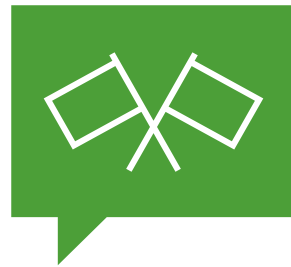


HANDBOOK



for Member State Dialogues

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FOREWORD

Welcome to this Handbook for the Member States Food System Summit Dialogues!

This Handbook is designed to help National Dialogues Convenors to devise and implement a progression of national Food Systems Summit Dialogues. It will be of interest to all who may be involved in devising, organizing, convening, and supporting the dialogues.

The contents of this Handbook should be read as a series of suggestions for Convenors as they make use of the Dialogue method to help shape national pathways to sustainable food systems. It is expected that the Dialogue method and programme will be adapted in line with national priorities and circumstances. Care should be taken to ensure that the seven principles of engagement in the Summit are reflected throughout the Dialogue methods that are selected.

In many settings, face to face meetings are not possible either because of the threats posed by COVID-19, or because of communications and logistical challenges. Convenors may wish to use applications that permit online meetings, all the time seeking ways to avoid excluding those groups for whom connection is a challenge.

This Handbook is entirely focused on the programme for progressive stages of national Food Systems Summit Dialogues. The arrangements for Global Dialogues and Independent Dialogues are presented in other materials.

The Handbook starts with an Executive Summary of the programme for Member States Food Systems Summit Dialogues.

The sections that follow include:

1. The invitation to Member States;
2. The rationale and importance of integrated approaches to the food systems of the future;
3. Guidance on the use of dialogues for shaping pathways to sustainable food systems;
4. Detailed description of the steps in organizing a Member State Programme of Dialogues;
5. The connections between the Member State Dialogues and other workstreams of the Summit;
6. The timeline for the Member State Dialogues.

There are three Annexes:

- i. Suggested approaches for exploring national and local food systems;
- ii. Example agendas for different stages of a Member State Programme of Dialogues;
- iii. A series of references.

More information about the Member State Dialogues is available through the Food Systems Summit Dialogues Gateway at www.summitdialogues.org. This is where Convenors register, access advice, arrange to participate in training programmes, upload feedback once their Dialogues are complete, and obtain information from the Summit Secretariat via regular newsletters. The outcomes of all Dialogues will be synthesised and made available to other Summit workstreams. Member States are encouraged to organize follow-up Dialogues after the Summit with a view to moving forward on national pathways for sustainable food systems.

This handbook is a living document: we hope you find it to be useful. Please send any comments to info@summitdialogues.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Programme For Progressive Stages Of National Dialogues

The UN Secretary-General is calling on world leaders to take part in a Summit that will help to establish the future direction for food systems and accelerate collective action to that end. This reflects the increasing recognition that transforming food systems must be central in efforts to achieve all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The COVID-19 pandemic shows the fragilities and inequalities in food systems: it underscores the urgent needs to ensure that food systems are more sustainable, inclusive and resilient.

Multiple stakeholders are working together to contribute to tangible and positive changes in food systems. The preparatory process for the Summit includes several complementary workstreams that ensure dynamic exchanges among food systems practitioners involved in science, policy and implementation. Care is being taken to ensure that there are opportunities for the involvement of a broad range of diverse stakeholders in the preparation of the Summit. The Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues are a critical element of the Summit preparatory process.

Food systems vary by location, and pathways to sustainability must be rooted in national and local realities. Each Member State of the UN has the opportunity to organize three stages of national Food Systems Summit Dialogues in advance of the Summit. These Dialogues enable stakeholders to work together - examining their food systems, exploring options for change, and shaping pathways for these systems to be sustainable by 2030. The Dialogues also offer opportunities for stakeholders

to firm up their intentions to work together in support of these pathways and to make specific commitments for the contributions that they will make.

During the Dialogues different stakeholders work together to devise pathways for the sustainable future of national food systems that make significant contributions to the SDGs. The Dialogues are designed in ways that enable participants to make connections, explore different perspectives on food systems, examine the possibilities that emerge, and turn those with the greatest promise into solutions that can be implemented when and where they are relevant. It is expected that they build on food systems work that is already underway within their settings.

The Member State Dialogues are organized by a national Convenor nominated by the Government. The Convenor is ideally located in a central high-level position under the direction of the Head of State or Government or a coordinating Minister. The Convenor will engage a broad range of stakeholders across government and other constituencies that compose food systems in the Dialogues programme. In countries with a United Nations system presence, United Nations Resident Coordinators and members of the United Nations Country Teams are available to assist with organizing and preparing the Dialogues.

These three stages of the Member State Dialogues take place between November 2020 and June 2021, in various sub-national settings as well as at the national level. In the standardized method, the three stages of the Dialogue process are as follows:



STAGE 1

Initiating national engagement in the 2021 Food Systems Summit

The purpose of the Stage 1 Dialogue is to initiate an inclusive process through which stakeholders involved in developing pathways to sustainable national food systems can be engaged in, and contribute to, the Food Systems Summit process. By the end of the first stage, relevant Member State stakeholders will be engaged, exploring the purposes and functioning of their national food systems and connecting with others within them. They will start to consider how they can contribute to, and benefit from, the 2021 Food Systems Summit. They will have examined their national food systems – their potential and vulnerabilities as well as opportunities for transformation. They will identify both emerging issues on which there is consensus and areas where major disagreements exist. They will commit to deepen their exploration of options by including a more diverse range of stakeholders in the next stage of the Dialogues, at sub-national as well as national levels. They will contribute to developing the material that is posted online in the report of this first stage of national Dialogues, summarizing outcomes and indicating areas for deeper exploration in Stage 2.



STAGE 2

Extensive explorations everywhere

The purpose of the second stage of the Member State Dialogues is to create an opportunity for engagement and interconnection among an even broader set of food systems stakeholders through multiple Dialogues that connect the sub-national and national level. National authorities may invite local administrations (such as provincial authorities and municipalities) to convene the sub-national Dialogues, which are foreseen to include many individual stakeholder groups (e.g. farmers, fishers, consumer associations, SMEs). These diverse stakeholders will explore options for sustainability in their local context, consider a wide variety of perspectives and identify options for collective action that can contribute to the national pathways towards sustainable food systems. To assist discussions, Stage 2 sub-national Dialogues will be informed by propositions from the Summit's independent Scientific Group and Action Tracks.

The Stage 2 sub-national Dialogues are followed by a national level Dialogue where participants receive news about approaches that emerged in the sub-national Dialogues that may have potential for more widespread application. Participants then consider how

EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF MEMBER STATE FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT DIALOGUES

Member State Dialogues will enable national governments to engage in the issues of constructing sustainable food systems in their totality.

1. The Dialogues will contribute directly to national engagement in the wider effort towards sustainable food systems in the coming decade; The expected outcomes of the Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues include a **pathway towards sustainable national food systems** for the coming decade in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and opportunities to bring the pathway to life with practices, policies, actions, partnerships and commitments.
2. The Member State Dialogues will be an opportunity for exploring propositions from the different Summit workstreams (especially the independent Scientific Group and the Action Tracks) within the national context.
3. During the Dialogues, participants that represent different stakeholder groups will work out how they intend to contribute to the sustainability of national food systems and, ideally, make commitments for which they are accountable.
4. COVID-19 outbreaks are revealing multiple vulnerabilities and fragilities in food systems and the Dialogues present an opportunity to address them.
5. The Dialogues help ensure that the UN Food Systems Summit reflects national ambitions, and that national efforts benefit from the Summit preparatory process.
6. The Dialogues encourage diverse and inclusive communities of food systems stakeholders to connect with each other, explore experiences, agree on options for action and then combine their efforts in order to encourage the emergence of sustainable food systems.

these approaches might be encouraged within the context of the evolving national food systems transformation pathway.



STAGE 3

Consolidation, intention and commitment

The purpose of Stage 3 is to agree on the national pathways towards sustainable food systems by 2030, and to identify the intentions and commitments of different stakeholders. Stage 3 participants receive the consolidated outputs from the Stage 2 Dialogues, together with suggestions from the Scientific Group and Action Tracks. They will agree on issues where consensus exists and identify areas for further dialogue. They will shape the national pathway and seek to reach agreement on its scope. They will work out and prioritize the actions they expect to take in coming years to support the pathway and agree on intentions and commitments for future action. By the end of this stage, participants will have a greater understanding of, and commitment to, taking action in ways that will improve their national food systems. They will also have a more profound understanding of these systems and their potential. Feedback from the Stage 3 Dialogue will summarize key outcomes for the country and for the Food Systems Summit, and will be drawn upon for synthesis reports. It is hoped that the pathway will continue to be developed by and be of use to national stakeholders as they advance in their journey to food systems sustainability.

This work done in preparation for the 2021 Summit will be of crucial value as national efforts to adapt food systems, in line with the national pathway, are taken forward in-country during the coming decade. Due to the involvement of such diverse stakeholder groups in shaping the pathway, it is anticipated that action will be strongly supported by local, national, regional and international stakeholder groups. Stakeholder groups may, for example, choose to forge new partnerships or develop innovative forms of collaboration. It is hoped they will indicate their intention and commitment to do so at the time of the UN 2021 Food Systems Summit.



STAGE 4

After the Summit

Once the Summit has taken place, the Convenor organizes a fourth stage of the Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues. This is an opportunity for the national authorities, leaders of stakeholder groups at national level, together with the Convenors and participants from the previous stages of national dialogue to reflect on the overall outcomes of the Food Systems Summit. It is hoped they will use this opportunity to re-examine the national pathway to sustainable food systems not only at a national event but also in the sub-national contexts of earlier Dialogues. During the Stage 4 Dialogues, participants will focus together on the contributions they are making, and intend to make, to the journey set out in the pathway. They will consider how they will maintain their engagement in the implementation of actions as set out in the pathway; reviewing progress and adapting the pathway as appropriate. This will be a good opportunity to communicate what has been achieved to date with the wider public, setting out processes through which progress can be monitored and accountability maintained. The in-country monitoring mechanism can be linked with any system set up during the Summit for reviewing actions taken in relation to commitments.



INVITATION

In 2019, the United Nations Secretary-General called for a global summit on the future of food systems: this UN 2021 Food Systems Summit will take place in September 2021. The summit is underpinned by an inclusive engagement process to deliver progress on all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In preparation for this historic global summit, a diverse range of stakeholders from all Member States – from Government to Members of Parliament, from youth activists to indigenous leaders, from smallholder farmers to scientists and CEOs – are invited to identify the most powerful ways to make food systems stronger and more equitable; ultimately driving progress on all of the SDGs. In the run up to the UN Secretary-General's Food Systems Summit it is expected that many UN Member States will focus on how their national food systems can, in the coming decade, align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In November 2020 Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General and Chair of the Advisory Committee of the Food Systems Summit, invited each Member State to engage in the preparation of the Summit through encouraging action-oriented dialogue, discussing ways to achieve sustainable food systems by 2030. In countries with a UN presence, UN Resident Coordinators and Representatives of UN system entities are committed to supporting Member States to develop and implement their Dialogues, as are Summit Champions, in-country scientists, development partners and food systems partners.

Dr Agnes Kalibata, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Food Systems Summit, has proposed that in the months leading up to the Summit, each UN Member State encourages widespread dialogue on the urgent actions needed to secure the future of its national food systems. Member States are advised to use this period to explore how their food systems should evolve during the next ten years so that they reflect the needs of people, nation and nature, while aligning with the principles and goals of Sustainable Development and Climate action.

As a core component of the Summit process, each Member State is invited to shape a national pathway towards sustainable food systems. This will mean examining, and then building on, existing food and agriculture policies and plans. It calls for a broad systems perspective that reflects connections between food systems and all the SDGs; it pays particular attention to people who are at risk of being left behind.

Dr Kalibata has invited each Member State to bring together different groups of stakeholders from within their national food systems through a programme of three-stage multi-stakeholder dialogues, both nationally and sub-nationally, in the months before the summit. These Food Systems Summit Member State Dialogues provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape their local and national pathways, indicate their intentions and commit to specific actions. Pathways to sustainable food systems that emerge through the dialogues can be developed and refined after the summit and used by all stakeholders in the coming decade.

Member States are asked to nominate National Dialogue Convenors to be responsible for organizing their national Food Systems Summit Dialogues. Once the Dialogues have taken place, the Convenors compile feedback on the outcomes of the Dialogues they have organized, using structured feedback forms uploaded through the dedicated Dialogues Gateway on the summitdialogues.org website. This Feedback Form is then made publicly available. All the feedback received by the Summit Secretariat will be synthesized in ways that reflect the objectives for the summit. At intervals during 2021 these syntheses will be made available for the use of the UN Food Systems Summit Scientific Group, as well as the five Summit Action Tracks and the integration mechanism, the network of Food Systems Champions, the Summit UN Task Force and the Summit Advisory Committee. The outputs from the Food Systems Summit Dialogues will also be taken into account in the preparation of the pre-Summit and Summit in July and September of 2021 respectively.

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO THE FOOD SYSTEMS OF THE FUTURE

Food touches every aspect of human existence; very one of us needs it. Billions of people are involved in growing, raising, making food or transporting it, right through to consumption. Food links farmers to fruit pickers to supermarket cashiers; flourmills to refrigerated trucks to neighborhood composting facilities.

People are able to access the food they need thanks to the connected efforts of these different stakeholders. Their efforts make food available for all of us who need it; they work in the **food systems** on which humanity depends. These different stakeholders each have their own contribution to make – be it growing, harvesting, packing, processing, distributing, selling, storing, marketing, consuming and disposing of food. Different food systems are most likely to function well if these stakeholders are connected in ways that are strong, flexible and adaptable; something much more likely if their connections are based on shared values and principles. These connections work best if the contributions of different stakeholder groups are appreciated by others and all concerned focus on the effective functioning of systems as a whole, as well as the different elements within the systems.

Many sectors of the economy are involved in the functioning of food systems. They are the concern of several sectors of government which maintain oversight of, shape and are influenced by food systems. These sectors include agriculture, water, energy, infrastructure, transport, financial services, information and technology. The broader world in all aspects is involved too; the operation of these systems is influenced by natural resources, the environment, the functioning of economies, people's preferences, culture, education, income and assets, indigenous knowledge, policies, politics, trade, regulations and more.

For most people the availability and accessibility of food, and of nutrients, has improved markedly in recent decades. The amount of food produced has also increased steadily, exceeding the overall needs of the world's people. Until recently the number of people who are hungry has declined, except in settings affected by climate change and conflict.

However today's food systems aren't functioning well. They are fragile and inequitable, and in many locations are beset by multiple, complex challenges. These challenges are found throughout the world and they tend to be complex, far-reaching and have long-term implications.

- 1. Diet-related illness is affecting increasing numbers of people.** More than 30% of deaths throughout the world are related to people not eating healthy diets. There is a world-wide epidemic of type 2 diabetes and childhood obesity remains steadily on the rise.
- 2. Food poverty and undernutrition is increasing.** Levels of acute and chronic malnutrition as well as micronutrient deficiency are increasing and look likely to have increased significantly as a result of COVID-19.
- 3. The livelihoods of many who produce and process food are vulnerable.** In many locations the living standards of small-scale farmers and daily laborers are declining, with increased debt leading to seasonal, and in some cases, permanent migration in search of more resilient sources of income. The extent of mental ill-health among those who farm in rural areas is reportedly increasing.
- 4. Food systems impact on climate.** They contribute to as much as 30% of greenhouse gas emissions, significantly contributing to climate change.
- 5. Food systems threaten nature.** There are multiple reports of nature being damaged as a result of food production practices, all across the globe.

A high price is being paid: The hidden costs of these adverse impacts of food systems are high – perhaps as much as 20% more than the total value of these systems.

In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed vulnerabilities and inequalities in food systems and has increased the numbers of people who have been food insecure to varying degrees in many nations. It is likely that there will be further food systems challenges linked to COVID-19 in 2021.

Taken together, these challenges suggest that **many aspects of the world's food systems** as they currently function **urgently need to change** – for the good of people, the environment and climate, and for our shared future.

A starting point for the summit is that **food systems need to evolve** in ways that adapt to the needs of current and future generations and, at the same time, conserve the planet's resources. There is increasing consensus that food systems should contribute to people eating diets that are nutritious, healthy and safe, made from sustainably produced and diverse foodstuffs, in ways that contribute to prosperous livelihoods - especially among women, youth and indigenous peoples.

The Food Systems Summit reflects the need for change. It has five objectives:

- i. Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all;
- ii. Shift to sustainable consumption patterns;
- iii. Boost nature-positive production;
- iv. Advance equitable livelihoods;
- v. Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.

The Scientific Group and Action Tracks of the summit link directly to these objectives, and the overall goal of the summit is to explore how the Action Tracks and other levers of change can best be integrated and contribute to sustainable food systems by 2030 at local, national and global levels.

These different elements of the vision should be **pursued simultaneously and implemented locally**. This integration inevitably means seeking concurrence on how different options should be valued and navigating trade-offs as decisions are made.

In many nations a variety of stakeholder and territorial groups have already been working on making food systems sustainable – some for decades. In many settings, different groups of stakeholders in local food systems, as well as the sectors that reflect their interests, will have varying perspectives on **how food systems can best be aligned with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development**. This variety of perspectives means that establishing a common approach to change is challenging. It is unlikely that there will be universal solutions that fit into all contexts; there is no one-size-fits-all. Stakeholders' views on how best to ensure that food systems are good both for the future of people and planet are often divergent.



DIALOGUES THAT SHAPE PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Realizing this vision will mean bringing about significant changes to the ways in which most food is financed, produced, processed, marketed, stored, distributed, prepared, shared and eaten. It will mean changing the ways in which decisions are made about food. It will also require the use of new values and thresholds when choices are being made between different options. The changes can be outlined in a pathway to sustainable food systems informed by science and experience.

In the months leading up to the summit, national and local authorities, as well as various food systems stakeholder groups, are invited to **envision** the kinds of national food systems that will be needed by 2030 and to **shape the pathway to sustainable national food systems**. This means considering what must happen for all people to be able to access sustainably produced food in ways that contribute to equitable, resilient livelihoods and provide healthy, nutritious diets for the whole population while adapting to and mitigating climate change.

The **Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues** are based on the principles of engagement in the 2021 Food Systems Summit. They use the Food Systems Summit Dialogue method proposed by the Special Envoy and is explained in detail in the Reference Manual for Dialogue Convenors¹. They are designed to encourage a wide range of stakeholder groups from within national food systems to engage deeply, sharing their different perspectives of food systems and the ways in which they have evolved.

The Dialogues are designed to encourage participating stakeholders to explore different aspects of local food systems, to identify the vulnerabilities in these systems from a variety of perspectives, to explore what needs to change to ensure long term sustainability and to agree on priorities for action in the near future. This process of exploration, identification and agreement among multiple stakeholders will contribute to the shaping of pathways to sustainable food systems and to the Food Systems Summit outcome.

Through a succession of Dialogues, participants will have the opportunity to analyze issues, consider ways in which they can be addressed and take advantage of diverse perspectives to discuss and debate the choices to be made. They will consider the trade-offs to be taken into account as options are chosen, identify areas of

convergence and divergence between stakeholders, and together forge pathways towards sustainable food systems by 2030.

As Member States prepare their Dialogues, some national authorities may **draw on existing plans** for national development, climate action and sustainable food systems, as well as relevant regional and international agreements. Others may decide that a more **substantial transformation** of national food systems will be needed, exploring ideas and opportunities from a number of sources, including the work of the Scientific Group and the different Action Tracks being set up in advance of the summit to support and inform deliberations.

The Member States Dialogues are designed to enable participants to work together on exploring four lines of enquiry (or axes) that will contribute towards shaping national pathways to sustainable food systems.

1. **Consider the purposes of current food systems and explore how they function**, including whether they enable all people to access healthy and nutritious food that has been produced sustainably, respond to the needs of those within them and contribute to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
2. **Agree on expectations of food systems in the coming ten years**, including how they will contribute to the good health and nutrition of everyone; the livelihoods of those working in food systems; the resilience of people's lives and livelihoods in the face of climate change, personal health and other unknowns; the well-being of women and children (especially between conception and a child's second birthday); the regeneration of ecosystems and nature and to substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
3. **Identify the changes that must be made in the coming three years** for food systems to meet expectations by 2030, considering the challenges that must be addressed to do so, the ways in which changes might be supported so that they are both equitable and just and ongoing experiences (within the country or elsewhere) of all people.
4. **Explore how stakeholders can work well together for collective action, forge powerful partnerships,**

¹ <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Manual-for-Convenors.pdf>

create mutually reinforcing interventions and foster a cycle of continuous learning and sharing

on practices and policy choices that contribute to sustainable food systems; including an analysis of who sees value in supporting the change, who opposes it, and who will perceive the benefits.

It is unlikely that the lines of enquiry can be examined sequentially but those who curate and facilitate Dialogues will sometimes be called upon to assist participants as they undertake explorations and seek to reach agreement on the pathways and ways in which they form the basis for collective action and change. The agreements reached during the period of the Dialogues - and the shape of the pathway that emerges - will set the scene for stakeholders to indicate their intentions and make commitments for how they will contribute, both now and in years to come, to the evolution of sustainable food systems.



ORGANIZING A MEMBER STATE PROGRAMME OF DIALOGUES

This section provides specific guidance for organizing the programme of [Member State Dialogues](#).¹ It is best used in conjunction with the Reference Manual for Convenors which describes the key roles involved in the Dialogues and provides step-by-step guidance for organizing each Dialogue event.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ORGANIZING AND INITIATING MEMBER STATE DIALOGUES?

APPOINTMENT OF A NATIONAL DIALOGUES CONVENOR

Following the announcement of the Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues on 16 October 2020, the UN Deputy Secretary General - in her capacity as Chair of the Summit Advisory Committee - issued an invitation to each Member State to initiate a programme of Food Systems Summit Dialogues. Through this invitation, Member States wishing to plan a programme of Food Systems Summit Dialogues are requested to appoint a **Member State Dialogues Convenor** who will be responsible for organizing the national Dialogues programme on behalf of the Government.

The Convenor will ideally be located at the level of President's or Prime Minister's Office or a central high-level coordinating ministry. Ideally, the Convenor should be in a position to engage with all relevant ministries and stakeholders beyond the government in order to embed the outcomes of the Dialogues programme within national priorities and to fully embrace an all-SDG approach.

The Member State Dialogues Convenor plays a vital role in the overall organization of the Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues. The Convenor will be responsible for organizing a Dialogues programme which focuses on shaping a national pathway towards sustainable food systems so that by 2030 they are aligned with, and making significant contributions to, the SDGs. The Convenor is also responsible for ensuring that this is done through engaging a broad range of stakeholder groups. These should include any and all stakeholder groups who are usually involved in formulating and implementing policies related to food and should also include those who are not usually 'at the table' of policy

formulation; namely the farmers and the food workers, the small and medium enterprises along the food value chains, indigenous people, etc. It is expected that the Convenor will encourage an integrated, interdisciplinary and exploratory approach to shaping the national pathway to sustainable food systems throughout the period of the Dialogues.

HOW THE CONVENOR GETS STARTED

REGISTERING ON THE GATEWAY

As a first step, the Food Systems Summit Secretariat will formally invite the Member State Dialogue Convenor to register on the [Dialogues Gateway](#).² The Gateway provides access to the [Reference Manual for Convenors of Food Systems Summit Dialogues](#) and other materials, as well as the schedule of briefings and collective training sessions to which Convenors are invited to attend.

Dialogue Convenors may deputize some of the tasks to officers referred to as Dialogue Supporters. Dialogue Supporters are nominated by the Convenor on the Dialogues Gateway and have access to the same resources and training schedule as the Convenor.

EXPLORING GUIDANCE AND MATERIAL

Comprehensive step-by-step guidance on how to practically organize, host, facilitate and report on a Food Systems Summit Dialogues can be found in the [Reference Manual for Convenors of Food Systems Summit Dialogues](#). Convenors and other organizers should explore the purpose and method for Food Systems Summit Dialogues in the Manual for Convenors and this Handbook.

Additional guidance can be found on the [Summit website](#)³ alongside updates about the [Action Tracks](#),⁴ the Scientific Group and the [Champions Network](#).⁵

1 <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Manual-for-Convenors.pdf>

2 www.summitdialogues.org

3 <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit>

4 <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/action-tracks>

5 <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/champions-network>

COLLECTIVE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Dedicated online training and mentoring will be available for Convenors, Curators and Facilitators of Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues. Training sessions are hosted in the six UN languages and Portuguese with interpretation of speaker inputs.

The first training session for Convenors will give an overview of the three stages of the Member State Dialogue process and will focus in depth on developing the Stage one Dialogue. It will include an overview of the resource materials available and provide an opportunity to meet with other Convenors and to discuss any issues and questions that arise. There will also be opportunities for Convenors to connect across Member States to draw upon the experience of others. The dates for Convenor training are posted on the Summit Dialogues website.

As Member State Dialogues progress, Convenors will be encouraged to continue their engagement with the Summit Dialogues team and with other Convenors by joining those of the weekly training sessions that are relevant to them. There will be specific guidance and support on preparing each stage of the Dialogues as well as on how to provide feedback to the Food Systems Summit team (including the Action Tracks, Champions and Scientific Group).

ANTICIPATED ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

MOBILIZING AN INFORMAL ORGANIZING GROUP TO SUPPORT THE DIALOGUES PROGRAMME

Once appointed, the Member State Dialogues Convenor may decide to establish an **informal organizing group** to support the contextualization of the programme for the national context and to support the organization of the Dialogues. This group could include technical advisors with expertise related to food systems, as well as individuals and institutions able to provide operational and financial support. This group could also include Food Systems Champions from the country, as well as leaders from a small number of stakeholder groups. In countries with a UN system presence, the UN Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Teams (UNRC & CT) are available to accompany the Member State and Member State Dialogue Convenor with the organization of the Dialogues programme.

The Member State Dialogue Convenor draws upon the resources of this organizing group when **designing and shaping the Dialogues programme**, considering what existing activities and analyses can be built upon and how connections can be encouraged between stakeholders in different sectors, professional disciplines and stakeholder groups. The organizing group can also support the Convenor to take stock of existing data and analyses on the national food systems, as described in

the section below. This material will be essential to the design of the Dialogues programme and in order to focus on local challenges.

Working closely with the organizing group, the Convenor designs the programme for Member State Dialogues. This will usually involve three stages of national Dialogues with sub-national Dialogues in the second stage. If such work is already well advanced, if the time available is short, or if organizing capacity is limited, the number of dialogues can be reduced to two, or even one. Further detail on the possibility of combining stages is provided at the end of this chapter.

The organizing group will support the Convenor in defining the tasks to be undertaken in relation to each stage of the Dialogue with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion of participation. There will be a widening of participation between Stages 1 and 2, especially as Stage 2 is expected to include sub-national Dialogues.

APPOINTING A DIALOGUE CURATOR AND IDENTIFYING SUB-NATIONAL CONVENORS

As a next step, working closely with the organizing group, the Convenor appoints a **Dialogue Curator** to run each of the national dialogue events and identifies **Convenors for the sub-national Dialogues**. Curators should have a good understanding of food systems issues, experience with managing multiple stakeholders and, ideally, familiarity with at least some of the stakeholders who will be involved. The Convenor and Curator are together responsible for ensuring that each Dialogue is aligned with national regulations in relation to COVID-19 and determining whether the event should be in-person or virtual.

The organizing group will then plan the first national Dialogue, identifying the venue, inviting participants and agreeing, with the Curator, both Facilitators and discussion topics.

PREPARING PARTICIPANTS FOR OPEN AND STIMULATING DIALOGUES

When participants agree to join Food Systems Summit Dialogues, they are encouraged to speak out about what matters to them both now and their expectations for the years to come. They are invited to participate as individuals, though will often reflect positions held by others in their stakeholder group. They are also encouraged to be open to the perspectives of others, even (or especially) if they suspect that they will not agree. The willingness of individual participants to connect, engage and explore together, in a welcoming and open-minded way, is a key ingredient of a successful dialogue. It is essential if participants are going to be able to explore complex and multi-dimensional issues together and

define hitherto uncharted pathways, even if they hold very different points of view on what should be done and why.

Dialogue Convenors are encouraged to consider the kinds of information they should seek to collate and share before the Dialogue to help participants navigate the Dialogue's progression successfully. They may seek the advice of local food systems experts and discuss with colleagues.

They may find it useful to share information that helps to:

- **Challenge commonly held perceptions.**
For example: It is often assumed that people are obese in settings where there is abundance of food. Yet there are increasing rates of obesity especially among children even in low-income countries and communities. Also, it is often assumed that children receive inadequate diets because their parents lack knowledge. However, data on the affordability of healthy diets disaggregated by income group reveal that it's seldom because of ignorance or choice and more likely to be a result of poverty.
- **Highlight the interconnections between different components of food systems.**
For example: environmental studies reveal that certain natural resources are being depleted through food production to the extent that the nutritional quality of food is compromised.
- **Illustrate trade-offs that need to be considered.**
For example: the buying price of food for consumers may be much higher than the selling price for producers because of taxes or levies.
- **Show interesting trends over time.**
For example: the rise of obesity, diet-related noncommunicable disease and people eating plant-based diets in some parts of the world
- **Encourage a wide-angle view of food systems.**
For example: by sharing information on where inputs for food production come from, where food is imported from, and where it is processed.

Additional detail is presented in [Annex 1](#) regarding the kinds of information that it may be useful to obtain in preparation for Member State Dialogues. The following section contains a description of the progression of Member State Dialogues.



STAGE 1

Initiating national engagement in the Summit

PURPOSE

The purpose of the first stage of a Member State Food System Summit Dialogue is to initiate an inclusive process through which stakeholders involved in making national food systems sustainable can be engaged in, and contribute to, the Summit process.

During Stage 1 Dialogues, the leaders of national stakeholder groups begin to explore options for national food systems to be inclusive, sustainable and resilient by 2030. They identify emerging issues on which there is consensus as well as those where major disagreements exist. Participants will be provided with resource materials and use these as the basis for discussing opportunities and vulnerabilities within their food systems, as well as the challenges that need to be addressed for these systems to function as desired. They will focus on how best to work together to shape possible pathways to food system sustainability by 2030.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND PROMPT QUESTIONS

The recommended dialogue method uses discussion topics formulated as future statements and prompt questions to initiate the conversation. A **future statement** acts as a common objective for all – an ambitious projection of the future looking ten years forward. It provokes participants to define a collective challenge and imagine an altogether better future.

A **prompt question** moves the focus back to the present and asks what actions can be taken over the next three years that will have the greatest impact towards achieving the future objective that participants now hold in common. By prompting thinking considering the next three years, the dialogue shifts towards progressing concrete action. Further detail on this method can be found in the Reference Manual for Convenors of Food System Summit Dialogues.

It is expected that the Stage 1 Dialogue will be structured in two discussion periods, each with short presentations followed by multi-stakeholder dialogues. In part 1 participants explore their own food systems. In part 2 they consider how best to engage with the preparation of the Food Systems Summit.

The following proposed future statements and prompt questions can be used as the main focus of the two foreseen discussion periods at the first national Dialogue event.

STAGE 1

NATIONAL DIALOGUE – DISCUSSION PERIOD 1

Recommended future statement:

In 2030, our food system will be fit for purpose for the people of our country.

Recommended prompt questions:

- What is the purpose of our food system?
- Where must we focus our efforts?
- What might be the necessary trade-offs?
- Who needs to be involved to achieve this?
- How must they relate to each other to be successful?

STAGE 1

NATIONAL DIALOGUE – DISCUSSION PERIOD 2

Recommended future statement:

The UN Food Systems Summit will be our springboard to preparing a national pathway that will transform our food system by 2030.

Recommended prompt questions:

- What are the opportunities the Summit can create for us?
- What can the Summit offer us?
- How do we want to contribute to the Summit?

Annex 2 provides an indicative agenda for Stage 1 Dialogue.

PREPARATION

In the days before each Dialogue the Convenor will ask the Curator to review the list of people who have accepted their invitation and divide them into mixed groups of up to eight people to work in discussion groups at Dialogue tables (if the Dialogues are in person) or breakout rooms (in the case of virtual Dialogues). Co-workers or people of similar disciplines and experience should be assigned to different discussion groups.

The Convenor will request that the Curator prepares the discussion topics that will be explored in each discussion group and to make contact with participants before the Dialogue. The Curator then appoints a **Facilitator within each discussion group** whose role is to encourage participants as they explore the issues and develop results

from their discussion group. The Facilitator ensures that all participants have an opportunity to contribute and have their perspectives listened to by others. Facilitators are also required for virtual Dialogues.

Before the dialogue the Curator prepares instructions detailing the expected process and output of each discussion group. Resource materials (written or video) are offered to members of the group together with a discussion topic. Just before a Dialogue begins, the Curator should meet with all appointed Facilitators to explain their role. The participants in each Discussion Group should converse in the language they find to be most convenient and can be accompanied by interpreters to aid comprehension.

PARTICIPATION

It is important that the full range of national food system stakeholders be reflected through the progression of Member State Dialogues, incorporating diverse interests. In general, Dialogues work best if there is a minimum of 60 and maximum of 100 participants. The Member State Dialogue Convenor will work with the others in the organizing group to identify up to 100 individuals who will be invited to take part in the Member State Dialogues. Typically, there will be a mix of legislators and officials responsible for policy and implementation within different sectors of national government and local authorities, as well as local community representatives and traditional leaders. Care is taken to invite representatives of all groups of stakeholders involved in food systems, including those who do not normally take part in such events (perhaps because of their remoteness or lack of resources). There is a significant time commitment involved in participation; each will be requested to participate in all three stages of the Dialogue and to be ready to meet in between the stages in order to contribute to the expected outcome of the process – the national pathway to sustainable food systems.

Every effort should be made to ensure diversity, which will mean having a reserve list per stakeholder group. Usually, the leader of each stakeholder group is invited; however, if space is available, each could be invited to bring at least one other member as well.

The invitees may include key figures from any of the following categories:

- National and local legislators (representing different constituencies) especially if they have a specific interest in food systems;
- Ministers or senior officials from different sectors of government including the office of the President or Prime Minister, Finance, Health, Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Forests, Water resources, Marine and Ocean, Environment, Land, Trade, Women, Youth,

Indigenous peoples, Climate, Disaster Management;

- Senior officials including sector leads from local authorities (e.g., cities);
- Local community representatives, traditional leaders, social entrepreneurs, coordinators of networks and similar;
- Organizations of farmers, fishers, livestock producers, horticulturalists, foresters (including those representing smallholders), specialist producers and organizations of agricultural labourers;
- Organizations of food processing operations and organizations representing the workers within them;
- Catering and hospitality enterprises, including chefs and procurement officers;
- Civil society organizations (including but not limited to, youth and women's, indigenous peoples', consumers', environmental, conservation, well-being and other advocacy groups);
- Associations of micro, small, medium and large enterprises in food systems (including those involved in inputs, production, processing, marketing, distribution, retailing, recycling and import-export of food) as well as representatives of their employees and suppliers;
- Those investing in and offering financial support for food systems (e.g., investors and credit schemes);
- Scientific bodies, think tanks, research networks and academic institutions;
- Professional organizations related to: public health, nutrition, veterinarian, agronomy, soil science, forestry, ecology etc.;
- Schools and other educational institutions;
- Regulatory and monitoring bodies;
- Marketing and communications groups;
- Personnel from sub-regional, regional, and international organizations including multilateral, business, civil society, advocacy and educational groups; and
- Other stakeholders with important roles in food systems.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE FIRST STAGE OF MEMBER STATE FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT DIALOGUES?

At the start of the Dialogue the Curator addresses all participants and, in a few minutes, describes the purpose of the Dialogue in helping shape pathways to sustainable national food systems and to prepare for the Summit. The Curator explains that the discussion period will be between 60 and 90 minutes and that the Facilitators are responsible for ensuring that the discussion groups complete most of their tasks within the allotted time. At the end of the discussion period, each Facilitator takes five minutes to report briefly to the rest of the participants on the progress of discussions in the group and the feeling among them. The Curator then sums up the outcomes of the different discussion groups, and encourages further exchanges among the participants, giving an opportunity to those in leading positions to comment on what they have heard and felt.

At the end of this Dialogue the participants indicate whether they agree to stay in contact and to engage further. Each discussion group Facilitator completes a written report which summarizes the outcome from the discussion group. These reports are used by the Curator to develop the summary report of discussions from all the discussion groups. There is no attribution of any statements to specific individuals.

The Curator assembles the reports from all the discussion groups and works with the Convenor to prepare the feedback from the Dialogue event overall. The Convenor ensures that relevant extracts from the Dialogue report are uploaded in the Official feedback form on the Dialogues Gateway website.

Feedback forms and Dialogue reports are used as the basis for an overall Member State Dialogue synthesis that will be prepared for the Summit secretariat. The Convenor also draws on the reports of previous Dialogue events when preparing the next stage in a progression of national Dialogues.

Dedicated training and mentoring is available for Convenors, Curators and Facilitators together with a managed support network and helpline designed specifically for Convenors. All will have opportunities to debrief in between the Dialogue stages and to be mentored by the Summit Secretariat. The capacity in-country is too limited, one Dialogue that combines stages 1, 2 and 3 would be better than none at all, especially if there has been work done beforehand which can be used to establish a draft national food system transformation pathway.



STAGE 2

Extensive explorations everywhere

PURPOSE

The second stage of the Member State Dialogues is a period of extensive explorations about the future of food systems in multiple settings, extending deep into communities and territories. It begins with a series of sub-national Dialogues and concludes with a National Dialogue.

The purpose of Stage 2 of the Member State Dialogues is to create an opportunity for engagement and interconnection among an even broader set of stakeholders through multiple dialogues that connect the sub-national and national level. **Stakeholders across the nation will come together** to discuss and debate ways to ensure that the food systems of the future are sustainable and equitable. If their discussions identify promising options these may be taken into account when proposing pathways to food systems of the future.

PREPARATION

To prepare for the Stage 2 Dialogue, individual stakeholder groups (e.g. farmers, fishers, consumer associations, SMEs) are encouraged to hold preparatory meetings to consider the themes of the Summit, connections they might make with other stakeholder groups and ways they can contribute to broad-ranging systems transformation. In advance of Stage 2 discussions, participants will be able to review propositions from the Summit's independent Scientific Group and Action Tracks to assist their discussions.

PROCESS FOR SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL STAGE 2 MEMBER STATE DIALOGUES

The Stage 2 Member State Dialogue process **begins with sub-national Dialogues** that will take place in many different locations throughout the country, including cities, states or provinces. Some will have a focus on the whole of a food system, others may have a more restricted focus – such as links between food producers and consumers, or ways to reduce the risks associated with food production. It is the role of the National Dialogue Convenor to decide how many Stage 2 Dialogues will be initiated. National authorities then invite local administrations to convene the dialogues, which will usually take place over half a day.

At the beginning, the Convenor of each sub-national Stage 2 Dialogue arranges short presentations about the functioning of food systems in the locality where the dialogue takes place and the plans for the UN Food

Systems Summit. These presentations are followed by discussion groups with discussion topics which focus on interlinkages between the different Action Tracks of the Summit in the location where the Dialogue is taking place. Participants should be allocated to discussion groups in order to reflect maximum diversity. Stakeholders will then explore options for transformation in their local context; they will be encouraged to connect with stakeholders from different settings (e.g., rural vs urban) and to include those who may not normally engage with each other.

Some of these sub-national Dialogues will be directly requested by the national Convenor. In the case of others, individuals and organizations may offer to organize dialogues within the context of the national effort; it will be for the National Dialogue Convenor to nominate them as Convenors of sub-national Dialogues. There is also the possibility that stakeholders may organize independent dialogues at this time and seek to link them with the Member State Dialogues.

Once formally nominated by the national Convenor, sub-national Convenors will be recognized in the **Dialogues Gateway** website and will be able to access training and support. When each Stage 2 sub-national Dialogue has been completed, the Convenor will complete the official feedback form which is then uploaded to the Dialogues Gateway website.

PROCESS FOR NATIONAL LEVEL STAGE 2 MEMBER STATE DIALOGUE

After the Stage 2 sub-national Dialogues, the **national Stage 2 Dialogue** takes place. Within each country, the feedback from the different sub-national Dialogues should be shared with participants in advance. This national Dialogue is designed to harvest the outcomes from the extensive sub-national explorations of local food systems, identify fresh perspectives on options for sustainable national food systems and to ensure they are considered in shaping the national pathway to sustainable food systems. Different stakeholders may then consider the commitments they are prepared to make.

The Stage 2 national Dialogue event is expected to last for a full day. At the beginning, the National Dialogue Convenor explains that the purpose of the event is to identify, from the Stage 1 and Stage 2 sub-national Dialogues, the main themes to be considered for the national pathway to sustainable food systems. The suggested structure of the event is as follows: the first session is set aside for presentation of the main elements from the sub-national Stage 2 Dialogues. The presentations should take no more than 10 minutes per sub-national Dialogue and could be provided by the Convenor of each sub-national Dialogue. The Curator then summarizes the themes that have emerged from these sub-national Dialogues, which are then clarified and confirmed in a short plenary discussion moderated by the Curator.

STAGE 2

SUB-NATIONAL DIALOGUES

Possible future statements linking to Food Systems Summit themes and drivers:

- No one is hungry and everyone is adequately nourished.
- Everyone is able to choose healthy food sourced sustainably.
- Food Production addresses climate change, regenerating and protecting critical ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Food producers and processors are properly rewarded for producing food sustainably.
- Investment finance and other support systems encourage the production, processing and marketing of nutritious food produced sustainably.
- Trade agreements incentivize producers, processors and consumers to adopt sustainable practices.
- Food systems consistently respond to the interests and needs of the vulnerable, including women and children.
- People see food systems as inextricably connected to health, livelihoods, regeneration and climate change.

Recommended prompt questions:

- Who will need to be involved?
- What actions might be needed?
- How will these actions come to happen?
- What outcomes might we seek?
- What will be the impact of any outcomes throughout the whole food system?

STAGE 2

NATIONAL DIALOGUES

Possible future statement Food Systems Summit themes and drivers:

By 2030, our food system will have been changed by our national food systems transformation pathway.

Recommended prompt questions:

- How will the issues and opportunities from the sub-national Dialogues be addressed?
- Who needs to be involved in this?
- What could be our next actions?

Annex 2 provides indicative agendas for the two levels of Stage 2 Dialogues.

After a break, participants are then directed into their discussion groups for the second session; a 1.5-hour discussion period. Ideally there should be at least six discussion groups. Each discussion group prioritizes several themes which have emerged from the sub-national stage 2 Dialogues to be incorporated into the **national pathway to sustainable food systems**. One option is to request each discussion group to prioritize themes from the perspective of one of the five Action Tracks. A sixth group may then identify priority themes from an overall food systems perspective (i.e., all the Action Tracks together).

The role of each discussion group Facilitator is to help members reach consensus on the five themes to be prioritized, and to identify areas of divergence. At the end of the discussion period, Facilitators from each discussion group will report back on the themes their groups find most relevant. Open discussion in plenary follows and stakeholders should consider the emerging themes and their place in shaping the **national pathway**. Some stakeholders will then indicate their intention to commit to supporting the national pathway to sustainable food systems at the Summit.

PARTICIPATION

The participants of Stage 2 sub-national Dialogues will include both leaders and members of stakeholder groups with active interest in local food systems issues; many will come from the locality in which the event is being held. Participation in the Stage 2 national Dialogue will be similar to that of the Stage 1 national Dialogue, and may include some of those who took part in the sub-national Dialogues as well.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND PROMPT QUESTIONS

Stage 2 sub-national Dialogues may be convened by various food systems stakeholders and are intended to explore the various themes and issues that arose from Stage one. The following proposed future statements and prompt questions may be used as the main focus for discussion in Stage 2 sub-national Dialogues. Prompt questions should be tailored to the chosen future statement and phrased 'openly' to prompt discussion.

Stage 2 National Dialogue discussion topics will rely primarily on the outputs of sub-national Dialogues brought to the national level for reflection and consolidation. National Convenors may also make use of any independent dialogues happening either in their country or elsewhere on relevant themes. Discussion topics are ideally specific statements about the desired state of national food systems in 2030 and may reflect aspects of desired future food systems that are being explored by the Summit Scientific Group and Action Tracks. The task

for participants in this case is to consider the policies or practices that might be implemented in the coming three years to make a meaningful contribution to this desired future state. Participants should also discuss how different stakeholders could be brought together to help ensure that the changes happen and achieve the expected results.

PROGRESS BY THE END OF STAGE 2

By the end of Stage 2 there will have been broad engagement of national stakeholders in the exploration of national and local food systems and identification of fresh perspectives on options for national food systems transformation for consideration as the national pathway is developed. Different stakeholders will be considering the commitments they may be prepared to make and discussing these among themselves.

In the interval between Stage 2 and Stage 3, the National Dialogues Convenor will incorporate feedback from Stage 2 into the outline of the national pathway to sustainable food systems which will then be discussed in the Stage 3 Dialogues.



STAGE 3

Consolidation, intention and commitment

The purpose of the third stage of Member State Dialogues is twofold: first, to shape a pathway for national food systems to be sustainable by 2030, in line with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals; second, to consolidate the intentions and commitments of different stakeholders in contributing to this pathway. Participants in the Stage 3 Dialogues will have access to the outputs from the Stage 2 Dialogues and the propositions from the Summit Scientific Group and Action Tracks.

PREPARATION

The Food Systems Summit Secretariat will arrange a debriefing session for Convenors, Curators and Facilitators between Stages 2 and 3. The informal organizing group will meet shortly after Stage 2 to review progress and agree plans for Stage 3. The organizing group will then work with partners to set up arrangements for Stage 3, establishing the programme and communicating it widely. The draft national pathway towards sustainable food systems should be prepared: it will be based on existing national initiatives while taking account of the broader systems perspectives that emerged during Stage 2 of the Dialogues.

Before the Stage 3 Dialogues, participants will receive the consolidated outputs from the Stage 2 Dialogues,

STAGE 3

NATIONAL DIALOGUE – DISCUSSION PERIOD 1

Possible future statements:

Creating our pathway to the food system we need in 2030

Recommended prompt questions:

- Where does consensus exist?
- Which issues do we need to explore further?
- What differences do we have that are currently unresolvable?

STAGE 3

NATIONAL DIALOGUE – DISCUSSION PERIOD 2

Possible future statements:

Working together, we will achieve transformation in our national food systems.

Recommended prompt questions:

- What are the actions we intend to undertake?
- What will be our real breakthroughs?
- Who is committed to participate in this work?

together with propositions from the Scientific Group and Action Tracks. Specific opportunities to respond to these propositions may emerge through the Stage 3 Dialogues and are likely to include a series of high-impact and innovative ‘flagship’ approaches that are science-based. These are especially important in the context of the Summit if they garner support from many diverse stakeholders.

PROCESS

Stakeholder leaders are convened again, typically for a day, to shape the directions of the pathway for sustainable national food systems in the coming decade. The discussions can be structured in two discussion periods; in the first discussion period, members of discussion groups review the Stage 2 Dialogue outputs alongside the work of the Scientific Group and Action Tracks. They will examine the emerging themes from Stage 2 in order to establish the overall shape of the national pathway. They then start to consider the issues

it should cover, and the ways in which the most pressing issues might be addressed.

In the second discussion period, members of discussion groups explore and then seek a degree of consensus on the actions that they expect to take in coming years. They should indicate the priority of each action and show how it will align with, and contribute to, the pathway. Those who wish, may agree the outlines of any statements of intention and commitments for future action.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND PROMPT QUESTIONS

The following proposed future statements and prompt questions can be used as the main focus for discussion in Stage 3 national Dialogues. Prompt questions should be tailored to the chosen future statement and phrased as open questions to prompt discussion.

PARTICIPATION

The Stage 3 Dialogue will be led by the National Dialogue Convenor. It is desirable to include high level representation from the government sectors that are responsible for different elements of food systems, at least for part of the event. Participants from all stakeholder groups should have secured sufficient authority to be able to at least explore options for the shape of national pathways for sustainable food systems futures, as well as for intentions and commitments by different stakeholders. Participation will likely be similar to those who attended the Stage 1 Dialogue, enriched by those who played central roles in the different Stage 2 Dialogues.

PROGRESS BY THE END OF STAGE 3

By the end of this third stage of Member State dialogues, the elements of the national pathway should be clear enough to form the basis for further work by in-country stakeholders to nurture sustainable national food systems in the coming years. They will have a more profound understanding of potential approaches for enabling the emergence of sustainable food systems and the alliances through which they can be advanced in different settings.

The feedback from the Stage 3 Member State Dialogue will summarize the work done to develop a possible shape for the national pathway and any commitments by stakeholders that will be declared at the Food Systems Summit. It is hoped that the pathway will continue to be developed by and be of use to national stakeholders as they advance their journey to food systems sustainability.

After it has been completed by the Convenor, the feedback form should be uploaded on the **Dialogues Gateway website**. The contents of the feedback form will be used to develop a synthesis report of the outcomes from Member State Dialogues.

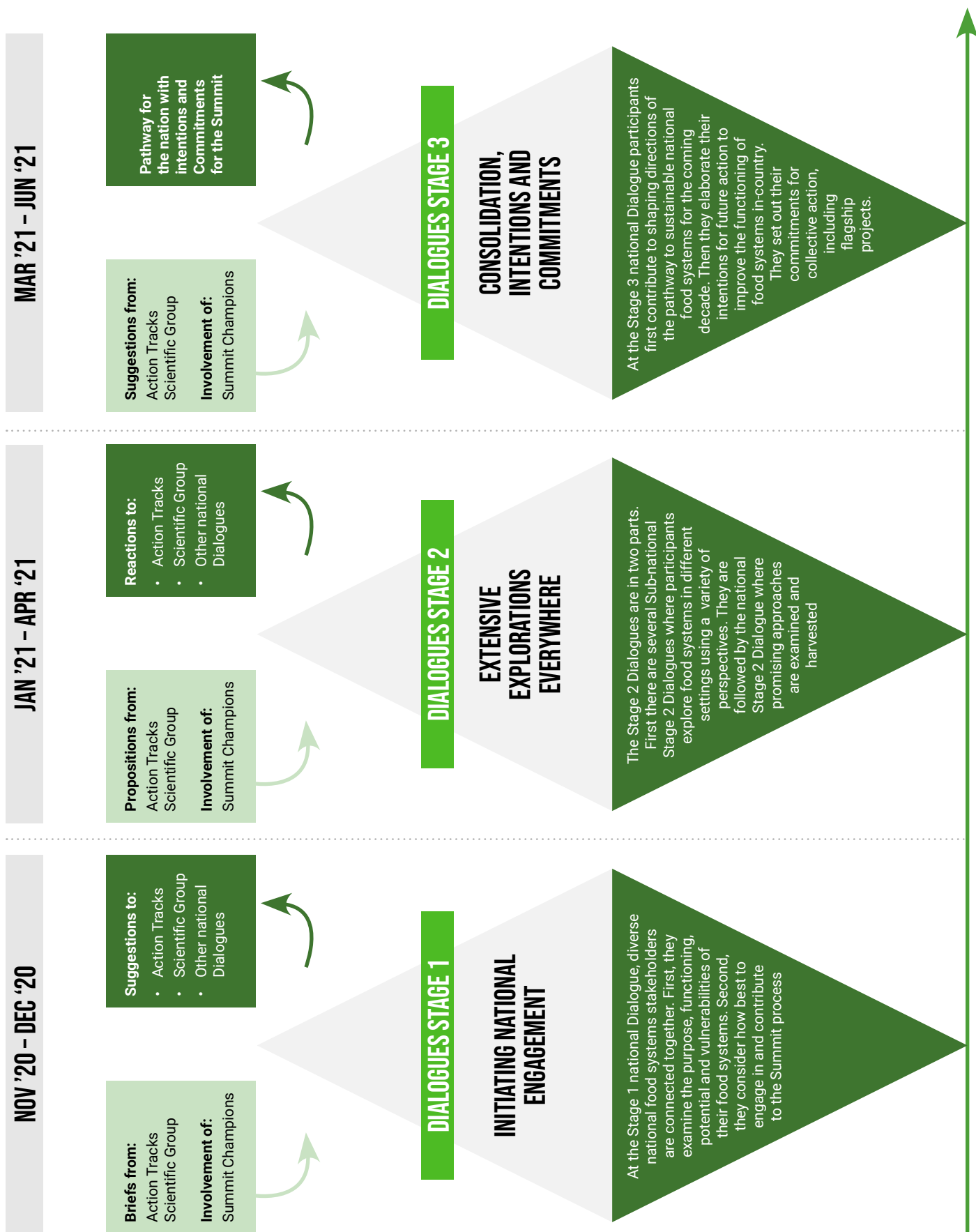


STAGE 4

Dialogues After the Summit

The Convenor, in conjunction with others involved in the organization of the national dialogues before the Summit, will decide the focus and methodology of the Stage 4 Dialogues, arrange the participation and appoint a Curator. There may be a decision to hold Stage 4 Dialogues sub-nationally as well. The feedback form for the Stage 4 dialogues will be developed after the Summit to align with any systems for monitoring future progress that are agreed during the Summit. Updates will be announced in the Summit Dialogues newsletter and information will be posted on the summitdialogues.org website.

CONNECTING THE NATIONAL & GLOBAL CONVERSATION



COMBINING STAGES OF THE DIALOGUES

Combining the stages of the Dialogues is possible if needed. Stages 1 and 2 can be combined and Stage 3 conducted a month or so later. In this case, it would be most effective if the combined Dialogues could be undertaken both sub-nationally as well as nationally. If the progression of Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues is designed to allow for continual exchange between national and global conversations. At each step, the Member State Dialogue outcomes inform the Action Tracks at the global level and in the same way, the Scientific Group and Action Tracks provide inputs to the Member State Dialogues at each stage.

After each Dialogue, Convenors will be asked to submit official feedback to the Food Systems Summit via the **Dialogues Gateway** website using an online form. The contents of this feedback will be synthesized to provide an overall assessment of the outcome from each stage of the Member State Dialogues. A detailed description of the feedback form and process is provided in the Reference **Manual for Convenors of Food Systems Summit Dialogues**.

STAGE 1 MEMBER STATE DIALOGUES

Global Inputs: In advance of the Stage 1 Member State Dialogue, Convenors will receive briefs from the global level Action Tracks and Scientific Group and will be supported by the involvement of the Summit Champions' Network.

Member State Feedback: After the completion of this first stage, the Curator assembles the reports from all the discussion groups and works with the Convenor to prepare the feedback from the Dialogue event overall. The Convenor ensures that relevant extracts from the Dialogue report are uploaded in the Official feedback form on the **Dialogues Gateway** website. The feedback from the first stage of Member State Dialogues will summarize outcomes from the first stage and indicate areas that the stakeholder group leaders expect to explore more deeply in the second stage of the Dialogues. Feedback forms and Dialogue reports are used as the basis for an overall Member State Dialogue synthesis that will be prepared for the Summit secretariat, the Action Tracks and the Scientific Group.

STAGE 2 MEMBER STATE DIALOGUES

Global Inputs: Before the Stage 2 Member State Dialogue, participants will receive propositions from the global level Action Tracks and Scientific Group and will be supported by the involvement of the Summit Champions' Network.

Member State Feedback: After the completion of each Second Stage Dialogue at sub-national or national level, the Curator will assemble the reports from all the discussion groups and work with the Convenor to prepare the feedback from the Dialogue event overall. The Convenor should ensure again that relevant extracts from the Dialogue report are uploaded in the official feedback form on the **Dialogues Gateway** website. This feedback will be made available to the Summit Scientific Group, Action Tracks, and Champions' Network.

STAGE 3 MEMBER STATE DIALOGUES

Global Inputs: In advance of the Stage 3 Member State Dialogue, participants will receive suggestions from the Action Tracks and Scientific Group and will be supported by the involvement of the Summit Champions' Network.

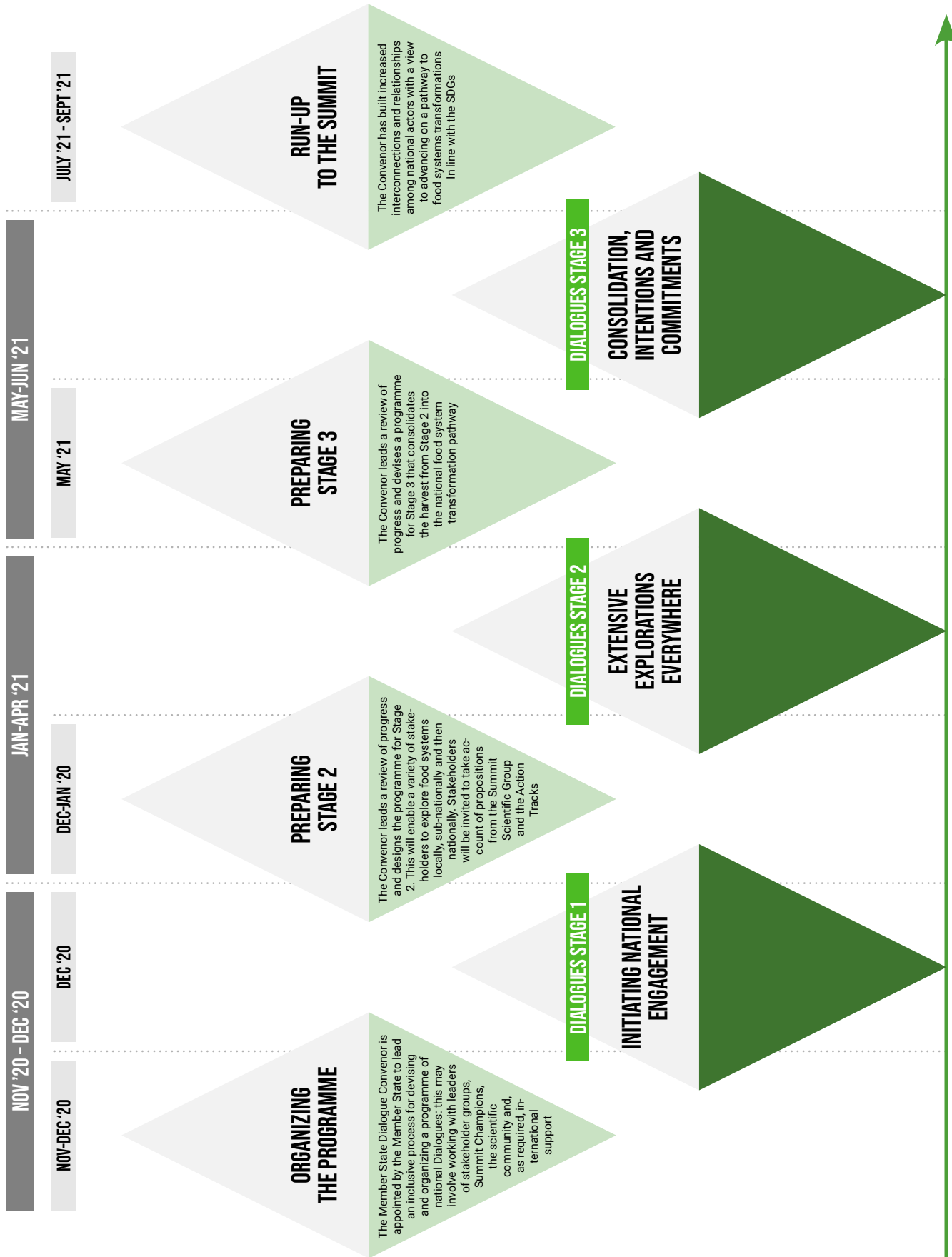
Member State Feedback: The feedback from the Stage 3 Member State Dialogue will summarize the work done to develop a possible shape for the national pathway and any commitments by stakeholders that will be declared at the 2021 Food Systems Summit. It is hoped that the pathway will continue to be developed and used regularly by national stakeholders as they make lasting progress towards food systems sustainability.

TIMELINE

The Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues represent a critical global engagement process leading up to the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021 in conjunction with the UN General Assembly. All Member States are invited to lead a three-stage Dialogue process between November 2020 and June 2021 as described in the following table. It is expected that the three stages will be complete by the time of the ministerial level pre-Summit meeting which will be held in July 2021. Member States are also encouraged to plan for a follow-up Dialogue after the Summit to build on momentum and commitments in order to advance the national food systems transformation. For the purposes of planning Member State Dialogues, the approximate time required for each of the key organizational steps is shown in diagram “Recommended timeline of action for Member State Dialogues” on the following page.



RECOMMENDED TIMELINE OF ACTION FOR MEMBER STATE DIALOGUES



SHAPING A PATHWAY TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS ALIGNED WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

EXPLORING NATIONAL AND LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

To align stakeholders along pathways to visions of sustainable national food systems, participants in Dialogues may find it useful to explore whether a pathway already exists and how well stakeholders are aligned, identifying impediments or factors inhibiting implementation. Participants may also consider the opportunities for encouraging change and whether national policies provide a context that encourages the change that needs to happen. Are the policies supported by necessary laws? Are the financial incentives for change appropriate? Can new partnerships and alliances support change or is innovation and new research needed? Some stakeholders will bring examples from their own experience – traditional practices, pilot projects, innovative new solutions and more. As these initiatives are explored and analysed they may turn out to offer significant potential as stimuli to transformation.

The Convenor and organizing team may find it useful to share information with participants about the national and/or local food systems ahead of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Dialogues. This information can help establish a common, evidence-based reference point and stimulate thinking ahead of the event. It can be shared in the form of briefs, links to relevant documents or videos if available.

ISSUES TO BE EXPLORED IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

The following checklist identifies food systems issues that can usefully be considered in advance of a Food Systems Dialogue. Participants can be encouraged to explore the issues through obtaining information from within their own communities, from their stakeholder groups or from sources of reference. The issue checklist is in five parts:

1. The impact of food systems on different groups of people, ecosystems, biodiversity and climate
2. The functioning of different supply chains and issues faced by people who work within them
3. The ways in which context (or the food environment) influences people's patterns of food consumption
4. The factors that shape local food systems
5. The policies relevant to food systems

IMPACTS OF FOOD SYSTEMS ON PEOPLE, ECOSYSTEMS, BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE

Food systems impact people's food security and nutritional status, their livelihoods, nature and the environment and the governance of territories. These may change by season or over the years and the measure of impact shift. The checklist of questions relating to the impact of food systems covers four areas:

- **Food security and nutrition**
What is the prevalence rate of food insecurity? Of different types of malnutrition (wasting, stunting, excessive weight and obesity, micronutrient deficiencies), and diet-related diseases (diabetes, cancer, cardio-vascular disease) in different population and age groups? Are certain population groups more affected than others (e.g., when disaggregated by income, sex, location). How are these rates evolving over time? What are the associated costs for individuals, households and health systems?
- **Economy and society**
What is the contribution of the food sector to the overall local or national economy? Which are the main economic stakeholders in food systems (e.g., large companies or small enterprises)? What percentage of the working population works in food systems (including in producing, processing, retailing, catering)? What types of employment are available (short or long-term contracts versus daily wages; seasonal versus year-round, registered versus unregistered). What proportion of the working population has access to social protection? To what extent is there inequity in the remuneration of persons working in food systems e.g., between men and women, young and older people or other groups in the population?
- **Governance and territory**
How do food systems affect land-use patterns and control over land? Do the dynamics of food systems affect the politics and economics of specific territories (e.g., patterns of land-use and land tenure; and employment conditions), as well as relationships between food producers, retailers, consumers, local authorities and others?
- **Environment**
What is the environmental impact of food systems – specifically food production, processing and transporting? The impact could include quantities of water used, pollution of aquifers, the status of soils, degree of deforestation, extent of greenhouse gas emissions, with a particular emphasis on how these are changing over the years. What are the

environmental effects of food processing and transport? To what extent is food loss and waste a challenge? What efforts are in place to minimize it?

ISSUES WITH FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

The movement of food from where it is produced to where it is eaten is described as the supply chain. Key functions in food supply chains include producing, trading, processing, storing, transporting and retailing. The loss and waste of food in supply chains is significant. The checklist of questions about food supply chains covers six areas:

- **Producing**
Where and how are the main foodstuffs produced? What are their yields? What inputs are used? How efficient is production? How much of each foodstuff is produced for humans? For animals? For other purposes? Who are the farmers and food processors? How are they organized?
- **Trading**
Is food produced for domestic consumption or for export? How much is the population dependent on food imports? What is the trade balance regarding different foods?
- **Processing**
How are different foodstuffs processed? What is processed where? Which enterprises do the processing: small, medium, or large enterprises? What systems exist to ensure adherence to standards for food safety and quality?
- **Storing and transporting**
Where and how are foodstuffs stored? Who is responsible for storage? How is food transported and who transports it?
- **Retailing**
Where and how do different groups of people obtain their food? Does access vary at different times of year? How much of people's food comes from their own production? What use is made of fresh markets, local shops or supermarkets?
- **Loss and waste of food**
Is there information about the amounts of food that are lost or wasted? Where do the greatest losses occur and why?

THE CONTEXT WHICH INFLUENCES PEOPLE'S DIETS

What people eat is determined by the availability, affordability and desirability of different diets, and choice is influenced by both culture and habit. The checklist of questions about dietary choice covers three areas:

- **Availability**
Is a wide diversity of foods, in particular fresh foods, available in local markets. Is there a shortage of specific foods in certain areas? Are there seasonal variations in availability?
- **Affordability**
What is the cost of a healthy diet for households? Within different income groups, what proportion of a household's budget is spent on food? Are there income levels below which a healthy diet is not affordable? What is the extent of this food poverty?
- **Desirability and consumer habits**
What are the most commonly-eaten foods in the locality? What is the level of dietary diversity? Are food preferences changing over time? Is the use of highly processed foods on the increase? Among whom? Are there rural/urban differences? How are consumer preferences influenced? From where do consumers obtain information about food? How and where do people primarily eat? Is there an increase in eating out – from restaurants or street food vendors? Are there policies that protect consumers and promote healthy eating e.g., fortification standards, food labelling, levies on sugar content etc.?

THE FACTORS THAT SHAPE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

The checklist of questions is spread across five groups of factors that influence local food systems:

- **Biophysical and environmental factors**
How are climate change and environmental degradation affecting local food systems (including increased frequency of droughts and floods, less predictable weather, changes in levels of soil pollution)?
- **Political, governance and territorial factors**
How do government policies shape food systems? What are the challenges associated with their implementation? Are food systems affected by conflict? How do tenure regimes (e.g., land and water rights) affect food systems?
- **Infrastructure and technology factors**
How does the availability of infrastructure affect ways in which food is produced, distributed and sold (including access to roads and other means of transport, to storage facilities, to markets)? Do food systems stakeholders have access to technology which enables them to invest in, innovate and evolve (e.g., telecommunications, processing facilities, as well as research & development)?

- **Socio-economic factors**

How has the economic situation of the locality changed in recent years? Is it more or less favourable to increase investment in food systems? Are specific parts of food systems (e.g., producing, processing, retailing, or catering) particularly affected by economic changes? Do economic disparities affect the ability of different stakeholders to engage in the food system? Do gender dynamics influence the way food systems operate (e.g., is there a difference in control over resources and decision-making when disaggregated by sex)?

- **Demographic factors**

How do the dynamics of populations affect food systems? Are there labour shortages in certain areas (e.g., because youth are leaving rural areas)? Does a lack of employment opportunities in certain areas precipitate migration? Is population growth posing a challenge in terms of ensuring sufficient availability of affordable food for all?

OBTAINING INFORMATION BEFORE THE DIALOGUES

The sources from which information is obtained vary greatly depending on the country. They will generally involve the Central Statistics Office (or equivalent) and Ministries of Food and Agriculture, Health, Planning/Economics, Commerce, Environment, Labour and Social Affairs, Women's affairs, etc. Convenors can draw upon existing reports, policies and stakeholder mapping exercises. Convenors can also consult **global databases** which already compile food systems related data. For example, the [Food Systems Dashboard](https://foodsystemsdashboard.org/)² website includes country fiches with a wide range of data relating to food systems compiled from numerous global datasets, cutting across various sectors.

POLICIES RELEVANT TO FOOD SYSTEMS

The Convenor may wish to provide a brief overview of policies which influence and/or try to address the issues that are described above. These can include policies related to food and agriculture, health, social protection, environment and climate change, education, commerce and trade and more. The Convenors are especially encouraged to include the national policies developed or reviewed in light of the guidelines and policy guidance from the [Committee on World Food Security](https://www.fao.org/cfs/home/activities/nutrition/en/)¹ as shown in [Annex 1](#). The Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security are especially important for the analysis of food systems.

1 <http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/activities/nutrition/en/>

2 <https://foodsystemsdashboard.org/>

EXAMPLE AGENDAS OF MEMBER STATE FOOD SYSTEM SUMMIT DIALOGUES

EXAMPLE AGENDA OF A STAGE 1 MEMBER STATE FOOD SYSTEM SUMMIT DIALOGUE

Stage 1 of the Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogue is expected to take place over the course of one day and be broken into two discussion periods. Below is an example of a typical agenda for a face-to-face event starting at 08:30. A similar event could be set up with two sessions using a web-based platform.

TIME	SESSION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
08:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration of participants Briefing of discussion group facilitators by Curator 	
INITIAL STATEMENTS		
08:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official Welcome to all participants 	National Dialogues Convenor
08:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit 	Senior UN representative
08:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of National Food Systems: pathway to sustainability by 2030 	Senior national official
09:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
DIALOGUES		
09:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Discussion Groups 	Curator
09:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion period 1: Focus on national food systems 	Curator
11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
11:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report bBack by facilitators 	Curator
12:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary by Curator 	Curator
12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
13:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion period 2: Focus on the 2021 UN food systems Summit 	Curator
15:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
15:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report bBack by facilitators 	Curator
16:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary by Curator 	Curator
CONCLUSION		
16:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking ahead to the next stage of the Member State dialogues 	Senior Officials and National Dialogues Convenor
17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farewell and au revoir 	National Dialogues Convenor

EXAMPLE AGENDA OF A STAGE 2 SUB-NATIONAL FOOD SYSTEM SUMMIT DIALOGUE

TIME	SESSION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
08:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration of participants Briefing of discussion group facilitators by Curator 	
INITIAL STATEMENTS		
08:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official Welcome to all participants Introduction to the Food Systems Summit 	National Dialogues Convenor
08:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of local food systems issues 	Sub-National Dialogues Convenor
08:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and to the sub-national dialogue 	Curator
09:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
DIALOGUES		
09:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Discussion Groups 	Curator
09:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion period 1: Focus on national food systems 	Curator
11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
11:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report bBack by facilitators 	Curator
12:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary by Curator 	Curator
CONCLUSION		
12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking ahead to the next stage of the Member State dialogues 	Sub-National Dialogues Convenor
13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farewell and au revoir 	National Dialogues Convenor

EXAMPLE AGENDA OF A STAGE 2 NATIONAL FOOD SYSTEM SUMMIT DIALOGUE

TIME	SESSION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
08:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration of participants Briefing of discussion group facilitators by Curator 	
PLENARY PRESENTATIONS		
0830	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official Welcome to all participants 	National Dialogues Convenor
0840	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose of Sstage 2 national dialogue 	National Dialogues Convenor
0900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of feedback from sub-national Sstage 2 dialogues (10 minutes per dialogue) 	Moderated by Curator
1030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open discussion on the feedback 	Moderated by Curator
1100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
DISCUSSION GROUPS		
1115	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Discussion Groups 	Curator
1130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion period: Identification of principal themes from sub-national stage 2 dialogues 	Moderated by Curator
1300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
WORK IN PLENARY		
1400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report bBack by Ffacilitators on principal themes (5 minutes per discussion group) 	Moderated by Curator
1500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of principal themes by Ccurator 	Curator
1515	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
1530	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open discussion of principal themes from Sstage 2 Ddialogues 	Curator
1645	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking ahead to development of the pathway, intention statement and commitments in the Sstage 3 Ddialogue 	National Dialogues Convenor
1715	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farewell and au revoir 	National Dialogues Convenor

EXAMPLE AGENDA OF A STAGE 3 MEMBER STATE FOOD SYSTEM SUMMIT DIALOGUE

TIME	SESSION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
08:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration of participants Briefing of discussion group facilitators by Curator 	
PLENARY PRESENTATIONS		
0830	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official Welcome to all participants: introduction to Sstage 3 national dialogue 	National Dialogues Convenor
0840	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of a) outcomes from Sstage 2; b) materials from action tracks 	National Dialogues Convenor with others as appropriate
0900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals for shaping and weaving the national pathway 	National Dialogue Convenor and Curator
0930	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
DISCUSSION GROUPS		
0945	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion period: Shaping and weaving elements of the pathway 	In discussion groups
1115	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
WORK IN PLENARY		
1130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report bBack by Ffacilitators: Elements of the pathway (5 minutes per discussion group) 	Curator
1230	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion followed by Curator's Summary 	Curator
1300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
1400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals for stakeholders to outline statements of collective intention and commitments 	National Dialogue Convenor and Curator
1430	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion period: Outlining intention statements and commitments 	In discussion groups
1530	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break 	
1545	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report bback by Ffacilitators: Intention statements and commitments 	Curator
1645	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion followed by Curator's summary 	Curator
1715	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next steps and au revoir 	National Dialogues Convenor

REFERENCES

- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:**
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>
- **Addis Ababa Action Agenda – Financing for Development:**
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/frameworks/addisababaactionagenda>
- **Paris Agreement:**
https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf
- **High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development:**
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>
- **Voluntary National Reviews Database:**
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>
- **2019 Global Sustainable Development Report**
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/gsdr2019>

Full report: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf
- **2020 The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020 (SOFI report):**
<http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2020/en/>
- **2019 IPCC report on land and climate IPCC: Special Report on Climate Change and Land. Summary for Policymakers:**
<https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/summary-for-policymakers/>
- **IPBES – Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019):**
<https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>
- **The Committee on World Food Security:**
<https://cfs-products.ifad.org/>
- **Database provides easy access to CFS products, such as voluntary guidelines, policy recommendations and principles:**
<https://cfs-products.ifad.org/>



FINAL NOTES

Please note, this is Version 1.0 of the Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues Handbook and precedes the release of the Handbook for the Independent Dialogues. Links to this and other resources will be included in subsequent versions uploaded to the *Dialogues Gateway* and communicated to all who have subscribed to the Summit Dialogues Newsletter.

KEY CONTACTS

For any questions and further information, please register for the *Dialogues Gateway* at summitdialogues.org and submit your query via the helpdesk.

This Handbook has been developed by 4SD – Skills, Systems and Synergies for Sustainable Development, in partnership with the Food Systems Summit Secretariat.

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