

Multistakeholder Partnerships to Finance and Improve Food Security and Nutrition in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda

e-consultation on the V0 draft
proposed by the HLPE Steering Committee

From 16 January to 19 February 2018

Synthesis by the HLPE Secretariat

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This consultation on the V0 draft of the HLPE report #13 on *Multistakeholder Partnerships to Finance and Improve Food Security and Nutrition in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda* attracted 69 contributions, from 27 different countries, totalling 172 pages and around 70,000 words. 10 contributions came from national governments, 12 from the civil society, 6 from the private sector, and 26 from academic or research institutes. 28 of the contributions come from developing countries.

This note proposes a synthesis of the comments received during this e-consultation. Written by the HLPE Secretariat, this synthesis does not represent the position of the HLPE Steering Committee. Being a short document, it is not meant to reflect with precision the richness and diversity of all the contributions received, but should only serve as a guide to ease the reading of the full proceedings of this consultation (reference is made here to the numbered contributions). The full proceedings are available online.¹ They will be examined by the HLPE (Steering Committee and Project Team) and used as a background document to develop the report.

Some contributions suggested useful references and interesting case-studies; not all have been mentioned in this synthesis, but all the suggested references and case-studies will be carefully considered by the HLPE Project Team in the course of elaboration of the report. The HLPE also submitted during this consultation a questionnaire designed to describe and assess existing MSPs and received 26 filled questionnaires about concrete examples of existing MSPs.²

This note is organised in 3 sections. The first section gathers general comments, in particular about the scope and structure of the draft. The second section describes the main issues that contributors would like to see covered in the draft. The third section presents contributions related to specific chapters.

1) General comments

This is an excellent draft (14, 35, 69), both in terms of scope, substance and structure (69). This V0 draft is welcome (28, 37, 48), important (44), timely (23, 53), very interesting (17, 22, 42), very good and well written (1) building on a exhaustive/large/thorough literature review (21, 54, 55). The HLPE

¹ See: http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/cfs-hlpe/sites/cfs-hlpe/files/files/multistakeholder-partnerships/HLPE_MSP_V0_PROCEEDINGS.docx

² See: http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/cfs-hlpe/sites/cfs-hlpe/files/files/multistakeholder-partnerships/HLPE_MSP_V0_QUESTIONNAIRES.docx

has accomplished a great work (8), an enormous task (46) commendable efforts (55) to develop this V0 draft. The draft make a laudable contribution in exploring some of the controversies and concerns about MSPs (21), and contains strong material (5) and covers adequately concepts and topics of relevance (6). The report will be a valuable tool: to deepen our understanding of the rationale and value behind MSPs; to classify and assess existing MSPs, in order to improve their performance in the future by proposing avenues to overcome their specific challenges (23, 28, 48, 53).

The CSM appreciates the difficulties encountered by the HLPE in preparing this V0 draft: as noted in the draft, existing research on MSPs for FSN is very scarce, and the CFS potential policy convergence objective is unclear (40).

Title, scope and general orientation of the report

The wide scope is appropriately covered: this MSPs initiative is a firm step against the four malnutrition forms (12). The draft covers most if not all the “blind spots” to make MSPs more effective, meaningful and sustainable (69).

Given the title, the focus of the draft is expected to be on financing: in reality, the draft is much more comprehensive and interesting on the critical role of partnerships to advocate, support, finance, implement and evaluate actions for FSN. The title should be modified to reflect more adequately the content of this document (16). This HLPE report is about “improve and finance”: the potential contribution of MSPs to improve FSN goes beyond their ability to raise financial resources: other resources are needed (in-kind contributions, expertise, experience and knowledge) both at the MSP level and among the beneficiaries (32, 63). The value added of MSPs is much wider than only financing (66). Finance related issues are given enough space in the V0 draft (6). The draft correctly emphasizes funding as one of the key outputs/roles for some of the MSPs (31).

The CFS clearly requested a focus on financial issues (63). The context and rationale for the HLPE report as established by CFS 43 is the following: innovative financing is highlighted due to declining ODA and budgetary pressure (63). Given the title, additional space should be attributed to finance and resource mobilization (30, 47). The last chapter has the strongest focus on financing (30, 47). If this is really the key objective of the report, this theme needs to be much more “front and center” (30). Trying to include different viewpoints and sensitivities in the draft dilutes the focus, i.e. how to fund food security and other sustainability goals (30).

The draft should be better linked to the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda (66). Starting from the recognition of the role of MSPs as means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), the introduction [and the whole report] should better reflect CFS request (63). While acknowledging the importance of effective MSPs to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the draft gives the sentiment that MSPs may not be generally appropriate (47, 63). The statement that there is “a need to revisit MSPs critically” is not backed by sufficient evidence and not in line with CFS43 report, SDG17 or the AAAA (63). It is important to note that the UN has been developing the roles, understanding and working processes of MSPs which underlies the fact that SDG17 and AAAA approaches to further use MSPs already draws on a rich and established history: some milestones are given (63). The key objective of the study is not to dismiss MSPs a priori but to identify the critical success factors helping to define and establish effective and efficient MSPs able to address the challenges and limitations outlined in Chapter 3 (47), and to identify what kind of MSPs are the most promising in term of innovative financing and access to resources, technology transfer and capacity building (63).

The HLPE should consider in its report multistakeholder platforms that are organized around broader themes (including agriculture, forestry, health, land, water...) but strongly inclusive of FSN: the next draft should include examples of MSPs focusing on “integrated landscape management” (5). More attention should be given to health (68) and water (45) for FSN. GAVI should not be included in the report because its impact on FSN is only indirect (13, 23, 53). GAIN is trying to play a similar role to GAVI in the FSN sector (16).

Although MSPs and public-private cooperation are privileged as a means of implementation of the SDGs, we are far from a consensus among food policy actors on the desirability of this approach (42).

The draft does not map the controversies and critical debates around the MSP paradigm (49, 56). The draft should not assume from the outset that MSPs are desirable or needed but engage a critical discussion of the MSP paradigm (49). The neoliberal environment under which MSPs are implemented is not mentioned at all (21, 40). The draft seems to legitimate the corporate-influenced, neoliberal, mainstream narrative on the benefits of partnering with corporations and rich funders, and of “stakeholderising” our public arenas and institutions (49, 52, 56).

The report should not limit its scope to exploring how to best implement MSPs without addressing their limitations (40). The draft avoids to assess the extent to which MSPs are addressing or exacerbating the structural causes of food insecurity and malnutrition and should examine alternative and potentially better ways of promoting improved cooperation, convergence and coherence for FSN, among public institutions and between them and other actors (40). Public-private cooperation is only one of the possible governance modes, to be privileged only under specific conditions (42).

Structure and overall narrative of the report

The structure of the draft is well-articulated (4, 37, 67), and comprehensive (6, 23, 28, 48, 53, 54). Different chapters build upon each other in a logical and progressive way, and internal references to previous and following chapters are given in a systematic way (37).

The audience of the report should be clarified (48). The draft seems more academic than practically designed for policy makers (14, 21, 48, 54). This makes it difficult and sometimes tedious to read (21), the real issues beginning around the middle of the draft (14). Future versions should be shorter, more readable (21, 48, 55) and more focused on the purpose of the report (55).

The draft attempts to be overly comprehensive and its structure could be revisited (30, 54): narrow the scope and get to the point (54). The HLPE has done a commendable job to explore the issues involved, but in the length of the draft, the key issues get somehow lost (21, 54). Tons of arguments are given but key constraints seem not properly weighed (21). There is also a lot of repetitions (54). The report has lengthy discussions of issues not directly related to the topic: introductory sections, including extensive explorations of definitions and classification of MSPs, could be significantly compressed (30, 31). The draft is focusing a lot on definitions, descriptions and classifications (32, 48, 63) with limited reference, if any, to financial issues (63).

Definitions, terminology and concepts

Overall, all concepts are clearly and consistently dealt with in the document (6, 23, 28, 37, 53). One of the present draft’s greatest strengths is its crisp **definition of MSPs** (31). WFO strongly supports MSPs as collaborative relationships between different partners who equally share risks, responsibilities, resources and benefits of collaborating towards a common aim (48). It is correct to consider as MSP various collaborative arrangements, e.g. partnerships, platforms, networks, processes (63). A focus on the purpose of MSPs rather than source or attributes of members would be appropriate (63).

For this report to be independent and evidence based, due attention should be paid to potentially biased language, especially without cited justification (30).

The concept of “**multistakeholderism**” should be subjected to a critical examination and the HLPE should consider the option to reject the “multistakeholder” paradigm (40, 49), using the term “actor” instead of “stakeholder” to underline the different nature of different actors (40, 49).

The use of the term “**stakeholders**” in the draft is misleading (21): different actors have different interests (21, 48), not all actors have equal “stake”, nor equal legitimacy to participate in decision-making or to assume certain roles and functions (40). The report should emphasize the need to explore the various actors referred to as “stakeholders”, their interests, roles, legitimacy, power, and power asymmetries among them (40). Farmers and their organizations should always be considered as relevant actors in MSPs for FSN (48). Family and peasant agriculture, women, indigenous peoples and traditional communities should be seen as leading elements of food and nutritional sovereignty

and security (51). It is unclear where the knowledge sector fits under the three categories of stakeholders (66).

The UN System and the V0 draft continue to use the term “**non-state actors**” despite the literature acknowledging that such actors are a mixed pack of public and private interest groups (21). Generic reference to “civil society” should not hide the difference between, for instance, social movements and NGOs and, consequently, their legitimacy (40). The report should unpack the private sector category and clarify differences of interest and power between small-scale family farming and multinational agribusinesses (40).

The terminology of the MSP paradigm is confusing and conflates “multistakeholder” initiatives/dialogues with public-private “partnerships” (49). The **definition of MSPs** suggested in the draft seems arbitrary (21) and flawed (40). It mixes “collective” and “public” interest into a single category whereas it is precisely the tension between those two sets of interests that constitute a major problem of MSPs (40). MSPs are not voluntary and collaborative, but imposed by donors (21). It is not clear why the definition of MSPs refer to the three spheres of stakeholders: MSP have more than one stakeholder but they will not necessarily have all types of stakeholders (63).

The draft fails to set a clear demarcation between partnerships that should or should not be considered as MSPs (see for instance box 2) (40). CFS is not an MSP but, as defined in its reform document, an “international and intergovernmental platform”, with universal membership open to all UN member countries, where decision-making rests unequivocally with member governments (40). Brazil CONSEA is not an MSP, it is defined by the law and funded with public resources (51). The proposal to include “partnerships” and “platforms” under the same umbrella of “participation” is totally inadequate as it would merge together organizations that have profoundly different roles from a democratic governance perspective (40). A more **limiting definition** of MSP would facilitate the comparison between MSP and non-MSP approaches, which is at the core of the HLPE mandate with this report (40).

The report should clearly distinguish **multi-actor policy processes** and **operational partnerships** clarifying the requirements in the two cases for maintaining the legitimacy of the public sphere and fulfilling the state’s human rights obligations (40). A clear distinction must be drawn between the determination of the appropriate goals with respect to achieving FSN and the implementation (and financing) of those goals through policies, implementing strategies and operational actions (13).

The **categorization of MSPs** (section 1.3, and tables 1 and 2) is confusing (40), not helpful, does not really integrate well with the cluster analysis, is not used in subsequent discussions, and does not have any clear link to increasing their effectiveness (30). The report should not try to cover all possible combinations of stakeholders in MSPs but rather address situations where right holders and duty bearers are opening up to other actors, exploring the consequences on rights-based governance, as well as the conditions required to ensure that MSPs work for the public interest (40). The report should adopt only one rational/simple classification system for MSPs (31). Such a typology could help to identify what type of MSPs are needed – rather than a comparison between MSP and non MSP – as some challenges can only be overcome by global MSPs (31).

Case-studies and references

Many contributions suggest case studies and valuable references on existing MSPs. Although they are not all quoted in that short synthesis, they will all be carefully considered by the HLPE.

The CGIAR/ISPC publication (2015) is a rich source of references (more recent than many in the draft) and case studies on multistakeholder partnerships (47). The report should point out the lack of references and data (34) and offer more case-specific insights (14). The report would benefit from a more empirical approach, through exploration of case-studies and quantifiable analyses of the successes and failures of MSP for FSN, in order to identify “lessons learned”, rather than engaging in more literature based discussions (30).

The HLPE may want to broaden the number of existing MSPs it considers for further study or simply for listing and description as this type of catalogue will help identify MSPs for specialists and

beneficiaries; and to study more in depth a number of existing MSPs (31). HLPE questionnaire on case studies can help to better understand MSPs but the HLPE may want to be proactive and seek more examples (31). Examples given should not just increase the size of the section (e.g. box 10) but help the reader to analyse these MSPs (31).

The draft lacks an explicit reference to the 10YFP Sustainable Food System Programme and its “core initiatives” (23, 28, 35, 37, 44, 53) – a box is suggested (23, 53). CGIAR governance reform and partnerships arrangements (47), as well as CIRAD’s “platforms in partnership for research and training” (22) may provide interesting case studies for this report.

Most of the examples of MSPs quoted in the report are global market/trade and value chain oriented and weighed in favour of donor-driven MSPs and of large (corporate) private sector (40). Communities are presented as “beneficiaries” rather than primary development agents: mentions of communities as participants and as leaders of MSPs are rare (40).

2) Main issues to be covered in the report

No topics are under or overrepresented in the draft (6). No important and relevant aspects have been left out (6). The document is able to cover different issues that may arise from the establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships to fund and improve food and nutrition security (7).

Some important issues are missing (21).

Human Right to Adequate Food and FSN

The report should provide a synthesis of the issues posed by MSPs from an FSN and human rights viewpoint (40, 51). The report should adopt a **human-rights framework** to guide public policies formulation (40, 51), privileging the fundamental distinction between “**right-holders**” and “**duty-bearers**” (40). Civil society organizations as right holders representatives and governments as duty bearers are the two main categories of actors in the decision making process (51). “Rights” cannot be considered as a sub-category of “stakes”, and the concept of “stakeholders” which gathers “right-holders”, governments and authorities as accountable “duty-bearers”, along with other categories of actors is profoundly problematic (40, 42). States have, as duty-bearers, a clear and non-transferable role, hence MSPs will not guarantee the structural and sustainable changes needed to ensure FSN and the right to food (51).

The purpose of this report is to ascertain the use of MSPs for financing and improving FSN, in particular for the 800 million people hungry and the 1 billion living in poverty (13). MSP model is not a goal in itself but a tool to achieve results and to improve FSN (32, 63). More attention in the draft should be given: to poverty reduction and pro-poor interventions to achieve FSN (47); to the primary role of smallholder farmers in rural development (47); and, to agricultural development as an effective mechanism of poverty reduction (47). MSPs should be assessed according to their potential to achieve the **human right to adequate food and nutrition** and enhance FSN particularly for **vulnerable groups** (40). In CFS context, it is essential to prioritize those actors who are directly affected by hunger and malnutrition and whose human rights must be respected and guaranteed by States (40). The report does not acknowledge the failure of a market-driven policy orientation to achieve FSN (40).

The call for more participation of **vulnerable groups** is right: but there is a lack of transparency on this: who creates this vulnerability in the first place (21). Citizen, and civil society organizations’ action is vital for tackling marginalization and for advancing human rights and sustainability (28). The realities of poor people’s lives are often invisible to policymakers: this results in frequent mismatches between policy and local priorities (28). Government, market or outsider expert driven solutions alone cannot solve complex challenges: citizen-driven, bottom up innovation needs to be an essential part of the picture (28). Citizen voices should steer the direction of MSPs (28).

MSPs could adversely affect FSN if: (i) they promote the use of a technology beyond the capacity of the target population; (ii) they promote “modern” capital intensive methods in areas of high population density and low workers’ qualification at the expense of local employment (13).

Based on the analysis of the critical issues mentioned in the draft, the establishment of MSPs must ensure:

- the strengthening of rights-based national policies, ensuring the human right to adequate food, contributing to food sovereignty and to the preservation of traditional forms of food production and dietary practices,
- the promotion of adequate and healthy foods to populations,
- the adoption of a sustainable approach, considering its environmental, economic and social aspects (7).

The Brazilian FNS governance system is aiming at the realization of the human right to adequate food and based on the understanding that it is necessary to strengthen public policies and have autonomous, active and legitimate participation of civil society, especially from those who represent groups that suffer violations of the right to food (51).

The United States of America does not recognize the right to food as casually formulated in multiple locations throughout this document. The distinction between “right-holders” and “stakeholders” does not hold without the assumption of a right to food (30). The language in this document heavily references right-based approaches to FSN and implies that these are the main approaches to FSN. This is not a position with which the United States of America agrees (30).

Roles and responsibilities of different partners

Civil society actors seek to problematize the boundary between public and private spheres, as well as the behaviour of private actors, arguing for an incompatibility between their activities and profiles and the achievement of FSN related public goals (42).

Nothing wrong with sharing information and knowledge, and deliberating with the **private sector**, but it should not be involved in decision making (21). It could be argued that corporate actors have no place in public policy spaces where vision and regulatory frameworks are discussed, while partnerships with them could be envisaged in the context of operational programmes provided that the interest of weaker parties in contractual negotiation is guaranteed (40). Outside partners, such as foreign government, commercial entity, or a local NGO with national interests, may join in financing policies, strategies and operational actions but should not interfere in the determination of the goals themselves which should result from consultations between the authorities and local people (13). The private sector might consider MSPs as a place where they can influence public decision-making (21).

MSPs should build on viable and sustainable business models (32, 63) that many companies are now rebuilding around social goals (63). The private sector often undertake non-profit driven actions (63). Many companies are part of MSPs that do not entail any direct return of investment (63). With the help of NGOs, governments and other stakeholders, business has the power of scale to create real change on major social problems (63). Food is mainly produced in the private sector by commercial actors and if production is not commercially viable in the longer term, it will stop as soon as the partnership is over (32, 63). Private funds will always be criticized as potentially biasing the process or outcome and creating “reputational risk”, but is the alternative (accepting only funds from “public good” entities) realistic (54). Private sector should not be considered only as a donor but as a partner: beyond donations, and through its core business, the private sector can bring investments, knowledge and technical assistance (32, 63). Commercial projects can also contribute to FSN and development: the private sector’s objectives in MSPs are not limited to philanthropy, CSR and branding (32, 63). Some MSPs focus on implementation and operational interventions, but in a previous phase, the private sector can also play a key role in supporting the design and promoting the policy or rationale behind these interventions (17).

The issue of reciprocal obligations and of **sharing responsibilities, risks, benefits and different kinds of resources** is thoroughly addressed in several parts of the V0 draft (37). However, the report should seek to better understand the relation between individual responsibilities of the different partners and the collective responsibility of the MSP (37). The risks of MSPs are not equally shared: a strong literature (not cited in the draft) shows that the public sector carries the brunt (21).

Several references are made in the draft to the “UN System” but specialised agencies and funds have very different logics and respond to different constraints, in particular concerning **engagement with the private sector** (17).

Power asymmetries and conflicts of interest

Power asymmetries and **conflicts of interest** are real (17, 21): they need to be not only acknowledged but addressed (21, 40).

Relations and dynamics between MSP members are very well explored, particularly regarding issues of **power asymmetries**, mitigation and creation of synergies (37). In **Section 4.1**, issues of trust and synergies, and of power asymmetries are addressed (37). MSPs are not really examples of policy dialogue or negotiations among equals (21). Some actors with greater power might use MSPs to strengthen their legitimacy (21). True dialogue only happens when participants have a leveled playing field with equal power in decision making (21). MSPs provide frameworks for collaboration where bilateral collaboration may be impossible or difficult (23, 53). They may offer advantages over traditional hierarchic approaches or over bilateral collaboration for addressing complex problems by providing a “co-owned” space that can enable a shift in power relationships (23, 53). Despite the transaction costs inherent to MSPs, bringing people to the table, acknowledging their diverging positions and power differentials, might be the best way to have a transparent decision making process (23, 53).

Conflicts of interest are very poorly addressed in the V0 draft and need absolutely to be better covered in the next version (21, 49, 51, 52, 56). One of the most questionable aspects of “multistakeholderism” is that it opens the door to powerful corporate actors in public policy arenas and public decision-making processes, inevitably provoking conflicts of interest (40, 49, 56). Conflicts of interest materialize at many levels, from the biased analysis of development challenges to the articulation of false solutions (40). This report is an important instrument to identify and prevent conflicts of interest related to the participation of private sector in the global food and nutrition security agenda (7). Potential conflicts of interests should be assessed based on references such as the ethics guidance of the United Nations and the guidelines of the WHO and the Brazilian Association of Nutrition (7). All actors might be concerned with conflicts of interest: governments, private sector, research bodies, NGOs (63). Preventing conflicts of interest requires all parties to work together and build credible partnerships based on trust and respect, rule of law, good governance, accountability and transparency (63).

Trust between partners cannot be reached if conflicts of interest remain unresolved (21). Legitimacy is said to be grounded on rights, justice and equity, but nothing is said in the draft about how conflicts of interest are at the core of any claim to legitimacy (21).

Corruption

The report should provide a much more robust articulation of all issues pertaining to the domain of conflicts of interest and – institutional - corruption (13, 40).

Finance and funding needs

Compared to the rest, the draft is still a bit weak on finance related issues (23, 37, 48, 53). Sections on finance are of a rather general nature and would benefit from further research and elaboration (23, 28, 37, 40, 48, 53). The report could present in more depth: (i) the specific successes, challenges and constraints that existing MSPs, from local to global levels, with different degree of formalization, face in raising – additional - funds (23, 28, 31, 37, 48, 53); (ii) the emerging evidence from innovative MSP fund raising mechanisms, including blended finance (31). The draft would be strengthened through the inclusion of an inventory of practical financial mechanisms and their role (54).

Why did the draft come to the conclusion that “MSPs” are an acceptable way to raise funds for public purposes (49)? One of the assumptions that underlies the acritical idea that MSPs are a “good thing” is that much more funding is required to achieve FSN and the SDGs (40). This eludes basic questions such as: financing by whom? for whom? for what? under what conditions? for whose benefit? which

arrangements are necessary to make these decisions equitable and consistent with public interests rather than being determined by private ones? (40). Some of these questions have already been dealt with in previous HLPE report on smallholders (2013) and subsequent CFS policy recommendations (2016) (40). The draft misrepresents the key focus of Financing for Development which is not about “financing” but about policies to change financing dynamics (tackling such issues as illicit financial flows) (40).

The report should provide the current state of information on financing for FSN and on **funding gaps** (16). Funding is readily available for standard interventions presented as cost-effective but more difficult to find for sustainable solutions adapted to local constraints (17). Governments, international organizations, civil society and corporate investors must ensure that large-scale investments in agriculture are socially beneficial and environmentally sustainable (47). Important constraints in raising funds for FSN are the lack or limited access to finance and services (such as: capacity building, health care, access to markets and market information, technical education, access to tools and equipment) for **smallholder farmers** and **SMEs** (32, 39, 47, 63). The lack of all these services contribute to financial exclusion of small and marginal farmers (39). They need both **finance and technical assistance** to fully realize their potential contribution to FSN: MSPs have a key role to play in that regard (32, 63).

With respect to **finance mobilization** for FSN, recent efforts supported by SUN and the World Bank, either to develop methods or to actually estimate cross sectoral expenditure on nutrition specific and sensitive actions, should be recognized in this report (16). Efforts to mobilize resources begin with analyses that may include demonstrating value for money, cost-benefit or cost effectiveness (16). The cross sectoral nature of FSN creates challenges in working across sectors for raising resources (16).

In chapter 4 background information or text box are needed on methods and tools for helping to catalyse or mobilize resources for FSN (16). Joint resource mobilization strategy in an MSPs can reduce or overcome competition for funds across different stakeholder groups (23, 53).

Instead of harping on external aid, we should call for holistic and more sustainable, less resource-intensive food production and consumption patterns (14). More funding support should be geared into neglected and underutilised species (NUS) so as to provide enough nutrient diversity (10).

With respect to achieving SDG13 (Climate change adaptation and mitigation), large climate change funding providers like Green Climate Funds and Adaptation Funds can play a major role as MSPs (11).

Gender dimension

The gender dimension could be strengthened in the report (28). Women play a key role in food systems and should play a key role in MSPs addressing FSN: they produce most of the food crops in the developing world and decide about food consumption in their families; but they have much less access to information, resources, finance and markets (28).

3) Chapter specific observations

Summary and Recommendations

An **executive summary** must be added (21).

Recommendations. Multi-actor initiatives can make it easier to overcome contradictory positions and identify systemic solutions instead of suggestions directed only to individual actors (28). There are no “one size fits all”, readymade, fixed solutions: the ability to learn from failure is of particular importance (28). From should-do’s to real actions: evidence-based recommendations for FSN already exist but each situation requires its own unique set of interventions applied at different levels, and adapted to local conditions (28).

Chapter 1: Context and definitions for MSPs

This chapter fails to set the frame for the study in a clear way (40).

Section 1.1. In section 1.1.3, a more detailed discussion on the difference between “partnerships” and “platforms” will help the reader to better understand (67). The review of PPPs in section 1.1.4 is very limited, further (recent) references are suggested (63). In Section 1.1.5, the draft should refer to the HLPE (2014) definitions of “food systems” and “sustainable food systems” (23, 28, 37, 53). This section suggests a quite complete list of MSPs that the report should cover but the examples given in the draft do not cover all the elements of this list while others are over-represented (32, 63). The focus is FSN but the link to nutrition could be strengthened across the whole report (55, 67, 68), in particular in section 1.1.5 (55). The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition refers to MSPs and to the importance of partnerships to achieve the global nutrition targets (68).

Section 1.2 is incomplete and not instructive: it misses UN decades-long efforts to open-up intergovernmental processes before the emergence of the concept of MSP (40). The draft does not even mention the highly problematic efforts led by the World Economic Forum to “redesign” governance (40) into a “global, polycentric, corporate-led, multistakeholder governance system” (49). In introduction of this section, the report is given a new purpose, both conflicting with previous statements and not in line with CFS request (63).

Section 1.3: Towards a categorization of MSPs. The suggested methodology to describe MSPs is a good starting point (23, 37, 53). In the context of the Agenda 2030 we have to go beyond **sectoral** MSPs and get **geography** back in the picture, bringing around the same table actors that are (or should be) engaged in a sustainable territorial strategy (17). The draft pays limited attention to **local level MSPs** where citizens play an important role (28). It is important to show the linkages between MSPs at different levels that can strengthen the MSPs’ outcomes (28).

Figure 1 is useful (54). This approach is interesting but should be completed with other elements such as internal and external accountability (40), and a thorough scrutiny of conflicts of interest (21).

Figure 2. Beyond policy and action, MSPs can also act as think tanks and as funding/finance sources. (11). MSPs operate at three levels: policy design, policy implementation strategies, field operations (13). Inconsistent treatment of “learning-oriented” MSPs in the report (23, 47, 53, 67)

Chapter 2: Clustering MSPs

The classification of MSPs in broad clusters, as suggested in the draft (Chapter 2) is appropriate (6) and quite useful (30, 47, 54) to analyse MSPs and understand how they operate (48). By including actual examples, this clustering provides good insights (30). However if the purpose of the report is to provide a clear perspective on the funding issue, many of the current clusters, although interesting, are not relevant (30). The proposed clustering, albeit potentially useful for analytical purposes would require a higher degree of differentiation to be more meaningful (23, 28, 37, 53).

The purpose of defining clusters remains unclear (63). The current classification in clusters is rather confusing (47, 63), inconsistent (47) and should be reconsidered (44). The suggested clustering is academic rather than practical (21). The proposed clusters are not mutually exclusive (63) nor clearly distinguishable (30). Similar partnerships are presented in different clusters (30), while many MSPs, including GASL and the 10YFP SFS Programme, could fall into different clusters (23, 28, 37, 47, 53, 54). Many MSPs address several “areas of contributions” mentioned in the questionnaire (question 14) (31).

In **Section 2.1.1** an association is made between types of partnerships and certain types of strengths and weaknesses (37). The “banking sector” presented here as a category of stakeholders is not discussed in Chapter 1 (67). **Table 1** includes networks that have nothing to do with MSPs (40). **Tables 1 and 2** are not necessary/useful (30, 31, 40). Instead, we recommend a diagram illustrating the arrived-at final four clusters (30).

Section 2.2: knowledge generation and sharing MSPs. This cluster is biased towards industrial (corporate) agriculture and intensification (40). The knowledge generated by the private sector is not neutral (21). Exchange of expertise and reciprocal capacity building can take place between different stakeholders facing the same issue (or between different countries: North-South, South-South

cooperation) (22). Farmers have a sound expertise which can be introduced within the knowledge production process from the very beginning: they will also, obviously be part of the innovation dissemination process (22).

Section 2.3: food policy and advocacy cluster. The fact of coupling policy and advocacy into a single cluster is analytically and politically mistaken (40). None of the MSP sustainability standards referred to in the report have human rights at the center (40).

Section 2.4: action oriented MSPs. This cluster is largely anecdotal and not analytical, all sub-clusters are heavily dominated by private sector objectives (40). Action oriented MSPs at a given geographical location can play a major role in preservation of traditional crop varieties (11). The relevance of separate clusters on “Livestock/Food production improvement” (23, 37). Section 2.4.5 on PPPs should include examples of the risks faced by the private sector, not only financial and investment risks, but also regulatory, political, corruption, and infrastructure risks (63).

The introduction of PPPs in the context of MSPs is highly questionable and the draft often blurs the lines between PPPs as long-term contractual arrangement and the broader notion of public-private partnerships (40). PPPs are (questionable) instruments that can be used in different clusters and may not deserve a separate sub-cluster (23, 40, 53). PPPs, if viable, require a regulation ensuring the primacy of public over private interests (51). The section on PPPs offers only a shallow analysis of risk distribution and of how PPPs influence policy thinking: the example of the New Alliance for FSN (from which key G8 governments are currently withdrawing) is emblematic (40). The discussion on PPPs does not mention market and government failures (47). Market and value chain approaches are a neglected area in this V0 draft: a large literature on value chain MSP and “pro-poor” value chains that should be quoted here (47).

Section 2.5: finance and resource mobilization MSPs. This cluster does not mention the growing body of criticism of “innovative” mechanisms such as blended finance (cf. CONCORD, 2016), nor it discusses the kinds of mechanisms required to reach small scale producers (40). The literature given here and in section 4.3 is very limited: see example suggested (47). The function of the finance cluster is not only to “mobilise funds and raise awareness” without considering the use of those funds for FSN (63).

The weak concluding remarks reflect the fact that it is not possible to identify specific policy recommendations and actions with the clusters suggested in this chapter (63).

Chapter 3: MSPs: potential and limitations

Chapter 3 is much more interesting and helps to better assess the content of Chapter 2: so perhaps it makes sense to swap those two chapters (28).

The main key challenges and/or opportunities are covered in the draft (6, 32). The question arises if the draft strikes the right balance between MSPs advantages and constraints (21). The section on potential and value added is sketchy and not convincing, the section on limitations and challenges is more detailed and better documented (40). Current chapter 3 focuses more on limitations: more attention should be given to the innovations, added value and positive results of MSPs (23, 28, 53). MSPs are increasingly emerging worldwide despite well-substantiated ongoing controversies and opposition (21).

Section 3.1: potential and value added. The strong focus in the draft on value added of MSPs seems to rely more on advocacy than analysis (30). MSPs are primarily “learning platforms” (54). The main value added of MSPs is to gather different actors around common objectives, but also: to help the weaker partners to participate in these processes; to facilitate the interaction between governments and non-state actors; and, to promote a holistic and multi-dimensional approach to FSN (48). Multistakeholder initiatives can ensure a degree of “private” governance in a context in which there was practically none (53). This section suggests two areas where MSPs could contribute but does not mention finance (63). MSPs contribute to a better mutual understanding between public and private sectors (63). The promotion of consensus-building through stakeholder engagement and dialogue, notably amongst governments, business and civil society, is vital for designing and

implementing effective solutions and for a shared sense of accountability and responsibility (63). In section 3.1.1, the meaning of “pro-poor institutional change” is unclear (63)

Section 3.2: limitations and challenges. The draft has articulated well the limitations of MSPs but fails to suggest a way out of these inherent fault lines (40). Some of the limitations and challenges identified appear to introduce new objectives – e.g. addressing power asymmetries (30). In Section 3.2.1 “tensions/distrust between partners”, several points of divergence are explored (37). Section 3.2.2 on power asymmetries is crucial but is concluded by a disappointing and naïf paragraph (21). The different interests of different partners can make it difficult to focus on common objectives and common fund raising and resource allocation strategy (48). The challenge is to ensure effective balance between actors, and effective participation of the most affected by food insecurity (48). One of the clear challenges in MSPs is maintaining the connection with people and activities “on the ground” (54) and ensuring the effective participation of civil society (66). This draft would need a proper conceptualization of “**transaction costs**” (14).

Section 3.3: assessment of MSPs performance. One of the greatest strengths of the draft is its response to the CFS’s interest for “metrics” or criteria to study existing MSPs in order to learn from them and improve present and future MSPs for FSN (31). This section is interesting but could come as part of Chapter 1 and the criteria developed could be then applied to the examples given in Chapter 2 (63).

Section 3.3 covers important characteristics and qualities for successful MSPs that can help analyze existing MSPs (31). Although counterintuitive, the process in an MSP can be in itself part of the solution, triggering cultural changes and deepening democratic culture (53). While all the proposed criteria are fine and relevant to MSPs, some of them, including power asymmetry, are not specific to MSPs (23, 28, 37, 53). The questionnaire should be adapted to MSPs that operate at different scales (23, 28, 53). To be relevant, any assessment framework will have to include effectiveness, impact, transaction costs, motivations, accountability and transparency (14).

This section fails to bridge the gap between limitations and solutions since it is theoretical and draws on literature that is not necessarily useful for the purpose at hand (40). The methodological framework to assess the positive and negative effects of MSPs on FSN and on its different dimensions (sustainability, resilience, availability and affordability of food supply; and dietary competence of end-users) is missing in the report (13). The draft could propose a more rigorous set of characteristics that can be assessed in existing/future MSPs – CFS’s GSF can provide the conceptual/operational framework for such criteria (31).

The potential of MSPs to contribute to the human right to adequate food and nutrition is not assessed, nor a clear assessment framework is methodologically defined: how much MSPs can contribute to FSN is not clear (40). MSP assessment should be conducted from a **human-right** based perspective (e.g. PANTHER), to which any other objectives and indicators should be subsumed (40).

Sustainability in its 3 dimensions should be added as an assessment criteria (32, 63).

In the section on **impact** and in box 12 distinguish “attribution” and “contribution” (25).

The section on **resource mobilization** is rather theoretical (47): the resource mobilization theory, developed in the context of social movements is not relevant to the kind of private sector-led mechanisms examined (40). The draft should study more in-depth the critical success factors in resource mobilization for development drawing on the marketing literature (47). This section focuses only on access to resources for the MSP as opposed to any financial purpose and functions the MSP has (63).

Ensuring **inclusiveness** is time consuming and resource intensive (28). Overcoming polarization and promoting inclusiveness are paramount conditions to enhance multistakeholder collaboration for the transformation of food systems (23, 53).

Accountability might not take the same form for all entities (30). There is no discussion in the draft about mutual accountability (30). Beyond corporate social responsibility, we should aim for the private sector at corporate accountability in FSN issues (21).

The short section on **transparency** does not mention conflicts of interest (21). Access to information is a very relevant question: the presence of private stakeholders often raises the questions of commercial exploitation and intellectual property rights (22).

Figure 4 provides a very good image of how MSPs could have an impact (28). This figure should arrive earlier in the report (28). As very clearly explained in Figure 4, the costs to ensure inclusiveness, accountability and transparency occur immediately: this increases legitimacy of the initiative and trust between partners but the outcomes on FSN will be realized over a longer time span (28).

Chapter 3 concludes with an unclear and inappropriate statement (21, 23, 40, 53), undocumented, disconnected from the discussion and highly open to critics (40). This would need further elaboration (23, 53).

Chapter 4: Pathways to improve MSPs' contribution to FSN

Chapter 4 aims to address the issues identified in Chapter 3 but many of the key sections are short or "to be developed" (47). The final chapter attempts to do the impossible given the faulty framing of the issue from the outset and the lack of any convincing evidence that the potential of MSPs to promote FSN and the right to food outweighs their striking limitations (40). A clear finding of the report is the lack of demonstrated success of MSPs (30). This should catalyse more serious thinking about whether MSPs can achieve FSN and the SDGs and lead to predictable and sustainable source of funding (30). Given the inadequate "evidence-base" behind the trend to promote MSPs, the report could identify areas for future research (40).

The V0 draft fails to provide substantive guidance about the required **governance mechanisms** of MSPs (40). Given the dominant role played by corporate interests backed by donor governments, there is little chance that the voices and demands of the most vulnerable will be fully recognized in the governance and operations of MSPs (40).

The draft lacks the important discussion on how to encourage and facilitate the creation of - broader - MSPs to finance and improve FSN (32, 34, 63). Many of the avenues explored in Chapter 4 are not equally applicable to different types of MSPs (23, 37, 53). Some sections (such as 4.2.4 and 4.3.1) are not specific to MSPs (23, 37, 53).

Chapter 4 should elaborate a step-by-step approach to "operationalise" MSPs: a reference is suggested (69).

Sections 4.1 and 4.2 could be more directly related to the eight performance qualities identified in Chapter 3 (63).

Section 4.1: improve MSPs' performance: internal conditions. Section 4.1 analyses internal factors playing a key role in the achievement of a fruitful collaboration between partners (37). This analysis could be extended to internal factors – examples are given - in the different partner organizations themselves, according to their nature (37). The role of a trusted partnership "broker", not covered in the draft, is critical to address and overcome power asymmetries, build trust, legitimacy and much more (69). One of the soft skills required for actors to effectively engage in MSPs is "multistakeholder diplomacy"

The following factors are crucial to MSPs' performance: engagement of each group of stakeholders (63); high-level leadership (47); scalability (63); institutional infrastructures (63); clear objectives and common agenda (23, 47, 53); effective partner collaboration and mutually reinforcing activities (23, 47, 53); clear roles and responsibilities (47); transparency (63); accountability (47, 51, 63); monitoring mechanisms and indicators (47, 51); resource availability, resource mobilization and allocation (47, 48); continuous communication (47); capacity building (63), in particular for smallholder institutions and organizations (32, 47); sharing of good practices (63); knowledge management (47).

The report needs to identify **minimal standards** of participation, accountability, rights-based, transparency, roles and responsibilities, conflicts of interests... in line with the CFS vision and the spirit of its reform (40). Addressing conflicts of interest should be mentioned among these internal

conditions (21). “Alignment between MSPs” can contribute to strengthen the hand of private sector actors (21).

Section 4.2: improve MSPs’ performance: enabling environment. Sections 4.2.2 to 4.2.4 must be enacted by governments and are less relevant for global MSPs (23, 37, 53). SDG17 deserves additional analysis that could fit in section 4.2.3 (31). Appropriate incentives are important for the creation and development of MSPs (32, 63).

Section 4.3: financing for development. This section starts from the 2030 Agenda and the AAAA but should also use OECD and World Bank reports on agriculture that assessed financial needs for FSN and for the agricultural sector (63). This section omits important literature that has been critical of the AAAA (21).

In **Section 4.3.1**, it would be interesting to be more specific about financial needs of MSPs, rather than sustainable development in general (23, 37, 53). The paragraph on “investments needed to address global challenges” is about possible funding sources rather than about actual needs: other sources should be mentioned (including the new GEF Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program; the Land Neutrality Degradation Fund; and the Green Climate Fund) (23, 53).

Section 4.3.2 is an important section and needs further elaboration (32). The terms of “domestic public finance”, “domestic private finance”, “international public finance”, “international private finance” need to be better defined (6).

The section on domestic private finance has to recognize local private actors (smallholders, SMEs and local large corporations) (32, 63). The contribution of multinational corporations is not under domestic private finance (63). More can be said about the private sector’s ability to finance FSN: the private sector must be recognized for its important contributions and not just for its potential in causing harm (32, 63). Another important group to mention in this section is consumers/households that, through their food purchase choices, influence production and investment in agriculture and food value chains (32,63). The section on domestic public finance could be more specific on the needs of the agricultural sector, references are given (63). Innovation can help direct-to-farmer finance providers better serve farmers by addressing the challenges associated with direct-to-farmers lending: see the Initiative for Smallholder Finance (63). One of the most important effort from the HLPE should be to encourage international funding actors (international banks, green funds...) to invest for FSN (35).

Figure 5 is very useful (54). **Figure 6.** This model is of limited use as it cannot be applied to all types of MSPs (23).

Conclusion

Currently the conclusion does not address any of the basic issues included in the CFS request: some of its statements only repeat AAAA findings (63).