



MATS

making agricultural trade sustainable

Moving Towards Sustainable Agricultural Trade

Transition Pathways



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The MATS Project

Making Agricultural Trade Sustainable (MATS) is a collaboration between universities, research institutions, small to medium enterprises, and non-profit foundations. Funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation program, the project runs for 3.5 years (2021-2024).

MATS identifies key leverage points for changes in agricultural trade policy that foster the positive and reduce the negative impacts of trade on sustainable development and human rights.

The approach focuses on improving the governance, design and implementation of trade practices, regimes and policies at national, European Union, African, and global levels; it develops and pilots new tools for trade policy analysis.

Within this mission, the project places particular focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1 – no poverty
2 – zero hunger
3 – good health and well-being
6 – clean water
13 – climate action
and 15 – life on land.

MATS comprises a multi-method analysis, the exploration of pathways towards sustainable trade, and consultation and policy dialogue.

MATS aims to contribute to the development of a fair-trade system that supports local development and promotes labour and human rights globally, and to set a new benchmark in trade policy analysis.



<https://sustainable-agri-trade.eu/>

MATS Partners

- **University of Helsinki**
Department of Economics and Management
- **KnowlEdge Srl**
- **Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI)**
- **Research Centre on Animal Production**
Department of Economics and Engineering
- **SCiO P.C.**
- **Universidad Politécnica de Madrid**
- **Transnational Institute**
- **The Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF)**
- **Oxfam Solidarité – Oxfam Solidariteit**
- **Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI**
- **Agricultural University of Athens**
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development
- **North-West University**
- **Universität Bern**
World Trade Institute (WTI)
- **Maastricht University**
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Foreword

Transition Pathways to Make Agricultural Trade More Sustainable – from Vision to Action

We need more knowledge and transparency to take action that moves us towards social, environmental and economic sustainability in agri-food trade, as well as a better understanding of the associated sustainability impacts of agricultural trade policies at different regional and organizational scales in agri-food value chains. More than ever before, agricultural trade, global food systems and their embedded value chains are shaped by complex factors, including multi-level policies, globally operating businesses, and the consumption choices we make.

In spite of trade-related macro-level achievements with respect to poverty reduction and economic development (between 1995 and 2022, low- and middle-income economies’ share of global exports increased from 17% to 32%, and the number of people living on less than \$2.15/day fell from 40% to 10%: WTO Secretariat, 2024)¹, we continue to lack country, commodity and individual actor-level insights into the sustainability implications of trade and trade policies at different levels in global agri-food value chains (including farmers, traders, and processors).

To start with, the call for more knowledge about the sustainability implications of trade is highly relevant to the 33 Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, which are part of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) group of 45 states that the United Nations² have identified as characterized by low socio-economic development and high vulnerability to external shocks. These SSA countries have primarily agrarian economies³ and suffer from low investments and productivity⁴. Among the instruments used in the past to accelerate economic growth were three Programmes of Action based on the Paris Declarations (1981-1990 and 1990-2000) and the Brussels Declaration (2001-2010).

However, the Istanbul Plan of Action (IPOA) (2011-2021) and Doha’s declaration in 2022 have shifted the balance of focus from official development assistance towards sustainable trade. SSA countries are now expected to adopt more sustainable methods of production to ensure that LDCs retain access to specific international support in the areas of trade,

development assistance, and general support⁵. As part of these expectations, the European Union’s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and the European Union’s Regulation on Deforestation-free products have added greater complexity to the vision of sustainable trade impacting SSA countries and their small-scale farmers.

To explore several of the implications of these expectations and policies at micro- and macro-levels, MATS has embraced SSA country organizations, commodities and regions in 15 case studies with 14 project partners from Africa, Europe and South America⁶. This approach culminated in a multi-actor foresight process with MATS-internal and external actors, led by Fraunhofer ISI, to jointly develop transition pathways to make agricultural trade more sustainable.

This was achieved in World Café style via four webinars and one workshop, which involved a priority-setting process that typically started with the consideration of local producers, investors and processors before considering broader trade and investment implications.

This foresight process to formulate transition pathways for desirable changes in agricultural trade relations towards greater sustainability was consistently built around four dimensions that were identified with MATS project partners – “policy, governance and regulation”, “social and human dimensions”, “natural capital”, and “economy and markets”.

The following report provides an overview of the proposed actions from a great diversity of global researchers, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and businesses, which could potentially lead to the accomplishment of the different vision statements which you can find in this brochure.

We have to say “potentially”, since it is, as always, up to the policymakers and key actors in agri-food value chains to address the sustainability issues and required actions identified here. In a policy environment currently facing a global polycrisis (Lawrence et al., 2024)⁷, and an increasingly polarized

debate on sustainability matters related to agri-food trade, it is important that value chain actors and policymakers can access actionable and transparent information as part of an agri-food systems transformation agenda they may wish to implement^{8, 9}.

This report aims to make a contribution in this regard and we hope that the actions outlined here become part of a transformation agenda to help global agri-food value chains become more sustainable.

- 1 <https://twitter.com/wto/status/1813523585698234516>
- 2 UN list of least developed countries | UNCTAD
- 3 2024-Snapshots.pdf (un.org)
- 4 The Least Developed Countries Report 2023 | UNCTAD
- 5 <https://www.un.org/ldcportal/>
- 6 <https://sustainable-agri-trade.eu/our-partners/>
- 7 Lawrence, M., Homer-Dixon, T., Janzwood, S., Rockstöm, J., Renn, O., & Donges, J. F. (2024). Global polycrisis: the causal mechanisms of crisis entanglement. *Global Sustainability*, 7, e6. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/sus.2024.1>
- 8 Conti, C., Hall, A., Percy, H., Stone-Jovicich, S., Turner, J., & McMillan, L. (2024). What does the agri-food systems transformation agenda mean for agricultural research organisations? Exploring organisational prototypes for uncertain futures. *Global Food Security*, 40, 100733: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2023.100733>
- 9 Resnick, D., & Swinnen, J. (2023). The political economy of food system transformation: Pathways to progress in a polarized world (p. 401). Oxford University Press: <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/85666>



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Executive Summary

Transition Pathways towards Sustainable Agricultural Trade

The importance of agricultural trade today is multifaceted. It contributes to global food security by leveraging efficient production conditions in certain parts of the world. It also drives economic growth, providing income for farmers and agricultural businesses. Additionally, agricultural trade fosters international cooperation and can help stabilize markets by balancing supply and demand across borders. Trading agricultural products furthermore encourages technological and methodological advancements in farming by facilitating the spread of knowledge and new technologies. In sum, agricultural trade provides major leverage points to influence global sustainable development.

On the other hand, agricultural trade also has several disadvantages. One major drawback is the potential dependence on imports, which can weaken local agriculture and lead to a loss of food sovereignty. Additionally, large agricultural exporters can exploit their market power to dictate prices and market conditions, disadvantaging smaller and less developed countries. Environmental concerns are also significant, intensive cultivation for export can lead to soil erosion, overuse of water, and loss of biodiversity.

In this area of tension, the MATS project aims to propose courses of action for improved governance in global agricultural trade. However, this raises the question of what exactly sustainable agricultural trade means for the MATS partners and how we can jointly achieve this common goal.

In a participatory process led by Fraunhofer ISI, consortium partners, MATS case studies and experts from the agri-food sector have defined a common MATS vision on sustainable agricultural trade and compiled measures that contribute to making this vision a reality. The iterative foresight process fostered exchange between experts from different countries, overcoming constraints in time and location. The results indicate that many of the potential improvements are rooted in agriculture itself.

What to expect

How the Roadmap unfolded

In the context of the MATS project, Fraunhofer ISI conducted a participative foresight process to develop transition pathways to make agricultural trade more sustainable. As MATS seeks to transcend previous quantitative, econometric and model-based analyses, the multi-actor process involved all the consortium partners, each with their own specific research background and tasks within the MATS project.

This brochure presents a guide to developing sustainable agricultural trade pathways as envisioned by the MATS consortium and its partners. It outlines the methodological approach, detailing the actions and strategies required to achieve a sustainable trade environment by 2035+. The methodological approach consists of two core modules: visioning and roadmapping. Visioning focuses on creating a joint vision of sustainable trade for 2035+ within the MATS consortium, while the process of roadmapping outlines potential transition pathways to achieve this vision.

Thirty-four specific actions that aim to make agricultural trade more sustainable will be presented. This brochure also includes a visual roadmap, which illustrates the actions needed to achieve the vision statements, shows the interlinkages between actions and vision statements, and provides a timeline for implementation. Additionally, the brochure takes a deep dive into 14 selected actions to offer detailed insights and strategies for their implementation. These deep dives take a closer look at the specific steps required to move towards the sustainability goals. The 14 selected actions are to be tackled in short-term and at the same time address several sustainability dimensions.

Looking ahead, based on the transition pathways defined in the roadmap, policy recommendations will be formulated to guide the transformation of food trade towards greater sustainability. These actions are designed not only to realize the desired vision but also to shape future policy recommendations. They address various dimensions of sustainability and highlight the need for both innovative and conventional policies that comprehensively tackle sustainability issues.

Furthermore, the MATS project proposes strategies to improve the sustainability impact of trade regimes, ensuring they align with the vision for 2035+. This serves as a comprehensive roadmap and action plan, guiding stakeholders from visioning to actionable steps that will steer agricultural trade towards a more sustainable future.

Embark with us on the journey towards sustainable trade.

Transition Pathways

MATS Vision and Roadmaps

From the MATS vision to 34 actions

The process for developing transition pathways towards sustainable food trade consisted of two core modules: a visioning process to develop a joint vision of sustainable trade for 2035+ within the MATS consortium, and a roadmapping process to outline potential transition pathways.

The visioning process began with a series of online consultations to gather preliminary information on vision statements specific to different case studies. Building on this foundation, those involved in MATS case studies and core team members – especially those engaged with institutional, regulatory, and legal frameworks, as well as civil society actors, stakeholders, and policymakers – convened in Moshi, Tanzania, for a co-creation workshop. This workshop was central to the visioning process, helping to identify shared vision statements. The outcomes were further reflected upon in a series of webinars open to those in the MATS case studies, the core team, and external participants from industry, research, and civil society.

After describing desirable changes in trade regimes, trade relations, and instruments for the 2035+ horizon and including insights from all partners, the second step was to define concrete actions to achieve the various vision statements. This step incorporated both internal insights and external perspectives from various stages of the agri-food chain, extending beyond the MATS project.

To ensure constructive discussions, the overarching question was divided into thematic bundles based on four sustainability dimensions: “policy, governance, and regulation”, “economy and markets”, “social and human dimensions”, and “natural capital”. A series of webinars allowed stakeholders from the case studies to propose actionable steps, enabling a reflection of the formulated vision statements and identifying a comprehensive set of actions leading to these desired states. These webinars laid the foundation for the further elaboration of potential transition pathways with the support of the project consortium to finalize the roadmap.

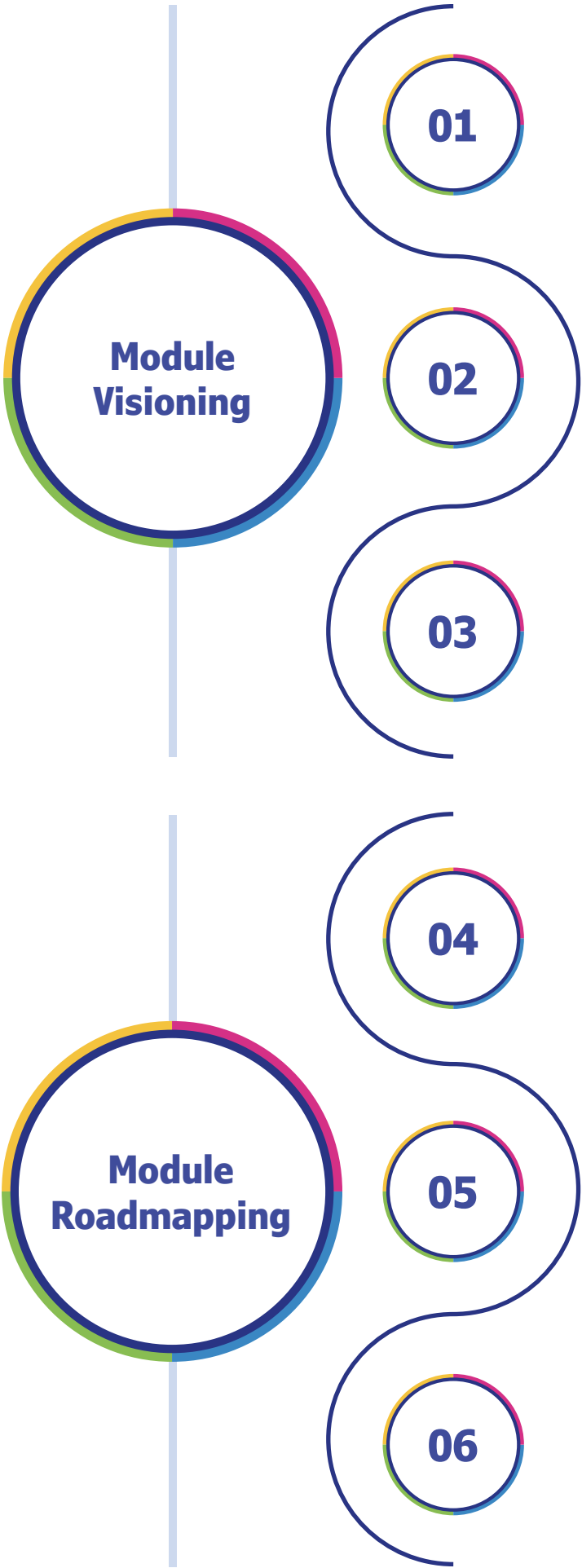
The applied methodology also acted as a bridge between individual case studies and a global context, translating localized insights into a broader perspective.

Transition pathways with 34 actions and 14 deep dives

As a guide to developing sustainable agricultural trade, this brochure presents pathways envisioned by the MATS consortium and stakeholders. We aim to embark on the path towards this vision, with 34 actions along the way supporting and shaping these transition pathways. These actions are presented along the four sustainability dimensions: “policy, governance, and regulation”, “economy and markets”, “social and human dimensions”, and “natural capital”. Each action is accompanied by a brief introduction and describes a series of different activities, which include both ongoing efforts and recommended future initiatives. Linked to specific statements from the MATS vision for sustainable trade, each action provides a comprehensive approach to achieving sustainable agricultural trade. All proposed actions and activities are equally important.

A roadmap found on page 32-33 organizes all these actions into short, medium, and long-term phases. Each row indicates the relevance of actions to specific vision statements.

Fourteen selected deep dives are presented, which include detailed facts and figures, as well as the implications for agricultural trade, providing a thorough understanding of the impact and importance of these actions in the broader context of sustainable development.



Visioning process initiation:
Online consultations with case study stakeholders to gather preliminary vision statements.

>> Goal:
Collect initial vision inputs from different case studies.

Co-creation visioning workshop:
In-person workshop in Moshi, Tanzania, with case study members and core team.

>> Goal:
Identify shared vision statements for sustainable trade 2035+.

Describing desirable changes:
Discuss vision outcomes and outline desired changes in trade regimes, relations, and instruments.

>> Goal:
Reflect on and refine the vision of sustainable trade.

Defining concrete actions:
Specify actions needed to achieve the vision statements.

>> Goal:
Develop a clear action plan incorporating internal and external perspectives.

Thematic webinars for action steps:
Webinars to propose actionable steps along four sustainability dimensions.

>> Goal:
Break down the vision into specific, actionable steps.

Finalizing the roadmap:
Elaborate transition pathways and finalize the roadmap with consortium support.

>> Goal:
Create a comprehensive roadmap for sustainable food trade.

34 Actions towards Sustainable Agricultural Trade

01



Establish International Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement

Initiate an international monitoring and enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance with environmental regulations, including those related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable farming practices. Collaborate with international organizations and governments to develop and implement standardized monitoring and reporting frameworks for environmental performance.

Proposed activities

- Inclusion of monitoring specific environmental and social criteria in national laws of consumer countries and in Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).
- Improving the availability of existing reports.
- Meaningful and safe participation of local communities in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), including information about their rights and opportunities for influence.
- Collaborating with international organizations and governments to create standardized monitoring and reporting frameworks for environmental performance, ensuring consistency and comparability across regions.
- Providing training and resources to local and national authorities to enhance their ability to monitor and enforce environmental regulations effectively.
- Developing transparent mechanisms for public reporting on environmental performance, including publishing regular reports and creating accessible online platforms.

>> Towards the vision

Conducting environmental impact assessments for trade: We aspire to a world where environmental impact assessments are a standard practice for all trade activities. This seeks to ensure that international trade complies with environmental regulations and promotes sustainability, with a focus on reducing the ecological footprint of agricultural products.

02



Launch Consumer Awareness Campaigns on Environmental Impact

Roll out consumer awareness campaigns to educate and inform the public about the environmental impacts of their dietary and consumption habits. Promote sustainable and responsible consumption practices through targeted messaging and initiatives that encourage to reduce meat consumption and support deforestation-free industries.

Proposed activities

- Strategies to encourage more informed consumption (naming, blaming, shaming).
- Launching education campaigns to encourage ethical consumption.
- Introduction of taxes or higher prices on, unsustainable' products like meat or sugar, for example Finland's sugar tax.
- Develop and distribute educational materials such as brochures, infographics, and videos that explain the environmental impacts of various dietary and consumption habits.

- Utilize social media platforms to share targeted messages, success stories, and practical tips on sustainable and responsible consumption practices.
- Foster educational programs and resources for schools to teach students about the environmental impact of their dietary choices and the importance of sustainability.
- Work with retailers and supermarkets to promote sustainable products and practices, including labelling initiatives and in-store promotions for environmentally friendly products.

>> Towards the vision

Change in dietary habits and consumption: We strive to inspire changes in dietary habits and consumption patterns to promote climate and environmental justice. By encouraging sustainable choices, we aim to foster a healthier planet and equitable resource distribution.

03



Develop and Disseminate Sustainable Water Management Guidelines

Establish and widely disseminate guidelines for sustainable water management practices in agriculture, ensuring efficient irrigation methods, water conservation, and proper treatment of wastewater. Provide training and support for farmers to implement these guidelines and adopt sustainable water management practices. Promote water-efficient farming practices to reduce water waste and absolute water use. Encourage the implementation of water recycling and re-use systems in agricultural operations. Promote the adoption of nature-based solutions for water allocation in agriculture to ensure compliance with environmental regulations, focusing on enhancing productivity while preserving environmental integrity.

Proposed activities

- Investing in infrastructure such as drip irrigation, micro-clams, rainwater capture, etc.
- Promoting water technologies adapted to smallholder modes of production.
- Strengthening of governance at different levels of water use.
- Establishing guidelines for sustainable water management.

- Strengthening public/democratic water use assistance at municipal level, avoid privatization of water.
- Use of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) to increase transparency around water footprint and to inform trade policy.
- Create detailed documents, manuals, and online resources that outline best practices for efficient irrigation, water conservation, and wastewater treatment in agriculture.
- Facilitate workshops, webinars, and on-site training sessions to educate farmers on the developed guidelines and demonstrate practical implementation techniques.

>> Towards the vision

Ensuring efficient use of water resources in water-scarce regions: We opt for a resilient agricultural sector that prioritizes efficient water use, especially in water-scarce regions. By fostering innovative practices, global financial support, and collaboration, we aim to achieve sustainable water management, promoting both environmental and economic resilience.

04



Establish Climate Risk Insurance for Farmers

Foster insurance and re-insurance programs specifically tailored to farmers to mitigate the financial risks associated with climate change-induced natural disasters. Advocate policies and incentives that promote the availability and accessibility of insurance products for farmers, including flexible payment options and exchange mechanisms.

Proposed activities

- Conduct risk assessments to determine appropriate coverage for climate change-induced natural disasters.
- Engage with governmental and non-governmental organizations to promote the importance of climate risk insurance.
- Hold workshops and informational sessions to educate farmers on the benefits and usage of climate risk insurance.
- Implement flexible payment options to accommodate the financial cycles of farmers.
- Collect feedback from farmers on a regular basis to improve and adapt insurance offerings.

- Design insurance and re-insurance programs specifically tailored to address the unique needs of farmers, covering risks such as droughts, floods, and other climate change-induced natural disasters.
- Collaborate with insurance companies, agricultural cooperatives, and farmer associations to develop comprehensive insurance products that are accessible and affordable for farmers.

>> Towards the vision

Enable producers to achieve living incomes to enhance their capacity for climate adaptation and disaster resilience: Our vision is to empower producers to achieve living incomes, ensuring their economic stability. By enhancing their capacity for climate adaptation and disaster resilience, we aim to build a sustainable and resilient future.

05



Implement Policies to Prevent Deforestation and Promote Conservation

Enforce policies and initiatives to prevent deforestation linked to agro-ecological practices, such as promoting sustainable land use and forest conservation. Strengthen global value chain governance to account for biodiversity considerations, ensuring that supply chains prioritize biodiversity conservation. Support farmers, especially small-scale farmers, in preserving agro-biodiversity through training, access to diverse seed varieties, and sustainable farming methods.

Proposed activities

- Ensure that the principles and commitments of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are integrated into the European Union's deforestation policies to enhance biodiversity conservation.
- Establish comprehensive education programs to train farmers on sustainable practices, biodiversity preservation, and the benefits of agro-ecological methods.
- Encourage the widespread adoption of agro-ecological practices that support sustainable farming, soil health, and biodiversity conservation.
- Support and facilitate community-based management approaches to natural resource use, empowering local communities to take an active role in conservation efforts.

- Ensure that initiatives align with the European Union Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and comply with existing pesticide regulations to promote a holistic approach to environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection.
- Create and maintain biodiversity corridors that connect fragmented habitats, helping to preserve ecosystems and support wildlife populations.

>> Towards the vision

Minimize deforestation by optimizing land use for beef feed production to preserve natural habitats: We envision to minimize deforestation by optimizing land use for beef feed production. By preserving natural habitats, we aim to protect biodiversity and ensure a sustainable environment.

06



Develop Sustainable Farming and Biodiversity Programs

Initiate and implement agro-ecology programs that promote sustainable farming practices, focus on social issues and local content, and support food security and incomes. Establish institutionalized frameworks and support systems for agro-ecology, providing training and resources to farmers to adopt sustainable practices and conserve biodiversity. Launch knowledge-sharing platforms and training programs for farmers, intermediaries, and consumers to promote the adoption of best agricultural practices and enhance consumer awareness and understanding of sustainable agriculture.

Proposed activities

- Establish and support incubators and accelerators to nurture and grow start-ups focused on sustainable agriculture and biodiversity.
- Develop programs to enhance literacy and empower farmers with the knowledge and skills needed for sustainable farming practices.
- Promote the establishment of direct food circuits connecting producers and consumers, and support the development of social and solidarity economies.
- Facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge exchange among farmers through agro-ecology schools and designated training programs.
- Organize a conference focused on soil health and management practices in Africa to share knowledge and innovations.

- Utilize digital tools, such as mobile text messages, to share knowledge and best practices among farmers and other stakeholders.
- Invest in the development and enhancement of resource centres to provide farmers with the necessary tools, information, and support for sustainable agriculture.

>> Towards the vision

Addressing environmental risks through business model changes and sourcing practices: We envision companies that proactively change their business models and sourcing practices to address root causes of environmental risks. This includes implementing Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD), with a focus on mitigating, monitoring, and reporting negative impacts in the value chain, especially regarding greenhouse gas emissions.

07



Promote Customers' Awareness for Fair Trade and Livelihoods of Producers

Implement and promote fair trade certification and labelling programs to establish standards for fair pricing, working conditions, and environmental sustainability in supply chains. Encourage consumers and businesses to support fair trade products through awareness campaigns and incentives, fostering a market that values and supports the livelihoods of producers.

Proposed activities

- Develop and enforce policies and regulations that enhance or replace voluntary sustainability standards to ensure comprehensive compliance and sustainability.
- Establish and improve services within the sector to optimize organizational structures, enhance capacity building, and upgrade equipment for better efficiency and sustainability.
- Organize field demonstration projects, such as Congo coffee production, to showcase sustainable practices and their benefits in real-world settings.
- Implement Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) activities with a focus on reducing energy and water impacts.
- Create sustainability standards through a bottom-up approach, as demonstrated by the development of two local wine standards in South Africa, which were subsequently benchmarked to international standards.

>> Towards the vision

Ensuring compliance with environmental regulations: We opt for an agricultural sector where all stakeholders comply with environmental regulations, ensuring that production practices align with global sustainability goals. This promotes accountability, with governments and other actors enforcing standards that protect the environment.

08



Develop Policies for Diversification in Supply Chains

Enforce policies and initiatives that promote competition and diversification of suppliers within importing markets, reducing the dominance of centralized markets. Provide support and resources to local businesses and producers to enhance their competitiveness and expand market access, for example by reviewing, simplifying and streamlining existing bureaucratic processes and regulations.

Proposed activities

- Enhance existing European Union competition law and national competition laws in producing countries to promote fair competition.
- Enforce laws governing contract farming to ensure fair and transparent agreements between producers and buyers.
- Formulate and implement policies designed to foster competition among suppliers within the market.
- Create incentives for importing goods from a diverse range of suppliers to reduce market concentration.
- Conduct a review of existing regulations to identify and eliminate bureaucratic obstacles that hinder market entry and operation.
- Implement measures to ensure transparency within the regulatory framework, making it easier for businesses to comply with regulations.
- Host trade fairs and exhibitions to provide a platform for local products to be showcased and promoted to broader audiences.
- Create and promote e-commerce platforms to enable local businesses and producers to reach broader markets and increase their sales potential.

>> Towards the vision

Ensuring market access and fair prices for smallholder farmers: We aim to create a fair and accessible marketplace for smallholder farmers, where they receive equitable prices for their produce. By fostering transparent trading practices and reducing intermediaries, we want to build a market environment that promotes sustainability and rewards hard work.

09



Support Value-Addition Activities in Third Countries

Promote value-addition activities in third countries through technical cooperation, which may help reverse tariff escalation. Additionally, enhancing capacity building at the farm-gate level will improve transparency and foster inclusive horizontal governance. This approach will engage local, private, and public governance actors, including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and be tailored to the specific needs of different commodities and countries.

Proposed activities

- Increase and improvement of cold chain infrastructure in developing countries.
- Public investment in rural areas in energy and water, among others.
- Establish technical assistance programs to transfer knowledge and skills for value-added production.
- Review and adjust tariffs to encourage value addition in third countries by reducing tariffs on processed goods.
- Implement policies to reverse tariff escalation, making it more attractive to export finished products rather than raw materials.
- Promote inclusive horizontal governance by involving local communities in decision-making processes.
- Develop country-specific action plans that align with local contexts and priorities.

>> Towards the vision

Reforming futures markets to include farmer interests and promote transparency: We wish for a reformed futures market where transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights and the environment are paramount. By incorporating farmer interests and fostering collaboration, we aim to create a futures market that serves the common good and supports sustainable agricultural practices.

10



Conduct Impact Assessments of Trade Agreements

Evaluate effects on local markets, poverty levels, environment, and food security by conducting comprehensive impact assessments before and after trade agreements. Use the findings from impact assessments to inform policy decisions and negotiate trade agreements that prioritize sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Proposed activities

- European Union economic partnership trade agreements and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) negotiations on increasing data access and reports for assessments and increasing local community participation.
- Engage with stakeholders, including local communities, industry representatives, environmental groups, and policymakers, to gather diverse perspectives.
- Engage with the same stakeholders to gather feedback on the real-world effects of the trade agreement.
- Establish monitoring mechanisms to track the actual impacts of the trade agreement over time.
- Publish and disseminate post-agreement findings to maintain transparency and accountability.
- Advocate for clauses that allow for periodic reviews and adjustments based on ongoing impact assessments.
- Build the capacity of local institutions to conduct impact assessments and monitor trade agreements.

>> Towards the vision

Promoting local, fair, and sustainable production and trade: Our vision is a thriving local economy supported by fair and sustainable production and trade practices. We aim to foster resilient local food systems that prioritize local sourcing and build strong territorial markets that encourage regional collaboration.

11



Explore and Promote Digital Agriculture Opportunities

Exploring and promoting digital agriculture offers significant benefits, such as enhanced yield and profitability for smallholder farmers through access to real-time data and direct market information. However, the digital divide could exacerbate existing inequalities, as barriers like limited digital literacy and high technology costs may impede small farmers' adoption of these tools. To ensure inclusive growth, careful implementation and supportive policies are crucial to prevent market power asymmetries from increasing.

Proposed activities

- Data-driven decisions aid in reducing the use of harmful or scarce inputs and in agricultural innovation (regenerative agriculture).
- Policy need for data security in the digitization of agriculture.
- Improving internet access and infrastructure using satellite data to define land titles.
- Conduct training programs to improve digital literacy among smallholder farmers.
- Develop user-friendly digital tools and applications that are accessible to farmers with varying levels of education.
- Establish local digital agriculture hubs or extension services to provide hands-on support and guidance.
- Ensure that digital agriculture initiatives are aligned with national agriculture and rural development strategies.
- Create digital platforms that facilitate direct communication between farmers and markets, reducing reliance on intermediaries.

>> Towards the vision

Investing in local production and processing for a stronger economy: We aspire to build a robust economy by investing in local production and processing facilities. This vision encourages the development of local businesses, creating job opportunities and fostering a sustainable and resilient agricultural sector.

12



Support Producer Associations with Training and Resources

Provide training programs and resources to support smallholders in forming and strengthening producers' associations or cooperatives, enabling them to overcome administrative hurdles and increase competitiveness. Streamline administrative processes and reduce paperwork for smallholders to make it easier for them to participate in cooperatives. Additionally, facilitate access to international trade by offering export training and support, connecting smallholders with global markets and trade networks.

Proposed activities

- Establishment of capacity building cooperatives.
- Simplify registration procedures for forming cooperatives to reduce bureaucratic barriers.
- Foster cooperations between cooperatives internationally.
- Auditing of cooperatives' accounts to improve transparency and governance of cooperatives.
- Offer specialized training programs on international trade regulations, export documentation, and logistics.
- Provide resources and tools for market research, identifying international buyers, and understanding trade requirements.
- Partner with trade organizations and export promotion agencies to connect smallholders with global markets.
- Facilitate access to credit and financial services tailored to the needs of smallholder cooperatives.
- Establish platforms to connect smallholder cooperatives with international buyers and trade networks.

>> Towards the vision

Ensuring market access and fair prices for smallholder farmers: We aim to create a fair and accessible marketplace for smallholder farmers, where they receive equitable prices for their produce. By fostering transparent trading practices and reducing intermediaries, we want to build a market environment that promotes sustainability and rewards hard work.



Enact Legislation for Corporate Sustainability in Supply Chains

Implement legislation that mandates companies to conduct comprehensive analyses of their purchasing practices' impact on living income and take necessary actions to ensure fair compensation, for example, a mandatory requirement for the inclusion of the cost of a living wage in product prices. Establish regulatory mechanisms and penalties to enforce compliance with Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) obligations and hold companies accountable for their impact on living income, possibly by publicly identifying and exposing companies engaged in unethical practices in their supply chains, raising awareness, and promoting consumer boycotts.

Implement legislation that requires companies to conduct comprehensive analyses of their purchasing practices' impact on living income and take necessary actions to ensure fair compensation, such as incorporating the cost of a living wage into product prices. Establish regulatory mechanisms and penalties to enforce compliance with HREDD obligations, ensuring companies are accountable for their impact on living income. Additionally, publicly identify and disclose companies engaged in unethical practices within their supply chains to raise awareness and encourage informed consumer choices.

Proposed activities

- Draft and pass legislation requiring companies to conduct comprehensive analyses of their purchasing practices' impact on living income.
- Define clear criteria and methodologies to calculate living income and living wages.
- Create a public registry of companies that fail to meet living wage standards and HREDD obligations.
- Introduce measures to incentivize compliance, such as tax breaks or public recognition for ethical practices.
- Mandate transparency in supply chains, including the publication of supplier lists, sourcing practices and disclosure of human rights, environmental effects and value chain costs.
- Launch awareness campaigns to inform consumers about the importance of fair compensation in supply chains.
- Foster collaboration between companies, governments, and civil society to share best practices and develop industry standards.
- Use feedback from stakeholders to continuously improve the legislative framework and enforcement strategies.

>> Towards the vision

Integrate living income price as a fundamental component of chocolate companies' business models: We aim to make living income pricing a fundamental component of chocolate companies' business models. This approach ensures fair and sustainable livelihoods for producers, promoting a more equitable industry.

Holding companies accountable for farm gate prices: We aspire to create a business environment where companies take full responsibility for farm gate prices, ensuring they are fair and transparent. This promotes accountability and discourages outsourcing to traders who exploit smallholder farmers.



Encourage Participation in Certification Schemes

Encourage farmers and agricultural businesses to participate in voluntary certification schemes that promote environmental objectives and ensure compliance with sustainable practices. Provide financial incentives and technical assistance to support the implementation and maintenance of certification schemes, including training and capacity-building programs. Facilitate obtaining and maintaining certification for sustainable and quality production by creating dedicated funding mechanisms or grants and exploring partnerships with financial institutions and impact investors.

Proposed activities

- Digitization of certification(s) to enhance transparency.
- Microfinance instruments to facilitate obtaining and maintaining certification for farmers.
- Subsidization loans for changes towards sustainable supply chain practices.
- Trade facilitation agreements between World Trade Organization (WTO) members to accelerate processing and reduce bureaucracy and food waste.
- Introduction of smart subsidies.
- Launch awareness campaigns to educate farmers and agricultural businesses about the benefits of certification schemes.
- Collaborate with financial institutions to develop loan products with favourable terms for investments in sustainable practices and certification.

- Provide technical assistance to help farmers and agricultural businesses understand and meet certification standards.
- Create a one-stop-shop or online portal where they can access all necessary information, forms, and resources related to certification.

>> Towards the vision

Promoting local, fair, and sustainable production and trade: We aspire to a thriving local economy supported by fair and sustainable production and trade practices. We aim to foster resilient local food systems that prioritize local sourcing and build strong territorial markets that encourage regional collaboration.

Implement agro-ecological practices across production: Our goal is to implement agro-ecological practices across production to promote sustainability and biodiversity. By doing so, we strive to create a resilient and environmentally friendly agricultural system.



Facilitate Sustainable Agri-food Investments

Promote partnerships between foreign private-sector investors and agri-food actors in developing countries to provide the necessary financial resources for sustainable development aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Create investment funds specifically targeted at supporting sustainable practices in the agri-food sector.

Proposed activities

- Reduction of overprotection of foreign investors, ex-ante and post-ante sustainability assessment and consultation of communities in the interest of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).
- Implementation of a national investment policy that guarantees equal treatment for domestic and foreign investors.
- Local investment in value-addition, sustainable bottom-up initiatives, local income generation, and reform central bank's regulations to encourage finance of agri-food.
- Establish offices or agencies dedicated to facilitating and supporting partnerships, providing matchmaking services, and offering guidance on regulatory and market conditions.

- Offer training and capacity-building programs for local agri-food actors to improve their ability to attract and manage investments.
- Create programs that specifically incentivize investments in projects that align with the SDGs and promote sustainability.
- Establish reporting requirements for investment funds and projects to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Engage with stakeholders, including governments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and community organizations, to build support and advocate sustainable investment in the agri-food sector.

>> Towards the vision

National governments to bolster sustainable investments by providing conditional financial support to farmers based on clear sustainability objectives: We aim for national governments to bolster sustainable investments by offering conditional financial support to farmers. This approach ensures that funding is tied to clear sustainability objectives, promoting environmental stewardship and long-term agricultural resilience.



Improve Food Cold Chain Logistics

Improving Food Cold Chain Logistics (FCCL) is essential to minimize food loss and waste, thereby supporting a functioning circular economy. Enhanced FCCL systems present significant business opportunities by extending the shelf-life of perishable products, which allows producers to access diversified markets. This improvement not only reduces waste but also boosts incomes for farmers and businesses by maintaining the quality and value of their products. By investing in efficient FCCL, we can create a more sustainable supply chain that benefits both the economy and the environment.

Proposed activities

- Invest in the design and construction of cold storage facilities that utilize renewable energy sources to align with the European Energy Roadmap 2050.
- Fund the establishment of cold storage facilities in rural areas to ensure that perishable goods can be stored and transported efficiently to support the Malabo declaration's goal of boosting agricultural value chains and improving market access for smallholder farmers.

- Develop digital platforms that provide real-time monitoring and data analytics for cold chain logistics, improving traceability and reducing food loss to promote the CELAC Plan for food security, nutrition and the eradication of hunger 2030.
- Minimizing food loss and waste as a goal of the US 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with Food Cold Chain Logistics (FCCL) as one of the primary foreseen implementation measures.
- Improve infrastructure in rural areas to ensure that cold chain logistics are accessible to farmers and producers, linking them efficiently to urban markets.
- Offer technical support to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to help them adopt and implement efficient cold chain practices.
- Introduce financial incentives such as subsidies, grants, and low-interest loans to encourage investment in cold chain infrastructure and technology.
- Develop programs that incentivize adherence to cold chain best practices, such as market access benefits or priority in public procurement.
- Develop platforms that provide real-time market information, helping producers and businesses make informed decisions and reduce spoilage.
- Strengthen logistics networks to ensure efficient and timely delivery of perishable goods, reducing transit times and spoilage.

>> Towards the vision

Holding companies accountable for farm gate prices: We aspire to create a business environment where companies take full responsibility for farm gate prices, ensuring they are fair and transparent. This promotes accountability and discourages outsourcing to traders who exploit smallholder farmers.

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Establish Price Observatories in Agricultural Supply Chains

Initiate price observatories at different stages of the agricultural supply chain to monitor and analyse price changes, providing valuable information for market participants. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to ensure the transparency and accessibility of price observatory data, enabling informed decision-making.

Proposed activities

- The European Union reinforces its network of national price observatories and financially supports price observatories in third world countries.
- The European Union price observatory services work together with competition authorities to spot price manipulation following power abuse and market concentration.
- National governments need to improve the functioning of Market Information Systems (MIS) to reach farmers.
- Utilize advanced technologies such as IoT sensors, mobile apps, and data analytics to collect accurate and timely price data.
- Collaborate with academic institutions, research organizations, and industry associations to enhance data collection and analysis capabilities.
- Create online platforms where price data can be accessed freely by all market participants, including farmers, traders, and consumers.
- Launch awareness campaigns to inform stakeholders about the availability and benefits of price observatories.
- Enact legislation to support the establishment and operation of price observatories, ensuring their legality and sustainability.
- Offer incentives for stakeholders to participate in data collection and reporting, such as financial rewards or recognition programs.
- Provide actionable market insights and forecasts to help stakeholders make informed decisions.
- Conduct regional analysis to identify local market dynamics and address region-specific challenges.

>> Towards the vision

Reforming futures markets to include farmer interests and promote transparency: We wish for a reformed futures market where transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights and the environment are paramount. By incorporating farmer interests and fostering collaboration, we aim to create a futures market that serves the common good and supports sustainable agricultural practices.

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Enact Local Market Allocation Legislation

Enact legislation that requires companies involved in exporting food products to allocate a certain percentage of their production for the local market, ensuring food security and availability for local communities. Implement incentives and support programs to encourage companies to prioritize domestic market supply when exporting food products.

Proposed activities

- Enact legislation that specifies a minimum percentage of production that food-exporting companies must allocate for the local market.
- Implement recognition programs that publicly acknowledge and reward companies for their commitment to local food security.
- Provide technical assistance to help companies optimize their production processes to meet both local and export market demands.
- Partner with non-governmental organizations to support the implementation and monitoring of local market allocation requirements.
- Conduct impact assessments to evaluate the effects of the legislation on food security, local market dynamics, and company operations.

>> Towards the vision

Guaranteeing food security and the right to nutritious food: We pursue a world where food security and the right to nutritious food are guaranteed for all. We aim to achieve this by supporting smallholder farmers, promoting food sovereignty, and addressing the root causes of food insecurity.

Establish fair and sustainable value chains: We envision to establish fair and sustainable value chains that ensure equitable treatment for all stakeholders. By promoting transparency and ethical practices, we aim to create a more just and resilient economic system.

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Introduce Legislation to Transform Business Models

When introducing legislation to transform business models, it is important to acknowledge that food system transformation measures are often framed as win-win for both people and the planet, despite the presence of many trade-offs. Legislation should consider the specifics of each context and account for the complex relationships between different agents across local, regional, and global scales.

Proposed activities

- Due diligence to enforce responsible corporate behaviour regarding negative human rights and environmental impacts throughout global value chains.
- Policies that promote sustainable business models considering the externalities and impacts at different levels (e.g. shutting down obsolete business models).
- Implementation of the European Social Economy Mission(s).
- Conduct detailed local assessments to understand unique challenges, opportunities, and cultural factors influencing business models.
- Maintain ongoing dialogue with stakeholders to address concerns and incorporate feedback into legislative processes.
- Perform assessments that evaluate economic, social, and environmental impacts of proposed legislative measures.
- Develop scenario plans to explore various outcomes and prepare strategies to manage potential negative impacts.
- Develop integrated policies that address interconnected issues such as sustainability, food security, and economic growth.

>> Towards the vision

Transform business models and sourcing practices to ensure all workers, including cocoa farm workers, earn a living wage in accordance with human rights due diligence: We strive to transform business models and sourcing practices to ensure that all workers, including cocoa farm workers, earn a living wage. By adhering to human rights due diligence, we aim to promote fairness and dignity in the workplace.



Integrate Gender Perspective in Corporate Due Diligence

Integrate a gender transformative approach into companies' Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) processes, conducting risk assessments that consider and address gender-based vulnerabilities and discrimination. Develop gender-specific measures and interventions to promote gender equality and empowerment within value chains.

Proposed activities

- Develop and enforce safety protocols to protect women from gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination.
- Implement equal pay policies to guarantee equal pay for equal work, actively eliminating gender-based wage disparities.
- Provide gender equality training for all employees on the importance of gender equality and their role in supporting an inclusive workplace.
- Establish mentorship programs connecting women with experienced leaders for guidance, support, and career development.
- Conduct risk assessments to identify gender-based vulnerabilities and discrimination within the company's operations and value chains.
- Engage with female employees, women's rights organizations, and gender experts for insights into gender-specific risks.
- Develop and implement gender equity policies addressing identified risks and promoting gender equality within the company and its value chains.
- Make public commitments to gender equality and report on progress towards achieving these goals.

>> Towards the vision

Promoting gender equality and asset ownership for women and youth: We aim for a society where gender equality is achieved in asset ownership, allowing women and youth to fully participate in agricultural production and land ownership. By challenging discriminatory cultural norms, we aim to ensure that everyone has equal rights to property and resources.



Advocate for Fair Wage Policies

Advocate the implementation of fair wage policies and regulations that ensure farm workers receive living wages, such as the establishment of a minimum price guarantee for agricultural products. Encourage companies to commit to paying living wages to farmers and farm workers through voluntary agreements or certification schemes.

Proposed activities

- Work with legislators and policymakers to draft and pass laws that raise the minimum wage for farm workers to a living standard.
- Advocate market interventions, such as price floors, to protect farmers from volatile market prices and ensure they can cover their production costs and pay living wages.
- Form coalitions with other organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and advocacy groups to strengthen the push for fair wage policies and regulations.
- Promote certification schemes that verify and recognize companies that adhere to fair wage practices, such as Fair Trade or Rainforest Alliance certifications.
- Advocate transparency in corporate wage practices, including regular reporting on wages paid to farm workers and adherence to fair wage commitments.
- Help farmers access premium markets that value and pay for sustainably produced and ethically sourced products, providing them with higher income opportunities.
- Educate consumers about the importance of fair wages in agriculture and encourage them to support companies and products that adhere to fair wage practices.

>> Towards the vision

Transform business models and sourcing practices to ensure all workers, including cocoa farm workers, earn a living wage in accordance with human rights due diligence: We strive to transform business models and sourcing practices to ensure that all workers, including cocoa farm workers, earn a living wage. By adhering to human rights due diligence, we aim to promote fairness and dignity in the workplace.

Ensure cocoa farmers earn a living income to support a dignified life with full human rights protection: Our goal is to ensure that cocoa farmers earn a living income, enabling them to support a dignified life. By upholding full human rights protection, we aim to create a fair and just agricultural sector.



Develop Sustainability Standards for Small-Scale Producers

Develop and enforce sustainability standards and legislation that specifically consider the impact on small-scale producers and cooperatives, ensuring that compliance burdens are primarily placed on larger companies in the value chains. Strengthen the role and position of cooperatives as key stakeholders in value chains through policy measures and support programs that enhance their capacity and bargaining power.

Proposed activities

- Establishing collaboratives to share responsibilities such as costs, investments, change of practices, etc.
- Price increase to promote sustainability practices – translate it to consumer awareness on fairness.
- Design legislation that places greater compliance burdens on larger companies, while offering more flexible or phased compliance requirements for small-scale producers and cooperatives.
- Conduct impact assessments to understand how new sustainability standards will affect small-scale producers and cooperatives.
- Develop clear and accessible guidelines specifically tailored for small-scale producers and cooperatives to help them understand and meet sustainability standards.
- Offer technical assistance and training programs to enhance the capacity of small-scale producers to comply with sustainability standards.
- Raise public awareness about the role and benefits of cooperatives in value chains and sustainable development.

>> Towards the vision

Strengthening co-operatives to enhance market participation and reduce rural poverty: We attempt to build a future where co-operatives play a central role in enhancing market participation for smallholder farmers, leading to increased

incomes and reduced rural poverty. By fostering a sense of community and shared goals, co-operatives will be instrumental in achieving sustainable rural development.



Cultivate Sustainable Food Systems through Knowledge Networks

A local community food system can effectively address global challenges such as hunger, chronic health conditions, fluctuating food costs, and land appropriation. Supporting small-scale farmers and local value chains, along with bolstering local knowledge networks, is crucial for developing sustainable food systems.

Proposed activities

- Identifying and documenting good practices in community food systems.
- Analysing common challenges due to global food system pressures.
- Fostering knowledge exchange among diverse community initiatives.
- Building networks to enhance community solidarity.
- Ensure that competition law supports and facilitates agreements aimed at achieving sustainability goals, without hindering collaborative efforts among businesses.
- Establish community-based knowledge centres where farmers can access information, resources, and training on sustainable practices.
- Create digital platforms and mobile apps to facilitate the sharing of local knowledge, best practices, and innovations among farmers and stakeholders.
- Build the capacity of local organizations and farmer groups to advocate their interests and influence policy at local, regional, and national levels.

>> Towards the vision

Supporting small-scale producers and empowering marginalized communities: We aspire to create a thriving ecosystem that supports small-scale producers and marginalized communities. This includes providing resources, training, and market access to ensure that every producer has the opportunity to succeed and contribute to sustainable food systems.



Raise Sustainability Standards in Value Chains

For value chains to be sustainable, they have to be fair. They should be aligned with supply and demand, globalized but also domesticated. Raising minimum sustainability standards and promoting voluntary action is necessary to achieve fair and sustainable value chains. Particular focus should be on due diligence policies and supply chain law; promoting fair and sustainable agricultural trade with multi-actor and multi-level actions, as well as targeted actions and investments.

Proposed activities

- Implement sustainability standards that are based on scientifically validated targets, such as those provided by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), ensuring that goals are ambitious yet achievable.
- Encourage adherence to industry-specific guidelines and best practices, such as those recommended by the China Meat Association (CMA), to promote sustainable practices within specific sectors.
- Implement mandatory due diligence requirements for companies to assess and address sustainability risks in their supply chains, as outlined in the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD).
- Support local initiatives that promote sustainable practices within communities and local value chains, in line with directives like the European Union Directive on the protection of young people at work (94/33/EC), which ensures safe and fair working conditions for young workers.
- Create incentive programs, including tax breaks or subsidies, for companies that voluntarily exceed minimum sustainability standards.
- Require companies to publicly report on their due diligence processes and the sustainability impacts of their supply chains.
- Provide legal support and resources for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to help them comply with supply chain laws.
- Incorporate sustainability clauses into trade agreements to promote fair and sustainable agricultural practices.

>> Towards the vision

Establish fair and sustainable value chains: We envision to establish fair and sustainable value chains that ensure equitable treatment for all stakeholders. By promoting transparency and ethical practices, we aim to create a more just and resilient economic system.



Promote Inclusive Collaboration and Governance

Common methods are often established by a small set of actors and may exclude other stakeholders (e.g. sub-national governments, indigenous peoples, local communities, etc.). Collaboration is key to identifying the most successful approaches to sustainable practices and for accountability. Rural communities, indigenous groups, women, youth, other minority groups have limited agency to influence decision-making. Develop governance mechanisms to empower them. Provide information and capacity development for meaningful engagement.

Proposed activities

- Relabel “small” farmers.
- Conduct comprehensive mapping of all stakeholders, including marginalized groups, to ensure their inclusion in policy development processes.
- Develop participatory frameworks that facilitate the involvement of diverse stakeholders in decision-making, ensuring their voices are heard and considered.
- Offer legal and institutional support to marginalized groups to help them navigate governance systems and advocate their rights and interests.
- Ensure that all stakeholders have access to information on policies, governance processes, and sustainable practices through transparent and accessible communication channels.
- Establish multi-stakeholder platforms that bring together diverse actors, including marginalized groups, to collaborate on sustainable practices and governance.
- Create advisory councils comprising representatives from marginalized groups to provide input on policy and governance issues.
- Establish accountability mechanisms, such as grievance redress systems, to address concerns and hold decision-makers accountable.

>> Towards the vision

Supporting small-scale producers and empowering marginalized communities: We aspire to create a thriving ecosystem that supports small-scale producers and marginalized communities. This includes providing resources, training, and market access to ensure that every producer has the opportunity to succeed and contribute to sustainable food systems.



Enforce Corporate Accountability

Enforce existing laws and regulations based on the United Nations guiding principles on business and human rights, ensuring that companies are held accountable for their actions and impacts. Develop and implement national action plans that outline specific measures and requirements for companies to conduct Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) in their operations and supply chains.

Proposed activities

- Implement the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) to require companies to provide detailed and transparent reports on their sustainability practices, including human rights and environmental impacts.
- Implement the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) to require companies to provide detailed and transparent reports on their sustainability practices, including human rights and environmental impacts.
- Require companies to disclose their sourcing practices, ensuring transparency in how they address human rights and environmental impacts in their supply chains.
- Implement policies that link executive compensation, including Chief Executive Officer (CEO) bonuses, to the achievement of specific climate and sustainability goals.
- Provide capacity-building programs to help companies understand and comply with new regulations, such as the CSRD and EUDR.
- Organize dialogues and training sessions to contextualize and explain the requirements of United Nations and European Union guidelines and directives, helping companies to integrate these into their operations.
- Develop and implement positive incentives, such as tax breaks or public recognition, for companies that demonstrate strong commitments to human rights and environmental protection.
- Mandate companies to conduct comprehensive Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD), identifying, preventing, and addressing adverse impacts.

>> Towards the vision

Promoting transparency in environmental sustainability practices and standards: We aspire to increase transparency in environmental sustainability practices, ensuring that production methods and standards are clearly specified in

agreements. This addresses the need for dedicated sustainability units within processors and retailers, emphasizing their role in sustainability reporting and aligning with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

Hold companies accountable for human rights violations and environmental damage across their supply chains: We aim to hold companies accountable for human rights violations and environmental damage across their supply chains. By enforcing strict standards and promoting transparency, we strive to ensure ethical and sustainable business practices.

Integrate comprehensive Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) within global value chains, ensuring meaningful involvement of rights holders: We envision to integrate comprehensive HREDD into global value chains. By ensuring the meaningful involvement of rights holders, we aim to foster ethical and sustainable practices throughout the industry.



Facilitate Vision Alignment on all Levels

Institutional reform should aim for greater policy collaboration among domestic institutions to address the complexities of integrating trade, climate and nature agendas. Efforts should work towards a shared vision on the regional level (e.g. East Africa), continental level (e.g. African Trade Union (ATU)), and the local/community level, as well as towards global agendas.

Proposed activities

- Ensure the implementation of the Living Income Differential (LID) Policy in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to secure fair income for farmers, thus addressing socio-economic impacts and promoting sustainable livelihoods.
- Facilitate exchanges and collaborations between actors involved in East African trade agreements to harmonize standards and practices, ensuring that human rights and environmental due diligence are integral parts of regional trade policies.
- Support individual trade initiatives in Kenya that incorporate robust due diligence practices to prevent human rights abuses and environmental degradation.
- Implement participatory certification systems that involve local communities and stakeholders in the certification process, ensuring transparency and adherence to human rights and environmental standards.

- Join efforts and negotiations for advocacy to promote the importance of Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD), engaging with governments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and international bodies to strengthen regulations and enforcement mechanisms.

>> Towards the vision

Promoting transparency in environmental sustainability practices and standards: We aspire to increase transparency in environmental sustainability practices, ensuring that production methods and standards are clearly specified in agreements. This addresses the need for dedicated sustainability units within processors and retailers, emphasizing their role in sustainability reporting and aligning with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

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Facilitate Dialogues with Large Agricultural Traders

Facilitate policy dialogues and engagement between large agricultural traders, particularly with influential traders such as China, to discuss and promote the evolution of social and environmental trade standards in their respective markets. Foster collaboration and knowledge sharing to drive positive change in global agricultural trade practices.

Proposed activities

- Conduct in-depth research to identify gaps and discrepancies in existing social and environmental trade policies and regulations. Develop evidence-based alternatives and best practices to address these gaps and enhance sustainability standards.
- Explore and critically analyse the gaps in existing policies and regulations. Provide actionable recommendations to strengthen these frameworks, ensuring they effectively support Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) and environmental sustainability in alignment with international guidelines and directives.
- Advocating policy reforms and reconnecting enforcement mechanisms.
- Organize international forums and summits that bring together large agricultural traders, policymakers, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders to discuss social and environmental trade standards.

- Conduct policy workshops to educate and engage large agricultural traders on the benefits and implementation of social and environmental trade standards.
- Provide technical assistance to help traders implement sustainable practices and meet regulatory requirements.

>> Towards the vision

Promoting transparency in environmental sustainability practices and standards: We aspire to increase transparency in environmental sustainability practices, ensuring that production methods and standards are clearly specified in agreements. This addresses the need for dedicated sustainability units within processors and retailers, emphasizing their role in sustainability reporting and aligning with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

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Align Sustainable Investment with Local Policies

Align sustainable investment strategies with local development policies and global value chains, reducing over-dependency on external markets and resources; encourage investments in value-adding activities closer to the farm gates, such as processing and packaging, to increase the value of agricultural products. Develop transparent and accountable investment guidelines and criteria that prioritize Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors.

Proposed activities

- Implement infrastructural development projects to support sustainable investments, focusing on facilities for processing, packaging, and transportation that enhance the value of agricultural products closer to the farm gates.
- Encourage investments in agricultural value-adding activities, such as processing, packaging, and other post-harvest operations, to increase the value of agricultural products and reduce dependency on external markets.
- Increase research and development in sustainable investment areas to identify innovative solutions and best practices that align with local development policies and global value chains.
- Governments should regularly review and update investment policies and regulations to ensure they promote sustainable development and are effectively enforced.

- Promote the establishment and use of ESG-focused investment funds, such as Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) funds, to support socially responsible and sustainable investments.
- Ensure that investment strategies are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promoting sustainable development in line with global and local priorities.
- Conduct thorough due diligence before making investments to ensure they are sustainable and aligned with local policies. Implement corrective actions to repair or mitigate the impact of any bad investments.
- Facilitate access to investment for smallholders, with a focus on overcoming gender barriers and ensuring that women and other marginalized groups can benefit from sustainable investment opportunities.

>> Towards the vision

Align European Union agricultural, trade, investment, and development policies to foster sustainable value chains: We aim to align European Union agricultural, trade, investment, and development policies to foster sustainable value chains. By creating coherent and supportive policies, we strive to promote sustainability and equity throughout the global market.

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Re-purpose Agricultural Subsidies

Many agricultural practices are harmful to the planet but are made attractive by government subsidies (e.g., the overuse of fertilizer and agrochemicals, unsustainable land expansion, and skewed income distribution). The funds for these should be repurposed towards subsidies that do not harm the planet to avoid economies that are locked-in to certain production methods.

Proposed activities

- Monitor the impact of European Union agri-exports on local markets in third countries.
- Adapt subsidies accordingly to mitigate any negative effects, including adjustments through the Performance Assessment System (PAS).
- Enhance local agricultural and environmental standards. Support the development and reinforcement of local institutions to enforce these standards effectively.

- Provide incentives and support for farmers to adopt eco-friendly techniques.
- Ensure that only genuinely sustainable practices receive financial support and prohibit subsidies to companies that engage in greenwashing.
- Encourage diversification and innovation in agricultural practices to build resilient and sustainable agricultural systems.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the new subsidy allocation and make adjustments as needed to ensure positive outcomes.

>> Towards the vision

Providing comprehensive capacity building for processors and exporters: We want to create established bodies that offer extensive capacity-building initiatives for processors and exporters, enabling them to meet World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, European Union requirements, and other global standards. This includes support for certification, technology adoption, and value addition, empowering businesses to thrive in a global market.

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Build Local Capacities for Sustainable Trade

Establish capacity-building programs and initiatives focusing on knowledge exchange and skill development for farmers and intermediaries in sustainable trade. Allocate funding and resources to support the creation of local institutions that promote trust, transparency, and knowledge sharing among stakeholders in the trade value chain. Develop training programs on future markets, labelling regulations, and other relevant topics to enhance the capacity of farmers and intermediaries to engage in sustainable trade practices.

Proposed activities

- Identify and document local institutions that can play a role in promoting sustainable trade, including local governments, indigenous groups, women activist networks, and others.
- Engage in Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and facilitate dialogue and partnerships to align goals and leverage resources effectively.

- Provide funding and resources to enhance the capabilities of local institutions in promoting sustainable trade, including programs to build the skills and knowledge of farmers as well as intermediaries.
- Implement measures to ensure that all activities and initiatives are transparent and accountable.
- Clearly define what constitutes a “local institution” to ensure that the definition is inclusive and representative of all key stakeholders, like for example local government bodies, indigenous groups, women activist networks, and other relevant entities.
- Create and implement technological platforms to facilitate knowledge exchange and information sharing among stakeholders, including digital tools to enhance communication, training, and collaboration in sustainable trade practices.

>> Towards the vision

Strengthen local institutions and capacities to enhance sustainable trade: We strive to strengthen local institutions and capacities to enhance sustainable trade. By empowering communities and building robust frameworks, we aim to create long-term economic and environmental benefits.

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Enhance Interconnectivity of Food-System Initiatives

Increase interconnectivity of food-system-oriented initiatives to maximize their impact on strategic policy-making. These initiatives address various legislations and policies, so effective coordination of concerned policies is essential to facilitate joint actions. This will lead to the comprehensive and wide-ranging implementation of food-system initiatives.

Proposed activities

- Utilize technology to enhance connectivity and access to networks among food-system initiatives.
- Promote dialogues among policymakers and stakeholders to ensure coordinated and effective policy-making.
- Form partnerships and agreements among various actors and stakeholders to enhance collaboration and joint actions.
- Advocate supportive policies and regulations through lobbying efforts by food-system-oriented initiatives.

- Pursue reforms in institutions to better support the coordination and implementation of food-system initiatives.
- Promote the active participation of women and small-scale farmers in food-system initiatives.
- Increase the recognition of geographical indications for products from non-EU regions to enhance their market access and value.
- Identify and document existing food-system-oriented initiatives and the legislations or policies they address.
- Establish mechanisms for effective coordination among different policies related to food systems.
- Engage a diverse range of stakeholders, including government agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), private sector, and community groups, in the planning and implementation of initiatives.

>> Towards the vision

Promoting transparency in environmental sustainability practices and standards: We aspire to increase transparency in environmental sustainability practices, ensuring that production methods and standards are clearly specified in agreements. This addresses the need for dedicated sustainability units within processors and retailers, emphasizing their role in sustainability reporting and aligning with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

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Alignment of Policies to Simultaneously Target Multiple Dimensions of Sustainability

Different dimensions of sustainability must be addressed simultaneously to achieve a balanced and effective approach. Implementing complementary policies alongside trade policies can target specific aspects of sustainability such as environmental protection, social equity, and economic growth. Effective coordination of these policies will enable comprehensive and impactful implementation of sustainability initiatives. **By integrating various sustainability dimensions into a cohesive policy framework, positive outcomes cab be maximised for both the environment and society.**

Proposed activities

- Ensure that national strategic plans under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) include considerations of trade impacts on sustainability.

- Perform ex-ante assessments of European Union initiatives to evaluate their trade-related impacts, focusing on sustainability dimensions.
- Create and implement policies that complement trade policies, targeting specific sustainability aspects such as environmental protection, social equity, and economic growth.
- Ensure that all policies and assessments are inclusive, taking into account the needs and impacts on small-scale farmers and gender considerations.

>> Towards the vision

Integrate comprehensive Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) within global value chains, ensuring meaningful involvement of rights holders: We envision to integrate comprehensive HREDD into global value chains. By ensuring the meaningful involvement of rights holders, we aim to foster ethical and sustainable practices throughout the industry

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Reform and Integrate Food System Policies

Transition to sustainable food systems requires both new and old policies. An effective sustainable food policy needs new policy goals, frameworks, and mixes, as well as innovative approaches for evaluation. Enhancing existing policies involves better coordination and the inclusion of new actors at various levels; these policies can be scaled-up and integrated with other tools to increase their impact. New policies must involve stronger engagement with civil society and urban municipalities, as well as multilevel governance and the participation of relevant stakeholders to be effective.

Proposed activities

- Improve coordination among existing policies to ensure they work synergistically towards common sustainability goals.
- Coordinate the policy cycles of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and other related policies, such as Environment, Energy, and Gender, as well as the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), to ensure a cohesive approach towards sustainable food systems.

- Redefine CAADP’s priorities to incorporate sustainable indicators, ensuring that new policy goals and evaluation methods reflect sustainability objectives.
- Shift the focus of the CAP towards more sustainable practices, with a greater emphasis on the Performance Assessment System (PAS) and support for smaller-scale, sustainable farming operations.
- Advocate the active involvement of local indigenous groups and other marginalized communities in the development and implementation of sustainable food system policies.
- Ensure that policies are coherent and complementary at local, regional, national, and international levels.

>> Towards the vision

Establish Institutions to Oversee Compliance with International Standards and Enhance Market Access: We envision to establish institutions that oversee compliance with international standards and enhance market access. By ensuring adherence to global norms, we aim to facilitate fair trade and open new opportunities for businesses.

Roadmap – Actions for Sustainable Agricultural Trade

Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
01		Establish International Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement01	
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03	Develop and Disseminate Sustainable Water Management Guidelines03		
04		Establish Climate Risk Insurance for Farmers04	
05		Implement Policies to Prevent Deforestation and Promote Conservation05	
06		Develop Sustainable Farming and Biodiversity Programs06	
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09	Support Value-Addition Activities in Third Countries09		
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20	Integrate Gender Perspective in Corporate Due Diligence19		
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MATS Vision

01	Conducting Environmental Impact Assessments for Trade
02	Change in Dietary Habits and Consumption
03	Ensuring Efficient Use of Water Resources in Water-Scarce Regions
04	Enable Producers to Achieve Living Incomes to Enhance Their Capacity for Climate Adaptation and Disaster Resilience
05	Minimize Deforestation by Optimizing Land Use for Beef Feed Production to Preserve Natural Habitats
06	Addressing Environmental Risks through Business Model Changes and Sourcing Practices
07	Ensuring Compliance with Environmental Regulations
08	Ensuring Market Access and Fair Prices for Smallholder Farmers
09	Reforming Future Markets to Include Farmer Interests and Promote Transparency
10	Promoting Local, Fair and Sustainable Production and Trade
11	Investing in Local Production and Processing for a Stronger Economy
12	Integrate Living Income Price as a Fundamental Component of Chocolate Companies' Business Models
13	Holding Companies Accountable for Farm Gate Prices
14	Implement Agro-Ecological Practices Across Production
15	National Governments to Bolster Sustainable Investments by Providing Conditional Financial Support to Farmers Based on Clear Sustainability Objectives
16	Guaranteeing Food Security and the Right to Nutritious Food
17	Establish Fair and Sustainable Value Chains
18	Transform Business Models and Sourcing Practices to Ensure all Workers, Including Cocoa Farm Workers, Earn a Living Wage in Accordance With Human Rights Due Diligence
19	Promoting Gender Equality and Asset Ownership for Women and Youth
20	Ensure Cocoa Farmers Earn a Living Income to Support a Dignified Life With Full Human Rights Protection
21	Strengthening Co-operatives to Enhance Market Participation and Reduce Rural Poverty
22	Supporting Small-Scale Producers and Empowering Marginalized Communities
23	Promoting Transparency in Environmental Sustainability Practices and Standards
24	Hold Companies Accountable for Human Rights Violations and Environmental Damage Cross Their Supply Chains
25	Align EU Agricultural, Trade, Investment, and Development Policies to Foster Sustainable Value Chains
26	Providing Comprehensive Capacity Building for Processors and Exporters
27	Strengthen Local Institutions and Capacities to Enhance Sustainable Trade
28	Integrate Comprehensive Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence Within Global Value Chains, Ensuring Meaningful Involvement of Rights Holders
29	Establish Institutions to Oversee Compliance with International Standards and Enhance Market Access

Social and Human Dimension

Policy and Governance

Natural Capital

Economy and Markets

Assigned

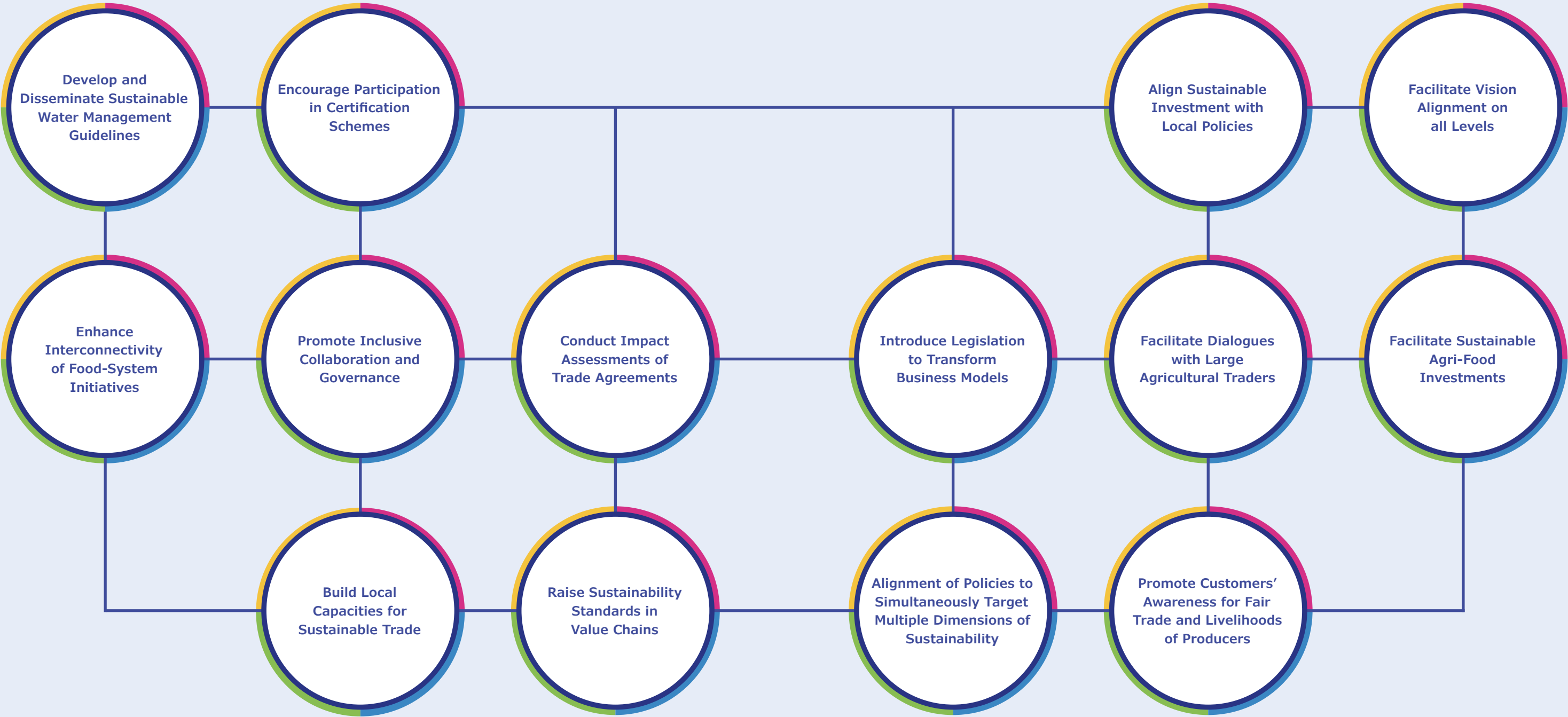
Not Assigned

Action

Deep Dive

Deep Dives

14 out of 34 Actions in Focus





Develop Disseminate Sustainable Water Management Guidelines

Description

This action focuses on developing and widely disseminating guidelines for sustainable water management practices in agriculture. These guidelines will ensure the adoption of efficient irrigation methods, water conservation techniques, and proper treatment of wastewater. Training and support to farmers should be provided to help them implement these guidelines. The goal is to promote water-efficient farming practices that reduce water waste and overall water use. Additionally, the implementation of water recycling and reuse systems should be encouraged. By promoting the adoption of nature-based solutions for water allocation, the aim is to ensure compliance with environmental regulations while enhancing productivity and preserving environmental integrity.

Facts and figures

Water use intensification leads to biodiversity and ecosystem loss, soil salinization, and degradation of water sources. These are further exacerbated by climate change, which is increasing the frequency of extreme weather events such as flooding and torrents, as well as drought and aridity. Further issues arise as a result of illegal water usage. Illegal wells are a major problem for the water balance of entire regions and for natural ecosystems. Approximately 25% of the global population may face extreme water shortages by 2025; 15-35% of the water used in agriculture comes from unsustainable sources. It is evident that more efficient water management techniques are necessary as one step to combat increasing water scarcity. Drip irrigation systems e.g. are the water management systems with the highest efficiency at 80-95% while surface irrigation systems are least efficient at 25-60%.¹

¹ For further insights see case studies 1, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13.

Implications for agricultural trade

Clearly a one-step method is not powerful enough to overcome the current challenges raised with the water crisis. Political determination and framework conditions put in place for sustainable water use are pivotal. The guidelines from sustainable agricultural movements such as organic farming, permaculture, regenerative agriculture, agroecology, conservation agriculture, and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) can be adopted to develop efficient water management systems.

Preventive practical water management measures, including the choice and implementation of an efficient irrigation system, must be fitted to the operation. Water stewardship comes at the inter-operational level and works to plan and manages water resources responsibly in the watershed, beyond the individual operation. This involves all stakeholders and aims to ensure that water is used considerably throughout the entire watershed. Food and Agriculture Organizations (FAOs) Water Management Program for climate-smart agriculture is an example of training courses provided for both professionals and the general audience and particularly addresses zero hunger, clean water and sanitation, and climate action goal among Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).





Encourage Participation in Certification Schemes

Description

The action aims to encourage farmers and agricultural businesses to participate in voluntary certification schemes that promote environmental objectives and ensure compliance with sustainable practices. It should provide financial incentives and technical assistance to support the implementation and maintenance of certification schemes, including training and capacity-building programs. Additionally, it will facilitate obtaining and maintaining certification for sustainable and quality production by creating dedicated funding mechanisms or grants and exploring partnerships with financial institutions and impact investors.

Facts and figures

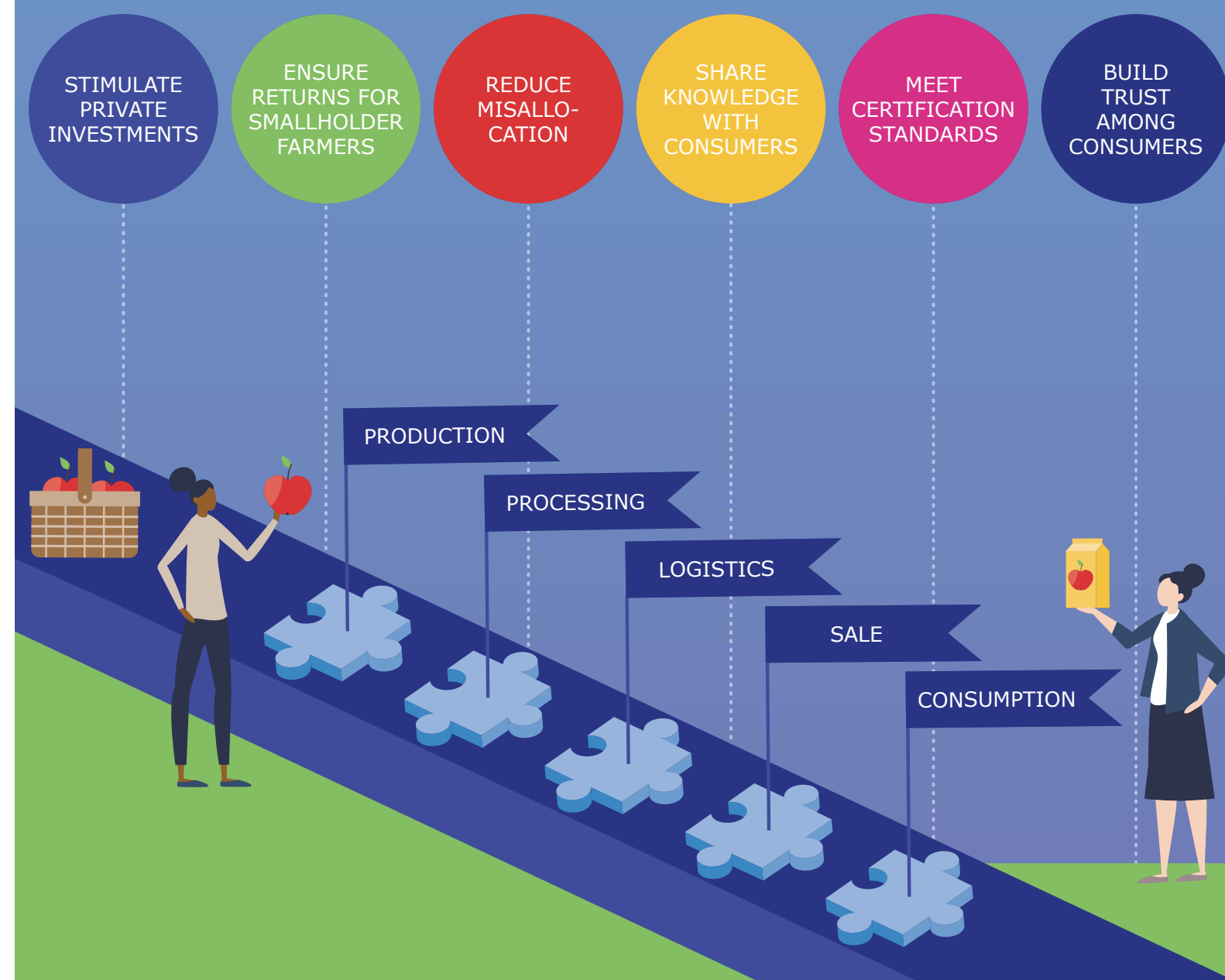
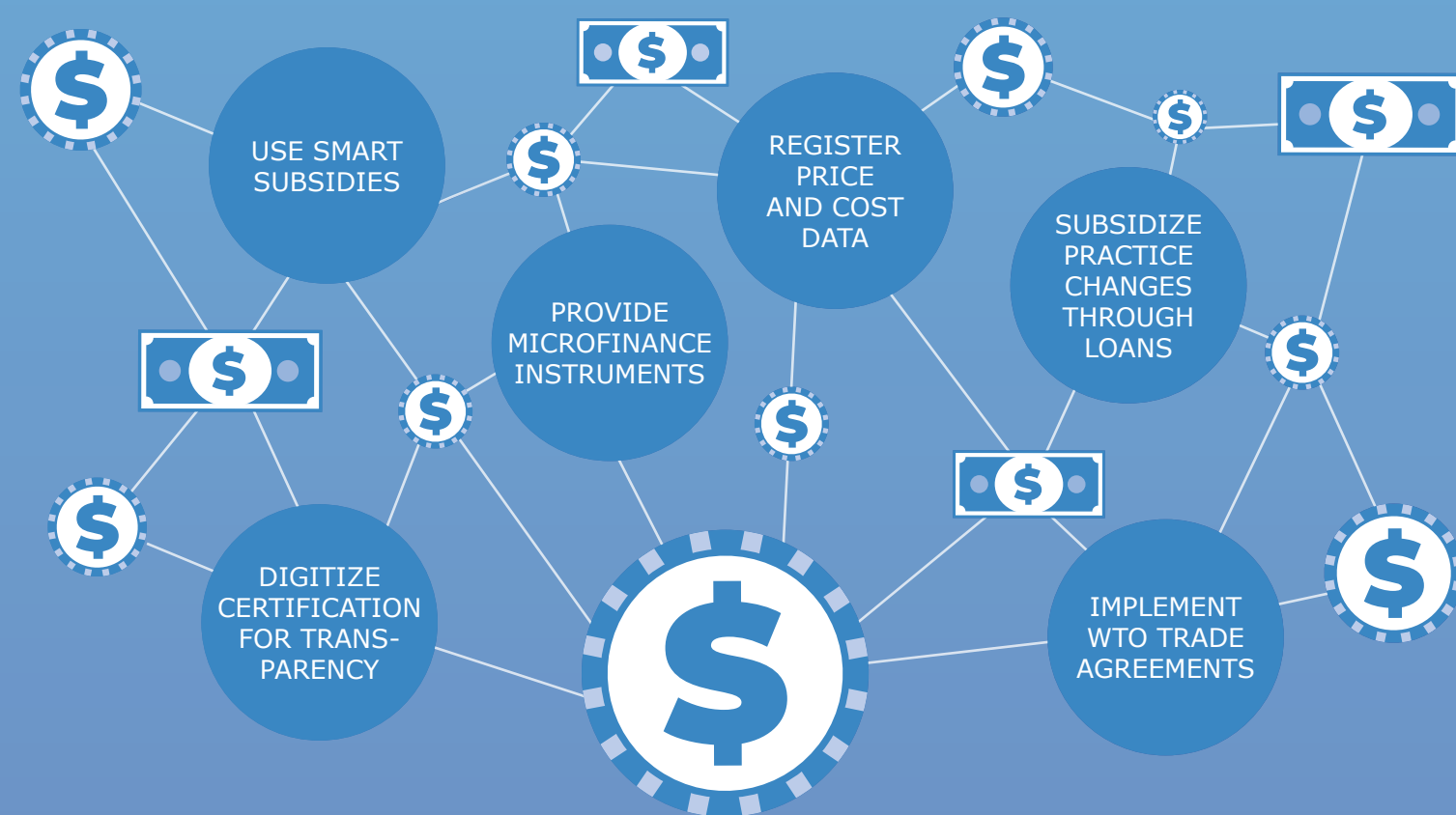
The potential advantages of certification are limited by its complexity, low benefit-cost ratio, scalability challenges, and overall effectiveness. It is most successful for well-managed farms with resources, market access, and effective local governance.

Various examples include Organic Certification, Rainforest Alliance and UTZ Certified, and Global G.A.P., which establishes standards for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) encompassing food safety, environmental sustainability, and worker welfare.

According to the European Parliament's 2022 report, 198 certification schemes at the farm level have been identified. Of these, 170 schemes (86%) are established within the European Union, while 28 schemes operate in third countries. Over two-thirds of these schemes have been initiated by private organizations, with one-third is managed by public entities. Additionally, most of these schemes cover multiple product types.

Implications for agricultural trade

In agriculture, certification schemes provide opportunities for farmers and other stakeholders to access markets more effectively, offering a competitive edge even without premium prices. Following the standards facilitates the learning process for farmers, helping them to adapt to new and global markets. Voluntary standards, driven by market demand, are effective for segmenting markets and meeting consumer needs in both national and export contexts. While certification schemes are beneficial, their success depends on context, and the poorest, most vulnerable smallholder producers often require considerable external assistance to comply with sustainability standards.





Enhance Interconnectivity of Food-System Initiatives

Description

These initiatives address various legislations and policies, making it essential to effectively coordinate concerned policies to facilitate joint actions. This approach will result in the comprehensive and wide-ranging implementation of food-system initiatives.

Facts and figures

International food system initiatives have put efforts to cope with the global food security threats resulting from the shortcomings of current food systems. In recent decades, the international organizations, governments, industries, and corporate bodies were showing significantly increased rate of involvement in implementing initiatives in alignment with the United Nations Agenda on food security and nutrition. The development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 2: Zero Hunger, was a milestone to this progress. For this reason, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in partnership with governmental and non-governmental bodies, has launched key innovative initiatives and agendas, including Climate Smart Agriculture, Regenerative Agriculture, Agricultural Intensification, Precision Farming, and the Circular Economy, setting sights on promoting food system sustainability in rural and peri-urban regions.²

Challenges still exist on a global scale. During the timeline of 2015 to 2023, the hunger rate dropped only marginally, from 11 to 9.2% of the world's population. The post-COVID situation, climate change and political vulnerabilities all have affected the food security during the past years.

Implications for agricultural trade

Although smallholder farmers produce one third of the agricultural products, they receive only 1.7% of the financial aid related to the climatic situation. The United Nations Food Systems Summit has provided a platform for the countries to share the progress of their food systems to accelerate the transformation in the global food systems towards a more sustainable, efficient and economically just structure for the farmers.

An example of this transformation is the Gran Chaco region of Latin America, which is facing serious climatic changes and requires a more resilient food system. Now this area is target of a joint mission with actors from the indigenous communities, local government, small landholders and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to tackle agricultural, financial and social challenges of the region.

Another example is the TITAN project initiated by the European Federation of Food Science and Technology (EFFoST). The project's main goals are to increase transparency, fairness, health, environmental friendliness and societal welfare through a 4-year horizon, with a focus on small and medium-sized agribusinesses.

² For further insights see case studies 1, 4, 5, 7, 14.





Promote Inclusive Collaboration and Governance

Description

Common methods are often established by a small set of actors, potentially excluding other stakeholders such as sub-national governments, indigenous peoples and local communities. Collaboration is key to identifying the most successful approaches to sustainable practices and for accountability. Rural communities, indigenous groups, women, youth, other minority groups have limited agency to influence decision-making. Therefore, the action seeks to develop governance mechanisms to empower these groups and provide information and capacity development for meaningful engagement.

Facts and figures

There is no definitive method to empower marginalized groups through collective action. Major current challenges include poor governance, inadequate financial and managerial capabilities, underdeveloped human capital, and unfavourable policy environments.

Inclusive Business Models (IBMs) could be a valuable approach to enhance collaborative efforts within the agribusiness sector, fostering greater inclusion and shared benefits. IBM's aim to create value for low-income communities by integrating them into a company's value chain both as clients and consumers on the demand side, and as producers, entrepreneurs, or employees on the supply side, in a sustainable manner. These models prioritize the participation of small-scale farmers, women, and marginalized groups in agricultural value chains, ensuring their inclusion and empowerment.

IBM generates growth opportunities for both smallholders and companies. Increasing awareness among value chain actors highlights that IBM can unlock attractive business prospects in increasingly competitive markets, fostering shared value creation. Inclusive Contract Farming (ICF), a specific type of IBM, enhances inclusive collaboration and governance. IBM contribute to sustainable development across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. ICF, in particular, connects smallholder farmers with rapidly growing local consumer markets, as well as lucrative regional and global export markets, driving rural economic transformation and creating more resilient food value chains.³

Implications for agricultural trade

Inclusive agribusiness necessitates adopting inclusive trading practices across the entire value chain. Key aspects of these inclusive value chains encompass stable trading relationships, ethical trading practices, transparent communication and collaboration, balanced power dynamics, fair pricing, market adaptability, value addition, and comprehensive service provision. When inclusive agribusiness trade has been established and operates on inclusive principles, the supportive environment becomes crucial in transforming it into a new standard. Key elements of this environment include institutions, regulations, and support services.

³ For further insights see case studies 1, 5, 9.





Conduct Impact Assessments of Trade Agreements

Description

The action aims to conduct comprehensive impact assessments before and after trade agreements to evaluate their effects on local markets, poverty levels, environment, and food security. The analysis of these impacts can be used to inform policy decisions and negotiate trade agreements that prioritize sustainable development and poverty reduction. Trade agreements offer opportunities for European Union producers in global markets, benefiting both the European Union economy and consumers. However, the benefits to the European Union agri-food sector from these agreements cannot be assumed. It is crucial to consistently monitor and enhance existing agreements, drawing lessons from those treaties already implemented to strengthen new trade negotiations underway and being aware of their impacts on the trading partners.⁴

Facts and figures

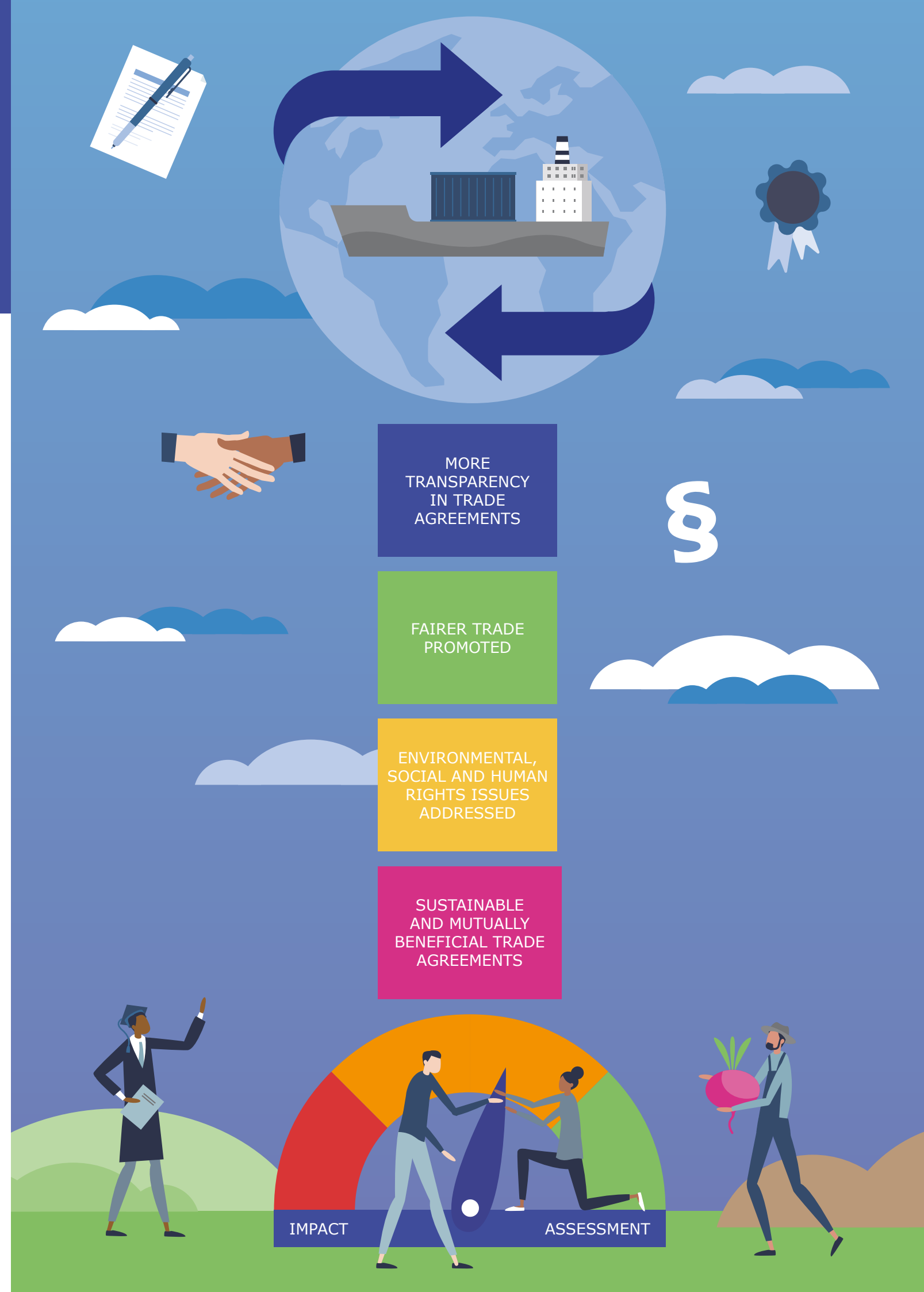
Trade agreements have impacts on the economy, society and environment of the trade partner countries. As a part of the European Union's sustainable development policy, "trade Sustainability Impact Assessments" (trade SIAs) are done before finalizing each trade agreement to forecast the effects a proposed trade agreement will have on the aforesaid dimensions and subsequently identify additional measures to mitigate any negative impacts. In the last years, these trade SIAs were criticized for not effectively assessing the impact of trade agreements on human rights, failing to address underlying challenges which exist in poor countries, emphasizing the right to food (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2).

Therefore, several approaches for carrying out, Human Rights Impact Assessments' (HRIAs) of governmental actions have been established. Trade HRIAs examine the various aspects of sustainable development through a human rights lens. The real value of these assessments may lie in their potential to inform long-term risk mitigation efforts. Challenges include the gap between initial and follow-up assessments and the difficulty of translating unilateral findings into joint strategies. These issues need further exploration within trade agreements.

Implications for agricultural trade

When conducting an SIA in the context of agricultural trade, it is crucial for each country to prioritize areas that will yield the most valuable insights and to compare benefits and demands. Policymakers well-informed decisions should consider the strengths and limitations of various analytical methods to ensure that the chosen approach is practical, comprehensive, detailed, relevant to policy goals, and credible. It depends on the country's capacities which methods can be implemented effectively. For smaller or resource-constrained countries, it is essential to focus on manageable methods, enabling them to make informed decisions and develop effective policies in agricultural trade.

⁴ For further insights see case studies 1, 2, 8, 14.





Build Local Capacities for Sustainable Trade

Description

To support establishing capacity-building programs and initiatives that focus on knowledge exchange and skill development for farmers and intermediaries in sustainable trade, funding and resources will be allocated to create local institutions that promote trust, transparency, and knowledge sharing among stakeholders in the value chain. Additionally, training programs on future markets should be developed, labelling regulations, and other relevant topics to enhance the capacity of the target group to engage in sustainable trade practices. By focusing on these efforts, the action seeks to empower stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge to participate effectively in sustainable trade, thereby fostering a more transparent and equitable trading environment.

Facts and figures

Aligned global standards could help exporters to adapt more easily to internationally accepted food safety and quality regulations instead of complying with several standards set for different regions, making export more efficient and increasing the welfare in exporting countries, by opening doors to new markets for them.

This requires working on the supply side to build adequate production and manufacturing capacities, while also ensuring that the products meet international standards and are suitable for export. Local institutions are a variety of organizations, structures, and systems that play pivotal roles in supporting, regulating, and facilitating agricultural activities and therefore should be acknowledged. These actors can promote sustainable trade by providing knowledge-sharing and development tools, in a transparent context.

Higher compliance of agricultural production in the countries of the Global South with sustainable standards would lead to their boosting growth in global markets, as there is an increasing trend towards more sustainable consumption resulting from the education and awareness among consumers. Currently, sustainably produced cotton in Sub-Saharan countries accounts for 10% of the worldwide output of sustainable cotton. According to the agricultural outlook of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for 2024-2033, this share is anticipated to grow as these countries comply more with sustainable standards.⁵

Implications for agricultural trade

Capacity-building activities raise awareness of responsible farming practices and support their implementation by transferring or enhancing skills, knowledge, and resources. In developing countries and countries with transitioning economies, these programs are crucial to promote their participation in global trade. In addition to creating employment opportunities, enhanced market access has a significant effect of capacity building, reducing market-dependency and mitigating risk. Through local institutions' promotion of trust and transparency in value chains, business relationships are improved, and transaction costs can be reduced.

Local institutions which promote trust and transparency in the trade value chain can enhance the competitiveness of local agricultural products. The United Nations Transparency Protocol (UNTP) was established to build up transparency in the global trading system. Referred to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 and 5, 4500 educational events were held each year for this project, with 80000 participants, to support the farmers and educators in gaining more income.

⁵ For further insights see case studies 4, 5, 10.





Raise Sustainability Standards in Value Chains

Description

For value chains to be sustainable, they must be fair. They should be aligned both with supply and demand, balancing globalization with domestic needs. Raising minimum sustainability standards and promoting voluntary action, especially for companies that are not in direct contact with consumers, is essential for achieving this goal. Particular focus should be on due diligence policies and supply chain law, as well as promoting fair and sustainable agricultural trade with multi-actor and multi-level actions, alongside targeted actions and investments.

Facts and figures

Sustainability standards are guidelines that supply chain participants can comply with, to show their dedication to social equity and environmental conservation.⁶

Currently only about 2% of the farmers are cultivating certified lands, and the sustainability standards have limited coverage. Cocoa and coffee fields are of great importance here. In Ghana, for instance, which is one of the main cocoa-producing countries, around 90% of this crop is produced on smallholder farms, with low income and without applying the sustainability standards. The consequences are child labour, poverty and hunger, along with increased deforestation and heightened environmental risks critical to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 3, 12, 15.

Implications for agricultural trade

Voluntary sustainability standards are management tools that are classified under the broad concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Implementing these standards ensures a uniform approach to priorities and responsibilities across the entire product value chain. For countries with transitional economies, four key areas of applying voluntary sustainability standards are especially crucial: Firstly, these standards enhance accountability throughout the entire value and supply chains. Secondly, they establish a foundation for better management and extended dialogue with key partners in both domestic and international markets. Thirdly, the focus shifts towards innovation and identifying their role in the division of labour. Lastly, these standards prompt the restructuring of internal development policies, aligning them with sustainable practices and long-term goals. In the case of rural producers, CSR may be less beneficial as their names often remain anonymous in the supply chain, making it difficult to establish a recognized position among end consumers. To overcome these shortcomings according to SDGs 16 and 17, implementing supply chain contracts, receiving support from advisory services within producer organizations and cooperatives, and developing systems to guarantee the reliability of the producer's sustainability claims to end consumers would be effective strategies.

⁶ For further insights see case studies 1, 6, 9, 12.





Align Sustainable Investment with Local Policies

Description

This action aims to align sustainable investment strategies with local development policies and global value chains, thereby reducing over-dependency on external markets and resources. It seeks to encourage investments in value-adding activities closer to the farm gates, such as processing and packaging, to increase the value of agricultural products. To support these efforts, transparent and accountable investment guidelines and criteria that prioritize Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors should be developed. By focusing on these areas, the action aims to create a more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector that benefits local communities and aligns with broader development goals.

Facts and figures

Sustainable investment refers to a long-term investment strategy that incorporates ESG criteria into the research, analysis, and selection of securities within an investment portfolio. ESG-based investments include, but are not limited to energy conservation, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and water use, health, education and promoting diversity, therefore address Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

SDGs are increasingly being mentioned as sustainable investment strategies. They are good utilities when talking about sustainable investment on a global scale. One prominent SDG to be used as a strategy in this context is goal 7, assuring access to cost-effective, reliable, modern and sustainable energy for everyone.

The investments in the agricultural sector should be in a way that do not lead to disempowerment and displacement of local communities. In October 2014, the United Nations Committee on World Food Security (CFS) developed principles for responsible investments, emphasizing the role of states in protecting small-scale producers and workers from market fluctuations and price volatility by regulating local, national, regional and international food markets, and curbing food price speculation. To increase the individual farmers' independency, they must be provided with the ability to sell their production surplus directly on local or nearby markets or intermediate companies. Food sovereignty is an important definition in this concept, shielding the local producers from imported goods with competitive prices.⁷

Implications for agricultural trade

The sustainable investment goals in agricultural trade must align with the sustainable environmental practices. This includes prioritizing soil health and water quality, reducing the impact of natural disasters, and promoting resource conservation programs. In the economic perspective, farmer-friendly policies such as setting up tax incentive systems for agriculture, promoting local shopping, and urban agriculture would be effective initiatives to be explored. Involving a wide range of stakeholders in the trade has potential positive impacts on the farmers' welfare, plus environmental adaptation efforts to counter climate change. This contribution can be facilitated through encouraging the business owners in agriculture to join the boards and partake in programmatic decision-making, implementing the connection with the government through the Chamber of Commerce, and maintaining these connections with sharing conversations and exchanging knowledge.

⁷ For further insights see case studies 1, 10.





Facilitate Vision Alignment on all Levels

Description

Institutional reform towards greater policy collaboration of domestic institutions is necessary to effectively address the complexity of combining trade, climate, and nature agendas. Where some aspects of these agendas are complementary, others are conflicting. Vision on the local and community level, regional level such as East Africa, and continental level such as the African Trade Union (ATU), as well as in global efforts, must be aligned to ensure a holistic and effective approach to these three agendas in the development of Africa's agricultural sector.

Facts and figures

Trade on the African continent is low (within the 20% margin). The majority is dominated by South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which, combined, account for 47% of trade within this margin. To address this, several continent-wide frameworks have been established. Among said frameworks is the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of the African Union (AU). CAADP focuses on financing sustainable agricultural development. It encompasses an agreement between African governments allocating a minimum of 10% of the national budget to this development and issues grants to regional institutions working towards this goal, e.g. set up with the aim to strengthen the cooperation between the European Union and African countries.

The Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA), meanwhile, advises the European Commission on the best way to contribute to sustainable development and job creation in Africa's agri-food sector. Members include experts in agriculture, agri-business, agro-industry, and trade development policy. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) seeks to enhance African trade by addressing various trade barriers. It offers the continent a promise of \$2.5 trillion combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP).⁸

Implications for agricultural trade

Global agricultural trade ties into several issues, including climate and environment, human rights, and food security. Therefore, it is necessary to align visions on all levels to ensure that continued agricultural development occurs in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as social and environmental standards. Long-term strategic frameworks, with shared visions, goals and principles that address the aforementioned issues on a continental level, are necessary to align and enhance efforts to drive forward the progression of Africa's agricultural development.

⁸ For further insights see case studies 7, 15.





Introduce Legislation to Transform Business Models

Description

The action aims to introduce legislation that transforms business models by acknowledging that food system transformation measures are often framed as win-win for both people and the planet, despite the presence of many trade-offs. To achieve this, the legislation should take into account the specificities of each context and consider the intricate relationships between different geographical levels – local, regional, continental and global. By doing so, the action seeks to create more nuanced and effective policies that address the complexities of food system transformation, ensuring that both human and environmental needs are met in a balanced and sustainable manner.

Facts and figures

The European Union has put in place different subventions and incentives to make agriculture and rural development more sustainable and promote the transition to sustainable agricultural practices.

- FAO/WHO International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management (2013) and Guidelines on Pesticide Legislation (2020)
- Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (1998)
- Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes (1989)
- EU Regulation concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market (2009); Directive establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides (2009)
- FAO International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers (2019)

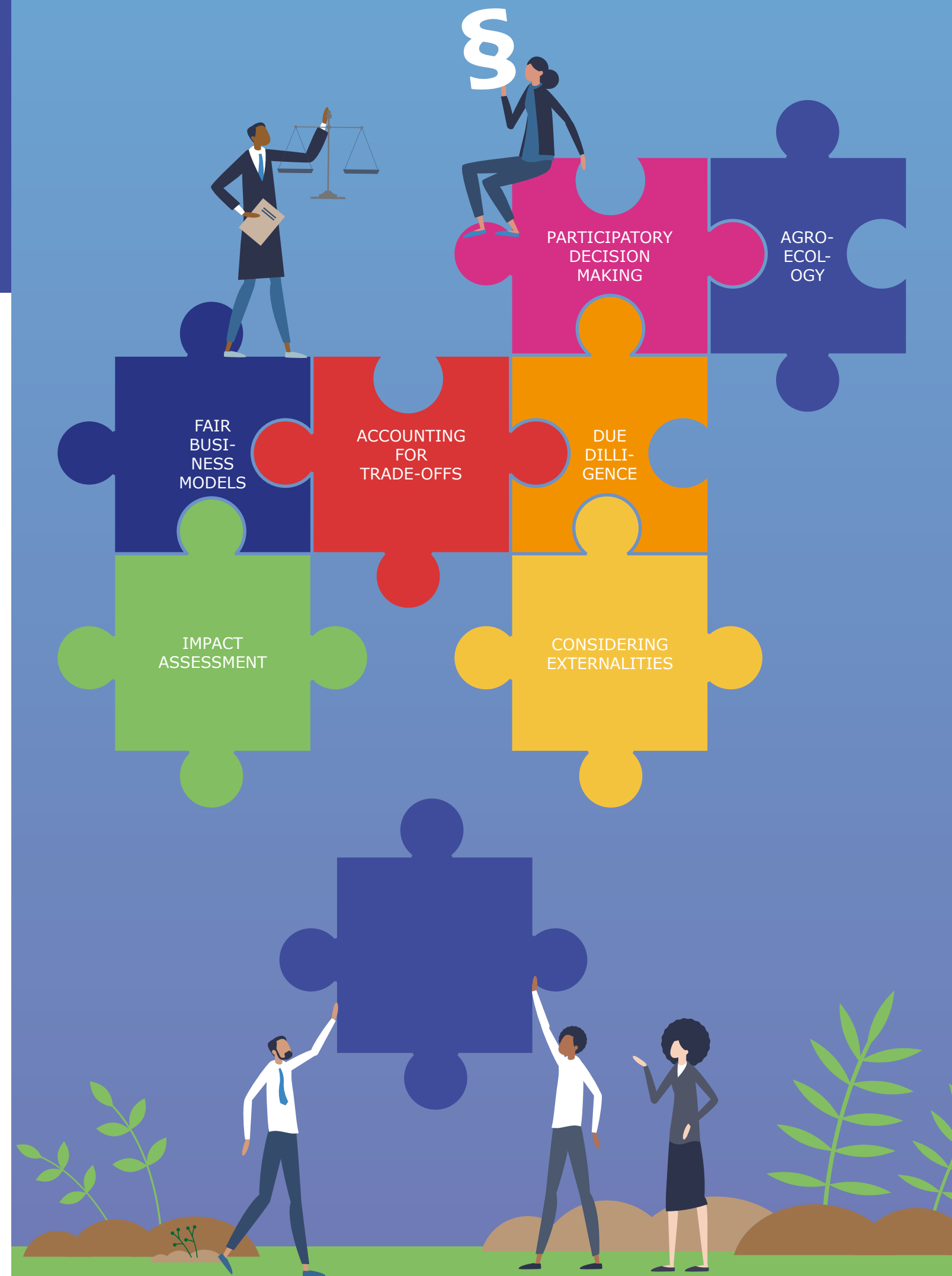
- “Specific payments are also provided through Regulation (EU) No. 1307/2013 which sets up “green payments” to financially support farmers to adopt specific agricultural practices that are mandatory and beneficial for the environment and the climate, and through Regulation (EU) No. 1305/2013 which sets up “agri-environment climate payments” which financially support farmers who voluntarily go beyond mandatory environmental and climate standards.”

Implications for agricultural trade

Smallholder farmers usually run the risk of low productivity and insecure income. Although companies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) propose investment models, scaled by banks and donor organizations, there are challenges like the uncertainty of these models and their alignment with sustainable trade principles. Several business model types aim to address the sustainability dimensions of agri-food systems, such as disruptive, sufficiency, inclusive, family, and circular business models, as well as place-based social food networks.

The implications of these business models focus on the following critical aspects. First, they examine the added value they bring to farmers, including whether farmers are receiving more input and better income. They also consider how the benefits and returns on investment for companies and other stakeholders are being managed. Additionally, potential risks are assessed, and broader issues addressed such as women’s rights, food security, global hunger and poverty, and the inclusion of marginalized groups (Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 5). By evaluating these key areas, the action aims to ensure that business models contribute positively to the entire agricultural value chain and promote sustainable development.

Introducing legislations in agricultural business models is still lacking actions. Especially more specific ones regarding land tenure and quality assurance legislations and capacity building investments are required.





Facilitate Dialogues with Large Agricultural Traders

Description

Policy dialogues and engagement between large agricultural traders, particularly influential traders such as China, foster collaboration and knowledge sharing to drive positive change in global agricultural trade practices. It is necessary to facilitate such exchanges as they provide opportunities to discuss obstacles and emerging trends. This contributes towards policy-making and enables in-depth exchanges to produce driving and implementable ideas and recommendations towards accelerating African and global agricultural development and practice.

Facts and figures

The Africa Agricultural Policy Leadership Dialogue (AAPLD) focuses on African agri-food policy actions and considers the growing global economic integration of its agri-food systems. It facilitates the discussion of policy reforms and promotes the dialogue on the agri-food policy agenda aimed to increase investment and technical assistance support for the continent. Senior leaders from government, the development community, and the private sector are involved. Similarly, the Africa Agri-business Leadership Dialogue (AALD) provides a platform for strengthening knowledge and experiences from the perspective of the private sector on Africa's agri-food systems' main challenges and opportunities. It provides the opportunity to discuss obstacles and emerging trends and to provide recommendations to policy makers accordingly.

The average growth rate of African agricultural exports to China amounts to 11.4%, a result of active exchange between the two nations, e.g. at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Agriculture; export of avocados from Kenya to China has brought more income to over 3,200 farmers. Resulting collaboration and knowledge sharing has facilitated capacity building and technological improvements, from which 1 million small local farmers have benefited. Other exchanges with China include the European Union-China High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue. It facilitates exchange on broader geopolitical concerns as well as specific issues related to agriculture and enhances collaboration and knowledge sharing between the parties to improve agricultural trade practices.⁹

Implications for agricultural trade

Policy reforms implemented following such dialogues with agricultural traders can unlock investment financing opportunities that transform African food systems by means of incentives, innovation, and investment. Agri-food-based economic growth and job creation, as well as increased resilience of national and regional food supply chains are the result. Dialogues and events for exchanges improve cooperation mechanisms addressing concerns such as food security, poverty reduction, and the adaptation of agriculture to climate change as seen in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 13 and 15.

⁹ For further insights see case studies 1, 4, 7.





Facilitate Sustainable Agri-Food Investments

Description

It is necessary to enable the creation and enhancement of the policies, institutions and systems that facilitate private investment in agriculture, agribusiness and agro-industries to provide the necessary financial resources for sustainable development aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition to this, investment funds specifically targeted at supporting sustainable practices in the agri-food sector should be established.

Facts and figures

At least 10% of the national budget of African countries should be allocated to agriculture and rural development. This was agreed by African governments through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). Other activities of the Programme include issuing grants to regional institutions that work to improve the strategic planning and implementation of agricultural investments at both national and regional levels. Financial support also stems from funds such as the Africa Agriculture and Trade Investment Fund (AATIF) and banks. The former extended funding totalling \$127 million in 2022/23, impacting approximately 50,000 more smallholder producers than in the previous year; the fund closes a central gap in long-term external financing. Meanwhile, in October 2023 the African Development Bank Group and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) signed an agreement for a dual currency line of credit comprising \$50 million and €50 million to support local agricultural businesses in West Africa.¹⁰

Implications for agricultural trade

Facilitating sustainable investment in agriculture is an important aspect within food system transformation. Sustainable investment allows for the realization of the potential of Africa's agricultural production, and related manufacturing and service provision. By promoting inclusive growth, increasing decent employment and income to farmers and entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector it stands to enhance African trade across entire value chains. African governments must mobilize financial institutions and private sector actors to invest in agriculture. Doing so requires the implementation of long-term inclusive strategies, good governance, the establishment of innovative public-private partnerships and ensuring strong political will. Mobilizing regional, continental and global political and institutional support and efforts to improve food systems especially addressing SDGs 2, 6, 14 and 15 requires opportunities for sustainable agri-food investments.

¹⁰ For further insights see case studies 1, 7, 8.





Alignment of Policies to Simultaneously Target Multiple Dimensions of Sustainability

Description

All facets of sustainability need to be tackled at the same time to create a well-rounded and effective strategy. Introducing supportive policies in conjunction with trade policies can focus on particular sustainability elements like environmental conservation, social fairness, and economic development. Coordinating these policies effectively will enable a thorough and impactful execution of sustainability efforts. By merging different aspects of sustainability into a unified policy framework, we can enhance positive results for both the environment and society.

Facts and Figures

One key objective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda is to form a balance between the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainability. Through the 2030 Agenda, governments committed to promoting “policy coherence and a facilitating environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors.” While these three pillars of sustainable development are theoretically of equal importance, in practice, the economic pillar tends to dominate. This imbalance has significantly hindered decision-making and policy development, as economic and financial policies often fail to align with environmental dimensions and human rights standards. To address this imbalance and achieve true policy coherence in support of sustainable development, it is crucial to restructure and redesign the institutional frameworks that govern all stages of the policy process, including strategic planning, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation, and assessment.

This action addresses several SDGs, namely goals number 1, 2, 3, 8, 12, 13, 15, and 17.¹¹ Strategic alignment of policies and interventions can enhance food security, improve nutrition, strengthen economies, address climate change, and protect the environment, covering multiple dimensions of sustainability. A global shift towards clean, sustainable agriculture could not only promote complete nutrition plans, but also protect the planet, potentially generating an economic benefit of \$4.3 trillion by 2040.

Implications for Agricultural Trade

Aligning policies to target multiple dimensions of sustainability has significant implications for agricultural trade. It may enhance market access for sustainably produced goods, as consumers increasingly prefer eco-friendly products. New trade regulations could emerge to ensure compliance with sustainability standards, affecting overall trade flows. Countries that adopt sustainable practices may gain a competitive advantage, while initial shifts toward these practices could lead to price volatility in agricultural products. Additionally, a focus on sustainability can drive innovation in agricultural technology and attract investments, while promoting fair trade policies can improve social equity, benefiting smallholder farmers and local communities.

¹¹ For further insights see case studies 7, 10.





Promote Customers' Awareness for Fair Trade and Livelihoods of Producers

Description

Fair trade is a two-way street; not only producers, but also consumers must be considered when drafting measures to promote fair trade, as their purchasing behaviour is a key component. The implementation and promotion of fair-trade certification and labelling programs, as well as the establishment of fair pricing standards, working conditions and environmental sustainability in supply chains are all measures that address the producers' side of fair trade. Promoting consumer awareness of fair trade, for example through awareness campaigns and incentives or fostering a market that values and supports the livelihoods of producers, is equally necessary.

Facts and figures

School-based Food and Nutrition Education (SFNE) has gained increasing importance – several countries have adopted laws that promote its inclusion in formal school curricula, and many take advantage of the food and nutrition learning opportunities school meal plans provide. This correlates with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4. A corresponding generational shift can be observed in purchasing behaviour. Younger generations in Europe pay greater attention to the practices behind and environmental implications of the products they buy. For example, 45% of Millennials and 48% Generation Zs are willing to pay 20% more for a product if it is Fair Trade Certified.

Even from 2021 to 2022 a 100% increase in the number of Millennials and Generation Z that purchased Fair Trade Certified products on a regular basis could be observed. Despite the main obstacles to the consumption of Fair-Trade products for consumers include price, variety, availability in mainstream retailers, and a lack of trust in the Fair-Trade label.¹²

Implications for agricultural trade

Promoting consumer awareness of Fair-Trade is important to effectively impact purchasing behaviour in favour of Fair-Trade products. Increasing public education on Fair-Trade is a significant element to this and best achieved through those media channels from which consumers usually get their information. Increasing product availability by encouraging mainstream retailers to increase stocks, meanwhile, poses challenges stemming particularly from a lack of leverage to influence retailers. Operational transparency must be prioritized to enhance and maintain consumers' trust in the Fair-Trade label.

¹² For further insights see case studies 7, 12.



Statement from the Project Team

MATS Grassroots Findings as an Aid to the Sustainable Agricultural Trade Goal

The fifteen MATS case studies produced sobering findings. Only two case studies did not identify trade issues requiring trade regime changes. When measured in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) achievements, fourteen case studies found not more than half the relevant targets could be achieved. Our “grassroots findings” match, sadly, the review results of the two most important SDG at the 2024 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF): SDG 1 on halving poverty and SDG 2 on ending hunger. Governments and experts had to agree that these two goals could not be reached by 2030. Many argued that the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution exacerbated what critical Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) observers described as “systematic governance failures”.

Strong signals for regulators and operators along the food value chain bent on more sustainable agrifood trade. Do MATS recommendations show a sustainable way forward? What are common features, regardless of the wide product and country differences? Of course, each case study has made its own analysis, and then blazed its own trail for the specific improvements it proposed. Bringing the “harvest” together at our World Café, in four webinars and one workshop, involved a priority-setting process which in most cases started with the local producers, investors and processors before looking at the trade and investment implications. Clearly, the first operators – unprotected and unsubsidized rural community producers – appear as the last beneficiaries from more trade sustainability. Like the HLPF, we show, for instance, that “poverty has a woman’s face”, and this calls for prioritised spending to meet human rights obligations. Another concrete example are our field data and reports on Ukraine’s war-torn maize exports to Northern Africa and the Middle East, showing what the HLPF called the “weaponisation of starvation”.

Moreover, our case study also address the universal right to adequate food and nutrition, the strengthening of value chains, and the scaling-up of regenerative agricultural practices. Given the challenges and uncertainties faced especially by vulnerable farmers and their associations, most case studies place an

immediate priority on reducing over-dependency on external markets and resources, and on providing resilient responses to various crises. We find that encouraging local agrifood investments would require support to better agro-entrepreneurship, facilitating local processing, and start-up subsidies. Success along these principles could shift in valueadding activities closer to farm gates, more agroecology and related initiatives linking agricultural productivity to climate resilience.

In a second step, innovative solutions for more sustainable and equitable food trade could reduce poverty and improve food security of smallholder farmers. This, however, requires improved local regulations, more inclusive and fair-trade regimes, and better value chain participation.

A few examples of new ideas and policy tools underline this bottom-up approach for more inclusive economic growth, e.g. new types of smart production insurance for small-scale farmers, risk and weather insurance schemes, the provision of affordable credits – especially for women, support for value addition in the agriculture and rural sectors, voluntary labelling of climate- and development-friendly produce, databases to better target interventions and extension services or coherent policies to account for the hidden costs of unhealthy food.

We also suggest taking other elements into account: the role of digital transformation and research in addressing challenges of food policies, digital document traceability of “farm to fork” to encourage sustainability and healthy foods strengthening rural and sustainable economies, namely fostering cultural and traditional knowledge. Context, as always, matters tremendously: action to tackle fiscal injustice in pursuit of wealth redistribution targeted social protection measures, debt restructuring and forgiveness, debt-for-investment swaps at subregional levels, rural extension of social and health services, and integrated environmental improvements to harness expertise and enhance collaboration for holistic and innovative solutions, gender-responsive policies, programmes and policies to increase expenditure on social and infrastructural services to improve

quality of life and income, ending gender-based violence, and learning from local communities and indigenous peoples. As for the multilateral rules and policy framework, an open, fair, and rules-based global trading system is required to provide farmers with stable market access.

Last but not least, it has to be noted that developing country food exporters to Europe face a moving sustainability target, continuously self-defined in Brussels, often without a published impact assessment or a World Trade Organization (WTO) compatibility check, let alone mutually recognised agreements to avoid double inspections of production facilities.

The European Union’s Green Deal is an ambitious train of almost fifty regulations and measures to reach climate neutrality by 2050. Many such new policies improve the sustainability of the European food system. Others, such as the continuation of tax-free fossil fuel, the continuous use of dangerous pesticides or an exemption from the new deforestation regulation, may assuage farmer opposition and reduce their adaptation costs.

Nonetheless, stricter standards may make food production and prices in Europe more expensive. Local producers, poor consumers and exporters might then benefit from some sort of a temporary compensation, from a new Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) Social Fund, or from protection against unsustainable competition, especially under the new European Parliament and a less bureaucratic Commission.

Here too, the message from MATS in this complex process is clear: “do no harm to developing countries’ governments, operators and traders trying to progressively emulate more development-friendly standards.”

As the UN Secretary General António Guterres puts it in his HLPF Report (July 2024): “We have a rescue plan before us, in the [SDG Summit] political declaration. Now is the time to lift the declaration’s words off the page, and invest in development at scale like never before.”

Moreover, a new Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty is due to be launched at the G20 Summit in November 2024.

MATS hopes to contribute to these plans with our “bottom up” reality checks and proposals for concrete action!

Dr. Christian Häberli

Universität Bern
World Trade Institute (WTI)

Takeaways

It’s Time to act

The identified actions aim to make trade more sustainable by addressing several thematic areas.

First, **inclusive collaboration and governance** is emphasized, ensuring diverse stakeholders, such as rural communities, indigenous groups, women, youth, and other minority groups, are empowered and can meaningfully engage in decision-making processes. This theme includes promoting inclusive collaboration, governance mechanisms, and facilitating vision alignment on all levels.

Second, **capacity building and local empowerment** is crucial. Building local capacities for sustainable trade involves creating capacity-building programs that focus on knowledge exchange and skill development for farmers and intermediaries. Encouraging participation in certification schemes also falls under this theme, as it helps to promote environmental objectives and compliance with sustainable practices through financial incentives and technical assistance.

Third, **impact assessments and policy alignment** are necessary to understand and address the effects of trade agreements on local markets, poverty levels, the environment, and food security. Conducting comprehensive impact assessments and aligning sustainable investment strategies with local policies ensures that trade policies are informed and targeted effectively. Additionally, aligning policies to target multiple dimensions of sustainability simultaneously is essential for a holistic approach.

Fourth, **sustainability standards** involve raising sustainability standards in value chains to ensure fairness and alignment with both global and local demands. This theme includes developing and disseminating sustainable water management guidelines and introducing legislation to transform business models, acknowledging the trade-offs involved in food system transformation.

Finally, **stakeholder engagement and sustainable investments** highlight the importance of facilitating dialogues with large agricultural traders and fostering sustainable agri-food investments. These actions aim to drive positive change in global trade practices and support sustainable development aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Promoting consumer awareness for fair trade and the livelihoods of producers is also crucial, establishing standards for fair pricing, working conditions, and environmental sustainability in supply chains.

What’s Next?

Towards Implementation

The transition pathways outlined aim to create a comprehensive framework addressing the multifaceted challenges in sustainable agricultural trade. As Borsellino (2020) notes, “[A]ttaining long-term food and nutrition security means understanding the dynamics of global agri-food trade as well as the governance and functioning of domestic agri-food markets.” By implementing structured incentives for policy coherence, promoting fair and sustainable practices, and empowering small-scale farmers and marginalized communities, these pathways strive to foster a more inclusive and equitable agricultural system, ensuring that efforts are genuine and impactful.

Adopting and modifying regulatory frameworks to support living incomes and wages, and enhancing digital agriculture for individual farmers, leverage modern innovations while promoting traditional knowledge and community engagement. Addressing structural and systemic issues, such as decolonizing dialogues and integrating diverse perspectives, ensures a holistic approach to agricultural development. Effective knowledge sharing and consumer engagement aim to create a sustainable and fair-trade system that supports local development and promotes labour and human rights globally.

To implement these actions, a multi-tiered approach integrating policy adjustments, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building is essential. Establishing incentives for policy coher-

ence through structured dialogues that include marginalized groups, such as female and small-scale farmers, ensures their voices are heard in policy-making processes. Targeted support, such as subsidies and financial incentives, should help these groups to meet sustainability standards, discouraging greenwashing and fostering genuine sustainable practices. Regulatory frameworks must support living incomes and wages while considering unintended consequences like child labour. Developing business models and sourcing practices that promote equitable agricultural trade ensures sustainability and fairness at their core.

Enhancing digital agriculture focuses on enabling farmers to embrace digital technologies, including support in data management, information security, and Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools for early warning systems. Training and resources are essential for effective use of these tools. Integrating sustainable environmental management practices into digital agriculture strategies and assessing trade agreements for their impact on human rights and environmental standards promotes a holistic approach to agricultural development.

By addressing structural and systemic issues, promoting knowledge sharing, and engaging consumers, these steps will leverage technology, ensure sustainability, and promote equitable practices in agriculture.

Overview of MATS Case Studies

No	Topic	Key aspects	Focus on	Leading partners
01	Reducing poverty among smallholder farmers through enhanced trade regimes and value chains for coffee in Uganda and Tanzania	Improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers through trade and food value chains; localisation of food systems, strengthening of territorial markets	Uganda, Tanzania	University of Helsinki with Moshi Co-operative University and Makerere University
02	Intra-EU trade, resilience and social sustainability: the case of the oats value chain in the Nordics	Resilience of trade-dependent food value chains in the context of intra-EU agri-food trade and social sustainability; sustainability and equity	Finland, Sweden, EU	University of Helsinki
03	Trade, sustainability and environmental linkages in Finnish dairy production	Mapping the linkages of dairy production and dairy trade with environmental externalities and production of ecosystem services	Finland, EU, trade partners	University of Helsinki
04	Priority Intervention Requirements to Enhance the Capacity of Sub Saharan African (SSA) Countries to Improve the Volume and Quality of Agri-food Exports – The cases of Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Ghana	Standards and market access; challenges related to WTO Rules and Regulations and/or EU requirements; strengthening of territorial markets	Sub-Saharan Africa	Economic and Social Research Foundation
05	Role of policy frameworks and social cohesion for sustainable value chains and livelihoods in Ghana	Emerging markets; poultry chains; role of policy regulation regarding animal welfare, inputs and trade; competitiveness, sustainability, livelihoods	Ghana	Technical University of Madrid
06	Analysis of cocoa and chocolate purchasing practices that could undermine living incomes for cocoa farmers	Experiences, obstacles, impact and lessons learned from a multistakeholder initiative on sustainability standards in the cacao sector	EU, Côte d’Ivoire	Oxfam België/ Belgique
07	Impacts of EU policies on local dairy value chains in West Africa	EU agricultural, trade, investment and development policies; impact on the development of local, fair and sustainable dairy chains	EU, Africa	Oxfam België/ Belgique
08	Belgian imports of ethanol from sugar cane: shared responsibilities among EU MS of human rights violations	EU biofuel policies and mandates; sustainability criteria biofuels; EU climate funding, carbon markets, offset mechanism; palm oil; land use change	EU, America, Africa, Asia	Oxfam Solidarité – Oxfam Solidariteit

No	Topic	Key aspects	Focus on	Leading partners
09	Human rights due diligence in the coffee value chain	Integrating human rights and environmental due diligence in coffee chains; impact on production practices and smallholder farmers	EU, Uganda	Oxfam België/ Belgique
10	Beef and policy coherence for sustainable development	EU agricultural, trade, investment and development policies; impact on local, fair, sustainable beef chains, including consumers and retailers	EU, Africa, South America	Research Centre on Animal Production, with Agribenchmark Beef
11	Private standards and sustainable trade	Impact of processors/retailers’ standards on development of local, fair, sustainable food chains	Kenya	Research Centre on Animal Production & University of Helsinki with Global G.A.P & Blu Marketing Ltd
12	Ethical trade initiatives in the South African wine industry	Assessment of local and global ethical trade programmes in South Africa (e.g. Fair Trade, Ethical Trading Initiative, Ethical Trade Association)	South Africa	North-West University
13	Dairy production, standards and competitiveness in global markets	Labour costs; additional costs resulting from environmental regulation; total production costs; processing and retail	EU, Africa, America	Research Centre on Animal Production, with International Farm Comparison Network
14	Governing trade to influence land-use and food systems pathways: The expansion of soybeans-meat complex in the MATOPIBA Brazilian frontier	How different trade agreements, institutions, rules and established practices could shape the expansion of the soybeans-meat complex in the MATOPIBA region to ensure more sustainable, equitable, inclusive, and resilient outcomes	EU, Brazil	Technical University of Madrid
15	Free Trade Agreements between the EU and selected North African countries, and their impact on food systems, access to water and sustainable development	Focus on the olive oil value chain in Tunisia and the potato value chain in Egypt; impact of trade relations with the EU on food sovereignty, territorial markets, ecological resilience and inclusive rural development in the North Africa region	EU, North Africa (Tunisia, Egypt)	Transnational Institute

Abbreviations

AALD	Africa Agribusiness Leadership Dialogue
AAPLD	Africa Agricultural Policy Leadership Dialogue
AATIF	Africa Agriculture and Trade Investment Fund
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AU	The African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBAM	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CMA	China Meat Association
CS	Case Study
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSRD	Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive
CSDDD	Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive
EBID	ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development
ECLARC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EFFoST	The European Federation of Food Science and Technology
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EUDR	European Union Deforestation Regulation
ESCO	European Skills, Competences, and Occupations
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCCL	Food Cold Chain Logistics
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
HREDD	Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence

HRIA	Human Rights Impact Assessment
IBM	Inclusive Business Model
ICF	Inclusive Contract Farming
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IPOA	Istanbul Plan of Action
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
LCA	Life Cycle Assessment
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LID	Living Income Differentials
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Public Agencies
MIS	Market Information System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAS	Performance Assessment System
PET	Product Environmental Footprint
PPD	Public-Private Dialogue
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
RUFORUM	Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SBTi	Science Based Targets Initiative
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFNE	School-based Food and Nutrition Education
SIA	Sustainability Impact Assessment
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SSA	Sub-Saharan African
TFRA	Task Force Rural Africa
UN	The United Nations
UNTP	The United Nations Transparency Protocol
VC	Value Chain
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

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