



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



ADVANCING POLICY COHERENCE FOR AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

EMERGING LESSONS FROM
TEN COUNTRIES



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Sustainable
Food Systems

ADVANCING POLICY COHERENCE FOR AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

EMERGING LESSONS FROM TEN COUNTRIES

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
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FOREWORD

Decisions shaping food systems are increasingly extending beyond a single sector. Climate, trade, energy, health and nutrition, water, soils, biodiversity and social protection policies, all influence what and how food is produced, traded and distributed, and who can afford and access it. Yet across many countries, policies continue to evolve in parallel rather than in a coordinated manner. By reflecting emerging lessons drawn from ten country experiences, this report explores how governments are working to bridge those divides through more coherent and inclusive approaches to food systems transformation.

As co-leads of the One Planet Network's Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) Programme, we welcome this report as a valuable contribution to the collective effort to advance the transformation towards more inclusive, equitable, resilient and sustainable food systems.

The report offers a structured perspective on different approaches adopted by countries to align policies across sectors, strengthen institutional coordination, balance competing priorities, and respond to the growing pressures of climate change and environmental degradation. By combining experiences from diverse national contexts, it offers a constructive shared reflection that can inform and strengthen national processes towards greater policy coherence.

While countries differ in their level of capacities, governance systems and available resources, they often face similar challenges and difficulties. The insights presented in this report affirm that peer learning and sustained dialogue among countries, technical organizations and a broad range of food systems stakeholders, can play a fundamental role in promoting meaningful and lasting transformation. They also underscore the principles of shared ownership and governance that lie at the core of the SFS Programme, recognizing that lasting change depends on broad participation, collective responsibility and sustained collaboration across sectors and levels of governance.

In maintaining and harnessing the global momentum for food systems transformation, the SFS Programme continues to play a key role in facilitating multistakeholder exchange, promoting shared learning, inspiring action and supporting more coordinated decision-making.

This publication is particularly timely. The outcomes of the 5th Global Conference of the SFS Programme in Brasilia in May 2025, followed by the UN Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake in Addis Abeba in July 2025, reflect a growing understanding that the climate, agroproduction, food, equity and environmental agendas are interconnected and cannot move forward in isolation. In this context, we are pleased that the SFS Programme serves as the host initiative for the Plan to Accelerate Solutions (PAS) on *Convergence and Coherence of Public Policies for Climate Action and Food Systems Transformation*, launched under the Action Agenda of the Presidency of the 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30).

We remain committed to fostering this collaborative space for exchange, collective learning and alignment, grounded in the practical realities and lessons emerging from country-level implementation. Together, we can support more coherent and effective policies that accelerate the transition towards inclusive, equitable, resilient and sustainable food systems, while improving food security and nutrition for all.



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ABBREVIATIONS

10YFP	10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns
AFCS	Agriculture and Food Climate Strategy
Caisan	Interministerial Chamber on Food and Nutrition Security
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
Consea	National Council for Food and Nutrition Security
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	civil society organization
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAST	Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation
FOAG	Federal Office for Agriculture
FOEN	Federal Office for the Environment
FSVO	Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office
HDSFS	Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All
I-CAN	Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition
MAG	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MDS	Ministry of Social Development, Family and Fight against Hunger
MINAE	Ministry of Environment and Energy
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAP-FST	National Action Plan for Food Systems Transformation
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDP	National Development Plan
NFSCC	National Food Systems Coordination Committee
NGO	non-governmental organization
NST	National Strategy for Transformation
OPN-SFSP	One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems Programme
PAS	Plan to Accelerate Solutions
PIAP	Programme Implementation Action Plan
PIP	Provincial Implementation Plan
PSTA	Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation
RECSOIL	Recarbonization of Global Agricultural Soils
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SFS	sustainable food systems
SISAN	National Food and Nutrition Security System
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
SND	National Development Strategy
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFSS	UN Food Systems Summit
WWF	World Wildlife Fund



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This publication synthesizes key lessons from ten country experiences and identifies ways to advance policy coherence to support agrifood systems transformation.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Uganda and Viet Nam, policy coherence is advancing through various pathways and at varying speeds, reflecting a range of institutional contexts, political priorities and implementation capacities. Across these ten country cases, policy coherence is increasingly understood as an iterative process, designed to reduce policy contradictions and better align regulations, investments and institutional mandates across agrifood systems objectives.

The experiences of these ten countries consistently highlight coherence as a means to manage trade-offs among sectors such as agriculture, nutrition, health, social protection, climate and biodiversity – helping to ensure that progress in one sector does not undermine outcomes in another. Progress remains uneven, but countries are taking concrete steps to integrate coherence into planning, coordination, financing and learning processes.

There are promising signs of change including growing institutional awareness of intersectoral linkages, the integration of agrifood systems framings into national planning processes, and increasing alignment between agrifood systems strategies and broader development, sustainability and climate agendas. In some countries, efforts to advance policy coherence are taking the form of structured institutional arrangements. Examples include the creation or strengthening of coordination platforms, emerging monitoring and financing mechanisms, and spaces for multistakeholder participation. However, the experiences of the ten countries suggest that advancing policy coherence depends not only on formal strategies and institutional structures, but also on political leadership, financing arrangements, coordination mechanisms, accountability systems and implementation capacities. These enabling factors vary considerably across different contexts, but a number of patterns have emerged:

1. High-level political leadership can spark progress on coherence but rarely sustains it alone

High-level political commitment – on the part of presidents, prime ministers or central agencies – is essential for elevating agrifood systems transformation to national agendas, and underpins whole-of-government coordination. Leadership at this level provides a shared policy vision that helps reduce sectoral silos and mobilize cross-ministerial action. However, lasting progress requires complementary factors, in particular: clear mandates, domestic financing, technical ownership and governance arrangements capable of enduring political change.

2. International processes frequently accelerate national coherence efforts

International processes – such as the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) – act as catalysts promoting dialogue across sectors. They help countries initiate and structure coordination among ministries without imposing prescriptive approaches. Global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate commitments also play a key role. Aligning national strategies with these international processes strengthens political legitimacy and interministerial coordination. They can also facilitate access to technical and financial support, but their effectiveness depends on countries' ability to leverage them to advance national coherence efforts.

3. Countries are using coordination mechanisms to tackle fragmentation across sectors and levels

To facilitate policy coherence across sectors and actors, countries are adapting or creating new institutional mechanisms – including interministerial committees, national coordination platforms and multistakeholder bodies. These mechanisms play an increasingly central role in the endeavour to tackle fragmentation and support cross-sector dialogue, leading to joint decision-making. However, their effectiveness depends on the existence of a formalized mandate, authority and resourcing, as well as, crucially, on how influence is exercised and whether participation translates into meaningful engagement in policymaking and implementation.

4. Inclusive participation can help navigate diverse interests and strengthen coherence

Participatory and multistakeholder mechanisms are helping to broaden engagement across sectors and levels of governance. Inclusive participation can support policy coherence by creating spaces for dialogue, coordination and negotiation among actors with different mandates, interests, perspectives and forms of knowledge. Such spaces can help identify synergies and trade-offs, strengthen connections between national strategies and implementation realities, and build shared ownership across sectors and territories, while strengthening legitimacy and accountability of policy processes. At the same time, differences in levels of influence and access to decision-making processes can shape whose priorities and perspectives are reflected in policy discussions and outcomes.

5. Cross-sectoral strategies are increasingly used to align priorities across government

Countries are progressively employing cross-sectoral strategies to align priorities under a shared national vision, providing a common policy framework for agrifood systems transformation. Embedding these strategies in national development plans strengthens their effectiveness, translating coherence into implementation, budgeting and accountability. Strategic frameworks also promote vertical integration, linking national priorities with subnational planning and delivery. The use of specific entry points is also central to advancing policy coherence. In particular, involving women, youth and vulnerable groups, and embedding strategies within existing government systems, is critical to achieving operational and inclusive results.

6. Budgets and financing often fail to keep pace with coherence ambitions

Financing is an essential but underdeveloped lever for advancing policy coherence in agrifood systems, limiting the translation of coherent strategies into action. Some countries are beginning to link agrifood systems priorities with national budgeting and planning instruments, improving alignment between policy objectives and resource allocation. However, in most cases, budgeting processes remain weakly connected to cross-sectoral priorities, and engagement with finance authorities is limited. Achieving policy coherence requires coordinating multiple financing streams – including public, donor and private resources – rather than relying on fragmented, project-based funding.

7. Monitoring and learning systems remain uneven and underused in advancing policy coherence

Monitoring and adaptive learning are essential for informed and coherent decision-making, helping governments to manage trade-offs and leverage synergies for coherent policy implementation. While certain countries are tracking outcomes across sectors, organizing periodic reviews and establishing participatory learning platforms, such efforts are not systematically embedded in governance and implementation mechanisms. While some progress has been made, dedicated spaces for reflection, continuous learning and adaptive management remain scarce, limiting the ability of countries to enhance coordination, resource allocation and adaptive management.

8. Implementation gaps persist even where coherent policies and coordination structures exist

Implementation of coherent policies to advance agrifood systems transformation remains uneven and limited on the ground. Even where coordination mechanisms are present alignment often breaks down during implementation, with weak joint accountability and insufficient cross-ministerial follow-through. Capacity constraints, particularly at decentralized levels, combined with fragmented budgeting systems and weak accountability mechanisms, across all levels of government, significantly hinder effective and coordinated delivery.

These insights identify key areas of focus for advancing coherence in agrifood systems agendas. The report also highlights critical areas for further analysis and reflection. These are intended to help policymakers better understand how to improve policy coherence in government for effective agrifood systems transformation.



BACKGROUND

The **One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems Programme (OPN-SFSP)** is one of six programmes of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP). A global multi-actor partnership, it brings together governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector, to catalyse the transition to sustainable agrifood systems through joint activities, global conferences, and research and advocacy.

The OPN-SFSP operates through four different working groups. In 2024, the [Working Group to Support the Implementation of National Pathways](#) introduced a specific focus on **policy coherence**, in response to growing interest in understanding how strengthening this area could support agrifood systems transformation. Policy coherence is a critical part of a **systems approach** (FAO, 2025), which seeks to understand and manage the interconnections, relationships and interactions within and between agrifood and related systems. It also aims to move away from siloed decision-making towards more collective and integrated action across agrifood systems (FAO, 2025). In 2025, the [5th Global Conference](#) of the OPN-SFSP provided a platform for governments, international organizations and other stakeholders to share experiences and discuss convergent and coherent policies, their enablers and key barriers.

Policy coherence is embedded in the 2030 Agenda through [SDG 17 \(Target 17.14\)](#) on enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development. Other international processes have increasingly highlighted the importance of policy coherence in addressing interconnected challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition. This recognition is reflected in a growing set of international agreements, frameworks and processes relevant to agrifood systems, and reinforced through global frameworks under the three Rio Conventions – the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) – as well as global nutrition commitments and targets.

The [2021 UN Food Systems Summit \(UNFSS\)](#) emphasized the need for coordinated, cross-sectoral action. Through inclusive national dialogues, countries identified priorities and developed **National Pathways** as roadmaps for agrifood systems transformation, articulating priority actions and opportunities to align efforts across sectors and stakeholders. In 2023, at the [UN Food Systems Summit +2](#) (UNFSS+2) – the first UNFSS global stocktaking moment – and the [4th Global Conference](#) of the OPN-SFSP, countries were encouraged to integrate National Pathways into national policies and align them with climate and biodiversity objectives. Later that same year, at the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the UNFCCC, 160 Heads of State endorsed the [Emirates Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action](#), committing themselves to integrate agrifood systems into climate strategies and align them with instruments such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

This message was further reinforced at the 2025 [UNFSS+4](#) when the UN Secretary-General called on leaders to:

secure convergence and coherence across all public policy areas that are related to food systems outcomes – including people’s food security, nutrition and livelihoods, as well as the efficient use of increasingly scarce planetary resources [and to] promote measures that focus on equity and resilience through linking environmental, economic and social dimensions of food systems ([Call to Action by the Secretary-General – UNFSS+4](#)).

This call was echoed later that year at COP30 through the [Belém Declaration on Hunger, Poverty and Human-Centred Climate Action](#), signed by 43 countries and the European Union. The Belém Declaration places food security at the centre of climate policy, with links to the [Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty](#). The Presidency’s Action Agenda presented ambitious climate actions in agriculture and agrifood systems including the establishment of new initiatives targeting agriculture, forests and the bioeconomy. Among these initiatives were the development of a [Plan to Accelerate Solutions](#) (PAS) on Convergence and Coherence for Climate Action and Food Systems Transformation. This PAS aims to strengthen institutional and technical capacities to develop convergent and coherent policies for agrifood systems transformation, delivering critical climate action while promoting more sustainable, resilient and equitable agrifood systems.

Alongside these processes, a number of international initiatives have emerged to support countries in strengthening synergies across agrifood systems-related agendas and objectives – including climate action, biodiversity, nutrition and sustainable development priorities. Key examples include the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub [Convergence Initiative](#), FAO’s [Global Roadmap for SDG 2 Zero Hunger and 1.5°C, Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation](#) (FAST), the [Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition](#) (I-CAN), the [SCALA Programme](#) created by FAO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and [Food Forward NDC and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans \(NBSAPs\)](#) developed by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

For such international statements and initiatives to become meaningful, they require effective implantation on the part of national governments. Accordingly, this publication was prepared to better understand how countries are advancing more coherent and integrated approaches, and to gather insights from their experiences. It draws on the efforts of the OPN–SFSP Working Group to Support the Implementation of National Pathways (see Box 1) and builds on a combination of country experiences, stakeholder inputs and background materials. As such, this publication aims to document country-level insights, inform collective learning processes, and support greater alignment across partners and initiatives.



BOX 1. THE OPN–SFSP WORKING GROUP TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PATHWAYS

The OPN–SFSP [Working Group to Support the Implementation of National Pathways](#) was created to help countries transition from commitments to action in transforming their agrifood systems. Building on the momentum of the UNFSS and subsequent follow-up processes, the Working Group provides a collaborative platform bringing together governments, national and subnational stakeholders, and the broader ecosystem of support, to help achieve more sustainable, resilient and equitable agrifood systems.

The Working Group promotes a systems approach that recognizes the complexity of transformation and the need to move beyond sectoral silos. It seeks to strengthen policy coherence by fostering alignment between agrifood systems, climate, biodiversity, nutrition and equity agendas, while addressing trade-offs, power dynamics and political economy constraints. By linking National Pathways with related policy frameworks and connecting national and subnational processes with regional and global dialogues, it contributes to more integrated and coherent action.

The Working Group focuses on three interlinked areas of activity:

- 1. Convening collective learning** through workshops, dialogues and events across multiple levels, enabling policymakers, practitioners, civil society, producers and partners to exchange experiences, reflect on progress and co-develop solutions to shared barriers, while building trust, fostering collaboration and supporting more inclusive and participatory processes.
- 2. Documenting country experiences** to capture how different agendas are being integrated in practice, generating actionable insights for both policymaking and implementation (including through this publication).
- 3. Fostering collaboration** across partners by convening exchanges among OPN–SFSP members to share tools, align ongoing initiatives, identify synergies and reduce duplication, thereby strengthening the overall coherence and effectiveness of support provided to countries.



PURPOSE AND APPROACH

This publication seeks to answer a practical question: **How are countries attempting to advance policy coherence in agrifood systems?** Based on the ongoing, evolving experiences of ten countries, it identifies early emerging patterns and lessons that offer insights into how governments, development partners and practitioners are working to strengthen policy coherence for agrifood systems transformation. The preparation of this publication involved three stages:

- 1.** Working Group members, particularly from FAO, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All, documented [country experiences](#) (see Table 1) in ten countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Uganda and Viet Nam. These case studies examined policy coherence across different system agendas, drawing on interviews, focus group discussions and desk reviews, in collaboration with national stakeholders. The initial criterion for selection was existing engagement with the OPN–SFSP and its partners. The country selection aimed to reflect a diverse range of geographic contexts, institutional arrangements, policy frameworks and approaches, but was not intended to be representative.
- 2.** To consolidate insights across countries, FAO commissioned the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT to undertake a cross-country review, drawing on these experiences. This was complemented by additional information gathered through semi-structured key informant interviews conducted with a limited number of stakeholders in each country between July and mid-September 2025, as well as a review of other relevant documentation. Based on these inputs, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT produced a working paper highlighting recurring themes, enabling factors, challenges and emerging lessons. The paper did not seek to measure or assess the degree of policy coherence achieved or to evaluate the performance of these countries in advancing policy coherence. Further details on the methodology of the background paper are provided in Appendix 1: Methodological approach.
- 3.** Building on this working paper, the present publication distils and presents identified patterns and insights, with the aim of supporting learning, exchange and practical application in countries.

Given that many of the processes analysed are still at an early stage, the patterns identified will require further confirmation over time, while additional changes that have not yet materialized may become more apparent as these processes evolve.

TABLE 1. DOCUMENTED COUNTRY EXPERIENCES

COUNTRY	IN BRIEF	DESCRIPTION
<u>BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA</u>	From farm to Europe: aligning agrifood systems with EU accession in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Efforts to connect agriculture, food safety, trade and rural development policies take place within a highly decentralized governance system, where coordination is shaped by EU accession requirements and the need to ensure alignment across multiple institutional levels. In practice, coherence is driven by the obligation to harmonize legislation with the EU <i>acquis</i> , requiring coordination between state, entity and cantonal authorities with distinct mandates. This process remains largely compliance-driven and uneven, with sectoral entry points – such as the dairy value chain – used to operationalize alignment between standards, market access and rural development priorities.
<u>BRAZIL</u>	Institutionalizing multilevel governance and cross-sectoral coordination for food security and nutrition	Food security and nutrition policies are coordinated through high-level and well-established national systems. Mechanisms link the federal, state and municipal action levels, ensuring the active participation of civil society in designing, shaping and implementing policies. Institutionalized platforms such as SISAN and its associated councils provide formal spaces for coordination and accountability across sectors, including climate and environment, social protection and family farming. Coherence efforts are explicitly oriented toward reducing hunger and inequality, strengthening local agrifood systems, and linking urban and rural dimensions through initiatives such as <i>Alimenta Cidades</i> , reflecting a rights-based governance model.
CAMEROON	Whole-of-government convergence around priority production systems	Whole-of-government action is organized around three priority areas of convergence – the rice value chain, agroecological production of staples and livestock, and import substitution – bringing together interventions on production, climate adaptation, nutrition and nature conservation. These priorities are articulated through the Convergence Action Blueprint, which defines a set of coordinated interventions and roles across ministries and partners, providing an operational framework to align policies and programmes around shared objectives.

<p><u>COSTA RICA</u></p>	<p>Connecting climate, biodiversity and agriculture systems through Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs)</p>	<p>Coherence between agriculture, climate and biodiversity policies is pursued through concrete initiatives, such as climate mitigation programmes in key value chains, with a strong focus on implementation at the farm and landscape level. Instruments such as NAMAs provide a concrete instrument focused on a value chain that connects national climate commitments to agricultural practices, linking mitigation, adaptation and productivity objectives. Policy coherence is tied to implementation, translating objectives into practice, particularly around soil management, emissions reduction and ecosystem restoration.</p>
<p><u>PAKISTAN</u></p>	<p>Nutrition and healthy diets as entry points for cross-sector alignment around agrifood systems</p>	<p>A wide set of nutrition, health and food-related policies are being connected through ongoing processes to address malnutrition, with increasing coordination between ministries and initiatives linking agrifood systems to health and social outcomes. This includes multisectoral strategies and nutrition action plans that unite agriculture, health, education and social protection. Coherence efforts are driven largely by the need to address the triple burden of malnutrition, with emerging institutional mechanisms – including subnational initiatives – helping to operationalize coordination across sectors.</p>
<p><u>RWANDA</u></p>	<p>Agricultural transformation strategy driving system-wide alignment</p>	<p>The national agricultural strategy is used as a platform to progressively integrate nutrition, climate resilience and market development, reflecting a shift from a production focus towards a broader agrifood systems perspective. Through PSTA5 and its alignment with national development strategies, agriculture serves as a central entry point for cross-sectoral integration, supported by strong central coordination. Priorities include increasing productivity and strengthening value chains, while improving nutrition outcomes and enhancing resilience – illustrating how sectoral strategies can support integration.</p>

SIERRA LEONE	Cross-sector coordination under fiscal and capacity constraints: the Feed Salone strategy	National flagship initiatives are bringing together agriculture, nutrition, climate and employment priorities, in a context of limited resources and strong reliance on coordinated partner support. Feed Salone acts as a central coordination mechanism, aligning government ambition and action with external support around shared objectives. In practice, coherence is pursued through programmatic alignment and investment prioritization, with a strong focus on food security, nutrition and economic recovery.
SWITZERLAND	The Agriculture and Food Climate Strategy 2050: interministerial coordination for long-term alignment	Different ministries (federal offices) are working together to align agriculture, climate, food and health policies through a jointly developed long-term strategy and monitoring mechanisms, reflecting efforts to connect policy agendas. The Agriculture and Food Climate Strategy 2050 provides a shared framework for coordination, developed through collaboration between institutions with distinct mandates. Rather than creating new structures, coherence is pursued by aligning existing policies, budgets and objectives.
UGANDA	Integrating agrifood systems priorities in national development planning frameworks	Agrifood systems priorities are being integrated into the national development planning framework, with mechanisms in place to link ministries, align programmes and translate cross-sectoral priorities into implementation. The shift to programme-based planning under the NDP IV, supported by platforms such as the National Food Systems Coordination Committee, enables coordination across sectors and levels of governance.
VIET NAM	National action planning as a mechanism for integrating multiple sectoral strategies	Multiple sectoral strategies and programmes are being brought together under a national action plan, supported by dialogue processes that connect ministries, local authorities and other stakeholders, within the context of a recent merger of the ministries of agriculture and environment. The National Action Plan for Food Systems Transformation provides a framework to improve coherence across policy areas, reduce overlaps and support implementation. While institutional coordination mechanisms are still evolving, the process reflects a shift toward more integrated planning and implementation across sectors.

I. UNDERSTANDING POLICY COHERENCE

DEFINING POLICY COHERENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

Agrifood systems have the potential to deliver multiple interconnected benefits across economic, environmental, health and social dimensions. National policies relevant to agrifood systems encompass a variety of objectives related to enhanced agricultural productivity, nutrition and health, environmental sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation, inclusive economic growth, jobs and livelihoods, and reduced inequalities – all of which are essential for long-term food security for all. Yet most agrifood systems do not consider these goals or their achievement in a coherent manner. As a consequence, policy design processes for agrifood systems often target specific objectives but fail to consider their impacts on others – or the potential synergies between them.

Responsibility for different food-related objectives is typically distributed across a wide range of sectoral ministries and specialized agencies. Ministries of agriculture tend to focus on agricultural productivity and farmer livelihoods; ministries of health on nutrition and public health; ministries of environment and climate on natural resources, biodiversity and emissions; ministries of finance and planning on public budgets and national planning; and ministries responsible for social protection and development on equity, livelihoods and access to food. While each plays a critical role in shaping agrifood systems, they all operate within distinct mandates, incentives and planning processes. As a result, policies are often developed independently.

While such specialization is necessary, the interconnected nature of agrifood systems means that policies will inevitably impact one another. These effects may be beneficial – creating synergies among objectives – but can also be counterproductive when adverse interactions are not adequately considered (Bojic, Clark and Urban, 2022). For example, agricultural subsidy and procurement programmes which prioritize staple crop yields over more diverse, nutrient-rich foods, may leave micronutrient deficiencies and diet-related diseases largely unaddressed (FAO, 2018). Similarly, climate and environmental objectives may be undermined by input and land use policies that encourage overuse of fertilizers and water or expansion into fragile ecosystems (OECD, 2025). This friction leads to inconsistent and sometimes conflicting outcomes across policy domains – affecting agricultural production, nutrition and healthy diets, environmental sustainability, and rural environment and rural livelihoods (OECD, 2021). These dynamics are further complicated by government involvement with diverse stakeholders – producers, industry actors, civil society organizations, citizens and development partners – whose interests, incentives and influence can shape policy priorities, often in competing directions.

Managing potential synergies and trade-offs is a political process as well as a technical one. Efforts to reconfigure agrifood systems need to typically consider the broader political economy beyond governments – including how policy changes affect a wide range of stakeholders and how these actors will likely respond as political constituencies. Such consideration reflects the fact that agrifood systems outcomes are shaped by the combined effects of decisions taken across multiple sectors and over time, not just by isolated policy interventions (FAO, 2025; HLPE, 2017).

In this context, agrifood systems transformation demands a holistic approach to policy design, ensuring that policies across different parts of the system complement and reinforce one another (FAO, 2025). This process, referred to as **policy coherence**, implies a systematic effort to minimize conflicting policy objectives, actions and outcomes across government ministries, while promoting greater alignment and mutually supportive policies (Parsons and Hawkes, 2019). In relation to agrifood systems it can be defined as:

the alignment of policies that affect the food system with the aim of achieving health, environmental, social and economic goals, to ensure that policies designed to improve one food system outcome do not undermine others (Parsons and Hawkes, 2019).

The term “policy coherence” is closely linked to other complementary concepts, including policy integration and convergence, all of which have different specific meanings (see Box 2).



BOX 2. POLICY COHERENCE: KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Policy integration – the extent to which cross-cutting concerns are incorporated across policy domains, enabling the consideration of interdependencies and trade-offs in a more coordinated manner. Policy integration reflects a shift from siloed approaches towards more holistic and cross-sectoral governance arrangements.^{i, ii}

Policy consistency – whether policy objectives, instruments and implementation approaches reinforce rather than undermine one another within and across policy domains. Policy consistency relates to the compatibility of policy elements and the avoidance of contradictions across policy mixes and governance arrangements.^{iii, iv}

Policy alignment – broadly, the orientation of policies, strategies and instruments towards shared or mutually reinforcing objectives across sectors and governance levels. Alignment is often used to describe efforts to reduce fragmentation, strengthen synergies and support coordinated action across interconnected agendas.^v

Policy coordination – institutional mechanisms and processes through which actors and institutions organize actions, exchange information and manage interdependencies across policy domains and governance levels. This may include joint planning, decision-making and stakeholder engagement mechanisms. Policy coordination is widely considered a prerequisite to more coherent and effective policy outcomes.[!]

Policy convergence – the process whereby policies across countries, sectors or institutions increasingly share objectives, instruments or approaches over time. This process can result from shared challenges, international agreements, policy learning or policy diffusion, but does not necessarily imply coherence or alignment in terms of implementation.^{vi, vii}

Sources:

- i. Candel, J.J.L. & Biesbroek, R. 2016. Toward a processual understanding of policy integration. *Policy Science*, 49: 211–231. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-016-9248-y>
- ii. Candel, J. & Daugbjerg, C. 2020. Overcoming the dependent variable problem in studying food policy. *Food Security*, 12(1):169–178. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12571-019-00991-2>
- iii. Howlett, M. & Rayner, J. 2007. Design principles for policy mixes: Cohesion and coherence in “new governance arrangements”. *Policy and Society*, 26(4): 1–18.
- iv. Howlett, M. & Rayner, J. 2013. Patching vs packaging in policy formulation: Assessing policy portfolio design. *Politics and Governance*, 1(2): 170–182. www.cogitatiopress.com/politicsandgovernance/article/view/95
- v. Dewi, D., Aytekin, D., Schneider, K.R., Covic, N., Fanzo, J., Nordhagen, S. & Resnick, D. 2024. Defining and measuring policy coherence for food system transformation: A scoping review. *Global Food Security*, 43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2024.100803>
- vi. Holzinger, K. & Knill, C. 2005. Causes and conditions of cross-national policy convergence. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12(5): 775–796. <https://kops.uni-konstanz.de/server/api/core/bitstreams/a5bd6526-9099-4704-a31c-32cb5d47eedd/content>
- vii. Knill, C. 2005. Introduction: Cross-national policy convergence: Concepts, approaches and explanatory factors. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12(5), 764–774. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760500161332>

Advancing policy coherence requires attention to the entire policy cycle – from setting policy priorities through to policy design and implementation. Governments should look beyond formal strategies to identify key factors and processes, including actors who drive the agenda, the mandates and instruments through which it is pursued, and organizational pathways that translate intent into practice. Advancing policy coherence also means identifying conditions that enable or constrain progress, including the role of often-underrepresented non-state actors and groups, the availability of political and financial support, and incentives shaping institutional behaviour.

Policy coherence also has both vertical and horizontal dimensions, with policies developed across multiple sectors and levels of government – national and subnational (see Box 3). Central government agencies can play a critical role in supporting coherence by coordinating policies across jurisdictions and among sectors.

BOX 3. DIMENSIONS OF POLICY COHERENCE

Horizontal coherence implies coherence between policies across sectors or policy domains at the same governance level (e.g. across ministries), focusing on how sectoral policies interact, align or conflict in a single geographical context.

Vertical coherence involves coherence between policies across different governance levels (e.g. global, national, subnational, local), capturing how they are coordinated and implemented.

Temporal coherence describes coherence between current and future policies over time, including the alignment between short-term actions and long-term objectives, focusing on effects on the well-being of future generations.

Sources:

Migone, A. & Howlett, M. 2024. The purpose of policy portfolios: Design, intention, and logic. *Journal of Public Policy*, 44(4): 809–825

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). 2016. Better policies for sustainable development 2016: A new framework for policy coherence. Paris, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264256996-en>

Parsons, K. & Hawkes, C. 2019. Rethinking food policy: A fresh approach to policy and practice. Brief 5: Policy coherence in agrifood systems. London, Centre for Food Policy. https://researchcentres.citystgeorges.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/504621/7643_Brief-5_Policy_coherence_in_food_systems_2021_SP_AW.pdf

Policy coherence is not an end in itself, but rather a means to change the way agrifood systems function by enhancing the effectiveness, equity and sustainability of public action through more coordinated planning, investment and implementation.

Misaligned policies risk reducing the effectiveness and efficiency of public action (Parsons and Hawkes, 2019). Investments intended to advance one objective may be weakened – or even offset – by interventions in another, leading to inefficient use of resources and missed opportunities to generate co-benefits. Incoherence can also create tensions between competing priorities, making it more difficult to navigate trade-offs transparently and build consensus across sectors (OECD, 2021).

Strengthening policy coherence is a means by which governments can make better use of existing resources, identify synergies and manage trade-offs more effectively (Parsons and Hawkes, 2019; OECD, 2021). It supports more informed decision-making and helps ensure that policies contribute to sustained, system-wide outcomes, maximizing impact across agrifood systems outcomes. This is critical given that agrifood systems are shaped by power relations and asymmetries, competing interests and governance structures that often prioritize short-term gains and sector-specific results.

As described in the Background Section, calls for greater policy coherence in agrifood systems have grown over the past decade, reflecting increasing recognition that interconnected challenges require integrated responses. Yet despite widespread recognition of its importance, efforts to advance policy coherence remains challenging in practice. Global analyses have highlighted multiple barriers hindering the alignment of climate and agriculture agendas at the implementation level (Crumpler *et al.*, 2025).

A growing body of evidence (Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT *et al.*, 2021; Christensen and Lægreid, 2007; Dewi *et al.* 2024; FAO, UNDP and UNEP, 2021; OECD, 2021; Patay *et al.*, 2026) suggests that efforts to advance coherence are strengthened when governments move beyond *ad hoc* coordination to embed efforts in **formal governance arrangements, shared planning frameworks** and **joint accountability mechanisms**, including through the adoption of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.

Building on previous work in this area, this publication identifies eight emerging lessons from ten countries working to navigate this complexity to advance greater policy coherence in agrifood systems.

II. EMERGING LESSONS

Countries are making progress in advancing policy coherence through a variety of different pathways. Although significant differences exist in context and institutional maturity, some early patterns are emerging. Experience from the ten countries consistently indicates that coherence is increasingly being addressed, **not as a static goal, but rather as an iterative process** with the purpose of reducing policy contradictions and aligning regulations, investments and institutional mandates towards different agrifood systems objectives. Country cases invariably emphasize coherence as a process that **helps governments manage trade-offs** between agriculture, social protection, nutrition, health, climate and biodiversity, avoiding situations where progress in one domain undermines outcomes in another.

Each country is following its own path, at its own pace, taking concrete – though sometimes uneven – steps to embed greater coherence into planning, coordination, financing and learning processes. The depth, maturity and institutional anchoring of these changes vary significantly depending on the context. Some countries build on stronger institutional governance, others on a longer history of coherence embedded into their institutional culture. Differences in political priorities and implementation capacities also affect the entry points for advancing coherence and the pace of change.

A typical early step in bringing more coherence to agrifood systems transformation processes is **institutional awareness of intersectoral linkages**. For example, in **Costa Rica**, the establishment of a technical committee to develop the country's National Pathway for Food Systems Transformation helped foster a more holistic vision of agrifood systems among civil servants and a stronger understanding of cross-sectoral inputs. In **Pakistan**, the preparation of the country's NDC 3.0 provided an opportunity to foster a shared understanding of interlinked challenges facing nutrition and climate, while lowering bureaucratic barriers that traditionally separate these policy domains. The process itself increased institutional awareness, now considered instrumental to fostering cross-sector cooperation and creating entry points for the future integration of nutrition into climate planning, financing and policy.

Other important early steps in advancing policy coherence include the **integration of "food system" framings into planning processes** and the **alignment of agrifood systems strategies with national and international development frameworks**. These endow political legitimacy, access to technical and financial support, and a narrative that can mobilize interministerial engagement without creating entirely new policy agendas. For example, **Brazil** and **Rwanda** have integrated a food systems framing into their policy agendas on food security, and nutrition and agriculture, respectively. Meanwhile, **Cameroon, Costa Rica** and **Switzerland** have incorporated agrifood systems into sustainability and climate strategies. **Uganda** and **Viet Nam** have included agrifood systems transformation as a cross-cutting priority in national development frameworks and sectoral reforms. Finally, **Sierra Leone's** agrifood systems strategy *Feed Salone* has become a national flagship policy, providing a strategic umbrella for sectoral programmes.

The practical arrangements required to translate this increased awareness into real change are still emerging. While the process is still very new and often uneven, there is a clear trend towards institutionalization to better support coherent action and planning. Countries such as **Brazil, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Switzerland** seem to be moving towards **more structured planning, with clearer strategies, defined priorities, and emerging monitoring or financing arrangements**. In the case of **Brazil or Switzerland**, this sometimes includes spaces and mechanisms for the inclusion of civil society and other stakeholders, to support coherent decision-making and implementation for lasting agrifood systems transformation.

Country experiences reveal that efforts to advance policy coherence are shaped by a combination of formal strategies and structures, decisions regarding who leads and how resources flow, and whether institutional spaces are adaptable and sustained. In practice, policy coherence in agrifood systems is not a single institutional reform, but rather a dynamic, multidimensional process that encompasses political leadership, alignment with international processes, coordination arrangements, multistakeholder participation, formal policy instruments, financing arrangements, systems for accountability and learning, and implementation mechanisms. While countries seem to be engaged in these processes, the form and intensity of these enablers vary significantly according to each specific context.

Exploring these and other factors, this section presents eight emerging lessons from efforts to advance policy coherence.



1. HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL LEADERSHIP CAN SPARK PROGRESS ON COHERENCE BUT RARELY SUSTAINS IT ALONE

- Endorsement from presidents, prime ministers or central agencies elevates agrifood systems transformation onto national policy agendas, fosters whole-of-government approaches and reduces sectoral silos.
- Political commitment alone seems insufficient to sustain progress towards policy coherence. Strategic resource allocation, clear institutional mandates, operational capacity and accountability mechanisms are also all essential requirements.
- Policy coherence efforts can deliver more durable results when anchored in legal frameworks and embedded in inclusive governance systems, rather than relying on ad hoc or leader-driven initiatives.

Advancing policy coherence in agrifood systems requires strong political commitment at the highest levels of government, as highlighted in the country experiences. When endorsed by presidents, prime ministers or central coordinating bodies, the need for coherence acquires visibility, legitimacy and authority within government structures – and can generate the political momentum needed to mobilize different sectors, facilitate collaboration across ministries and better position agrifood systems within national development agendas.

High-level leadership can provide the legitimacy necessary to unite actors with different mandates under a shared vision, signalling to ministries and agencies that coordination across sectors such as agriculture, health, environment, trade and finance, is both expected and politically supported. This can **help reduce institutional silos and foster whole-of-government approaches** to complex challenges such as agrifood systems transformation.

In **Uganda**, for example, agrifood systems transformation forms part of a high-level policy agenda reflected in the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV). This integrates agrifood systems considerations across sectors and highlights the importance of coordinated action to achieve national development objectives. High-level ownership of the national agrifood systems transformation agenda by the Office of the Prime Minister, and the involvement of the National Planning Authority, provide political momentum and help encourage collaboration among ministries that traditionally operate separately.

Anchored in national and international legal frameworks, **Brazil's** high-level commitment to the fight against hunger and poverty reframes **food as a human right**, recognizing its social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions – a position that accords with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This commitment is manifested through the National Food and Nutrition Security System (SISAN), established by law in 2006 to ensure the Human Right to Adequate Food. SISAN's

interministerial chamber Caisan consists of 24 ministries led by the Ministry of Social Development, Family and Fight against Hunger (MDS), while a National Council (Consea) ensures social participation and accountability. SISAN provides a public, intersectoral and participatory governance framework for coordinating action across the three levels of government and organized civil society, anchoring policies led by the MDS and other sectors.

Such high-level political commitment can also lay the foundation for aligning food and nutrition objectives with climate action, biodiversity conservation and social equity, while addressing agrifood systems transformation in a more coherent fashion (see Box 4).



BOX 4. BRAZIL: HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL COMMITMENT DRIVING POLICY COHERENCE FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Brazil's experience shows how sustained high-level political commitment can drive policy coherence in agrifood systems through strong leadership, institutional coordination and participatory governance. Central to this trajectory is the establishment of an **integrated policy architecture** under SISAN in 2006, ensuring continuity across political cycles and supporting alignment with broader national priorities, including climate policy (e.g. *Plano Clima*).

Social participation is a cornerstone of this system. The **National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (Consea)** functions as a direct advisory body to the Presidency of the Republic of Brazil, working to ensure that policies related to food security and nutrition and the Human Right to Adequate Food are shaped, monitored and evaluated with strong civil society involvement. With two-thirds of its members representing civil society (48 civil society representatives) and one-third representing government (24 ministries), Consea embeds inclusiveness and accountability across all levels of governance – from federal to state and municipal levels. Their involvement enhances accountability, fosters innovation through community-based knowledge and strengthens the responsiveness of public action to territorial realities, helping to translate national policy coherence into tangible outcomes on the ground.

Institutionalized interministerial arrangements further operationalize this vision. The **Interministerial Chamber on Food and Nutrition Security (Caisan)**, established in 2007, facilitates horizontal coordination by bringing together multiple ministries to design and implement joint programmes. These arrangements enable integrated policy responses, such as linking public procurement to family farming, reorienting school-feeding programmes towards healthy and locally sourced food, promoting agroecology and addressing the consumption of ultra-processed foods. Such mechanisms ensure that policy coherence becomes a functional reality firmly embedded at the territorial level.

SISAN also **enables the decentralization of food security and nutrition actions**. The *Alimenta Cidades* (Feeding Cities) strategy, launched by presidential decree in 2023 and coordinated by MDS in partnership with the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Family Farming and the Ministry of Cities, strengthens policy coherence by assisting cities in diagnosing their urban agrifood systems and – based on that diagnosis – defining actions to transform local agrifood systems. This process is combined with a set of federal programmes offered to cities, such as public procurement, urban agriculture, food loss and waste initiatives, and community kitchens. This territorialized integration reduces fragmentation, aligns policy objectives and enables context-sensitive implementation of agrifood system policies.

Read more about Brazil's experience [here](#).

Other experiences highlight how **sustained political commitment over time can improve coherence across sectoral strategies** and overcome institutional fragmentation. In **Rwanda**, strong political leadership and accountability – a defining aspect of Rwanda’s governance culture – seem to have helped create favourable conditions for advancing policy coherence. The country recently launched its Fifth Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation (PSTA5) – its first agrifood systems and climate-resilience strategy. Rwanda’s experience indicates that strong planning traditions and consistent political direction can support coordinated policymaking across sectors.

Similarly, in **Sierra Leone**, strong political commitment at the highest levels of government played a key role in advancing policy coherence around agrifood systems transformation. The President established and chaired an interministerial Presidential Council for the Feed Salone Strategy 2023–2028 – an initiative which provided a unifying framework for cross-sectoral action on food security and nutrition. Anchored in the National Development Plan and supported by senior political leadership, Feed Salone helped frame food and nutrition security as a national priority rather than a purely sectoral concern. This created an opportunity for different ministries to work towards shared objectives, linking in particular agriculture, nutrition and economic growth.

In **Cameroon, Costa Rica and Pakistan**, political commitment originates primarily from sectoral ministries rather than the highest levels of government. In such cases, ministries of agriculture can play a leading role in promoting agrifood systems transformation and advocating for policy coherence. While such leadership can be critical, its influence depends frequently on broader interministerial dynamics and the presence – or absence – of mechanisms capable of convening other sectors such as finance, health, trade or environment.

In some contexts, coherence has been supported not only by explicit political initiatives but also by **broader administrative reforms** aimed at improving government efficiency. In **Viet Nam**, for example, coherence processes have been driven in part by high-level government decisions to implement structural changes, including ministerial mergers and decentralization processes. Although not designed specifically around agrifood systems transformation, these reforms reflect a pragmatic approach to public administration that has supported greater policy coherence and created institutional arrangements that facilitate coordination across sectors.

Country experiences, including from **Brazil, Cameroon, Rwanda** and others, indicate that while high-level political will, together with donor support, can be decisive in initiating processes to advance policy coherence, they are not sufficient in and of themselves to sustain these processes over time. This is particularly the case following changes in government or in the absence of strong domestic financing and deeper institutional ownership. Such insights suggest that for policy coherence efforts to deliver sustainable results, **high-level political commitment needs to be supported** by specific elements. Key among these are domestic financing, operational arrangements and political stability capable of maintaining coordination over time, institutionalized mechanisms for civil society engagement, and governance frameworks that are legally or sufficiently structurally robust to withstand shifts in political leadership and ensure sustained implementation.

2. INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES FREQUENTLY ACCELERATE NATIONAL COHERENCE EFFORTS

- International processes such as the UNFSS can act as accelerators for cross-sectoral dialogue and policy alignment. They can help countries initiate or structure cross-sectoral dialogue and align or reframe existing policies within a broader agrifood systems perspective.
- Aligning national strategies with international and regional commitments can enhance political legitimacy and incentivize interministerial coordination.
- Alignment with international agendas can help countries access technical and financial support but may increase complexity, fragmentation and pressure on national capacities, if poorly coordinated. How countries use these processes can determine their effectiveness for policy coherence.

Across the ten country cases, international processes and agendas played an important role in supporting policy coherence in agrifood systems at the national level. Notable examples include the UNFSS, the SDGs, climate frameworks under the UNFCCC (NDCs and NAPs), biodiversity frameworks under the CBD, land-related frameworks under the UNCCD, and regional commitments (e.g. the Kampala Declaration under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and EU accession frameworks). The influence of these processes varies significantly in depth and function, depending on how they were adopted and translated into domestic processes. Rather than acting as prescriptive frameworks, these international agendas function frequently as catalysts, providing political momentum, legitimacy and a convening space that countries can leverage to advance national efforts towards policy coherence for agrifood systems transformation.

In several countries, **international processes – especially the UNFSS – helped to initiate or structure cross-sectoral dialogue** by creating a legitimate basis and institutional space to convene actors with little or no previous experience of systematic collaboration. For example, in **Viet Nam**, the UNFSS process triggered a series of national dialogues bringing together ministries, local authorities, research institutions, private sector actors and civil society, contributing to the formulation of the National Action Plan for Food Systems Transformation (NAP-FST). Similarly, in **Cameroon**, the UNFSS process – including the development of the National Pathway – expanded discussions beyond the agriculture sector and enabled engagement across multiple sectors, with a focus on climate priorities. This process informed the development of the Convergence Action Blueprint and the designation of seven UNFSS Coalition focal points in five ministries (see Box 5).

BOX 5. CAMEROON: LEVERAGING THE UNFSS PROCESS TO CONVERGE AGENDAS



In Cameroon, the UNFSS process helped catalyse a national effort connecting agrifood systems transformation with climate, biodiversity and nutrition priorities. National dialogues and the development of a food systems pathway brought together ministries and partners to explore ways to better align existing national strategies and international commitments. This process created a strong basis for Cameroon's engagement in the [UN Food Systems Coordination Hub's Convergence Initiative](#), which aims to align agrifood systems transformation and climate action for accelerated sustainable development.

Building on this momentum, Cameroon developed the [Convergence Action Blueprint](#), a national roadmap that links agrifood systems priorities with key policy frameworks, including the National Development Strategy 2030, climate commitments under the Paris Agreement, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and the Multisectoral Plan to Fight Malnutrition. The blueprint lays out three strategic priorities, 15 priority actions, concrete milestones and coordination mechanisms. These are designed to strengthen collaboration among ministries responsible for agriculture, environment, health and finance – and to translate policy alignment into joint programmes and investment priorities.

To strengthen multisectoral coordination, the Agrifood Systems National Convenor also requested five ministers to designate focal points for seven UNFSS Coalitions. **Knowledge brokers and partners from international organizations and other institutions have supported the National Convenor** in translating global agendas into nationally relevant priorities and in facilitating dialogue across sectors. This has helped build trust and shared understanding among ministries and stakeholders involved in the convergence process.

Implementation is being advanced around three priority areas: the rice value chain, agroecological transformation of staples and livestock, and import substitution. These are areas in which actions can contribute simultaneously to food security and nutrition, climate resilience and biodiversity protection. As part of this effort, ministries and partners are developing bankable projects aligned with these priorities, seeking to mobilize financing from climate and development funds and strengthen investment in sustainable agrifood systems. A first Joint Programme, *ConvergeFood*, launched in January 2025, brought together several ministries, eight UN agencies and three donors. Seed funding was obtained from the Joint SDG Fund, and discussions are underway to secure additional funding from the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security and the Islamic Development Bank, with a view to scaling up implementation.

In other contexts, international agendas have supported coherence primarily by **helping governments align and reframe existing policies and initiatives** within a broader agrifood systems framework. In making the interlinkages between sectoral initiatives more visible and actionable, this process helps countries operationalize them as part of more integrated approaches.

In **Costa Rica**, international processes have shaped and reinforced current national policy coherence efforts. Building on existing environmental action, particularly in forest conservation and ecosystem restoration, global climate frameworks under the Paris Agreement have boosted momentum and created opportunities to strengthen linkages between environmental and agricultural agendas – including through the development of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs). Similarly, the UNFSS process provided an opportunity to build on agro-environmental initiatives, such as soil recarbonization (e.g. RECSOIL) and payments for ecosystem services schemes, integrating them into the National Agrifood Systems Roadmap as part of a broader articulation of “better production, better resources, better diets”. In so doing, it helped deepen cross-sectoral dialogue and expand connections with other key agendas – including health and education – for example, by reinforcing priorities around practices that jointly benefit environmental sustainability and human health, while promoting soil recarbonization (see Box 11).

In **Pakistan**, participation in global initiatives such as the UNFSS Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All (HDSFS), has been leveraged to translate international learning into national institutional innovations, while supporting the alignment of existing policies and strategies (see Box 6).



BOX 6. PAKISTAN: LEVERAGING INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES TO CATALYSE CROSS-SECTOR AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS ACTION



Pakistan's experience illustrates how engagement with international processes and initiatives can catalyse cross-sectoral coordination and advance more integrated agrifood systems approaches. Facing a "triple burden" of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and rising diet-related non-communicable diseases, the country has increasingly framed agrifood systems action around improving nutrition outcomes and access to **healthy and affordable diets**.

Participation in the UNFSS and engagement with the [Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All \(HDSFS\)](#) elevated healthy diets in national policy discussions and helped to advance new policy and institutional processes, including a **National Healthy Diet Policy**. By facilitating broader and more inclusive cross-sectoral dialogue, these processes also broke down traditional policy silos, bringing together ministries responsible for health, food security, planning and climate, alongside academia, development partners and civil society.

International engagement has also catalysed institutional innovations at the subnational level. For example, the **Healthy Diet Resource Center**, established in Punjab and inspired by international exchange, provides a practical model for strengthening coordination across food safety, nutrition and social protection policies, with the goal of improving access to healthy diets. Similarly, **school meals programmes** implemented at the provincial level translate national nutrition priorities into practice, linking nutrition, education, agriculture and social protection, while supporting improved diets and human capital outcomes.

Read more about Pakistan's experience [here](#).

Similarly, in countries where efforts are already underway to strengthen coherence for agrifood systems transformation, **international processes often act as accelerators**. They play a complementary role, reinforcing political momentum, increasing visibility and scaling ongoing efforts.

In **Brazil**, efforts to advance coherence are rooted largely in long-standing food security and nutrition frameworks reinforced by more recent domestic political prioritization – including the reactivation of interministerial coordination mechanisms (Caisan) and the rollout of strategies such as *Alimenta Cidades*. International processes, including SDG commitments and climate policy spaces, enabled national strategies to be linked to global narratives, connecting agrifood systems more explicitly with climate, urban development and social inclusion agendas while increasing their visibility and momentum. Brazil was also one of the first countries to implement the Hub's Convergence Initiative in 2024 and is now supporting its expansion to Amazonian

countries. **Brazil**'s role as host of the 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) reinforced this trajectory, strengthening the connection between climate and agrifood systems within national policy discussions. In this context, the Reference Framework on Food Systems and Climate for Public Policies, launched by Brazil at COP30, emerged as a key instrument to promote convergence and coherence across sectors and levels of governance. The Framework guides implementation efforts within *Alimenta Cidades* and enables alignment with initiatives under the [Plan to Accelerate Solutions](#) (PAS), hosted by the SFS Programme of the One Planet Network, thereby reinforcing policy coherence between climate action and agrifood systems strategies.

In **Switzerland**, coherence efforts are an integral part of the country's long-standing engagement with the 2030 Agenda. Food systems considerations have been integrated into an existing policy landscape, with momentum from global agendas – including the UNFSS and climate and biodiversity frameworks – reinforcing efforts to strengthen alignment across agriculture, climate, biodiversity and nutrition policies within the federal system.

In some countries, international processes have played a role in **strengthening vertical coherence** by supporting alignment between national frameworks and subnational planning and implementation. **Viet Nam** offers a clear example, here. Building on national dialogues and coordination processes initiated through the UNFSS process, the government has worked to align the national agrifood systems framework with provincial administrations through the expansion of NAP-FST at the provincial level.

Aligning national strategies with regional frameworks can also offer political legitimacy and create incentives for interministerial coordination. For example, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**'s alignment with EU accession requirements illustrates how external frameworks can structure alignment across agriculture, food safety and environmental policies (see Box 7). Similarly, countries such as **Sierra Leone** and **Uganda** have embedded agrifood systems priorities within national development plans and initiatives in line with CAADP commitments under the Malabo and Kampala declarations (which promote coordinated action on agricultural transformation, food security, resilience and increased public investment in agriculture across African Union member states). They also align with other international commitments such as the UNFSS.



BOX 7. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: LEVERAGING REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR BETTER COORDINATION



Bosnia and Herzegovina's experience proves that agrifood systems transformation can unfold within a **highly decentralized and complex governance structure**. The country's institutional architecture – shaped by the Dayton Peace Agreement – distributes responsibilities across the state level, two entities (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska), ten cantons within the Federation, and the Brčko District. With multiple layers of government and more than 100 ministries and institutions involved, coordinating food policies across levels is both challenging and essential for progress.

In this context, **EU accession negotiations have become a key driver of policy alignment**. As a candidate country, Bosnia and Herzegovina is required to progressively align its legislation with the EU acquis across multiple negotiation chapters: agriculture and rural development, food safety and veterinary standards, environment and climate change, and social policy. These requirements are shaping national and entity-level reforms and influencing investment priorities under the country's Strategic Plan for Rural Development 2023–2027.

The **dairy sector** provides a practical entry point for navigating these transformations. Deeply embedded in rural livelihoods and cultural traditions, dairy production connects several policy agendas including rural development, food safety regulation, trade competitiveness, nutrition and environmental sustainability. The sector is closely tied to Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts to align with EU food safety and veterinary and market standards as part of the accession process, which shapes regulatory reforms and export opportunities. However, smallholder producers face increasing pressure from market liberalization, regulatory changes and competition from imports.

Experiences from family farms and small dairy enterprises highlight how producers are adapting to evolving regulations, investing in quality standards and exploring new markets such as artisanal products or diaspora demand. At the same time, their stories underline the importance of **coherent policies and coordinated support across sectors and levels of government**, in ensuring that food transformation strengthens rural livelihoods rather than accelerating their decline.

Read more about Bosnia and Herzegovina's experience [here](#).

Alignment with international processes can also **facilitate access to technical and financial support** including from UN agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organization (NGOs) and bilateral development partners. Greater access to analytical tools, capacity building and support for coordination mechanisms can help countries strengthen policy coherence. In many cases, this external support has informed policy design and proven instrumental in sustaining dialogue and developing and implementing integrated approaches. At the same time, several country experiences suggest that the proliferation of international processes, initiatives and support mechanisms, linked to different global agendas, **can create coordination challenges for governments, particularly where institutional capacities and resources are limited**. In some contexts, stakeholders highlighted difficulties associated with navigating multiple reporting processes, coordination platforms and partner requirements across agrifood systems, agriculture, climate, biodiversity and nutrition agendas.

Overall, the ten country experiences suggest that **international processes appear to be most effective when they support and reinforce nationally driven priorities and efforts, rather than operating as standalone or externally driven agendas**. From this perspective, policy coherence seems to depend less on international frameworks themselves than on how countries adapt and use them to strengthen nationally driven processes of coordination, alignment and implementation.



3. COUNTRIES ARE USING COORDINATION MECHANISMS TO TACKLE FRAGMENTATION ACROSS SECTORS AND LEVELS

- Countries are increasingly institutionalizing coordination platforms to align agrifood systems policies, often strengthening existing structures rather than creating new bodies.
- Institutional arrangements vary widely but their impact appears to depend on formalized mandates, political backing, clear links to decision-making and implementation procedures, and agreed accountability processes.
- Governments are employing different institutional arrangements to advance policy coherence, notably high-level intersectoral coordination mechanisms, sectoral bodies with cross-cutting mandates and technical-level coordination.

Advancing policy coherence in most country experiences involves the **development, strengthening or adaptation of institutional arrangements** designed to coordinate policy processes across different sectors, levels of government and stakeholder groups. These mechanisms aim to address fragmentation in governance of agrifood systems and related sectors, where responsibilities for food security, nutrition and health, food production, environment, trade and social protection are distributed across multiple ministries and agencies.

Countries are creating or strengthening structured coordination platforms that enable cross-sector dialogue and joint decision-making. While most are relatively new and uneven in terms of implementation, they represent an important shift towards more explicit governance structures for managing policy interactions across agrifood systems agendas. These mechanisms take varying forms across countries reflecting differences in governance systems and policy priorities, but generally bring together multiple ministries, levels of government and non-state actors to identify synergies, address potential trade-offs and align priorities across sectors.

Across countries these platforms differ in their institutional positioning, mandates and degree of formalization. In several cases, **governments are building on existing institutional structures** to improve policy coordination for agrifood systems transformation across sectors. This includes **Brazil**, where long-standing coordination mechanisms within SISAN help align food security, nutrition, agriculture and social protection policies across sectors and levels of government (see Box 4).

In **Sierra Leone**, the government has expanded the scope of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Unit from its initial focus on nutrition coordination to a broader mandate supporting coordination across agrifood systems agendas. Renamed the “SUN and Food Systems

Coordination Unit”, this body located within the Office of the Vice President operates as a technical coordination space in support of the Presidential Council for the Feed Salone Strategy. The Unit enables coordination across ministries, development partners and other stakeholders by facilitating information-sharing, helping to align implementation efforts and contributing to multisectoral dialogue and follow-up on food system priorities.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, coordination builds on existing institutional arrangements within a highly decentralized governance system. Responsibilities for agrifood systems-related governance and policymaking are distributed across multiple levels of government (see Box 7). Agricultural policy is managed primarily at the entity level, with each entity having its own ministries, legal framework and budget. At the state level, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations plays a coordinating role ensuring policy harmonization related to EU accession requirements and other international commitments. The UNFSS National Convenor is hosted within the Ministry and works to facilitate dialogue across institutions and levels of government through a multistakeholder working group – an example of coordination achieved through strengthening existing structures rather than creating new centralized bodies.

In other cases, governments have created **new coordination bodies or institutional structures** specifically designed to advance food systems transformation and policy coherence. Many of these mechanisms emerged in the aftermath of UNFSS, with countries seeking to translate commitments articulated in their National Pathways into concrete implementation processes.

Pakistan, for instance, has established a Food Systems Transformation Secretariat to help coordinate food systems strategies and to align national and provincial actions around nutrition-sensitive food systems priorities. **Viet Nam** (see Box 10) has also established a coordination mechanism – the Food System Transformation Partnership – outlined in the [National Action Plan for Food Systems Transformation](#) (NAP-FST). The Partnership is chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment and brings together government institutions, local authorities, international partners and other stakeholders to oversee tasks assigned across ministries. It supports alignment across policies and programmes, reflecting a centrally guided approach to improving coherence across food systems agendas.

Similarly, in **Uganda** (see Box 8), the National Food Systems Coordination Committee (NFSCC) gathers together ministries and a wide range of stakeholders to align agrifood systems priorities with national development planning, coordinating budgeting and implementation across sectors. In **Sierra Leone**, the SUN and Food Systems Coordination Unit is complemented by the Presidential Council for delivering Feed Salone. Established by the government and chaired by the president, the Council provides strategic guidance, helps convene development partners and key actors, promotes policy coherence across sectors, and addresses cross-cutting issues affecting programme delivery, including trade-offs.

BOX 8. UGANDA: STRENGTHENING POLICY COHERENCE THROUGH A NATIONAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION COMMITTEE



In Uganda, a formal coordination mechanism acts as a catalyst for strengthening policy coherence for food systems transformation. The **National Food Systems Coordination Committee** (NFSCC), chaired by the Office of the Prime Minister, serves as the country's central institutional platform, bringing together 17 ministries and institutions alongside civil society, the private sector, academia and development partners. Created to advance the implementation of Uganda's National Pathway for Food Systems Transformation, the NFSCC functions as a convening and decision-shaping body, guiding strategy, mobilizing resources and tracking progress across the food systems agenda.

A permanent multistakeholder platform, the NFSCC helps identify synergies, address trade-offs and build a shared understanding of priorities across agriculture, nutrition, climate and broader development agendas. Its high-level positioning has proven instrumental in strengthening cross-ministerial engagement and linking food systems priorities to national planning and decision-making processes.

This coordination function supported the integration of Uganda's National Pathway for Food Systems Transformation into the **Fourth National Development Plan** (NDP IV), adopted in 2025. The NDP IV consolidates the shift from fragmented, sector-based planning towards a **programme-based approach**, uniting multiple ministries and agencies around shared objectives and embedding food systems priorities within national planning and budgeting frameworks.

Programme Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs) translate these programmes into jointly defined outputs, timelines, indicators and financing. In the Agro-industrialization Programme, for example, ministries responsible for agriculture, trade, and water and environment jointly deliver on priorities such as value addition, irrigation and climate-smart agriculture, aligning interventions across sectors within a single implementation framework.

Read more about Uganda's experience [here](#).

In **Costa Rica** and **Switzerland**, new structures have been established building on existing interministerial coordination cultures. Long-standing collaboration between the ministries of Agriculture and Environment in **Costa Rica**, aimed at aligning climate, biodiversity and agricultural policies, has been leveraged to establish the Agrifood Systems Technical Roundtable. This serves as a central platform to convene ministries and stakeholders in support of a whole-of-system approach to food systems transformation. In **Switzerland** (see Box 9), coherence is advanced through structured interministerial collaboration. This is exemplified by the joint development and implementation of the Agriculture and Food Climate Strategy 2050 by the Federal Office for Agriculture, the Federal Office for the Environment, and the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office. The outcome is a cross-sectoral space supporting the alignment of climate, agriculture, biodiversity and nutrition agendas.



BOX 9. SWITZERLAND: STRENGTHENING POLICY COHERENCE THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



Switzerland has progressively strengthened policy coherence in its food system by improving coordination across sectors and fostering dialogue among stakeholders.

In 2023, in response to growing interconnected climate, environmental, health, economic and social pressures, and building on its commitment to the Paris Agreement and its Long-Term Climate Strategy, Switzerland launched the **Agriculture and Food Climate Strategy 2050** (AFCS2050). Looking ahead to 2050, the strategy sets out three main objectives: (1) to adapt farming to the changing climate and local conditions, ensuring can meet at least half of the country's food demand; (2) to promote healthier and more resource-efficient diets, reducing per-capita food-related emissions by two-thirds compared to 2020; and (3) to cut emissions from domestic agricultural production by at least 40 percent compared to 1990, while addressing remaining emissions.

Developed jointly by the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG), the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), and the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO), the strategy represents a key step towards overcoming fragmented policymaking and provides a more integrated approach to food systems transformation. It reflects a strengthened interministerial approach, aligning objectives across health, nutrition, biodiversity, climate, agriculture and trade.

An **interministerial working group** is supporting coordination across policy design, implementation and monitoring, helping to connect actions across the entire food system. The strategy also builds on existing policies and instruments, looking to build synergies rather than creating an additional standalone framework.

The AFCS2050 is further grounded in a **broad multistakeholder consultative process** launched in 2021, supported by an advisory group bringing together actors from research institutions, producer organizations, cooperatives, industry, retail, consumer groups and environmental organizations. This process highlights the value of structured and inclusive engagement in fostering shared understanding, building trust and strengthening collective ownership of transformation pathways.

Read more about Switzerland's experience [here](#).

Other countries are in the process of establishing new coordination mechanisms. In **Cameroon**, a Sub-Commission for Rural Development, established under the National Development Strategy 2020–2030 (SND30), facilitates alignment of food and nutrition priorities across ministries – a process involving engagement with seven designated UNFSS Coalition focal points. In **Rwanda**, a Food Systems Coordination Unit, currently being established under the Fifth Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation (PSTA5), aims to strengthen cross-sector planning, implementation and resource alignment, reflecting a shift from sector-based coordination toward more integrated, system-wide governance.

Overall, institutional platforms used to advance policy coherence vary considerably across countries reflecting differences in governance systems, political leadership and administrative capacity. Examples range from high-level coordinating bodies anchored in central government institutions, to sectoral leadership with cross-cutting mandates and more technical coordination mechanisms supporting incremental alignment across sectors.

Several country experiences illustrate how coherence can be driven through **central leadership and coordination mechanisms anchored in or linked to the highest levels of government**, including the Office of the Prime Minister or the Presidency. Mechanisms such as **Brazil's** Caisan, **Pakistan's** Food Systems Transformation Secretariat, **Sierra Leone's** Presidential Council and **Uganda's** NFSCC, are illustrative of efforts to position food systems coordination within broader national development and planning processes. These platforms typically bring together planning, finance and sectoral ministries within a single coordination framework, helping to align policy priorities, budgets and implementation across sectors. High-level political anchoring (see II.1) can strengthen authority, facilitate interministerial collaboration and support budgeting and resource mobilization, although the depth of implementation remains uneven across contexts.

In addition to these governance mechanisms, single ministries – mainly ministries of agriculture – **also play coordination roles that span government departments**. In many cases, broader food systems governance structures and coordination mechanisms appear to complement rather than replace the coordination work carried out by individual ministries, with



specific ministries often continuing to play a leading role in supporting or coordinating these structures. In **Rwanda**, the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) plays a long-standing coordination role within national development frameworks including Vision 2050 and NST2, which guide cross-sectoral national development planning. Under PSTA5, this role is being deepened through dedicated arrangements focused on implementation of agriculture and food systems priorities. Similarly, in **Viet Nam**, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment chairs the Food Systems Transformation Partnership, coordinating inputs from health and other sectors. As noted previously, in **Costa Rica**, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock coordinates the Agrifood Systems Technical Roundtable.

This type of coordination leadership by a single government ministry can play a critical role in initiating and structuring coherence efforts, anchoring coordination within an existing mandate, mobilizing sectoral expertise and linking policy processes to existing programmes or activities. However, country experiences also suggest that coordination led primarily by a single sector ministry may face challenges in sustaining broad cross-sectoral engagement. Effective coherence may depend therefore not only on sectoral leadership but also on the extent to which other ministries are actively involved.

Across many of the country experiences, the most common area of integration related to the agriculture–nutrition–health–environment nexus, as observed in **Cameroon, Costa Rica, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone** and **Switzerland**. In some countries, such as **Brazil, Uganda** and **Viet Nam**, this integration extends to agendas for social protection, equity and economic development.

The tendency of ministries to prioritize sector-specific objectives also reflects broader institutional and political economy factors. Ministries are often accountable to distinct constituencies and policy priorities, which can influence incentives for collaboration and shape how coherence is pursued across sectors.

In several contexts, progress toward coherence initially used **technical-level coordination as an entry point**, rather than high-level political mandates. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pakistan and Viet Nam**, for example, early advances were led by technical teams, policy units and National Convenors, who facilitated dialogue, built shared understanding and supported incremental alignment across sectors. In such cases, technical collaboration can provide a concrete entry point where political leadership or formal mandates are less clearly defined, allowing coordination processes to emerge gradually. This helps build trust and shared understanding across sectors and potentially contributes over time to more formalized coordination arrangements.

Overall, the country experiences suggest a growing **trend towards the institutionalization of coordination mechanisms for food systems transformation**. Countries are moving from ad hoc approaches towards more structured and formalized governance arrangements for food systems that take different forms, engage with diverse actors and operate across multiple levels – all of which provides a good basis for enhancing policy coherence. These mechanisms also differ in their institutional positioning, mandates and degree of authority, and in some instances function primarily as platforms for dialogue and alignment, while responsibilities for policy decisions, budgeting and implementation remain with line ministries and government agencies.



4. INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION CAN HELP NAVIGATE DIVERSE INTERESTS AND STRENGTHEN COHERENCE

- Countries are making increasing use of participatory and multistakeholder mechanisms to broaden engagement with diverse actors in agrifood systems policy and decision-making processes across different sectors and levels of governance.
- Inclusive participation can support policy coherence by creating spaces for dialogue, coordination and negotiation among actors with different mandates, interests and forms of knowledge.
- Different stakeholders can have diverse interests, unequal access to decision-making processes and varying levels of influence, which may shape whose priorities and perspectives are reflected in policy processes.

Policy coherence is shaped by several factors: who participates in coordination and decision-making processes, how that participation is structured, and what approaches are used to engage with different actors and levels of governance – and for what purpose. Several countries have introduced or strengthened **participatory and multistakeholder governance mechanisms** to broaden engagement and reinforce inclusiveness in agrifood systems policy processes. Such inclusive forms of participation appear to support coherence by creating spaces for dialogue and coordination among actors with different mandates, priorities and forms of knowledge. This approach has the potential to align objectives across sectors, strengthen shared understanding of trade-offs and synergies, and improve connections between national strategies and implementation realities.

In Brazil, Consea institutionalizes civil society participation (see Box 4) and municipal engagement through councils operating at federal, state and municipal levels. Within the broader SISAN governance architecture, these arrangements help facilitate dialogue across sectors and levels of government, strengthening connections between national policy processes and territorial realities. **Pakistan**'s provincial coordination mechanisms and **Uganda**'s NFSCC extend participation to subnational actors, academia and the private sector, helping to ensure that priorities and implementation challenges from different sectors and territories are reflected in national policy discussions. Similarly, in **Sierra Leone**, the Feed Salone initiative has been shaped through inclusive national dialogues gathering actors from across government, civil society, private sector and development partners. Meanwhile, in **Rwanda**, district consultations and sector working groups have engaged with farmer organizations and local stakeholders to shape national strategies.

Participation in coordination mechanisms varies considerably across countries depending on their composition, mandate and degree of influence over policy and decision-making processes. In some cases, participation focuses primarily on consultation and dialogue,

while in others participation is institutionalized through advisory councils, working groups and multistakeholder coordination platforms. In many cases, countries combine broad participatory processes with more focused deliberative spaces. This helps shape how dialogue is structured, how trade-offs are negotiated and whose perspectives ultimately influence policy processes.

It is important to note that **different stakeholders often possess diverse interests and may have unequal access to decision-making processes as well as differing levels of influence**. This includes the private sector, where large multinational companies and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may differ significantly in their resources, technical capacity and ability to engage in policy processes. The design of coordination platforms – including who is invited, how participation is structured and which inputs are reflected in decision-making – can play an important role in shaping whose interests are represented.

In this context, **involving civil society in agrifood systems policy and decision-making processes** can enhance legitimacy and accountability, incorporating diverse perspectives and evidence into policy discussions. Such engagement can surface competing priorities and power dynamics, balance influence among actors, identify policy inconsistencies, and highlight synergies and trade-offs that might otherwise remain unaddressed within sector-specific policy arenas – thereby potentially contributing to more coherent and informed decision-making.

Across the country experiences, civil society engagement in agrifood systems decision-making and governance mechanisms takes different forms. In several cases, civil society actors are involved in consultative, planning and/or implementation processes. **Brazil** presents an example of particularly strong institutionalized civil society engagement, where Consea councils at federal, state and municipal levels enable civil society actors to play a role in agenda-setting, policy formulation, and monitoring of food security and nutrition policies. In addition to strengthening inclusivity, such engagement connects policy processes across sectors and levels of governance by integrating implementation realities, territorial perspectives and the priorities of affected populations into cross-sectoral policy discussions, thereby supporting more coherent and context-responsive policy processes.

In **Rwanda**, civil society organizations (CSOs) and farmer organizations were actively involved in the development of PSTA5 through district consultations, sector working groups and policy dialogues – and are expected to contribute to implementation through roles in extension, producer mobilization and service delivery. **Cameroon's** Convergence Action Blueprint also foresees CSO participation within multistakeholder working groups linked to agroecology, nutrition and value-chain initiatives. In **Costa Rica** and **Sierra Leone**, CSO participation is incorporated into strategy development processes related to sustainable agriculture initiatives and the Feed Salone initiative, respectively.

In other cases, CSOs contribute primarily through consultations and policy dialogues linked to national strategies and planning processes. Such engagement can help strengthen policy coherence by eliciting perspectives and evidence from different sectors, constituencies and territorial contexts. This can help identify implementation challenges, gaps and trade-offs that



may not be visible within government-led or sector-specific policy processes. In **Pakistan and Uganda**, civil society actors participate in national and subnational dialogues and consultations related to agrifood systems, nutrition and development planning processes, while in **Switzerland** citizens and CSOs are involved in structured consultations around federal strategies (see Box 9). In **Viet Nam**, mass organizations such as the Women's Union and Farmer Union contributed to dialogues during the development of the National Action Plan for Food Systems Transformation, while implementation remains largely the purview of government structures. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, engagement is limited mainly to sector-specific actors such as producer associations.

Coordination mechanisms also **contribute to integrating equity considerations into policy processes** by reflecting the perspectives and needs of women, youth and vulnerable groups. For example, **Uganda's** NFSCC purposely incorporates women's groups and youth alongside civil society representatives. In addition, the country's NDP IV emphasizes inclusive economic opportunities including entrepreneurship and employment for women and youth. Similarly, **Sierra Leone's** Feed Salone prioritizes women and youth empowerment as part of implementation. In **Rwanda and Pakistan**, food and nutrition policy processes increasingly recognize gender dimensions including maternal nutrition and the structural constraints faced by women farmers. Across countries, the extent to which these mechanisms translate into more equitable participation remains uneven, however, often constrained by persistent barriers in access to resources, representation and decision-making power.

Multiple countries are also **strengthening participation and coordination across national and subnational levels of government**. Incorporating local governments in national policy processes and platforms – through structured dialogues and joint intersectoral reviews (to assess progress and align priorities across sectors and levels) – can help align policies and actions across sectors and territories. Countries such as **Brazil** and **Viet Nam** have institutionalized consultations and learning platforms to support subnational engagement, while **Rwanda** and **Uganda** have used national and regional dialogues to inform priority-setting and implementation.

Engaging with subnational and local levels of government can be critical to strengthening policy coherence. Different forms of engagement can help adapt national priorities to diverse territorial contexts, support implementation where sectoral mandates converge, and strengthen ownership, coordination and accountability across actors. Such approaches have not yet been systematically established across countries, however, either in terms of ensuring consistent regional representation in national processes or sustained engagement across subnational levels of government. As a result, effectiveness remains uneven and often depends on institutional capacity, available resources, and whether and to what extent these mechanisms are embedded in formal policy, decision-making and governance processes.

The country experiences also highlight the importance of **involving technical, research and advisory institutions in agrifood systems policy and decision-making processes**.

In contributing scientific evidence, technical expertise, knowledge exchange and convening spaces, these actors can strengthen the evidence base informing intersectoral dialogue and support the operationalization of cross-sectoral priorities.

In **Switzerland**, extra-parliamentary commissions, such as the [Federal Commission for Nutrition](#) and the [Agricultural Advisory Commission](#), provide scientific and technical advice, assembling expertise from academia, industry and civil society to inform federal food system-related policy developments. In **Costa Rica**, research institutions, academia and producer organizations have participated in the design and implementation of coffee and livestock Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) by generating data, testing practices and supporting extension – thereby linking policy objectives on climate, biodiversity and agriculture to concrete action. In **Rwanda**, specialized agencies and partners supporting PSTA5 have contributed technical analyse, knowledge exchange and capacity building (e.g. through knowledge seminars and policy learning programmes), helping to strengthen evidence-based decision-making.

Overall, the country experiences suggest that advancing policy coherence involves not only technical and institutional dimensions, but also political processes addressing diverse objectives and interests. These typically involve negotiations across multiple actors and levels of governance. Such inclusive and multilevel participation can strengthen legitimacy, ownership and impact of implementation, although the extent to which different actors influence policy and decision-making processes varies considerably across contexts.

5. COUNTRIES ARE INCREASINGLY USING CROSS-SECTORAL STRATEGIES TO ALIGN PRIORITIES ACROSS GOVERNMENT

- Cross-sectoral strategies and national plans are considered the backbone of policy coherence, providing a structural framework for organization and implementation while connecting strategic vision with policy delivery.
- Strategic frameworks play a key role in vertical integration, translating national objectives into planning, financing and action at the local level.
- Specific issues, such as malnutrition, climate change, advancing gender equality, and the inclusion of youth and vulnerable groups, can be potential entry points for advancing coherent policy implementation.

Across all country cases, **strategic frameworks, plans and policy instruments** are strengthening policy coherence, translating cross-sectoral intent into practice. These instruments play a critical role in embedding agrifood systems objectives across sectors, aligning priorities and linking high-level commitments to implementation processes.

While [National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation](#) often provide the initial narrative, vision, convening framework and institutional anchor, countries rely on a broader architecture of complementary strategies and plans to strengthen coherence and advance agrifood systems transformation. These include national development plans, cross-sectoral frameworks, sectoral strategies and policies, and implementation instruments.

In several countries, broader **national development frameworks and strategic plans can provide a structural framework for advancing policy coherence**. Such core planning instruments unite sectoral priorities under a shared strategic direction, linking them to resource allocation, institutional responsibilities and joint delivery mechanisms. **Uganda** illustrates this process through the integration of National Pathway priorities into the NDP IV and PIAPs, which use shared planning, budgeting and results frameworks to deliver on cross-sectoral priorities (see Box 8). Similarly, in **Sierra Leone** the Feed Salone initiative is embedded within the Medium-Term National Development Plan, aligning production, markets, nutrition, climate resilience and employment objectives with public investment and delivery structures. In **Viet Nam**, the NAP-FST provides a unifying framework for a wide range of strategies (and their respective indicators) – including for agriculture, nutrition, climate change and green growth – by building on shared objectives, clarifying institutional responsibilities and cross-referencing issues across policy instruments (see Box 10).

In some cases, **cross-sectoral strategies provide a shared policy framework, aligning sectoral priorities around common objectives**. The strategies help connect previously fragmented agendas by uniting agrifood systems goals across sectoral policies and plans.

In **Sierra Leone**, the National Nutrition Commitment Framework aligns nutrition, health and social protection priorities, while the Feed Salone initiative connects production, markets, nutrition, climate resilience and employment objectives under a unified national agrifood systems framework. In **Pakistan**, a dense architecture of multisectoral nutrition strategies reflects an explicit effort to link health, agriculture and social protection objectives under a shared vision, with tools such as the Cost of Healthy Diets and Nutrition Outlook reinforcing evidence-based, multisectoral policy design. Similarly, **Brazil** aligns urban agrifood systems transformation and climate action priorities through interconnected instruments, such as PLANSAN 2025–2027, the *Alimenta Cidades* strategy, and the National Food Supply Policy and Plan, supported by a broader national climate agenda. This approach advances coherence across sectors and levels while anchoring implementation, building on long-standing institutional frameworks such as SISAN that formalize intersectoral coordination around the Human Right to Adequate Food. **Switzerland** advances intersectoral alignment through an extensive set of frameworks – the Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, the Nutrition Strategy 2025–2032, and the Agriculture and Food Climate Strategy 2050 – rooted in broader agendas of sustainable development, agriculture, nutrition, environment and climate. In **Rwanda**, coherence is advanced through the PSTA5, which adopts a food systems approach, integrating nutrition, climate, markets and development priorities across the entire system.

In other cases, agrifood systems are explicitly integrated into other sectoral policy agendas such as climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience agendas as well as biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management, extending beyond traditionally food-related domains. This is particularly evident for national instruments such as NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs and green growth strategies, which increasingly incorporate agrifood systems-related objectives and actions, as is the case in **Costa Rica**. Meanwhile, in **Uganda**, climate and agrifood systems priorities are integrated into national and district development planning processes.

BOX 10. VIET NAM: USING NATIONAL PLANNING TO ALIGN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS ACROSS SECTORS AND LEVELS



In Viet Nam, policy coherence is being structured by a central planning instrument that aligns multiple sectoral strategies under a shared framework. In 2023, building on national dialogues under the UNFSS, the government adopted the [National Action Plan for Food Systems Transformation \(NAP-FST\)](#). The plan describes a comprehensive, system-wide approach for transforming agrifood systems with an emphasis on transparency, responsibility and sustainability.

The NAP-FST **unites key national strategies that previously operated in parallel** – the Strategy for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (2021–2030), the National Green Growth Strategy, the National Strategy on Nutrition, the National Climate Change Strategy and the SDG Action Plan. Instead of replacing these instruments, the NAP-FST establishes shared objectives, clarifies institutional responsibilities and tasks across ministries, and cross-references issues across policy frameworks.

The NAP-FST also builds on and harmonizes existing key indicators and targets from existing sectoral strategies, integrating them into a common results framework rather than introducing new parallel indicators. This approach strengthens coherence by ensuring consistency across reporting systems, while enabling the coordinated tracking of progress across sectors and levels of government.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) has led implementation of the NAP-FST, coordinating the process across ministries, government levels and stakeholders through the **Food Systems Transformation Partnership** – a multistakeholder coordination mechanism. Following recent government restructuring, MARD merged with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, creating a new Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, with the potential to strengthen alignment across agriculture, climate and natural resource management.

The National Action Plan is realized through Provincial Implementation Plans (PIPs). These **adapt national objectives to provincial contexts**, assigning responsibilities, aligning goals with local planning and budgeting processes, and assuring appropriate delivery mechanisms. This process enables vertical integration between national priorities and local implementation, ensuring that coherence is reflected in concrete actions across provinces.

This combination of aligned strategies, shared indicators and vertical integration through provincial planning, enables national planning instruments to provide a practical basis for structuring and operationalizing policy coherence for agrifood systems transformation.

In several of the country experiences, strategic frameworks play a central role in **vertical integration, ensuring national priorities translate into local action**. Viet Nam's NAP-FST and associated Provincial Implementation Plans operationalize this process, transforming national ambitions into provincial action (see Box 10). In **Brazil**, territorial coherence advances through decentralized instruments such as *Alimenta Cidades*, which links national objectives to municipal-level governance and action. Across the country, a purposively integrated portfolio of federal programmes implements food system interventions coherently in 1 000 municipalities. In **Uganda**, district-level planning is anchored in the NDP IV, with districts required to align their priorities and budgets with national programmes. This facilitates access to implementation resources while reinforcing coordination across different sectors and levels of government. Such an approach provides a clear framework for vertical alignment, although effective implementation remains an ongoing process requiring time, capacity and sustained coordination across levels.

In several cases, alignment of agrifood systems-related policies is based on **specific entry points or challenges that connect different sectors**, rather than a single overarching strategy. In **Costa Rica**, coherence between agriculture, climate and biodiversity is pursued through specific policy instruments that serve as key entry points, notably NAMAs, which focus on value chains such as coffee and livestock. This process translates the Agro-Environmental Agenda into concrete actions on the ground, while contributing to the implementation of NDC commitments (see Box 11). In **Pakistan**, nutrition and healthy diets act as a central entry point. Tools such as the Cost of Healthy Diets and a set of multisectoral policies and institutional mechanisms (including Vision 2025, the Pakistan Multisectoral Nutrition Strategy and the ongoing development of a National Healthy Diet Policy) convene agriculture, health, education, social protection and climate actors around a shared agenda, supporting more integrated decision-making across sectors. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, alignment with EU accession processes provides a concrete entry point for coherent policy reform and institutional coordination, requiring the harmonization of agriculture, food safety, veterinary, environmental and trade policies with the EU acquis. The dairy value chain serves as a practical entry point for operationalizing this alignment, linking regulatory reforms, market access requirements and rural development priorities through a key sector for livelihoods and competitiveness. Similarly, in **Cameroon**, the Convergence Action Blueprint has identified the rice value chain as a key priority, and structures cross-sectoral action around a defined set of interventions spanning production, value chain development, child nutrition, biodiversity considerations, and climate mitigation and adaptation.

BOX 11. COSTA RICA: ALIGNING AGRICULTURE, CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY VIA A SHARED POLICY ENTRY POINT



In Costa Rica, policy coherence is advanced through a concrete entry point rather than via a single overarching strategy. In this instance, the policy entry point is the alignment of agricultural production, climate action and biodiversity conservation, operationalized through value chains and anchored in soil recarbonization.

This approach has **evolved progressively**. Early instruments from the late 1990s and early 2000s, such as the Payments for Environmental Services programme, strengthened collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) and the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), but remained largely sector-led. Over time, coordination became more structured, culminating in the **Agro-Environmental Agenda** (2021), which established a formal interministerial mechanism for joint planning, budgeting and monitoring across agricultural and environmental priorities.

Within this architecture, **NAMAs** for coffee and livestock have acted as a central operational entry point. Designed around specific value chains, they translate climate and biodiversity objectives into concrete changes in production systems, notably improved soil and water management, agroforestry and low-emission practices, while aligning incentives, financing, data systems and technical support. By bringing together ministries, producer organizations, financial institutions, academia and development partners, NAMAs connect policy coordination with implementation, creating durable multi-stakeholder platforms that persist across political cycles.

Soil has emerged as a unifying policy entry point cutting across these instruments. Through initiatives like the Recarbonization of Global Agricultural Soils (RECSOIL), soil recarbonization simultaneously addresses climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation and agricultural productivity. Such initiatives translate alignment in policy design into practice, enabling farmers to adopt regenerative practices supported by extension services, training systems, and coordinated financing and technical assistance. These instruments are **embedded within broader national frameworks** – including the National Decarbonization Plan and successive NDCs – where soil health and low-emission production systems are positioned as strategic levers for climate action. Long-term monitoring, reporting and verification systems developed through the NAMAs further strengthen this alignment by generating data that inform policy, ensure continuity across policy cycles and guide investment.

Read more about Costa Rica's experience [here](#).

In some countries, **equity considerations are emerging as potential entry points** to advance more coherent implementation. This approach builds on connections between **gender, youth and inclusion of vulnerable groups** and priorities related to nutrition, agriculture, livelihoods and inclusive economic development. Examples of this trend include nutrition-focused approaches in **Pakistan** and **Sierra Leone**, where policy processes explicitly link agrifood systems with improved dietary outcomes while addressing gender – including maternal nutrition. In **Uganda**, inclusive economic opportunities for women and youth are embedded within the NDP IV. Similarly, in **Rwanda**, efforts to address structural constraints faced by women farmers – including limited access to inputs, finance and services – are increasingly being recognized within broader agricultural and agrifood systems strategies that link productivity, nutrition and livelihoods objectives. It remains to be seen whether these equity-oriented entry points translate into coordinated implementation across sectors, as they are often not embedded in institutional mandates, financing arrangements or delivery mechanisms.

In certain country cases, **crises and external shocks** have acted as accelerators for advancing coherence. Climate shocks, food insecurity crises and economic disruptions have heightened the political importance of agrifood systems, creating windows of opportunity for policy realignment. In **Brazil, Cameroon, Sierra Leone** and **Uganda**, repeated exposure to such challenges has contributed to a stronger emphasis on resilience, as well as more coordinated approaches across sectors. In **Brazil**, for example, devastating floods in Rio Grande do Sul in May 2024 – one of the worst disasters in the country’s history – served as a stark reminder of the vulnerability of communities and agrifood systems, and underscored the need for climate-resilient, inclusive public policies. To tackle the effects of extreme climate events, the federal government reactivated Brazil’s Interministerial Committee on Climate Change and launched *Plano Clima 2024–2035*, establishing an intersectoral and participatory climate governance framework. Within this framework, MDS developed a [Reference Framework for Food Systems and Climate for Public Policies](#), which proposed concrete policy pathways to align climate action and agrifood systems transformation, emphasizing systemic, intersectoral and rights-based approaches. These have been operationalized through SISAN and territorial governance structures (see Box 4).

While crises do not generate coherence per se, they shape its timing, urgency and political prioritization. In such contexts, coherence is often perceived less as a long-term reform objective than as a pragmatic way to improve coordination across sectors and levels of government while strengthening system-wide resilience. This, in turn, makes coherence more attractive to political leaders and senior administrators navigating constrained policy environments and responding to overlapping and rapidly evolving pressures.

Country experiences also highlight important differences in how these strategic frameworks function. In some cases they act primarily as **coordination references**, providing a shared direction without strong enforcement or financing mechanisms, which can limit their effectiveness in ensuring coherent implementation. In others, they serve as **binding implementation tools**, linking policy priorities to budgets, monitoring systems and administrative processes. These differences relate to the level of formality of the instruments, the authority they carry, and the extent to which they link national priorities to subnational execution and financing. For example, **Cameroon’s** Convergence Action Blueprint aligns ministries and partners around shared priorities, while **Uganda’s** planning architecture embeds coherence directly into government systems and expenditure frameworks.

Across contexts, countries have developed or are developing intersectoral instruments to transition from **siloed action to more coordinated implementation**, with varying degree of support from budgeting authority, monitoring tools and clear institutional mandates. In parallel, they are increasingly combining sectoral policies incorporating cross-sectoral objectives with dedicated intersectoral strategies and implementation tools. This approach strengthens coherence through the interaction and mutual reinforcement of multiple instruments, rather than relying on a single overarching framework. Furthermore, the findings suggest that policy coherence is more effectively operationalized when cross-sectoral strategies are **embedded within existing national planning, budgeting and implementation systems**, rather than developed as parallel or standalone frameworks. Where such integration is limited, coherence efforts tend to remain at the level of dialogue and coordination only. Where integration is achieved, they begin to shape policy delivery, resource allocation (see II.6) and implementation outcomes.



6. BUDGETS AND FINANCING OFTEN FAIL TO KEEP PACE WITH COHERENCE AMBITIONS

- There is growing recognition that aligning financial resources is essential to translate policy coherence into implementation, yet budgeting and financing are often neglected in coherence ambitions.
- Some countries are linking agrifood systems strategies with national planning and budgeting processes, gradually improving resource allocation and accountability.
- Improved coordination of diverse financing sources and less reliance on fragmented project-based funding can strengthen policy coherence.

Evidence from the country cases demonstrates growing recognition of financing as a potential instrument to drive coherence, by aligning incentives, prioritizing investments and linking policy objectives across sectors. However, progress remains limited and highly uneven, with only a small number of countries taking steps towards more systematic financial alignment.

In a limited number of cases, governments are starting to **connect agrifood systems priorities with national budgeting and planning instruments**, thereby strengthening the operational basis of coherence. **Uganda** exemplifies this emerging shift. Building on the integration of agrifood systems priorities into the NDP IV, the government is developing a budgeted National Action Plan and a Food Systems Transformation financing strategy. It also aims to use PIAPs to link sectoral budget allocations with shared agrifood systems objectives. This approach seeks to align resources across ministries, anchoring coherence within core government planning and expenditure processes. In **Rwanda**, complementary efforts are advancing through the development of a financial tracking system for agrifood systems, designed to monitor resource flows across ministries and partners. By making financial contributions to agrifood systems transformation more visible across sectors, this tracking process aims to support more coordinated and accountable investment decisions.

In **Brazil**, agrifood systems priorities are operationalized through a portfolio of federal programmes embedded in SISAN, the country's food security and nutrition architecture. Instruments such as social protection, public procurement and urban food policies are funded and implemented in an integrated manner across different sectors and levels of government. Participation in national strategies such as *Alimenta Cidades* enables municipalities to access financial resources and coordinate these programmes, linking national policy objectives with territorial implementation, rather than through explicit budget alignment mechanisms. In contrast, **Switzerland** is advancing coherence through the coordination of existing budgets across federal offices as part of the development and implementation of the Agriculture and Food Climate Strategy 2050. Structured interministerial collaboration enables government to align financial planning with shared

strategic objectives, allowing different federal offices to effectively pool and reallocate resources within existing budgets in support of joint priorities, rather than relying on programme-based integration.

These experiences imply that **linking agrifood systems priorities to budgeting and planning processes provides an important means** to strengthen implementation. In most cases, however, engagement with central planning and finance authorities – and with parliaments, which ultimately approve budget allocations – remains limited. This lack of engagement reduces the systematic reflection of agrifood systems priorities in national budgets, restricting the available resources for implementation. Efforts to align sectoral budgets, track financial flows, integrate programmes or coordinate expenditures across institutions can improve the visibility of cross-sectoral priorities within government systems, potentially translating them into concrete actions while strengthening the basis for monitoring and accountability.

Some countries are exploring ways to **mobilize and align different sources of financing** – including public budgets, donor funding and private investment – around shared agrifood systems priorities. In **Sierra Leone**, initiatives such as Feed Salone are implemented in a constrained fiscal environment, where public investment remains limited and external financing plays an important role. Nevertheless, the government is increasingly directing domestic resources towards Feed Salone as a multisectoral national priority, resulting in higher budget allocations, dedicated capital investments and expanded implementation capacity through field-based staff. Efforts are also underway to better **coordinate financing streams around shared priorities, including through platforms that link partner support to national strategies** (see Box 12).



BOX 12. SIERRA LEONE: ALIGNING INVESTMENTS FOR AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS AND NUTRITION THROUGH THE FEED SALONE INITIATIVE



Agrifood systems transformation can help align investments across agriculture, nutrition, climate resilience and economic development, as shown by Sierra Leone’s [Feed Salone initiative](#). Launched in 2023 as the government’s flagship agrifood systems programme, Feed Salone positions agrifood systems as a central driver of the Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024–2030 and one of five national “Game Changers” for economic transformation.

Feed Salone adopts a **whole-of-government approach**, assembling ministries responsible for agriculture, health, finance, education and planning alongside development partners, civil society and private sector actors. Its main strategic pillars – mechanization and irrigation, seed and input systems, value chain development and climate-smart agriculture – aim to strengthen domestic food production, expand economic opportunities, and improve access to **nutritious and diverse foods as part of healthy diets**.

A central feature of Feed Salone is the effort to **align public investment with agrifood systems and nutrition objectives**. Coordinated investments across agriculture, education and health link agricultural productivity, value chain development and food environments with national nutrition priorities. One example is the **national school feeding programme**, which provides meals to hundreds of thousands of students while creating stable demand for **locally produced foods**. Public procurement for school meals increasingly prioritizes domestic products such as staples, pulses and vegetables, strengthening local markets and supporting smallholder farmers – particularly women – while improving the nutritional quality of school meals and access to diverse local foods.

Complementary investments in value chains, processing, storage and rural infrastructure aim to increase the **availability and affordability of nutritious foods** while reducing post-harvest losses. These efforts are reinforced by **concrete financial and institutional commitments**: funds have been allocated to Feed Salone from the 2025 domestic capital budget, while the national budget allocations to agriculture increased from 2 percent to 7 percent of total public expenditures in 2024 – with a goal of reaching 10 percent (in line with commitments under the Kampala Declaration). The government has also strengthened **implementation capacity** through the recruitment of additional field-based technical staff to support delivery.

By linking policy priorities, public investment and coordinated governance in this manner, Feed Salone shows how financing decisions can translate agrifood systems and nutrition strategies into integrated action across sectors.

Read more about Sierra Leone’s experience [here](#).

In contrast, several countries – notably those in the early stages of strengthening food policy coherence – rely predominantly on donor funding to support coordination mechanisms and initial implementation efforts. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon and Pakistan**, and to a lesser extent, **Costa Rica**, for example, coherence processes are sustained largely through externally funded projects and technical assistance, with limited evidence of systematic integration into domestic budget frameworks. While such support has been instrumental in initiating dialogue, building capacity and enabling early action, it often remains project-based and time-bound. This reliance also raises significant challenges for long-term institutionalization. Without stronger integration into national budgeting systems, policy coherence efforts risk remaining fragmented, dependent on external cycles and insufficiently embedded within routine government processes.

Overall, the analysed country experiences indicate that **financial alignment remains an underdeveloped dimension of policy coherence** for agrifood systems transformation, despite its importance. While countries are increasingly recognizing the need to connect planning, coordination and financing, few have yet established mechanisms that systematically align budgets with cross-sectoral objectives, even though such alignment largely determines whether policy ambitions translate into implementation (see II.8).

This gap reflects broader structural constraints – including limited fiscal space, fragmented public financial management systems, and weak links between planning and budgeting – but also highlights an important opportunity. Strengthening the integration of financing into coherence processes could provide a powerful lever to move from coordination to coherent implementation, reinforcing incentives for cross-sector collaboration and enabling sustained, system-wide transformation. Without corresponding budgetary integration, coherence risks remaining confined to planning and coordination processes rather than shaping concrete policy delivery.



7. MONITORING AND LEARNING SYSTEMS REMAIN UNEVEN AND UNDERUSED

- Monitoring and adaptive learning are essential for informed and coherent decision-making, enabling governments to manage trade-offs while leveraging synergies for coherent policy and action.
- The effectiveness of adaptive learning and monitoring processes seems to depend on their technical design, how and by whom they are implemented, and on the effort and resources invested to sustain them.
- Despite progress made, dedicated spaces for continuous learning, reflection and adaptive management remain scarce, limiting the ability to translate coordination into results.

Country experiences indicate that adaptive learning and monitoring processes are increasingly considered a critical component in effective coordination and informed joint decision-making for coherent agrifood systems transformation. Countries are taking diverse pathways in establishing integrated monitoring systems, data-sharing mechanisms and spaces for adaptive learning in support of coherent policy implementation, but in most cases adaptive learning and monitoring frameworks are still nascent.

Establishing **integrated monitoring systems** can help manage trade-offs and leverage synergies to enhance coherent policy implementation across sectors. In **Costa Rica**, more than a decade of implementation of Coffee and Livestock NAMAs has generated robust monitoring, reporting and verification data on soil carbon and emissions. This critical evidence base helps guide decision-making and ensure credibility and continuity across policy cycles. In addition, **Costa Rica's** upcoming NDC 3.0 aims to tighten the monitoring framework by instituting clear institutional responsibilities and strengthening coordination, enabling progress to be systematically tracked and verified.

The **Rwanda** country case illustrates the importance of integrated monitoring systems to support coherent policy implementation. For its Fifth Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation (PSTA5), Rwanda is investing in a monitoring and evaluation system to track progress (see Box 13).

BOX 13. RWANDA: LEARNING AND MONITORING PROCESSES IN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION



Rwanda's experience illustrates how **adaptive learning and monitoring processes** can help governments progressively align policies across agriculture, nutrition and climate agendas.

Building on the momentum of the UNFSS, Rwanda is increasingly employing an agrifood systems approach to address agricultural transformation, recognizing the interconnections between food security, nutrition, climate resilience and economic development. A core element of this approach is the [Fifth Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation \(PSTA5\)](#), Rwanda's first strategy explicitly framed around resilient and sustainable agrifood systems. The plan links agricultural productivity, sustainable value chains, nutrition and climate resilience, operating within a broader national planning framework defined by Vision 2050 and the Second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2).

The development of PSTA5 was shaped by an **extensive review and learning process** involving government institutions, development partners, civil society, private sector actors and farmers. National dialogues, technical assessments and a large [knowledge seminar](#) helped to surface diverse expertise and deepen understanding of the interconnections between agrifood systems priorities. These exchanges shifted the plan from a production-focused agricultural strategy towards a more integrated agrifood systems framework. Looking ahead, Rwanda plans to invest in a shared monitoring and evaluation system to assess progress across institutions involved in implementing the PSTA5. The intention is to enhance transparency, improve intervention alignment across priorities and prevent duplication of efforts.

Read more about the Rwanda experience [here](#).

In some country cases, coherent decision-making is supported by **data-sharing mechanisms** that enable coordinated monitoring of agrifood systems outcomes. In **Sierra Leone**, a new food consumption database will inform the country's first Food Consumption and Micronutrient Survey in 2025–2026, highlighting the importance of shifting from data collection to actionable insights. The significant investment approved for new field-based positions dedicated to the Feed Salone programme, including field data enumerators and programme monitoring staff, also underscores the value of allocating resources to such processes. **Cameroon** has reviewed and adapted a suite of indicators building on the country's Food Systems Countdown Initiative, which will be used by the food systems National Convenor and the National Institute of Statistics to monitor the Food Systems Transition Roadmap 2025–2030. Experiences in several countries, however, suggest that the existence of tools and data platforms does not automatically translate into their effective use in decision-making processes. In **Pakistan**, for example, a Food Systems Dashboard was

introduced as an innovative way to visualize gaps and interconnections, with the potential to enable intersectoral monitoring and accountability at national and decentralized levels, but uptake among decision-makers seems relatively limited.

Countries are starting to recognize **spaces for adaptive learning** as complementary to integrated monitoring systems, with several examples institutionalized through arrangements that support coordination and joint decision-making. For example, **Costa Rica's** *Mesa Técnica para los Sistemas Agroalimentarios* provides a platform for joint decision-making, coordination and monitoring of the food systems transformation pathway. Similarly, **Uganda's** experience with the National Food Systems Coordination Committee (see Box 8) suggests that routine joint planning, monitoring and dialogue can foster new ways of working together across institutions. These examples also seem to indicate that the “how” and “who” of monitoring and learning processes matter as much as their technical design and what they monitor.

Working along related lines, **Brazil** is embedding monitoring and adaptive learning within participatory governance structures. As described in Box 4, federal, state and municipal Conseas facilitate continuous dialogue between government and civil society, playing a central role in social oversight, monitoring and evaluation of public policies. This continuous engagement ensures strategies remain responsive and coherent with local realities. Simultaneously, the interministerial chamber Caisan leads on monitoring and evaluation, tracking a wide range of indicators related to food production, access, income, health and education, gathering representatives from more than 20 ministries within a single institutional framework. This approach exemplifies the use of coordinated monitoring systems to support coherence across sectors.

Switzerland provides another illustrative example of how integrated monitoring systems and adaptive learning spaces can be institutionalized. The Agriculture and Food and Climate Strategy 2050 (AFCS2050) is monitored through a publicly accessible online dashboard, enabling continuous tracking of progress. This process is complemented by a dual monitoring and learning mechanism, consisting of an annual interministerial review accompanied by public communication, and a more in-depth progress review held every two years to assess implementation and determine necessary adjustments. Participatory dialogue platforms are central to this process, suggesting that overcoming institutional silos may entail the creation of structured, recurring spaces where stakeholders with different mandates and interests can jointly define problems, acknowledge constraints and build shared ownership over time.

While the country cases offer lessons on the positive role of monitoring and learning mechanisms, they also illustrate **important gaps in potential** to support more coherent implementation. Institutionalized frameworks and established processes for reflective practice did not exist in most of the ten countries reviewed. Monitoring systems appeared fragmented across ministries or programmes, and data-sharing mechanisms were weak or underdeveloped, undermining support for coherence. Where learning processes are embedded within established coordination mechanisms, joint monitoring and learning may be constrained by the same challenges that affect coordination more broadly, including limited time, insufficient resources and uneven participation.

Looking ahead, integrated monitoring systems, data-sharing mechanisms and spaces for adaptive learning offer potential to foster coherent implementation, ensuring that agrifood systems transformation is both evidence-based and collectively driven. However, these require commensurate effort and investment at the country level.



8. IMPLEMENTATION GAPS PERSIST EVEN WHERE COHERENT POLICIES AND COORDINATION STRUCTURES EXIST

- Notwithstanding coordination mechanisms and cross-sectoral strategies, alignment often breaks down during implementation, due to limited joint accountability and follow-through across ministries and levels of government.
- Limited human, technical and administrative capacity, particularly at decentralized levels, combined with fragmented budgeting processes, restricts the ability of governments to implement policies effectively and coherently.
- Countries are adopting targeted measures to strengthen implementation capacity and resource mobilization, but these efforts remain partial and insufficient to ensure comprehensive, coherent delivery of agrifood systems transformation.

Despite widespread commitment to strengthening policy coherence around agrifood systems and the progress made in establishing policy frameworks and coordination mechanisms, efforts to translate coherent planning into implementation have encountered persistent and recurring challenges. These obstacles often reflect structural, political, financial and administrative constraints in countries, sometimes extending beyond agrifood systems themselves. Coherent delivery on the ground remains limited hindering meaningful progress in the achievement of agrifood systems outcomes. At the same time, some policy processes aimed at bringing coherence to agrifood systems transformation remain in the early stages, with outcomes and tangible community-level impacts expected to materialize only over a longer time frame.

Numerous countries have developed cross-sectoral strategies and coordination platforms, but progress in translating them into coherent implementation remains uneven. Despite the presence of national frameworks, several countries still struggle to achieve coordinated implementation across levels of government and in moving from national policy statements to district-level delivery. Across countries, implementation gaps can be traced to logistical constraints, limited staffing, weak administrative infrastructure and insufficient follow-through mechanisms.

Insights from country interviews highlighted the following key recurring challenges to coherent implementation across country experiences:

- Where coordination mechanisms are in place, they often struggle to **effectively support cross-sector alignment during policy and programme implementation**, focusing instead on the planning and design phases. This implies difficulty in overcoming siloed mandates and overlapping responsibilities to ensure coordinated implementation. While structured cross-sectoral frameworks and plans may exist, they do not consistently

include the corresponding implementation and joint accountability arrangements needed to ensure the delivery of outcomes and shared commitments.

- **Limited human and technical capacity both across ministries and at decentralized levels** is a widespread constraint. The country cases suggest that skills and capacities, such as understanding of agrifood systems concepts, systems thinking, cross-sector analysis, stakeholder facilitation and adaptive management, remain uneven within and across ministries, especially outside national capitals. Staffing – including extension services, training and analytical resources – remains limited in most cases, emphasizing the challenges in expanding implementation to subnational levels.
- **Siloed or fragmented budgeting processes** also emerge consistently as a critical barrier to coherent implementation, pointing to systemic issues in how national resources are allocated across and within ministries. Country experiences suggest that without adequate resources and financial alignment for implementation, coherence risks remaining largely technical or conceptual, rather than operational.
- Experience from countries indicates that **institutions such as local government bodies and community organizations also face capacity constraints**, including limited human resources, technical expertise and weak administrative infrastructure, affecting their ability to implement policies effectively and coherently. This appears to obstruct cascading alignment at subnational levels, hindering the translation of national statements or frameworks into local level delivery.

The country experiences also spotlight examples of how **countries are taking concrete measures to address some of these challenges**.

Rwanda, for example, is working to **institutionalize capacity building** through the Policy Learning Programme. This initiative strengthens systems thinking among policymakers and supports the integration of nutrition, climate and economic considerations across policy design and implementation. Within this context, simplifying agrifood systems messaging seems to be a valued means to strengthen understanding and participation across sectors, including among youth and local actors. This suggests that a **communication strategy** is an important component of a coherence strategy.

In **Sierra Leone**, the government has supported **field implementation capacity** by investing in the creation of 1 000 new field-based positions dedicated to the Feed Salone initiative. This underscores the importance of mobilizing investments to ensure that government priorities are backed by human capacity and institutional authority.

Costa Rica is **leveraging climate funding** from major entities such as the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund and other mechanisms to transform policy ambition into real change on the ground. While still indicative of a reliance on external funding (see II.6), this approach enables the country to move from pilot projects – including those under the RECSOIL initiative – to broader, programmatic implementation anchored in national policies and global frameworks. This ensures that alignment is embedded in public and private funding flows designated for implementation.

The *Alimenta Cidades* strategy in **Brazil** exemplifies the use of policy frameworks to **align political leadership and administrative capacity across different levels of government**.

This national strategy helps translate the complexity of agrifood systems into actionable programmes at the municipal level. The strategy links local governments with national objectives, and anchors food security and nutrition interventions in the specific realities of each territory, while ensuring coordinated resource allocation. The Solidarity Kitchens Programme, a core part of *Alimenta Ciudades*, connects public procurement schemes with local communities, providing free, high-quality and locally sourced meals to the population, while encouraging the active participation of marginalized communities in the design and implementation of the initiative. This experience reinforces the importance of designing public procurement and social programmes that are flexible, participatory and embedded in local realities – allowing agrifood systems strategies to take concrete form.

Across the different cases, examples emerge of countries attempting to address barriers to coherent implementation. However, as yet no country seems to have sufficient structural mechanisms or systematic measures in place to overcome these identified challenges. This suggests potential for further steps to ensure that increased leadership, coordination, policy alignment, resource allocation, monitoring and implementation capacity are translated effectively into coherent actions on the ground – ensuring a balanced delivery of agrifood systems transformation outcomes.

III. CONCLUSION

This report examines the ways in which countries are advancing policy coherence to increase the sustainability and resilience of agrifood systems with a view to strengthening food security and nutrition. It explores progress made in ten countries, each moving at their own pace and according to their own context, as they shift from conceptual awareness towards institutionalization and operationalization of policy coherence in practice. In so doing, the report surfaces critical enablers and bottlenecks that can support or hinder progress.

Such insights help identify prerequisites for countries to advance coherence in their agrifood systems agendas. Countries can build on existing efforts by securing high-level political commitment, leveraging international processes when relevant and addressing key barriers. This approach includes strengthening and institutionalizing interministerial and multistakeholder coordination mechanisms and establishing clear lines of accountability. Similarly, strengthened and more coordinated financing systems, as well as enhanced capacities at both national and subnational levels, will be critical to support the effective implementation of cross-sectoral frameworks and plans. In addition, well established and resourced monitoring and learning systems are essential to track progress and allow for evidence-based adaptation of policy implementation – enabling coherence to be sustained over time.

The report also highlights critical areas in need of further analysis and attention from policymakers to improve policy coherence practice. Key aspects include:

- 1.** The role of different financing mechanisms (public budgets, donor funding, blended finance) in enabling or constraining policy coherence.
- 2.** Private sector engagement in agrifood systems governance – acknowledging the insights the private sector can offer regarding policy impact and the feasibility of proposed changes, and the extent to which vested interests can influence decision-making.
- 3.** The role of parliaments in ensuring sustained institutionalization, resource allocation and accountability.
- 4.** The role of subnational authorities and multilevel governance in reinforcing coherent implementation across national and subnational levels.

Additional analysis and attention are also necessary to better understand the political processes underpinning policy coherence efforts – in particular, the underlying incentives and political economy dynamics which shape policy coherence. As diverse stakeholders often hold divergent interests and varying levels of influence in change processes, progress will depend on addressing not only the technical dimensions but also the political drivers of coherent implementation.

Building on this report, the Working Group under the COP30 PAS on Convergence and Coherence for Climate Action and Food Systems Transformation will focus on deepening collective learning and structured exchange among countries and stakeholders. The

goal is a dedicated space to share emerging experiences, identify persistent gaps and further distil practical lessons to help turn shared visions and strategies into coherent implementation and sustained impact. This will include greater examination of how policy coherence is being pursued in practice, with particular attention to political economy dynamics and the role of the private sector and other stakeholder influences in shaping implementation pathways.

Such learning processes should enable the co-development of practical insights for countries and stakeholders on future actions to strengthen policy coherence, while reducing fragmentation, duplication of efforts and transaction costs. Strengthening this shared evidence base will also allow for more effective support by FAO and other members of the Working Group. Ultimately, this collective effort will be critical to enabling more coherent, effective and country-driven policies that can accelerate the transformation of agrifood systems towards greater sustainability, resilience and improved food security and nutrition.



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APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This publication builds on a combination of documented experiences and a background paper consolidating stakeholder inputs and supporting materials to distil emerging lessons from approaches to advancing policy coherence in ten countries.

In 2024, a [framing document](#) was developed by the Working Group to guide the documentation of country experiences, outlining key questions and dimensions related to linkages between agrifood systems and climate, biodiversity, nutrition and equity agendas. This provided a common point of reference to support consistency across contributions, while remaining flexible and adaptable to different contexts.

[Country experiences](#) were documented independently by Working Group members and partners – particularly FAO, GAIN and the Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All – in collaboration with national stakeholders through interviews, focus group discussions and desk reviews. Guided by the framing document, these cases were co-developed with national actors to reflect on how these agendas are being integrated in practice, capturing key governance and technical dimensions, as well as enabling factors, barriers and lessons. They follow a reflective, context-specific approach rather than a standardized format, and therefore vary in scope and depth.

The background paper, commissioned by FAO and developed by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, was designed to consolidate and reflect on country experiences developed under the OPN–SFSP Working Group, to support the implementation of National Pathways. This cross-country review aimed to identify recurring themes, enabling factors, challenges and emerging lessons related to policy coherence for agrifood systems transformation.

Overall, the analysis adopts a qualitative and practice-oriented approach, focusing on how policy coherence is being pursued in different country contexts, rather than assessing performance or measuring levels of coherence.

ANALYTICAL FRAMING OF THE BACKGROUND PAPER

To structure the information collected across countries, the background paper selected a set of domains covering key aspects of the policy coherence process:

- drivers of the coherence process;
- the role and contribution of international processes, including the UNFSS;
- national policy instruments and institutional settings involved;
- the depth and nature of the coherence process;

- the mechanisms used to operationalize coherence;
- the inclusion of civil society and other stakeholders;
- key enabling factors;
- main challenges and barriers;
- the types of change pursued;
- processes of learning and reflection.

These domains provided a common structure to guide data collection and organize insights across countries. However, the information collected revealed overlaps across these areas, and findings were subsequently organized into three broader thematic groupings to improve clarity and reduce repetition:

- drivers and incentives shaping the coherence process;
- approaches to operationalizing coherence;
- status of progress and implementation.

APPROACH AND DATA COLLECTION OF THE BACKGROUND PAPER

The above domains informed the design of a questionnaire combining structured and open-ended questions, which was administered to key informants in each of the ten countries.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted between July and mid-September 2025 with a limited number of informants in each country. Interviewees were selected based on their knowledge of, or involvement in, policy processes related to agrifood systems transformation and policy coherence. Both “insiders” (directly involved in the processes) and “outsiders” (with relevant but more independent perspectives) were included. This approach allowed for triangulation of views, recognizing that insiders may provide detailed accounts of processes, while outsiders may offer more independent perspectives.

The interviews were complemented by a review of secondary sources, including official government documents, technical reports and other relevant materials. These were used to support and contextualize the information collected and to clarify or validate findings where needed.

The background paper draws on the documented country experiences, the information collected through interviews and the review of relevant secondary sources.

The findings of the background paper were then consolidated into a set of emerging lessons. These offer insights into how countries are approaching coherence, the entry points they are using, and the enabling factors and barriers that advance or hinder the translation of commitments into institutional arrangements, policy processes and implementation across sectors.

LIMITATIONS

The findings of this publication are subject to several limitations.

First, the review is based on a limited number of country experiences, selected for their relevance and engagement with the OPN–SFSP Working Group, and is therefore not representative of all country contexts and does not allow for comparability across countries.

For each country, the findings rely partially on views and experiences shared by a small set of key informants, which may reflect subjective perspectives. Complementary secondary data varied in availability and depth across the countries. This information was then triangulated with findings from interviews and analysis undertaken for the documentation of country experiences. However, gaps were observed in some cases in the analysis of areas such as the role of financing or the private sector in supporting coherence. For other critical areas, such as the political economy dimensions of policy coherence, the methodology proved limited in its effectiveness to capture in-depth perspectives from interviewed stakeholders, given the high sensitivity of the topic. Other approaches, such as exchanges held in safe learning spaces, might be needed to deepen knowledge in such areas of analysis.

Finally, the findings reflect the information available at the time of data collection and may not capture subsequent developments.

Accordingly, this publication provides early insights based on selected country experiences and stakeholder perspectives, while not aiming to provide a comprehensive or comparative assessment of countries' performance.

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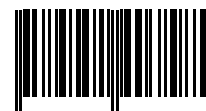


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