

PSM perspectives on the policy convergence for agroecological and other innovative approaches

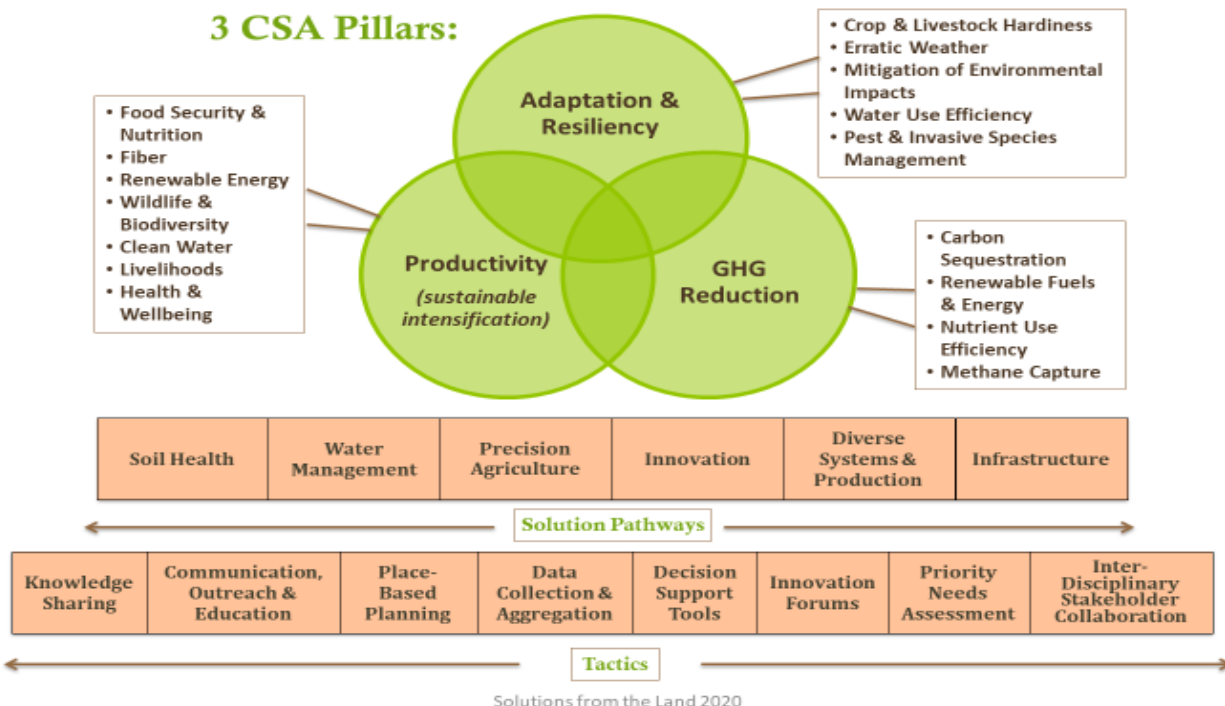
Following the series of informal discussions on the issues raised by the zero draft, and Draft One, the PSM members wanted to give the following perspectives. Firstly, we would emphasise that the outcome, or the objective, is what the goal should be, not just the means to get there. That goal is for food security, underpinned by a global sustainable food system for society to support the attainment of the SDGs and, in particular, food security and food accessibility at affordable prices for both rural and urban consumers.

We therefore need prompt and meaningful progress of how all individual farms, with their current level of sustainability practices in agricultural (crop, livestock, fisheries) production, can successfully implement sustainable farming that supports the foundation of a Sustainable Food System. We need to be able to improve farmers, and their families, prosperity and for people and institutions to invest in the systems transformations to achieve that.

In support of attaining this sustainable agriculture, fisheries and livestock we need to recognize that there are many important interlocking and mutually supporting approaches, techniques and strategies designed to sustainably improve production, enhance resilience and reduce/sequester GHGs. This includes agroecology, which is one of many innovative approaches but also, other approaches for sustainable production, which includes everything that well managed farms, ranches and forests produce- food, feed, fiber, clean energy, ecosystem services, biodiversity etc. We do not limit these approaches to just production of agricultural commodities but rather everything that farms, of all sizes, produce including ecosystem services. These 'solution pathways' include (but are not limited to) climate smart agriculture, precision agriculture and improved nutrient use efficiency that uses a variety of strategies and tools such as digitalization and improved seeds to support the adaptive capacity of agriculture. This is shown in the diagram¹ below.

¹ Developed together with 'Solutions from the Land'

Strategies to Enable Agricultural Solutions to SDGs



There is a concern that framing these strategies and approaches from only a societal or political standpoint and not from the perspective of the farmer provides false dichotomies which can get interpreted as the environment vs. large corporate interests; social issues vs. big business. It therefore gets harder to focus on the tools and management practices that individual farms need to use to sustainably develop their farming operations, as the diagram emphasises.

We believe we can better focus on the areas of convergence and the approaches and strategies that can be demonstrated to be better alternatives for individual farms and farming systems, to increase the sustainability of farming to better support rural and urban populations. These approaches includes everything that well managed small and large farms and forests do and produce: food, feed, fiber, clean energy, ecosystem services, biodiversity etc. This is not limited to just production of agricultural commodities but rather everything that sustainable farms can deliver, including ecosystem services and practices that increase soil organic matter, improve soil tilth and production for the farmer, and sequester CO₂ from the atmosphere.

At the same time, by benchmarking best practices it enables both old and new techniques to be easily compared, to demonstrate best performance, impact on employment and income, with a full assessment of not just financial, but all economic

costs. Many of these strategies and approaches can be monitored and accomplished with digitization tools, decision support tools, knowledge sharing and inter-disciplinary stakeholder collaboration.

A key part of that stakeholder collaboration is farmer representation and voice at local, regional and national level. We believe that a way forward for an integrated mechanism for the voice of farmers would be to use the proposed interactive dialogues proposed as part of the ongoing consultations for the Food Systems Summit. Based on the Food Systems Dialogues, these interactive sessions, conducted in-country (using toolkits and techniques that are being developed by the Food Systems Summit) would provide valuable information and feedback of how best to further develop varied, sustainable farming systems pathways with the farmers themselves. The PSM welcome the opportunity to take these farmer dialogues forward to enhance the convergence and implementation of sustainable agricultural approaches.