



**Network of Agroecological Agroforestry of Southern Brazil**  
**LEAP.UFSC.BR/SAFAS** [redesafas@gmail.com](mailto:redesafas@gmail.com) skype: rede.safas  
c/o **FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF SANTA CATARINA (UFSC);**  
Dept. of Crop Science (FIT); Center of Agrarian Sciences (CCA);  
Rod. Admar Gonzaga 1346; Itacorubi; Florianópolis; SC; CEP 88034-001; BRAZIL. Ph: +55 48 3721-5475; Fax: -5335; [ilysid@gmail.com](mailto:ilysid@gmail.com)



**Contribution to the e-consultation on the scope of the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security report on:**

***‘Agroecological approaches and other innovations for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition’***

The Network of Agroecological Agroforestry Systems of Southern Brazil (SAFAS Network) has been coordinating research syntheses and systematization of practical knowledge of diverse stakeholders across Southern Brazil. An integrated, parallel focus has been outreach with decision makers ranging across scales from local land managers, through project technicians and coordinators to fiscal staff and public policy makers at municipal, state and federal levels.

Here we present comments that synthesize the experiences of these efforts of systematization that are directly relevant for the scope, project team, evidence, transparency, as well as principles and procedures of the HLPE report to the CFS.

Agroecology has outstanding potential to simultaneously and drastically reduce environmental and socioeconomic degradation associated with increases in productivity of single commodities in industrial monocultures of conventional farming, including for instance:

- 1) Terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity loss;
- 2) Contamination of soil, water and food with toxic pesticides;
- 3) Loss of fertilizer nutrients resulting in eutrophication and nitrous oxide emissions;
- 4) Floods and droughts;
- 5) Direct GHG emissions and fossil energy dependency driving agricultural C debt;
- 6) Loss of soil productive potential associated with the degradation of soil biological, chemical and physical fertility, soil erosion and desertification;
- 7) Loss of agrobiodiversity and access to forest resources critical for food sovereignty, fuelwood, timber, medicinal products, etc;
- 8) Erosion of food, nutritional and health sovereignty at household, regional, national and international scales;
- 9) Displacement of smallholder farmers and indigenous communities with devastating socioeconomic and sociocultural impacts;
- 10) Adverse impacts on gender, intergenerational and intercultural justice;
- 11) Market concentration undermining democratic institutions and their pivotal role in food sovereignty and ecosystem stewardship.

Several technologies and innovations have been promoted with massive public and private investment in public relations, yet have potential to mitigate single or only a few of these environmental and socioeconomic costs, such as sustainable intensification, no-till agriculture, climate-smart agriculture, precision agriculture, etc. These technological

fixes that maximize the gain in isolated functions ignore important social-ecological tradeoffs. Thus, such narrow-scoped technological fixes for single problems may exacerbate others, accentuating socioecological tradeoffs, frequently overcompensating single environmental gains by largely unevaluated collateral social and ecological damages.

By contrast, agroecology has tremendous and still largely untapped potential to simultaneously generate a portfolio of regulating ecosystem services to simultaneously mitigate the range of aforementioned processes of degradation, while amplifying and maintaining in the long run a diverse range of provisioning ecosystem services from the same land management units. Greater attention should be paid to the largely overlooked highly integrative agroecological approaches such as successional agroforestry, syntropic agriculture, agroecological animal husbandry, community supported agriculture, (peri-) urban agroecology, multi-stakeholder network-based participatory organic guarantee systems, short-circuit cooperative food commercialization schemes, all of which consistently outperform technological fixes in their social-ecological multifunctionality at low economic, social and environmental cost.

This way, the HLPE report could contribute in remarkable ways to substantially approach several of the Sustainable Development Goals, provided that agroecology is engaged with its full transdisciplinary scope and participatory, social movement base.

- 1) The **Scope** of the report should adopt a transdisciplinary and participatory agroecological perspective that fully engages with the scientific and local knowledge, social movement and practical dimensions of agroecology. Specific technologies and innovations must be considered with regard to their social-ecological multifunctionality within agroecological systems and principles.
- 2) The **Project Team** should include scientists with a demonstrated track record of crossing disciplinary lines and incorporating the complexity of agrifood systems in their analyses. The team should also include with an active voice non-scientist practitioners that include organized smallholder farmers, as well as social movements that have been actively developing and *scaling out* agroecology.
- 3) The report should be mindful of what it considers **Evidence**, avoiding marketing and manipulative materials from corporate actors and their advocates. In addition, practical knowledge and experience from farmers and broad-based social movements should be included in addition to scientific evidence.
- 4) **Transparency** at all stages and levels of this process is essential, and needs to involve rigorous disclosure conflicts of interest. It will be necessary for the FAO to share progress consistently and in a timely manner.
- 5) This process should move forward with agreed upon **Principles & Procedures** determining governance and transparency over the project team's work, including total transparency of the review process, representation of differing points of view among authors, as well as "conflict resolution" processes.

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Ilyas Siddique, PhD

- Coordinator of the Network of Agroecological Agroforestry of Southern Brazil ([Rede SAFAS](#))
- Professor of Agroecosystems, Dept. of Crop Science; Center of Agrarian Sciences; Federal University of Santa Catarina
- Permanent Faculty of the Postgraduate Programs in [Agroecosystems](#) and [Plant Genetic Resources](#)