

How can Food Systems be Harnessed for Healthy Diets and Better Nutrition?

Guidance on Applying a Food Systems Approach to Policymaking

Multi-stakeholder Technical Task Team (M3T) Retreat

May 2023

Centre for Food Policy, City, University of London and Results for Development



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The context

Applying a food systems approach to policymaking

The context: In September 2021, the United Nations Food Systems Summit pledged to deliver *“progress on all 17 of the SDGs through a food systems approach, leveraging the interconnectedness of food systems to global challenges such as hunger, climate change, poverty, and inequality.”*

Questions asked:

1. What does it mean to take a food systems approach?
2. How can interested policymakers and decision-makers adopt this approach and apply it to their contexts?

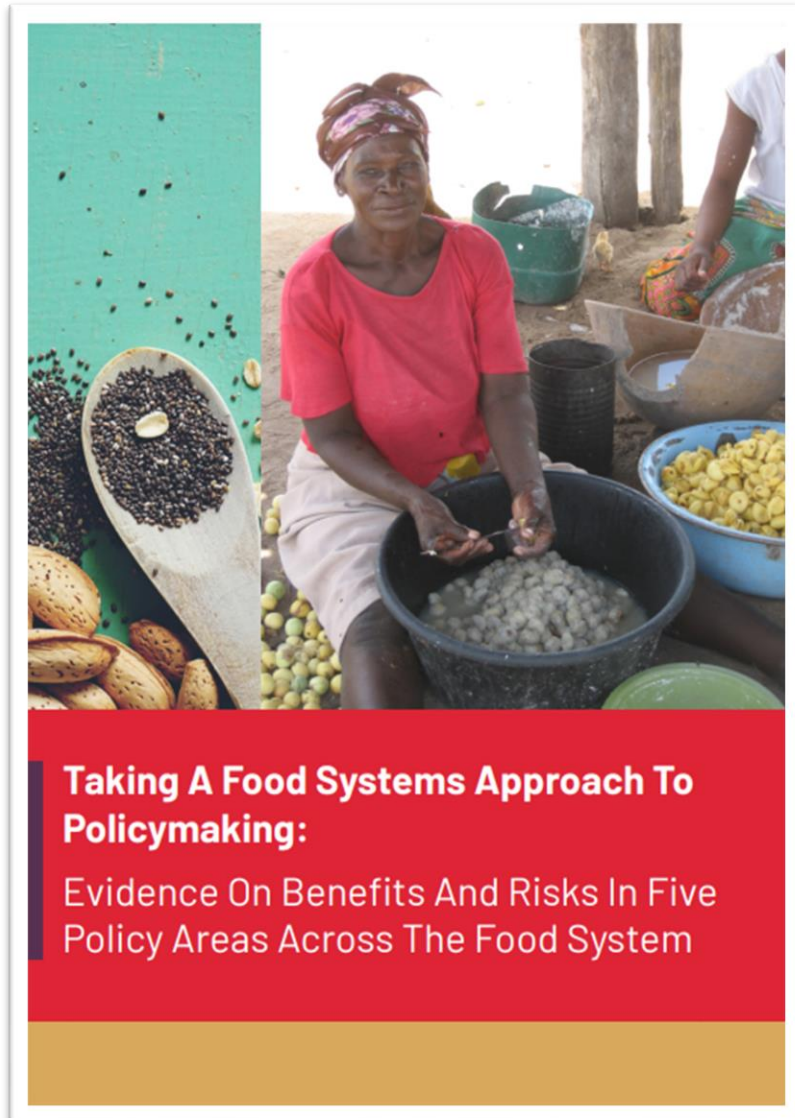
Package of resources

- Evidence Review
- Technical Briefs



Access them here

Evidence review



- Explores what policymakers should consider as they design policies to achieve multiple benefits
- Example impacts of policies/programs in 5 areas...
 1. Cash and food transfers
 2. Food safety
 3. Road and transport infrastructure
 4. Agricultural extension
 5. Land tenure
- ...across five food system outcomes:
 1. **Diets and food environments**
 2. Agricultural production
 3. Livelihoods
 4. Gender equality
 5. Environmental sustainability

Food system outcome – Diets and food environments

Cash and Food Transfer policies

Benefit: Cash and food transfers can increase dietary diversity

Risk: Cash and food transfers can bring risks for unhealthy diets

Food Safety policies

Benefit: Ensuring the safety of nutritious foods could raise consumers' willingness to pay for those foods

Risk: Could bring risks for healthy diets by raising the price of nutritious foods beyond reach of consumers

Road and Transport Infrastructure Policies

Benefit: Policies to develop roads and reduce transport costs bring benefits for household food security and more nutritious diets in rural areas

Risk: Expanding roads into remote areas can lead to increased access to unhealthy foods

Land Tenure policies

Benefit: Land tenure policies can bring benefits for household diets and food security

Agricultural Extension policies

Benefit: Agricultural extension services can improve diet quality in producer households

Technical briefs



BRIEF II

Taking a Food Systems Approach to Policymaking: Managing Stakeholders and Identifying Policy Entry Points

Key Messages

- A food systems approach to policy achieves policy objectives. It requires through a multistakeholder mechanism relevant stakeholders together help comprehensive, creative, cohesive
- The mix of stakeholders will differ identified through stakeholder management, civil society, private sector and whose interests could be served
- When identifying stakeholders, it is engagement, to understand the position and other often marginalized and vulnerable
- To convene identified stakeholders created to increase the connection effectively to address the policy objectives permanent or ad hoc, and national
- When identifying policy entry points
- Another potential starting point is specific objective or series of objectives clear objective and seek to understand policy solutions (see Table 1).



BRIEF IV

Taking a Food Systems Approach to Policymaking: Costing and Financing

Key Messages

- Policy governance and decision-making costs should be included in budgets to ensure that a food systems approach can be implemented and sustained over time, with appropriate oversight.
- The initial and recurring governance and process costs of a food systems approach to policymaking generally fall into three categories: (1) coordination and knowledge management costs; (2) system and staff capacity-building costs; and (3) evidence generation, advocacy, and dissemination costs.
- Financing for governance and process costs should come primarily from the public sector to help ensure that decision-making bodies remain independent, accountable, and sustainable and that the process is aligned with national priorities. Public-sector financing can also ensure country ownership of institutional knowledge and capacity.
- By bringing together different stakeholders to look at outcomes in an interconnected way, a food systems approach opens new financing opportunities. It may result in more aligned financing or co-financing between government sectors and development partners, greater political visibility and support from influential champions, gender-equitable financing, and better incentives for private sector investment in the food system.
- In the long term, taking a food systems approach will likely increase the cost-effectiveness of policymaking by creating more holistic and sustainable policies that create linkages and increase benefits across sectors.

Brief I. Taking a Food Systems Approach to Policymaking: What, How, and Why

Articulates what a food systems approach is and why it is valuable for policymakers

Brief II. Taking a Food Systems Approach to Policymaking: Managing Stakeholders and Identifying Policy Entry Points

Explains how to take a more collective approach to policymaking by identifying the relevant stakeholders, using multistakeholder mechanisms to bring these stakeholders together, and identifying policy entry points for action

Brief III. Taking a Food Systems Approach to Policymaking: Developing a Shared Agenda

Shares tools and methods to guide policy decision-making, help assess policy coherence, and mitigate and manage conflicts

Brief IV. Taking a Food Systems Approach to Policymaking: Costing and Financing

Discusses some of the cost and financing implications of a food systems approach

Applying a food systems approach: What, How, and Why?

The pathway of each country will depend on the policy issue and the context in question

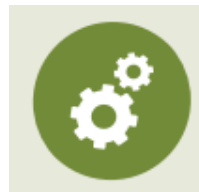
A **three-step iterative model** supports policymakers in deciding which policy or set of policies will work for their context, and how they can ensure that they are leveraging the benefits and managing the risks across multiple food system objectives:



Identify Policy Entry Points



Design Policies to Maximize Benefits and Minimize Risks



Establish Inclusive and Participatory Governance Mechanisms



Identify Policy Entry Points



How to take the approach

- Look for policy entry points throughout food supply chains, from inputs at the front end of the chain to waste and disposal at the consumer end
- Look for policy entry points across government departments and sectors

Objective: Assure healthier diets in Ghana

Entry Point: Improving the food environment

Portfolio of Policies:

1. Public food procurement
2. Front of pack labelling
3. Market regulation
4. Food-related fiscal policy



Benefit to the approach

- Increases the potential of finding the most effective solutions
 - Scope of potential solutions extends beyond the more typical interventions
- A food systems approach helps identify the portfolio of policies needed
 - Operating in different parts of the system to ensure that food becomes safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, and acceptable to all people



May fall under

Work package 3 – Development of the food-based policy bundle



Design Policies to Maximize Benefits and Minimize Risks



How to take the approach

- Consider how policy instruments designed to achieve one objective might interconnect with other objectives
- Combine complementary policies into mutually reinforcing portfolios to align the system toward desired objectives while managing trade-offs between objectives

Examine evidence (including impacts on other areas)

- Market regulations, school-focused public procurement, political economy factors of food-based policy bundle, SSB taxes, food labelling policies, etc.



Benefit to the approach

- Increases the efficiency of policies in attaining multiple objectives
 - Requires policymakers to consider the potential that a single policy can have multiple outcomes, whether positive, neutral, or negative, and then design the policy to maximize the benefits
- A food systems approach reduces the risk of unintended consequences



May fall under

Work package 1 – Landscaping and context analysis

Work package 2 – Food Composition Data for processed & packaged food and Nutrient Profile Model





Establish Inclusive and Participatory Governance Mechanisms



How to take the approach

- Identify stakeholders from different parts of food supply chains and different sectors
- Develop inclusive coordination mechanisms to bring together different stakeholders and sectors in a more coherent approach

Consider how to keep identified stakeholders engaged

- Identify all stakeholders who may be impacted by the policies, or involved in implementing them
- Articulate stakeholder roles and expectations
- Establish processes to handle disagreements



Benefit to the approach

- Helps identify who needs to be involved in policymaking
 - Requires involvement of multiple policymaking departments across government and engagement of partners across society
- Provides a framework for coordinating policymaking mechanisms
 - Calls for governance structures that includes cross-departmental and sectoral boundaries to support a more holistic, coordinated way of working



May fall under

Work package 4 – Advocacy, scholar activism, and capability strengthening



Consider costs and financing implications

Throughout each step, policymakers should consider the cost and financing dimensions of taking a food systems approach

- Plan for policy governance and decision-making costs
 - Ensures country ownership
 - Supports the credibility, accountability, and sustainability of the policymaking process
- May also be able to pursue financing opportunities
 - More aligned financing or co-financing between government sectors and development partners
 - Greater political visibility and support from influential champions
 - Gender-equitable financing
 - Better incentives for private sector investment in the food system

- What costs are you incurring as you pursue creation of this policy portfolio?
- How are these costs being financed?



May fall under
Work package 4 – Advocacy, scholar activism, and capability strengthening

Discussion

- How can these materials be useful to your work?
- Do you see connections between the proposed pathway and the process you're pursuing?
- Are there specific questions you hope the resources can help answer?

Thank you!



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