

# Consultation on an Action Programme to address Food and Nutrition Challenges facing Asian and Pacific SIDS

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## Executive summary

Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives in September 2014 adopted SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway inviting FAO to facilitate a meeting on food and nutrition security in Small Island Developing States to develop an action programme to address food and nutrition challenges facing SIDS (Paragraph 61). To fulfill this mandate, FAO, DESA, OHRLLS have proposed a road map to develop the action programme in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

This document opens with a short explanation of the background and recent actions taken on the request to develop an action plan to address food and nutrition challenges facing SIDS. Information on the state of food and nutrition security in SIDS is provided. This serves to emphasize the multi-faceted dimensions of food and nutrition security in SIDS. The roadmap to develop the action programme is then described.

A proposed action programme for Asian and Pacific SIDS is described. The programme is built on four thematic foci:

- a. consumer demand which favours a balanced diet and positive health outcomes;
- b. well-functioning domestic markets that can bring affordable food to consumers;
- c. efficient food production from island, atoll and aquatic resources which takes advantage of innovative technologies and practices developed for, and in, islands and atolls; and
- d. natural resource management practices which protect and enhance the fragile terrestrial and aquatic resources which are the bases for food production and other economic sectors such as tourism.

It is proposed that implementation of the action programme is through consortia which are to be formed to tackle the problems inherent in each theme. The first step will be to develop a much deeper understanding of the issues within each theme and in each country.

Participants are invited to guide further refinement of the action programme by providing guidance on:

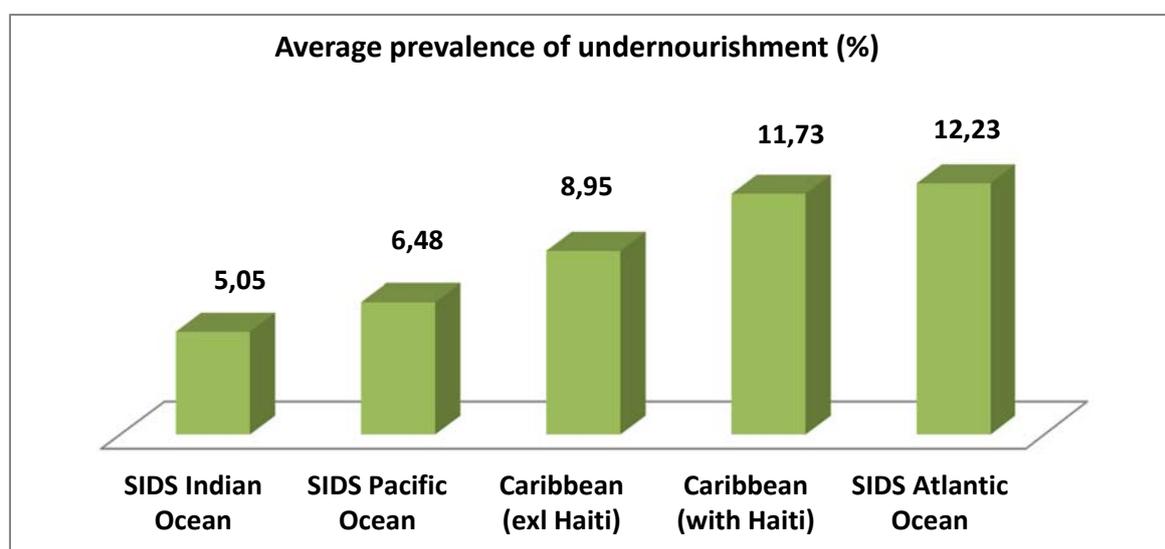
- a. whether the four proposed thematic foci are necessary and sufficient to construct an action programme to achieve the changes signaled by the SDGs;
- b. whether the proposed thematic foci align effectively with regional and national plans;
- c. the practicality and sufficiency of the partnership arrangements that are proposed; and
- d. the suitability of the action programme as a prospectus to attract investment from both traditional and new financiers.

## I. Introduction

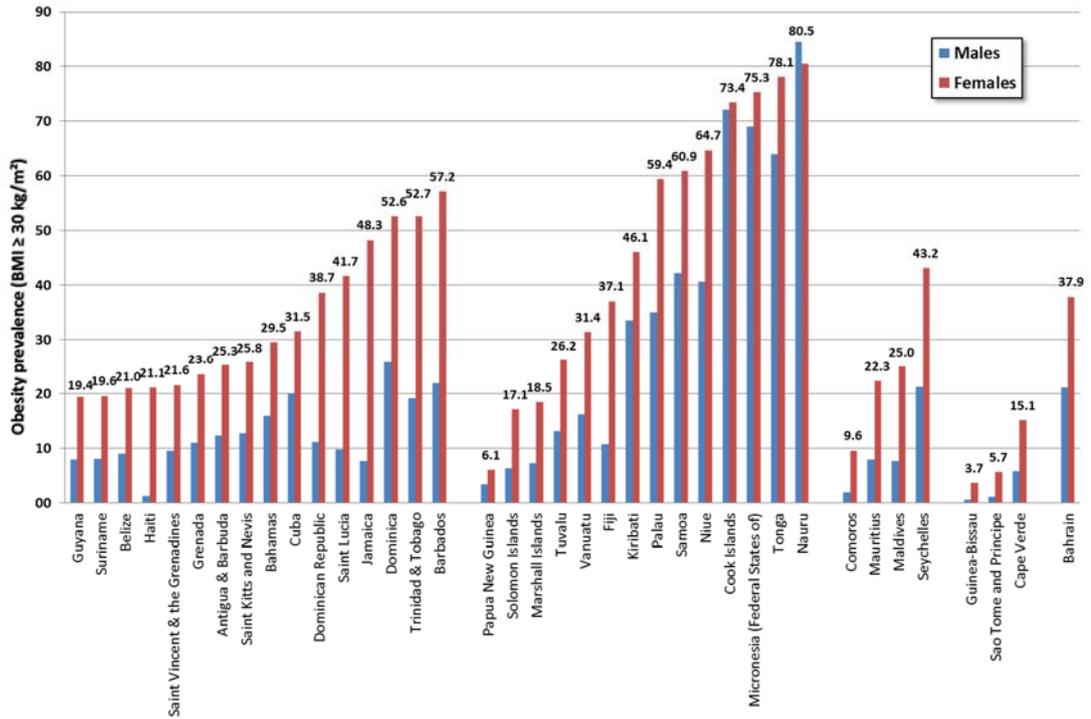
1. Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives in September 2014 adopted SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway inviting FAO to facilitate a meeting on food and nutrition security in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to develop an action programme to address food and nutrition challenges facing SIDS (Paragraph 61).
2. Towards fulfilling this mandate, FAO has engaged with member states at national and sub-regional level towards identifying priorities to be integrated into the action program. Recent activities included a high level panel organized during the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of FAO Conference in Rome, Italy on 6 June 2015 and a Ministerial Meeting on Enhancing Food Security and Climate Adaptation in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) jointly organized by the Government of Italy and the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in Milan, Italy, on 14–16 October 2015.
3. The processes and actions to develop the action programme are closely aligned with existing processes and utilize current mechanisms (e.g. FAO’s Regional Conferences, Alliance of Small Island States, Ministerial Meeting and DESA online platforms). The action programme will explicitly link to other international efforts (Sendai Framework, SDG-2030 Agenda etc.).

## II. State of Food Security and Nutrition in Asian and Pacific SIDS

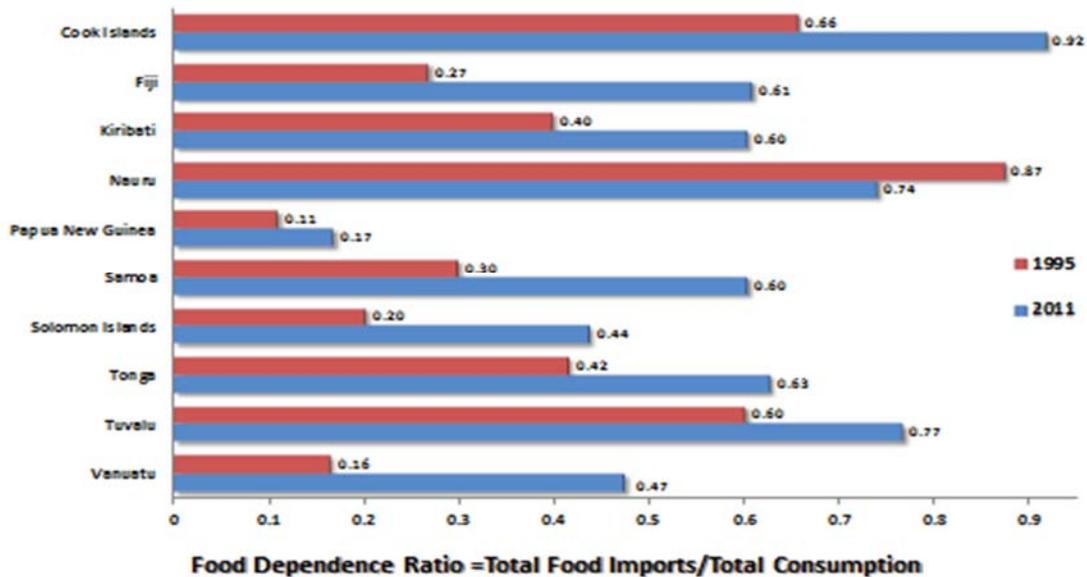
4. The UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States identifies 58 SIDS being made up of 38 members of the UN and a further 20 associate members of Regional Commissions. In the Asia and Pacific region there are 21 SIDS having various constitutional arrangements.
5. Food security and undernourishment vary substantially between and within SIDS regions. However, this is only part of a complex picture which includes the health impacts of under and over nourishment and the impact of food imports on diet and the economies of SIDS.



6. For almost all SIDS, the most pervasive challenge to food and nutrition security is associated with poor food decisions. Poor diets and lack of physical activity are major causative factors of obesity which in turn is one of the five major risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes and heart disease.



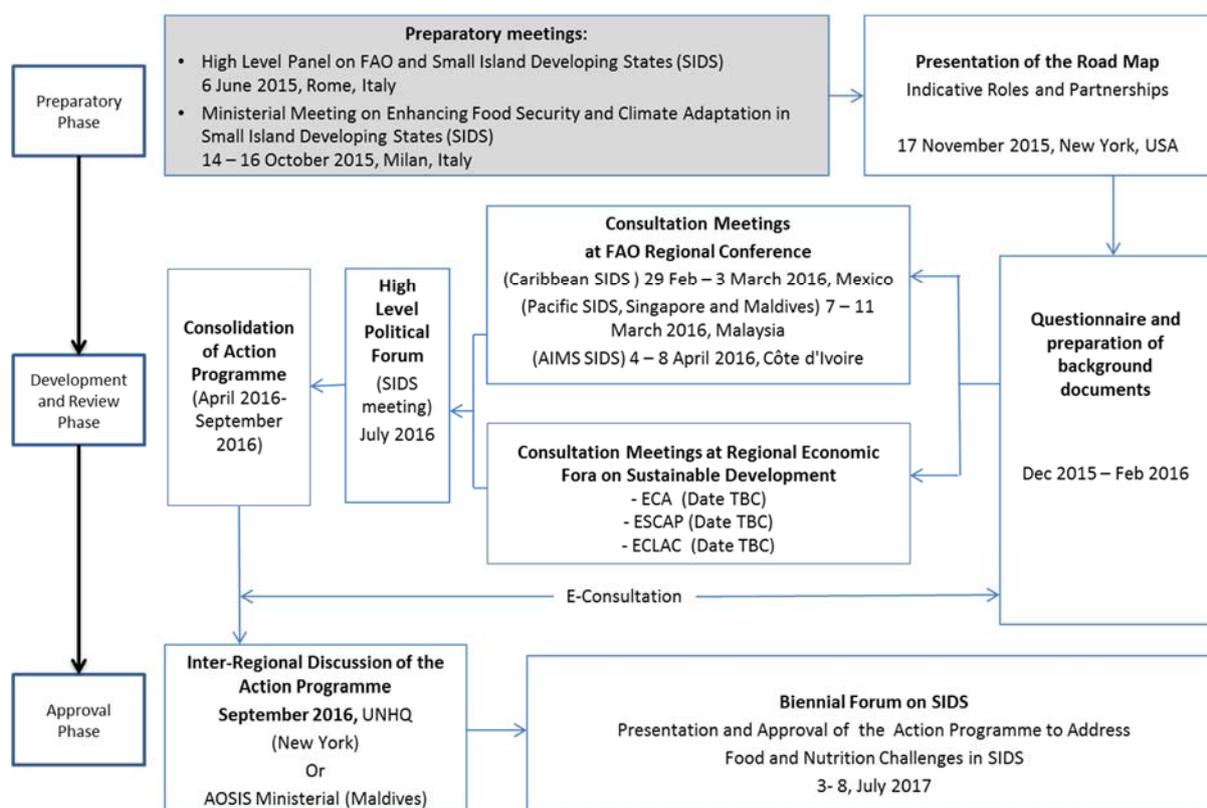
7. The effects of population growth on the food supply over the next two decades are expected to be just as consequential as the natural disasters, eventual impacts of sea level rise and saltwater intrusion from longer-term climate change. The heavy reliance of Asian and Pacific SIDS on imported staples must be recognized as a key risk factor in reducing resilience to global climate change. The risks posed to global rice and wheat production by climate change, linked with increasing demand for these basic foods by the expanding world population, are likely to lead to less secure and more costly supplies of imported staples in SIDS. A similar situation exists with protein supply, whereby collapsing coastal fisheries resources will dictate more imports of animal-based proteins at a time when the diets of emerging economies are demanding more meat and dairy products.



Source: FAOSTAT

### III. Road map to develop an Action Programme to address Food and Nutritional Challenges facing SIDS: Follow-up to Paragraph 61 of the S.A.M.O.A pathway.

8. Following the two high-level meetings, an indicative road map was proposed to fulfil paragraph 61 of the S.A.M.O.A Pathway by developing the requested action programme in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
9. The roadmap calls for a close collaboration and consultation with SIDS member States, the UN System, regional inter-governmental bodies, development partners and non-state actors, including non-governmental and civil society institutions and the private sector. Close collaboration with UN-System (FAO, DESA, OHRLLS), SIDS member States, regional inter-governmental bodies, non-governmental and civil society institutions and other development partners will be ensured.
10. The road map is a living document consisting of 3 phases: (i) preparatory, (ii) development and review, and (iii) approval. The development and review phase widens participation of multi-stakeholders (through regional consultation meetings, e-consultations, and questionnaires to be sent out to governments and other partners) throughout the development of the action programme.
11. The final presentation of the Action Programme is proposed for both the FAO Conference and the High-Level Political Forum in mid-2017. The preparation of the action programme will be supported and coordinated by FAO, DESA, OHRLLS and regional organizations.
12. Special attention will be taken to ensure adequate participation of non-agricultural sector actors as foreseen in the S.A.M.O.A Pathway. This includes different government sectors (such as education, health, and environment) as well as non-state actors. Measures will be taken to ensure that their participation and inputs are received through one or more of the proposed consultation channels.



#### IV. Food and Nutrition Security Action Programme for Asian and Pacific SIDS

13. SIDS tend to confront similar constraints in their sustainable development efforts, such as a narrow resource base depriving them of the benefits of economies of scale; small domestic markets and heavy dependence on a few external and remote markets; high costs for energy, infrastructure, transportation, communication and servicing; low and irregular international traffic volumes; limited resilience to natural disasters; growing populations; high volatility of economic growth; limited opportunities for the private sector and a proportionately large reliance of their economies on their public sector and their fragile natural environments.
14. In contrast, there is significant actual and potential wealth within the EEZ of many SIDS which have sovereign rights over large expanses of ocean. However, at present off-shore marine living resources do not make a large direct contribution to food and nutrition security. There are also concerns that the appropriate share of the benefit of these offshore marine resources is not captured by SIDS with, for example, less than 10% of the catch taken in the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of the Pacific island countries is processed in the region<sup>1</sup>.
15. Food and nutrition security, along with rising and shared prosperity, will not be achieved with a ‘silver bullet’, but it can be achieved through an arsenal of policies and initiatives that are deployed in a systematic manner. Most importantly, progress will require a new level of understanding of how those interact and how they play out in the actual workings of an island economy. In practice, this means taking an integrated food economy approach to strengthen the entire food system of a small island country.
16. It is proposed that a programme of action from 2018 to 2030 be based on four thematic foci:
  - a. consumer demand which favours a balanced diet and positive health outcomes;
  - b. well-functioning domestic markets that can bring affordable food to consumers;
  - c. efficient food production from island, atoll and aquatic resources which takes advantage of innovative technologies and practices developed for, and in, islands and atolls; and
  - d. natural resource management practices which protect and enhance the fragile terrestrial and aquatic resources which are the bases for food production and other economic sectors such as tourism.
17. The emphasis on consumer demand is driven by findings that NCDs can and do impose large health, financial and economic costs on countries<sup>2</sup>. The risk factors for NCDs are currently feeding a pipeline of potentially expensive to treat diseases and it is widely recognised that change requires a coordinated approach across agriculture, education, finance and health. Improving the availability of lower cost, nutritionally superior diet has been identified as critical to improving food security and health, as well as reducing the financial burden faced by PICs in order to service rising trade deficits and health care costs.<sup>3</sup> FAO is identifying the household and environmental factors contributing most to poor dietary outcomes, and the food items and quantities required for a nutritious diet, in order to assist policy-makers in this region to design targeted interventions to improve the cost and level of access at which households can access an improved diet. FAO has also found that prioritising investment in local fruit, vegetable and animal products identified as providing efficient sources of missing micronutrients will help to provide the price incentives necessary to encourage product substitution and improved dietary outcomes. Further, the identified resilience of many PIC staples to natural disaster (principally cyclones and drought) provides an additional impetus for investing in improving domestic

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<sup>1</sup> FFA 2015 Economic Indicators Report Prepared by the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFC96-INFO3 2015)

<sup>2</sup> World Bank 2012 The Economic Costs on Non-communicable Diseases in the Pacific Islands, Final report

<sup>3</sup> Pacific Islands Forum (2011) Op. Cit.

food supply capacity in order to reduce vulnerability to climate change. Finally, natural resource management is *sine qua non* for the culture of all islanders and recent global fora have served to reinforce the necessity of continued action and investment.

18. Delivery of the changes signalled in each of the thematic foci will first and foremost demand a much deeper understanding of the issues within each theme and in each country. Subsequent action can draw on a common (but not identical) set of tools and approaches which will need to be applied through consortia of global, regional and national organizations with each member working where they have genuine comparative advantage. These tools and approaches can include *inter alia*:
  - a. policies to create a consistent enabling environment across all relevant sectors;
  - b. new technologies suited to the circumstances of island food production systems;
  - c. collaboration across ministries and between the public, social and private sectors;
  - d. extension systems which integrate public, private and social enterprises in the sharing and transfer of know-how;
  - e. mobilisation of communities and their institutions so that the well-being of all residents of all income levels is considered (i.e. not just considering national averages); and
  - f. investment in infrastructure, people and, perhaps more importantly, which share risks with enterprises and communities so that creative business models can be tried.
19. To shape consumer demand such that future food choices constitute a balanced and healthy diet will be a long-term endeavour drawing on ministries of education and of health, sports clubs, women's associations, churches, and technical specialists who can shape desirable diets from food resources available to island communities. The term 'desirable diets' has multiple dimensions and a desirable diet is one which is:
  - a. desirable from a health perspective;
  - b. attractive because it is socially accepted and adopted by influential persons;
  - c. appealing as it revitalizes traditional foods and preserves cultural heritage; and
  - d. feasible for the individual preparing the food.
20. Efficient domestic markets matter because the route from farm to table can either be very short (for own consumption) or long and complex when food moves between islands. Moreover, desirable foods are most often perishable and favoured fresh. A single bottleneck can lead to losses for producers and traders and to shortages for consumers. Failures in domestic markets are often repaired by importing food which may not be the most desirable outcome. Efficient domestic markets will only prosper if an end-to-end value chain approach is utilised. This will stretch from promoting the right inputs to encouraging creative business models to enabling low interest financing and risk sharing. Efficient markets will also root out and reduce losses. FAO has estimated that one third of all food is either lost or wasted. In island economies where the alternative to a lack of locally produced food is expensive imports, then it makes sense for markets and consumers to reduce losses.
21. A forward-looking agricultural strategy for an island country will encourage food production from crops suited to local environments and from aquatic sources in a sustainable manner. It will also support the creation, incubation and adoption of new technologies. Public and private investment in research and development will be essential to raise yields of desirable food crops and thereby expand GDP. While this can be a daunting thought, there are examples which can inspire: Israel now produces most of its own food from limited natural resources as a result of R&D in agricultural production technologies and Brazil invested in soil conservation technologies to turn previously non-arable grasslands into major soybean production zones. In both cases a well-trained workforce has emerged.

22. The resilience of staple food crops to the effects of global warming compared to staples grown in temperate regions provides opportunities to soften the potential effects of climate change on food security and livelihoods. Therefore, there is a critical need to identify and disseminate those varieties of local staples best adapted to the effects of climate change; but more generally to facilitate improved efficiency of production and marketing of local staples in order to reduce reliance on imported cereals.
23. Well managed aquatic resources are a significant source of highly nutritious fish and aquatic plants in SIDS. Although food production associated with subsistence and coastal fisheries play a crucial role in food security, failure to effectively implement measures to curb access and fishing effort constrain their potential to support growing populations and to lessen impacts associated with climate change. To ensure an adequate supply of fish to support food security in SIDS, there is a need to shift to more effective management of coastal fisheries and marine resources, to increase availability of offshore marine living resources to domestic markets, empower communities to participate and lead management of aquatic resources and develop sustainable aquaculture or other effective means to maintain fish availability in both rural and urban areas.
24. An integrated food economy approach strengthens the entire food system and this includes the natural resources on which food production is dependant. However, it is not only inappropriate farming and fishing practices which can damage the resource base, extreme weather events are an ever-present risk in SIDS. The likelihood of both sudden and slow-onset disasters dictates that approaches to natural resource management continue to evolve as natural and management sciences improve understating of the complex systems that farmers, fishers and communities are called on to manage in SIDS.
25. In Paragraph 63 of the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway countries agreed to work together to enhance the resilience of agriculture and fisheries to the adverse impacts of climate change, ocean acidification and natural disasters; and to maintain natural ecological processes that support sustainable food production systems through international technical cooperation. This agreement adds weight to the suggestion of an integrated food economy approach and implies that funding which is expected to become available following the UNFCCC Paris Agreement would support such an approach.
26. Where countries have successfully strengthened their food systems, an investment in a skilled workforce has usually been a key component. At present, most SIDS do not have public expenditure on food supply and nutrition that is in proportion to either the level of labour force participation or to the contribution to GDP that food systems represent. For an action programme to have any chance of success there will need to be a paradigm shift in terms of up skilling of personnel across the food system.
27. The distinguishing attribute of the S.A.M.O.A Pathway is the emphasis on accelerated action. Therefore, one must ask ‘what is the mechanism within the proposed action programme that will catalyze action’? What will create the change from business-as-usual and what will strengthen the evidence base for action? It is suggested that the catalyst can be partnerships. Partnerships are easy to propose, troublesome to negotiate and require humility to implement; yet, they are immensely powerful when they work well. The potential partners are obvious in each country and region as is their strengths; no attempt is made to list partners in this document. Rather, the emphasis in this consultation is much more on the type of partnerships, the factors considered critical for their longevity and success and the catalysts which can lead to effective cooperation.

28. It is suggested that partnerships can be a catalyst at three levels within the action programme:
- in the analysis and design phase, governments, donors and technical agencies will need to combine forces to develop a much deeper understanding of the issues and to engage with the private and social sectors to verify them; all parties can all play a role;
  - implementation can be through consortia which are to be formed to tackle the problems inherent in each theme and which are funded by investors as a consortium (as opposed to one or more of its members); and
  - public, private and social sector partnership business models to address the lack of scale across many parts of the food system in island countries which works against the viability of common business models.
29. The table below<sup>4</sup> sets out perceived wisdom on what is required for successful collaboration. Do the steps represent a necessary and sufficient set of conditions for partnerships to implement the proposed action programme?

<b>Six key steps to successful collaborations</b>	
What to collaborate on	1. Collaborate in areas where you have a solid footing to build on strengths rather than compensating for weaknesses
	2. Turn win-lose situations into win-win opportunities by agreeing on benefit-sharing models for formerly neglected collaboration areas
Whom to collaborate with	3. Select partners not only on potential performance, but also on their capabilities and willingness to collaborate
How to collaborate	4. Dedicate your best teams to the collaboration initiative and ensure senior leadership involvement
	5. Jointly manage performance and measure impact to avoid misaligned incentives
	6. Collaborate for the long term to overcome initial hurdles and to activate a positive virtuous circle

## V. Conclusion

30. Participants in the consultation are invited to guide further refinement of the action programme by providing direction on:
- whether the four proposed thematic foci are necessary and sufficient to construct an action programme to achieve the changes signaled by the SDGs;
  - whether the proposed thematic foci align effectively with regional and national plans;
  - the practicality and sufficiency of the partnership arrangements that are proposed; and
  - the suitability of the action programme as a prospectus to attract investment from both traditional and new financiers.

<sup>4</sup> Collaboration today and tomorrow – taking the right steps on the path to impact.  
<http://www.mckinsey.com/search?q=partnerships+key+success+factors&start=10> accessed on 15 Jan 2016