**Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals**

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# Topic note

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calls for collective transformational changes of all key actors in society. Businesses and the private sector more broadly can provide an important contribution to achieving the SDGs, although their specific role is not sufficiently mainstreamed in the SDG agenda.

SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production) and target 12.6 explicitly encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and integrate sustainability information in their reporting. As the custodian agency of SDG indicator 12.6.1(number of companies publishing sustainability reports), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) developed the [Guidance on core indicators for entity reporting on the contribution towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (GCI).](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diae2019d1_en.pdf) UNCTAD’s GCI provides a useful starting point for assessing corporate performance on the SDGs as a set of standard baseline indicators. FAO has sought to build off of UNCTAD’s indicators by identifying additional indicators and tailoring guidance to assess the specific impact of food and agriculture private actors on the achievement of the SDGs.

The resulting [**Core Food and Agricultural Indicators for Measuring the Private Sector Contribution to the SDGs Supplement Guideline**](http://assets.fsnforum.fao.org.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/public/Methodology_note_of_core_indicators_food_and_agriculture_22.03.20_CONSULTATION.pdf)provides practical information on how to measure the contribution of food- and agriculture private actors to the SDGs in a consistent manner and in alignment with countries’ needs on monitoring the attainment of the SDG agenda. The indicators address four sub-sectors of the food and agriculture sector, namely: i) agriculture production (crop and animal production and aquaculture); ii) food processing, iii) food wholesale, and iv) food retail. For each indicator, the guideline provides the definition, rationale, measurement methodology and conceptual interpretation. The links and alignment of each indicator with relevant SDG indicators are also included.

The indicators and associated methodological guidelines are the result of an extensive review of existing frameworks and key standards, and wide internal peer review among FAO’s technical departments.

[The Office of the Chief Statistician of FAO](http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/en/) invites you to review the [draft indicators and guideline](http://assets.fsnforum.fao.org.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/public/Methodology_note_of_core_indicators_food_and_agriculture_22.03.20_CONSULTATION.pdf) and provide feedback as part of wider efforts to seek feedback within the UN agencies and partner institutions, and pilot testing of the indicators with private organisations. The indicators will then be finalised based on the input received through this consultation process and pilot testing, and launched alongside the Food Systems Summit later this year. FAO will work with countries and relevant partners across UN agencies and standard setting bodies to support private sector organisations in using the indicators, and support national governments and wider stakeholders on integrating information into overall analysis and reporting of progress on the SDGs.

We are seeking input on the questions outlined below. Please feel free to choose the question(s) where you can share the most relevant input and expertise.

**1. Scope**

* Are the most relevant sectors and areas with respect to the private sector’s impact on the SDG agenda covered? Are the associated indicators adequate to measure private sector entities’ contribution to the SDGs? If not, where are the gaps? Are there any indicators included which are superfluous and why?
* The framework is food-centric for the downstream sectors (food processing, food wholesale and food retail), and the scope of the guidance at the production level only includes crop and livestock production as well as aquaculture. Is the inclusion of aquaculture but not fishing the right approach given the similar impacts of aquaculture with other types of agricultural production? Should the framework be applicable to the forestry sector and if so, which aspects should be considered?
* Would it be helpful to include the specific list of indicators which apply to each type of production, e.g. aquaculture, livestock, crop production?
* For certain sustainability issues, the performance of an entity cannot be assessed without going beyond the entity’s direct operations. Some indicators take into consideration reporting entities’ relationships with their suppliers or suppliers’ impact in the reporting entity’s overall performance:
  + 1. **Indicators related to reporting entity’s relationship with suppliers**: A.5.1 Proportion of local procurement, A.5.2 Fair pricing and transparent contracts,
    2. **Indicators related to impact of suppliers**: B.1.4 Water Management practices, B.2.3 GHG emissions (scope 3), B.2.4 GHG Emissions management, B.7.1 Land conversion, B.7.3 Sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, C.4.2 Incidence/frequency rates of occupational injuries, C.5.1 Incidents of non-compliance with child labour laws, C.6.3. Non-compliance in food safety and food quality, C.7.1. Non-compliance with land tenure rights regulations, D.2.1. Amount of fines paid and payable due to corruption-related settlements, D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence. For the other indicators, entities are encouraged to assess and report on suppliers’ performance alongside their own reporting.

Does this approach capture the relevant sustainability issues related to suppliers? Is it clear where reporting entities need to be requesting information from suppliers?

**2. Clarity**

* Is the supplementary guidance clear in terms of type of private entities targeted and reporting rules?
* Can entities easily evaluate if their activities and the commodities they purchase, produce, process, manipulate and/or sell are in scope for each indicator? If not, how could this be improved?

**3. Feasibility**

* Do private sector organisations have access to the type of data required to assess performance against the indicators? If not, is it feasible for them to collect it?
* Do companies have country-level information in order to provide disaggregated data by country to feed into SDG monitoring/reporting?

**4. Ease of use**

* Does the guidance make it easy enough for private sector entities to understand how to calculate their performance against each indicator? If not, where is improvement needed?
* Is there sufficient supplementary guidance in terms of links to additional materials and definitions?

**5. Qualitative vs. quantitative indicators**

* Are there ways to make any of the qualitative indicators quantitative and how? *Qualitative indicators are: A.2.3 Financial Risk Management, A.5.2 Fair pricing and transparent contracts, B.1.4 Water management practices, B.2.4 GHG emissions management, B.7.3 Sustainable use and conversion of biodiversity, B.9.2 Management of pesticides, B.10.2 Management of fertilizers, C.6.1 Food labelling, C.6.2 Practices promoting sustainable healthy diets*, D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence.
  + 1. For example, would it be preferable to replace the indicator in C.6.2 which focuses on practices with an indicator on the percentage of the entity’s marketing budget spent on promoting healthy foods?

**6. Adequacy of specific indicators**

* **B.7.1 Land conversion:** Do the three sub-indicators address the issues with land conversion as related to the achievement of SDG 15?
* **B.7.2 Habitat area protected:** Where there is no natural habitat in the reporting entity’s production area, should there be a requirement for reporting on restoration or ‘rewilding’ to create habitat?
* **C.1.2 Average hourly earnings of all employees:** Would it be better to formulate this indicator as ‘Percentage of employees and other workers paid above a living wage, disaggregated by occupation, gender, age, and disability status’?
* **C.6.3 Non-compliance in food safety and food quality:** Is it relevant to include incidents of non-compliance with GFSI certification as part of this indicator?
* **D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence:** Does this indicator capture well entities’ institutional efforts and commitments to identify and address social and environmental risks along the value chain?

Comments are welcome in English, Spanish or French. The consultation is open until April 30th, 2021.

We thank you very much for taking the time to provide your feedback on the core indicators and guideline. Your input will be very valuable in ensuring that they are effective at contributing towards measurement of progress on SDGs.

*Pietro Gennari, Chief Statistician, Office of the Chief Statistician, FAO*

*Valerie Bizier, Senior Statistician, Office of the Chief Statistician, FAO*

# Contributions received

## Anthony Fardet, INRA, France

Private sector (i.e., mainly multinationals) must afce four securities: food security (food availability for everyone worlwide), food safety, nutrition/health and environment. With the globalization of ultra-processed foods, food security and food safety have been almost fully met, but to the detriment of human health and environment. The challenge relative to SGD for private sector would be to meet all four dimensions at the same time:. For this, developping minimal processing? And to both fragment and relocate food transformation to avoid long distance (allowed by ultra-processing). Food systems are 34% GHGE (Crippa, M., Solazzo, E., Guizzardi, D., Monforti-Ferrario, F., Tubiello, F.N., Leip, A., (2021). Food systems are responsible for a third of global anthropogenic GHG emissions. Nature Food 2(3), 198-209.). The largest contribution came from agriculture and land use/land-use change activities (71%), with the remaining were from supply chain activities: retail, transport, consumption, fuel production, waste management, industrial processes and packaging. This means 10% of GHGE by "retail, transport, consumption, fuel production, waste management, industrial processes and packaging", but we should not forget that all is linked and that probably the 24% by agricultural productions is dependent on the way that we process foods. Notably, ultra-processed foods drive intensive agriculture and breeding (see attached file). An important issue would be to measure impact of private sector on GHGE when coming back to less processed foods, and private sector fragmentation and relocalization, and how it will impact in return food agricultural production.

Attachment:

<http://assets.fsnforum.fao.org.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/public/discussions/contributions/Sustainability%202020_0.pdf>

## Cozette Griffin, AIMA (International Association of Agricultural Museums), France

Dear Ms. Bizier and Mr. Gennari,

I have worked extensively on the use of animal power in agriculture and open-air museums and am helping a friend organize a congress and virtual archive on animal draft on 8-9 May 2021. We, and all the network we are in, have always been impressed by the total lack of information on working animals in the world available from the FAO or other official sources. This is not a criticism, it is an observation.

Please verify our identities here:

- Dr. Cozette Griffin-Kremer

Associate Researcher (retired) CRBC (Centre de recherche bretonne et celtique), Brest FR:

<https://www.univ-brest.fr/crbc/menu/Lab-members/Enseignants-chercheurs_ou_chercheurs_associes/Cozette_Griffin-Kremer>

- Claus Kropp, farm director Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory, Kloster Lorsch DE

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Claus-Kropp>

Online presentation of the draft animal congress: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPbbu1XKvJg>

It would be very worthwhile for someone involved in the examination of SDG-efficiency as proposed by the FAO to be aware that important numbers of people worldwide use animal power. The congress programme is already available from Mr. Kropp and the event involves experts who have worked for the FAO such as Paul Starkey or Pit Schlechter.

With all best regards,

Cozette Griffin-Kremer

## Murungi Jonan, Agroecology advisor, Uganda

The core indicators should be measured in line with agriculture activities the private sector are offering to societies. Do those activities promote human health, agroecology health that enhances man to harmoniously live with features supported by nature. In addition synthetic inputs being offered by the private sector, we need to understand if many farmers really understand the impacts of using such products on both their side and ecology as well.

Lastly, Is the private sector really promoting processing that doesn't undermine the reputation of the population interms of products being processed.

An example is recently Kenya rejected maize coming from Uganda citing that the maize was heavily infested with alot of aflatoxins but on the same issue the private is claiming to be promoting proper post harvest handling.

Thanks

Jonan Murungi

From Uganda

## Santosh Kumar Mishra, Population Education Resource Centre, Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension (Previously known as: Department of Continuing and Adult Education and Extension Work), S. N. D. T. Women's University, Mumbai (Retired: June 30, 2020), India

Dear Pietro Gennari and Valerie Bizier,

I am pleased to submit herewith my contribution to consultation on “Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”. The attached document (in MS Word) runs in 20 pages, including references. I hope that you will find my submission useful and informative.

Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra (Ph. D.)

**[1]** Contribution submitted on April 14, 2021 (Wednesday) to **Pietro Gennari** and **Valerie Bizier** (Facilitators), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy, Tel.:(+39) 06 57051, e-mail: [fsn-moderator@fao.org](mailto:fsn-moderator@fao.org) & [FAO-HQ@fao.org](mailto:FAO-HQ@fao.org).

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**Note:** **(a)** Views presented herewith are of the contributor and not of the PERC, DLLE, SNDTWU (the contributor was employed at previously, till June 30, 2021). **(b)** Some portion of the input outlined below have drawn from secondary sources (mainly Internet resources), which have been quoted under references. **(c)** The contributor has marked specific inputs in **red** colour in the following text.

**1. Scope**

* **Are the most relevant sectors and areas with respect to the private sector’s impact on the SDG agenda covered? Are the associated indicators adequate to measure private sector entities’ contribution to the SDGs? If not, where are the gaps? Are there any indicators included which are superfluous and why?**

1. **Are the most relevant sectors and areas with respect to the private sector’s impact on the SDG agenda covered?**

As indicated in the document entitled “Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the SDGs–Supplementary guidance (published by the Office of the Chief Statistician on 22 March 2021 (for e-consultation on web link:

<http://assets.fsnforum.fao.org.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/public/Methodology_note_of_core_indicators_food_and_agriculture_22.03.20_CONSULTATION.pdf>), covers most of the relevant sectors and areas with respect to the private sector’s impact on the sustainable development goal (SDG) agenda. However, the contribution of private sector in the context of gender consideration needs to be specifically emphasized. More specifically, role of women in fisheries (which refers to the capture of aquatic organisms in marine, coastal and inland areas) activities needs to be looked into by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). According to recent estimates, marine and inland fisheries (together with aquaculture) provide food, nutrition and a source of income to around 820 million people around the world, from harvesting, processing, marketing and distribution. For many it also forms part of their traditional cultural identity **[1]**. Also, fisheries, in general, have been found to be an enabling factor in poverty reduction in several parts of the world. Contribution of women, especially from rural areas, in fisheries and resulting enhancement in economic activities thus, needs to be outlined by the FAO, and other stakeholders.

1. **Are the associated indicators adequate to measure private sector entities’ contribution to the SDGs? If not, where are the gaps?**

The associated indicators, covered and selected by the FAO, are not adequate to measure private sector entities’ contribution to the SDGs. The International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) requires to incorporate another reporting entity (indicator) namely inter-linkages between *“quality of food intake”* and *“state well-being of mental health”* of individuals (both males and females). For example, if a community project has increased access to food supply in an area or region during a particular time, it would be relevant to know, on the part of policy makers, what impact (and to what extent) the intervention (enhanced access to food supply) has made on mental health of the target-group. This realization can be seen in view of the fact that food insecurity (FI) is a complex phenomenon that encompasses food availability, affordability, the cultural norms that dictate acceptable means of acquiring food, and individual food utilization **[2]**. Given the diverse set of conditions that contribute to FI, the conceptual framework of FI is associated with a diversity of nutrition-related health outcomes, including:

1. dietary inadequacies,
2. early child growth faltering,
3. obesity,
4. poor physical health,
5. low educational achievement, and
6. developmental deficits in children **[2]**.

Also, it would be relevant to look into if there are disparities (or differences) in attainment of mental health levels in terms of sex (male and female). One of the most challenging task in this initiate is to design and develop indicators that can be measured in *“quantifiable terms”* exactly (or to the possible extent). This (developing indicators) will require extensive consultation (in the form of meeting or e-discussions/debates) among experts and policy makers.

1. **Are there any indicators included which are superfluous and why?**

Indicators, associated with the SDG agenda (as outlined in the document, published by the FAO) are not superfluous. However, there may be some similarities because of the fact that 17 SDGs (sustainable development goals) are inter-connected, with all aiming at elimination of poverty by the year 2030. In terms of policy matters, with the shared goal and desire to end to global poverty, there is need to:

* + Provide high quality, sector-relevant, convenient, affordable training opportunities;
  + Organise networking and knowledge sharing opportunities;
  + Coordinate the dissemination of information across the sector; and
  + Be an effective, valuable resource for any person or organisation engaged in ending global poverty **[3]**.

The SDGs are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges that are faced, including those related to (a) poverty, (b) inequality, (c) climate change, (d) environmental degradation, (e) peace, and (f) justice. The 17 Goals are all interconnected, and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve them all by 2030 [4].

* **The framework is food-centric for the downstream sectors (food processing, food wholesale and food retail), and the scope of the guidance at the production level only includes crop and livestock production as well as aquaculture. Is the inclusion of aquaculture but not fishing the right approach given the similar impacts of aquaculture with other types of agricultural production? Should the framework be applicable to the forestry sector and if so, which aspects should be considered?**

1. **Is the inclusion of aquaculture but not fishing the right approach given the similar impacts of aquaculture with other types of agricultural production?**

Inclusion of aquaculture, but not fishing, is the right approach. In any case, aquaculture, in broad terms includes fisheries activities. The policy makers and food sector experts must note that the term ***‘aquaculture’*** broadly refers to *“the* ***cultivation of aquatic organisms in controlled aquatic environments*** *for any commercial, recreational or public purpose”*. The breeding, rearing and harvesting of plants and animals takes place in all types of water environments including ponds, rivers, lakes, the ocean and *“man-made closed systems”* on land **[5]**.

A**quaculture, today, one of the fastest growing forms of food production in the world.** Because harvest from many wild fisheries has peaked globally, aquaculture is widely recognized as an effective way to meet the seafood demands of a growing population **[5]**. Using aquaculture techniques and technologies, researchers and the aquaculture industry are ‘farming’ all types of freshwater and marine species of fish and shellfish **[5]**:

* ***Marine aquaculture*: It** refers specifically to the culturing of oceanic species (as opposed to freshwater). Examples of marine aquaculture production include **oysters, clams, mussels, shrimp, and salmon algae**. Marine aquaculture is just 20% of the U. S. production, consisting mostly of shellfish (e.g., oysters, clams and mussels).
* ***Freshwater aquaculture*: It includes trout, catfish and tilapia**. About 70% of aquaculture in the United States is freshwater farming of catfish and trout. Only a handful of U.S. farms grow marine finfish such as salmon in Maine and Washington State and yellowtail, and Pacific threadfin (moi) in Hawaii.

**Aquaculture produces almost half of the seafood consumed by humans globally, a trend that continues to increase.**  At this juncture, it is pertinent to note that it (a**quaculture) serves many purposes,** including **[5]**:

* Food production for human consumption;
* Rebuilding of populations of threatened and endangered species;
* Habitat restoration;
* Wild stock enhancement;
* Production of baitfish; and
* Fish culture for zoos and aquariums.

 *Aquaculture activities of the WorldFish, Lusaka, Zambia*

**[**Source: WorldFish (2021). *“Research program: Sustainable Aquaculture”*. Lusaka, Zambia: WorldFish (Accessed on April 12, 2021 from: <https://www.worldfishcenter.org/content/sustainable-aquaculture?gclid=CjwKCAjwvMqDBhB8EiwA2iSmPHZ9LquV3nNNsS1F4pF9UI8RHJbYUjNmqzIR563rc1IU2Q1l9Ps61xoCDWYQAvD_BwE>**]**

The FAO, while designing indicators and policy framework, should not forget that today’s world what is required is *“sustainable aquaculture”*. There are several organizational, the world over, working towards sustainable aquaculture. One such agency is the WorldFish, with its headquarters at Lusaka, Zambia. It focuses on sustainable increases in aquaculture production ensuring that poor farmers, their families and communities receive direct nutritional and economic benefits **[6]**.

The WorldFish’s sustainable aquaculture research focuses on enabling enterprises to progressively enhance production efficiency and sustainability via the use of domesticated, selectively-bred, high-health fish reared on sustainable feeds in gender-inclusive production systems that have low carbon and environmental footprints. The WorldFish and its development partners are currently conducting research in these three areas: (a) fish breeds and genetics; (b) fish health, nutrition and feeds; and (c) aquaculture system **[6]**. *Most importantly*, inclusion of aquaculture (in the context of answer to question: **Is the inclusion of aquaculture but not fishing the right approach given the similar impacts of aquaculture with other types of agricultural production?**),should take into account these considerations associated with sustainable aquaculture.

1. **Should the framework be applicable to the forestry sector and if so, which aspects should be considered?**

The framework should be applicable to the forestry sector also. This is because of the fact that forestry sector is closely linked with food security and nutrition (FSN). In most cases, people, at large, associate forests with trees and the wood they (forests) provide. They do not find direct link of forests to food security. The fact remains is that sustainable food systems include food from forests. Globally, it is estimated that billions of people depend on forests and trees. This is true for many people living in developing countries, for whom forests are an essential part of a sustainable food system **[7]**.

*Moabi fruit from Cameroon* (Credit: Bioversity International/J.Tieguhong)

**[**Source: Bioversity International (2013). *“Sustainable food systems include food from forests”*. Maccarese (Fiumicino), Italy: Bioversity International (Accessed on April 12, 2021 from: <https://www.bioversityinternational.org/news/detail/sustainable-food-systems-include-food-from-forests>)**]**

Action is, thus, needed to better manage forests and their genetic resources to ensure long-term availability of these food resources to rural people who depend on them for their nutrition and livelihoods. Such action requires heightened awareness of the important contribution of forests and trees to food security and nutrition, especially among policy makers. In addition, researchers see opportunities including the potential to plant more trees, and to increase protection of trees. They recognize the importance of understanding differences in roles and rights of women and men, and their perspectives on conservation and management of forest and tree resources. Other opportunities lie in increasing the role and visibility of food from the forest and include the adoption of deliberate policies for sustainable access to important forest food resources from the forests, and promotion of modern processing techniques to create marketable products from forest foods **[7]**.

*Further*, Access to forests and tree-based systems has been associated with increased fruit and vegetable consumption and increased dietary diversity. *Furthermore*, it was found in the year 2011, for example, that in the East Usambara Mountains of Tanzania, children and mothers in households who ate more foods from forests, and who had more tree cover close to their homes, had more diverse diets. In another African example in the year 2013, policy makers discovered that children in Malawi who lived in communities that experienced deforestation had less diverse diets than children in communities where there was no deforestation **[8]**.

* **Would it be helpful to include the specific list of indicators which apply to each type of production, e.g., aquaculture, livestock, crop production?**

It would be appropriate to include the specific list of indicators (including performance indicators) which apply to each type of production, e.g., aquaculture, livestock, crop production, etc. National governments, from around the world, should establish mechanisms to collect information on the nutritional status of all members of the communities, especially the poor, women, children and members of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, in order to monitor and improve their household-level food security. Countries should also be capable of selecting indicators appropriate to each situation and specific purpose (s) **[9]**. Implementing food and nutrition policies or interventions requires information on the following aspects:

1. current absolute and relative status and evolution of FNS,
2. causes of change in FNS,
3. possible actions and possible impacts of those actions, and
4. monitoring and evaluating the actions (and their effective impacts to assure cost effectiveness and therefore set priorities for future actions) **[9]**.

In order to develop the information base, as outlined above, the relevant instruments need to be available. These instruments / indicators provide a detailed description, numerical or not, of observable variables or interactions of variables relevant to the FNS status, risks, and their drivers. An extensive number of FNS (food and nutrition security) indicators is available, but they are distributed across various disciplines. The selection of food and nutrition security indicators to screen, diagnose and evaluate interventions at individual and household level, therefore, needs to be coordinated across these disciplines **[9]**.

The selection of FNS indicators (status and drivers) should also make reference to the time scale and geographical pattern of FNS outcomes. For instance, one can distinguish between structural / mid and long-term and short- term risks to the FNS status, at household, regional or national level. For instance, the recent food price changes have become the focus of attention from the policy makers both at the national and global level. The steep rise of food prices (during the period 2007-08) has led to several difficulties particularly for the poor as some studies have shown an important reduction in calorie intake and an increase in poverty rates in general. Although high food prices can have positive as well as negative welfare effects, depending on the target groups or the time horizon of the analysis (e.g., net food buyers versus sellers, short-term versus long-term impacts), the episode of high and volatile food prices of 2007-08 has definitely slowed down progress in terms of decreased malnutrition and hampered achievements in the fight against food insecurity. Specifically, price volatility also has significant effects on food producers and consumers. Greater price volatility can lead to greater potential losses for producers because it implies price changes that are larger and faster than what producers can adjust to. Uncertainty about prices makes it more difficult for farmers to make sound decisions about how and what to produce. For example, there may be uncertainties like:

1. Which crops should they produce?
2. Should they invest in expensive fertilizers and pesticides?
3. Should they pay for high-quality seeds?

Without a good idea of how much they will earn from their products, farmers may become more pessimistic in their long-term planning and dampen their investments in areas that could improve their productivity. The positive relationship between price volatility and producers‘ expected losses can be modelled in a simple profit maximization model assuming producers are price takers. Still, it is important to mention that there is no uniform empirical evidence of the behavioural response of producers to volatility. By reducing supply, such a response could lead to higher prices, which in turn would hurt consumers. In view of volatile food prices, indicators of transitory and cyclical FNS should be taken into account. In such situations of food insecurity caused by a sudden drop of purchasing power and access to food, indicators should provide information about the immediate needs for essential nutrients derived from specific food commodities. Most importantly, as the problems of food and nutrition insecurity are currently more complex, identifying and choosing relevant indicators is crucial. Again, as the nature of food and nutrition security status is different between short term and long term causes, there is a need to differentiate between long term and short term indicators to design policy response **[9]**.

Indicator should be chosen in such a way that they meet a range of desirable properties. Some of the properties are based on the policy relevance of the indicators (the indicator should be credible, i.e., rooted in a solid conceptual and theoretical framework, rapidly available, communicable to the end users and consistently aimed at answering a given set of policy questions), while others are based on scientific criteria. The latter include robustness to changes in parameters and to measurement errors, and a right balance of stability and sensitivity, in order to report change without signalling to excess. In the technical aspects of collecting relevant data for an indicator, particularly concerning the cost of collection, policy makers may consider using and adapting principles of *“optimal ignorance”*. It implies not collecting data more than absolutely needed, and *“appropriate imprecision”* (not measuring more precisely than what is necessary). The concept of costs of collection versus costs of non-collection is criterion that links the direct costs of data collection and of the policy action that the information generates, to the benefits that the indicator has in terms of the improvements brought about by the policy action (e. g., the costs of collecting household data to identify food insecure households, the costs of addressing this food insecurity, and the social benefits of having addressed it, respectively) **[9]**.

Today, there is a growing concern (as indicated earlier) for improving FNS measurement as a response to the urgent need to achieve sustainable global FNS. While FNS concepts are elusive and difficult to follow up with targeted actions, there is a possibility to identify populations or individuals who are in an insecure food and nutritional state. There are numerous indicators of food and nutrition security at global, national, household and individual level. Each indicator reflects a specific aspect of FNS and thus is only relevant for certain situations. This section documents the list of indicators which have been mostly used in the literature of various disciplines. Several indicators listed below are well-known measures approved by the CFS (Committee on World Food Security) and used for monitoring the achievements of MDGs, forming the so-called *“state-of-the-art”*. The indicators are recommended by experts in the relevant disciplines and by international agencies. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the indicators might be revised after a certain period in order to accommodate validation **[9]**. The food security indicators may be comprised of:

1. The FAO Indicator of Undernourishment (FAOIU);
2. The Global Hunger Index (GHI);
3. The Global Food Security Index (GFSI);
4. The Poverty and Hunger Index (PHI);
5. The Hunger Reduction Commitment Index (HRCI);
6. Anthropometric indicators (AI);
7. The Diet Diversity Score (DDS); and
8. Medical and biomarker indicators (MBI) **[9]**.

Improving and monitoring food and nutrition security requires many elements. *First*, a clear and universally agreed upon definition of food and nutrition security must be identified. Food and nutrition security exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. There are four dimensions to FNS: (a) availability, (b) access, (c) utilization, and (d) stability (the latter also includes the notion of vulnerability) **[9]**.

*Secondly,* a sound conceptual (if possible, even theoretical) framework to guide the choice of FNS indicators is required. The conceptual framework and existing studies suggest that the measurement of food and nutrition security should include anthropometric measures, as the true indicators of the impacts of food and nutritional insecurity at the individual, biological level. *Importantly*, existing sets of anthropometric data allow for a gender and spatial analysis of FNS, as they are collected through field surveys. Combining the anthropometric measures and other biomarker indicators (such as the prevalence of anemia) can provide more accurate information as anemia reflects poor micro-nutrient intake (iron), infection and chronic illness driven from poor health environment. Indicators of food and nutrition security are crucial to (a) provide an accurate and workable description of the actual FNS status of target groups, as well as (b) devise appropriate policy responses **[9]**.

* **For certain sustainability issues, the performance of an entity cannot be assessed without going beyond the entity’s direct operations. Some indicators take into consideration reporting entities’ relationships with their suppliers or suppliers’ impact in the reporting entity’s overall performance:**

1. **Indicators related to reporting entity’s relationship with suppliers:**  A.5.1 Proportion of local procurement, A.5.2 Fair pricing and transparent contracts.
2. **Indicators related to impact of suppliers:** B.1.4 Water Management practices, B.2.3 GHG emissions (scope 3), B.2.4 GHG Emissions management, B.7.1 Land conversion, B.7.3 Sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, C.4.2 Incidence/frequency rates of occupational injuries, C.5.1 Incidents of non-compliance with child labour laws, C.6.3. Non-compliance in food safety and food quality, C.7.1. Non-compliance with land tenure rights regulations, D.2.1. Amount of fines paid and payable due to corruption-related settlements, D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence. For the other indicators, entities are encouraged to assess and report on suppliers’ performance alongside their own reporting.

**Does this approach capture the relevant sustainability issues related to suppliers? Is it clear where reporting entities need to be requesting information from suppliers?**

1. **Does this approach capture the relevant sustainability issues related to suppliers?**

The adopted approach (as indicated in the document entitled “Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the SDGs–Supplementary guidance, published on: <http://assets.fsnforum.fao.org.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/public/Methodology_note_of_core_indicators_food_and_agriculture_22.03.20_CONSULTATION.pdf>) do capture the relevant sustainability issues related to suppliers. However, in the present day situation, there is need to look into an alternative system of food distribution that focuses on locally produced and sold food. The challenges of these new systems, termed as *“short food supply chains”* (SFSC), represent tough market competitions, high distribution and logistics costs, small shipment sizes, and so forth. Hence, the SFSC model requires corresponding solutions in food distribution that are aligned with the contemporary logistics trends, sustainability and aspects of the new digital era. With right management strategy in the area of sustainability, the SFSC can be designed and implemented from the aspects of innovative logistics modes and contemporary information and communication technologies, with the final aim to outline and evaluate different food distribution scenarios towards greater sustainability. This realization has gained increased significance in a 21st Century world with an ever-growing population. Therefore, creating efficient, sustainable, safe and healthy food provisioning systems has become more vital. This is because of the fact that besides fresh water, food is the most important natural resource in the world that is needed to meet the demand of ever growing population **[10]**.

1. **Is it clear where reporting entities need to be requesting information from suppliers?**

It is not very clear where reporting entities need to be requesting information from suppliers. It needs to be outlined in more specific terms, as reporting entities generally do not get required support from the supply chain. It may require outlining specific strategies envisaging support from national governments.

**2. Clarity**

* **Is the supplementary guidance clear in terms of type of private entities targeted and reporting rules?**

Supplementary guidance is clear in terms of type of private entities targeted, and reporting rules. However, the contributor (of this ongoing consultation on: *“Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals*) suggests that under the paragraph (sentence): **If the reporting entity is a multinational company, or the subsidiary of a multinational company, then the following information should also be reported** (page 12 of the document entitled “Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the SDGs–Supplementary guidance”), followings sentence should be added:

* the type of activities of the entity; and
* collaborating partners of the entity (sector-wise: in governmental sector and non-governmental sector).

Above information will give added information on type of entity. In terms of sequence while adding above two points (if accepted or agreed upon by the organizer of the consultation), the contributor leaves the decision to **Pietro Gennari** and **Valerie Bizier**, Facilitators, associated with the office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), located at Rome, Italy.

* **Can entities easily evaluate if their activities and the commodities they purchase, produce, process, manipulate and/or sell are in scope for each indicator? If not, how could this be improved?**

The entities will not be able to easily evaluate in order to ascertain if their activities and the commodities they purchase, produce, process, manipulate and/or sell are in scope for each indicator. The contributor of this ongoing consultation makes a specific point at this juncture that there cannot be a standard monitoring and evaluation tool. A representative (or sample) tool for evaluation can be suggested. However, each entity will need to make necessary changes in the tool, depending upon locally prevailing situations pertaining to food supply chain system and the type of SDG indicator.

Policy makers should remember that the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of agricultural projects for their impact on household food insecurity and nutrition is important given the paucity of data documenting successes and failures in such projects, and because possible adverse effects in such projects need to be identified and addressed rapidly. Recognizing, however, the lack of capacity and/or reluctance of some agriculture project managers and planners to incorporate nutrition considerations in their project planning or their management information systems, a feasible alternative approach is needed: one capable of meeting agriculture-nutrition M&E objectives without encumbering project managers. There may be a role for external M&E teams comprised of staff skilled in agriculture-nutrition linkages (the Ag2Nut teams). These teams could identify sensible indicators to measure nutrition-relevant impact based on the type of activities in the program, carry out the key M&E necessary for tracking progress, and feed back to the program management; they also could support nutrition-sensitive program *‘design’* or *‘adjustment’* **[11]**.

The teams could carry out M&E for food security and nutrition at geographically representative sentinel sites, where baseline data are followed by the collection of quantitative and qualitative data at six month intervals. Data collected in these areas plus comparable control sites would include: (a) information indicating participation and the extent to which households and individuals within households have been reached/affected by the project; (b) data on household food insecurity levels and on dietary quality; (c) where appropriate, data on young child nutritional status (collected annually); (d) information on women’s empowerment (qualitative and quantitative); € information which might indicate harm to food security or nutrition (e.g. increased time constraints, or inadequate protection of natural resources); and (f) data on a subset of data of primary interest to project managers **[11]**.

The Ag2Nut teams would work with local agriculture staff in initial projects to test the approach while developing prototypes, training modules and TA mechanisms. Where Ag2Nut teams also are sufficiently involved in project design, and where explicit understandings exist that harmful effects will be quickly addressed by project management, such systems have the potential to move this type of *“nutrition-sensitive intervention”* forward. In addition, they offer an opportunity to build capacity among program managers to plan for and to measure food security and nutrition (FSN) effects of programs. Importantly, this approach offers a means of assessing the effects of operational nutrition-sensitive agriculture projects that are rolling out in the immediate term, thus enabling learning from substantial investments. It would also enable agriculture projects to understand their impact on food security and on nutrition, two goals that are often explicitly sought, particularly in the current environment where there is increasing desire to improve impact on nutrition **[11]**.

**3. Feasibility**

* **Do private sector organisations have access to the type of data required to assess performance against the indicators? If not, is it feasible for them to collect it?**

In response to this question, the contributor states that all private sector organisations do not have access to the type of data required to assess performance against the indicators. However, it is possible for the private sector organisations to collect data. This initiative will require, among other things, coordination with all stakeholders and collaborating partners involved, at all stages (right from planning to implantation, including evaluation of project outcomes). Importantly, data collection tools should be worded in simple sentences. Also, they should use language (s) that the stakeholders and project managers understand, without much difficulties.

* **Do companies have country-level information in order to provide disaggregated data by country to feed into SDG monitoring/reporting?**

All companies do not have access to have country-level information in order to (a) provide disaggregated data by country, (b) feed into SDG monitoring/reporting. Limited availability, uncertain quality and restricted access to data are challenges to this type of analytical work. In many cases, there are no extensive datasets that reliably report on both food expenditure and market prices, disaggregated to subnational administrative units. *Importantly*, data for the fill the nutrient gap assessment comes from a wide range of sources **[12]**.

**4. Ease of use**

* **Does the guidance make it easy enough for private sector entities to understand how to calculate their performance against each indicator? If not, where is improvement needed?**

The guidance (titled “Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the SDGs-Supplementary guidance”) make it easy enough for private sector entities to understand how to calculate their performance against each indicator. However, some changes in the text of the document, as outlined above, needs to me made.

* **Is there sufficient supplementary guidance in terms of links to additional materials and definitions?**

There are supplementary guidance in terms of links to additional materials and definitions (in terms of sources quoted under: References-Sustainability Standards and Initiatives, pages 105-106 of the document entitled “Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the SDGs–Supplementary guidance”, published on: <http://assets.fsnforum.fao.org.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/public/Methodology_note_of_core_indicators_food_and_agriculture_22.03.20_CONSULTATION.pdf>). *Nevertheless*, some more resources can be added. There are several inter-governmental bodies that have excelled in designing agricultural indicators in the context of SDGs. Their work can be quoted and incorporated in the guidance.

**5. Qualitative vs. quantitative indicators**

* **Are there ways to make any of the qualitative indicators quantitative and how? Qualitative indicators are: A.2.3 Financial Risk Management, A.5.2 Fair pricing and transparent contracts, B.1.4 Water management practices, B.2.4 GHG emissions management, B.7.3 Sustainable use and conversion of biodiversity, B.9.2 Management of pesticides, B.10.2 Management of fertilizers, C.6.1 Food labelling, C.6.2 Practices promoting sustainable healthy diets, D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence.**

It is possible to make *‘qualitative’* indicators *‘quantitative’*. However, it is not always possible. It depends on the context and the conceptual framework on the given SDG in a particular country or region during a given time.

1. **For example, would it be preferable to replace the indicator in C.6.2 which focuses on practices with an indicator on the percentage of the entity’s marketing budget spent on promoting healthy foods?**

It would not be preferable to replace the indicator in C.6.2 which focuses on practices with an indicator on the percentage of the entity’s marketing budget spent on promoting healthy foods. This is because of the fact that there cannot be standardization, as there are fluctuations in entity’s marketing budget spent on promoting healthy foods.

**6. Adequacy of specific indicators**

* **B.7.1 Land conversion: Do the three sub-indicators address the issues with land conversion as related to the achievement of SDG 15?**

Three sub-indicators address the issues with land conversion as related to the achievement of SDG 15.

* **B.7.2 Habitat area protected: Where there is no natural habitat in the reporting entity’s production area, should there be a requirement for reporting on restoration or ‘rewilding’ to create habitat?**

There should be a requirement for reporting on restoration or ‘rewilding’ to create habitat in case where there is no natural habitat in the reporting entity’s production area.

* **C.1.2 Average hourly earnings of all employees: Would it be better to formulate this indicator as ‘Percentage of employees and other workers paid above a living wage, disaggregated by occupation, gender, age, and disability status’?**

It would be better to formulate this indicator (average hourly earnings of all employees) as *“percentage of employees and other workers paid above a living wage, disaggregated by occupation, gender, age, and disability status”*. However, this arrangement may not be applicable in situations where there are not accepted standards in wage earnings. Again, food price fluctuations and inefficiencies in food systems impact the affordability of nutritious diets in many contexts. Access to, and availability of, nutritious foods are impacted by three factors. They are: (a) decreased local production as land and assets are lost or destroyed and populations migrate; (b) ruptured supply chains due to conflict and damaged infrastructure; and (c) increased demand that can drive up food prices **[13]**.

* **C.6.3 Non-compliance in food safety and food quality: Is it relevant to include incidents of non-compliance with GFSI certification as part of this indicator?**

It is normally relevant to include incidents of non-compliance with GFSI certification as part of this indicator.

* **D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence: Does this indicator capture well entities’ institutional efforts and commitments to identify and address social and environmental risks along the value chain?**

This indicator (management of risks to people, planet,. and society through supply chain due diligence) captures entities’ institutional efforts and commitments to identify and address social and environmental risks along the value chain.

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**[13]** World Food Program (WFP) (2020). *“Food Systems in Fragile Settings: Identifying gaps and opportunities to support access to improved diets (Fill the Nutrient Gap)”*. Rome, Italy: WFP (Accessed on April 14, 2014 from: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/food-systems-fragile-settings>).

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| **Photo.Dr.Mishra.jpeg.jpgBrief Biography of Contributor**  Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra (Ph. D.) retired on June 30, 2020 from the Population Education Resource Centre, Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension, S. N. D. T. Women's University, Mumbai, India. He underwent training in demography and acquired Ph. D. His areas of interest include demography, sustainable development, etc. Dr. Mishra has authored (some co-authored) 5 booklets, 4 books, 22 book chapters, 74 journal articles, and 49 papers for conferences (some with bursary for presenting research papers at international events held at Sweden, Australia, Tajikistan, USA, Tanzania, Philippines, Ireland, Nepal, and Pakistan). Also, he has contributed to nearly 125 e-discussions. After retirement from the S. N. D. T. Women's University, Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra is independent (freelancer) researcher. He can be reached at Email: [drskmishrain@yahoo.com](mailto:drskmishrain@yahoo.com) & Tel.: (+91) 9224380445. |

## Philipp Aerni, Center for Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability, Switzerland

When reviewing the core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals I noticed that it heavily relies on the established set of social, environmental and governance (ESG) indicators that have been developed prior to the UN SDGs. However, the UN SDGs stand for a paradigm shift in the sense that they do not just recognize corporate efforts to minimize their negative externalities (social and ecological footprint) but also the potential of companies to create positive externalities for society and the environment through their responsible and innovative core business (also known as the 'handprint'). Such positive externalities must not necessarily be deliberate but are often 'unintended side' effects resulting from long-term investments and the development and commercialization of sustainable scalable innovations.

For example, a multinational company that invests in low-income countries and encourages its subsidiaries to embed themselves in a principled way into the local economy is unlikely to get rewarded for these efforts in the conventional sustainability ratings. In fact, often they score worse than multinational companies, which only operate in high-income countries where they are less exposed to risk. However, the contribution of embedded multinational companies to sustainable change in general and  to UN SDG 8 (and its targets) in particular, are potentially huge (see <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783030037970>).

These contributions may manifest themselves through

- the creation of new decent jobs in the formal economy

- the reduction (directly or indirectly via local companies that obtain contracts) of youth unemployment

- the upgrade of local businesses to become sustainable suppliers in an integrated global value chain (contribution to inclusive and sustainable growth),

- the tranfer of technology and capacity development into the local economic ecosystem

- the economic empowerment of local entrepreneurial women

- investments in innovative local solutions that make use of external knowledge and know-how to enhance the value and sustainability of local products

However, I do not see how the set of indicators is capable of calculating a potential net impact of companies for all UN SDGs (discounting the assessed negative impact from the assessed positive impact in all areas of concern). It would also be hugely burdensome forcing companies to allocate more resources to monitoring, reporting and verification - often at the expense of investment in innovation and the local economy).

Even though it is commendable to focus on quantitative indicators it is far from clear to me how they promote the measurability and comparability of the sustainability performance of companies within their particular industry. For that purpose, a set of indicators (based on raw data) would have to be captured in form of key performance indicators that enable an appropriate benchmarking based on a score function.

Since doing this for every UN SDGs and respective selected targets would be too burdensome why not focusing instead on UN SDG 8 and its targets? In our research we noticed that UN SDG 8 and its focus on 'inclusive growth and decent work' directly or indirectly impacts all other SDGs, because companies that contribute substantially to UN SDG 8 become drivers of inclusive and sustainable change in the respective region in which they invest.

We discuss these issues in our forthcoming book on UN SDG 8:

<https://www.mdpi.com/books/pdfview/edition/1227>.

## Yvonne Harz-Pitre, International Fertilizer Association, France

The International Fertilizer Association (IFA) recognizes the impressive effort that has gone into this framework, and we acknowledge its ambition to be as comprehensive and exhaustive as possible in terms of data collection. However, its ambition could undermine the feasibility and practicality, in particular for smaller-sized companies, which have limited resources for that type of exercise. We have the following suggestions for improvement: The indicator B.9. 2 on the Management of Fertilizers provides a diverse and complete list of recommended sustainability practices, but it is unclear how the wealth of information reported could ultimately fit under a single indicator. We are fully supportive of this indicator, but believe that it deserves more thought.

However, we question the Fertilizer Use Intensity Indicator (B.9.1), expressed in Kg / ha. Fertilizer use intensity depends on a number of biophysical (soil, crop, and climate) as well as socioeconomic factors, thus different conditions will necessarily lead to higher or lower fertilizer use per ha. In addition, access, supply, and government policies could influence the amount of fertilizers applied in a given region. Thus we recommend eliminating the indicator of fertilizer use intensity or replacing it with a Nutrient Use Efficiency Indicator.

Last but not least, the soil degradation indicator (B.8.1) is vague and responsibilities and knowledge of soil conditions are unclear, in particular, if the land is owned but not used. Who should report in this case? While this indicator is highly relevant for national data sets, it is difficult for a company to report on, as most companies do not manage a lot of land directly. While we fully recognize the importance of knowledge improvement on soil health, we would recommend removing this indicator from this assessment and rather enforcing it for countries to be measured on a regional or national scale.

## Cecile Brugere, Soulfish Research & Consultancy, United Kingdom

I would like to draw your attention on aquaculture as a specific form of farming system, and with specific value chains.

Aquaculture is included in the guidance, but this sector is quite specific compared to terrestrial animal rearing and farming systems and would need to be better accounted for, especially under the scope of "agriculture production". For example, under the Environment dimension, in relation to Soils and Fertilisers aquaculture is excluded, when in fact it can have an impact on soil quality/degradation (e.g. shrimp ponds), and some freshwater pond farming system do rely on fertiliser use and fertilisation.

I have not delved into all the details of the document and indicators, but more specific comments with regards to aquaculture are included in the attachment.

Best wishes in this important endeavour.

Attachment:

<http://assets.fsnforum.fao.org.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/public/discussions/contributions/Methodology_note_of_core_indicators_food_and_agriculture_22.03.20_CONSULTATION_CB.pdf>

## Mishma Abraham, World Benchmarking Alliance, Netherlands

**FAO Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals – World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) Feedback**

1. Scope

* Are the most relevant sectors and areas with respect to the private sector’s impact on the SDG agenda covered? Are the associated indicators adequate to measure private sector entities’ contribution to the SDGs? If not, where are the gaps? Are there any indicators included which are superfluous and why?

We welcome this initiative and strongly support FAO’s efforts on incentivizing and measuring the private sector’s contribution to achieving the SDGs. These efforts are in line with WBA’s mission and vision.

Generally, we appreciate the broad approach in terms of sectors and areas covered by the core indicators. As such, we see a high level of alignment between FAO’s core food and agriculture indicators and the methodology (and indicators) for [WBA’s Food and Agriculture Benchmark](https://www.worldbenchmarkingalliance.org/publication/food-agriculture/about/). We appreciate this alignment, ensuring basic synergies between both frameworks as well as consistency on metrics required. We view this as an important basis for further conversations between FAO and WBA, and looking at potential collaboration on driving the agenda for private sector engagement on the SDGs.

Going through the core indicators, the following questions have come up:

* Sectors covered: The scope of the framework does not include food service and restaurant chains. Why is this sector not included? WBA’s Food and Agriculture Benchmark considers food service and restaurants key players in the food system transformation agenda.
* Animal welfare: This topic is not covered. As we consider animal welfare a key issue for private sector action - is there a reason why it is excluded from the core indicators?
* Promoting sustainable and healthy diets: Indicator C.6.2 contains multiple elements that address different aspects of promoting sustainable and healthy diets. For example, activities related to responsible advertising and promotion of healthy foods. Both elements require separate data points, and as such can both form a separate indicator on responsible marketing activities. Two indicators, one that assesses companies’ efforts on improving the nutritional quality of products and one on (commercial) food promotion practices, can strengthen the focus on these two key topics.
* Forced labour/modern slavery: this topic is excluded except in terms of child labour. As this can be considered a key aspect in many agricultural supply chains, WBA’s Food and Agriculture Benchmark includes two separate indicators in these topics. Why was it excluded from the core indicators?
* Referencing: we much appreciate the referencing of the high number of sources used, including WBA sources. As our materials (notably the benchmark’s methodology) evolve over time, it may be useful to further specify the documentation used:  
  World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) 2021, Methodology for the Food and Agriculture Benchmark: A roadmap for corporate action, indicator [xyz]. Available at: <https://www.worldbenchmarkingalliance.org/research/food-and-agriculture-methodology/>
* The framework is food-centric for the downstream sectors (food processing, food wholesale and food retail), and the scope of the guidance at the production level only includes crop and livestock production as well as aquaculture. Is the inclusion of aquaculture but not fishing the right approach given the similar impacts of aquaculture with other types of agricultural production? Should the framework be applicable to the forestry sector and if so, which aspects should be considered?

If fishing activities are not included in this sectoral guidance, are you planning to develop a separate guidance for that sector? Or maybe refer to an existing standard to guide companies in the industry?

WBA’s [Seafood Stewardship Index](https://www.worldbenchmarkingalliance.org/seafood-stewardship-index/) assesses the performance of the seafood industries in achieving key SDGs. The methodology includes key topics for the industry in moving to a sustainable sector.

* Would it be helpful to include the specific list of indicators which apply to each type of production, e.g. aquaculture, livestock, crop production?

To increase the understanding for stakeholders, including companies, it could indeed be helpful to have an overview of the applicability of indicators to key segments of the food value chain. Further, it could also be helpful to have an overview of the most material/relevant indicators for each type of production.

* For certain sustainability issues, the performance of an entity cannot be assessed without going beyond the entity’s direct operations. Some indicators take into consideration reporting entities’ relationships with their suppliers or suppliers’ impact in the reporting entity’s overall performance:

1. Indicators related to reporting entity’s relationship with suppliers:
   1. A.5.1 Proportion of local procurement
   2. A.5.2 Fair pricing and transparent contracts
2. Indicators related to impact of suppliers:
   1. B.1.4 Water Management practices
   2. B.2.3 GHG emissions (scope 3)
   3. B.2.4 GHG Emissions management
   4. B.7.1 Land conversion
   5. B.7.3 Sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity
   6. C.4.2 Incidence/frequency rates of occupational injuries
   7. C.5.1 Incidents of non-compliance with child labour laws,
   8. C.6.3. Non-compliance in food safety and food quality,
   9. C.7.1. Non-compliance with land tenure rights regulations,
   10. D.2.1. Amount of fines paid and payable due to corruption-related settlements,
   11. D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence. For the other indicators, entities are encouraged to assess and report on suppliers’ performance alongside their own reporting.

* Does this approach capture the relevant sustainability issues related to suppliers? Is it clear where reporting entities need to be requesting information from suppliers?

Depending on where the company sits on the value chain, there are a few more topics that are related to the impact of suppliers. For example, in the WBA Food and Agriculture Benchmark, we also ask about impact of suppliers on the following topics, in addition to the ones indicated above:

* B.1.1 Water stress: if downstream companies source products produced in water-stressed regions, and if they engage with their suppliers.
* B.9 & B.10 Fertilizers and pesticides: if downstream companies expect their suppliers to reduce and/or optimise the use of fertilizers and pesticides.
* B.7 & B.8 Biodiversity and soil: if downstream companies expect their suppliers to adopt practices that improve soil health and agrobiodiversity.

2. Clarity

* Is the supplementary guidance clear in terms of type of private entities targeted and reporting rules?

In some cases, there is overlap between indicators, such as B.7.1. land conversion and B.7.3. sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity if companies were to report on deforestation/conversion-free targets. Acknowledging that the topics are highly connected, would it be relevant to focus B.7.3 on sustainable use of biodiversity (through sustainable agriculture for example), and focus conservation of biodiversity (through no-deforestation commitments for example) under B.7.1 and B.7.2?

* Can entities easily evaluate if their activities and the commodities they purchase, produce, process, manipulate and/or sell are in scope for each indicator? If not, how could this be improved?

The scope of sectors included across p. 7-9 is a useful overview for the general framework. The “scope” section for each of the indicators is also a good guidance for companies. It would be great to have an overview of the indicators and their associated scope for each of the sectors.

3. Feasibility

* Do private sector organisations have access to the type of data required to assess performance against the indicators? If not, is it feasible for them to collect it?

For the indicators as part of WBA’s Food and Agriculture Benchmark, initial research has been done to ensure availability of data and applicability of indicators. There is strong divergence between industries/sectors and companies on the level of complexity of data needs as well as availability depending on the indicator.

* Do companies have country-level information in order to provide disaggregated data by country to feed into SDG monitoring/reporting?

Many companies collect such data. Much divergence exists around quality, depth and public availability of such data, and strongly depends on the topic.

4. Ease of use

* Does the guidance make it easy enough for private sector entities to understand how to calculate their performance against each indicator? If not, where is improvement needed?

The indicators provide great depth in terms of understanding the issue, as well as providing guidance towards measuring impact. However, certain indicators could be strengthened by referencing existing initiatives that already support private sector action. For instance, indicator B.1.2 on water stress can reference existing tools such as the WRI Aqueduct Tool or the WWF Water Risk Filter that provide companies with the database to map their water risk footprint.

* Is there sufficient supplementary guidance in terms of links to additional materials and definitions?

5. Qualitative vs. quantitative indicators

* Are there ways to make any of the qualitative indicators quantitative and how? Qualitative indicators are:
* A.2.3 Financial Risk Management
* A.5.2 Fair pricing and transparent contracts
* B.1.4 Water management practices
* B.2.4 GHG emissions management
* B.7.3 Sustainable use and conversion of biodiversity
* B.9.2 Management of pesticides
* B.10.2 Management of fertilizers
* C.6.1 Food labelling
* C.6.2 Practices promoting sustainable healthy diets
* D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence.

1. For example, would it be preferable to replace the indicator in C.6.2 which focuses on practices with an indicator on the percentage of the entity’s marketing budget spent on promoting healthy foods?

Not replacing, but it could be useful to single out responsible marketing and create a separate indicator that focuses on both regulating negative practices and enhancing positive marketing strategies to promote healthy eating. In this way, a quantitative indicator on the percentage of the entity’s marketing budget spent on promoting healthy foods would be extremely relevant and valuable.

Indicator C.6.1 can include quantitative metrics. Next to acknowledging the countries in which food labelling in regulated by country legislations, companies can disclose the % of products for which they have rolled out labelling commitments beyond legal compliance (ideally, covering all the relevant markets where the company operates).

Examples

* The company has X% of its products (or sales values) compliant to national regulations/Codex Alimentarius in X countries in which it operates.
* The company has rolled out supplementary labelling schemes for X% of products (sales values) in X countries in which it operates.

Many of the environmental indicators in WBA’s Food and Agriculture Benchmark require companies to report on their targets towards reducing their impact on environmental issues. In some cases, this is a mix of qualitative and quantitative data. For example, on soil health, we expect companies to disclose their commitments/policies to improve soil health, but we also ask them to disclose quantitative data on their impact on soil health, for example, through % reduction of land affected by erosion, % of land under regenerative agriculture, etc. Similarly, for downstream companies, the benchmark expects companies to report on the proportion of food it sells that is produced under recognised environmental schemes that replace harmful pesticides with alternatives and optimises fertiliser use.

6. Adequacy of specific indicators

* B.7.1 Land conversion: Do the three sub-indicators address the issues with land conversion as related to the achievement of SDG 15?

It is unclear under indicator B.7.1 on land conversion if downstream entities who source high-risk commodities are required to report on this. Such entities have a huge impact on land conversion through their sourcing practices, and this should be made clearer in the indicator. It might also be useful to specifically call out the main high-risk commodities (such as beef, soy, palm oil, etc.) that are responsible for majority of land conversion, and are found in the portfolio of most global food and agriculture companies. Moreover, the land conversion indicator could be strengthened by including guidance for companies to set targets to eliminate land conversion of natural ecosystems, and report performance against the targets.

* B.7.2 Habitat area protected: Where there is no natural habitat in the reporting entity’s production area, should there be a requirement for reporting on restoration or ‘rewilding’ to create habitat?

A requirement may be too strict when a company does not have any impact on natural habitats. For WBA’s Food and Agriculture Benchmark, companies will not be assessed on this topic, who do not produce/source high-risk commodities, which are among the major threats towards natural habitat destruction.

* C.1.2 Average hourly earnings of all employees: Would it be better to formulate this indicator as ‘Percentage of employees and other workers paid above a living wage, disaggregated by occupation, gender, age, and disability status?

It depends what the purpose of the indicator is – the indicator would be entirely different if it referred to Living Wage.

* C.6.3 Non-compliance in food safety and food quality: Is it relevant to include incidents of non-compliance with GFSI certification as part of this indicator?

We consider the disclosure on the % of companies’ operations (n of plants in all countries in which the company operates) and % of suppliers audited and certified by GFSI (or other independent and globally accepted third-party certification) more relevant than reporting on non-compliance incidents. The former is a measure of how the company supports its suppliers with implementing food safety requirements, which we deem as the key element of our food safety indicator.

* D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence: Does this indicator capture well entities’ institutional efforts and commitments to identify and address social and environmental risks along the value chain?

This indicator seems quite broad. It may be difficult to capture human rights due diligence and environment due diligence in one indicator. Is it possible to split or clarify the objective of this indicator?

## Valerie Bizier, facilitator of the consultation

We’ve been encouraged by the feedback received to date both on the forum itself and directly by email, where contributors have highlighted the importance of not just capturing the ‘avoidance of harm’ by the private sector but also the significant positive impact that is being made. On a number of the specific questions we’ve posed, it’s been helpful to hear the views expressed on inclusion of aquaculture and forestry and the highlighting of some issues which contributors thought should receive greater attention like gender, mental health and food quality. This feedback is extremely useful as we seek to refine the indicators and ensure that they are fit for purpose and we look forward to receiving additional contributions over the coming weeks!

## Margaret Koyenikan, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, Nigeria

Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Q-Are the associated indicators adequate to measure private sector entities’ contribution to the SDGs?

Answer: The report is quite comprehensive but I feel private sectors institutional characteristics including innovativeness needs to be captured

Q-If not, where are the gaps?

Answer:

1. Expenditure on technical training of workers as proportion of revenue;
2. Sources, uptake and funding of technologies/information/innovation development and dissemination;
3. Community service or compensation to community of operation;

Q- Would it be helpful to include the specific list of indicators which apply to each type of production, e.g. aquaculture, livestock, crop production?

Answer: No there should be a standard format that can be adopted by all the sub-sectors for ease of reporting.

Best regards.

Margaret.

## Samuel Kirichu, FAO, Malawi

The following are my two comments on the indicators provided:

1. While the cross cutting issues such as gender and age have been taken care of in some indicators (eg. D.1.2, D.1.3 etc), I am of the opinion that other cross-cutting issues like disability should also be considered. In addition, the cross cutting issues mentioned above (gender, sex, disability etc) should strongly be reflected across the indicators where possible and not just to some indicators.

2. There is a need to clearly indicate the role of the digital technology in measuring and/or assessing the indicators. Where possible too, utilization of digital technology in accelerating the outputs could also be measured.

## Sabine Desczka, Wageningen Economic Research, Netherlands

**As Wageningen University and Research (WUR) we greatly appreciate and strongly support FAO’s efforts on incentivizing and measuring the private sector’s contribution to achieving the SDG’s. This initiative is very much in line with WUR’s efforts for measuring and developing KPI’s for food systems investments, the work of the sustainability consortium and WUR’s ambitions to monitor and digitalize impacts of investments in biodiversity.**

**For the private sector, the development of an ambitious set of indicators to measure the contribution to the SDG’s is of great value as most individual business are too small themselves to undergo this exercise and the business community will greatly benefit from a larger attempt to standardize indicators and make them comparable for benchmarking and monitoring purposes.**

**1. Scope**

* Are the most relevant sectors and areas with respect to the private sector’s impact on the SDG agenda covered? Are the associated indicators adequate to measure private sector entities’ contribution to the SDGs? If not, where are the gaps? Are there any indicators included which are superfluous and why?

WUR would like to advise that in food value chains also the restaurant, hotel and food services industry has a large impact on food systems, in particular where it comes to reducing food waste and circularity of food systems.

# Number of sustainable inputs used

Animal welfare should be extended in it’s set of indicators regarding health plans, use of antibiotics, and general food safety issues, which however, could possibly be replaced with GFSI or other certification schemes applied.

* The framework is food-centric for the downstream sectors (food processing, food wholesale and food retail), and the scope of the guidance at the production level only includes crop and livestock production as well as aquaculture. Is the inclusion of aquaculture but not fishing the right approach given the similar impacts of aquaculture with other types of agricultural production? Should the framework be applicable to the forestry sector and if so, which aspects should be considered?

In our view, to be more comprehensive, the framework should include both, the fishery and forestry sectors.

* For certain sustainability issues, the performance of an entity cannot be assessed without going beyond the entity’s direct operations. Some indicators take into consideration reporting entities’ relationships with their suppliers or suppliers’ impact in the reporting entity’s overall performance:

1. Indicators related to reporting entity’s relationship with suppliers: A.5.1 Proportion of local procurement, A.5.2 Fair pricing and transparent contracts,
2. Indicators related to impact of suppliers: B.1.4 Water Management practices, B.2.3 GHG emissions (scope 3), B.2.4 GHG Emissions management, B.7.1 Land conversion, B.7.3 Sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, C.4.2 Incidence/frequency rates of occupational injuries, C.5.1 Incidents of non-compliance with child labour laws, C.6.3. Non-compliance in food safety and food quality, C.7.1. Non-compliance with land tenure rights regulations, D.2.1. Amount of fines paid and payable due to corruption-related settlements, D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence. For the other indicators, entities are encouraged to assess and report on suppliers’ performance alongside their own reporting.

Does this approach capture the relevant sustainability issues related to suppliers? Is it clear where reporting entities need to be requesting information from suppliers?

WR provides an extensive framework and adequate tools on product sustainability and impact in the supply chain through the website of [The Sustainability Consortium – Sustainable Products for a Sustainable Planet](https://www.sustainabilityconsortium.org/).

**3. Feasibility**

* Do private sector organisations have access to the type of data required to assess performance against the indicators? If not, is it feasible for them to collect it?

Our experience is that smallholders do generally not have this information available, but are keen to know. Agreements on SDG’s are often made on industry level. If access to internet is available a number of indicators can be derived from digital technology. Wageningen is currently working on accessing these data for sustainability purposes.

<https://research.wur.nl/en/publications/tien-miljard-monden-hoe-gaan-we-de-wereld-voeden-in-2050>

**6. Adequacy of specific indicators**

* C.1.2 Average hourly earnings of all employees: Would it be better to formulate this indicator as ‘Percentage of employees and other workers paid above a living wage, disaggregated by occupation, gender, age, and disability status’?

Generally the minimum wage or living wage indicators are more important than average wages. However, these can fluctuate strongly and should include also non-permanent employees who are more at risk.

If the purpose of this indicator is to measure progress towards reducing poverty and improving livelihoods a minimum approach should be used.

* C.6.3 Non-compliance in food safety and food quality: Is it relevant to include incidents of non-compliance with GFSI certification as part of this indicator?

Generally it is not advisable to use one concept or certification system only. There are many comparable national and international standards. In recent times a number of certification systems also recognise progress towards food safety standards, which should be acknowledged.

* D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence: Does this indicator capture well entities’ institutional efforts and commitments to identify and address social and environmental risks along the value chain?

This is a very broad indicator with many interdependencies and it is unclear what causes progress towards SDG’s in this indictor. Therefore separate indicators should be used.

The ESG framework is more developed and delivers widely available data.

## Brandon Eisler, Nutritional Diversity, Panama

May 1, 2021

TO: FAO

FR: NDDIET, BIODIVERSE FOOD STUDY, PANAMA

SUBJ: Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainability is a natural component of our ecology. We are the only species that lives in an unsustainable manner. The United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization wants to know how to evaluate private sector sustainability contributions.

Here are my top 3 importance's that will indicate a more sustainable contribution from private sector agriculturists.

Switch from mono-culture style to natural fertilization making and diverse agriculture systems.

Sustainable energy resource investments, solar, small hydro and wind, etc.

Increases in diverse production.

I can only add that the more diverse and sustainable the operation, the better the produce dynamically and we know well through our study diverse nutrition = a higher quality of life and less suffering.

Brandon E.

Senior Research Person

Bio-dynamic Food Study, Panama

Attachment:

<http://assets.fsnforum.fao.org.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/public/discussions/contributions/SDG.indicator.private.sector.pdf>

## Nozomi Ide, FAO, Italy

Thank you very much for this opportunity to review the Supplement Guideline on Core Food and Agricultural Indicators for Measuring the Private Sector Contribution to the SDGs. I would like to make the following comments with regards to the adequacy of specific indicators (#6).

It is commendable that gender aspects are incorporated in various indicators, including the proportion of local procurement and the percentage of employees covered by collective agreements, across different (i.e., economic, social, and institutional) dimensions by asking to disaggregate data by sex. However, women’s empowerment perspectives can be further reinforced considering not just that women comprise over 37% of the world’s rural agricultural employment, but that women account for up to 80% of workers in the plantations or processing factories.

In this regard, it is particularly important that the private sector actors take gender-specific measures to mitigate health and safety risks for women, in particular pregnant and lactating women, including mental health and stress that is exacerbated by sexual harassments and assaults. It is not only a material topic of corporate social responsibility and the sustainability and stability of entity operations, but also a high financial risk given that more and more ESG investment funds consider gender equality as high priority.

The Indicator C.4.1 Expenditures on Employee Health and Safety exactly speaks to this point; however, it should be gender sensitive. It is currently a quantitative indicator that measures the entity’s related expenses, but entities could also report, for example, if they address the specific health, safety, and hygiene needs of women at work and while commuting to work with a qualitative indicator. (It would be difficult to disaggregate the expenditure data by sex.) Its methodology could build on the Women’s Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool of the UNGC (https://weps-gapanalysis.org/) (Q10, 11, and 12 are particularly relevant.)

## Hurriyat Khudoykulova, The State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, Uzbekistan

Hello, FAO staff,

Although my opinion is not directly related to the above topics, it is important for the secondary indicators to emerge from them.

Known that, the food balance (FBS) methodology of FAO has been improved in many ways, but it seems that still has its disadvantages.

According to the new food balances (FBS), highlighted as the new loss module is a linear hierarchical algorithm that imputes for losses across the whole value chain up to and excluding the. The hierarchy is based upon commodity and country groups. In addition, much more use is made of web scraping, text mining, and academic/research articles and publications. Thus, the historical loss percentages in the food balances are consistently being revised based upon the new findings.

If we look at the relative losses in the example of potatoes for the country of India, we consider the data on old and new methodologies.

Known that, India is the world's second-largest producer of potato, after China. Together, both countries contribute 38 percent to the world's total potato production. According to the estimation of FAO of loss in potatoes and products for India, it can be seen that 23.3 percent of the amount of potatoes and products, that is lost from total production (see attached table 1).

According to information in the Report on the assessment of quantitative harvest and post-harvest losses of major crops and commodities in India, the total loss in potato is estimated at 7.32 percent for the study years 2012-2013. The conclusion is that there are significant differences between the data of international organizations and national organizations.

Another important and noteworthy aspect of this information for India is that the share of losses from the whole production quantity of potatoes and products differs significantly not only from its neighboring countries but also almost all other countries of the world (see attached table 2).

Moreover, in the new food balances (FBS) it is highlighted that an in-depth analysis has been carried out on the historical time series of stocks and a number of ‘unrealistic’ series (negative stock levels, or in excess of certain supply thresholds) have been discontinued and re-imputed, but it can be seen that there are still negative stock levels for some countries to the latest data.(see attached table 3)

Hurriyat Khudoykulova,

Freelance researcher (Ph.D)

Attachment:

<http://assets.fsnforum.fao.org.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/public/discussions/contributions/Table123_0.docx>

## Nora Mardirossian, Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment

As part of the Fixing the Business of Food project for aligning the food sector with the SDGs (https://www.fixing-food.com/), the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI) and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) welcome the contribution of FAO's core indicators to efforts to measure the food sector’s contributions to the SDGs.

Attached, we provide constructive remarks with hopes of helping improve the methodology. We look forward to further collaboration and welcome any questions regarding our contribution.

*As part of the Fixing the Business of Food project, we at the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI) and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) welcome the contribution of these core indicators to efforts to measure the food sector’s contributions to the SDGs. Below, we provide some constructive remarks (in blue and italicized) with hopes of helping improve the methodology. We look forward to further collaboration and welcome any questions regarding the input herein.*

**1. Scope**

* Are the most relevant sectors and areas with respect to the private sector’s impact on the SDG agenda covered? Are the associated indicators adequate to measure private sector entities’ contribution to the SDGs? If not, where are the gaps? Are there any indicators included which are superfluous and why?

*Most relevant areas related to the private sector’s impact on achievement of the SDGs are covered, in particular with regard to the environmental topics.*

*By mapping the Methodology Note’s indicators against the Four Pillar Framework for aligning the agri-food sector with the SDGs*[[1]](#footnote-1)*, we have identified some areas which are less covered, including:*

*(1) Forced labour*

*Forced labour is only mentioned in the Methodology Note in the context of the worst forms of child labour upon which a company should report (“whether the incidents are involved with the worst forms of child labour (including hazardous child labour, forced labour, slavery, etc).” Forced labour is a severe human rights impact which is widespread among adults in the food and agricultural sector, so its omission is noteworthy.*

*Out of the 24.9 million people trapped in forced labour, 16 million people are exploited in the private sector such as domestic work, construction or agriculture. In total, 11% of global forced labor cases take place in agriculture & fishing.*[[2]](#footnote-2) *Commodities classified as at risk of forced labor by the US Department of Labor include wheat, rice, and corn.*[[3]](#footnote-3) *KnowTheChain has a Food & Beverage Benchmark on forced labor.*[[4]](#footnote-4) *As noted by KnowtheChain, there are several inherent traits of agricultural work that render workers more vulnerable to forced labor risks, including precarious employment conditions, poor working and living conditions, low wages, debt bondage, and lack of freedom of association. In order to ensure forced labor is covered, FAO’s methodology may include forced labor as a stand-alone indicator, or may ensure the above-mentioned traits are covered (i.e., measuring company efforts to formalize work, prohibit recruitment fees, etc). Some of these issues are discussed in the next point.*

*(2) Discrimination and harassment/ Addressing inequalities*

*Discrimination and harassment in company’s operations and value chains is a significant barrier to achieving the 2030 Agenda, elaborated in the principle of Leave No One Behind. Gender, race, age, religion, national origin, disability, migrant status, and sexual orientation are among the factors which expose individuals and groups to unequal treatment and unequal outcomes which must be addressed to achieve the 2030 Agenda. While the Methodology Note captures need for equal representation of women and people of different age classes at the very tops of companies (“D.1.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions” and “D.1.3 Board members by age class”) these indicators do not capture the actual and potential impacts on workers throughout the company’s operations and value chain. This is important because equal* representation *of women in management may not be a sufficient indicator of the* treatment *of women in the lowest positions of power within a company and its value chain.*[[5]](#footnote-5)

*This may be addressed by adding more indicators on efforts to address discrimination and harassment and/or by requiring more disaggregation of indicators by various groups exposed to unequal treatment (i.e., as was done in “C.1.2 Average hourly earnings of all employees,” which calls for the data to be broken down by gender, age group, and disability, and “C.2.1 Percentage of employees covered by collective agreements,” which calls for data to be broken down by gender).*

*(3) Formality of work, indicators’ focus on “employees,” and downstream workers*

*Many indicators are about “employees,” and it should be noted that oftentimes, the vast majority of a company’s workers are not formal employees of the company, but contracted workers. By having indicators that measure the wages and treatment “employees” only, this not only risks missing the most vulnerable workers, but also risks incentivizing companies to continue to keep those least-protected, lowest-paid workers in informal, precarious working conditions, so as not to skew their scores negatively. Indicators should measure and incentivize companies to formalize work, as a way to enable other labour rights in their operations and value chains.*

*Additionally, the framework focuses on companies’ employees and suppliers, and in terms of downstream sectors, the focus is on impacts on consumers. Because of this, many severe social impacts that are present in food sector companies’ downstream value chains where informal, dangerous, unregulated work is prevalent, may not be covered. These relate to the companies’ distribution, logistics, retailers, sales, and recycling.*

*(4) Environmental and human rights defenders*

*The protection of environmental and human rights defenders in agribusiness supply chains is vital due to both (1) the particularly high risk of violence and other forms of harassment they face in the sector; (2) the critical role environmental and human rights defenders play in supporting food and beverage companies in identifying severe risks, including material risks, in their value chains.*[[6]](#footnote-6)

*In 2020, the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre identified 137 cases of attacks on defenders were related to agribusiness, including killings and judicial harassment. Many of these attacks stemmed from lack of consultation or the failure to secure free, prior and informed consent of affected communities.*[[7]](#footnote-7)*Michel Forst, the former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, has said, “The agribusiness supply chain is one of the riskiest for human rights defenders and communities.”*[[8]](#footnote-8)

*Some efforts food sector companies can make to prevent and mitigate attacks on defenders include: (1) preventing retaliation against workers exercising their rights (in particular, the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining); (2) enhanced assessment, monitoring, and prevention and mitigation measures in relation to private and public security forces the company contracts with (through which violence is most prevalent); (3) preventing judicial harassment of defenders, including through strategic litigation against public participation (SLAPPs); (4) aligning lobbying and public policy engagement with achieving the 2030 Agenda, including by avoiding stigmatization of defenders in the media.*

*(5) Lobbying and litigation*

*In addition to anti-corruption practices, companies can contribute, or undermine, the SDGs through their lobbying and litigation practices. For example, companies can lobby for regulation or deregulation of their industry’s activities which harm the environment, or they can target with frivolous lawsuits individuals who campaign against the company’s potentially harmful activities. These activities, while legal under national law, can significantly limit governments’ and civil society’s abilities to take meaningful action to achieve the 2030 Agenda.*

*(6) Animal welfare*

*Finally, while animal welfare is not explicitly mentioned in the SDGs, it is an important aspect of sustainable and responsible business practices in the food sector, which should be included in order to achieve a holistic approach.*

* The framework is food-centric for the downstream sectors (food processing, food wholesale and food retail), and the scope of the guidance at the production level only includes crop and livestock production as well as aquaculture. Is the inclusion of aquaculture but not fishing the right approach given the similar impacts of aquaculture with other types of agricultural production? Should the framework be applicable to the forestry sector and if so, which aspects should be considered?

*Yes, fishing and forestry should be included. The severe impacts of fishing on both environmental and social sustainability make it a key component of the food system for which focus must be directed in order to achieve the SDGs. Forestry may also be included due to the similarities in environmental and social issues present in the sector compared with the food production sector.*

* Would it be helpful to include the specific list of indicators which apply to each type of production, e.g. aquaculture, livestock, crop production?

*Yes.*

* For certain sustainability issues, the performance of an entity cannot be assessed without going beyond the entity’s direct operations. Some indicators take into consideration reporting entities’ relationships with their suppliers or suppliers’ impact in the reporting entity’s overall performance:
  + 1. **Indicators related to reporting entity’s relationship with suppliers**: A.5.1 Proportion of local procurement, A.5.2 Fair pricing and transparent contracts,
    2. **Indicators related to impact of suppliers**: B.1.4 Water Management practices, B.2.3 GHG emissions (scope 3), B.2.4 GHG Emissions management, B.7.1 Land conversion, B.7.3 Sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, C.4.2 Incidence/frequency rates of occupational injuries, C.5.1 Incidents of non-compliance with child labour laws, C.6.3. Non-compliance in food safety and food quality, C.7.1. Non-compliance with land tenure rights regulations, D.2.1. Amount of fines paid and payable due to corruption-related settlements, D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence. For the other indicators, entities are encouraged to assess and report on suppliers’ performance alongside their own reporting.

Does this approach capture the relevant sustainability issues related to suppliers? Is it clear where reporting entities need to be requesting information from suppliers?

*This approach covers many of the relevant sustainability issues related to suppliers, and it is vital that the indicators include suppliers’ info, because of the scale and severity of impacts which can occur in a company’s supply chains.*

*Some of the relevant sustainability issues which are less covered in the draft indicators, and which relate to suppliers are discussed above.*

*An important question the methodology may more explicitly tackle is* how *companies incentivize their suppliers to improve their performance and to provide information to feed into these indicators. Companies should be expected not only to gather this data from suppliers, but to support suppliers (financial support, technical support, capacity building, financial incentives) in both (1) meeting the underlying expectations embedded in the indicators; and (2) collecting the data and making the measurements necessary for the indicators.*

*Some considerations related to the listed indicators include:*

1. ***A.5.2 Fair pricing and transparent contracts****: We commend the development of this indicator as largely aligning with consensus among researchers concerned with achieving living incomes for smallholders and living wages for farm workers through fair and transparent contracts.*[[9]](#footnote-9) *Some additional factors for ensuring fair pricing and transparent contracts which should be considered include: (1) how is compliance with the requirement that the established price covers at least “a living wage [or income] for the producer” monitored, including through audits, assessments, and engagement with farming communities, to ensuring farmers and farm workers are in fact being paid living wages/incomes; (2) particularly because long-term contracts are incentivized, contract prices should account for inflation; (3) avoiding overly-restrictive quality specifications, which, especially given the effects of climate change, can lead to lower incomes for farmers, as well as unnecessary food loss.*
2. ***C.5.1 Incidents of non-compliance with child labour laws****: It is noteworthy and appropriate that this indicator includes non-compliance with both national laws and international law. A potential unintended side effect of creating a purely compliance-based approach for addressing the issue of child labour, though, is that it incentivizes companies to immediately terminate relationships with producers where incidents of child labour have been identified. While this may be the best decision for the business in avoiding the legal and reputational risks of child labour, it does not improve the situation of the child who was engaged in child labour, as the lost family income with only exacerbate the child’s vulnerability. In order to address this, the indicator might also consider* how *the company and/or its supplier remeday instances of non-compliance when they are identified, as well as what efforts the company makes to address the root causes of child labour which lead to better outcomes for children and their families.*
3. ***C.7.1 Non-compliance with land tenure rights regulations****: This indicator focuses on regulations, and, as currently articulated does not sufficiently integrate existing international standards on consultation with communities, namely the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples.*
4. ***D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence****: Under the UN Guiding Principles and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, management of risks to people, planet and society is not only expected through* supply chain due diligence, *but through due diligence across the company’s operations and value chain (both supply chain and downstream). Based on the placement of this indicator, it is not made clear whether this indicator relates to the management of all of the above environmental and social issues. While some initiatives, like WBA’s Social Transformation Framework, have chosen to separate out “human rights due diligence” from reporting requirements on specific issues, due diligence is an approach which can be used by businesses to manage all of these environmental and social risks and impacts. Our specific comments on this indicator are:*
   1. *Under the UNGPs, companies cannot simply commit to the UNGPs, but must commit to the international standards which define the specific human rights standards they are expected to respect. So, companies should be asked to demonstrate their “public policies and commitments to the following international standards” include the authoritative list of the core internationally recognized human rights “contained in the International Bill of Human Rights (consisting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the main instruments through which it has been codified: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), coupled with the principles concerning fundamental rights in the eight ILO core conventions as set out in the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work” (UNGP 12 Commentary).*[[10]](#footnote-10)
   2. *Companies should have a commitment to respecting all internationally-recognized human rights which takes the UNGPs’ and OECD Guidelines’ due diligence approach. This is referred to as a “human rights policy commitment,” rather than a “due diligence policy”. This policy commitment should refer to the above-listed set of internationally-recognized human rights standards, and follow the other expectations elaborated in the UNGPs (UNGP 16).*[[11]](#footnote-11) *It is noteworthy and appropriate that the indicator requires the company having “processes and actions to identify and manage risks in line with internationally recognized frameworks”, which are necessary for the company to implement its human rights policy commitment; to know and show that it is managing risks to people, as called for under the UNGPs. However, these processes and actions may or may not be included within a company’s human rights policy commitment.*
   3. *The specific indicators under “Description of enterprise management systems to support the due diligence process” are appropriate, and align in part with the reporting expectations laid out in the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework.*[[12]](#footnote-12)

**2. Clarity**

* Is the supplementary guidance clear in terms of type of private entities targeted and reporting rules?
* Can entities easily evaluate if their activities and the commodities they purchase, produce, process, manipulate and/or sell are in scope for each indicator? If not, how could this be improved?

**3. Feasibility**

* Do private sector organisations have access to the type of data required to assess performance against the indicators? If not, is it feasible for them to collect it?
* Do companies have country-level information in order to provide disaggregated data by country to feed into SDG monitoring/reporting?

**4. Ease of use**

* Does the guidance make it easy enough for private sector entities to understand how to calculate their performance against each indicator? If not, where is improvement needed?
* Is there sufficient supplementary guidance in terms of links to additional materials and definitions?

**5. Qualitative vs. quantitative indicators**

* Are there ways to make any of the qualitative indicators quantitative and how? *Qualitative indicators are: A.2.3 Financial Risk Management, A.5.2 Fair pricing and transparent contracts, B.1.4 Water management practices, B.2.4 GHG emissions management, B.7.3 Sustainable use and conversion of biodiversity, B.9.2 Management of pesticides, B.10.2 Management of fertilizers, C.6.1 Food labelling, C.6.2 Practices promoting sustainable healthy diets*, D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence.

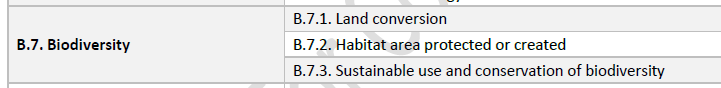
*Please refer to our privately submitted comments which include some of the draft indicators developed by SDSN for our Four Pillar Framework, which to be finalized and published in September 2021.*

* + 1. For example, would it be preferable to replace the indicator in C.6.2 which focuses on practices with an indicator on the percentage of the entity’s marketing budget spent on promoting healthy foods?

*In our view, both are informative, so both should be included. It is important to measure how* effective *the measures are, not merely how much money is spent on them. Thus, a quantitative indicator alone might be less sufficient in capturing the potential beneficial outcomes of marketing practices to promote healthy foods. In this regard, it may be possible to include a measure of the relative sales of healthy foods relative to less-healthy foods over time, in order to track the effectiveness of the company’s marketing efforts.*

**6. Adequacy of specific indicators**

* **B.7.1 Land conversion:** Do the three sub-indicators address the issues with land conversion as related to the achievement of SDG 15?



*Yes, but the indicators might be a little improved.*

* **B.7.2 Habitat area protected:** Where there is no natural habitat in the reporting entity’s production area, should there be a requirement for reporting on restoration or ‘rewilding’ to create habitat?

*Yes.*

* **C.1.2 Average hourly earnings of all employees:** Would it be better to formulate this indicator as ‘Percentage of employees and other workers paid above a living wage, disaggregated by occupation, gender, age, and disability status’?

*Yes. This formulation is better because it will be less skewed by CEO and top leadership pay. This indicator is justified because companies are expected to pay, and use leverage to ensure payment in the value chain, of a living wage/income for all workers in line with the corporate responsibility to respect human rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living, across the value chains (UNGPs).*

* **C.6.3 Non-compliance in food safety and food quality:** Is it relevant to include incidents of non-compliance with GFSI certification as part of this indicator?
* **D.3.1 Management of risks to people, planet and society through supply chain due diligence:** Does this indicator capture well entities’ institutional efforts and commitments to identify and address social and environmental risks along the value chain?

*See comments on this indicator above. It does not fully capture the value chain as currently written, because it focuses on the supply chain. Additionally, indicators related to corporate governance, tax, lobbying, and litigation might also be included to better capture “entities’ institutional efforts and commitments.”*

## Rosemary Navarrete, Private Sector Mechanism, Italy

FAO Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals – **IAFN Feedback**

The [International Agri-food Network (IAFN)](https://agrifood.net/) applauds the effort made to respond to the gaps in-country monitoring and report to effectively recognize the significant contribution of the private sector. The present task is timely and critical to assessing the achievement against the Sustainable Development Goals.

Private Sector actors have undertaken a multitude of tasks to further the SDGs and have attempted to include them in their operating frameworks. The Private Sector is also engaged in many large-scale coordination initiatives to build trust across supply chains, ensure that business contributions to the SDGs remain positive and coherent. Moreover, advancements by business in technology and precision agriculture will aid in the development of new business models, the advanced of sustainable production and consumption practices, the tracking of data and enablement of data driven decision-making, knowledge transfer and capacity building—all of which will contribute to the delivery of the Agenda 2030.

However, the task of collecting the extent of the contribution through the proposed framework is too ambitious. Dedicating the time to review the 100+ pages of the Methodological Note of Core indicators called for by this consultation is frankly too prohibitive for many private sector actors. The scope of the work would be overwhelming for many large companies, let alone SMEs and MSMEs. It would be helpful to align more effectively with the ESG reporting of companies and to focus on fewer metrics to ensure companies can readily respond to some, if not all the information requested, without disincentivizing them from participating altogether. In this respect, we welcome a pilot project to focus on the ways to synergize this with existing systems, and to narrow the scope to those areas where business can provide the most impactful information.

## Dick Tinsley, Colorado State University, United States of America

As I reviewed your introductory material on Agriculture indicators for the Private sector contributions of SDGs, from the perspective of an agronomist mostly interested in stimulating smallholder production for both crops and livestock, I am convinced the private enterprises are the primary and most effective means of supporting smallholders. However, I think your analysis needs to put more emphasis on the small village-based family enterprises that are in direct contact with smallholder farmers, rather than your emphasis on large corporations including the multi-nationals. These family enterprises are what most smallholders rely on to provide vast majority of their support services most noticeable production inputs and marketing produce where they are the primary link between the farmers/producers and the large private corporations serving the agricultural needs of the country. In addition to these well-established services the family enterprises also provide essential contract mechanization services for basic land preparation and crop establishment, as well as threshing and other mechanizable post-harvest needs. The need for contract mechanization services in smallholder communities, may be essential to achieving many of the SDGs. It is the only means to overcome what I provocative refer to as the Genocide Oversight, of developing labor-intensive innovations that attempt to compel smallholder farmers to exert up to twice the caloric energy they have access to. Furthermore, it might be the key to minimizing the need to convert marginal lands from cropping, but halving the total crop establishment time, reducing the delayed establishment yield loss to the food needs can be meet with less land, and more left in natural vegetation. Please review:

<https://smallholderagriculture.agsci.colostate.edu/promoting-the-green-revolution-in-asia-as-solely-technology-driven-a-major-disservice-to-africa/>

<https://smallholderagriculture.agsci.colostate.edu/sustainability-of-smallholder-agriculture-global-trade-offs/>

<https://webdoc.agsci.colostate.edu/smallholderagriculture/BrinksDrudgery.pdf>

Also, I think history has shown these contract mechanization services can only be provided by through the family enterprise system as only when you have an owner/operator will the mechanical maintenance be maintained for the full designed life of the machinery. Historically any form of joint ownership of mechanization has proven dismal. This would include government mechanization units and even producer organization. When these have attempted to provide mechanization services the equipment has been surveyed out of service with less than half the designed service hours, often as little as one-third. It might also lead to some off-the-book charges for access to the mechanization, or operators vandalizing the odometers so they can service additional areas without accounting for the services.

While the village-based family enterprises will provide most of the immediate needs of the producers, it may be difficult to get detailed information on their business activity. They tend to operate on minimum records mostly kept in notebooks. This may be deliberate and beneficial as it would limit the ability of tax collectors to determine any taxes due.

I would also be highly skeptical on including producer organizations as private sector enterprise. While they are highly promoted by academia and imposed by the development community for their social desirability, a careful analysis of the competitiveness would quickly show they are non-competitive in open competition with family enterprises, and if smallholder fully relied on them, they would force the members deeper into poverty. The result is they attract only a small percent of the potential beneficiaries and even those who agree to participate will divert most of their business to the competing private service provider. Thus, they require continued external facilitation and collapse once almost immediately after external support ends. When viewed objectively they are a real scandal. Please review:

<https://webdoc.agsci.colostate.edu/smallholderagriculture/ECHO-Private.pdf>

<https://smallholderagriculture.agsci.colostate.edu/vulnerability-for-class-action-litigation-a-whistleblowers-brief/>

<https://smallholderagriculture.agsci.colostate.edu/appeasement-reporting-in-development-projects-satisfying-donors-at-the-expense-of-beneficiaries/>

## Oliver Onyeodili, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

The following can also be considered as indicators in servicing some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

1. Product Accessibility.

2. Product Affordability.

3. Satiety of the Products.

4. Long-term Sustainability of Product Supply.

5. Variety Production from the same Core Foods.

Varieties of products should be produced from the Core Foods and capable of providing satisfaction upon consumption (satiety). These products should be affordable and always accessible having assured its long-term sustainability in production and supply, thereby ensuring food security.

CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE IMPACTS OF PRIVATE SECTORS' CONTRIBUTION

1. Not all the Food and Allied Industry Players use the same Agricultural Indicators, both in the same and in different countries. Variations in the use of the indicators in many countries are equivalent to variations in impact/result.

2. There are discrepancies in standard amongst usable indicators available in most countries.

3. Absence of/little/inefficient monitoring and evaluation on the part of Standard Organizations/Agencies over the effectiveness and impacts of the agricultural indicators as adopted by the Food and Allied Industry Players.

4. Playing at variance and personalizing competition - the reason for the gap between standard and sub-standard products. The gap could be seen in product price differences, safety, and quality of comparable products. Most Private Sectors engage in open wars and can go to any length (including spiritual) to stop their perceived competitors, thereby seeking Monopoly with their blood. These seekers forgot that the world and the population therein are too large to accommodate several competitors of the same product.

SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES ABOVE.

1. Just as we have 17 SDGs being projected and adopted by all countries of the world, we should also have enlisted Agricultural Indicators as well as their various standards of measurement for quantifiable results/impacts especially on the related SDGs. The list may be subjected to review in every two years with respect to Technology Advancement.

2. A particular indicator could have 2 - 3 evaluation methodology such that any country in the world must find at least one method that will give them equivalent/expected result/impact.

3. Every member country that adopted SDGs should be mandated to set up functional Standard Organization/Agency that will use the enlisted Agricultural Indicators as yardsticks in measuring the impacts by the Food and Allied Industry Players in achieving the SDGs.

4. Partnerships especially in terms of knowledge sharing and networking should exist between the various Private Sectors in the spirit of sportsmanship.

With regards;

ONYEODILI, ADINDU OLIVER.

Food Sci. & Tech. Graduate Student, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, UNN.

## Mariam Mikadze, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, Spain

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and explicitly target SDG 8.7 on the elimination of all forms of child labour by 2025, the private sector plays a key role. Companies and the private sector are expected to adopt more sustainable practices in the ways they conduct business, ensuring that child labour is not used along their supply chains. One way in which the food and agricultural private sector can contribute to the elimination of child labour in agriculture is through sustainability reporting standards. Over the last decade, numerous accounting and sustainability reporting standards have been developed, enabling companies to improve their practices towards sustainability. In the case of child labour in agriculture, indicators can be included in the sustainability reporting standards to measure the positive and conducive transformation in business practices.

The indicator on child labour in agriculture could be reformulated to focus on: Measures applied to address cases of non-compliance with child labour national and international laws. In this manner, private sector could report on the positive contribution to address encountered cases of child labour.

The indicator on one hand can capture the situation of child labour the business faces:

* The total number of incidents of non-compliance with laws, regulations and/or international standards regarding child labour. And whether the incidents involved the worst forms of child labour (including hazardous work, forced labour, slavery, etc.).
* The indicators should include data disaggregation by age, gender, and migrant/national child labourer, and report the agricultural tasks undertaken by children.

On the other hand, the indicator on child labour can also capture the transformation of businesses towards the prevention and reduction of child labour in agriculture, capturing:

* Total number of measures and activities applied to address cases of non-compliance with child labour national and international laws.
* The type of measures and activities implemented: addressed hazardous work (removal of hazard), incentives to school attendance, increased access to education or training, care facilities, implemented labour-saving technologies, provided fair prices for farmers and fair wages for workers to reduce family's economic burden, or other relevant actions.

Such reporting systems can be used by businesses not only to monitor the situation of child labour in agriculture, but also to highlight positive and progressive actions and measures implemented to reduce child labour in agriculture. Reporting also on positive progress or changes can contribute to a more positive and open dialogue with businesses and their important role in reducing child labour through transformative approaches.

## Anthony Fardet, INRA, France

The agri-food system supporting the globalization and massive consumtpion of ultra-processed foods is no more sustainable for small farmers, animal well-being, environment, socio-economics, culinary traditions and human health. The producers are incited to produce massive cheap food ingredients under pressure of multinational and mass retailing for ultra-processed foods. Therefore, the food value chain should be rethink with more emphasis on producers, and developping more minimal food processing by private sector to supply foods respecting food accessibility, safety, nutrional and envrionmental securities. Food transformation should be relocalized and fragmented to adapt more to what can be produced locally in respect of sustainability.

## Sajeevani Weerasekara, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

Thanks very much, FAO for this initiative, and public consultation. While considering that FAO's "Core food and agricultural indicators for measuring the private sector’s contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals" is a comprehensive report I would like to suggest the followings;

1. It's good that you have considered water use efficiency and energy and transport efficiency widely. I propose to consider the efficiency of food production as well. Because increasing efficiency and productivity is highly essential to achieve sustainability. Using less or the same input to produce more output, reducing waste, and reducing negative externalities can be captured through efficiency measures.

2. more emphasis on the individuals, smallholder farmers and village-based merchants which is the largest proportion of the farming community in most Asian countries is important rather than considering multinational corporations. Otherwise, this measurement will lose part of the important segment of developing countries. Though measuring will be difficult it will give more meaning to the measurement.

3. Further, causes for supply chain disruptions during pandemic, food waste during the pandemic due to sudden lockdowns, quality, and sustainability of emerging methods of food delivering, and the contribution of the private sector to mitigate such problems are some of the other areas should be considered.

Sajeevani Weerasekara, Sri Lanka

## Taimur Hyat, Consultant, Pakistan

To Whom It May Concern.

As Salaam Alaikum.

Are these Indicators, and the opportunity to comment on them, available in Local Languages or do you think that English, Spanish and French are sufficient to cover all the Stakeholders?

I think we need to work on AI-assisted Language Interfaces as a common Goal before we can target Sustainability in ANY Field.

Bon Chance!

Sardar Taimur Hyat-Khan

Barefoot Bioenvironmental Management and Sustainable Development Worker from Pakistan (Urdu).

## Lal Manavado, Independent analyst/synthesist, Norway

On the Indicators of Contribution by Private Sector in Food and Agriculture to the Achievement of SDG’s

The descriptive framework provided for this discussion, seem to suffer from two major inadequacies. Their coherence with respect to the SDG’s appears questionable while as one contributor has already pointed out, they lack inclusivity. This contribution suggests a holistic approach to indicator design. It is based on the tenet that an indicator ought to show the extent to which a given set of actions has enabled a certain group of people achieve a specified objective.

The purpose of attempting to achieve the SDG’s is to enhance the quality of life of everybody. As it has been described in the parallel discussion on child labour, this requires that everybody should be able adequately to satisfy their six fundamental needs:

1. Nutrition
2. Good health
3. Security in its justifiable sense; it includes safety from the inclemencies of the weather (housing and clothing), physical danger from animals, other people (lack of law and order, war, etc.), threat to personal belongings, various forms of discrimination etc.
4. Education in its justifiable sense, i.e., enabling an individual to develop one’s innate abilities and skills which one may use to meet one’s fundamental needs.
5. Procreation; education enabling one to understand that the equilibrium between the living species and the ecosystems services on which their existence depends, demands the qualitative and quantitative biodiversity among them. This quantitative dimension imposes a limit on the number of individuals of every living species with no exceptions. Hence, procreation ought to be guided by family planning.
6. The set of non-material goals; so called because their achievement does not result in a material gain. For Example, aesthetic enjoyment, engaging in games and sports for pleasure, entertainment of varying quality.

The justifiable purpose of engaging in pursuits connected with food and agriculture is enabling people to obtain a sustainable, wholesome and adequate nutrition, for its value stems from the fact that after air and water, food is the most important thing needed to sustain life. Further, people derive a personal pleasure or a culinary enjoyment from their meals which is an established cultural good. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the direct indicators involved here, are those concerned with ascertaining the private sector’s contribution to these.

There seems to be some confusion around what may justifiably termed indirect indicators which are applicable here. They are indirect because they influence how one satisfies some other need in a positive or a negative way. When negative, it may impinge directly or indirectly on how well one is able to meet any one or more other needs. A brief explanation is given below to facilitate the understanding of this notion.

Emergence of agriculture was followed by that of division of labour and the barter system. Even at this early stage of human development, it is possible to distinguish between fundamental and secondary needs. Consider now two people; one is a skilled farmer while the other is a maker of good agricultural implements. Neither of them have the time nor the skill to do each other’s work satisfactorily. Barter system enables the former to meet his secondary need for farm tools by exchanging food for them.

It is important to grasp that here both farming and tools are secondary needs the farmer must meet in order to satisfy his fundamental need for nutrition. The tool maker’s secondary need to make tools is motivated by his desire to satisfy his nutritional needs through an exchange of his product for food. It will be easy to see how need for transport and energy become more and more important as human intellectual and technical advances proceed.

However, the barter system is rather clumsy. Therefore, value tokens of various forms ranging from coins to intangible credit were introduced. This enabled trade on an ever expanding basis, hence the tertiary need for money. Unfortunately, in spite of the emergence of non-secular and secular ethics, the introduction of value tokens accelerated the acceptance of the desire for power and unlimited wealth as an institutionalised social value by the majority.

Now, the reader will be able to trace the development of two networks of needs; one justifiable and the other not. Regardless of the political ‘ism’ it may profess, they co-exist in every society. In the first, the six fundamental needs subsume a varied and increasing array of secondary needs whose prior satisfaction is a necessary condition for the satisfaction of the former. Satisfaction of those secondary needs often depends on satisfying the tertiary need for an income.

Second network of needs are subsumed by institutionalised value of unlimited personal gain, desire for power, prestige, publicity, etc. It cannot be justified by any civilised standard of common decency. Their existence has promoted the modern competitive economy which is essential to those who seek unlimited gain. Too often it is often overlooked that other things being equal, had it not been for cooperation, man would have remained what he was, viz., a mere mute brute, for emergence of language and education are impossible without it.

The foregoing makes clear two common confusions, viz., paying undue attention to what are secondary and tertiary needs instead of letting them branch out from fundamental needs in a logically cohesive manner and allowing a set of unjustifiable needs to promote the tertiary need for value tokens into a position of an unjustifiable primacy. For instance, one may have to travel some distance to buy food from a shop before it can be prepared and eaten which requires some means of transport, hence the need for money and not vice versa.

Another confusion seen in the present discussion is its failure to distinguish between two logically different categories and their sub-categories. They are food and and its mode of production. What is relevant to SDG-2 is the sustained availability and affordability of adequate amount of wholesome food. What is meaningful to ascertain is whether such an amount would be sufficient for a given group of people.

Naturally, what food is required for the purpose depends on a given group’s dietary habits as determined by their food culture. Food items needed here will vary widely; generally speaking, some staple item will be required in a larger quantity than others. Therefore, ascertaining the output from one or another food production method does not seem to serve a useful purpose.

Mode of food production has two elements; the methods in use and the people using them. The former are of crucial importance to the sustainability of food systems, hence their effect on the environment should be ascertained. However, despite the emotional reactions some groups in the second sub-category seems to evoke, their inclusion cannot be justified with reference to the achievement of SDG-2. It would be wiser to leave those issues to those best able to deal with them.

Meanwhile, man’s primitive food system consisted only of a harvesting system viz., hunting or gathering and consuming the harvest on the spot as the other primates do. As agriculture emerged, his environment was more or less replaced as his primary yielder sub-system by cultivation and animal husbandry. Fishery and collecting forest produce represent harvesting man’s oldest yielder sub-system. To day, a typical food system has the following sub-systems which often display a wide technological variation:

* Yielder.
* Supplementation; it represents the attempts to supplement the diminishing ecosystems services owing to continued land use by agriculture and population increase. These include irrigation, use of fertilisers and biocides, etc.
* Harvesting.
* Transport.
* Storage.
* Preservation.
* Preparation; it includes actions needed to make food ready for consumption.
* Selling sub-system; it may include fresh food, preserved or ready-to-eat items, etc. It may also contain its own sub-systems like sorting, packing and promotion.

It will be noticed that large scale commercialisation continues to intrude into every sub-system of food systems. However, family farms and small holders still play a vital role in nutrition. Even though they are essential elements of a food system, some of its sub-systems like transport, storage and selling are common to many other fields. Thus, the present task would be to identify what could accurately indicate the direct and indirect contribution to the SDG’s made by food systems run by the private sector.

It would be irresponsible to ignore the reality of food production; apart from those few places like Northern Russia, communcal food production rose and fell with the Bolshevik regime. True, a little of still lingers in afew places, but majority of food producing units are privately owned. The same applies to the other sub-systems in food systems. Therefore, use of the term ‘private’ in the current discussion appears to be redundant.

One can now expand on the direct and indirect indicators. However, it is necessary to examine the soundness of distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative indicators. Under unusual circumstances when the need for nutrition is acute, a temporary emphasis on quantitative aspect may be justified. This should not blind one to the danger of it being given a permanent emphasis in order to maximise profits. Hence, a pragmatic coalition between these in a double-faceted indicator is desirable.

Direct Indicators

These will reveal the private food systems’ positive or negative contribution to nutrition. They have several dimensions all of which are crucial to the SDG-2. The indicators pertinent to each are given  under the heading which describes it. Moreover, an indicator represents a relative increase or a decrease given as a percentage.

Sustainability; unless this is ensured, disastrous results may obtain.

1. Biodiversity in yielder sub-system; its increase reduces the vulnerability of agriculture and animal husbandry to diseases. Promotion of the local food culture seems to be an appropriate way of achieving this.

2 .The extent of food wastage in food systems; this may occur in every sub-system of it.

3. Loss of soil fertility, erosion, pollution and salination; one may look up the Aral Sea disaster resulting from agro-industry which turned a huge area salinated and barren which left tens of thousands helpless.

4. Promotion of ecologically sound agriculture.

5. Use of the most energy efficient methods including modes of transport; priority ought to be given to water and rail transport as much as possible.

6. Effect on local pollinators; their presence is said to increase yields by as much as 25%.

7. The extent of over harvesting from the environment; this is most concerned with over fishing but in some cases, it may involve forest products as in felling sago palms to extract the starch they contain.

8. The extent of mixed cultivation; its benefits to the environment are many.

9. Emission of so-called ‘green house’ gases.

10. Water conservation; this is very relevant in some areas. Selection of crops suited to the degree of aridity of an area, harvesting rain and use of covered irrigation channels are among the solutions proposed.

Availability; this dimension has six aspects on which its indicators are based. Although food wastage affects availability, sustainability has a logically prior claim on it.

11. The extent to which the available food items enable the people of an area to partake of a wholesome, varied and balanced diet. It reflects the food diversity of an area. It is logically impossible to determine this with reference to any universal standard, it should rather be determined relative to the local food culture. However, if that should prove to be nutritionally deficient, appropriate additions may be made.

12. Quantitative sufficiency of the food items in 11 for the people in the area concerned. Surplus food may be disposed of either through trade or laying it aside as a reserve.

13. Quality of the above items with reference not only to their nutritive value, but also to their ability to enhance people’s culinary enjoyment which depends on their freshness and flavour and not to cosmetic properties like colour and large, uniform size.

14. Adequacy of the transport system and its cost between food producers and end-users.

15. Distribution, adequacy and the cost of storage facilities of the food systems concerned.

16. Accessibility which depends on the number of outlet locations from where food may be conveniently procured by all the people of the area concerned. These may include shops, stalls, restaurants, etc. Their aggregation in a few places would not make food easily accessible to some who reside in remoter parts, especially where transport is difficult. Therefore, this should be ascertained with reference to the total population of the area.

17. Export of key food items; selling sub-systems may export food to increase profits cutting down the supply of food available for local use.

18. Amount of food from a local food system in storage that is not released into the outlets in the area. This is done to increase profits and causes an artificial shortage as well as a price increase.

19. Replacement of food crops by cash crops.

Affordability; this is a crucial indicator when taken in conjunction with indicators 11 to 17. High prices may often result in a pseudo-surplus which merely benefits the operators of the selling sub-system.

20. Price change in food items caused by the relevant indicators above.

The purpose of the indirect indicators is to ascertain what adverse effects food systems run by private sector may have on the people, which in turn may influence the availability and affordability of food.

21. The extent of job losses/redundancies in food systems owing to changes in them, purportedly undertaken to increase their efficiency. This would lead to an obvious reduction in affordability.

22. The incidence of the so-called NCD’s; beverages with a high sugar content, factory-made ready-to-eat comestibles and colourfully packaged sweets are thought to play a significant role here. These may reduce one’s earning capacity which could have an adverse impact on affordability.

Concluding Remarks

The foregoing is based on the assumption that a set of indicators are needed in order to decide on and guide some suitable actions to enhance people’s nutrition. Serving this purpose requires the indicators to be as comprehensive as possible. Looking at what is needed from a food system perspective seems to be a suitable approach to achieve such completeness. However, it will make statistical analysis difficult.

This is because some of the factors that adversely affect the availability and affordability of food originate from different sub-systems in the food system. Not only does the profit motive of the competitive economy plays a part here, so does also the variations in the ownership of transport sub-system. In many less affluent countries, the state-run communications remain inadequate. Resolution of these problems is beyond the scope of food and agriculture authorities.

Some may argue that weather conditions are critical for food production especially the snows for winter wheat and monsoon rains in tropics, and therefore, they ought to be included. The difficulty here is that it is still impossible to predict them with any significant degree of reliability. Even if it does, one can hardly do anything to directly influence them. It seems that undertaking steps to enhance those ecosystems services is a sounder alternative.

The notion of core-food items may make statistical work manageable, but this reductive notion would result in a set of indicators that could hardly guide one towards remedial action enabling the people procure a balanced diet, not to mention culinary enjoyment. In a world where the incidence of NCD’s is described as an ‘epidemic’, this limitation is a cause for concern.

Best wishes!

Lal Manavado.

## Angel Carro Castrillo, Open Earth Foundation, Belgium

Thanks for launching this consultation process. A few comments:

- Yes, fishing and forestry should be included;

- Animal welfare should be included as well;

- Where possible, indicators to measure the efforts to reduce food waste should be included;

- Activities related to responsible advertising and promotion of healthy foods should be covered;

- Sustainable sourcing for food packaging should be included.

Dr Angel CARRO CASTRILLO

OPEN EARTH FOUNDATION

## Pietro Gennari, facilitator of the consultation

**English version**

Dear members of the FSN Forum,

Thank you to all of the contributors who spent the time to go through FAO's Core Food and Agriculture Indicators for measuring the private sector contribution to the SDGs to provide your insightful feedback. The range and depth of experience in this area among the contributors is obvious and will greatly assist us in finalising the indicators and ensuring that they are fit for purpose. From the comments covering the full set of indicators to those focused on specific areas, we've been impressed and encouraged by the solutions that you've outlined for how to better capture the private sector contribution to the SDGs.

With the online consultation now closed, we will now do an in-depth analysis of all of the feedback received and integrate it into the final version of the indicators. We may call on some of you if we have specific questions on how best to address your feedback.

The final version of the indicators will be launched alongside the Food Systems Summit with a set of case studies outlining the experience of private sector companies in using the indicators.

We look forward to sharing the final indicators and working with all of you to improve the way that data on the SDGs is reported, collected, and used.

Thank you again to all those who participated,

Pietro Gennari and Valerie Bizier

**Spanish version**

Estimados miembros del Foro FSN,

Gracias a todos los participantes que han dedicado su tiempo a revisar los indicadores alimentarios y agrícolas básicos de la FAO para medir la contribución del sector privado a los ODS y que han aportado sus valiosos comentarios. La variedad y la profundidad de las experiencias de los contribuyentes en este ámbito son evidentes y nos ayudarán en gran medida a finalizar los indicadores y a garantizar que sean adecuados para su propósito. Desde los comentarios que abarcan todo el conjunto de indicadores hasta los que se centran en áreas específicas, nos han impresionado y animado las soluciones alcanzadas para captar mejor la contribución del sector privado a los ODS.

Una vez cerrada la consulta en línea, haremos un análisis exhaustivo de todos los comentarios recibidos y los integraremos en la versión final de los indicadores. Podríamos contactar con algunos de ustedes si tenemos preguntas específicas sobre la mejor manera de abordar sus comentarios.

La versión final de los indicadores se presentará junto con la Cumbre sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios, con un conjunto de estudios de caso que describen la experiencia de las empresas del sector privado en el uso de los indicadores.

Estamos deseando compartir los indicadores finales y trabajar con todos ustedes para mejorar la forma en que se comunican, recopilan y utilizan los datos sobre los ODS.

Nuestro agradecimiento de nuevo a todos los que han participado,

Pietro Gennari y Valerie Bizier

**French version**

Chères/Chers membres du Forum FSN,

Merci à tous les participants qui ont pris le temps d'examiner les Indicateurs clés de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture de la FAO pour mesurer la contribution du secteur privé à la réalisation des ODD et de donner leur avis. Les expériences présentées dans ce domaine sont particulièrement riches et profondes et contribueront énormément à la définition des indicateurs et à leur adéquation. Qu'il s’agisse de commentaires couvrant l'ensemble des indicateurs ou portant sur des domaines spécifiques, nous avons été impressionnés et inspirés par les solutions proposées pour mieux saisir la contribution du secteur privé aux ODD.

Puisque la consultation en ligne est maintenant terminée, nous allons procéder à une analyse approfondie de tous les commentaires reçus et les intégrer dans la version finale des indicateurs. Il est possible que nous fassions appel à certains d'entre vous en cas de questions spécifiques sur la meilleure façon de répondre à vos commentaires.

La version finale des indicateurs sera présentée parallèlement au Sommet sur les systèmes alimentaires, accompagnée d'une série d'études de cas décrivant l'expérience des entreprises du secteur privé dans l'utilisation des indicateurs.

Nous souhaitons vivement communiquer les indicateurs finaux et collaborer avec vous tous pour améliorer la présentation, la collecte et l'utilisation des données relatives aux ODD.

Merci encore à toutes les personnes qui ont participé à cette discussion,

Pietro Gennari et Valérie Bizier

1. <https://www.fixing-food.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Fixing-The-Business-Of-Food-2020.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
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7. <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/from-us/briefings/line-fire-increased-legal-protection-needed-attacks-against-business-human-rights-defenders-mount-2020/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.forestpeoples.org/en/news-article/2020/human-rights-defenders-call-consumer-goods-forum-companies-prevent-violence> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See, for example: <http://ccsi.columbia.edu/work/projects/coffee/> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <https://www.ungpreporting.org/framework-guidance/download-the-reporting-framework/> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)