

Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues

GETTING STARTED

This note is intended to provide guidance to Member States on how to 'get started' with the organization of a Food Systems Summit Dialogue (FSSD).

It addresses the following questions:

- *What are the steps involved in getting started?*
- *What should the profile of the Member State Dialogue Convenor be? Who nominates him/her?*
- *What does the Member State Dialogue Convenor do once s/he is nominated?*
- *How to mobilize support for Food Systems Summit Dialogues?*
- *Where to find help/guidance? Who is available to answer any questions?*

Introduction

As part of the Decade of Action to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Secretary-General is convening a Food Systems Summit to establish the future direction and accelerate action for sustainable food systems.

In preparation for the Summit, each Member State is invited by the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) to initiate Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues between November 2020 and June 2021.

These National Dialogues will result in the shaping of national pathways to sustainable food systems as well as expressions of intention to support these pathways from a broad range of stakeholders. They will provide opportunities for these stakeholders to engage in preparations for the Summit through structured interactions.

Member States' Food Systems Summit Dialogues are developed under the auspices of a Member State Dialogues Convenor. The nomination of a Dialogue Convenor is therefore one of the first and important steps in launching the Dialogues.

The expected roles of the Convenor as well as other suggestions to assist Member States in getting started with their Food Systems Summit Dialogues are presented below.

1. Appreciating the value and purpose of Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues

- The note, [The UN Food Systems Summit 2021: Outline of the Programme for Food System Summit Dialogues convened by UN Member States](#), provides an overview of the intended value and purpose of Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues. The timeline to organize Dialogues is outlined in the graphic below.
- The [Reference Manual for Convenors of Food Systems Summit Dialogues](#) provides further details on the purpose and method of Dialogues proposed. It is released on 2 November 2020.
- The Food Systems Summit Secretariat will organise **Open Public Briefings** on the Food Systems Summit Dialogues (FSSD) on 11, 18 and 25 November 2020. The details of these Open Public Briefings will be available on the Summit Dialogues website. These briefings will cover the Dialogues process, including how preparations for the Food Systems Summit are progressing, how Dialogues will be delivered and how Dialogues will help shape pathways

that lead to sustainable food systems. Attendees at the briefing will also discover how to access the related resources via the Gateway at www.summitdialogues.org.

- Specific briefings for Permanent Representatives of Member States based in New York and in Rome are also organised by the respective Groups of Friends of the FSS. These briefings will provide more opportunities to discuss implementation of Member State Dialogues.

2. Appointing the Member State Dialogue Convenor

- Each Member State is invited to nominate a Member State Dialogues Convenor, ideally located at the centre of Government (President's or Prime Minister's Office or a central high-level coordinating Ministry).
- The Member State Dialogues Convenor is responsible for organizing the national dialogues, on behalf of the Government.
- The Convenor is expected to engage a broad range of stakeholders in the Dialogues programme and to encourage an integrated, interdisciplinary, and exploratory approach. Ideally, the Convenor should be in a position to engage with all relevant ministries in order to embed the outcomes of the Dialogues programme within national priorities and to fully embrace an all-of-SDG approach.
- The role of a Member State Dialogue Convenor is described in the box below. It should be noted that the Dialogue Convenor is solely responsible for submitting the Official Feedback from the Dialogues to the Food Systems Summit Secretariat.
- Once the Member State Dialogue Convenor has been nominated, the Member State informs the Food Systems Summit Secretariat of their identity by sending an email to nominations@summitdialogues.org.

In a Dialogue, the Convenor is expected to ensure that:

- *an integrated, interdisciplinary, and exploratory approach is adopted to shaping pathways to sustainable food systems;*
- *all aspects - from preparation, planning, execution, and reporting - embrace the Principles of Engagement for the Food Systems Summit;*
- *the area of focus of the Dialogue is approached in an integrated, interdisciplinary, and exploratory manner;*
- *a diverse set of stakeholder groups is invited to participate in the Dialogue: all have an interest in the relationships between people, food and the planet and are involved in national food systems;*
- *the participants who join the Dialogue have a range of profiles and experience;*
- *special consideration is given to engaging stakeholder groups who do not normally take part in Dialogues about the future of food systems.*

3. Registering on the Gateway and attending online briefings

- The Food Systems Summit Secretariat formally invites the Member State Dialogue Convenor to register on the Dialogues Gateway, www.summitdialogues.org. The Gateway provides access to the *Reference Manual for Dialogue Convenors* and other materials, as well as schedule of briefings and collective training sessions which Convenors are invited to attend.
- Dialogue Convenors may deputize some of the tasks to officers referred to as Dialogue Supporters. Dialogue Supporters can be identified by the Convenor on the *Dialogues Gateway* and has access to the same resources and training schedule as the Convenor.
- There will be opportunities for each Dialogue's Convenors to connect across Member States to draw upon the experience of other Convenors.

4. Mobilizing an informal group to support the Dialogues programme

- Once appointed, the Member State Dialogues Convenor may decide to establish an informal group to support the development of Dialogues within the national context and the overall organization of the Dialogue events. This group could include specialists with expertise related to food systems, as well as individuals and institutions which can provide operational and financial support.
- The Member State Dialogue Convenor draws upon the resources of this informal group when designing and shaping the programme of Dialogues, considering what existing activities there are to build upon and how to encourage connections between actors in different sectors, professional disciplines and stakeholder groups.
- This informal group supports the Member State Dialogue Convenor to take stock of existing data and analyses on the national food systems. This material will indeed be essential to introduce the programme of Dialogues and focus it on the local challenges.
- In countries with a UN system presence, the UN Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Teams are available to accompany the Member State and Member State Dialogue Convenor with the organisation of the Dialogues programme.

5. Planning your first Member State Dialogue

- Comprehensive step-by-step guidance on how to practically organise, host, facilitate and report on a Food Systems Summit Dialogues can be found in the *Reference Manual for Convenors of Food Systems Summit Dialogues*.

Additional suggestions for UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams

Upon request from a Member State, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Country Team will be ready to accompany that Member State and in particular the Member State Dialogue Convenor in organising their Food Systems Summit Dialogues.

The UN Resident Coordinator and UN Country Team will especially assist Member States in the following ways:

- Ensuring that the purpose, rationale and process of the Dialogues are well understood in the Member State and encouraging a whole-of-government approach.
- Accompanying the government in identifying and nominating the Member State Dialogue Convenor with the relevant skills and appropriate convening power.
- Helping to build local awareness about the Food Systems Summit and Food Systems Summit Dialogues, and encouraging interested individuals and organisations to go to the Food Systems Summit Dialogues [Gateway](#) and Open Public Briefings.

Once the Convenor is nominated, the UN Resident Coordinator and Country Team can be invited to assist the Member State Dialogue Convenor in the following tasks:

- Mobilizing an informal group to support the organisation of the Dialogues Programme.
- Identifying Dialogue Curators and Facilitators.
- Mobilizing existing data and analysis of the national food systems to support the development of materials to introduce and contextualise the programme of Dialogues.
- Mobilizing financial resources from partners.
- Compiling a diverse invitation list, appreciating the Principles of Engagement of the Food Systems Summit.
- Integrating the outcomes of Dialogues in national policy processes, and correlatively the ongoing efforts by all to deliver upon Agenda 2030.

UN Resident Coordinators and members of the UN Country Teams are encouraged to explore and register on the Dialogues [Gateway](#) and subscribe to the Newsletter to receive updates on additional guidance.

Recommended timeline of Action for Member State Dialogues

