

Conceptual framework and methods for national and territorial assessments : piecing the food system puzzle together

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Introduction

Food systems (FS) play a major role in ensuring food security. However, ensuring food security in the long term implies to consider also other outcomes generated by FS, in a multidimensional perspective. Several analytical frameworks of FS have been recently developed, some of them rather conceptual at global level (e.g. Béné et al. 2019), others more applied, at city region level (e.g. Carey & Dubbeling, 2017), with methods based either on quantitative indicators (e.g. Chaudary et al. 2018) or on qualitative participatory approaches (e.g. FS Dialogues). However, there is a lack of analytical framework that enables a systemic, dynamic and policy dialogue-oriented diagnosis of FS, considering subnational specificities.

Objectives

- initiate/stimulate FS stakeholder dialogues on the long-term challenges and opportunities in the food system
- characterize food systems at national and subnational level
- inform future policies and interventions aimed at a sustainable and inclusive food systems

5 steps assessment process

1.Framing the issues. The assessment is problematized during an initial workshop, gathering 30 to 40 public and private sector stakeholders, that will be involved in steps 3 and 4. What are the major challenges of the food system, in terms of outcomes and drivers?

2.Analyse available data & documents. Each major outcomes and drivers is documented mobilizing quantitative and qualitative information: a set of selected indicators and their trends are analysed ; narratives are elaborated on critical issues

3.Consultation & spatialization. Bearing on key informants' interview, interaction between drivers, actors & activities and outcomes are detailed, with an impact pathway approach. Participatory mapping is used to identify the spatial distribution of FS actors and the challenges they face. On this base, relatively homogeneous territorial food systems are identified.

4.Discuss & reach common understanding. Intermediary results are discussed and refine during a synthesis workshop : validate the mapping of territorial food systems, elaborate coherent narratives for each of them, identify potential entry points for interventions to improve the sustainability of food systems at national and territorial level.

5.Summarize & prepare policy brief. A synthetic report and a policy brief summarize and synthesize main outputs.

Principals of the method :

- Multidimensional, considering 4 main objectives of the FS : (1) ensure food security, nutrition and health for all, (2) provide decent livelihood and jobs, and contribute to inclusive economic growth, (3) contribute to territorial development and balance power distribution among actors, (4) manage natural resources and limit climate change.
- Consider spatial heterogeneity of FS within each country
- Combine quantitative and qualitative analysis (including trends), to elaborate consistent narrative and overcome lack of data
- Participatory multi-stakeholder approach to foster policy dialogue

Implementation

In 8 countries end-2020 and early 2020 : Madagascar, Burkina-Faso, Senegal, Malawi, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Nepal, Bhutan. Other country studies foreseen in 2021.

References :

Béné, Prager, Achicanoy, Toro, Lamotte, Bonilla, and Mapes. 2019. 'Global map and indicators of food system sustainability'. *Nature – Scientificdata*, 6:279.
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Chaudhary, Gustafson, and Mathys. 2018. 'Multi-indicator sustainability assessment of global food systems'. *Nature Communications* 9 (1): 1–13

Food system conceptual framework

