from farm to fork – are taken on board.
10. There must be political will. EU policymakers must forget about re-election and short-termism and fear of failure and act now to send a clear signal to farmers, food business and consumers that business as usual is not an option. For true change to happen, politics need to make the first step by putting supporting regulations in place, and it needs to happen NOW.

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KEYWORDS

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		✓	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/6

Main problems in the food system

1.1 Food Production, Farming and Manufacturing:

- Climate change – emissions are still too high.
- Biodiversity – our use of resources (soil and water) is harming the environment.
- Big business – large-scale globalised monoculture production is still dominant, and it is hard for small and diverse businesses to cut through.
- Food waste and loss – we still lose a third of food produced (whether loss at farm level or wasted after the farm gate).
- Scale – it is easier for big companies to make the leap to more sustainable practices and gain a competitive edge, but smaller companies are left behind and need support.
- Food chain length – there are too many steps in a complex food chain.

Food Transports, Storage and Packaging:

- Energy – transport and packaging are still too reliant on non-renewable energies.
- Excessive packaging – there is a need for sustainable packaging.
- Circular economy – we need to improve resource efficiency (not only for production, but for every part of the chain) and avoid food waste. Keep 'waste' in the cycle and don't let it go to waste.

1.2 Food Consumption, Nutrition and Waste:

- Food information – there is a lack of information on food and general awareness on food, malnutrition, and over-nutrition.
- Obesity – there are too many people eating a poor diet
- Education – there is a lack on education on issues related to food (e.g., food safety, where food is coming from, how food is produced)

1.3 Policy:

- Slow policy – the policy environment is not fast enough and can slow down innovation. The classical system will not work anymore, we need a different approach.
- Siloed thinking – there has been a lack of a holistic food policy. The F2F strategy can be the answer but it will be a challenge to implement all the ambitions. We need to start thinking about the food system as a whole.
- Scale – innovation can be difficult to scale up, due to costs but also behaviour. It is hard to make people change their behaviour because of culture and habits. For this we need communication, data.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/6

Main challenges to bring forward innovation:

2.1. Several main players were identified: consumers, regulators, producers (manufacturers, primary production, packaging) and media:

oConsumer awareness is important. The role of the consumer is fundamental to understand that a seasonal product is seasonal, innovation while duly regulated is good, regenerative agriculture is the future, monoculture is damaging etc.

oManufacturers need to deliver according to what the regulatory environment allows, ensuring less packaging, regenerative agriculture, UN SDG goals

oRegulators need to continue helping enabling operators to act, but innovation runs very fast.

oThe media (traditional press or social media) has an important role as it will portray an innovation as good or bad, regardless of the science.

2.2 Bringing scale:

oThere is a challenge to take an innovation from niche to mass market – for that, regulatory support is needed.

2.3 Making it pay:

oit costs a lot to bring innovation to market – innovators need regulatory certainty to give them confidence to invest.

oIf farmers are to try new methods or diversify their crops, they need certainty that they will make a profit.

2.4 Intellectual property rights:

oStart-ups need access to IP, and large MNCs should not guard IP when they are slowing down new innovation.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/6

How we expect the future to be

Participants broadly agreed that:

- The Green Deal will be successful in making the EU climate-neutral by 2050 (with a few notable exceptions).
- Algae will be a substantial part of our diets very soon.
- It is unlikely that the world will be entirely plant-based but certainly more of an up-take of alternative proteins (including insects) will be widespread.
- Micro-farming for consumers will be more widespread.
- There will be higher consciousness of the food system, a larger systemic understanding of food and biodiversity.
- Personalised nutrition and digital apps will help consumers tackle the burden of NCDs.
- More foods will be medicinal as well: Nutraceuticals.
- There will be a closer collaboration of stakeholders (consumers + regulators + operators + others) through a strong dialogue.
- Consumers are able to make informed choices, they need to be well-educated, starting at school. Quality of the information should be transparent and science based. Access to information (my carbon footprint, my nutritional needs) will be easy and digital.
- There will be a regulatory environment that is pragmatic and allows consumers to have access to innovation.
- Food production should be as organic as possible. In developing countries this might come at a slower pace.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/6

Enablers to innovation:

Who: Entrepreneurs and innovators; farmers; agile players; consumers; private companies; regulators/policymakers; scientists/academics; NGOs; young people; retailers.

What: Technologies; transparent frameworks; multi-stakeholder approaches; co-creation; an open-mind; funding (public and private); decentralized autonomous organisations; open-source solutions; public procurement processes; multinational agreements impact framed, education; openness to change.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/6

Inhibitors to innovation:

Who: Policymakers/regulators; passive consumers; multinationals that own intellectual property (to detriment of others); cartels and monopolies.

What: Price competitiveness, environmental costs not built into consumer prices; political cycles are too short-term; polarized debates; hunt for profit over purpose; bargaining power; lack of connection between science and entrepreneurs; a low risk attitude in the EU which can stifle innovation and lead to a brain drain.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 6/6

Potential solutions & main drivers

We must:

- Invest in education and better communicate innovation to the public. The role of schools is particularly important.
- Support start-up incubators.
- Involve all players and stakeholders.
- Open mindsets to new solutions.
- Digitalise consumer information (including positive and negative consumer labelling (e.g. tobacco ads!) and connect consumers with local producers.
- Empower consumers as a force for change.
- Engage consumers at the EU-level.
- Enable knowledge sharing and open-source solutions.
- Connect academia and industry (e.g., the European Technology Platform innovation Strategic Research Innovation Agenda, built between academia and the food industry:
- Bring political incentives.
- Ensure financial support.
- Give a greater voice to small players (such as small farmer communities and SMEs).
- Learn to connect R&D with farmers and other implementers (knowledge transfer).
- Develop a EU food policy that connects the food systems challenges (all solutions are interrelated).
- Harness the ideas of young people.
- Find the true cost of food so that consumers can choose which product to buy not only in terms of price but also on how it was produced.
- Ensure trade agreements guarantee sustainability requirements.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The following statements had opposing views from participants:

- The discussion can become too focused on farmers and agriculture and not enough connection to food processing and consumer behaviour.
- Small farmers, SMEs and consumers are often missing from the discussion (we all talk on their behalf, but they are not 'in the system' to join these sorts of discussions. They also do not have time!)
- We strive for circularity in the economy and yet we do not recognize circularity in existing systems. An example is the pork industry, which - according to one of our participants - is fully circular. Abandoning pork production may cause input shortages in other sectors of the economy.
- Consumer preferences and actions are contradicting each other: Two examples would be wanting to eat only local food, but have it available all year round, as well as asking for the highest quality food, but not willing to pay a premium for it.

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<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Graphic recording of our Dialogue including discussion group 5**

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Miro Board with activities and our findings - feel free to leave a comment :)**
https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_IDfDix4=/