



Food Value Chain Consultations

Consultative workshop on sustainable food value chain focusing on Individual Consumption of Food
29th April 2021

WORKSHOP REPORT

Attendees:

Full list of attendees is available in the end of the report.

Workshop objectives:

- Introduce the value-chain approach as adopted by the One Planet-International Resources Panel Task Group.
- Provide key findings of the analysis of the food value chain with the focus on individual consumption.
- Understand the role of the individual consumption stage in the food value chain and its dependencies on other stages.
- Understand what initiatives/solutions currently exist at this stage of the food value chain to:
 - define the opportunities for their scale-up and replication;
 - identify gaps and challenges to be addressed;
 - identify actions needed by stakeholders at other stages of the food value chain to improve resource efficiency of food sector.

Full presentation of the meeting is available [here](#).

MAIN MESSAGES

- The application of the 'Value-Chain Approach' to analyse the food sector showed that the middle stages of the food value chain -- controlled by food companies across trading, processing and packaging, retail and food services -- are structurally powerful and have a disproportionate influence across both primary production and final consumption. Actors at these stages have a huge impact on the activities at either end in determining both what food farmers produce and what food consumers buy.
- While crucial, information dissemination and consumer awareness raising alone are not sufficient to lead the changes in practices and behaviors that are needed for sustainable consumption and production (SCP). They need to be accompanied by more structural changes at different levels including more equitable and inclusive long-term policies and regulations, to trigger this change and shift in the underlying consumption preferences.
- Furthermore, this needs to be complemented with science-based behavior change techniques. Particular opportunity for long-term behaviour change in consumption patterns lies in school feeding programmes (public procurement as an enabler) and education, ensured through government-led efforts. These provide a captive setting where changes in consumption practices



can be triggered through the nurturing of core values related to sustainability of food from the young age.

- Consumer voice, including that of the most vulnerable, needs to be properly included in research, policy discussions, solutions development and decision-making processes. Consumers can be empowered to manifest their demands in different ways – such as by advocating for consumer rights, and by helping shape regulation.
- Key success factors of the most important food movements and trends today include a strong engraining into people’s core values (which are powerful triggers for action), strong leadership, cooperation with local government structures and, in many instances, robust engagement and buy-in from producers. On the other hand, there are important barriers for the impact size and duration of such movements, including having considerably less power than entities with political or economic interest to maintain the status quo, competing values and constraints within consumers, the wide range of possible issues to be addressed, availability of resources, and regular access to communication channels.

SETTING THE SCENE

- Strengthening the science-policy interface by adopting the value-chain approach is one of the key elements in strengthening multilateral cooperation on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).
- As part of this process, the One Planet network has planned a series of multi-stakeholder consultations to take place in 2021, focused on high-impact sectors of food, construction and plastics.
- These consultations build on the findings of [the One Planet-International Resources Panel Task Group](#) on catalysing science-policy action on SCP, presented in this [report](#) “Catalysing Science-Based Policy Action on Sustainable Consumption and Production: The Value-Chain Approach and its Application to Food, Construction and Textiles”.
- This is the first consultations series that is focusing on the food sector and dedicated to “Innovative business and policy solutions” along the food value chain. It consists of 5 workshops focusing on the prioritized stages of the food value chain.
- The outcome document of these workshops developed jointly with the participants will be the basis for the collaborative development of the common agenda for action in the food sector.
- This is the fourth workshop of the series dedicated to individual consumption of food. Full information on the food value chain consultations can be found [here](#).
- The work on the value chain approach in high-impact sectors will inform further discussions on a post-2022 strategy on sustainable consumption and production lead by the Member States.

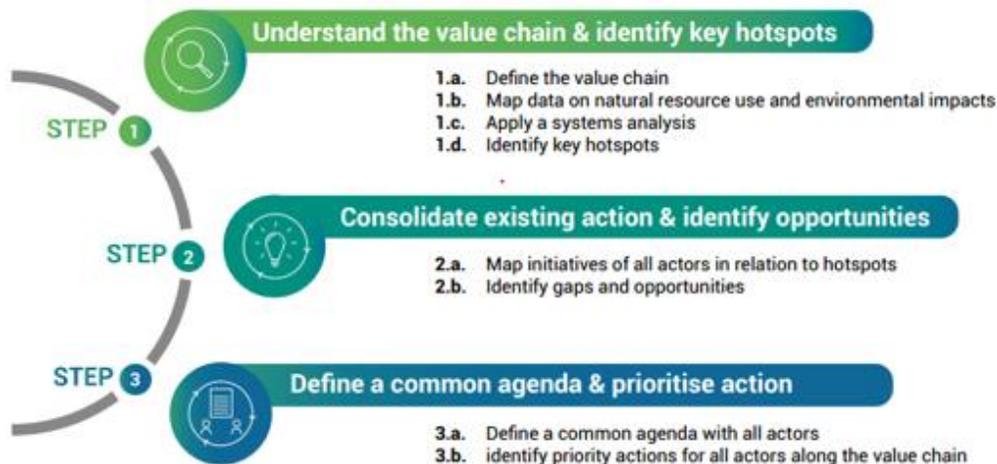
VALUE-CHAIN APPROACH AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE FOOD SECTOR

- The One Planet-International Resources Panel Task Group on catalysing science-policy action on SCP has been established at [the request the Member States at the 4th United Nations Environment Assembly](#)
- The [Task Group](#) aimed to catalyse science-based policy action on SCP, thereby providing actionable insights on the management of natural resources in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable



Development. To achieve this, the task group took a sectoral focus and applied the ‘Value-Chain Approach’.

- The ‘[Value-Chain Approach](#)’, as developed by the Task Group, is a methodology for catalysing science-based policy action on sustainable consumption and production which identifies key points of intervention within economic systems to reduce natural-resource use and environmental impacts through a common agenda for action.
- By applying a systems lens, the socio-economic drivers and barriers that influence value chain operations of different sectors are identified, taking into account the complex feedback loops influencing the operations and behaviours of actors along the value chain. This approach shows that the key points of intervention are often not the same as where natural resource use and environmental impacts take place, making systems analysis essential.
- The ‘Value-Chain Approach’ identifies where the greatest opportunities for a shift to sustainable consumption and production exist, shapes corresponding actions by building on current knowledge and available data and engages the relevant actors.
- The Approach consists of three main steps:



- The Task Group has applied various steps of the ‘Value-Chain Approach’ to three high-impact sectors: food, construction and textiles.
- When it comes to the sector of food, application of Step 1 has demonstrated that¹: *“while the majority of natural resource use is taking place at the primary production stage, a systems lens that considers drivers of food systems shows us that primary producers have a limited ability to shape food systems and change their production practices. Analysis shows that the middle of the value chain, controlled by food companies across processing and packaging, retail and food services, is structurally powerful and has a disproportionate influence across both primary production and final consumption. While these stages of the value chain don’t use the most resources themselves, they have a huge impact on the activities at either end in determining both what food farmers sell and what food consumers buy”*.

¹ Full analysis available [here](#)



- More specifically, in relation to the Individual Consumption the analysis showed that the consumers' behaviour is strongly shaped by the food environment they are in. Mainly:
 - Options determined by physical environment. Selection of food markets, supermarket products restaurants. Consumers in urban areas largely purchase processed, packaged, refrigerated food that originates from all over the world.
 - Lack of access and skills: lack of access and skill and knowledge, limited economic means or time
 - Lack of awareness: individuals have limited information on the consequences of their consumption behaviour for their own health, the natural environment and farmer livelihoods. Information on food products can be confusing or misleading, causing consumers to think they are making more sustainable or healthy choices than they actually are.
 - Influenced by food companies. Food companies, restaurants and retailers actively tempt customers to make certain choices, including advertising, packaging and presentation.

- The analysis of the food value chain identified three core challenges:
 - 1) How we produce food: The majority of natural-resource use and environmental impacts takes place during production. Changing production practices is critical to using resources more efficiently and sustainably, while causing less damage to the environment.
 - 2) How much food we produce and consume: One-third of all food produced is either lost at the production, transportation or processing stages, or wasted downstream in the food at the retail, food service and consumption stages.
 - 3) What types of food we produce and consume: Different types of food can embody large differences in the natural resources used and environmental impacts caused along the stages of the value chain including production processing, transportation, and disposal.

- Initial application of Step 2 of the Approach was based on the reporting data of the One Planet network. The One Planet network activities related to food were mapped in relation to the stage of the value chain that they target. Most activities of the Network take place at primary production (23%) or individual consumption (19%) stages. The middle stages of the food value chain, including food processing and packaging, transport and logistics, retail and food service, represent only 25% of the total. A significant amount of these activities within this 'middle part' of the food value chain can be seen at the food service stage.

- 70% of the communication campaigns reported by the Network that are connected to food are targeted at consumers and constitute the bulk of the activities under the Individual Consumption stage of the food value chain. The campaigns address food waste, sustainable and healthy diets, food security, local and urban agriculture, and consumption of local produce. Existing tools and resources tackle consumer habits through learning, information on sustainable diets and responsible consumption, and mobile applications.

Policies targeting Processing, manufacturing and retail (based on 12.1.1 reporting data)

- Concentration of policy measures at the two ends of value chain
- Nearly 60% of the measures proposed at either input/production phase or consumption phase.



- Policy measures targeting individual consumption indicate that the onus of 'being sustainable' is placed primarily on the individual consumer, who does not have the same amount of influence on various levers as players at other upstream stages.
- The large majority of the measures addressing individual consumption are voluntary.
- Within these voluntary measures, several focus on the issue of food loss and waste by addressing the question of 'how much we produce and consume'.
- In the case of those voluntary measures addressing the question of 'what we produce and consume' the overwhelming majority are centred around awareness raising campaigns and information dissemination.

EXISTING ACTION AT INDIVIDUAL CONSUMPTION STAGE OF THE FOOD VALUE CHAIN

The discussions of the workshop focused on existing initiatives/solutions at individual consumption stage of the food value chain. Through the discussion a number of enablers, challenges & gaps that exist at these stages were identified.

Opportunities & enablers

- Opportunity for long-term behaviour change in consumption patterns lies in school feeding programmes (public procurement as an enabler) and education. These provide a captive setting where changes in consumption practices can be triggered through the nurturing of core values related to sustainability of food from the young age.
- Implementation of science-based climate targets for food service providers as well as a consumer facing labels for meals that are more climate friendly is an interesting opportunity.
- Practical co-operation through direct producer-consumer linkages, including the adoption of innovative technologies to connect producers/retailers and consumers is another way to trigger the shift to sustainable production and consumption (SCP).
- Localised solutions, such as shorter food value-chains, the promotion of local food and introduction of participatory local-based labels, involving consumers, farmers, local authorities and sellers, show promising results and present an opportunity for the shift to SCP.
- Working with the actors of the food value chain that are setting the norms and values, can be an enabler for the shift in consumer behaviour and shifts the supply and demand towards sustainably produced food products. A commitment approach from these actors, especially those in the middle stages, to supply sustainable products is an enabler to assure the raise in the demand for these products. The challenge remains that commitments are voluntary, and thus no institution has a mandate to deliver accountability.
- Engaging with chefs in order to increase the availability of sustainable meals and raise awareness among the food service industry as well as consumers, has shown promising results.
- Policy instruments such as taxation and regulation of unhealthy/unsustainable food (e.g. sugar tax), or compulsory indication of levels of certain components that are harmful to health on product packaging can enable sustainable production and consumption of food. Burden falling on consumers through such regulations needs to be avoided.
- Science-based consumer research should be the basis for any consumer-targeted actions, including policy development, awareness raising campaigns, etc.



- Targeting action to the most impactful consumption patterns, such as red meat consumption and food waste, allows to narrow the focus of initiatives and solutions with the potential for the most impactful outcome.
- As retailers have direct interactions with consumers as well as with other actors of the food value chain, increasing their awareness on sustainable consumption and production, supported by targeted incentives, to empower action is key.
- As not all types of food have the same resource use and environmental impacts, there is an opportunity to increase production and consumption of sustainable diets by shifting to plant-rich meals and away from ultra-processed foods and meat consumption.

Challenges & Gaps

- The consumption of highly processed food, that has both negative impacts on natural resource use and health, differs in developed and developing countries. While this consumption prevails in the developed world, most of the food consumed in the developing countries is not processed. However, there is a tendency towards processed food consumption related to the increase of income.
- While crucial, information dissemination and consumer awareness raising alone are not sufficient to lead the changes in practices and behaviors that are needed for sustainable consumption and production (SCP). They need to be accompanied by more structural changes at different levels including more equitable and inclusive long-term policies and regulations, to trigger this change and shift in the underlying consumption preferences.
- Consumer voice, including that of the most vulnerable, needs to be properly included in research, policy discussions, solutions development and decision-making processes. Consumers can be empowered to manifest their demands in different ways – such as by advocating for consumer rights, and by helping shape regulation.
- Information to consumers should be communicated in ways that consumers can process quickly and intuitively at the moment of making their food choices. Therefore, there is a need to promote the use of tools to communicate sustainability information on food products and services in a reliable and clear way. Another option is to make the sustainable option a default choice (unconscious decision-making).
- There are evaluation issues that impair a clear picture of the actual impacts and pathways of consumer-driven or consumer-focused approaches. There is a lack of publicly available data that can clarify the effect of specific approaches on sale trends, complexity of accounting, difficulty to define and measure short and long-term outcomes.
- There is a need to address the paradox between actors at middle stages of the food value chain not providing healthy and sustainable food due to the lack of consumer demand, and consumers not being able to demonstrate this demand due to a lack of sustainable food choices. However it is important to note that plurality of reasons affect the supply of and demand for sustainable products. These could be but are not limited to market-driven demand; profitability and accessibility; social and cultural environment.
Consumers can be empowered to demonstrate demand for healthy and sustainable diets in other ways – such as by advocating for consumer rights, and by helping shape regulation. Food suppliers could also work directly with consumer advocacy groups to be able to respond to consumer demand.



- Key success factors of the most important food movements and trends today include a strong engraining into people’s core values (which are powerful triggers for action), strong leadership, cooperation from local government structures and, in many instances, robust engagement and buy-in from producers. On the other hand, there are important barriers for the impact size and duration of such movements, including having considerably less power than entities with political or economic interest to maintain the status quo, competing values and constraints within consumers, the wide range of possible issues to be addressed, availability of resources, and regular access to communication channels.
- Through increased advertising, some companies in the middle of the food value chain push for an increased consumption of highly processed, unsustainable and unhealthy diets.

LIST OF INITIATIVES SHARED AT THE WORKSHOP

- [Cool Food Pledge](#) and [Cool Food Meal Badge](#), World Resources Institute
- [E-Campo](#) distance learning platform, Emprapa
- [Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network](#)
- [School-based food and nutrition education](#), FAO
- [Food Matters Action Kit](#), Commission for Environmental Cooperation
- [“From Short Food Supply Chains to Sustainable Agriculture in Urban Systems: Food Democracy as a Vector of Transition”](#)
- [Semdesperdicio](#), WWF Brasil and Emprapa
- [MiCodigo Verde](#), Fundacion Chile
- [The Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative](#), WWF South Africa
- [My Food Ways](#)
- [Evocco mobile app](#)
- [WWF Meat Guides](#)
- [Food For Life — A global awareness raising campaign for more sustainable food choices](#)
- [Policy Options for Sustainable Food Consumption – Review and Recommendations for Sweden](#)

LIST OF ATTENDEES

	Organisation	Expert’s name
1	BRS Convention	Kei Ohno Woodall
2	Consumers Goods Council	Sibulela Ngeniswa
3	Consumers Goods Council	Linda Drummond
4	Consumers International	Charlie Worthington
5	Consumers International	Bethan Laughlin



6	Costa Rica – Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	Roberto Azofeifa
7	Embrapa	Gustavo Porpino
8	European Commission	Jesus Maria Alquezar Sabadie
9	Evocco	Hugh Weldon
10	FAO	Melissa Vargas
11	Fundación Chile	Antonia Biggs Fuenzalida
12	Fundación Chile	Flavio Araya
13	Fundación Chile	Claudia Razeto Pavez
14	GAIN – Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition	Ashish Deo
15	INRAE	Yuna Chiffolleau
16	International Resource Panel	Maria Jose Baptista
17	IRP expert – University of Oxford	John Ingram
18	Mauritius – Ministry of Environment	Sarita Meeheelaul
19	Mexico – Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources	Claudia Arely Sanchez Castro
20	Mexico – Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources	Lydia Meade Ocaranza
21	National Technical University, Mendoza	Pablo Arena
22	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	Anita Lundstrom
23	Stockholm Environment Insitute	Andrea Norgren
24	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	Eva Ahlner
25	Switzerland – Federal Office for Agriculture	Patrick Mink
26	UNEP	Garrette Clarke
27	UNEP	Beatriz Martins Carneiro
28	UNEP	Robert Mburia
29	UNEP	Boris Le Montagner
30	UNEP	Daniela Liebetegger
31	Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network	Marissa Balfour
32	WRI	Edwina Hughes
33	WWF Brazil	Virgínia Antonioli
34	WWF Colombia	Ferney Diaz Castaneda
35	WWF Germany	Michael Mulet
36	WWF South Africa	Innocentia Modau
37	WWF South Africa	Ivanna Katz
38	WWF South Africa	Pavitray Pillay