



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Food Systems Countdown Initiative

A DIVERSE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP TRACKING FOOD SYSTEMS
PERFORMANCE TO MEET THE SDGS AND OTHER GLOBAL GOALS

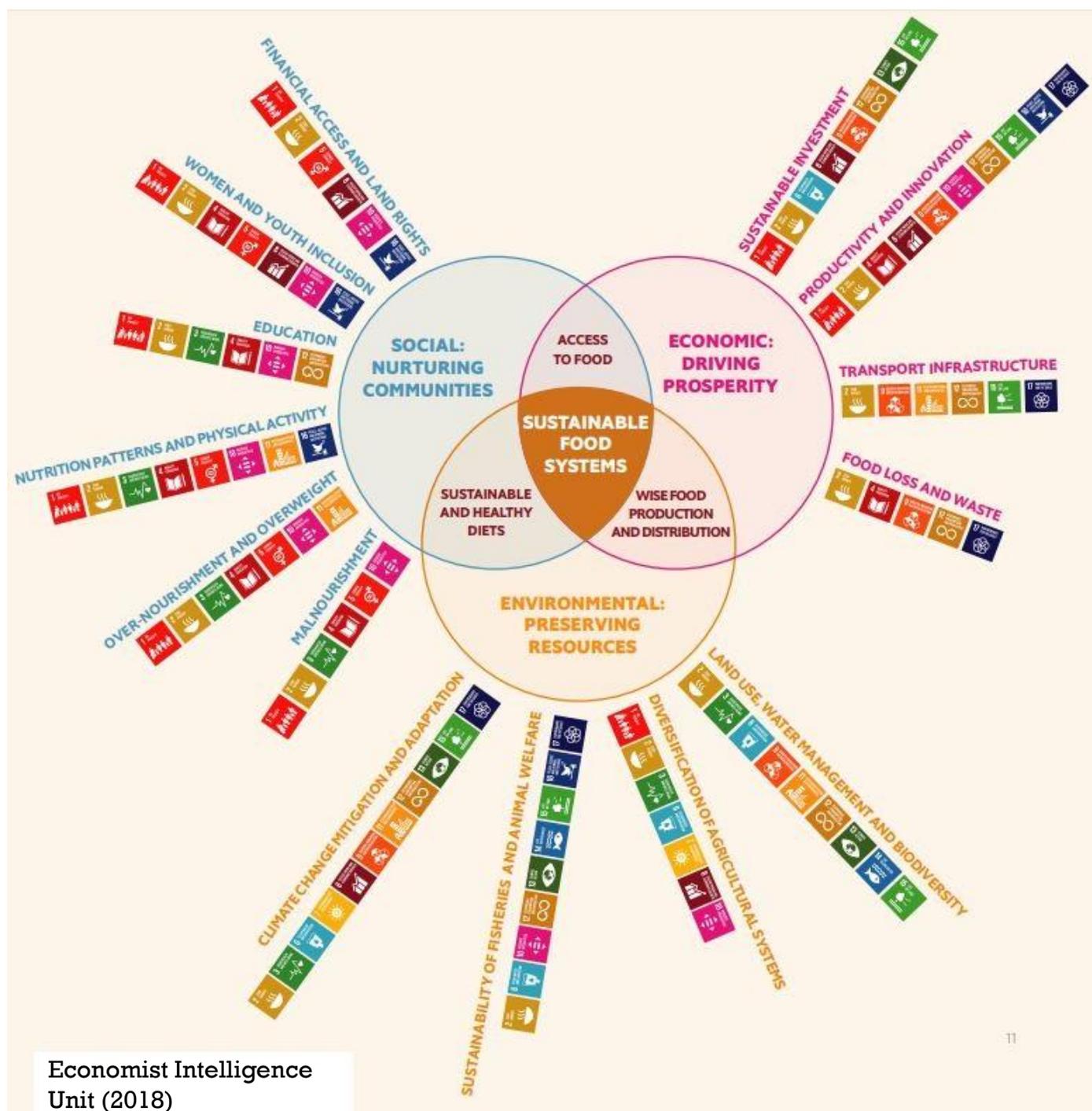
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Food systems play a role in meeting all 17 sustainable development goals



Food systems transformation is urgent

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Deliberately changing food systems **requires clear, rigorous indicators** to guide decision-makers and hold them accountable.

Covering all aspects of food systems *and their interactions* requires a **comprehensive framework of metrics**.

Yet no rigorous mechanism exists to track food systems change

UN Food Systems Summit focused global attention on food systems

- Achieving needed transformation **must keep food systems on the policy agenda** for the next 8 years.
- Commitments and pathways need **metrics to guide decisions and track progress.**

Yet no rigorous mechanism exists to track food systems change

UN Food Systems Summit focused global attention on food systems

- **Decision-makers** need trustworthy, science-based metrics and assessment to guide action.
- **Food system actors and stakeholders** (e.g., civil society, governments, and international organizations) require trustworthy, science-based metrics and assessment to hold those in power to account.

Yet no rigorous mechanism exists to track food systems change

UN Food Systems Summit focused global attention on food systems

- **Important research questions remain** regarding interactions, tradeoffs, and synergies within food systems and along diverse transformation pathways

In 2021, the Food Systems Countdown Initiative (FSCI) formed to fill this gap.

Now to 2030, the FSCI will publish annual assessments that will:

Provide actionable evidence to track progress, guide decision-makers, and inform transformation.

Complement other monitoring and tracking of related goals at global and regional scales.



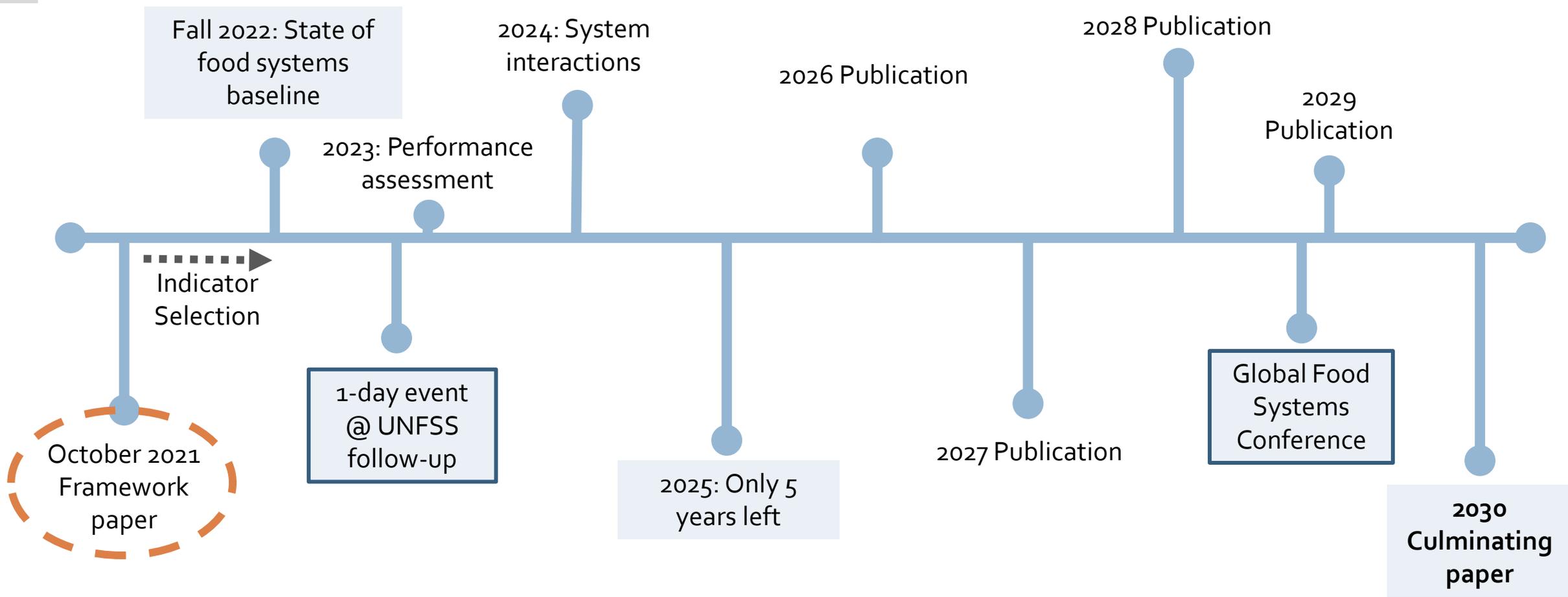
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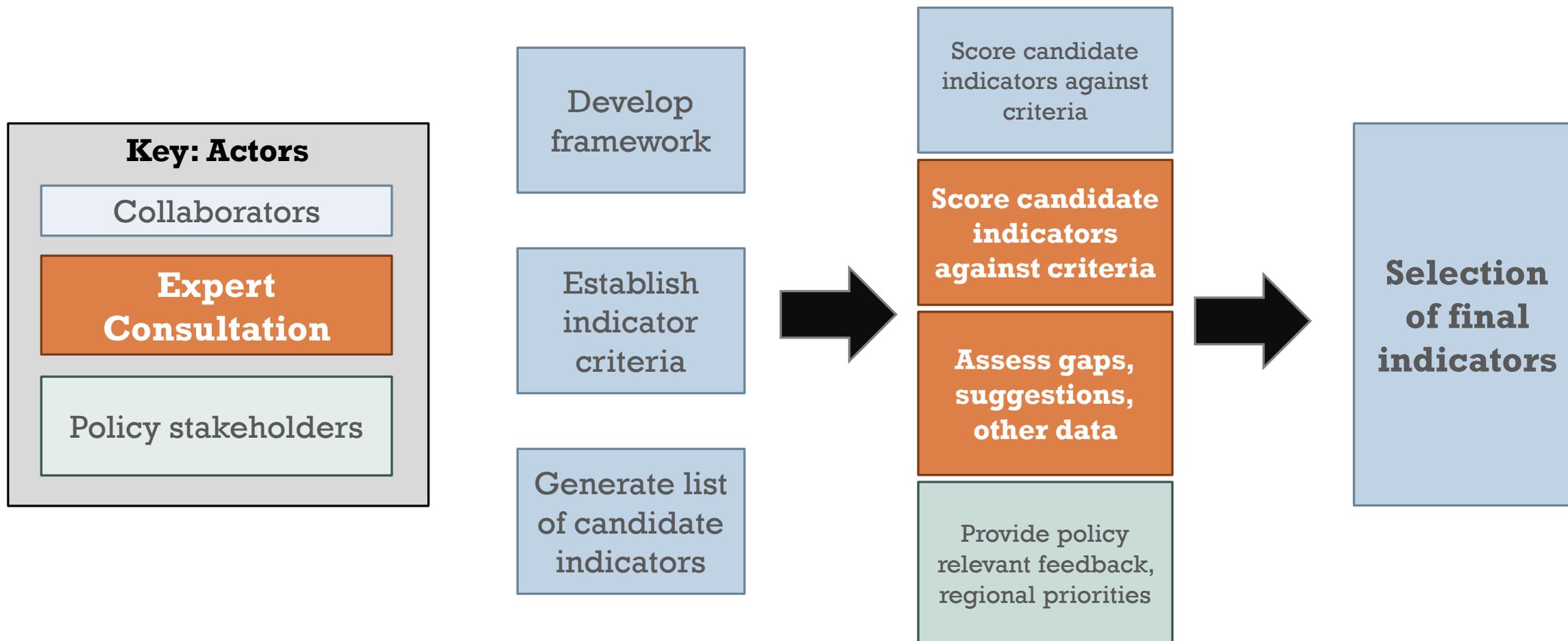
Vision to 2030



Vision to 2030

- ❖ Annual assessments 2021 – 2030
- ❖ Occasional papers: topical briefs, thematic papers, methodological papers
- ❖ 2023 event alongside UNFSS follow-up
- ❖ 2029 capstone event leading up to 2030

Process to select indicators

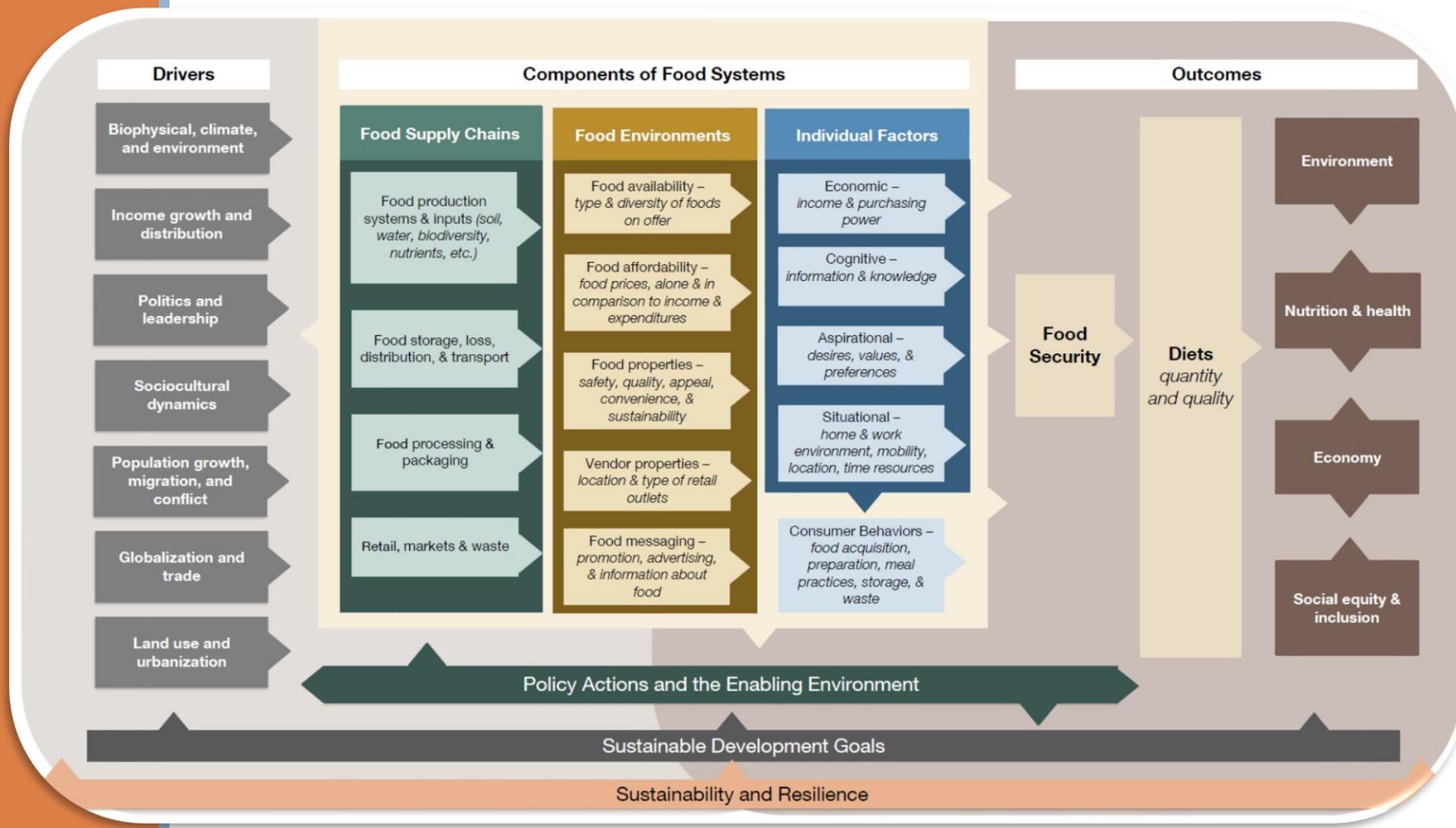


Food system framework

Architecture development

Identify themes and indicator domains based on food system framework

- **Themes:** outcomes of food systems and cross-cutting dimensions
- **Domains:** topic areas that fall under themes for which specific indicators can be monitored



Selecting candidate indicators: Prerequisites

1. **Feasibility:** Recent (within last 10 years) data exist or are planned to be collected in the coming 1-2 years and will be updated over the next 8 years.
2. **Coverage:** data exist for at least 70 countries and the proportions of countries in low-, middle-, and high-income countries approximate the distribution of countries by income level in the World Bank classification (14% LIC; 49% MIC; 37% HIC)
3. **“No black boxes”:** no indicators calculated with undisclosed modeling, methodology, or assumptions and no composite indicators where change cannot be clearly traced to underlying components.

Assessing candidate indicators: Criteria

- ❖ **Relevant:** Indicator measures something meaningful for food systems across a variety of settings and during relevant time periods.
- ❖ **High quality:** Best practices in data collection and aggregation (including quality controls) and rigorous statistical methodologies.
- ❖ **Interpretable:** Clear desirable direction of change, comparable across time and space, and easily communicated.
- ❖ **Useful:** At the single indicator level: useful indicators are relevant, high quality and interpretable. At the level of the suite of indicators, it requires that together they are useful.

Assessing candidate indicators: Operationalizing criteria

	Relevant	High-Quality	Interpretable
Sub-criterion 1	Can be clearly mapped to the food systems framework	Well-documented methodologies and metadata	Change has a clear interpretation
Sub-criterion 2	Observing change in the indicator is possible within a decade (meaning that the phenomena can change on that timescale and that the data exist to observe change)	Data are nationally representative	Data are comparable across countries

Regional Policy Stakeholder Consultations

- ❖ Consultations held in 5 regions:
 - ❖ Latin America & Caribbean
 - ❖ Middle East and North Africa
 - ❖ Sub-Saharan Africa
 - ❖ Asia and the Pacific
 - ❖ Europe
- ❖ 75-100 participants per region, nearly 500 total

Final indicator selection

- ❖ Consider coverage, non-redundancy, covering all dimensions of food systems
- ❖ Address gaps identified by survey and consultations
- ❖ Final selections made within working groups and in discussion across all collaborators

Outcomes of food systems

Crosscutting issues

Diets, nutrition, and health

- Diet quality
- Food security
- Food environments

Environment and climate

- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Land
- Water
- Pollution
- Biosphere integrity

Livelihoods, poverty, and equity

- Poverty and income
- Employment
- Social protection
- Rights

- Shared vision
- Strategic planning and policies
- Effective implementation
- Accountability

Governance

- Exposure to shocks
- Resilience capacities
- Resilience responses/strategies
- Agro- and food diversity
- Long-term outcomes
- Sustainability

Resilience and sustainability

Framework Architecture

Thematic areas & indicator domains

Diets, nutrition, and health

- ❖ Indicators for diets: challenge to identify parsimonious list that cover all populations and dietary concerns.
- ❖ Food safety and water: these are essential but harder to find adequate indicators
- ❖ Policies affecting food environments – transferred to governance after consideration

Environment & climate

- ❖ Emissions indicators: measured based on location of production, no current options account for trade
- ❖ Pollution: no sufficient indicators of packaging and end of life waste emanating from the food system
- ❖ New indicators capture functional intactness of landscapes for agriculture and health of fisheries

Livelihoods, poverty, & equity

- ❖ Many indicators of agriculture, much harder to capture the rest of food systems outside of agriculture
- ❖ Few indicators specific to food systems

Governance

- ❖ Few indicators specific to food systems
- ❖ What specific policies are essential or sentinel?
- ❖ Stark data limitations, many composite indicators

Resilience

- ❖ Many candidate indicators
- ❖ Data limitations in country coverage and many indicators monitored sub-nationally but not nationally representative
- ❖ Resilience responses – hard to identify any indicators that meet criteria

Key gaps – the data agenda

- ❖ Food loss and waste – no current data at the country level
- ❖ Food system governance – no measures of governance or policy coherence specific to food systems and their transformation
- ❖ Environmental impacts beyond production and specific to different production systems
- ❖ Income and welfare statistics specific to people whose livelihoods are tied to food systems

Next steps

- ❖ Finalizing the set of indicators
- ❖ Understand current status, time trends, and relationships between indicators
- ❖ In future years: performance assessment, tradeoffs and synergies, sustainability



Thank you.
