

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 16 June 2021 14:00 GMT -04:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Small Businesses: Good Food for All – North America
CONVENED BY	International Chamber of Commerce, US Farmers & Ranchers in Action, International Agri-Food Network
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/14639/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Canada, United States of America

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

69

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

Male

Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

Education

Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

Local Non-Governmental Organization

International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

International financial institution

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?

The dialogue was organised with full respect and commitment to the Principles of Engagement: Act with Urgency In light of this urgency, the Dialogue was organized as a contribution to the Food Systems Summit and to the elaboration of pathways to food systems transformation contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Commit to the Summit The Dialogue empowered stakeholders to participate in the preparation of the Food Systems Summit. All stakeholders were consulted about ways to move forward collectively and creatively, embracing the entire scope of opinions. The dialogue was organised around 2 main discussions which happened in small sub-groups to allow the most participative and safe open-discussions. Be Respectful Respect for one another is a foundation for genuine Dialogue. Participants in the Dialogues listened to each other and were open to the co-existence of divergent points of view. Each sub-group was facilitated by experienced facilitators who ensured everyone had an opportunity to express his/her opinions. Recognize Complexity Dialogues are an opportunity to embrace the complexity of food systems. They promote a systemic approach by involving multiple stakeholders to identify actions across the system together with potential synergies and trade-offs. Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity The Dialogue brought to the table a diversity of stakeholders from within SMEs, Ecosystem Support Organisations (ESOs), the broader business community, small-holder farmers and civil society – working across the food system from production to consumption. Complement the work of others The Dialogue built-on and added-value to existing policy processes and initiatives. It provided an opportunity to share promising innovations, connect stakeholders, and broaden partnerships to transform food systems for the common good. Build Trust The Dialogue was curated and facilitated in a way which created a “safe space” and promoted trust, encouraging mutual respect. The conclusions emerging from the Dialogue are not attributed to single individuals.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The dialogue included multiple stakeholders, from government and public agencies, to small businesses and support organizations.

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

Ensure that all involved in the planning and organizing, curators, facilitators, speakers, are aware of these.

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

How to boost the role of SMEs in providing good food for all?

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are vital to our food economies. Each country is different, but SMEs are often over 90% of businesses in the agri-food sector, creating half the economic value, providing more than half the sector's jobs, and handling more than half the food consumed. Their tenacity and agility sustain food supplies and access through the COVID pandemic.

What pathways will enhance the contribution of SMEs to the food system? Wasafiri here offers six promising pathways to boost the impact of food SMEs. Which are most important in your context? What is missing? What actions will advance them? How are they interdependent?

1. Elevate the Voice of SMEs

Food entrepreneurs are incredibly diverse. Hence, collectively they neither easily influence nor hear the policy decisions that determine their future. Policymakers are often simply unaware of this quiet majority and are instead swayed by more powerful voices that are easier to engage. Positive examples exist of institutions and processes that elevate the voice of SMEs. The best of these also manage to amplify more marginalised entrepreneurs such as women, youth and indigenous people. Replicating these efforts around the world will ensure our food systems are designed and managed in ways that realise the positive contribution of SMEs.

2. Reduce the Cost of Doing Business

In emerging economies, many basic challenges undermine the commercial viability of food SMEs, for example poor roads, intermittent power, red tape, corruption, unpredictable trade policy, and internet access. Wherever these improve, SMEs grow and proliferate. Access to finance also improves as lenders and investors have more confidence. Cross-sector collaboration can strengthen this basic enabling environment, reducing the risks and costs of doing business in the agri-food sector, and accelerating the "quiet revolution" through which SMEs are already transforming food systems.

3. Reward Positive Outcomes

Our food systems are currently designed to reward the mass production of cheap calories. Different incentives are needed for markets to produce food that is more sustainable, nourishing and equitable. From impact investing to carbon credits, from product certification to sugar taxes, there are diverse mechanisms to reward positive outcomes and disincentivise negative ones. These must be designed and scaled in ways that work for SMEs, rather than adding complexity and cost.

4. Target Support at Food SMEs

Well-resourced business development support for SMEs is a proven driver of inclusive economic growth. Targeting such support at food SMEs offers additional benefits, due to the importance of the sector to public goods such as health, the environment, and livelihoods. Youth, women and other groups face additional barriers to starting and growing a business. Support to them unlocks fresh entrepreneurial energy into the sector and addresses equity gaps.

5. Democratise the Digital Food Revolution

COVID has accelerated a long-term trend towards digitisation of the food system. Whether it is digital farming, block chain for supply chain management, or virtual marketplaces, the food system is undergoing a tech revolution. The vast flows of data could serve the common good or entrench control within a few powerful actors. By design and policy, the data services and digital markets must be accessible to SMEs. This could unlock myriad innovations from payment for ecosystem services, to direct farm-to-consumer sales.

6. Make Good Food Matter

For decades, the food system has been valued for its efficiency in feeding billions of additional mouths. This era witnessed the rise of industrial agriculture. The Summit marks an inflection point. Food systems must now also be valued for nourishing people, regenerating nature, improving equity and resilience to shocks. In this new paradigm, SMEs are in a stronger position with their closer, more nuanced relationships with communities and landscapes.

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

Need to redefine food. "Good food" is more than quality or nutrition alone or affordable access. It entails so much more - ESGs, relationship to the local culture and context, ethical production, traceability..

Increased consumer awareness regarding their food choices.

Storytelling.

Dedicated policy/private support to increase awareness and to connect consumers to food; strong food and nutrition policies. How to change consumer habits?

Agriculture in the classroom

Mobile education displays

Open farm days

Incentives for local production/regional food systems. Supply chains and technology aren't always geared to supply or support local production.

Local Food Hubs. Closes the gap between farmer access and urban demand. Promotes local ecosystem; addresses barriers farmers face in finding markets. Aggregate supply - institutional buyers, school lunch programs, urban food security.

Local food movement - promoting awareness, more targeted to local context. Needs to be institutionalized.

Rewards for farmers. Structures that allow farmer trust and participation in the market - cooperatives, marketing mechanisms, ownership shares, payment schemes. Ultimately pressures are passed back.

More collaboration, more opportunity for involvement. Connections across borders. "How do we fit into the puzzle?"

Recognize value of SMEs, but also resource.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

The outcomes of actions focused around rewarding ecosystem services.

1. Cannot deliver kinds of outcomes on environment, linking to consumers, without rural bandwidth and connectivity.

2. Need access to technology that incentivizes beneficial practices.

Producing green energy on dairy farm, could reduce the cost of doing business. In PA, been working very diligently to change the regulations that would require a fair pay rate for electricity that is generated. However many states won't pay a premium for this, makes it not profitable and disincentivizes. If we could reward that type of technology, it can become accessible to smaller farms. Would be awesome to see 50% of them providing electricity to neighboring homes and business - rewarding good practices.

b. Another way of rewarding good practices – make grants / funding accessible as a reward for “doing the right thing.”

3. Access to capital or proactively accessing grants if you're doing beneficial things, help value chains have access to consumer data. Upcycling groups and consumer oriented groups said there has to be a level playing field to get data and educate consumers.

a. Hu Kitchen example of difficulty getting away from slavery in cocoa supply chain. Needs UN to come in to articulate and provide broader awareness to put teeth behind local/domestic/international work

b. What to prioritize highest in terms of what to spend money on? What technology is most needed/relevant? This is a challenge to identify.

c. The smaller your business, the more difficult it is to access that capital.

4. Need cohesive certifications and terms. Certifications play a large role in consumer education. Many companies are creating and selling a product while also educating and setting a new standard/certification for that product category. Need to alleviate this burden to educate consumers.

a. In the dairy industry, we have taken it upon ourselves to create our own certification for animal welfare. We are now looking at creating certification for environmental stewardship

5. Agriculture should be without borders – “When it comes to small farmers doing a better job for the planet, my opinion is that agriculture should be without borders.” Farmers across Canada, US, etc shouldn't be treated different. This influences what farmers choose to do on their farms.

a. Need ecozone specific regulations, push for greater international cooperation. Farmer south of border of Saskatchewan are getting propped up by subsidies not everyone in the US agrees with – subsidies must be transparent.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

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