

IFAD Comments CFS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON AGROECOLOGICAL AND OTHER INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS THAT ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

IFAD welcomes the 1st draft of policy document and thanks the Chairperson and the CSF Secretariat for conducting the informal consultation process leading to this document reflecting further developments from the Zero Draft. IFAD would like to offer the following comments:

Paragraph 2: The updated figure on food loss from post-harvest to retail is up to 14% globally (FAO SOFA 2019), consider to revise the quoted 30% figure.

Paragraph 4: together with peasants and other people being affected by violation of human rights, it is suggested to explicitly mention indigenous peoples who are among the rural people and land and environment defenders who are experiencing their rights to land, territories and resources being violated.

Paragraph 6: *“As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on agriculture and food systems points to the critical importance of resilience, interest in innovative approaches that strengthen resilience is growing, particularly in agroecological approaches”*. The COVID-19 crisis has for sure re-enforced the need for resilience. However, a far bigger push for strengthening the resilience of farming and food systems, with particular emphasis on the resilience capacities of small-scale producers and other vulnerable families, comes from the accelerating impacts from climate change and shocks. Climate change should therefore mentioned there as a major challenge faced by food systems and deserves a specific paragraph.

Paragraph 7: *“The HLPE report considers that all food systems have the potential to contribute further to sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition by following context-appropriate transition pathways towards the transformation of food systems”*. This sentence, as formulated, sounds tautological. It is suggested that the sentence stops at *“context-appropriate transition pathways”*.

Paragraph 8: The *“shared principles”* (from the HLPE) appear to focus overwhelmingly on the supply side of the food system. A sustainable system is one where supply and demand are in balance, but there is little reference to the demand side in the principles. A principle on sustainable diets could be added which is also referred to in the policy recommendations 1 – g, h and i.

Paragraph 9: *“It is noteworthy that innovations in agriculture and food systems are distinct from those in many other sectors because ecological relationships and social interactions have a central role.”* All innovation is deeply embedded in its social and ecological milieu. It is suggested that this sentence is reformulated to indicate that ecological relationships and social interactions have, to some extent, a more central role in agriculture / food systems.

Paragraph 12: *“... Many technological innovations – despite having some positive impacts when assessed on single criteria – have generated significant negative externalities. It is suggested to provide an example of these negative externalities (e.g. decrease in pollinators, soil and water pollution and health impacts from pesticides, decreasing nutrient content in some high yielding crop varieties, decreasing soil health and soil organic carbon stocks over time, increased dependence on external inputs, high degrees of market concentration). “...Thus going forward innovation in agriculture and food systems must address major social and environmental challenges simultaneously by being scrutinized against the criteria of sustainability.”* Suggest to add: *...and its ability to deliver diversified food accessible and affordable for all.*

Paragraph 13: The last sentence is a bit cryptically and it would require some explanation: *“At the same time, concerns about access, capacity-building, levelling the playing field, and appropriate safeguards regarding data privacy, access, control and ownership signal the need to*

consider possible risks to food security and nutrition”. It could be useful to further elaborate on which are the risks that technology may pose for food security and nutrition in this context.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Lay the policy foundations for agroecological and other innovative approaches to contribute to sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition

- a. Suggest the assessment is conducted in a participatory manner, hence suggest to add the word “participatory” before assessment. Suggest also to paying attention to the food systems’ ability to provide access to diversified and healthy diets for all (as defined in the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020 (SOFI 2020)*).
- b. Suggest to add “nutrition” to the list provided for all relevant sectors. Suggested reformulation “giving particular importance to the needs and representation of the most vulnerable”.
- c. In this sentence, as in other parts of the recommendations, the word “scientist” is often used when discussing co-creation. However, “scientist” is often associated with the natural / physical sciences. Coherently with the emphasis on transdisciplinary research and with the recognition sustainable food systems transition necessarily requires also social innovation, it is suggested that these sentences are reformulated using “researchers” or “scientists and researchers” – e.g. “are co-created between producers and researchers...”
- e. Add “climate change mitigation” to the list of aspects to be assessed. Suggest to explicitly mention the need to guarantee open access to the primary data on which the assessment of impacts of agroecological and other innovative approaches is based (to promote transparency, favour independent verification and stimulate innovative research).
- h. Suggested reformulation: “Re-direct public policies, budgets and incentives from innovations and practices that lead to negative externalities to those that have primarily positive externalities while contributing to multiple sustainability goals. Why in particular private sector? Public health professionals and researchers, consumer organizations, farmers themselves, etc. are just as important. In addition, there are other means that could be mentioned to promote sustainable diets, such as nutritional guidelines and education related to these and public procurement.
- j. Suggested reformulation: “Ensure that small-scale food producers have access to the natural resources (e.g. land and water that are essential for sustainable agricultural production through adopting formal instruments at the national and local level that are....”
- k. Mention the four dimensions of food security in parenthesis
- m. Suggested reformulation “strengthen inter-sectoral and multi-level policymaking and planning...”

2. Establish and apply comprehensive performance measurement and monitoring frameworks to encourage the adoption of agroecological and other innovative approaches

- d. Suggested reformulation: “Undertake holistic assessments of positive and negative employment and labour characteristics in agriculture and food systems, disaggregated by gender and age to underpin policies and regulations that favour transitions toward sustainable agriculture and food systems, while ensuring decent conditions for agricultural labour and other food system workers, opportunities for women, men and youth, and strengthening the health of farm and other food system workers”
 - Add a point on developing matrix for farm and/or community level evaluation of “value” (nutritional, environmental, social) of food items that are produced through innovative sustainable systems making a case on the additional value versus costs.
 - Add another point on developing matrix for assessing the economic and financial viability of agroecology and other innovative approaches and their adoptability by resource poor men and women farmers and their clear development outcomes (productivity and income gains) along with biophysical sustainability dimensions.
- e. Suggested reformulation: “documentation of lessons learned, data and information sharing at all levels...”

- f. Metrics must be developed for different scales: farm, value chain, landscape, national economy among others.

3. Support transitions to resilient, diversified and integrated agriculture and food systems through agroecological and other innovative approaches

- h. Suggested addition: “Promote the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides and recognize...”

Suggested addition in subtitle between j and k: “*Recognizing that territorial planning is a key element of fostering diversity and sustainable ecosystem services*”

- k. Suggested reformulation: “Govern territories and landscapes at appropriate levels and in an inclusive way responding to local needs, including equity in access to resources, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and other challenges to conserve and enhance the provision of ecosystem services, protecting biodiversity-rich habitats, and responding to the local impacts of global emergencies, in particular by supporting social innovation and strengthening inclusive public bodies, such as local food policy councils and multi-stakeholder landscape and watershed management platforms”
- m. suggestion to mention green jobs for young people, connected to the use of agroecology and other innovative approaches. The current wording is too broad.

- p. Suggested reformulation: “through capturing, and fairly distributing, a high proportion of the value of production locally”. Add a point on labels and signs of quality, to market products coming from agroecology and other innovative approaches.

- s. Suggested reformulation: “support market and social innovations that strengthen linkages...”. Suggested reformulation: “all actors (researchers, producers, consumers, industry, governments)

Add a point on the promotion of the use of renewable energy technologies, together with agroecology and other innovative approaches.

4. Strengthen research, training and education, and reconfigure knowledge generation and sharing to foster co-learning

- a. Suggested reformulation: “by ensuring that research, development, extension/dissemination...”. Development, to be here intended as in “research and development” (R&D) is a key step in the innovation chain and should also be informed by the principles of inclusiveness, participation and problem-solving.
- b. Suggest to include inter-generational approaches that focus on the transmission of knowledge from elders to youth that can lead to innovations by blending indigenous knowledge with modern technologies
- d. Suggested reformulation “market concentration across value chains” (as it is a broader concept than supply chain)
- e. Suggested additions: “Invest in advisory services and strengthen training programmes for co-creation and experimental learning promoting ecological alternatives to agrochemical use through agricultural extension, veterinary services, forestry services using methods such as farmer field schools (FFS), producer-to-producer networks, networks of young promoters; promote women as extension agents and providers of advisory services for women;”
- f. Suggest to take into account the specificity of indigenous peoples’ knowledge together with the specificity of women’s knowledge. (e.g. indigenous knowledge is not necessary indigenous peoples’ knowledge)
- g. Suggested addition: “Support capacity development for producers, in particular small-scale producers and their experimental learning skills,.....”
- i. The point could insist on cost/benefits ratios and co-benefits.
- l. Suggested edit: “Increase and monitor responsible investments in public and private research...”
- m. Suggest to include “indigenous peoples”.

Annex: consider adding definitions for sustainable agriculture and for agroecology.