OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 14 December 2023 13:00 GMT +08:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Empowering small-scale farmers in China
CONVENED BY	Dr. Estelle Raveloaritiana, Prof. Thomas C. Wanger: Sustainable Agricultural Systems & Engineering (SASE) Laboratory, School of Engineering, Westlake University, China
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/52070/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	China

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

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0	0-18	1	19-30	5	31-50	8	51-65	2	66-80		80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

16	Male	0	Female	Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

16	Agriculture/crops		Education		Health care
	Fish and aquaculture		Communication		Nutrition
	Livestock		Food processing		National or local government
	Agro-forestry		Food retail, markets		Utilities
	Environment and ecology		Food industry		Industrial
	Trade and commerce		Financial Services		Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
	Large national business		Member of Parliament
	Multi-national corporation		Local authority
3	Small-scale farmer		Government and national institution
13	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
	Large-scale farmer		United Nations
	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
	International Non-Governmental Organization		Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
	Indigenous People		Consumer group
	Science and academia		Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

In organizing this independent dialogue, our objective was to bring together representatives of rice farmers from Huanghu Town in the Yuhang District of Hangzhou. The participants were rice farmers from family farms, agricultural cooperatives, and government agricultural management departments. To incorporate, reinforce, and enhance the principles of food system summit – independent dialogues, we designed a comprehensive agenda that included specific steps and activities. We facilitated an open discussion and ensured that every participant's voice was heard. Our main criteria for inviting representatives to participate in this dialogue was that they should voice smallholders' collective knowledge and information needs related to climate change mitigation. Through our discussions, representatives had the opportunity to connect with other farmers and openly discuss climate-related issues affecting their daily farming activities.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

We adopted an open dialogue format. At the initial stage of the discussion, , representatives of rice farmers approached our questions with some caution and did not respond very enthusiastically. However, as we gradually empathized that their perspectives are highly needed and we inquired about the challenges they face in the process of rice cultivation, they began to speak freely. The representatives of rice farmers expressed a willingness to collaborate and collectively address the issues. In summary, we respected the contributions of the rice farmer representatives during the workshop, encouraging everyone to freely participate in discussions.

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

Based on our independent dialogue, we suggest that facilitators adopt an active, proactive, and sincere approach when organizing an event involving farmers. Facilitators who are proactive and active can foster in-depth communication by understanding participants' needs in advance, preparing relevant agendas, and actively asking questions during the event to encourage meaningful exchanges. Additionally, it is crucial to establish genuine communication and trust by sharing our own perspectives and experiences, breaking the ice, and inspiring interaction among participants. Additionally, to ensure fairness, maintaining a neutral stance without favoring any particular viewpoint is essential to treat each opinion equally. Creating an open space, free from judgment and criticism, will enable participants to express their views more freely. Most importantly, attention should be given to the diversity of participants, respecting and understanding their cultural and professional backgrounds to ensure that everyone feels included and understood.

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

In this dialogue, we convened representatives of rice farmers from Huanghu Town in the Yuhang District of Hangzhou. The choice of Huanghu Town is significant as it serves as a pilot for the "Future Rural Experimental Zone" in Zhejiang Province, emphasizing a commitment to green development. This aligns seamlessly with the action direction proposed by the United Nations Food Systems Summit, focusing on "promoting production with positive impacts on nature and advancing fair livelihoods."

Our overarching goal is to identify the most effective ways to communicate and exchange knowledge with farmers, understand the most pressing issues that small-scale farmers are facing, and determine their knowledge needs to address these challenges. Therefore, we structured the dialogue into two parts:

(1) Communication and knowledge exchange using technology:
We aim to transform small-scale farmers into innovators in agricultural production through effective knowledge transfer, positioning them as key participants in the nationwide transformation of the food system.

(2) Farmers Issues and information needed:
Participants discussed the impact of climate on crop management, yields, and livelihoods. Based on this relevant information, we formulated knowledge requirements tailored to help them address the most urgent challenges they currently face. This not only involves promoting equitable livelihoods but also improves farmlands resilience to shocks, and pressures, enabling farmers to better adapt to changing environments and enhancing the sustainability of their agricultural practices.

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

MAIN FINDINGS

In general, representatives of rice farmers from Huanghu Town in the Yuhang District of Hangzhou reached several significant agreements during the dialogue:

a) Importance of Government Support:
All representatives emphasized the crucial importance of government support and promotion in addressing the challenges they face. This may involve providing more resources, technical supports, and policy measures to tackle challenges such as climate change.
b) Direct Contact and Knowledge Sharing:
Representatives unanimously expressed a desire to establish direct contact with researchers, government officials, and industry organizations through various means. This reflects their aspiration to gain more knowledge and resources.

c) Learning and Cross-Cultural Communication:
The participants in our dialogue also expressed a willingness to learn from farmers cultivating other crops, indicating a desire for cross-disciplinary learning. Simultaneously, they acknowledged potential language barriers when communicating with farmers from other countries, which need to be addressed through innovative approaches to facilitate cross-cultural agricultural knowledge exchange.

d) Impact of Climate Change:
Representatives generally agreed on the impacts of climate change on the rice cultivation process. They believed that more knowledge and skills are needed to address issues related to climate change, such as pest and disease control, weather forecasting knowledge, and participation in agricultural insurance and safety net. This emphasizes the need for climate adaptability and implementation of sustainable agricultural practices.

e) Government Subsidies and Support:
Representatives emphasized their need for government subsidies and supports, highlighting the crucial role of the government in providing economic and policy-level supports. In summary, these findings reveal the common challenges faced by representatives of rice farmers and provide valuable insights for future collaboration and policy formulation.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

(1)Communication and Knowledge exchange using Technology:
During the dialogue, notable observations were made concerning rice representatives' perspectives on channels for accessing agricultural information. The most common channels identified were the internet, Official agricultural sensitization, and cooperative training. It is encouraging to note that, in most cases, representatives found it convenient to establish communication with government officials, industry organizations, and researchers. The majority of representatives expressed the belief that the optimal way to acquire knowledge from researchers, government bodies, and industry associations is through on-site guidance by professionals.

In situations where face-to-face communication is not feasible, a consensus among representatives highlighted the utility of the internet, especially WeChat, which is the most popular social networking platform in China, and the use of direct phone call for facilitating communication and contact between farmers and researchers, industry associations, and government organizations. Additionally, most representatives expressed a willingness to learn from farmers in other countries, although language barriers were identified as a limiting factor.

(2)Farmers Issues and information needed:
In general, representatives highlighted that climate change has exacerbated pests and diseases issues, leading to increased costs for crop managements. They also expressed the need to acquire knowledge about weather, pests and diseases prevention, and to participate in agricultural insurance programs. Beyond climate-related concerns, all representatives raised issues related to high costs of agricultural inputs and labor.

To address these challenges, there was a collective desire among representatives for technology training to learn relevant mechanical skills. The goal is to use machinery as a cost-effective alternative to manual labor, aiming to reduce costs associated with agricultural inputs and labor.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

ACTION TRACKS

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- [ ] Governance
- [ ] Trade-offs
- [ ] Environment and Climate

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **The Knowledge Transfer Project – SASE Lab – Westlake University – China**
  https://www.tomcwanger.com/