A Food Systems Transformation Agenda: Government engagement workplan, 2022-2023

The Food Systems Collaboration Network is made up of the Food and Land Use Coalition, the World Resources Institute, Chatham House, the Just Rural Transition, the UN Climate Change High Level Champions, the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, EAT, the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, CARE, Good Food Finance Network, the Food Forward Consortium, The Club of Rome and ClimateWorks Foundation. Together, we are progressing ‘action hubs’, relating to engagement with governments, non-state actors, 1.5+ aligned transition pathways, and raising funds to deliver ambitious food systems transformation globally with the support of a co-investment platform.
Phase 1 of government engagement - ‘Scoping’
(August 2022 – March 2023)

In this initial scoping phase, we have been inviting national governments to step forwards as leads on this effort, to demonstrate progress to date in driving food system transformation, to showcase ambition for further transformation, and to provide political leadership in aligning immediate responses to the global food security crisis with medium- to long-term goals for people, nature, and climate.

Given EC policies and ambitions in this area, we are keen to invite the EC to explore participation in our High-Ambition Coalition. Relevant conversations we have had so far include:

- July 2022: __________ and __________ meet with __________ (WRI).
- In autumn, the European Commission shared information about the Food Systems Collaboration Network (then Food Action Now) with colleagues other services (AGRI, CLIMA, ENV).
- 9 November 2022: __________ attends a private dinner hosted by the FSCN during the COP in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.
- 24 March 2023: __________ and __________ meet with __________ (WRI), __________ (WRI), __________ (CH), __________ (CH).
Phase 2 of government engagement - 'Designing'
(March 2023 – November 2023)

In the design phase, EC representatives would work with consortium partners to shape a ‘high ambition’ grouping of nations, setting common metrics for ambition and progress on food system transformation and agreeing on a common framework for national-level and plurilateral actions to accelerate this progress.

If EC representatives have interest and ability to continue their engagement beyond phase 1, we are proposing a schedule of bilateral meetings and workshops. The exact schedule will be iterated based on government demand, noting the Coalition will be co-designed and co-launched for governments and by governments.

- **A high-level meeting (3rd May 2023 (tbc)**: For a small number of high-level representatives from interested governments to re-state the intentions of a High Ambition Coalition, talk about the consortium’s approach and begin shaping a joint vision for a coalition. This would take place at Chatham House, in London, with the option for some virtual participation.
- **Cross governmental workshops (April-November)**: Co-designing approaches to governance, the level of ambition necessary (and possible), and the possible criteria behind a tiered membership approach.
- **National governmental workshops (April-November)**: Focused national workshops, mobilizing working level staff across government ministries and technical expertise to identify and agree realistic pathways for food-system transformation that simultaneously meet short- and longer-term objectives on climate, nature, health, nutrition and equity and which align with their own aspirations.
- **A coordination meeting of interested governments at the UN Food Systems Summit (July 24-28 2023 (tbc)**
Phase 3 of government engagement – 'Launch and implementation' (November 2023 onwards)

We envisage a formal launch at COP28 in the UAE in November 2023. A hypothetical press release around the launch could look like this:

❖ [The EC], together with [EU Member State 1], [Climate Vulnerable LIC1], [Climate Vulnerable LIC2], and [MENA LMIC] announce a bold new coalition to transform their food systems in line with global goals on nature and people.

❖ Presidents and Ministers from those countries today signed a declaration to deliver [transformative change to its food systems], committing their support to tackling food systems’ role in the multiple and interlinked planetary and social challenges facing countries around the world today.

❖ [EC President], said: ‘We are proud to position ourselves as a lighthouse for global action on food systems. Just as we have shown leadership in the sustainable energy transition, today we commit ourselves to taking early, bold action to drive national and global food system reform in line with tackling the planetary challenges we face. Our commitment to food action now will not only improve the wellbeing of our citizens, but lay essential groundwork for brave new agreements between trade partners to deliver positive environmental and social outcomes far beyond our borders, and provide a template and marker for other countries wishing to pursue similar reform efforts.’
Our request for interested parties to consider

Global leadership is urgently needed to demonstrate that coordinated policy action across the myriad dimensions of food systems—climate, nature, nutrition and health, equity and livelihoods—is, politically and economically, both possible and desirable. Building on existing progress in food system reforms, a country with high ambition and a high commitment to delivering on its potential can demonstrate such leadership through participating in a coalition of high-ambition governments that collectively accelerates and supports the transformation of food systems globally, in line with tackling the planetary challenges.

In order to develop momentum among first movers, and to leverage this to foster further action by more countries, we would invite the EC, alongside other high-ambition peers, to consider steps such as:

- commit to holistically transform the food system—going beyond agriculture for climate and nature and including increasing the availability of health-promoting diets—in line with addressing these challenges;
- develop a vision for a transformed national food system (including the role of imports and exports) and identify the transformational strategies to realise it;
- realize such commitments and strategies through promoting and sharing implementation mechanisms and solutions to drive tangible transformative action.

By establishing itself as global leader on food-system transformation, we believe the EC’s public commitments and actions will improve the well-being of their populations, lay essential groundwork for brave new agreements between trade partners, and set a blueprint and marker for other countries wishing to pursue similar reform efforts. Membership of the High-Ambition Coalition will showcase the EC’s international leadership on this agenda—positioning itself as a global leader on this agenda—and showcase how ambitious new partnerships can be constructed with LICs.
at COP28
The High Ambition Coalition is launched by governments pledging to take the most ambitious action on this agenda - it 'raises the ceiling' and provides the much needed examples of action that have previously been missing.

By 2030
The High Ambition Coalition is no longer needed since an ever increasing number of governments now see food system transformation as economically and politically feasible.

At UNFSS Stocktake July 2023
A group of the most interested governments meets to further clarify the metrics, red-lines and governance of a potential High-Ambition Coalition.

By UNFSS 2025
The High Ambition Coalition is continuing to grow - doubling in size between 2023 and 2025 as more and more governments sign up and learn from the examples of good practice that are drawing increasing international recognition.