

Response below:

The HLPE-FSN's emphasis on scientific rigor, while essential for establishing credibility and evidence-based policy recommendations, inherently conflicts with the full recognition of Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge systems. This contradiction arises because Indigenous knowledge systems are often oral, context-specific, and holistic, encompassing socio-cultural, spiritual, and ecological dimensions that cannot be fully captured through Western empirical methods.

For instance, Māori practices like **maramataka** (the lunar calendar used for planting and fishing) and **mātauranga Māori** (traditional ecological knowledge) are based on intergenerational observation and relationships with the environment. These practices often prioritise community well-being and ecosystem health over productivity metrics typically valued in scientific analysis. The current framework of the HLPE-FSN, which emphasises standardised methodologies, does not accommodate the experiential and dynamic nature of such knowledge, leading to its undervaluation or exclusion from policy documents.

In the context of the 2024-2027 CFS consultation on “Preserving, strengthening and promoting Indigenous Peoples’ food and knowledge systems,” there is a need for HLPE-FSN to develop mechanisms that genuinely integrate and validate Indigenous perspectives. The contradiction lies in the expectation that Indigenous knowledge must conform to scientific standards, despite being inherently different. Indigenous knowledge systems, such as those of Māori, emphasise **kaitiakitanga** (guardianship) and relational stewardship, which are critical for sustainable food systems but may not fit within the scientific criteria set by HLPE-FSN.

This discrepancy risks perpetuating the systemic inequities highlighted in previous HLPE-FSN reports by failing to recognise the contributions and value of Indigenous knowledge, thus reinforcing a paradigm where only Western scientific knowledge is deemed valid and actionable. For the CFS and HLPE-FSN to truly support Indigenous food systems and promote sustainable development, a paradigm shift is needed—one that establishes a complementary, rather than hierarchical, relationship between scientific and Indigenous knowledge systems.

1. Do you agree with the guiding principles indicated above?

Yes, these principles align with a rights-based approach necessary to safeguard the sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples over their food systems and knowledge. In the context of Māori, this aligns with

tikanga Māori, incorporating **kaitiakitanga** (guardianship) and **tino rangatiratanga** (self-determination). However, integrating Indigenous knowledge with the scientific rigidity expected by the HLPE-FSN remains challenging. Māori systems like **maramataka** (lunar planting calendar) provide ecological knowledge passed down orally, which may not conform to Western empirical methods but remains critical for sustainability. This requires flexibility in policy frameworks to genuinely include these diverse knowledge systems.

2. Should the objectives include mainstreaming Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems, and lessons learned from them, for the benefit of all, or solely for the benefit of Indigenous Peoples as rights holders?

The objectives should focus primarily on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, consistent with UNDRIP Articles 20, 26, and 32. These articles affirm the right of Indigenous Peoples to control their food systems, lands, and resources. Māori practices, like **mātauranga Māori** (traditional knowledge) and sustainable harvesting techniques such as **waka kai**, illustrate how food sovereignty is tied to land stewardship. Mainstreaming such practices should occur only with **FPIC** and equitable benefit-sharing frameworks that prioritise Māori and Indigenous communities, aligning with the **Nagoya Protocol** to ensure control and benefits remain within Indigenous communities.

3. What are the challenges related to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and Access and Benefit Sharing when widely promoting and/or mainstreaming Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems?

FPIC is essential but complex when engaging with Indigenous governance models, like those of Māori, where decision-making occurs at multiple levels involving whānau, hapū, and iwi (families, subtribes, and tribes). Promoting practices such as **pā harakeke** (traditional flax plantations) demands thorough, inclusive consultations that may not fit the timelines expected by Western institutions. Furthermore, while the **Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food** provide a basis, more culturally adapted frameworks are needed to bridge Indigenous and scientific methodologies.

4. How can the report ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups, sustainability, and protection against commercialisation risks for Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems?

To address equity, the report should integrate participatory approaches like the co-governance model of **Te Urewera**, where land is given legal personhood and managed according to Māori values. Such frameworks protect traditional knowledge from commercialisation while promoting

environmental stewardship. The FAO's **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)** program demonstrates the potential for such models to support biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods, providing a template that could be adapted for Indigenous governance structures globally.

5. How should oral knowledge and traditions be documented and referenced in the development of the report?

Māori oral traditions, such as **whakapapa** (genealogies) and **karakia** (ritual chants), should be documented with respect to **tikanga Māori**, ensuring that communities retain ownership and control. Initiatives like **Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision** offer models for ethical documentation and archiving that prioritise Indigenous intellectual property rights. Aligning with Article 31 of UNDRIP, this approach secures Māori authority over how their knowledge is shared, ensuring it is not misappropriated or diluted.

6. What dimensions linked to Indigenous Peoples' agency, e.g., in governance issues, could be addressed?

The report should emphasise governance models like those under **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** (Treaty of Waitangi) that allow Māori to co-manage resources. Highlighting the **Te Wai Māori Trust**, which oversees freshwater management, shows how Indigenous governance structures can lead to effective, sustainable food systems while promoting **tino rangatiratanga**. These examples align with international best practices such as those advocated by the **FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples**, promoting inclusive and resilient food systems.

7. Are there important/relevant policy papers and instruments missing from the foundational documents list?

Including the **Waitangi Tribunal Reports** and New Zealand's adaptation of UNDRIP would enhance the report's relevance by highlighting legal precedents that support Māori food sovereignty. These documents provide essential context for Indigenous Peoples' land rights, ensuring that policy frameworks honour obligations under international agreements like the **ICESCR**, specifically Article 11, which supports the right to an adequate standard of living and food.

8. Could you please indicate relevant references that should be taken into account?

References such as the **He Ara Waiora** framework and studies on **kūmara** cultivation highlight how Māori sustainable practices can inform global policy. These examples illustrate how Indigenous knowledge systems align with broader goals for ecological balance and food security, demonstrating practical pathways for integrating Indigenous values into mainstream policies.

9. What best practices, ethical standards, and strategies for addressing climate change should be highlighted in the report?

Highlight Māori-led initiatives like the **Aotearoa Circle**, which combines traditional knowledge with contemporary approaches for nature-based climate solutions. Such projects exemplify how Indigenous communities contribute to global climate resilience strategies, aligning with the **CBD** and the **FAO Policy on Indigenous Peoples** by integrating traditional and scientific knowledge systems.

10. Which best practices or strategies to promote cross-cultural understanding should be highlighted in the report?

The report should focus on **hui** (consultative gatherings) and **wānanga** (learning forums) as models for inclusive and respectful knowledge exchange. These Māori practices offer frameworks for cross-cultural collaboration, ensuring that Indigenous voices are heard and respected in policy discussions, which is consistent with the FAO's support for participatory approaches that integrate Indigenous knowledge into global discourse.

11. Are the previous legal documents such as FPIC enough in light of this evolution of thinking about Indigenous People's knowledge, or do they need to be revised?

FPIC is fundamental but needs revision to encompass the complexity of Indigenous governance structures like those seen within Māori iwi and hapū. Expanding FPIC to recognise collective decision-making and support self-governance models ensures Indigenous communities maintain control over their resources, as seen in **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** agreements. Revising these frameworks would align them with evolving international norms and Indigenous rights under UNDRIP.

Integration of Tikanga Māori into Global Food Security Policy

To create an equitable and sustainable global food security policy framework that incorporates **tikanga Māori**, the following approach is recommended:

1. **Recognise and Value Indigenous Knowledge:** Policies must integrate **mātauranga Māori** alongside Western scientific approaches to ensure cultural and ecological knowledge are equally valued. This supports the broader objective of enhancing equity and inclusiveness in global food systems.
2. **Embed Kaitiakitanga in Policy:** The integration of **kaitiakitanga** ensures that food security policies are based on stewardship, emphasising regenerative agriculture and biodiversity conservation as foundational principles for long-term sustainability.
3. **Foster Partnerships and Co-Governance:** Effective food security strategies must include Indigenous-led co-governance models, like the management of **Te Urewera**. Such partnerships allow Indigenous Peoples to shape policy, ensuring that strategies are culturally appropriate and effective.
4. **Support Indigenous Rights and Land Tenure:** Secure land rights and self-determination (tino rangatiratanga) for Māori and other Indigenous communities by aligning policies with international agreements like UNDRIP and the ICESCR, which emphasise the right to food and land sovereignty.

This holistic approach promotes inclusive, resilient food systems that prioritise Indigenous rights and knowledge, ensuring that global food security strategies align with sustainable and equitable development goals.