

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Wednesday, 16 June 2021
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	True Cost of Food - Accessibility to Sustainable & Healthy Diets for Everyone
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Marieke van Schoonhoven, Editorial Manager FoodUnfolded, EIT Food + Rikolto
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/17658/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/17658/</a>
<b>DIALOGUE TYPE</b>	Independent
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</b>	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

38

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18

20 19-30

15 31-50

3 51-65

0 66-80

0 80+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

16 Male

22 Female

0 Prefer not to say or Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

6 Agriculture/crops

1 Fish and aquaculture

0 Livestock

0 Agro-forestry

4 Environment and ecology

1 Trade and commerce

7 Education

2 Communication

1 Food processing

0 Food retail, markets

7 Food industry

0 Financial Services

0 Health care

1 Nutrition

1 National or local government

0 Utilities

0 Industrial

7 Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

5 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

0 Large national business

3 Multi-national corporation

4 Small-scale farmer

1 Medium-scale farmer

0 Large-scale farmer

1 Local Non-Governmental Organization

10 International Non-Governmental Organization

0 Indigenous People

8 Science and academia

0 Workers and trade union

0 Member of Parliament

0 Local authority

1 Government and national institution

0 Regional economic community

1 United Nations

0 International financial institution

0 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

0 Consumer group

4 Other

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

With the recruitment, we specifically asked people who applied for their motivation to join the dialogue and what discussion topics they would want to bring to the table. Based on a mix of demographics, sectors and motivations, we selected the people we invited to the dialogue. We asked every participant to commit to the “practical” outcome of the dialogue and to only bring to the table solutions that they would themselves be willing to follow through within practice. Since the topic of True Cost and considering the environmental, social and human dimensions of value into food chains, is a complex and broad issue, concerning many different stakeholder groups, we decided to collaborate as FoodUnfolded (EIT Food) with a partner: the international NGO Rikolto. In that way, we widened our networks. Being the public-facing brand of EIT Food as FoodUnfolded, we were able to recruit a large young consumer audience. With our EIT Food network, we were able to reach people working in multinational corporations, researchers and policymakers. Rikolto has particularly a big network of smallholder farmers and young entrepreneurs from the global south and they reached out to these groups. To not exclude stakeholders coming from different parts of the food chain, we decided to form the groups around different languages: English, French and Spanish. In that way farmers from Latin America and Africa were able to join as well, also considering time zones. We were transparent with participants about the outcome of the dialogues and explained we would be taking notes according to Chatham House rules, promising to treat comments confidentially and anonymously. We told participants that we would have liked the conversation to be very spontaneous and positive, trying to build on top of each other’s ideas respectfully. We also said we didn’t want anyone to feel that they didn’t have enough expertise to contribute to the conversation – if they had been chosen to be there, it’s because we wanted to hear what they had to say.

### HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Act with urgency. We made sure that the conversation focused on the next 3-5 years and revolved around specific realistic and practical solutions. Be respectful. Everyone in the dialogue was encouraged to be respectful of others’ perspectives. Every friction and divergence was dealt with a constructive approach. We promoted food production and consumption policies and practices that strive to protect and improve the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and ecosystems – while at the same time respecting local cultures and contexts. Recognise complexity. Throughout the dialogue, we always recognised that food systems are complex, and closely connected to human and animal health, land, water, climate, biodiversity, the economy, and geopolitics. We allowed and encouraged disagreement with proposed solutions and recognised that solutions likely won’t be easy to implement. We recognised that solutions were needed on multiple levels, and asked participants to vote on each group’s main suggested solutions. Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity - We encouraged conversation between members of different stakeholder groups and ensured that everyone was always involved in the conversation and invited everyone to express themselves on each topic of discussion. Complement the work of others - We developed our own unique and relaxed style of hosting, targeted towards the millennial audience, in an effort to stimulate new discussions that would lead to creative solutions. Build trust - We committed to creating a relaxed and friendly atmosphere to build trust and an open airing of truthful views. We created a spreadsheet where each participant could drop their personal details in case they wanted to be contacted by other participants or by us. We let participants know that we would send the final feedback report to them. Participants also know that they might be offered follow-up opportunities with FoodUnfolded to reach our audience about important issues.

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

We have found that creating interactive polls during the plenary session allowed us to stimulate engagement from the very beginning of the event and to keep a higher level of attention throughout the Dialogue. By using polls, followed up by an explanation, we made sure the problem was clear for all attendees. We encouraged people to use the chat function as well. Using polls also made it possible to democratically vote on the solutions that the majority of participants thought should take priority. During the break out sessions we asked everyone to introduce themselves, but also asked them to answer a short ice breaker question: What did you have for breakfast? In that way, the atmosphere in the group was less formal from the start.

# 3. METHOD

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

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

**Yes**

**No**

# 4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

## MAJOR FOCUS

The Dialogue on “True Cost of Food - Accessibility to Sustainable & Healthy Diets for Everyone” revolved around the question: How can we consider the environmental, social and human dimensions of value into food chains -- to make fair, healthy and sustainable food systems the new standard?

The ‘True Cost of Food’ is the price of a product that accounts for all external costs—including environmental, social and economic-generated by the creation of food. Today, these environmental and social costs are more often than not included in the production chains of products. Costs not included in the market price of food are called ‘external costs’ or ‘hidden costs’. External costs can include ecological effects, environmental quality, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, animal welfare, social costs associated with labour, and public health effects. The UN World Food Organization FAO estimates that the annual hidden costs to the environment total \$2100 billion. The hidden social costs are estimated to be even higher, at \$2700 billion.

In this dialogue, to which we invited mainly millennial participants from different countries, continents, and backgrounds, we discussed who should be responsible for covering the huge hidden costs of food production to have fairer, healthier, and more sustainable food chains. And more importantly, we discussed solutions to move us toward that.

During the breakout session, the dialogue was structured around five main questions as anchor points for the discussion:

- What are the biggest barriers for the different stakeholders to commit to fair and sustainable practices?
- Could a ‘true cost’ food system, in which social and environmental costs are included, provide a global solution to unjust and unsustainable practices?
- What is the role for (smallholder) farmers, businesses, and retailers further up in the food chains, governments/authorities, and consumers to achieve a more inclusive and just food production system?
- Which role can or should specifically the younger generations play within their organisations to make this happen?
- How do we make sure all actors prioritise and commit to these environmental, social and human values, in a universal collaboration?

We formulated subquestions to these main questions as guidance for the facilitators. The conversations were in practice more flowing, focused on finding solutions, and not that strictly structured.

The last ten minutes of the dialogue we spent on formulating and summarizing the main solutions that had come up during the dialogue.

### 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

Education was a keyword that came back in all break out-groups. The lack of knowledge of consumers on the value of food, but also farmers lack knowledge on the true cost of producing their food.

Consumers do not know much, they should arbitrate on the part of the budget to be devoted to food to better reward the producers. This education must be given from a young age so that they become aware of the whole production process up to the finished product offered to the consumer.

You can for example link between city youth and rural youth, to create an enabling environment and stimulate inclusive, sustainable and just practices. Youngsters are the ones who can promote the new norms.

It would help if people knew the true cost, e.g. through an application or innovative labelling. E.g. a climate change stamp on food, helping consumers to lower their GHG emissions.

Producers underestimate the cost of labour when family members work with them in agricultural production. In addition, they do not account for certain resources such as water, even though they spend money to acquire it (installation and maintenance of wells for market gardening, for example); as a result, the true value of products is not really estimated. The impact of the environment is not always taken into account, and a lot of awareness-raising is needed for the actors to be aware of it and take it into account in the future.

It is the role of NGOs to teach producers to make the right calculations, the cooperatives do not have enough power to influence the prices determined at the international level (in the exchanges).

Related to education is the keyword transparency: increasing transparency in the food chains is crucial to reducing anonymity in supply chains. Very often it's not a smiling happy person who picks up one's food. Anonymity is one of the leading causes of large-scale collective action problems.

This problem can be solved by creating shorter food chains e.g. with direct trade via CSA programs.

Governments have also a key role in increasing transparency and creating local development of agriculture.

Creating a competitive playing field for sustainable standards. Now, the consumer is offered a variety of fair trade and non-fair trade products in supermarkets. These products cannot compete.

Governments can implement incentives and create competitiveness for sustainable products and as such move companies in a different direction. International standards on how to produce x product sustainably would also level out the international market, so the consumer wouldn't even have to think about what the sustainable option is.

A concrete solution that came forward to stimulate competitiveness for fair practices and incorporating hidden costs into food systems - implemented by governments and policymakers - is a tax reform that would reduce VAT for fair trade products. This reform should also include subsidising sustainable producers.

Another solution is to work on public-private partnerships to create a pre-competitive level playing field. True price should be a key discussion topic in board rooms and by company stakeholders. Partnerships with governments or interest organisations could work to set ambitious, science-based targets and goals together. It shouldn't just be company goals, but joint goals that take into account different stakeholders' views.

Multistakeholder collaboration is key to find systemic solutions.

As for the responsibility of the different actors in the food chains, it is shared. It is difficult to say which actor is the most responsible, but governments have definitely a big role to put things in motion. We have to put the actors together and think from there. It is important to go together to make things change, pool ideas, find solutions that will have impacts on the food system. Enable managers from different sectors to work together. It is important that these sectors talk to each other in order to set up transversal food policies.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/4

### Discussion Group 1: English 1

Participants acknowledged that you would level the playing field for sustainable produce if you'd give more power to the government to install regulations around sustainably produced products. But, you'd also need international agreements, or sustainably produced products still wouldn't be competitive on the world market.

The top three solutions to move toward a true cost food system the group came up with were:

Consumer education: transparency is key

Educating consumers about what a true price is, e.g. via an application, building your supermarket around sustainable products, ensuring transparency about the product's origins and what happens to the price increase, helping consumers make the right choice. Consumer education is very powerful because we are all consumers. Consumers also make policies and sit in boardrooms. Yet, this alone is not enough: some consumers cannot afford it or have other things on their minds while shopping.

Governments as regulators of markets and systems (international standards)

Governments can create a competitive playing field for sustainable products and, as such, moving companies in a different direction. International standards on producing x product sustainably would also level out the international market, so the consumer wouldn't even have to think about the sustainable option.

Public-private partnerships should get implemented to create a pre-competitive level playing field.

True price should be a key discussion topic in board rooms and by company stakeholders. Partnerships with governments or interest organisations could work to set ambitious, science-based targets and goals together. It shouldn't just be company goals, but joint goals that consider different stakeholders' views. It's not very original, but public-private partnerships are needed to create a pre-competitive level playing field.

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### KEYWORDS

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/4

### Discussion group 2: English 2

In this discussion group, the participants saw a major role for governments in getting things in motion towards fairer and more sustainable food systems. Change should start from global political alignment. Calling for a very big conversation that needs to reveal the costs of government subsidies and much better collaboration between public and private. At the same time, there was a consensus amongst everyone that it's not just governance, but that collaboration is how we are going to get out of the status quo. We need a complete value shift. In reality, overconsumption is the problem, and we waste so much food. It's about revaluing ourselves, our values, our collective behaviour.

The top four solutions to move toward a true cost food system the group came up with were:

Governmental support (subsidies) to smaller producers.

Government should protect their local producers with subsidies. Now, most of the subsidies are not going to sustainable practices.

Direct trade between producers and consumers.

There should be more local producers selling directly to consumers (CSA). Now, it's probably a relatively small group of people that care enough about knowing where their food is coming from and that it's sustainably grown, but that's where it starts as a snowball effect. Demand and importance of local produce have already increased a lot during the global COVID pandemic.

Educating consumers on the origins of their food.

In general, people have no idea what the cost of their food is. We need to educate people about where their food comes from. There is a big role for schools and education. We need to educate people from all sorts of backgrounds and age groups.

Increasing transparency in the food chain.

It's crucial to reduce anonymity in supply chains. Anonymity is one of the leading causes of large-scale collective action problems.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/4

### Discussion group 3: Spanish group

This discussion group emphasises the role of young entrepreneurs and the role of the youth in general. We should target the younger generations, since they will be the ones establishing new, more responsible and inclusive consumption trends, and kick start innovations in recognizing and revaluing the role of food producers.

The top three solutions to move toward a true cost food system the group came up with were:

Incidence with large food industries - show evidence

Advocacy with large food industries through evidence on the value of more sustainable and fair practices is key. Evidence must be built and systematized about the true cost of food. Also, establish changes in economic, tax and incentive regulations that promote sustainable production and make companies responsible for their practices.

Governments have a key role in transparency and local development of agriculture.

Fairer food systems start with local changes, then scale regionally, nationally to eventually build global changes. Also, establish new local models of more sustainable production and scale up so that it can be available to all consumers (not just a small group with greater purchasing power). Develop short production circuits that feed the cities.

Make links between city youth and rural youth. Youth need an enabling environment and there must be a strong education on sustainable food chains. Younger generations are the ones who will take on the new roles in society in the future.

We need education campaigns and consumer awareness about external costs. Inform about the impact on people's lives and the planet during the purchase of a product.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/4

### Discussion group 4: French Group

The participants of this group put forward that we have to put all actors in the food chains together and think from there. The top five solutions to move toward a true cost food system the group came up with were:

Accompany producers to identify & quantify costs and improve their negotiating position.

Producers must be well informed and trained on the variables to be taken into account in the cost of production. Thus, they will negotiate better contracts and this will allow them to set prices close to reality.

Reduce waste to improve efficiency and reduce costs (distribution)

The losses at the level of the distributors are enormous; they can go up to about 40%. Distributors must pay for unsold and discarded products. To reduce these costs, they can donate to associations and/or give for processing. This reduces costs.

Tax reform (reduced VAT for fair trade products) + subsidize sustainable producers.

The State could reduce value-added taxes for fair trade products to incentivise more sustainable and fair practices by producers.

Consumer education: transparency through labels

Labels, an ethical purchase label could have an effect, it could lead the consumer to orientate himself towards the product.

Generally, labels work quite well.

Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues and develop a transversal food policy.

We need Multi-Stakeholder platforms and a national transversal food policy that cuts across sectors to prioritise key issues and identify solutions collectively.

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## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Some participants identified consumers as being most responsible for driving change towards considering the environmental, social and human dimensions of value into food chains. Many participants thought governments and institutions have the biggest responsibility as policy drives consumers' and producers' behaviour. However, the participants were unanimous in considering that all actors, including consumers, have a share of responsibility and power to change the situation.

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# ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

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## ATTACHMENTS

- [https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/True\\_Cost\\_UN\\_Summary\\_Manifesto-scaled.jpg](https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/True_Cost_UN_Summary_Manifesto-scaled.jpg)