

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 8 July 2021 14:30 GMT +01:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Sustainable diets: national biodiversity, imported deforestation and responsible seafood
CONVENED BY	Associação Natureza Portugal WWF
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23623/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Portugal

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

20

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

12 31-50

8 51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

9 Male

11 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

1 Agriculture/crops

1 Fish and aquaculture

3 Livestock

Agro-forestry

2 Environment and ecology

3 Trade and commerce

2 Education

Communication

Food processing

1 Food retail, markets

1 Food industry

Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

3 National or local government

1 Utilities

Industrial

3 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

1 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

1 Medium-scale farmer

2 Large-scale farmer

3 Local Non-Governmental Organization

International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

2 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

1 Member of Parliament

Local authority

3 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

International financial institution

1 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

3 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The Independent Dialogue incorporated the Principles of Engagement by following the method recommended by the Reference Manual for Convenors of FSS Dialogues, namely by ensuring a diverse group of actors' participation. The selection and distribution of participants through the different thematic discussion groups were made according to their areas of work/interest so that they could more easily recognize the importance, complexity, and urgency of debating the respective themes. We also wanted to encourage the confrontation of different perspectives on the same challenge in a balanced way. To ensure fairness in their interventions, we gave each participant a similar intervention time. The choice of less explored themes for the focus of the Dialogue contributed to complement the work of others.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The discussion topics and questions used in the thematic breakout groups challenged participants to think about urgent short-term actions ("Act with urgency") to improve the state of food systems by 2030. We tried to incorporate, right from the definition of the discussion topics, concerns such as improving livelihood conditions of the most marginalized actors, namely through fairer pay, respect for human rights, health, sustainable management of natural resources, and local contexts ("Be respectful"). Approaching three distinct food systems components in the discussion groups and their integrated framing in the plenary sessions contributed to recognizing the complexity of food systems ("Recognize complexity"). As answered in the previous question, we also ensured the inclusion of diverse stakeholders and the complementarity of the work of others ("Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity" and "Complement the work of others"). Personalized responses to various questions posed by participants during the Dialogue planning phase and regular contact helped "build trust", as their concerns were taken into account.

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

We suggest that other dialogues seek to explore less visible but often fundamental aspects of food systems, thereby acknowledging their complexity. We believe that regular information to participants also helped to build trust in the process, for example, by informing in advance who the different stakeholders represented in the dialogue were before it took place, explaining how the session would unfold, etc. Do not overlook the importance of choosing a suited convener for the dialogue. Selecting a person who is consensual and recognized as knowledgeable about food systems in general and the various topics under discussion, in particular, contributes greatly to the credibility of the whole process. Her opening statement is also key to setting the tone for the discussion.

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 main focus of this Independent Dialogue was sustainable diets in Portugal and their relationship with the more specific themes of national biodiversity, imported deforestation, and responsible seafood. When choosing which food systems issues to address we considered the following criteria: having strategic importance for nature conservation work in Portugal; having substantial implications for other countries in terms of impacts and potentials; having been less (or not at all) addressed in other Independent Dialogues.

Since 2015, we have known that the food footprint of Portugal's population is well above the average for Mediterranean countries, distancing itself far from the consumption patterns established by the Mediterranean diet. Associated with this unsustainability, we also know that poor nutrition is the leading cause of premature mortality and multiple chronic diseases among Portugal's population.

The diets of Portugal's population represent an average of 30% of the country's ecological footprint. And this highlights a high dependence on the biocapacity of other countries for some types of food, which predictably leads to problems in terms of food security. Portugal's citizens consume, import, and waste food in excess.

Among the different problems associated with this footprint, we find a sharp decline in biodiversity. One of the most pressing concerns on this topic is to understand how national biodiversity is affected by food production, knowing that agriculture is the leading cause of biodiversity loss in the EU but it can also have positive impacts on biodiversity.

On the subject of deforestation, we know that much of the food placed on the European market may cause deforestation in third countries. The EU is the 2nd largest importer of products resulting from deforestation, and Portugal ranks 9th in deforestation caused by international trade, thus having a very important role in minimizing this problem.

On the subject of seafood, we know that Portugal ranks 3rd in the world in terms of seafood consumption per capita, with little diversified consumption given the enormous variety of seafood existing in national waters (+200 commercial species). Despite this, we are insufficiently aware and concerned about the impacts of our seafood consumption and about the coastal communities that depend on it.

The actions of multiple actors in the food system influence its results. In Portugal, public policies that can promote, in an integrated manner, food systems with less impact on biodiversity, deforestation and responsible seafood consumption are still immature, at the national but mostly at the local level. The capacity of the various actors, the consolidation of information and knowledge systems and the creation and strengthening of national and international networks are therefore fundamental.

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

In general, one sensed the following from the group discussions:

- Widespread criticism of the absence of a stronger policy that structures cross-cutting issues such as changing consumer behavior, legislation, and the training and mobilization of various actors (producer, processors, distributors, retailers, etc.).
- That there is room and willingness for civil society organizations, as well as the public sector, to constitute themselves as a more cross-cutting force, as a network, and to build constructive joint paths.
- The opportunities for transforming food systems only arise with collaboration, integration, and convergence of the various actors in the food chain.

The main conclusions on the three topics, in a cross-cutting way, were:

- Knowledge: the need to study and better understand the food consumption habits and consumption behaviours of citizens in Portugal, by involving all stakeholders to, in particular, better understand the drivers and reasons for steering away from the Mediterranean diet, particularly among youth.
- Long term vision and short-term actions: without compromising the need to have ambitious long term goals, it is key to focus on achievable short-term goals (3 years), that match societal expectations (e.g., having seafood and meat consumption reduction targets, which impact greatly on biodiversity and deforestation, but not unrealistic targets of excluding meat from diets).
- Awareness: educate consumers to choose certified products (that meet principles, criteria, and indicators); informed and science-based education, instead of biased information and/or cherry-picked messages, especially for youth; integrate in school syllabus issues on diets and sustainability, adapted to local contexts.
- Public Procurement: incentivize public procurement of sustainable food, including zero-deforestation criteria (e.g., for school cafeterias).
- Public participation: Implement country-wide participatory guarantee systems to enable the recognition of sustainable production and consumption for those who cannot afford certification.
- Labelling and Certification: adoption of legislation that makes traceability of goods mandatory. Make sustainability certification processes more flexible to adjust to local production contexts. Simplify information on certification systems to make it more accessible to the general public. Support businesses in rethinking and simplifying messages in food labels. Couple quality certification with sustainability certification (nutritional profile, benefits, and hazards).
- Policy action by governments: this needs to be translated into guaranteeing more sustainable consumption for consumers and better conditions for market competition for businesses.
- European policy mechanisms: to ensure meeting the targets of the European Green Deal and ensure that the Common Agriculture Policy is aligned with several environmental directives and strategies of the EU.

Some of the challenges set for the future were:

- Transform the forum started with the Independent Dialogue into something structured and consistent for the future, as a platform for civil society convergence to actively monitor food systems.
- Explore how the different actors collectively manage to support each other, share information and knowledge, and transfer capacity building to others.
- An opportunity to explore at the national level would be to create a convergence platform of different actors to act within the scope of the National Council for Food and Nutritional Security (with little expression and no consultative body), and to articulate its mission with that of Intermunicipal or Local Councils for Food and Nutritional Security.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

Regarding the discussion topic on sustainable diets and national biodiversity, the following actions were concluded as being necessary:

- Raise consumer awareness about buying in local markets and/or participating in producer-consumer or consumer-only cooperatives, to be able to gain access to sustainable food more cheaply (favoring value chains without intermediaries).
- Make the population aware of the different levels of self-sufficiency according to the type of food.
- Facilitate the process of selling native seeds by ending sales limitations, simplifying procurement requirements, and multiplying germplasm banks throughout the country.
- Monitoring of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) by different actors, demanding that financial incentives be better adapted to the national context, favoring marginal areas (growing evidence of greater environmental relevance), effectively based on results, and with greater supervision to encourage farmers to adopt more positive practices for biodiversity, rewarding them accordingly.
- CAP incentives should take negative externalities more into account (currently only very timidly considered in cross-compliance rules) in order to allow a reduction in subsidies for non sustainably produced food, bringing prices more into balance with those that are sustainable, and therefore making them more affordable.
- Extend traceability to all foods to know their origin and differentiate them according to production method.
- Raise awareness of the food chain (from producer to consumer) about how it works to empower action on how income is distributed along the chain, especially at the distribution level.
- Decentralize distribution - replicate the practice of imposing a limit on the number of food retail stores in a municipality, imposing minimum sustainable food purchase quotas for each retailer.
- Deconstruct the price/nutrient ratio of food - more sustainably produced food is generally more nutritious. The higher price of these foods is offset by their higher nutritional content.
- Reformulation of benchmarks for sustainable production methods (e.g. organic farming is no guarantee of greater biodiversity), involving all relevant stakeholders in this reformulation (prevents us from continually developing proxy approaches that do not safeguard biodiversity).
- Development of new regulations that promote good environmental practices or penalize bad ones (e.g., ban on incorrect burning).
- Empower rural areas more in logistical support for food processing - insufficient, compared to urban areas.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

Regarding the discussion topic on sustainable diets and imported deforestation, the following actions were concluded as being necessary:

- Negotiate EU agreements with third countries for deforestation-free commitments (apply same rules as for EU).
- The new EU forest strategy should reflect companies' responsibilities to ensure due diligence processes.
- Complement measures for zero deforestation criteria with the implementation of sustainability standards on the ground.
- Implementation of policies to value local products and control products imported from distant regions (analysis by region to meet essential needs).
- CAP should favor extensive production methods and local markets.
- Include zero-deforestation criteria in public procurement.
- Integrate more robust legislation (with due diligence) and sustainability standards.
- Use common metrics regarding environmental impacts and nutritional aspects in food classification for labeling purposes.
- Media awareness campaigns on the theme of deforestation (replicating methods used in other successful environmental campaigns on other themes).
- Educate producers about impacts.
- Increase the price of meat to discourage consumption.
- Reduce food waste by attending to size and calibration and using common metrics across the EU to calculate food waste (curb interests in using different metrics).
- Make large-scale local production of alternative foods (seaweed, insect meal, protein crops), especially protein alternatives, produced locally - allows for shortening chains.
- Invest in innovation for precision animal feed and improved animal digestibility (science-based).
- Invest in responsible soy production: improve trade agreements with producing countries to safeguard environmental impacts and human rights.
- Invest in agricultural production that integrates restoration actions (positive conversion) of ecosystems.
- Integrate local communities and animals in the management of national forests.
- Promote sustainable plant production, including for animal feed.
- Adoption of voluntary certification systems with strict requirements regarding deforestation.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

Regarding the discussion topic on sustainable diets and responsible seafood, the following actions were concluded as being necessary:

- Promotion of alternative foods (e.g. seaweed).
- Conversion to exclusive consumption of larger seafood.
- Promotion of seafood consumption diversification - dissemination of less consumed species accompanied by cooking demonstrations.
- Messages to raise consumer awareness should result from the collaboration of the different actors in the value chain.
- Invest in awareness and dissemination of information on aquaculture production (on the production method, production density, and origin).
- Apply more detailed traceability and make this information (e.g., origin) available to the consumer at all points of sale or consumption (including restaurants).
- Replication of the Proof of Purchase model at first sale point (this allows us to know the origin of the seafood, is easy to read, and incentivises purchases from first sale points and compliance with the rules). - <https://www.lotaemcasa.pt/>
- Promotion of the use of online platforms that identify seafood sold at first sale points.
- Supporting the various actors in the food chain to promote better choices (e.g., better protein sources, alternative proteins, more cost-effective forms of protein, food diversification, and waste reduction) through consulting, technological solutions, etc.
- Technology solutions that allow consumers to collect waste from outlets.
- Take advantage of seafood discards (recover the old practice of using discarded seafood for flour, e.g.; diversify baskets by including less consumed seafood species).
- Demand from distribution: reduce portion sizes, channel consumption to sustainable species, and reduce waste.
- Take advantage of existing tools in the value chain (e.g., guides to a better choice, companies with more sustainable offerings).
- Industries should make strong commitments (e.g., renewable energy, recycling, decarbonization).
- Make fishermen responsible for garbage collection.
- Reduce bureaucracy in licensing of sustainable projects (e.g., aquaculture), by defining sustainability benchmarks and replicating the best examples from Europe (rather than investing in innovation only).
- Decrease the number of vessels and hours at sea and polluting emissions.
- Focus demand on the most productive systems and promote resilience to external factors.

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

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Sustainable diets and national biodiversity:

Organic agriculture was understood by some as a benchmark of sustainability and a way to ensure more nutritious food, being contested by others for understanding that it is only a benchmark for certification that may eventually allow destructive practices for nature, namely, for biodiversity (does not protect the soil, uses agrochemicals, etc.) and that there is no clear scientific evidence that biological products have a higher nutritional content.

Sustainable diets and imported deforestation:

Some participants pointed to reducing meat consumption as one of the most effective measures to tackling imported deforestation, given that a large part of this deforestation is associated with the conversion of areas for pastures or fodder crops. However, others disagreed with a demonizing view of the consumption of animal-based foods, arguing that the consumption of this type of food is essential if we want to have a balanced diet and that a set of other solutions could be adopted to reduce the environmental impacts of animal husbandry such as promoting responsible soy production and improving third-country import criteria.

Some also criticized the frequent use of the term "conversion" in a pejorative way, pointing out that the conversion of ecosystems can be positive if, for example, it allows the restoration of degraded ecosystems.

In response to several participants indicating that it is important to have more information available to consumers through food labels, some pointed out the difficulty of gathering all the necessary information on a single label.

Also, in response to several participants who mentioned consumer education and awareness as essential steps for a transformation, as well as the implementation of voluntary agreements, some said that such measures were not effective and that it was imperative to create legislation that forces a change in consumer behavior by limiting non-sustainable choices.

Sustainable diets and responsible seafood:

The pressing need, highlighted by several participants, to diversify seafood consumption by the Portuguese was not unanimous. Someone felt that at least compared to other countries, namely the Nordic Europeans, the Portuguese consume a fairly diversified set of seafood, despite having recognized that there is always room for improvement.

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