CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

How can FAO better support countries in addressing governance of agrifood systems transformation to make them more sustainable, inclusive and resilient?

Template for submissions

This online call for submissions is being organized jointly by the Office of SDGs, the Food Systems and Food Safety Division, the Governance and Policy Support Unit, and the Development Law Service, to engage various stakeholders and gather examples of governance-related measures and interventions with transformative impact for agrifood systems.

The results emerging from the received submissions will contribute to informing FAO’s work at country level related to policy, law, and governance for more inclusive, resilient, equitable and sustainable agrifood systems.

To take part in this Call for submissions, please register to the FSN Forum, if you are not yet a member, or “sign in” to your account. Please download the submission template in any of six UN languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese) and upload the completed form (in Word document format) in the box “Post your contribution” on the call webpage. Please keep the length of submissions limited to 2,000 words and feel also free to attach relevant supporting materials.

For any technical questions or assistance please contact fsn-moderator@fao.org.

The Call for Submissions is open until 18 March 2024.

Template for submissions

Please note that “transformative impact” refers to innovative, pro-active changes away from “business as usual”
How can the hidden costs and benefits of agrifood systems be effectively incorporated into decision-making for transformation?

**1. Proponent (name/institution/unit)**

Camilla Björkbom, Eurogroup for Animals

**2. Title of the example presented and the type of governance-related transformative intervention/measure (policy, legal, institutional, financial)**

Manifesto for establishing minimum standards for public canteens across the EU

**3. Location of the transformative intervention/measure (global/regional/national/sub-national; urban/rural)**

EU and sub-national

**4. Which aspect, problem or challenge of the agrifood system was the transformative intervention/measure aiming to address?**

Currently, food environments do not always ensure that the healthy, sustainable choice is the easy one, or that it, in public canteens, is the default option.

The measure therefore aims at fostering enabling food environments by improving the access to healthy, sustainable food in public canteens. Public procurement is an important aspect of the food environments that people encounter.

**5. What transformational impact was the intervention/measure aiming to achieve (including in terms of the three pillars of sustainability)?**

The measure seeks to contribute to the strategic implementation of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy, particularly with regards to determining “the best modalities for setting minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement to promote healthy and sustainable diets, including organic products, in schools and public institutions”.

To this end the Sustainable Food Procurement manifesto calls for a minimum standard for public canteens across the EU.

It contains:
How can the hidden costs and benefits of agrifood systems be effectively incorporated into decision-making for transformation?

**TEMPLATE**

- precise targets;  
- procurement tender criteria;  
- verification;  
- and enablers

It consists of seven actionable target areas which go beyond ‘green’ (or environmentally friendly) public procurement (GPP):

- healthy food;  
- organic and other agro-ecological practices;  
- support for small-scale farmers;  
- climate action;  
- social economy and labour rights;  
- fair trade;  
- and animal welfare.

The manifesto covers the three pillars of sustainability and should be understood as a whole where all seven target areas support each other.

6. **What was the impact achieved in practice?**

The Manifesto is an inspiration for policy makers at all levels of government, including the EU-level. It has, so far, been endorsed by 13 local and regional governments in Europe and 17 non-profits.

The full list of endorsements can be found [here](www.fao.org/fsnforum) on the Buy Better Food website.

7. **How was the transformative change obtained by the intervention/measure? (a) data and evidence collected, b) concrete ways to measure, c) actors involved)**

The Manifesto is an ongoing work which is currently gathering support from more local and regional governments and is being presented to EU policy makers.

In Europe, local and regional public authorities play a key role in the implementation of sustainable food systems, and they have the mandate to procure food or catering services for their institutions/ bodies, such as schools, daycares, hospitals, etc.
How can the hidden costs and benefits of agrifood systems be effectively incorporated into decision-making for transformation?

Not only do they command the budgets, and thus have the power to exert market pressure, they have the responsibility to be exemplary in how they spend taxpayers money.

Sustainable procurement involves looking beyond short-term needs and considering the longer-term impacts of each purchase. Hence, they are the focus for establishing mandatory criteria for food procurement.

Nonetheless, local and regional governments need national governments to provide support and guidance for the implementation of resilient regional food systems.

8. What were the key challenges and trade-offs identified and how did a measure/intervention succeed in producing co-benefits and synergies [delivering on economic, environmental and social (including gender equality) sustainability] rather than favoring one option over the other?

A key takeaway from the Manifesto is that the Manifesto has to be seen as a whole rather than its single parts as it is in combination with all seven minimum targets and criteria that systemic change is attained.

9. Who were the key actors and stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of the intervention/measures in question, and what were their respective roles and capacities to exert power and influence?

The initiators of the manifesto came together through the EU Food Policy Coalition. The coalition brings together civil society and organisations working towards refining and advocating for a shared vision of sustainable food systems at the EU level such as: NGOs from a broad spectrum working on food systems, grassroots social movements, farmers organisations, organisations of fishers, trade unions, think tanks, scientific and research groups.

10. Did any of these key actors and stakeholders oppose or resist the envisioned transformative intervention, and if so, what were their main motivations and interests, and how was this resistance addressed?

11. To what extent is this measure transformative in improving the livelihoods of the most disadvantaged, and how does it contribute to a more inclusive food system?

To make healthy sustainable food available through public procurement benefits the most disadvantages and contributes to a more inclusive food system.
5 How can the hidden costs and benefits of agrifood systems be effectively incorporated into decision-making for transformation?

The Manifesto and its accompanying paper ‘Sustainable public procurement of food - a goal within reach’ show that sustainable food procurement is not only possible in cities known for their commitment to sustainability, but it is possible for all types of cities.

The examples range from the Nordic countries to Southern and Eastern Europe.

12. **What means were used to demonstrate positive changes in the most disadvantaged sectors of the population, and what monitoring and accountability mechanisms were put in place to ensure proper implementation?**

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13. **Key lessons that can be learned from your case (both positive and negative) and whether these could be applicable in other contexts with similar characteristics**

European public canteens, and in particular school meals, are low-hanging fruit for the implementation of the EU Farm to Fork strategy. They can be catalysts for food system transformation if their public spending actions include ambitious requirements that go beyond environmental or ‘green’ requests.

To support cost-efficient public food procurement and more resilient city-regions and food regions, smart logistics and infrastructure need to be in place (see chapter “small farmers”).

14. **Based on your experience, what gaps/areas of improvement still remain that need further action?**

Taking a systemic approach to food systems transformation calls for cooperation across different departments, from health, energy, environment, procurement, education, and waste to social welfare.

Policy coherence needs to be considered in food policies to avoid the creation of contradictory forces in the transformation towards sustainable food systems.

In some cases, national dietary guidelines sometimes misalign with the ambition of local governments to support plant rich diets.

15. **What are your key messages/takeaways from this intervention/measure?**

What if all public and school canteens across Europe had to abide by minimum mandatory criteria that support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals? Some may
6. How can the hidden costs and benefits of agrifood systems be effectively incorporated into decision-making for transformation?

Oppose higher costs, but as we all know by now, the costs of unsustainable practices related to any of these aspects are far higher for society and taxpayers.


So why buy cheap and unhealthy food when public food procurement provides such a good opportunity for tackling so many sustainability policy goals on one plate? Buying better to achieve more is the intention of this Manifesto.

16. Please feel free to share relevant links to resources and documentation regarding your intervention.
