

Written comments on uptake - PSU RAI Team

Version 19.01.2024

CFS stakeholders are invited to provide written inputs on objectives and potential areas of work to be addressed in the Action Plan. In this regard, written answers to the following questions should be sent to cfs@fao.org by 19 January 2024:

1. Could you share your expectations in terms of desired outcomes and areas of work of this CFS workstream?

The Action Plan should provide specific recommendations from CFS members on the application of the CFS-RAI Principles building on existing good practices, such as those presented at the Global Thematic Event of CFS in 2022. In addition, it would be helpful if this document would be coupled with specific pledges from resource partner countries and potential beneficiary countries to further uptake of the CFS-RAI Principles in line with the outcomes of the Action Plan.

2. Could you indicate the main elements that would be important to include in the Action Plan?

1- Raise awareness among donors about the time required for effective policy change and encourage them to contribute to fund **longer project cycles- of at least 5-6 years**, as the standard time of 2-3 years is not enough for policy change.

2- Clarify what each specific CFS instrument is and how it supports achieving the SDGs, also in coordination with other CFS instruments.

The Action Plan should clarify that the application of CFS instruments should not create more work in the country but rather support achieving the country's objectives, starting with the SDGs.

3- Promote the identification of country specific "Entry point(s)", linking the application of each CFS policy instrument to relevant country priorities and realities, basing activities on existing regional and national frameworks and adapting them to the context and the involved stakeholders.

Through baseline studies and country needs assessments, identify country priorities and policies, laws and institutions related to the topic of the specific CFS instrument already existent in the country. The CFS instrument should be presented as a tool to support and enhance them, rather than as introducing a new instrument derived from a global policy forum to which governments should align. In this regard, it is important to recommend a bottom-up approach

in which the policy instrument is contextualized to country-specific realities (rather than vice-versa) and communication is adapted accordingly, while respecting the core values of the instrument.

When analysing what is already available at country level, it is important to clarify similarities and differences with other standards related to the topic (e.g. many sustainability standards cover similar areas as the CFS-RAI).

4- Ensure to target Capacity Development to high-level decision makers and technical staff, including at local level.

Key change agents, need to be identified, across levels and stakeholder groups that will ensure the uptake of the CFS instrument. When strengthening the capacities of governments to apply the CFS instrument, it is key to include both high-level decision makers based in the government agencies located primarily in Capital cities, as well as parliamentarians. This needs to be complemented with the training of technical staff and linked to what they do in their day-to-day work, including at local levels. This will promote the use of the CFS instrument with what is happening on the ground. Other groups need to be included such as CSOs, academia, and NGOs to ensure the uptake across the broad spectrum of stakeholders. Capacity Development activities should take place in the country capitals and be complemented with Training of Trainers and training at local levels.

5. Promote the use of CFS instruments to foster multi-stakeholder collaboration at country level

CFS instruments can be used to foster dialogue and collaboration between different stakeholder groups, including at national level. There is a need to facilitate this kind of dialogue between change agents in the various stakeholder groups.

6. Ensure real inclusivity

To ensure all stakeholders take and feel ownership of CFS instruments, their participation is required and should be inclusive. As both FAO and the CFS operate in multilingual environments, the tools, guides and manuals created to support the uptake and application of these instruments should be made available in the working languages of the Organization to ensure a broad uptake. When operating at country level, the translation into national and sometimes local languages may also be important.

3. Could you present concrete examples of uptake activities carried out by your constituency, including indications on their impact, challenges encountered as well as areas for improvement?

Assessments and dialogues – setting the scene:

FAO, as implementing agency for the CFS-RAI, organized a series of inclusive and participatory global and regional dialogues and capacity needs assessments between 2015 and 2017. One point that clearly came out of these assessments was the need for more guidance to apply the principles in practice, through tools and Capacity Development. It was also made clear that, to strengthen the enabling environment for RAI, there is a need for:

- Empowered change agents: policy makers, parliamentarians, civil society and the private sector
- Inclusive institutions and participatory governance
- Enhanced policy, legal and incentives frameworks

Actions:

Since 2018 to present, the RAI Team at FAO has focused on 3 main areas:

a. Strengthening institutional, legal and policy frameworks

- a. Production of tools: A series of [E-learning courses](#) (e.g. Courses on the enabling environment), briefs and information sheets (e.g. [Policy brief: The right to food and responsible investment in agriculture and food systems](#)), guides (e.g. [FAO-CCSI Guide on incentives for RAI](#), [RAI Handbook for parliamentarians](#)) rapid assessment tools (e.g. [Rapid capacity assessment tool - Strengthening capacities to enhance responsible investment in agriculture and food systems](#)) and strategic planning tools (e.g. [Catalysing young agri-entrepreneurs' investments and ensuring their sustainability](#))
- b. Needs and demand-based capacity development activities for policy makers, parliamentarians, technical government staff, private sector and civil society organizations
- c. Learning programmes for civil society organizations, NGOs and farmers' organizations to empower women and youth to engage in RAI, with development of strategy papers including recommendations for required changes in legal and policy frameworks (selected countries in ASEAN)
- d. Support in the enhancement of policies and processes (e.g. ongoing revision of the investment screening policy in Liberia, ensuring alignment with CFS-RAI, in collaboration with NIC)
- e. Technical support in the regional adaptation of the CFS- RAI (e.g. support in the drafting of the ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry)

b. Promoting the integration of RAI in investments, including women, youth, and SMEs

- a. Investment planning tools (e.g. RAI Due diligence tools, investment scoring tool)

- b. Agri-accelerators for youth (e.g. Agri-Accelerator Hub providing support to young agri-entrepreneurs to finalize or expand their responsible investment projects. To date, the Hub has supported 60 economically sustainable responsible agribusinesses in Tunisia and ensured full alignment with the CFS-RAI, a further 200 are to be supported in 2024 and 2025 in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia.
- c. Strengthening the ecosystem of RAI for SMEs (e.g. integrating RAI into the work methodologies of SME business advisors in Mauritania and Tunisia)
- d. Trainings for rural women and youth to promote their participation in RAI and foster gender-inclusive policy making processes (Sierra Leone, district level – women; Liberia, district level - youth)
- e. Collecting good practices from companies (e.g. [Case studies on ASEAN-RAI](#))

c. Strengthening networks and alliances for RAI

- a. Collaboration with Parliamentary Alliances (e.g. capacity development for the Parliamentary Front against Hunger, support for the adoption of the PARLATINO Declaration and the AIPA Resolution on the ASEAN RAI)
- b. Collaboration with think-tanks and university networks (e.g. Network of Latin American Universities for the application of the CFS-RAI, coordinated by the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, and the multi-stakeholder think tank led by Institut national de la recherche agronomique de Tunisie - INRAT)
- c. Facilitation of regional and national events, and multi-stakeholder dialogues to support inter-institutional collaboration and inclusive governance (e.g. the RAI Multi-Stakeholder Platform in Liberia, the Multi Stakeholders Dialogues in Lao PDR),
- d. sharing of knowledge and good practices (e.g support to the agreement on regional roadmaps in Liberia, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Tunisia),
- e. Identifying the criteria for targeting investment support programmes for young agri-entrepreneurs (Senegal), and
- f. Identifying the steps of the entrepreneurial process through a “*Shared Entrepreneurial Pathway*” (Senegal).