



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development

Planet and Prosperity
Rural Development, Food Security and Nutrition

Brussels,
devco.c.1 

ANNEX TO THE REPLY OF DG DEVCO
AVAILABLE IN DECIDE

Interservice consultations initiated by: DG SANTE

Reference: Ares(2020) 1333725

Titles: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Farm to Fork Strategy for a Sustainable Food System.

Person to contact in the DG: 

<input type="checkbox"/>	Agreement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Favourable opinion subject to comments being taken into account
<input type="checkbox"/>	Negative opinion

DEVCO welcomes the ambitious aims of the Farm-to-Fork Strategy, which ‘seeks to address the challenges of sustainable food systems in a comprehensive and universal way, recognising the essential links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet’.

Understandably, the Farm-to-Fork Strategy focuses on proposals for action within the EU. Nevertheless, as the Strategy indicates, ‘the transition to sustainable food systems cannot be achieved by the EU acting alone’. The Strategy’s impact around the world will also depend on the external actions of the EU, notably through our cooperation with partner countries. DEVCO is of the opinion that this should be better reflected in the document. To this effect, DEVCO proposes new text for section 3.3. (see below) and strongly suggests that the section be upgraded to a separate chapter of the Strategy. This would be in line with the Biodiversity Strategy, which contains a separate (3.5 page) chapter on the global biodiversity challenges.

The newly proposed text below reflects the current momentum in redefining DEVCO's portfolio into a more robust agri-food systems approach in various parts of the globe. DEVCO also proposes the development of Green Alliances on agri-food systems in different parts of the world, referring to the mentioning of this concept in the Green Deal Communication of December 2019, and proposes to include this as a separate action in the Action Plan annexed to the Farm-to-Fork Strategy.

Besides these two major comments, DEVCO has a couple of other minor observations on the Strategy:

- Food systems around the world are very diverse. Different food systems face different challenges and require different pathways towards sustainability. This diversity should be acknowledged.
- Just as the Green Deal is presented as an integral part of the Commission's strategy to implement Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), so should the Farm-to-Fork Strategy be well rooted in Agenda 2030. The inter-linked nature of many of the SDGs is particularly relevant in the case of agriculture, food and nutrition as well as the blue economy.
- Where possible, the Farm-to-Fork strategy should be cross-referenced to other components of the European Green Deal (notably Biodiversity Strategy and Circular Economy Action Plan as well as Industrial Strategy given the issue of traceability and standard setting in food and carbon footprints). Moreover, it could better illustrate how it contributes to the Green Deal objectives, including carbon neutrality by 2050, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and resource efficiency/circularity.

Reflecting the comments and observations above, we provide the following concrete proposals for change:

Section 1, 2nd paragraph:

To add at the end: "The Farm-to-Fork Strategy is an integral element of the Commission's Agenda to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Improving food systems will have a major beneficial effect on many of the SDGs."

Section 1, 3^d paragraph:

"Food systems are globally responsible for around 21-37% of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, have a profound effect on biodiversity, water and soil pollution, carbon sinks and are one of the principal causes of resource depletion and degradation of natural ecosystems. However, food systems are very diverse around the globe and each system faces specific challenges to achieve sustainability."

Section 1, 6th paragraph [to reflect that food security is more than the availability of food]

"**Food insecurity** remains an issue. The global population is projected to increase to more than 9 billion by 2050. An increasing share will live in cities and adopt urban food consumption patterns. Considering also that presently over 820 million people presently suffer from are

hungry, and about 2 billion people suffer from one or more forms of malnutrition, global food availability would need to increase by 50% ~~percent~~ from 2012 to 2050 in order to meet the increased demand, while accessibility, affordability and nutritional qualities of food should improve ...”

Section 1, paragraph 10 (to use the quote more fully)

....At global level, it is estimated that a food and agricultural systems in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would deliver nutritious, affordable food for a growing world population, generate higher incomes – especially for the world’s 1.5 billion smallholders – and help restore forests, freshwater resources and vital ecosystems, including the world’s oceans. Moreover, it could create new economic value of more than EUR 1.8trillion by 2030....

Section 3.3. – to become new Chapter 4:

New text:

4. Promoting the transition to sustainable agri-food systems globally

In its international cooperation¹, the EU will support the global transition to sustainable agri-food systems in line with the objectives of this Strategy. To that effect, the EU will develop Green Alliances on sustainable agri-food systems, responding to distinct challenges in different parts of the world.

The EU will focus its cooperation on agri-food research and innovation, with particular reference to climate change adaptation and mitigation; agro-ecology; sustainable landscape management and land governance; conservation and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity; inclusive and fair value chains; nutrition and healthy diets; prevention of food crises; resilience and risk preparedness; integrated pest management; and sanitary/phytosanitary and food safety standards. The EU will build on ongoing initiatives² and use multi-stakeholder and integrated approaches.

The EU will support and accompany partner countries in the monitoring and phasing out of highly hazardous and harmful pesticides to human health and the environment according to international standards, agreements and conventions, and cooperate in strengthening their legislation and enforcement capacity governing phytosanitary products.

To reduce the EU’s contribution to global deforestation and forest degradation, the Commission will: (i) propose regulatory and non-regulatory measures to minimise the deforestation risk associated with commodities on the EU market; and (ii) support partner countries on sustainable agriculture and through actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore forests.

¹ The EU currently cooperates with more than 60 partner countries on agriculture, nutrition and food security and has committed EUR 9 billion in these areas in 2014-20; it has 13 Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements with third countries, and is one of the main providers of humanitarian food assistance.

² E.g. the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DESIRA) initiative.

The EU will continue to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and overfishing, promote sustainable management of fish and seafood resources and strengthen ocean governance, marine cooperation and coastal management³.

The Commission will incorporate these priorities in the programming guidance for cooperation with third countries in the period 2021-27.

Building on new evidence, the Commission will update its Action Plan on Nutrition⁴ and will continue its periodic reporting on progress against the stunting reduction commitments made for 2025.

The EU will support the development of analytical and policy support tools on sustainable agri-food systems as global public goods. The EU will promote the global transition to sustainable agri-food systems in relevant multilateral fora and international events⁵.

The Commission will ensure coherence between the internal and the external dimension of all measures taken under the Farm-to-Fork Strategy to reach objectives within and outside the EU⁶.

Section 4 (to become 5), 1st paragraph:

The Farm to Fork Strategy put forward by this Communication has the ambition to transform European food systems into a global standard for sustainability and to improve the sustainability of food systems globally.

Section 4 (to become 5), 2nd paragraph:

The transition to sustainable food systems needs a collective approach involving public authorities at all levels of governance, including partner countries, cities, rural and coastal communities, private sector actors across the food value chain, non-governmental organisations, academics and citizens.”

Annex – Action Plan

To add a section ‘Promoting the transition to sustainable agri-food systems globally’ and to include the following action:

³ Through the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements and our cooperation with third countries on IUU and on sustainable value chains in fisheries and aquaculture; cooperation is particularly relevant with countries affected by climate change.

⁴ Ref Action Plan

⁵ including notably the UN Conference on Biological Diversity in 2020, the Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2020 and the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021.

⁶ Policy Coherence for Development, Article 208, Treaty on the European Union

ACTIONS	Indicative timetable	No.	(Lead DG)
Promoting the transition to sustainable agri-food systems globally			
Launch Green Alliances on agri-food systems with development partners to promote the transition to sustainable food systems in developing countries, responding to distinct challenges in different parts of the world.	2021	21	DEVCO

[REDACTED]