

Final Report for Special allocation for the incubation of a thematic window for Integrated Programming on Food Systems Transformation

Cover page

Date of Report: 15 / 08 / 2023

Project title

Country: Global
Project title: Special allocation for the incubation of a thematic window for Integrated Programming on Food Systems Transformation

Project duration

Start date (day/month/year): 30 June 2022
Original End date (day/month/year): 31 December 2022
Actual End date (day/month/year): 15 July 2023
Have the PUNO operationally closed the project in its system: Yes
Expected financial closure date¹: 31 May, 2024

Participating Organizations

Lead PUNO (focal point name and email): FAO
Focal Point from the lead PUNO (name and email): Sylvia Ekra, sylvia.ekra@fao.org; Ophelie Hemonin, Ophelie.hemonin@fao.org
Other PUNO Focal Points (focal point names and emails): Non applicable

Project budget (US\$)

Joint SDG Fund Contribution² and co-funding breakdown, by recipient organization:

	Joint SDG Fund contribution	Co-funding	Total
FAO	USD 250 000	USD 100 000	USD 350 000
Total	USD 250 000	USD 100 000	USD 350 000

¹ Financial Closure requires the return of unspent balances and submission of the [Certified Final Financial Statement and Report](#).

² Joint SDG Fund Contribution is the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations – see [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).

Narrative report

Project context

- *Explain who was implementing the project and why (objective); provide an update (what has changed since the project was launched); and briefly indicate specific challenges and opportunities.*

The overall purpose of the project was to support the incubation of the thematic window for Integrated Programming on Food Systems Transformation, in the follow-up to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS). This Window responds to strong demand from more than 150 countries committing to transforming their national food systems in the context of the UNFSS, and to the Fund's Global Strategy identifying food systems as one of the key SDG transformations. The funding aimed to enable technical support for stakeholders consultations, resource mobilization, the development of an investment strategy based on a multiyear approach, and pending successful resourcing and approval of the Window by the Operations Steering Committee, the development of management arrangements for the Window (ToRs), the preparation for the launch of the window and of the first call for proposals.

Since the launch of the project, several rounds of consultations and desk studies provided a solid foundation for the development of the Investment Strategy. A sounding board of 30 Resident Coordinators were engaged, with in-depth interviews with 15 of them reflecting on the post UNFSS momentum, main challenges encountered, pathway priorities and implementation gaps. More than 90 National Convenors were consulted on the relevance of the Investment Strategy for pathway implementation and potential priorities for a first funding round, while a range of UN agencies were consulted at Headquarters level across the System, from Country programming to food systems units. The draft Investment Strategy for the multiyear Window proposes two funding tracks, a number of key principles for the Window, overarching objectives and cross-cutting objectives, overall progress indicators and selection criteria. It also connects the Window with a range of global initiatives, from the post UNFSS work to reform the food systems finance architecture, to other portfolios and windows of the Fund, or the integrated global policy instruments endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security. The Strategy builds on the assets of the UN Food Systems Summit (National Convenors, National Food Systems Pathways, integrated finance tools) and granular intelligence of country progress and support needs through the Hub (Voluntary Country Progress reviews shared by 109 countries), to catalyse national efforts and advance the global food systems agenda.

Momentum has gradually built around the Window, with two donor briefings allowing to garner interest and support for the Window from donors and the private sector, and 16 UN agencies, funds or programmes having been offered the opportunity to contribute to the Strategy. Country (RCO and UNCTs) and regional offices are well aware of the promising incubation of the window and ready to seize the opportunity once launched.

Supported by the design of robust and interactive presentation material (brochure, FAQ, PPT presentations and a video), advocacy efforts allowed to prominently position the Fund in a number of global reports and processes, regional activities of the Hub, harness national voluntary reporting efforts (Voluntary Country Progress Reviews), and build increasing Rome-based Agencies and wider-UN ownership and leadership of the Window.

These efforts culminated with the organisation of a Special Event on the Food Systems Window during the UNFSS+2 Stocktaking Moment, during which the German government also signed the first contribution to the Window (EUR 5 million). The emerging Joint SDG Fund Food Systems Window was successfully positioned as a key outcome of the UNFSS+2 Stocktake Moment, including through central mentions in the UN Secretary-General's progress report "Making Food Systems Work for People and Planet" and in the UNSG Call to Action, directing global efforts in the next biennium.


Challenges and opportunities: The constrained funding environment and objective to reach 30/35K in order to launch the Window, and several initiatives directly competing with the Window in their narrative, have resulted in delays in the timeline to submit the Window to the Fund's Operational Steering Committee for





approval, develop ToRs, officially *launch* the Window and develop a first funding round. Recent advances in the context of the UNFSS+2 Stocktaking Moment, post Special Event feedback from donors and close support from the Deputy Secretary-General allow for optimism in the next few months.





A number of further opportunities deserve to be leveraged in the context of the work to incubate this Food Systems Window. These are covered in the last section of this report.


Project Results

- For each deliverable / output, provide overview of the main activities and results. List all main events organized with the project.

Outputs	Activities	Results	Product
1. Finalization of the thematic window Concept - by June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to the draft Concept Consultations on the Concept with RCs and internal stakeholders Preparation of the Concept for review by the DSG 	Concept finalized and cover note prepared	
2. Feasibility assessment finalized - by April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth analysis of country demands and global priorities to provide the strategic framework for the window Stakeholder consultations, including with RCs, relevant UN specialized agencies representatives, member states and global, regional and local development partners 	<p>Results from the Country Needs Survey and Analysis implemented for the Hub in February 2022 informed the Investments Strategy outline.</p> <p>Several rounds of consultations took place to design the Investment Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> October-November: Consultations with UN country programming units within the HQs of FAO, WFP, IFAD, UNEP and WHO on best practices for Joint Programming, and desk study. November-December 2022: Semi-open interviews with 15 Resident Coordinators from all geographic and linguistic regions resulted in an analysis and report, subsequently shared with DCO and EOSG. 19 January 2023: first donor briefing, collecting initial donor feedback on the proposed Window objectives and modalities (see output 3) April: UN System consultations on the draft Investment Strategy (consulted: FAO, WHO, WFP, IFAD, DCO, UNEP, UNDP, UN Women, UNIDO, ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA, OHCHR, UNHCR, UN-Habitat, UNN) 	 FSHub_UNRC_Consultation_report_INTERNA See output 3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the investment strategy (max 10-12 pages) to include multi-year funding envelope, the rationale, priority interventions and key results, and modalities for implementing joint programmes The initial Investment strategy will be re-assessed with regard to emerging issues from the 2023 stock-take preparation process, and opportunities for development of transformative country proposals in the context of the global triple crisis of food, energy and financing and the follow up to the Joint SDG Fund Development Emergency modality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 May: Consultation of National Convenors on the draft Investment Strategy through a Solutions Dialogue 24 May: 2nd donor briefing presenting the draft Investment Strategy (see output 3) <p>Food Systems Window Investment Strategy developed and refined based on several rounds of consultations.</p>	 Summary_Food Systems Solutions Dia See output 3  Draft Investment Strategy_Joint SDG Fu
3. Resource mobilization strategy prepared and launched - by May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donor briefing to raise awareness on incubation of Joint SDG Fund thematic window, consult on priorities, including for first funding round. Analysis of interest from donors and other potential financing partners, in line with the multi-year funding envelope and the needs for initial funding for the launch of the window, and development of the resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 donor briefings organised on 19 January and 24 May 2023 to present the outline, objectives and modalities (19 January) and the draft Investment Strategy. A list of potential development partners was developed, building on the donor group to the Food Systems Summit and initial discussions on donors' funding priorities. This list was complemented by a list of Foundations for tentative outreach. 	 Summary_FoodSystems_JointSDGFund_Doi  24May_JointSDG Fund_2ndDevelopment

	<p>mobilization strategy, as a “living document” (max 3-4 pages)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of presentation and outreach materials • Bilateral follow-up meeting with donors, donor/fundraising event/s, and consultations with other potential funding/financing partners • Support to global and country-level strategic communications for the purpose of advocacy for the window 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the face of competing resource mobilisation efforts by a number of parallel/unaligned initiatives (EAT Foundation and Good Food Finance Network; WB Food Systems 2030 Trust fund), development of an information Note to DSG with recommendations. - Development of an FAQ document presenting the Fund and the Window to non NY-based donors. - Development of a 2 pager brochure - Design and co-production of a 3 minute video presenting the Food Systems Window through the voices from the ground, and emphasizing its value add. - Bilateral development partners were systematically approached and a number of bilateral meetings organised: FCDO (4 meetings); Germany (3 meetings); Ireland (2 meetings); Switzerland (2 meetings); the Netherlands, Canada, France, Spain, EU Commission, Australia. - Organisation of a signing ceremony with media during the UNFSS+2 to celebrate the first contribution to the Window by the German government (EUR 5 million) - Confirmation of commitment from Ireland (EUR1.3million) - Global advocacy for the Fund through inputs to the UNSG Report “United Nations system support for Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want” - Regional Advocacy through presentations on finance in the context of the regional preparatory meetings of UNFSS+2, and engagement of Issue-based Coalitions; DEM analysis informs regional meetings. 	<div></div> <p>Background Note for the Deputy Secretary</p> <div></div> <p>FAQ on Food Systems Window of th</p> <div></div> <p>Joint SDG Fund on Food Systems 2-Page</p> <div></div>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country-level advocacy through UNRC interviews, presentation of the Window to National Convenors, and analysis of the Voluntary Country Progress reports of relevance to the Window. 	
<p>4. The Food Systems Window is strategically positioned in the context of the UNFSS+2 and 2023-2025 biennium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Special Event is organised in the official UNFSS+2 Programme, presenting the Food Systems Window as an essential entry-point to accelerated national food systems transformations • The Food Systems Window is positioned centrally in UNFSS+2 outcomes (UNSG report and Call to Action) and in the narrative opening the next biennium. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The UNFSS+2 Special Event presenting the Food Systems Window, thanks to thorough preparation, featured high-level ownership by governments (Mali, Colombia, Indonesia), quality reflections on better alignments by strategic finance partners, and demonstrated clear ownership by the leadership of the Rome based agencies FAO and WFP - The Food Systems Window has a central place in the UNSG report “Making Food Systems work for People and Planet” and the UNFSS+2 Call to Action. - The Food Systems Window is a priority area for the Hub leadership (Integrated Team meeting; DSG-Hub debrief), and several though pieces are commissioned from the Hub by the Deputy Secretary-General to accelerate its launch and impact. 	 FINAL- Joint SDG Fund Special Event - S
<p>4. ToR for the window prepared for approval</p> <p>- by June 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the ToR (max 10-12 pages) based on the Concept for the window, Investment strategy, and window-specific management arrangements • Consultations with partners and finalization of the ToR that is ready for approval. 	Postponed due to resource mobilisation challenges – see Note to DSG, and recommendations in section 3	
<p>5. The first funding round prepared for launch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of the first funding round (e.g. Guidance for proposals) • Development and capacitation of arrangements for thematic and 	Postponed due to resource mobilisation challenges – see Note to DSG, and recommendations in section 3	

- by July 2023	programmatic support to the launch of the first funding round		
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Way forward

- Briefly mention what is expected to happen after the project and recommend the follow-up, if relevant.

A number of further opportunities were identified while incubating this Food Systems Window.

1. In the context of resource mobilisation efforts, a number of **discussions were initiated with bilateral donors expressing interest to become partners, but requiring further time to take a decision**, such as Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Canada. These contacts would benefit from being rapidly reactivated following the Special Event, in view of finalizing contributions in the fall. In addition, institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank have expressed their intention to contribute to the Food Systems Window. A pivot/new approach could be explored in the face of resource mobilisation challenges encountered in the last semester.

2. **The Terms of Reference for the Food Systems Window call for window-specific arrangements** in the distribution of roles between the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat and the Hub. The Food Systems Window benefits from a unique (post-UNFSS) landscape and range of assets (National Food Systems Convenors network, National Food Systems transformation pathways, multisectoral multistakeholder governance mechanism and coordination platforms, food systems coalitions, etc) facilitated and driven by the Food Systems Coordination Hub in close coordination with the Rome based agencies FAO, IFAD and WFP, EOSG, and the UN Taskforce on Food Systems. The development of thematic funding rounds, assessment and selection of Joint Programme submissions, monitoring of programmatic progress and analysis of impact, are activities which would benefit from continued Hub leadership.

3. The integrated nature of the Joint SDG Fund calls for a **more thorough analysis of the benefits that the Fund's portfolios and windows can deliver for food systems transformation**. This is also in line with a paper commissioned to the Hub by the Deputy Secretary-General to give greater visibility to the connections between all the different transitions and in support of efforts to better leverage unearmarked funds towards the food systems Window.

- The Development-Emergency Modality has generated valuable data on the activities prioritised by the more than 90% of UNCTs designing programmes focused on food, presented in the form of [dashboards](#) and an [analysis](#). Early discussions have allowed the Hub and Joint SDG Fund Secretariat to identify a number of areas where more granular data and analysis would inform a robust transition from the DEM to the Food Systems Window, enrich the Hub country work, and support subsequent accountability and impact communication efforts for the Window and the Fund.

- The work on Integrated National Financing Frameworks has generated a range of initiatives and results of relevance for food systems transformations, with 19 Joint Programmes touching on FST and 4 blended finance instruments incubated. Many Joint programmes (analysis of investment opportunities, private sector and SME finance assessments, mapping of business opportunities, costing of interventions) would benefit from being connected with overall Hub country support work as well as to the 3FS incubated by IFAD as part of its work on finance for the Hub.

- Simultaneously, work on social protection, given the proportion of the world's poorest in rural areas or amongst food systems workers, is highly connected to efforts to transform food systems so they deliver more decent and equitable livelihoods for people.

- The incoming window on localising the SDGs can be expected to have strong links with food systems governance and integrated policy making at local level, including in rural areas.

4. The discussion on **progress indicators** in the context of individual funding rounds is an opportunity to bring together relevant UN agencies, funds and programmes (16 identified in the context of the UN HQ consultation in April-May 2023) and initiate discussions around an integrated M&E framework for food

systems, which would contribute and connect to the SDG indicator framework for DCO and Resident Coordinators/ UNSDCFs whenever relevant. This framework has the potential to demonstrate how the UN, also at global level, is able to come together and deliver coherently in support of food systems transformations, and would complement integrated monitoring frameworks for governments such as the Food Systems Countdown Initiative.

5. The Food Systems Window has huge potential to catalyse **partnerships in countries with food systems finance actors**. These should not only be considered as financial contributors to the Hub, but also as partners to help maximise the impact of Joint Programmes and project the results of efforts over the medium to long-term. With this perspective, the UNFSS+2 Special Event identified priority partners to initiate discussions: regional public development banks and IFIs (African Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank), private banking institutions (Rabobank), private sector associations (Private Sector Mechanism to CFS but also other SENA members such as WEF, WBCSD), foundations (Rockefeller), private investors (FAIRR initiative) etc. In addition to these, global funds such as GEF, GCF, GFF should be approached to anticipate greater alignment in the medium-term and the Window being used to build country's eligibility.

6. A number of bilateral donors/ODA seek a **privileged bilateral donor space** to discuss regular country updates, alignment with the global food systems agenda, and reflecting how bilateral country programming can align and maximise Joint Programme results. This initiative could substantially integrate global agendas through donor activities, across rural development projects (Rural donor platform), nutrition (SUN Donor Network), etc. A priority of the next phase, for the Hub and Joint SDG Fund Secretariat, should be to set up this informal group in the context of developing the first funding round.