

**Inputs on the Draft Outline of the Action Plan, for the OEWG on the CFS Workstream, "Increasing awareness, ownership, use and usefulness of CFS policy outcomes"
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide input for consideration in developing the draft Action Plan. The submission that follows draws on forthcoming research that was undertaken during 2023, in part associated with a fellowship undertaken with the CFS. In-depth interviews were undertaken with 43 stakeholders working at global, regional and national level, with expertise relevant to cross-sectoral nutrition policy making and implementation, between May and September 2023. The findings that are summarised are those specifically relevant to the uptake and use of CFS policy agreements.

Forms of uptake

The interviewees spoke about the use (uptake) of CFS policy agreements in two main ways, and also highlighted the different 'audiences' that these forms of use entailed.

The first use of CFS policy agreements identified by interviewees was to **identify and operationalise evidence-based policy action**. This was evident at the national as well as at the global level. At the national level, the best-practice and evidence-based measures in global guidance documents were seen as serving as a helpful reference point in developing policy measures relevant to the national context. They were also used to justify the adoption and/or implementation of specific measures requiring cross-sectoral collaboration. From a political perspective, the agreement among countries that is represented in a guidance document was also seen as giving these documents authority at the national level, including overcoming tensions and conflicts between sectors.

At the global level, interviewees pointed to the use of CFS policy agreements to support evidence-based programmes and operationalise commitments in other multilateral agencies. A few interviewees gave specific examples of the application of the evidence based guidelines in CFS policy agreements to guide programming and funding by other multilaterals.

The second form of use was the role of CFS policy agreements in **norm-setting and shifting mindsets** in the policy community (globally and nationally). This was a more passive form of uptake, involving a wide range of policy stakeholders including negotiators (diplomats), global actors, national policy makers, and policy actors outside of government (including NGOs and the private sector), but was seen as powerful in supporting and enabling change.

Opportunities to strengthen uptake

There were six main opportunities evident in the data to strengthen and support uptake.

The first was the development of **approaches to help 'translate' the guidance** to relevant stakeholders. This was mainly focussed on fostering awareness at the national level, and included tailored communications to relevant sectors, including through checklist documents, access to experts and trainings. Interviewees also pointed to the value of identifying a focal person for CFS communications at the national level. There was also an important role for translational efforts identified with respect to other multilateral agencies. This included communication regarding the role of different agencies in supporting uptake and their relevance to existing projects and programmes.

Diversifying the format of the CFS policy agreements to support uptake by the relevant audience was also identified as critical to support uptake. Interviewees emphasised that the form and structure of global guidance documents needed to enable use at country level. Considerations related to the recommendations themselves indicated a preference for short and concise

recommendations with clear examples of best-practise that would inform operationalisation and adaptation to country context. Interviewees recognised the difficulty in striking a balance between general guidance that was widely applicable and specific guidance that could directly inform practice. Interviewees also perceived limiting the scope of CFS policy agreements as a means to enable uptake, through focussing on issues core to the mandate (namely food security and nutrition).

The third facet of supporting uptake was encouraging the **integration of the CFS policy agreements by other multilateral agencies**. This included integration into agendas in other multilateral forums and also the potential for cross referencing of CFS policy agreements by other global agencies. To enable this, interviewees identified a need to communicate how the guidelines support the mandate of other agencies – which in many cases were diverse sectors. Strategies that interviewees outside of the agriculture sector identified were developing sector-specific narratives regarding the implications of CFS policy agreements, and one-on-one engagement with the other agency.

A fourth approach identified was to investigate **potential for co-ownership of CFS policy agreements** with other agencies that have a relevant mandate for implementation. This was raised by two country-level interviewees and two interviewees at regional level, two of whom gave the example of the expansion of authorship on the annual State of food security (SOFI) report. This strategy was identified by interviewees as enabling 1) use at country level via multiple agencies, and 2) evolution to address a range of relevant issues because of the diverse perspectives informing its design.

The fifth approach identified by interviewees was the **creation of incentives to use CFS policy agreements** that were identified by interviewees. One incentive identified was introducing **monitoring and reporting** measures, through tracking examples of uptake (e.g. through a database), creating spaces for reflection on lessons learned from uptake, and embedding the use of CFS policy agreements into standard reporting templates used by multilateral agencies (in particular for the Rome-based agencies). Another incentive was **linking CFS policy agreements to relevant commitments** made in other global forums. For example, the opportunity to use CFS policy agreements to identify specific priorities and activities to operationalise commitments made with reference to the Nutrition for Growth summit.

Finally, interviewees identified a need to **develop connections between national policy makers**, regarding CFS policy agreements. This included national efforts to connect negotiators with relevant sector-specific policy makers, to help to build awareness of the CFS policy agreements and increase their use. It also included identifying leaders and focal points at the national level, who could support the dissemination as well as guide uptake of CFS policy products. At the global level, an opportunity was identified for the CFS policy agreements – as well as the CFS as a forum – to create action networks that spanned global and national policy makers. This was seen as enabling sharing of learnings regarding critical food security and nutrition issues, and also raising awareness of CFS policy agreements.