



WWF

# FROM GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO NATIONAL ACTIONS

WWF FOOD EXPECTATIONS FOR UNFCCC COP28  
NOVEMBER 2023





UNFCCC COP28 in Dubai will have the most comprehensive assessment of global climate action to date. Initial findings clearly show that the world is not on track to keep global temperature increases to 1.5°C, and if current trends continue temperatures will soar well past 2.0°C, with devastating impacts for communities and ecosystems. Integrating food systems approaches, that cover production, consumption and loss and waste, in global commitments and national-level action is critical to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Despite the slow progress to date, COP28 offers a unique opportunity to course correct and to elevate food systems as a key lever to accelerate climate action while safeguarding food security.

## FOOD SYSTEMS ARE A MAJOR DRIVER OF LAND-USE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY LOSS AND GLOBAL WARMING

The impacts of climate change are contributing to recent increases in global hunger and malnutrition, with extreme weather events causing crops to be lost and food supplies reduced, while climate change also reduces the nutritional density of many crops. Progress on food system transformation has been too slow, but momentum is being generated through the Emirates Declaration on Resilient Food Systems, Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Action; a new roadmap for the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food systems (SSJW); the Non State Actors Call to Action on Food System Transformation and open letter to negotiators; and a dedicated Food Day at COP28.

All stakeholders working on food system transformation must seize this momentum and rapidly close the ambition, transformation and implementation gaps that remain in food systems transformation. Anything less will fail to achieve healthy and sustainable food systems for all (Figure 1). Gaps cannot be fully closed with isolated measures. The most effective solutions will be integrated across the issues of nature, climate, and food security, and involve collaboration across the UN Rio Conventions on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Biological Diversity (UNCBD) and Deforestation and Drought (UNCCD).

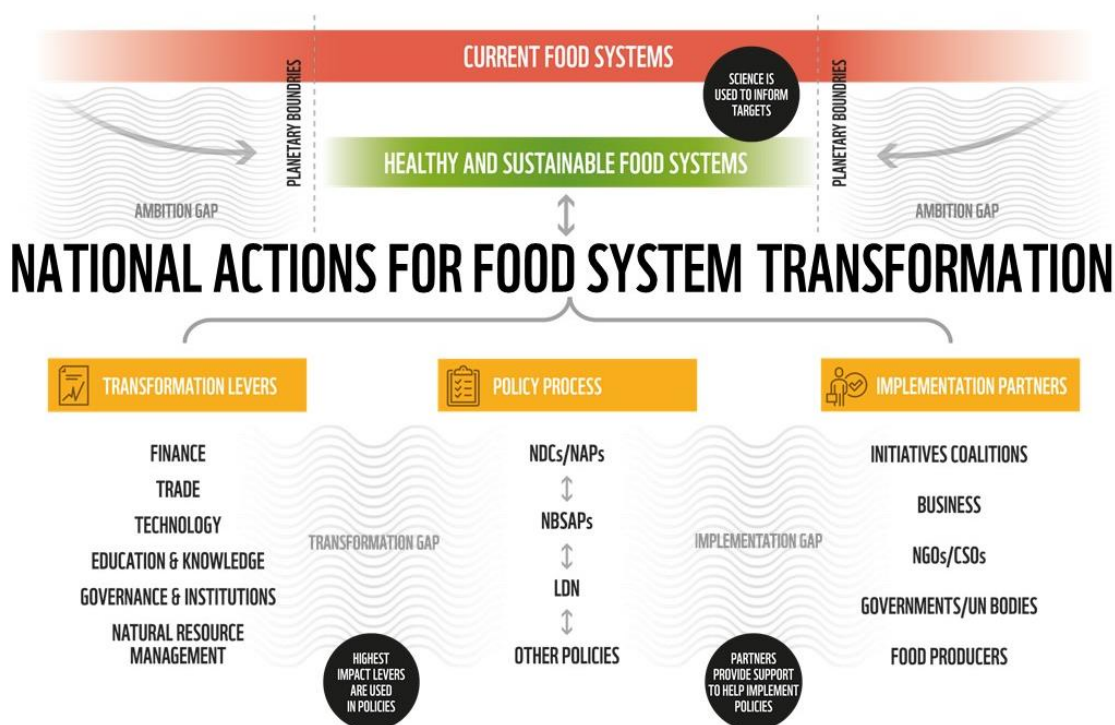


Figure 1  
Outlines a framework for ensuring that approaches for implementing food systems transformation are informed by key transformation levers, aligned across multiple policy processes, and supported by implementation partners, all of which must be guided by national level targets that are ambitious enough to ensure health and environment outcomes are within planetary boundaries.

Decisive and ambitious action in the formal negotiations at COP28 can help close the ambition gap. This will in turn send a strong signal for next year's biodiversity and desertification negotiations (UNCBD and UNCCD), and can accelerate the urgently-needed implementation of food system transformation at the national level and with business.

# OUR KEY ASKS

WWF is calling for five key actions at COP28 to signal to the rest of the world that it's time for all stakeholders to take ambitious action on food systems.

# 1

## **Recognise the vital role of food systems to address the climate crisis in the COP28 cover decision and outcomes of the first Global Stocktake**

Governments must prioritise food system transformation to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. This should be reflected clearly in the cover decision of the conference, and formal outcomes of the first Global Stocktake. *This is important because it will support countries in implementing food-based climate actions.*

# 2

## **Include food systems approaches in Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Long-term Strategies**

Building on outcomes of the Global Stocktake, all NDCs must incorporate a food systems approach by 2025. NAPs and Long-term Strategies must also include policies and incentives for actions such as nature-positive food production (including agroecology), reducing food loss and waste, and shifting towards healthy and sustainable diets and improved nutrition. *This is important because including a food systems approach in NDCs will require countries to design and implement joint strategies for climate-friendly and nature-positive production, consumption and food loss and waste.*

# 3

## **Incorporate a comprehensive food systems approach in the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security (SSJW)**

A food systems approach must be an integral component of the SSJW roadmap for agriculture and food security to be adopted at COP28. This means including consumption and nutrition, alongside production and food loss and waste as part of the scope and activities of the SSJW. *This is important because one of the upcoming SSJW workshops must cover how a food systems approach can support swift and effective climate action associated with nature-positive outcomes.*

# 4

## **Enhance financial support for climate-resilient, nature-positive, and inclusive food systems**

Aid agencies and private financiers must help fulfil existing financial pledges for healthy and sustainable food systems, while allocating more climate finance for transformative solutions within the agriculture and food sector. Studies have shown that increasing private investment to USD300-350 billion each year could reduce food-based greenhouse gas emissions by 60%. Ensuring an effective and equitable resource distribution is essential. In addition USD540 billion of environmentally damaging agri-food subsidies need to be repurposed each year. *This is important because smallholder farmers and rural women should benefit from better access to the financial support available to make food systems more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable.*

# 5

## **Include the phasing out of fossil fuels from food systems in all global and national food-based climate action**

Fossil fuel use is the primary driver of climate change and it's imperative to drastically reduce and phase fossil fuels out of food systems by 2050. Key actions include phasing out fossil fuel-based agrochemicals, adopting agroecological practices, shifting to renewable energy for food processing and transport, and promoting planet-based diets and minimally processed foods. *This is important because the decoupling of food systems and fossil fuels must be an underpinning action of all political and financial commitments to food-based climate action.*

## FROM COMMITMENTS TO IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND AND IN THE WATER

If decisions made at COP28 deliver the five actions above, there will be fertile ground for national-level action and changes to happen in landscapes, seascapes and riverscapes, especially those that are undergoing rapid conversion and degradation due to unsustainable food systems. WWF is actively working on food systems transformation in countries and places around the world and is ready to help translate ambitious global commitments into national-level action.

Our place-based approach is simple. First, identify the highest impact actions and pair them with policies (including ambitious NDCs) that will work in countries and the world's most biologically diverse landscapes and ecosystems, based on local environmental, social, political and economic conditions. Second, pair these actions with the right innovation, for the right impact in the right place. Third, build a robust ecosystem of support to scale implementation on the ground and in the water, especially places with the most vulnerable socio-economic and environmental contexts.

### 1 IDENTIFY ACTIONS WHICH CAN DELIVER THE HIGHEST IMPACT IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES TO HELP CLOSE THE TRANSFORMATION GAP

To help close the transformation gap, WWF's science-based [Solving the Great Food Puzzle](#) initiative is identifying the highest impact actions to drive food system transformation in countries around the world. The goal is to move away from panacea approaches to identify actions that will have the most impact based on local environmental, social, political and economic realities. This approach will help local decision makers determine which actions to focus on and invest in to achieve climate, environmental and social goals in the shortest time possible. In addition, the initiative is developing a food systems typology that will group countries into food system types based on countries that share similar food system characteristics. This will facilitate learnings between countries to accelerate action on the ground.

WWF and partners have developed the **NDC Guidance for Agriculture and Food Systems**, which will support governments in enhancing the ambition of NDCs and supporting the implementation of food system transformation at national level. The tool will be delivered using a simple, interactive, web-based platform that provides users with tangible, evidence-based policy options informed by concrete practices and measures that can help shape NDCs for food systems. The options can be tailored to a country's specific policy priorities within each component of the food system, including in different intervention areas. The website will be launched in early 2024. The NDC Guidance for Agriculture and Food Systems is part of the **COP 28 Agriculture, Food and Climate National Action Toolkit**, which serves as a key resource for national policy makers and decision makers aiming to accelerate and align national efforts on climate action and food and agriculture system transformation, including recommendations, case studies and practical approaches from NDCs and NAPs.



## 2 PAIR THE HIGHEST IMPACT ACTIONS WITH THE RIGHT INNOVATIONS, FOR THE RIGHT IMPACT IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Even in countries with the same food system characteristics, the ways in which the highest impact actions are implemented may look different. Given the urgent and high-stakes race to solving global problems, a rigorous place-based approach, that accounts for the range of diverse opportunities and challenges shaped by local ecology, culture and histories of development, is needed to identify the innovations required to implement the highest-impact actions.

To facilitate this, WWF has developed the **Right Innovation, Right Impact, Right Place** framework (Figure 2) to help anyone designing or supporting innovations in food systems build a toolkit to maximize impact and achieve national-level health and environmental goals. The framework helps in choosing innovations that will best amplify high-impact actions; anticipate the kind of change and impact any proposed innovation might have and use systems thinking to identify and treat root causes of the problems we want to reverse; and understand the social and ecological context in which the innovation is to be implemented. This helps anticipate unintended consequences that can arise when innovations are not critically reviewed.



**Figure 2:** There is not a "Right" place to begin when taking a strategic and structured approach for choosing the right innovation, with the right level of impact, for the right place. Instead, any stakeholder working on innovation should start at a place that makes most sense for them and then ask strategic questions to ensure the innovation being considered will help to close the gaps.



### 3 BUILD A ROBUST ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT TO HELP CLOSE THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP

To help close the implementation gap, WWF is working hand-in-hand with a broad and diverse group of stakeholders to build a robust system of support and to deliver a just transition. Through our network of offices, active in more than 100 countries, we are working with local stakeholders, from national governments to smallholder farmers and fishers, to provide support, guidance and tools that enable and accelerate implementation of the most impactful solutions on the ground and in the waters. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is key to conserve fragile landscapes, seascapes and riverscapes, and protect people who are most reliant on food systems for their livelihoods and those most vulnerable to climate change and food insecurity. Protecting the rights of local and indigenous communities, who remain the best stewards of biodiversity, is fundamental. But multi-stakeholder collaboration by itself is not enough. To close the implementation gap, local stakeholders must have access to enough knowledge, support and financial resources to be successful.

An example of WWF's commitment to closing the implementation gap is the partnership with the Lake Naivasha Basin Sustainable Horticultural Farmers group and other local stakeholders to establish a new food hub that keeps food fresher for longer and increases the supply of nutritious local food. By using solar-powered cooling facilities, the Vasha Greens fresh vegetable shop concurrently improves food security, mitigates against emissions from rotting food, and helps create a climate-resilient food supply chain. Furthermore, we helped ensure all farmers supplying the shop were given access to training in nature-positive and climate-resilient production practices, including halting deforestation and conversion and shifting away from fossil-fuel fertilisers.







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