

## **-Draft Concept Note and Agendas-**

## **Building capacities and regional exchange on operationalizing a holistic approach to transform food systems sustainably[[1]](#footnote-2) in Europe and Central Asia**

Organised by the UN Issue-Based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems (IBC SFS)[[2]](#footnote-3)

**Date:** 1st workshop: 11 October, 2024 10:00am – 12:30pm CEST; 2nd workshop: date TBD – tentatively, end of October, early November 2024

**Event duration**: 2 hours and 30 minutes

**Type of events**: virtual on Zoom

**Event outline**

The UN Issue-Based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems (IBC SFS) is organizing a series of two online workshops entitled “Building capacities and regional exchange on **operationalizing a holistic approach to transform food systems in the Europe and Central Asia**”. The workshops provide the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and UN Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) - with a unique opportunity to strengthen multisectoral UN support, enhance knowledge and skills to undertake the necessary steps for food systems transformation in their country contexts in Europe and Central Asia. With their considerable knowledge, expertise and convening power, UNRCs/UNCTs are key actors for enhancing food systems transformation.

The series of workshops is organized in response to the specific requests from UNRCs/UNCTs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, and will serves as a pivotal platform for advancing the agenda of transforming agrifood systems in Europe and Central Asia. The date and agenda of the second workshop will be communicated soon.

By sharing tools and best practices to enhance understanding and practical operationalization of the systemic nature of food systems, fostering policy coherence, and knowledge sharing, the series of workshops aim to provide the UNCTs with the tools, knowledge and experience available to drive tangible progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals in the region, customizing approaches to food systems in all countries where the UN is present. To this end, the UN’s Joint SDG Fund with its new funding window for food systems, can also play a catalytic role to improve national leadership on sustainable food systems and facilitate multistakeholder action

More specifically, the series of workshops will focus on i) building knowledge and capacities to apply systems thinking to transform food systems sustainably, and to solve complex food systems problems (promoting enhanced cooperation and policy coherence), and ii) help UNRC/UNCTs have the required skills to develop at scale impactful joint UN initiatives (projects/programmes) which guide Member States in improving collaboration across different sectors and disciplines through multi-level governance mechanisms. The series of workshops will facilitate regional cross-learning and experience sharing, and ultimately showcase the value of the UN’s regional and country-specific expertise to support the ambitious plans for food system transformation outlined in the National Pathways.

**Overall objective**

The series of workshops aims at strengthening UNRCs and UNCTs capacities to support countries in food systems transformation, through the exchange of knowledge, experience and tools available.

**Specific objectives**

1. Raise awareness, build capacities on systemic thinking on food systems, and facilitate regional and cross-country learning on the key concepts, tools and application of this approach for coherent policy and collective action;
2. Promote the knowledge of, and use of existing data sources, tools and analytical frameworks developed at global, regional and country levels to support evidence-based policy making and monitoring;
3. Enable cross-country, cross sectoral and multi-agency collaboration;
4. Develop impactful joint UN initiatives on food systems demonstrating the value of the UN’s regional and country expertise.

**Target Audience**

Primary target audience: UNRCs and UNCTs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan

Further participation:UNRCs and UNCTs in Europe and Central Asia will be invited

**1st Workshop - Draft Agenda**

The workshop’s agenda will be structured into three key sessions:

1. Knowledge: Sharing a common vision, ambitions, challenges, and opportunities to support the transformation of food systems by UNRCs and UNCTs.
2. Dialogue: Interactive discussion on moving beyond silos approach towards a holistic food systems approach.
3. Action: unlocking collective intelligence to enable cross-country, cross-sectoral and multi-agency collaboration.

**SETTING THE STAGE AND OPERATIONALISING HOLISTIC FOOD SYSTEM APPROACH**

**11 October 2024 10:00am – 12:30pm CEST**

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| **Time** | **Activity** | **Speaker** | **Objectives of the session** |
| 10:00 - 10:10 | **Opening**  **Welcome remarks** | **Overall Moderator:**  **Raimund Jehle**, IBC SFS Co-Chair  **Gwi Yeop Son**, Regional Director UNDCO Europe & Central Asia |  |
| 10:10– 10:15 | **Overview of the agenda and workshop objectives** | **Raimund Jehle,** IBC SFS Co-Chair |  |
| 10:15 – 10:35 | **Session 1**  **Introduction to the concept of holistic food systems**  This session will aim at responding to the following questions:   * *Is the food systems approach a useful approach for food systems transformation?* * *What are the strengths and weaknesses of a food systems approach in ECA?* * *What are practical tips to apply the food systems thinking and systemic approaches?* * *Developing the potential of making food systems thinking a key approach in future food systems programming and implementation plans/practical application* | **Cristina Lopriore**, International expert on food systems, FAO REU  **Mary Kenny**, Food Safety and Consumer Protection Officer, FAO REU and part of the IBC SFS Secretariat | Raise awareness, build capacities on systemic thinking on food systems, and facilitate regional and cross-country learning on the key concepts, tools and application of this approach for coherent policy and collective action. |
| 10:35 –10:45 | **Q&A & experience exchange** | **Monica Moldovan**, Technical Specialist, UNDP | Interactive discussion  Biodiversity  Innovation lab  Countries experiences  Prepared questions |
| 10:45 – 11:30 | **Session 2**  **Snapshots on food systems in selected countries** (covering Food, Health and Nutrition; Environment and Climate Change; Agriculture and Trade)  **Facilitated discussion:**  Use the food systems mapping and analysis to discuss:   * *Where are you working in the broader food systems?* * *Are you already exploring synergies in your work among the key areas of food systems? Can you share some examples and lessons learnt?* * *Where do you see major concerns/barriers, Opportunities/ synergies for improved outcomes on nutrition/health social, economic, environment)* * *What further support would be helpful from the IBC-SFS as you continue to work on FS transformation in the context of CCA and CF process?* | **Cristina Lopriore**, International expert on food systems, FAO REU  Moderator: **Elisabeth Türk,** Director,  Economic Cooperation and Trade  Division, United Nations Economic  Commission for Europe (UNECE)  UNCTs representatives for the facilitated technical discussion from   * BiH: **Amina Omicevic**, Head of Solutions Mapping, UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina * Serbia: **Aleksandar Mentov**, National Project Manager, FAO Serbia * Kyrgyzstan: **Ms Hilke** David, WFP Deputy Representative * Uzbekistan: **Mr Ivan Horvat**, UNDP Agriculture Technical Lead Specialist | Build capacities on sustainable food systems to show how it works in practice at country level.  Reflect on how UN agencies are positioning themselves in FS related work and support building a common narrative and impactful joint UN initiatives on FS. |
| 11:30 –  11:45 | **Open Discussion** | Moderator: **Elisabeth Türk,** Director,  Economic Cooperation and Trade  Division, United Nations Economic  Commission for Europe (UNECE) | Sharing views and inputs from other countries (not limiting only to the above country requests) |
| 11:45 – 12:15 | **Session 3**  **Roundtable discussion: Examples of food systems thinking in action in policies/programmes** based on the following entry points:  *Food, Health and Nutrition (WHO-IBC on Health)*  *Environment and Climate Change ( i.e. pesticides, circular economy; food systems and climate change agendas convergence) (IBC on Environment)*  *Agriculture and trade (UNECE)* | Facilitators:  **Raimund Jehle,** IBC SFS Co-Chair  **Panellists:**  **Julia Weatherhogg, Programme** Officer, Adaptation, UNFCCC Secretariat on behalf of the IBC on Environment  **Clare Farrand**, Technical Officer- Nutrition, Special Initiative on NCDs and Innovation, WHO Regional Office for Europe, IBC on Health  **Ariel Ivanier,** Chief of the Market Access section, UNECE | Facilitate regional and cross-country learning on tools and application of this approach for coherent policy and collective action.  Promote the knowledge of, and use of existing data sources, tools and analytical frameworks developed at global, regional and country levels to support evidence-based policy making and monitoring and shaping a common vision for UNCTs. |
| 12:15 –  12:30 | **Wrap up and closing remarks** | **Raimund Jehle,** IBC SFS Co-Chair |  |

**Annex 1**

**The series of workshops respond to the following** **country requests to the IBC SFS:**

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| **Country** | **Request** |
| **Bosnia and Herzegovina** | Guidance and TA from the IBC on developing impactful joint UN initiatives across the food systems transition, either policy or programmatic, that demonstrates the value of the UN's global and regional expertise. |
| **Kyrgyzstan** | Provision of guidance, TA and examples of country best practice from similar contexts on UN promotion of strategies for effective promotion of sustainable food systems in-country. |
| **Serbia** | Training UNCT staff to deepen our understanding of the systemic nature of food and introduce tools for analyzing interactions, feedback loops, and impacts of changes in one area of food systems on other areas. This could also draw on expertise from the “Food Systems Countdown Initiative” (in which FAO participates). Based on this training, the UNCT could develop a proposal for a customized tracking system based on the Initiative’s dashboard and aiming to start a national dashboard based on the experience of countries that have already done this (e.g Kenya, Indonesia, etc.)  Training UNCT staff/sharing experience on how to involve the private sector in transforming food systems, creating opportunities for farmers to engage in developing agricultural and food products that are healthy, nature positive, sustainable, resilient. Based on this training the UNCT could support the development of innovative project proposals around these areas.  Training on actions that have shown results in other countries on changing dietary patterns, taking into account that the dietary patterns of Serbian population are very unhealthy (220% more than recommended consumption of meat, 195% more than recommended consumption of dairy, 32% of recommended consumption of pulses), also possibly building on recommendations from the Countdown Initiative on Actions to reorient diets and overall demand (e.g. Public Awareness and Communication Campaigns, Retail Taxes on Animal-Source Foods, Adopt Public Food Procurement Guidelines to Reduce Animal-Source Foods, Limit Advertising and Marketing Promoting Overconsumption, Invest in Research and Development on Alternative Protein Sources, Reformulate Products with Plant-Based Alternatives). |
| **Uzbekistan** | Sustainable Food System (SFS) guidance, advice, and TA training is required to equip us with the knowledge and tools needed to comprehensively apply systems thinking to solving complex food systems problems. There is a need for a series of courses that highlight how systems thinking, and a sustainable food systems approach can help significantly improve our work in developing projects and policies for sustainable development and food systems transformation. It should also explore in more detail the key concepts of SFS and provide an analytical framework for describing and analyzing the complexity and different elements that make up food systems. |

1. Food systems encompass “all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the output of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.” High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) (2014), *Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security: A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security*, FAO: Rome, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3901e.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The IBC –SFS was established in April 2020. The IBC members are: FAO (acting as Secretariat), WHO, UNICEF, WFP, UNECE, WMO, UNDP, IFAD and UNEP, UNOPS. The main rationale for the establishment of an IBC dedicated to sustainable food systems is to capitalize on the expertise of several UN agencies to provide UNCTs, and thus Member Countries, with a multi-sectoral and coordinated approach on sustainable food systems, to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)