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## CHAPTER 3

# Presenting the 10 cases

# 1. Presenting the three cases selected at national level



Image credit: Paul Holmbeck, former CEO of Organic Denmark

At national level, there are very few cases of SFS MSMs linked to the implementation of a holistic SFS policy, or connected to a policy-making process for food systems transformation. Nevertheless, this research identified a few cases concentrated in Europe, where some countries have adopted forward-looking and ambitious sustainable food systems policies and put in place or connected them to MSMs for their formulation, implementation and/or evaluation.

In general terms, the governance of food systems in African countries and cities happens in an uncoordinated and unintegrated way (Smit, 2016). In Latin America and the Caribbean, the food and nutrition security approach prevails, with different types of participatory governance mechanisms in place (e.g. food and nutrition security commissions, committees,

boards), depending on the country. In Asia, policy-making is mostly state-driven, and food issues tend to be addressed by ministries of agriculture, although there is some evidence of intersectoral coordination, particularly at local level.

Some recent developments, such as the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council and the UK's Advisory Panel (mentioned in Chapter 3.2) suggest that the multi-stakeholder approach to national food policy formulation and implementation is expanding.

The following section presents a summary of the three SFS MSMs selected at national level: France, Denmark and India. The most relevant features are compiled from a literature review and the results from both surveys.



## 1.1. France: French National Food Council (CNA)



Image credit: Margaux Denis, *Secrétariat interministériel CNA*

### 1.1.1. About the CNA

The French National Food Council (Conseil National de l'Alimentation, CNA) is a long-standing institutionalized and independent mechanism that was created by decree<sup>40</sup> in 1985 by the French ministries responsible for agriculture, health and the economy. The Ministry of the Environment was officially added as the fourth ministry in the 2016-2019 mandate (decree published in October 2018). The CNA is considered to be the French “food parliament” and its main role is to be an advisory body for food-related issues in France.

In order to fulfil its advisory role, the CNA has established processes for consultation and debate that take into account the concerns and perspectives of French society as a whole. Through a highly participatory consultation mechanism, the CNA fosters participation and issues opinions (avis) that combine the different realities, perceptions, expectations and preferences of consumers and other food system stakeholders. To date, these consultation processes have contributed to inclusive public decision-making on issues related to food quality, consumer information, nutrition, health safety, food access, food crisis prevention, policy formulation and food systems knowledge management.

The CNA operates at national level with an estimated annual budget of EUR 350,000 from public funds. These resources cover staff salaries, the organization of meetings (e.g. logistics, catering, per diems), learning exchanges/workshops, the launching of new projects, studies, communication products and materials.

### 1.1.2. Structure and governance

#### Structure

Members participating in the CNA are predefined in official public documents (arrêtés)<sup>41</sup>. The 63 members representing the different food system stakeholders are grouped into 8 collèges and appointed by joint order of the ministries responsible for the environment, agriculture, health and the economy. The leadership role is filled by the CNA secretariat.

The CNA is a highly participatory SFS MSM, with a very broad and diverse representation of food system stakeholders. Figures 33, 34 and 35 show the composition of the mechanism in terms of the types of organizations (constituencies), sectors and food systems activities represented.

<sup>40</sup><https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000000503727/1985-12-05/>

<sup>41</sup><https://cna-alimentation.fr/cna/membres/>

In terms of government representatives, food-related ministries<sup>42</sup> and the parliament<sup>43</sup> are comprehensively represented.

All relevant food-related constituencies, sectors and actors working in different food systems activities participate actively in the CNA, making it the SFS MSM with the highest and broadest participation base of all the cases studied.

### Governance

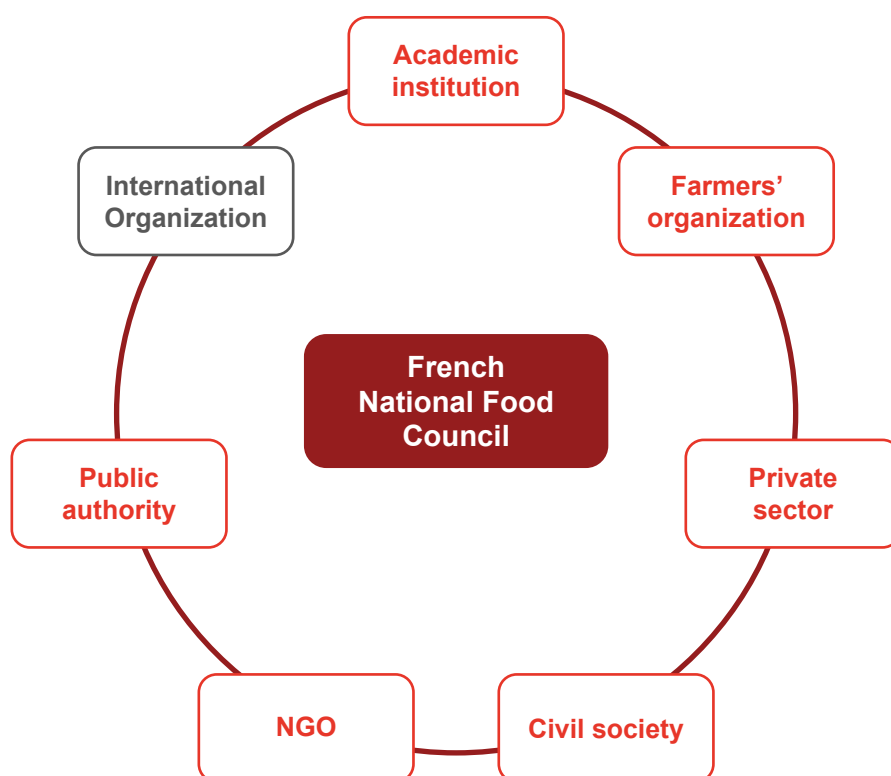
Governance in the CNA is guided by good governance principles that are enshrined in a written document,<sup>44</sup> endorsed by all members and are publicly available for consultation. Figure 36 shows the good governance principles practised by the CNA.

Additionally, this SFS MSM has put in place procedures to live up to these principles. For instance, the CNA has established mechanisms to capture and take into

account the points of view of all participants, and to include inputs from citizens and actors outside the council, when needed. It also has strategies in place to communicate effectively, reach consensus, learn collaboratively and contribute to its members' capacity building.

One outstanding example of these democracy-building processes is the procedure established in 2019 to include direct citizen participation. Its aim is to fully embody the spirit of the "food parliament", enriching the consultation processes and building a more inclusive and legitimate council. A participatory methodology<sup>45</sup> was developed and tested in 2020 during a consultation on food packaging. This reform includes the establishment of a citizen participation unit and the territorial decentralization of CNA discussions.

Meetings take place following a predefined annual calendar with three or four plenary meetings per year



**Figure 33. Types of organizations (constituencies) represented in the CNA (in red)**

<sup>42</sup>Permanent participants with advisory roles: ministries responsible for agriculture, social cohesion, trade, consumption, economy, education, employment, environment, industry, overseas, fisheries, research, health (13 ministries in total). Four key ministries are involved: Ministry for the Ecological Transition, Ministry of the Economy, Finance and the Recovery, Ministry for Solidarity and Health, and Ministry of Agriculture and Food. In addition, representatives from the following ministries also attend the sessions: social cohesion, trade and crafts, consumption, national education, employment, environment, industry, foreign affairs, fishing, research, health.

<sup>43</sup>Two representatives from the French parliament: Senate and National Assembly.

<sup>44</sup><https://www.cna-alimentation.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/CharteEthiqueD%C3%A9ontologie.pdf>

<sup>45</sup><https://cna-alimentation.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/La-participation-citoyenne-au-sein-du-CNA.pdf>

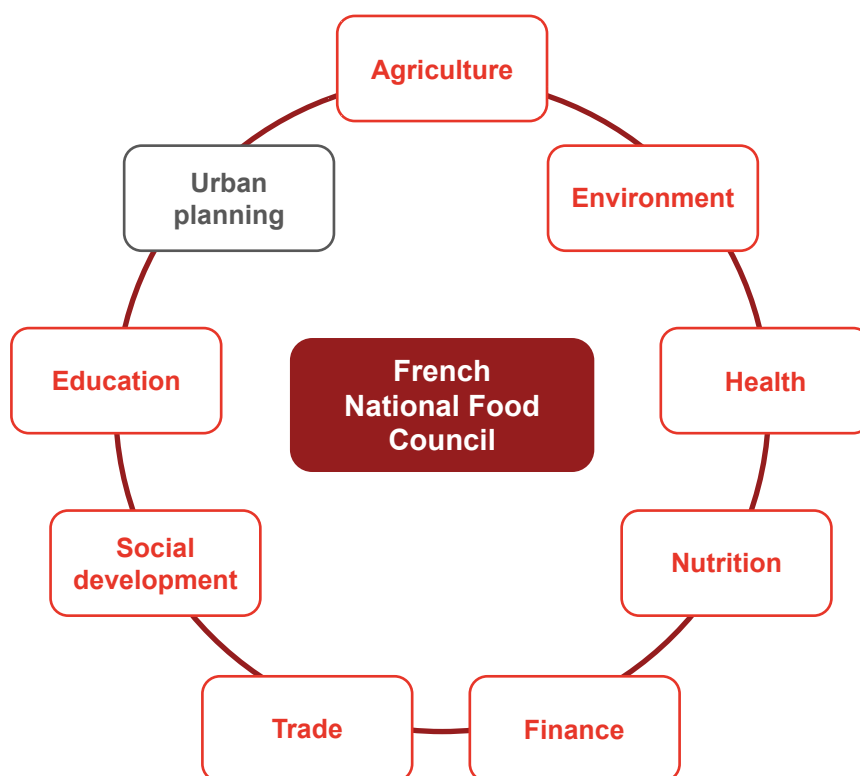


Figure 34. Sectors represented in the CNA (in red)

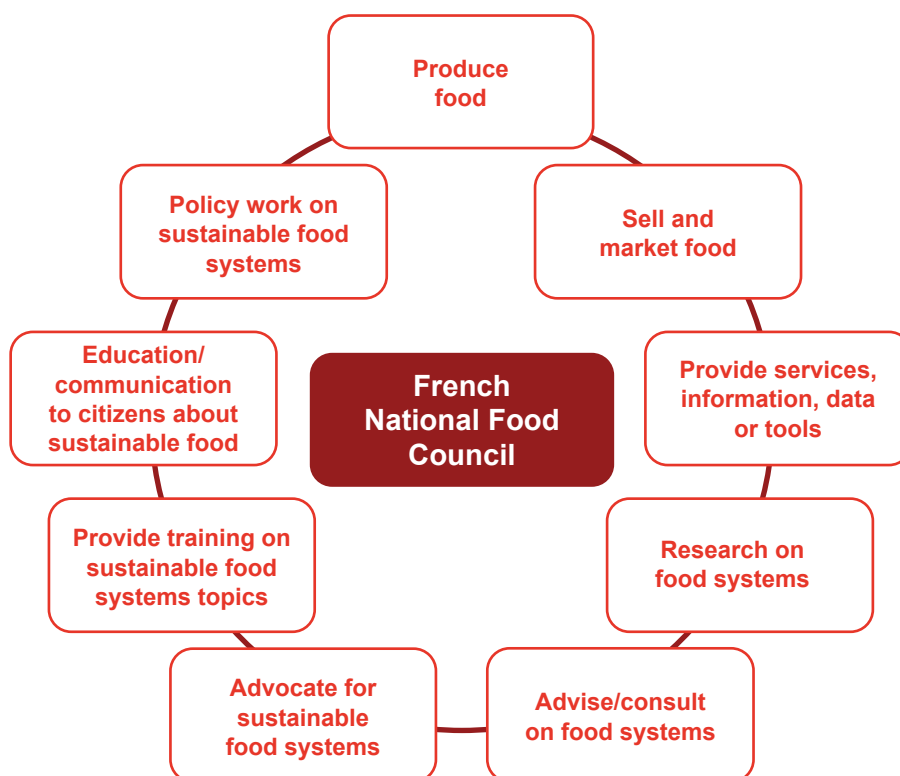
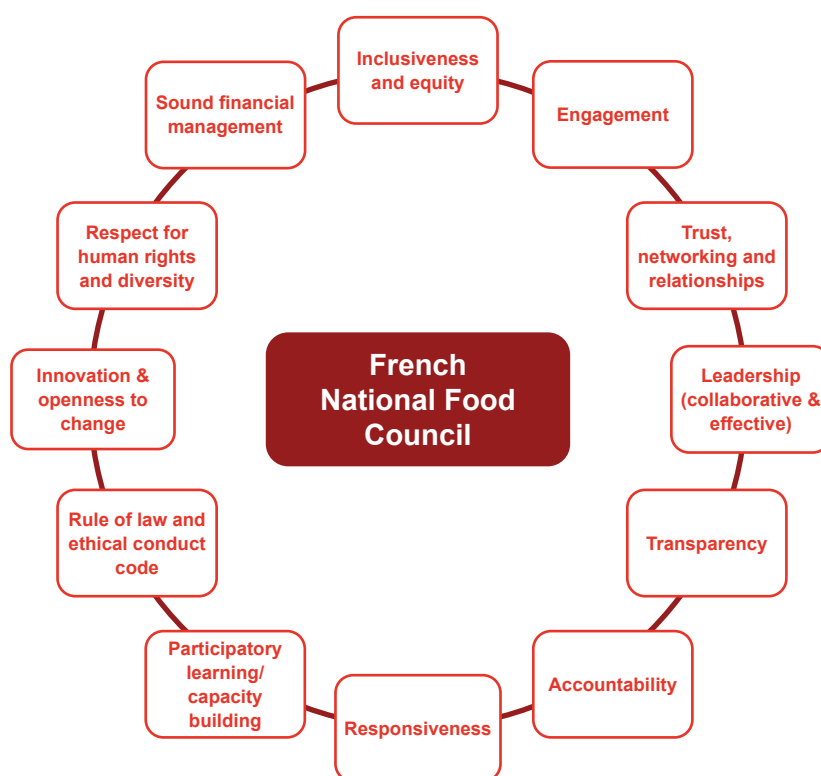


Figure 35. Activities represented in the CNA (in red)



**Figure 36. Good governance principles practised by the CNA (in red)**

and approximately one consultation group<sup>46</sup> meeting per month. The agenda and purpose of the meetings are defined by the CNA secretariat together with the supervisory ministries and are shared with all CNA members in advance. On average, 71 percent of the stakeholders surveyed in this study attend all meetings and dedicate more than 4 hours a month to the work of the SFS MSM, while the other 29 per cent dedicate 1 to 4 hours. In 66 per cent of the cases, members' participation is sponsored by the organizations they represent.

A designated facilitator promotes constructive and inclusive discussions, giving each stakeholder the same amount of time to participate. The CNA secretariat takes minutes of the session and distributes a comprehensive report to all stakeholders, including those who could not attend the meeting. Discussions are recorded and there are feedback mechanisms in place for all stakeholders to comment on discussion proceedings and final reports.

### 1.1.3. Policy formulation and implementation

#### SFS policy formulation

France has a rich set of ambitious laws and programmes aimed at creating a more equitable and environmentally friendly food system (see Annex 5). Within the framework of the Law on the Modernization of Agriculture and Fisheries, adopted on 27 July 2010,<sup>47</sup> the CNA participates in the development of the National Food Programme (Programme national pour l'alimentation, PNA)<sup>48</sup> which was adopted in 2010 and defines the objectives of French food policy.<sup>49</sup>

The CNA analyses society's expectations, organizes public debates and monitors the implementation of the PNA. The programme takes into account recommendations provided by the CNA and the Food Observatory.<sup>50</sup> The topics and interests prioritized in the PNA are those of the government and of the most represented stakeholder groups in the council. During the formulation process, trade-offs were addressed by trying to reach consensus on controversial issues.

<sup>46</sup>Current work is taking place within five consultation groups, focusing on the following themes: monitoring of nutritional policy; assessment of the BSE crisis; national abattoir ethics committee; consumer information within the framework of the online sale of foodstuffs; healthy food.

<sup>47</sup>[https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/download/pdf?id=\\_0aVWgLLJcRGvOuOwV5HLzDg8dfuYLobMvhwak3XtkyQ=](https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/download/pdf?id=_0aVWgLLJcRGvOuOwV5HLzDg8dfuYLobMvhwak3XtkyQ=)

<sup>48</sup><https://agriculture.gouv.fr/programme-national-pour-l'alimentation-2019-2023-territoires-en-action>

<sup>49</sup>A 2010 law requires the development of a National Food Programme every four years wherein a clear plan is set out for food policy.

<sup>50</sup><https://agriculture.gouv.fr/observatoire-de-l'alimentation-0>

If consensus was not reached, representatives were invited to share very detailed arguments to support their positions.

The PNA addresses all dimensions of food: health, nutrition, food aid, education, waste, territorial decentralization, the circular economy, environmental protection and biodiversity. It offers a cross-cutting and inclusive approach aimed at a wide variety of target audiences (e.g. children, adults, communities, food chain professionals, associations). The programme is also included in the agroecological project led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food,<sup>51</sup> and it is part of the Law on the Modernization of Agriculture and Fisheries (2010). Additionally, the PNA complements many other plans, most specifically the National Health and Nutrition Plan (Programme national nutrition santé, PNNS) 2019-2023,<sup>52</sup> which sets out the objectives, principles and orientations of the national nutrition policy. Both initiatives are the two main tools of the national food and nutrition policy carried out by the government for 2019-2023. They are now linked under the National Food and Nutrition Programme (Programme national de l'alimentation et de la nutrition, PNAN).<sup>53</sup>

Since 2014, the PNA has been overseeing regional food projects<sup>54</sup> that bring together producers, processors, distributors, local authorities and consumers to develop a region's local food system through grassroots actions.

The current phase of the PNA (2019-2023) is focused on three thematic axes:

- Social justice – improving nutritional quality and diversification of the food supply, fighting food insecurity and consumer information
- Food waste;
- Food education – nutrition education for young people and appreciation of food heritage.

It also focuses on two cross-cutting axes:

- Collective catering;
- Territorial food projects.

It sets quantifiable goals for food and nutrition, such as reducing salt consumption by 30 per cent by 2025 and achieving 50 per cent organic food in public kitchens by 2022. Each priority is backed by a number of actions,

such as supporting local governments in developing food poverty strategies, limiting children's exposure to advertising for non-recommended foods, and extending the Food Waste Law (Walton and Hawkes, 2020).

In addition to its role in formulating the PNA, the CNA has also provided input on food-related issues for the formulation of other food-related policies and plans in France (see Annex 5).

### **SFS policy implementation**

Currently, the four ministries to which the CNA is attached lead the implementation of the PNA, which takes into account pre-existing plans, programmes and related activities, in order to integrate them for better effectiveness and efficiency.

Institutional restoration and regional food projects are the levers through which specific actions of the PNA are implemented. The regional food projects channel funding from several ministries, including those responsible for agriculture and food, the environment, health and social affairs. The funding is distributed in grants to projects that bring together stakeholders from various sectors. Each year, a call for projects is announced and winners are selected. As of 2018, more than 120 projects had been funded through the programme. In March 2019, the French National Institutional Catering Council (Conseil national de la restauration collective) was created to ensure implementation and compliance with all goals set for public kitchens (Walton and Hawkes, 2020).

### **1.1.4. Reported achievements and challenges**

#### **Achievements**

The CNA has built a successful, highly participatory system to bring the topic of food to the forefront of public debate. France has formulated many ambitious policies aimed at transforming the country's food system into a healthier and more sustainable one. Since its creation, the CNA has issued 89 opinions (avis), focusing, for example, on food in hospitals, the challenges of mass catering in schools, following up on nutrition policy, simplified nutrition labelling, organic farming in France and food packaging.

In the stakeholder survey, respondents identified the following as major concrete achievements of the CNA:

<sup>51</sup><https://agriculture.gouv.fr/le-projet-agro-ecologique-en-12-cles#:~:text=Le%20projet%20agro%20D%20C3%20A9cologique%20vise,rep%20nos%20syst%C3%A8mes%20de%20production>

<sup>52</sup><https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/actualites/presse/communiqu%C3%A9s/article/lancement-du-4eme-programme-national-nutrition-sante-2019-2023>

<sup>53</sup><https://agriculture.gouv.fr/pnan-le-programme-national-de-l'alimentation-et-de-la-nutrition>

<sup>54</sup>The emphasis on territorial decentralization led to the development of a programme focusing on regional food projects as part of the 2015 PNA.





Image credit: Margaux Denis, Secrétariat interministériel CNA

- The important role that the CNA's opinions (*avis*) have played in informing the work of the ministries attached to the SFS MSM;
- The contribution it has made to the drafting of legislation on the future of agriculture, food and forestry (2014)<sup>55</sup> and the regulations for school food catering services (2017).<sup>56</sup>

The stakeholders believe that the CNA's work has been effective in fostering networking among stakeholders (71 per cent), providing information on food-related policies (71 per cent) and providing advice on policy formulation (57 per cent). They recognize that being part of the CNA has benefited their organizations by increasing their public visibility, which has allowed them to raise their voice on behalf of the sector they represent and highlight its problems. It has allowed them to promote joint actions in the formulation of laws and regulations and advance sustainable food systems.

For organizations, one of the major benefits of being part of the CNA is networking. All survey participants feel that the work of the mechanism has helped to build relationships among members, and most of them (71 per cent) feel that joining the mechanism has helped participants build trust among themselves and coordinate joint efforts.

Moreover, respondents from consumer associations claim that the CNA has given them access to useful information that has helped them to better assist and guide their target audiences and to align their positions on topics related to sustainable food.

The CNA has developed an interactive timeline<sup>57</sup> with relevant information about its work and achievements.

### Challenges

One barrier identified in the stakeholder survey is the members' resistance to the transformative change needed to foster sustainable food systems, deemed to be medium to high by all respondents. Some stakeholders indicate that this is particularly the case for the private and the public sector, whose interests and traditional ways of working tend to anchor them to their current trajectories. This challenge is even more daunting given that governance in the CNA seems to be lagging behind in terms of properly addressing power relations and conflicts of interest. According to the stakeholder survey, only 43 per cent of respondents believe that the SFS MSM has a good mechanism for dealing with power relations; a mere 29 per cent believe that the leadership uses a good mechanism for resolving disagreements and 43 per cent believe that the mechanism does not provide opportunities

<sup>55</sup><https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000029573022>

<sup>56</sup>[http://www.cnesco.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/171002\\_Restauration\\_scolaire\\_VF.pdf](http://www.cnesco.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/171002_Restauration_scolaire_VF.pdf)

<sup>57</sup>[https://cna-alimentation.fr/FriseCNA\\_30ans/P01a.xhtml](https://cna-alimentation.fr/FriseCNA_30ans/P01a.xhtml)



for members to build leadership skills within the mechanism.

Likewise, even if it is not the perception of the majority, it is worth noting that a not insignificant 43 per cent believe that the mechanism's processes are not conducive to the equitable participation of members. This identified challenge might be mitigated with the aforementioned new mechanism developed by the CNA to include wider citizen participation.

In relation to the achievement of concrete results, the CNA stakeholders who participated in the survey pointed out the following main drawbacks:

- Lack of participation in the elaboration of the Food and Agriculture Law<sup>58</sup> (Loi EGalim, 2018), for which the CNA was not directly consulted
- Insufficient level of harmonization in the procedures used to ensure the functioning of the working groups<sup>59</sup>
- Instances in which the political priorities are not clearly defined

In the stakeholder survey, respondents indicated that the main challenges facing the CNA are the lack of political will and support (57 per cent) and the lack of time that stakeholders have to participate in additional initiatives (43 per cent).

Finally, the stakeholders surveyed expressed mixed opinions regarding the responsiveness of the CNA when it came to supporting effective decisions and interventions in the context of COVID-19. Some 43 per cent of the stakeholders believe that it showed a high or very high level of responsiveness, the same percentage consider it was low and 14 per cent believe it was medium. The CNA published a new opinion (*avis*) in July 2021 with recommendations for better COVID-19 crisis management and to ensure more sustainable and resilient food systems in the context of the pandemic.

### 1.1.5. Conclusion: Drivers of success for the CNA

According to this research, the CNA owes its success to several factors, including its institutional set-up, governance, solid foundation and the concrete results it has achieved over the 35 years of its existence.

One key feature of the council is the strong and diverse representation of all stakeholders in the food system, which reinforces the legitimacy of the CNA

and adds great value to the plurality and diversity of opinions, contributing to collaborative and inclusive work. The majority of respondents to the stakeholder survey (86 per cent) consider that the mechanism adequately reflects the diversity of stakeholders in the food system. According to them, this impacts positively on constructive collaboration, as they mentioned the balanced representation of all food system stakeholders (71 per cent of respondents), and the personal motivation of the participants (57 per cent of respondents) as the two strongest drivers of collaboration.

This SFS MSM also owes its success to the high level of commitment and dedication of its members. Stakeholder involvement, perceived as medium to very high by all participants surveyed (with only slight differences by stakeholder group), has been key to achieving tangible results. Their main motivations for participating in the SFS MSM are linked to leading a fascinating thematic area (86 per cent), proudly representing their organization (71 per cent) and influencing the policy agenda (71 per cent).

Additionally, the CNA benefits from strong political support: 86 per cent of the stakeholders consider the level of government buy-in to be medium to very high, including the support of high-level representatives for the mechanism.

Good governance in the CNA is another key feature highlighted by the stakeholders who participated in the survey. Most of them (86 per cent) consider the meetings to be well organized and most of its formal members actively contribute to the work carried out. Additionally, 71 per cent of them believe that the SFS MSM has strong political commitment and participation, that it respects the agreed code of conduct and principles of good governance, and that its communication is transparent, clear and effective. Furthermore, more than half of the stakeholders (57 per cent) concur that the participatory learning procedures are conducive to the development of their members' capacities and that the structure and processes in place are conducive to addressing food systems commitments and agreements in a consensual and collaborative manner.

Undoubtedly, the CNA's performance can also be credited to its strong leadership. In this regard, 71 per cent of respondents believe that the leadership shares power with the members, is receptive to new ideas, reflects stakeholders' input in documents, and actively participates in welcoming new members. In addition,

<sup>58</sup><https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000037547946/>

<sup>59</sup>It is important to note that a working group was set up on this subject in April 2021, so these procedures are expected to evolve positively soon.



Image credit: Markus Spiske by Unsplash

86 per cent believe that the leadership encourages members to participate, and 57 per cent think that there is a good mechanism for managing conflicts of interest.

A clear, well-defined strategic vision and an overall understanding of the political and thematic context in which the SFS MSM operates are other fundamental determinants of its success. All respondents find that the CNA has well-defined objectives, plans, strategies and policy and advocacy priorities that are reflected in its overall strategy, and that it understands the overall policy environment related to these priorities.

The majority (86 per cent) recognize that the CNA articulates its mission, vision and goals to its members, that it has basic knowledge of its policy area, and that the food systems approach is understood by the majority of its members.

The overall perception of participants is that the CNA has been effective in incorporating the key topics related to sustainable food systems. The majority of respondents (71 per cent) rate as high or very high the level of inclusion of the environmental sustainability component in the work of the mechanism and consider that it correctly addresses the nutrition and health needs of the most vulnerable. Conversely, only half of them (approximately 57 per cent) consider that the SFS MSM is effective in including the food systems approach in its work.

Looking ahead, the majority of respondents (71 per cent) indicated that the CNA should address issues related to climate mitigation, sustainable food production, consumer awareness and education, and food governance.