

FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUES (FSDs)
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CO-ORGANIZED BY THE NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

DRAFT SUMMARY REPORT

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Executive Summary

The Food Systems Dialogues (FSDs) were initiated in 2018 by The EAT Foundation, Food and Land Use Coalition, World Business Council for Sustainable Development and World Economic Forum.

The FSDs are designed to advance the transformations of food systems that are needed to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs. The four elements of these transformations were spelt out by the multi-stakeholder “Milano Group” established by the UN Secretary-General in 2015. They are based on the work of the UN Committee on World Food Security, the Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research and the EAT-Lancet Commission on Sustainable Diets.

The FSDs provide opportunities for diverse stakeholders to explore options for handling the trade-offs associated with advancing four-part transformations. They involve sequences of structured interactions of government, private, scientific and civil society stakeholders, including food producers, processors, retailers, and consumers, working from the perspectives of human and animal health and nutrition, agriculture and fisheries, forests and environment, climate change and resilience. They are informed by inter-disciplinary evidence and local experience, and take place in local, national and international venues.

The FSDs are designed to be inclusive of all interests: each dialogue is carefully prepared and facilitated, proceedings are synthesized and the results of successive FSDs establish a cumulative ‘red thread’ that encourages collective, aligned and meaningful collective action which contributes to system transformations.

On 13 September 2018, the first Food Systems Dialogues (FSDs) took place in Oslo co-organized by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and EAT. The focus was Norway’s approach to food systems transformation within international trade, development and foreign policies. Approximately 60 participants attended, reflecting a range of actors working in Food Systems. Among 50+ participants were decision-makers from the largest grocery retailer in Norway, the Institute of Marine Research, the Enterprise Federation of Norway, and a major Norwegian agriculture cooperative.

The Oslo FSDs were held in the lead-up to the release of an Action Plan on Sustainable Food Systems by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Minister of International Development, Nikolai Astrup, made opening remarks and members of the Ministry were in attendance to capture key themes and recommendations which emerged on the day.

Two rounds of facilitated Dialogues were held at the event, in groups of around 10 people per table. High-level messages from conversations pivoted around the importance of policy coherence, of institutional collaboration and of knowledge-sharing, both locally and abroad.

A central component of the FSDs is that each event be locally relevant; in the case of Norway, they emphasized the unique role that the country is positioned to play in promoting sustainable and nutritious food systems globally, given its specific set of experiences and its development priorities.

Round One

In the first round each table discussed the same question:

How can Norway leverage the work done in the prioritized sectors such as global health, education, climate change and renewable energy, private sector development, humanitarian aid, and oceans to drive a transformative food systems agenda forward?

Tables were asked to work together to come up with three 'big ideas' to answer the question. Below is a summary of these ideas, as well as relevant considerations identified by participants.

Idea 1: Collaborate across government departments and institutions

There could be more collaboration between Norwegian government departments and institutions, and foreign public departments and NGOs. This would work where the targeted entity is open to exchange of information and learning from Norway's experience, and where the context is appropriate for Norway's approach to be relevant.

Norwegian institutions could incorporate successful elements of Norway's process for policy development, while adapting them to local contexts. This is especially relevant given Norway's proven historical ability of overcoming food shortage and malnutrition, and its current approaches to addressing obesity, non-communicable diseases and regulations of the private sector.

This approach could include knowledge and information banks that would assist with the exchange of experience and ideas.

An important consideration is that the Norwegian model does not necessarily fit other contexts - in particular, in the areas of stunting and nutrition, and private sector involvement. It should also be acknowledged that Norway does not itself yet have a sustainable food system.

Idea 2: Make sustainable food systems a priority

Food security could become a main focus of Norwegian development politics. More specifically, Norway should focus on sustainable food systems. In order to achieve this and to have influence across all SDGs, the government would need to encourage different sectors in Norway to prioritise this goal.

Norway could then use its global influence to make this issue a bigger priority across international development policy.

Idea 3: Increase policy coherence

There could be increased policy coherence on food systems within Norway. This would mean the government aligning on trade, foreign and development policies. This would enable Norway to be more impactful in transforming global food systems.

This approach would increase Norway's credibility on the international stage, allowing for stronger influence to encourage other countries to follow Norway's lead.

There is a need to determine whose interests should be at the forefront of sustainable development. Examples to consider include Norway's experience from meat production, animal feed import (soy), as well as climate effects or the Norwegian Oil Fund (Development Fund).

Idea 4: Share expertise in dialogue and knowledge sharing

Norway could share its expertise and experience in achieving results through open dialogue and knowledge sharing. Within Norway this has proven a very successful way to elicit change in policy and practice since it leads to multiple actors working towards a shared goal.

This approach would always need to be adapted to local conditions, and can often be inhibited by separate financial and political interests. However, if done carefully, Norway could take an international leadership role and initiate collaboration across the full food chain.

Idea 5: Help increase knowledge and capacity in other countries

Norway could work with other countries to support them to develop knowledge about sustainable and resilient food systems; and increase their capacity to address these issues.

In particular, Norway could provide expertise on social sustainability and awareness raising. However, it could be challenging to ensure local ownership of these ideas.

Idea 6: Develop tools for digitization

Norway could develop tools for digitization to meet local challenges (such as market prices / weather / banks / insurance / pests). This could be done by making use of hardware already widely used such as mobile phones, and software that is already developed, especially applications.

This could harness areas where Norway already has expertise in aquaculture, PGRFA; but also include new technology platforms for sharing ideas.

This approach would need to look at how to overcome poor infrastructure - especially network coverage and access to electricity.

Idea 7: Organise collaboration between different sectors

There could be increased collaboration between private and public sector, diverse actors and the society overall (industry, UN, private capital, local society). Norway could assist other countries to use this approach.

This could lead to the prioritisation of investment and a focus on knowledge and science.

For this approach to work, there needs to be trust in the system, authorities and other actors. This trust is needed to create a space for dialogue and testing.

In particular, there should be more public and private cooperation and commercial investment; as well as interdepartmental collaboration.

Idea 8: Support the role of women

Norway could contribute its expertise on the role of women in improving nutrition and food systems.

Norway could show how women work as 'Change Agents' and are very effective if supported adequately. For example, providing women with more education about nutrition can increase demand for more nutritious food products. Breastfeeding education is also an effective way to improve nutrition.

Idea 9: Design strategies to address climate change worldwide

Norway could prioritize addressing climate change, by designing strategies and action plans that help other countries to improve their climate change policies. In particular, Norway should be looking at policies on adaptation; resilience; GHG emissions; and carbon capturing.

This could also involve further exploring how climate and environment is connected to conflict.

Idea 10: Develop a robust science-based system

Norway could contribute to creating a robust and trust-based management approach for sustainable systems. This should focus on the ocean and on Norwegian management and competence within science. Specific areas that should be targeted include fish, aqua, health, vaccination, and breeding.

Idea 11: Build sustainable value chains that focus on small and medium-scale stakeholders

Norway could build sustainable value chains that focus on small and medium-scale stakeholders. This would use Norway's trade practises to encourage sustainable business models. There are good examples such as food systems in schools that could be scaled up.

Norway could also help countries to focus on supporting local food producers, and creating technical solutions on a local level.

Idea 12 : Help increase demand for nutritious foods

Norway could help other countries to develop methods to increase demand for fruit, vegetables, unrefined grains and seafood, and lessen the demand for sugar and salt. This could target both consumers and producers.

Norway could help increase education around how food is produced, and look at food systems in schools; including local school meals. It could also help to incorporate nutrition and food knowledge into more basic education, such as 'life skill programs'.

Idea 13: Create a model for using taxes and incentives to promote sustainable food systems

Norway could demonstrate how to create markets for sustainable alternatives through taxes and incentives. Norway has experience demonstrating how this approach can be successful - for example, through the sugar tax.

This approach is essential for creating incentives to help people make the right food decisions. Currently imported and processed food is usually cheaper than local food, so this needs to be addressed.

[Round two output follows on next page]

Round Two

In round two, each table was assigned a theme and was asked to discuss a specific question regarding Norway's possible role within that themed area.

Theme: Oceans

Question: How can Norway best support sustainable scaling up of harvesting food from the oceans?

Norway should be a strong and decisive voice in oceans policy, specifically in sustainable ocean harvesting and cultivation of ocean environments. Norway has the management skills within aqua and ocean culture, and has the practical knowledge regarding how the UN Sustainability Goals can be met. Norway also has practical knowledge in how these measures can be exported to other contexts.

Norway should lead the development of new sustainable fish feed ingredients, where ingredients are cultivated in and harvested from the ocean. There should be a greater focus on transportation, waste and stress on feed and product. Technology is important in fishing, and should be further explored as a tool to increase sustainability. This technology should be customized to meet local needs in different contexts.

Theme: Forests

Question: How can Norway advance progress on climate change, biodiversity and forest protection through linkages with agriculture and nutrition?

Norway should promote policy and law which is based on scientific knowledge. This could be achieved by building national institutions for knowledge and resources that provide a space for improving sustainable production. Steps should be taken to ensure that economic and commercial considerations do not triumph over social and environmental considerations

The Norwegian system has successfully increased demand for sustainable food and other products and these approaches could be exported and adapted to other contexts.

Norway's current forest program could include expanded concrete measures in Norway, as well as internationally, to contribute to sustainable value chains.

Theme: Hunger and stunting

Question: How can Norway best support a reduction in global hunger and stunting?

Norway could share knowledge on its policies and practices across the following areas:

- Aquaculture and oceans
- Environmentally smart and accustomed to agriculture
- Breeding of livestock
- Breastfeeding
- Policy regulations
- Regulations of private sector

In addition to knowledge sharing, Norway could provide countries with support on adapting Norway's approaches to local contexts, and also create structures to support implementation and ensure long term follow-up.

Norway's approach should recognise that it requires a lot of effort within a single sector to combat stunting, and that there should be a cross-sectoral approach to support policy, strategy and implementation

domestically.

Teenage girls should be the focus of efforts to improve education on this issue. Improving the nutrition knowledge of young mothers, as well as their access to family planning, can help control both hunger and stunting.

Norway should use international platforms to promote the importance of combating malnutrition and stunting. This should include advocacy with institutions such as FAO, WB, WHO and WFF.

Theme: Food security

Question: How can Norway help foster food security in conflict and humanitarian settings?

Norway's domestic and international policies should emphasise seed security and future biodiversity, both for the short and long term. This should also include distribution solutions to rebuild food for production.

It is important to include an emphasis on long-term, advanced solutions, and not just react in response to acute crises.

Norway could play a role in building and fostering local food security solutions using business development.

If done well, this approach could build digital infrastructure and enable cash-based aid solutions. This would also build engagement and activity to foster competence among people living in conflict zones and refugee camps. Given that time is essential in acute humanitarian crisis situations, being prepared is important.

Norway should reduce risk aversion towards financial investment in areas subject to conflict and disaster. Trust building through insurance and mentoring will help with this.

Theme: Fighting disease

Question: How can Norway best use food and nutrition policy to prevent the instance of NCDs and other diseases?

Norway should promote broad inclusion of good nutritional behaviour in lifestyle education for youth. In particular, secondary school education should include lifestyle-based approaches and support for good nutrition over the life cycle.

Norway should also reinforce climate and public health provisions in global trade and other rights mechanisms and conventions. States should be supported and empowered to control or regulate imports and markets on the basis of decreasing climate gases and increasing public health.

Stronger systems of incentives and regulations could be created to promote healthy diets by addressing both production and consumption, and promoting plant-based diets. This could play a big role in reducing the obesogenic environment.

Theme: Agriculture

Question: *How can Norway best support intensifying agricultural production in a sustainable way that supports disadvantaged populations?*

Norway should develop and support strategic programs that match local conditions with market needs. This would help to generate scalable, sustainable food chain solutions with profitability across the whole chain.

Value creation locally will ensure long term effect, and may also promote higher employment among women and youth.

Agriculture based on local conditions contributes to sustainable development especially if these programs ensure that participating farmers are able to adapt and benefit from market changes.

Despite the benefits, obtaining support from local governments for this approach may be a challenge.

Norway could also increase the (relative) value of agriculture land as well as protecting farmers' and women's rights. This would involve creating incentives to invest in soil regeneration and long-term planning; as well as ensuring that the most fertile land is protected. This approach could incorporate measures for diversified land use.

Norway could also support research for the development of more efficient production systems, such as seeds and animal husbandry. Although this approach could be expensive, it is likely to be more expensive in the long run not to do it. A crucial element to this approach would be to strengthen capacity in developing countries at all levels: research, extension services, education, etc.

Theme: Private sector partnerships

Question: How can we encourage private sector to form coalitions with other stakeholders in food systems?

Norway should work towards matching competence and markets with the right partner. Participation from embassies may be valuable.

Norway should 'engage the missing link' in a way that focuses on SDGs. Distribution channels should be included.

An "SDG Fund" should be established in order to promote long-term engagement, enable easier access to capital locally and motivate innovation. This should be accompanied by clear regulations.