

FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUES (FSDs)

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CO-ORGANIZED BY THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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*The format of FSDs Summary Reports is under development. This report may be subject to change

Executive Summary

The Food Systems Dialogue event in Vienna involved approximately 30 participants, within a Conference hosted by the Austrian Presidency of the EU, entitled “People’s food, people’s health: Towards healthy and sustainable European food systems.”

Participants were divided into three tables and asked to discuss recommendations; what success would look like; and how this process could be supported by their their organisation.

Below is a summary of the discussions across the five groups.

On 23 November 2018 a Food Systems Dialogues (FSDs) event took place in Vienna, co-organized by the Austrian Presidency of the EU. This FSDs event was held in the context of the conference entitled “People’s food, people’s health: Towards healthy and sustainable European food systems.”

Approximately 30 participants attended, reflecting a range of actors working in Food Systems, ranging from health professionals (European Society of Cardiology), to government officials (Austrian Ministry of Health) to researchers (Stockholm Resilience Center).

The following is a summary of the tables’ proposals for food systems transformation as well as the discussions that led them to their conclusions.

As is the norm at FSDs events, all ideas outlined in this Summary Report are not attributed to any particular individual or organization. Each proposal did not necessarily receive universal support from all participants at the event; rather, the aim of this report is to capture recommendations made at the event, in order to allow continuity and consensus - a ‘red thread’ - to emerge across all FSDs events.

Proposals

Proposal 1: Understand the demand profile of populations and demographic groups at a granular level

Researchers could create reports on nutritional requirements and preferences of local populations and demographic groups, as well as behaviours and decision making. Businesses should receive these reports so they can apply them.

While the focus of these reports is about building a view of the demand profile of specific groups in terms of nutrition and preferences, the way the reports are applied must take sustainability into account also.

Proposal 2: Find initiatives which are “win-win” among multiple stakeholder groups

A broad range of stakeholders could be brought together on a level playing field in order to find win-wins and co-benefits. A systems thinking campaign should be used to reach and involve different sectors, and work through trade-offs which will inevitably arise.

Transparent, measurable targets should be decided upon at the outset, to define success for the groups involved. Goals should be for both the medium- and long-term.

This process could be supported across all sectors, with different organizations taking the lead to convene relevant groups, hold workshops and seminars, develop roadmaps, and they could each contribute to the collective agenda so that it is balanced and representative of all food systems actors, as a whole.

Proposal 3: Devise policy at national level which promotes sustainable and nutritious food

National level food policies could be advocated that includes small producers, urban/rural linkages and interactions, sustainable procurement and food in schools. Specifically in regards to procurement, a new approach should be taken to replace the traditional approach where the cheapest bid always wins.

The aim of this would be achieve legislative change; on the way towards this, a white paper could be produced, as well as practical measures and programs led by national governments.

Advocacy organizations (for example, EIT Food) could facilitate policy processes towards these national food policies.

Proposal 4: Engage all actors at all levels in food systems change

All stakeholders important for food system transformation could be identified and brought together at all levels. In particular, actors that can most influence outcomes should be identified and made part of the process.

In terms of how to concretely implement this, more effort could be made to convene events such workshops and seminars that bring stakeholders together, at local, national, regional, global level. We should continue to pursue Food Systems Dialogues to act as a convening platform at scale. Each participant in an FSDs event should go home and undertake these with their organizations and groups.