



# National and Sub-national Food Systems Multi-Stakeholder Mechanisms: An Assessment of Experiences





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## CHAPTER 1

# Presentation of the study

# 1. Objectives of the study



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## 1.1. General objective

This study seeks to identify, study and analyse national and sub-national sustainable food systems multi-stakeholder mechanisms (SFS MSMs). It aims to understand and share the contribution that they make to embedding the food systems approach in policy-making processes and supporting the transition toward sustainable food systems.

## 1.2. Specific objectives

- Understand how national and sub-national mechanisms support governments in working more effectively with other actors and integrating sustainability policies with other relevant food systems policies (e.g. nutrition, food security, transportation, protection for small producers)
- at different levels (international to local) with a more holistic approach.
- Describe examples of concrete achievements made by these mechanisms in relation to the promotion of more sustainable food systems (e.g. environmental and other food systems benefits), and capture the key challenges they face.
- Understand the formats, sustainability principles and key food systems priorities of these mechanisms, the way they engage actors (and which actors), and analyse, in as much detail as possible, how these factors influence their success and the achievement of results.
- Promote knowledge sharing and foster innovation in the way that these mechanisms collaborate, mobilize more support for them in general, and stimulate the emergence of more similar mechanisms at different levels.



## 2. Significance of the study

This research intends to:

- Fill the aforementioned knowledge gaps to contribute to the aim of the One Planet network's SFS Programme to support the shift toward sustainable food systems through a holistic approach;
- Contribute to the efforts made by the Community of Practice on Food Systems Approach on the Ground (CoP-FSAG) to translate food systems approach theory into practice;
- Contribute to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and other relevant multilateral forums, at the sub-national, national and international level, by providing important insights on how multi-stakeholder governance can support the five defined action tracks;
- Provide a knowledge product and a technical tool with important lessons learned from the 10 SFS MSMs studied, which can be used to inform and encourage countries and cities to advance MSMs as an element of sustainable food systems;
- Provide an increased knowledge base regarding SFS MSMs and the broader governance structures and arrangements in which they operate.



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### 3. Research methods and limitations

The study methodology was aimed at identifying, analysing and comparing 10 good examples of national or sub-national multi-stakeholder mechanisms for sustainable food systems that:

- Bring together different food actors (e.g. government, private sector, NGOs, farmers) from all points of the supply chain (from production to consumption), in an inclusive way;
- Connect actors with different food agendas (environment, health, trade, agriculture);
- Are connected to the implementation of an existing holistic food policy or support an attempt at national or sub-national level to embed a food systems approach in the food policy-making process;
- Preferably assign an active role to national or sub-national level government (mechanisms led by civil society or the private sector can be considered as long as the government is involved and the mechanism is working in the context of a policy agenda);
- Are geographically balanced between the world regions.

This research used a qualitative case study methodology.<sup>22</sup> The detailed methodology is shared in Annex 1.

The first stage involved the selection of cases and included six steps:

- Phase 1 of the literature review and informal expert consultations to identify potential case studies;
- Phase 2 of the literature review and use of a pre-screening tool to rule out cases that did not meet the study's criteria;
- Phase 3 of the literature review, which focused on the 13 selected case studies and semi-structured interviews with focal points;
- Submission to the Open Planet network's CoP-FSAG for sustainable food systems to validate the selection of case studies;
- Contact with the focal points of the 13 selected case studies;
- Final selection of 10 case studies.

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<sup>22</sup>A qualitative case study methodology is a research methodology that helps to explore a phenomenon within some particular context using various data sources. It undertakes this exploration through a variety of lenses in order to reveal multiple facets of the phenomenon (Baxter and Jack, 2008).



The second stage involved the collection of comprehensive and thorough information about the 10 SFS MSM cases selected. This was carried out through two online surveys, with different purposes and target respondents.

1. **A survey aimed at the focal points**, focused on gathering key and basic information about the selected SFS MSM, such as origins, structure, governance and its relationship with the holistic food policy formulation process. The information gathered through the focal point survey is aimed at filling in the knowledge gaps about the selected case.
2. **A survey aimed at the stakeholders**, focused on capturing the perceptions of different stakeholders about different aspects of the selected SFS MSM, such as the quality of dialogue and leadership, the capacity to foster participatory and inclusive processes, perceived achievements and their causes, and perceived strengths and barriers.

The third stage involved the analysis of the results. This stage was divided into three phases:

- General analysis of the surveys' participants (presented in Annex 4);
- Analysis of the data from both surveys to enrich the individual case studies (presented in Chapter 3);
- Comparative analysis to determine trends, patterns and other relevant information (presented in Chapter 2).

The fourth stage involved the production of this final report. The case studies were revised by each focal point, and the whole report was reviewed by 10 members of the Open Planet network's SFS Programme's CoP-FSAG.

The results presented in the assessment of experiences are limited by some research constraints. Please refer to Annex 1 for more information.



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