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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.

1.3. India: Eat Right India



Image credit: Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

1.3.1. About Eat Right India

In the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006,⁶⁷ the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India⁶⁸ (FSSAI) is mandated to work toward ensuring the availability of safe and nutritious food for all inhabitants. The FSSAI has thus embarked on a major effort aimed at transforming the food system in India. One of its most important undertakings was the creation of the Eat Right India movement in July 2018. Under the slogan Right Food for Better Lives (Sahi Bhojan. Behtar Jeevan),⁶⁹ the Eat Right India initiative seeks to improve the health of people in India by adopting a food systems approach that fosters sustainability, in particular by addressing and tackling food practices, food safety and hygiene.

Eat Right India is an institutionalized SFS MSM hosted by the FSSAI. It was launched following a process led by the FSSAI, and externally supported by various government departments and ministries, along with other stakeholders. It is currently led by the Eat Right India Executive Committee.

Eat Right India focuses on three key themes:

Eat Safe: Ensuring personal and environmental hygiene and hygienic and sanitary practices throughout the food supply chain, combating food adulteration, reducing toxins and contaminants in food, and controlling food hazards in manufacturing processes.

Eat Healthy: Promoting diet diversity and balanced diets, eliminating toxic industrial trans fats from food, reducing consumption of salt, sugar and saturated fats, and promoting large-scale fortification of staples to address micronutrient deficiencies.

Eat Sustainable: Promoting local and seasonal foods, preventing food loss and food waste, conserving water in food value chains, reducing the use of chemicals in food production, and promoting the use of safe and sustainable packaging.

The main themes addressed so far have been sustainable diets, food diversification, nutrition and health, food environments, and food safety and quality.

The SFS MSM plays a consultative and advisory role, while at the same time participating in policy formulation processes, managing knowledge of food

⁶⁷<https://fssai.gov.in/cms/food-safety-and-standards-act-2006.php>

⁶⁸The FSSAI was established in 2006 under the Food Safety and Standards Act, which consolidates a number of food-related acts and orders that had been enacted in various ministries and departments. The FSSAI was created to lay down science-based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

⁶⁹In 2020, the US-based Rockefeller Foundation recognized the Eat Right Initiative in its top 10 finalists for the Food System Vision Prize.

systems, stimulating collective action and facilitating new initiatives. It also plays a strong advocacy role at global, national and sub-national levels through capacity building of its members, supporting communication strategies, managing media relations, and influencing decision-makers.

The SFS MSM's geographical scope covers the national and state level; at state level it is led by local governments and state food safety departments. It supports local outreach initiatives by working with local stakeholders, such as industry and consumer associations, academic institutions, and development partners. The movement has adopted the food systems approach as the main conceptual framework for its work.

Eat Right India receives a budget from national and local governments to cover the costs associated with meetings, learning exchange workshops, consultancy work, the production of communication materials and the implementation of its various initiatives.

1.3.2. Structure and governance

Structure

Eat Right India brings together about 15-20 primary stakeholders identified from pre-existing multi-stakeholder platforms or coalitions working on various food-related issues. The movement adopts a “whole-of-government” approach⁷⁰, bringing together all food-related mandates from various ministries (e.g. agriculture, health, environment) (see Figure 41).

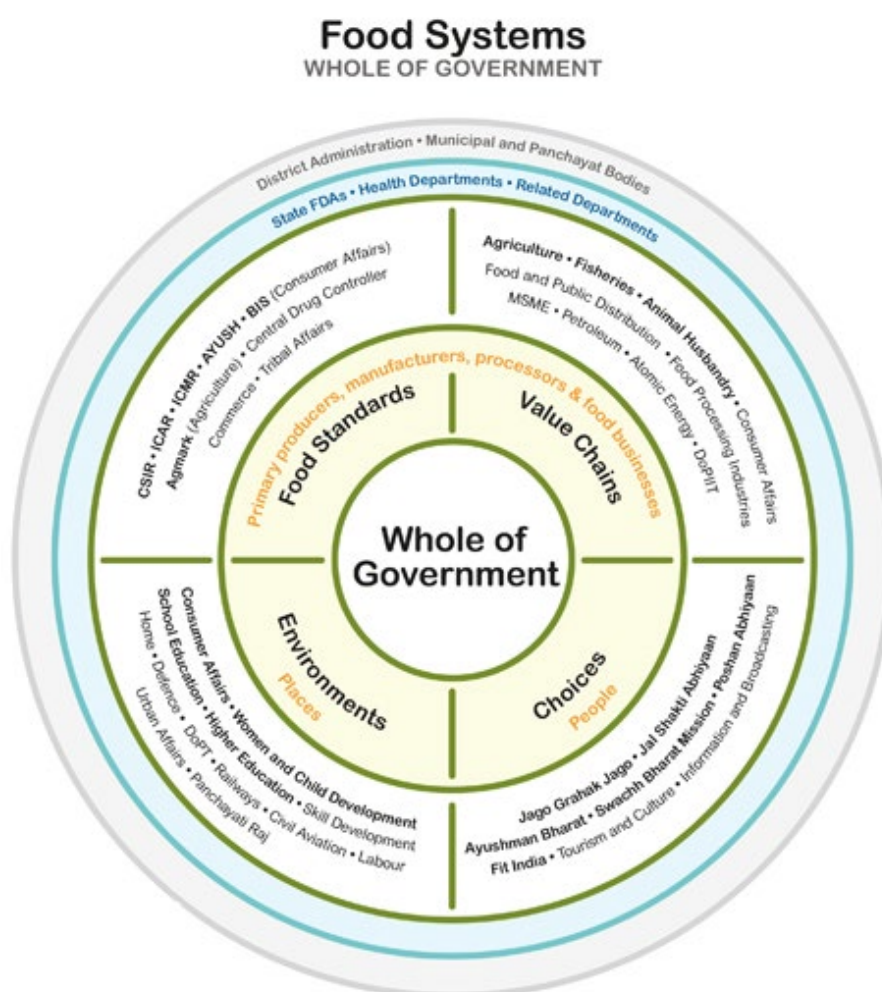


Figure 41. Eat Right India's whole-of-government approach

Source: Eat Right India website⁷¹

⁷⁰The whole-of-government approach is one in which public service agencies work across portfolio boundaries, formally and informally, to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues. It aims to achieve policy coherence in order to improve effectiveness and efficiency. This approach is a response to departmentalism that focuses not only on policies but also on programme and project management (WHO, 2015).

⁷¹<https://eatrightindia.gov.in/EatRightIndia/eatrightindia.jsp>

In addition, since food-related diseases affect all age groups and all sectors of society, it also adopts a whole-of-society approach, bringing together all groups in society (see Figure 42).

A quite broad and diverse pool of food system stakeholders participate in Eat Right India. Figures 43, 44 and 45 show the composition of the SFS MSM

in terms of types of organizations (constituencies), sectors and food systems activities represented. Farmers and their organizations, as well as grassroots community organizations, are not yet directly represented. However, the FSSAI is engaged in consultative discussions with them through the Steering Committee, as they fall within the ambit of the Ministry of Agriculture.



Figure 42. Eat Right India's whole-of-society approach

Source: Eat Right India website⁷¹



Figure 43. Types of organizations (constituencies) represented in Eat Right India (in red)

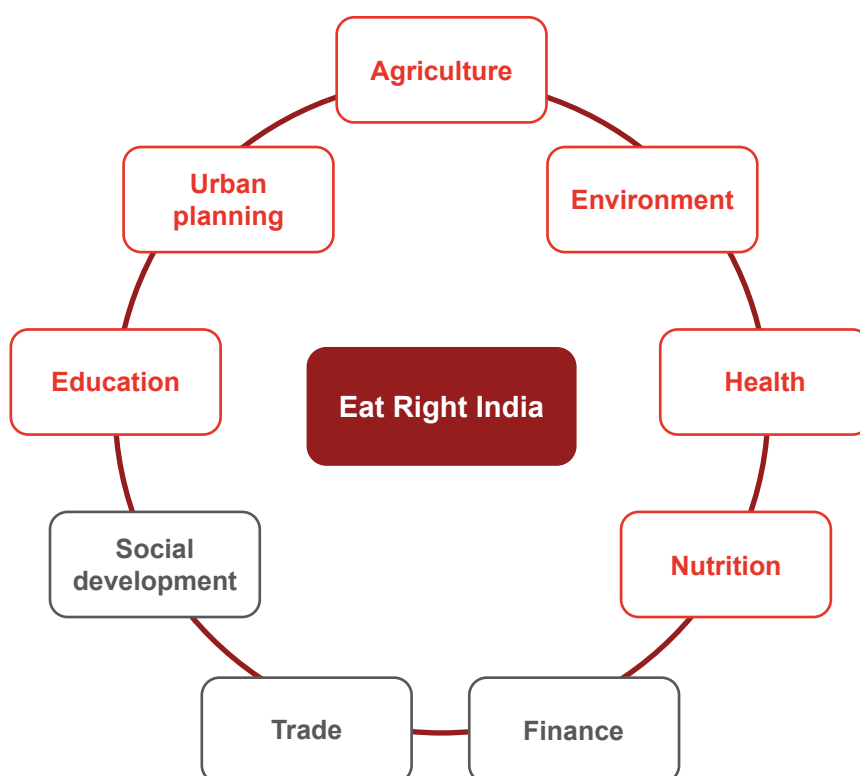


Figure 44. Sectors represented in Eat Right India (in red)



Figure 45. Activities represented in Eat Right India (in red)



Figure 46. Good governance principles practised by Eat Right India (in green)

Governance

The *Eat Right Handbook* is a detailed document that guides Eat Right India's governance and work. An online platform⁷² provides all details related to the execution of various projects under the auspices of Eat Right India. Members apply five main good governance principles, as shown in Figure 46 (on the previous page).

In order to put these principles into practice, Eat Right India has mechanisms in place to capture and take into account all voices, communicate effectively, learn collaboratively, and develop the capacities of its members. Meetings at the Executive Committee level follow a predefined annual calendar and are held once every quarter. Some 83 per cent of the stakeholders surveyed indicated that they attend all meetings; 50 per cent dedicate more than 4 hours a month to the work of the SFS MSM, while the other 50 per cent dedicate 1 to 4 hours. In 83 per cent of the cases, members' participation is sponsored by the organizations they represent. In addition to regular meetings, participants also communicate via emails or calls.

Agendas for meetings are usually suggested by the leadership and agreed upon by consensus. Participants are informed in advance of the topics to be discussed, and all parties have equal participation time during meetings. There are designated roles for note-takers and rapporteurs, and an established mechanism allows members to work collaboratively on the reports resulting from discussions.

1.3.3. Policy formulation and implementation

SFS policy formulation

India does not yet have a comprehensive policy for the promotion of sustainable food systems. Its main policy on food security is the National Food Security Act,⁷³ which ensures access to highly subsidized cereals (rice, wheat and coarse grains) through the Targeted Public Distribution Centre along with a free meal for all children between the ages of 6 months and 14 years.⁷⁴

Eat Right India is aligned to the National Health Policy 2017, which focuses on preventive healthcare, and flagship programmes such as Ayushman Bharat

(National Health Protection Mission),⁷⁵ POSHAN Abhiyaan (PM's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment),⁷⁶ *Anemia Mukht Bharat* (Anemia Prevalence)⁷⁷ and Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Mission).⁷⁸

In 2016, two years before the creation of Eat Right India, the FSSAI was instrumental in implementing the Food Safety and Standards (Food Fortification) Regulations⁷⁹, following a process of consultation with representatives of the food industry, consumer organizations and academia, including nutritionists and medical practitioners. These regulations cover the fortification of five key staples, including wheat flour, rice, milk, edible oil and salt, by adding micronutrients.

Eat Right India has been able to provide food-related inputs to other policy processes and initiatives, such as the Smart Cities Mission, launched by the Prime Minister in 2015 and led by the Ministry of Urban Affairs. This initiative's main objective is to promote cities that provide basic infrastructure, a clean and sustainable environment and provide a decent quality of life for their citizens through the implementation of "smart solutions". In 2021, an EatSmart Cities Challenge⁸⁰ was launched as a competition among Indian cities to recognize their efforts in adopting and scaling up various initiatives under the framework enacted by Eat Right India.

SFS policy implementation

The department leading the implementation of the Eat Right India initiative at state level is the Regulatory Compliance Division of the FSSAI. This unit collaborates with all Indian states by signing memorandums of understanding.

Eat Right India has a budget for implementation, and its role is focused on the execution of activities, project management and communication.

1.3.4. Reported achievements and challenges

Achievements

Stakeholders participating in the survey pointed out that Eat Right India's convening power is its main general

⁷²www.eatrightindia.gov.in

⁷³<https://dfpd.gov.in/nfsa-act.htm>

⁷⁴The National Food Security Act is overseen by the Department of Food and Public Distribution but is implemented by individual states. States are responsible for identifying recipients while the purchase and delivery of cereals is handled by the central government. While there was trouble initially in coordinating all of these tasks, the National Food Security Act has now been implemented and is still running.

⁷⁵<https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/ayushman-bharat-national-health-protection-mission>

⁷⁶<http://icds-wcd.nic.in/nhm/home.htm>

⁷⁷<https://anemiamukhtbharat.info/>

⁷⁸<https://swachhbharatmission.gov.in/sbmcms/index.htm>

⁷⁹<https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/advisories/2018/03/5a97968275a36206.pdf>

⁸⁰<https://eatrightindia.gov.in/eatsmartcity/home>



Image credit: Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

achievement. This has resulted in fruitful collaboration, knowledge generation and exchange, cross-sectoral action, and networking of a variety of professional organizations in the field of food and nutrition. This network continues to grow and work toward a common goal. Stakeholders particularly appreciate the opportunity to collaborate for a cause that moves the whole country, a cause that breaks barriers to contribute to food security issues but also extends to the fields of nutrition, health and the environment.

Some 83 per cent of respondents consider that Eat Right India's main achievement has been its contribution to the formulation of policies, strategies and action plans. This refers mainly to a variety of initiatives spearheaded by Eat Right India aimed at promoting food quality, safety, and adequate food consumption. Additionally, 50 per cent of respondents believe that networking, generating new collaborations and concrete projects, and policy advocacy are also valuable contributions made by Eat Right India.

Moreover, the collaboration generated by the SFS MSM has allowed them to take part in activities related to policy development. An outstanding achievement indicated by stakeholders is the contribution to the adoption of the food fortification policy, leading to discussions around the mandatory fortification of milk and oil, and potentially rice in the future.

Eat Right India has also successfully developed initiatives within which the three principles (Eat Safe, Eat Healthy and Eat Sustainable) can be applied on the ground. For example, it has launched many actions aimed at improving food quality and safety. For instance, in order to promote food safety in food businesses, the FSSAI initiated the Food Safety Training and Certification programme to ensure the presence of a trained and certified food safety supervisor on each food business premises. Additionally, several certification schemes to improve food safety and hygiene standards in restaurants, street food hubs, schools, campuses and workplaces were launched: Clean Street Food Hub, Clean and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Markets, Eat Right Station and Blissful Hygienic Offering to God for places of worship. The Hygiene Rating Scheme allows consumers to make informed choices in restaurants, catering establishments, sweet shops and meat shops. A mobile food testing van – Food Safety on Wheels – was designed to reach remote areas. Two specific tools were developed to tackle food adulteration: the Food Safety Magic Box and the DART Book. Both can be used in the home to test for adulterants. Large-scale training programmes were also put in place, such as the Eat Right toolkit for frontline health workers.

In terms of consumer awareness and eating behaviour, emphasis has been placed on encouraging healthy

food choices. The FSSAI launched the Aaj Se Thoda Kam (Eat Right) mass awareness campaign to reduce salt, fat and sugar in diets, and Trans-Fat Free India@75 to eliminate trans fats by 2022. The Eat Right@Home, Eat Right@School and Eat Right@Campus campaigns were launched to promote a culture of healthy eating. The campaigns include awareness-raising content and featured well-known personalities, including Virat Kohli, Raj Kumar Rao, Juhi Chawla and Sakshi Tanwar.

Finally, in order to encourage and support responsible food production and consumption to protect the environment, the FSSAI is spearheading initiatives such as Jaivik Bharat (Organic Food from India) to promote organic food; Save Food, Share Food to reduce food waste and promote food donation; Safe and Sustainable Packaging in Food and Beverage Sector to reduce the use of plastics; and Repurpose Used Cooking Oil to encourage the safe and healthy use of cooking oil and to repurpose used cooking oil to make biodiesel, soap or other useful products.

Challenges

Stakeholders who participated in the survey noted that Eat Right India is a relatively new initiative, and thus some areas still need to be strengthened. These include: building trust and motivation among all stakeholders to generate more and better participation; monitoring and evaluating initiatives to report on their results and encourage their scaling up; and strengthening the leadership capacity at sub-national level.

The barriers to the SFS MSM's work identified by 50 per cent of respondents are:

- Inadequacy of the mechanism's representativeness;
- Leadership and governance that is not always conducive to multi-stakeholder work;
- Lack of budget to support participation and collaboration;
- Lack of perceived political support.

1.3.5. Conclusion: Drivers of success for Eat Right India

Although the country does not yet have a holistic policy to promote sustainable and healthy food systems, Eat Right India promotes several programmes working in this direction at various levels, from production to consumption. It does so by mobilizing stakeholder collaboration on food policy-related and technical work, mainly through capacity building and empowerment approaches. It focuses on scaling up to the national level a wide range of key successful initiatives aimed at

promoting safe, healthy and sustainable food demand and supply. Supply-side interventions are aimed primarily at building the capacity of food businesses to promote self-compliance, and demand-side initiatives aim to motivate consumers to demand safe and healthy food by encouraging good food practices and habits.

The whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches underpin the FSSAI's role as an "enabler and reformer" (as well as "implementer") that can build a positive, collaborative and inclusive environment to foster a sustainable food system in India. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's legacy, Eat Right India aims to mobilize the nation toward a single goal: ensuring that all citizens eat healthy and safe food, produced in a sustainable manner.

Eat Right India owes its current success to several factors, as noted in the stakeholder survey. First, participation is reported to be high. Second, all respondents believe that the mechanism adequately reflects the diversity of stakeholders in the food system, and 83 per cent consider that there is balanced representation of the different stakeholders. Finally, more than half of the respondents (67 per cent) believe that one of the strongest drivers of collaboration is the trust built up over many years of networking and collaboration.

Another factor that has been fundamental for the success and positioning of Eat Right India is the high level of involvement perceived by all the stakeholder survey participants. Among the main motivations mentioned by the participants for their involvement in the work of the mechanism are: proudly representing the organization they belong to and learning (both selected by 67 per cent of respondents) and having up-to-date information on issues related to food in India (half of the respondents).

The high level of government buy-in, including the support of high-level representatives, is considered an essential ingredient for the performance of the SFS MSM (all survey participants rated both as high or very high). Respondents to the survey also believe that the governance mechanisms that Eat Right India has put in place are very good. On this subject, all stakeholders believe that the SFS MSM respects the code of conduct, the rule of law and agreed principles of good governance. They also all agree that meetings are well organized, the majority of members actively participate in the work of the SFS MSM, communication is transparent, clear and effective, and participatory learning processes are conducive to the capacity building of the stakeholders involved.

Undoubtedly, much of Eat Right India's success comes from the FSSAI's strong and effective leadership. All respondents agree that the leadership

shares power with stakeholders in decision-making, is receptive to new ideas, reflects members' input in documents or products generated by Eat Right India, actively participates in welcoming new members, and encourages all stakeholders to participate. A high percentage (83 per cent) also feel that the leadership has a good mechanism in place for resolving disagreements, managing conflicts of interest and managing power relations, and that it provides opportunities for members to build leadership skills within the mechanism. Overall, all respondents consider the leadership and governance of the SFS MSM to be appropriate.

According to all participants in the stakeholder survey, it has been fundamental that the mechanism has included well-defined policy priorities in its overall strategy and that it has an adequate understanding of the overall policy environment in which it operates. They also all concur that Eat Right India's vision, mission and goals are articulated among its members and it has basic knowledge of its policy area. In addition, the majority of respondents (83 per cent) believe that the food systems approach is understood by most of the stakeholders in the SFS MSM. Moreover, they all indicate that the SFS MSM has been highly effective in including the environmental sustainability component and the food systems approach in its work. They all consider that Eat Right

India is adequately focused on meeting the health and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable, and that it has had a high capacity to support effective decisions and interventions in the context of COVID-19. The FSSAI has taken many steps to ensure that food supply chains are not disrupted, and that regulatory compliance requirements are not an impediment to the operation of any food business.⁸¹ For example, food manufacturers now have the authorization to increase or upgrade their capacity, provided they have a valid receipt proving that they have applied online to the FSSAI for the necessary licence or registration and that they have paid the relevant fee via the Food Safety Compliance System (FoSCoS). This allows them to immediately expand production facilities without having to wait for regulatory approval.

Finally, the majority of respondents (83 per cent) perceive that Eat Right India has been highly or very highly effective in fostering inclusive and constructive dialogue and promoting collaborative and coordinated action among all stakeholders in the food system.

Looking forward, stakeholders believe that priorities should stay strategically focused on consumer awareness and education (100 per cent of participants), food safety and quality, food loss and waste, and sustainable food production (all three selected by 83 per cent of stakeholders).



Image credit: Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

⁸¹https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/press_release/2021/04/607ef8c7c1b04Press_Release_Facilitate_Food_Business_20_04_2021.pdf