



Executive Summary

# Strategic Planning Retreat Rome, 21-24 March 2023

The Resilient Local Food Supply Chains Alliance (the Alliance) is a country-led and multistakeholder alliance of partners aimed at strengthening the resilience of national food supply chains using integrated and multi-sectoral approaches for contribution to sustainable food systems. The Alliance was established during the UN Food System Summit in 2021 and is hosted by the World Food Programme (WFP).

The Alliance is focused on achieving food systems transformation and addressing the SDGs, with a particular emphasis on SDG 2 "Zero Hunger".

Since its establishment, partners have placed emphasis on local production for local consumption and resilient local food supply chains and have called for discussion on priorities to achieve these goals. The importance of "local" and "national" in the context of food systems transformation and achieving the SDGs should not be underestimated. Promotion of local value chains and local markets in connecting people compels food actors to focus on opportunities first in their localities, and then outside.

The Retreat provided an opportunity for the countries present to provide brief summaries of their government pathway objectives in support of smallholder farmers and supply chain activities. These examples from countries will contribute to the work of the Alliance.

The Alliance's priority areas, when implemented, directly contribute to achievement of 10 of the 17 SDGs and two related SDGs (13 and 15).

The Retreat aimed to address the Alliance's priorities for the coming year, focusing on advocacy, knowledge management, resource mobilisation, and showcasing innovation in research.

# WHAT IS INTENDED FROM THIS ALLIANCE?



Integrated approaches to ensure locally produced food contributes to resilience

- Increased food availability, affordability, accessibility
- Improved farmers' livelihoods, increased job opportunities especially for marginalized groups
- increased incomes
  Increased government revenue capital expenditure, capacity building
- Livelihood asset creation, adoption of context-focused integrated resilience packages, including social protection, youth and women focused investments
- Land use and resources; asset creation through availability of financing
- Employment creation farm and off-farm jobs including through private sector participation -MSME and SMEs supported
- Local planning, policy formulation operational plans and implementation
- Encouraging gender responsive policies, financing mechanisms established

#### Additionally,

Partners will be expected to make a long-term commitment using this platform of transforming food systems through strengthening people's agency, changing policies, better governance and greater investments to effect structural changes.







## **Expectations from participants**

Participants highlighted the importance of the Alliance being focused on and led by countries.

The Strategic and Action Plan should include support with technical and resource mobilisation to address supply chain priorities.

Participants were clear that "food supply is not a political concept". The Alliance's model of involving NGOs, civil society, academia, women and youth groups, research institutions and the private sector in its future actions was welcomed and proves food as a "social concept".

The Alliance's focus on countries is important and the leadership and support it receives from countries and continental organisations, especially African Union member states is crucial for its success.

#### **Recommendations**

The following should be areas of focus for discussion:

- Definition of the term "local food supply chains". Although it could encompass "national and regional" food supply chains, it does not have to involve every single aspect of food consumption and production due to the huge and complex system that supports food systems transformation.
- 2. The Alliance should focus on various dimensions of local food supply chains.
- Consideration to be given to emphasising multi-sector information systems to guarantee performance measurement systems within a sectoral harmonised framework – for example data collection at the local and community levels and data analysis capacity, essential to prepare and establish evaluation processes, is low.
- 4. Be precise on the major objective of Alliance work over the next 12 months and beyond.
- 5. Where possible the Alliance should support countries on developing food governance policies and their evaluation.
- 6. Use **country scoping missions to identify areas of stress and vulnerabilities** that will delay their progress in building strong food supply chains. This includes helping to link countries to networks of researchers to establish evidence, helping to design a model of interventions for small producers and especially for African member states and compare the costs related to these interventions, which can allow for hunger eradication in a sustainable way.
- 7. Create a **platform for resource mobilisation for the Alliance and support to countries** to conduct studies, country capacity building for specific skills gaps, support policy development, networking among countries. This platform should seek private sector support as investment in countries' efforts.





Highlights of the report: Local Food Systems and Policies as a Tool for the Transformation towards Sustainable Food Systems - by the Working Group on Local Food System and Policies, Italy

Italy's localised food system policies and approaches could be exported to other regions and adapted to local contexts. The report identifies game-changing solutions and provides policy recommendations that analyse the re-territorialisation process (localised food systems) by exploring the local supply chain from production to consumption with a focus on governance and policies. The report calls for governance and policies that integrate systemic approaches and territorial innovation that are inclusive of and accessible to all.

The report placed emphasis on the following:

- 1. Added value of small family farmers and diversification of farm incomes through agritourism, social farming and ecosystem services.
- 2. Importance of innovation and technology in overcoming the fragmentation of small farmers and attracting young people.
- 3. Scaling-up local food production by targeting big buyers to meet the growing demand for local/quality/sustainable products from consumers.
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#### **Recommendations**

- 1. **Localised Food Systems** is a learning example. Recent multiple crises make this an opportune time for localised systems, in terms of self-sufficiency. In areas where food local production is limited, countries should be practical on how food system transformation will occur by being collaborative within territories and within regions and considering comparative advantages for food production.
- 2. **Young People.** The Italian model could apply to other countries, but it should be accompanied by investments in technology and living conditions in rural areas. Innovation linked to young people and building resilience in food supply chains should be highlighted by the Alliance. For example, Italy's focus on youth in agriculture is linked to rural abandonment and increased urbanisation.
- 3. Living conditions in rural areas should be supported by investments in services, public schools and other social services. Asking the youth to go back to the land against a backdrop of cuts in services, in public schools or social services provision is unrealistic.
- 4. Land availability for young people. For example, A "Land Bank" has been established in Tuscany to provide commercial land for young people as well as to contribute to the living conditions of the rural areas. In most countries, 'productive' land is not affordable for the youth to acquire commercially or for living purposes.
- 5. **Infrastructure and connectivity.** Connectivity, as it relates to food production, is beyond roads and moving food from production areas to consumers. Infrastructure connectivity is still a challenge to support transformation of food supply at the territory level and keep the whole supply chain inside the territory. Other key areas to address are enhancement of high-speed digital connectivity and creating e-businesses.
- 6. **Support from the private sector.** Food processing companies could support key priorities in country pathway documents, such as for local food production and food quality structures to transform food at the territory level and keeping whole food value chains inside the territory. Support could include addressing land degradation for healthy soils in food production areas and commodity pricing for agricultural produce.
- 7. Impact of unhealthy and cheap food. Cheap, accessible and affordable but unhealthy food is cheap and tasty, now easily accessible but bad for health and low in nutritional qualities. The Alliance should advocate for public/private sector participation with governments for local production of diverse and nutritious food for local consumption, by supporting the supply side and consumers to make the right choices and with the private sector to be fully engaged in food production, processing and distribution.
- 8. **The Territorial Approach.** Vertical and horizontal coordination of the systems approach is necessary, in particular multi-sectoral approaches to address different systems in different countries. Multi-sectoral approaches can strengthen food systems transformation while ensuring that financial benefits reflect the multi-sectoral assets and are well monitored.





# What do countries want from and can contribute to the Alliance

Seven countries participated and highlighted their expectations from the Alliance and what best practices that they can share.

# Expectations are for the Alliance to:

- 1. Provide a platform to learn from other countries.
- 2. Support countries to strengthen the management of food supply chains/capacity of actors through technical assistance and using experts from institutions and agencies of the Alliance in specific areas, for example to increase norms and standards of quality.
- 3. Provide examples of being competitive on the quality of crops to trade and reach international markets/ internal, institutional, regional and international.
- 4. Disseminate research information.
- 5. Provide evidence for key interventions; provide data of what works; evidence linked to the intervention; for example, food assistance at national levels.
- 6. Develop strategic partnerships with state and non-state actors.
- 7. Provide examples for countries to learn from other countries not replicate apply examples to local contexts, as cultural values and institutional frameworks are different. For example, Italy can help with institutional settings on how they are structured to convey benefits and advantages.
- 8. Support mapping exercises from a local/national context to support prioritisation.
- 9. Facilitate exchange of examples of different approaches for attracting investors in food production.
- 10. Enhance or improve the value of local government, development and public service.
- 11. Facilitate exchange/development of inclusive models for engaging youth and indigenous people and the empowerment of women.
- 12. Align the activities at country level with relevant indicators of the selected SDGs.
- 13. Support with food processing issues specifically dealing with Post Harvest Loss.
- 14. Technical support to provide evidence and modelling of costs.
- 15. Provide examples of more competitive and variety of agricultural products legumes, grains and cereals.

## **Country Best Practices That Can Be Shared Amongst Alliance's Members**

- 1. Initiatives that focus on nutrition, health and social protection such as guidelines from all of the relevant ministries regarding farm to fork, especially the Health Ministry.
- 2. Examples of high level platforms led by the Prime Minister or President that will showcase transformational leadership, such as initiatives for food security and management, coordination and collaboration between ministries.
- 3. Land initiative for cooperatives.
- 4. Re-nationalisation of abandoned crops.
- 5. Transformation and processing of agro products.
- 6. Activities to develop strategic reserves to manage the lean season for example government buying and protecting crops to be available for lean season.
- 7. Youth actions that encourage interest in agri-food systems.
- 8. Examples of access to credit for female farmers guarantees to ensure that women have access to credit.
- 9. The legal framework/policies for strengthened local food supply chains.
- 10. Formulation of agricultural and food security policy.





### Recommendations by participating countries

- 1. **Burundi** expects support from the Alliance, sharing experiences, skills training for sourcing appropriate financing, and trade support so that Burundi's products can be competitive.
- 2. Democratic Republic of Congo (The DRC) emphasises the need for research to collect evidence on a national basis to address food security issues, collect data and evidence linked to the interventions, and scale them up in terms of food assistance at a national level. Capacity building for non-state actors is necessary and a multi-sectoral approach to food security will be welcomed in the DRC. The importance of increasing investment in this area, also in the private sector, but through advocacy with the institutions and agencies were stressed. The DRC would like the Alliance to support strengthening of the capacities of the agricultural actors, consider monitoring government's food standards and quality pursue the key objective of reducing PHLs.
- Italy recommends that the report of this Retreat could be a significant contribution to developing a strategic document for the Summit in July and presenting the Alliance during the Stocktaking moment with identified priorities in terms of actions.
- 4. Mauritius sees the Alliance as a good resource for the country as it has the potential and technical partners to leverage advocacy, mobilise resources, provide knowledge sharing and promote inclusiveness in financial solutions.
- 5. Niger stressed the importance of policies for rural defence and knowledge management of good practices to support producers and monitoring processes in the food value chain.
- 6. Sudan emphasised the importance of advocacy for resilience, fortification of food diversity and creating awareness for manufacturing issues.
- Tanzania supports the importance of developing a vision paper for the Stocktaking Moment in July 2023. The government of Tanzania will host the AGRF - Africa Food System Summit on 17th September 2023 and the Alliance should be represented at this event.

## The Italian Roundtable

The 'Roundtable' brought together Italian state actors and farmers at the local/national/regional level to share their experiences/good practices of short supply chains - from farmer to consumer/ from the private to public sector.

The Roundtable' was a good example for sharing best practices on building resilient local food supply chains. Key points and principles from these examples, such as tracking food distance "zero kilometre", focus on territoriality and locality can be adopted by countries but it should be recognised that it may not be suitable for all countries.

#### **Recommendations**

- 1. The Alliance should draw from the exemplary models shared by the presenters and identify best practices and governance arrangements with accompanying guidelines for countries.
- Examples of best practices should be compiled in a compendium. The compendium should define terminology, such as the definition of 'local' and document skills that can be transferred from one country to another.
- The Alliance should mobilise resources to support countries in their local food supply chains objectives, establish limits of interventions as food systems transformation requires a multi-sectoral approach and activities are interrelated; selecting specific areas of focus to avoid duplication of work with other coalitions.
- 4. Countries could contribute to a joint document on how they will support the Alliance and how they expect to be supported by the Alliance (part of the knowledge-sharing objective).





# Brief Background on the Alliance survey and relation to the creation of task forces

The Survey of May 2022 on Country Priorities and Alliance's Action Areas was presented. The latter underpinned the establishment of the four Task Forces. The Priorities and Action Areas were approved by the Members' Forum on May 2022 as below:

No	Country Priorities	No	Action Areas for the Alliance
1	Diversifying local production (including healthier foods) to meet local needs and	1	Build research partnerships at global and regional levels
2	demands Facilitating access to inputs and finance for small producers and local food value chain actors	2	Support the integration of multi-risk management measures againts shocks and stresses at the regional and national levels
3	Inclusive, resilient, and sustainable public procurement policies	3	Establish a Peer-to-Peer Exchange/Network of Best Practices at the global and regional levels
4	Developing short supply chains to build resilience vis-à-vis current global crises (COVID-19, food prices and supply chain)	4	Support national monitoring & data initiatives
5	E-commerce and digitalisation	5	Establish a Multi-Sector Financing Task Force at the global and regional levels
6	Post harvest management	6	Establish principles for the inclusive participation of marginalized communities in local food supply chains
7	Multi-risk management along food value chains		
8	Equitable access to productive land and other resources	7	Focus on advocacy and outreach at the national level
9	Capital investment in risk-proofed infrastructure	8	Support to develop national pathways and actions related to resilient local food
10	Focus on gender and youth		supply chains

# The Four Task Forces (TF): objectives, priorities, outputs, recommendations

The Task Forces are important part of the governance structure of the Alliance and the importance of territorial approaches, dissemination or research and innovative approaches should be reflected in future strategies. The importance of finance and identifying ways that the Finance and Investment TF can support governments and other stakeholders by providing information on financial opportunities should be a key activity of the Alliance.

#### Knowledge Management

The TF proposes the Alliance should include the informal sector and local producers working in the sector. An inclusive model of integrated and resilient approaches, adapted to the local context should be promoted.

The Alliance focus on knowledge sharing should comprise identification (where), generation (how), capture (who). The Alliance can compare different practices and disseminate best practices.

It is important to acknowledge and document the role of the "middlemen", who are generally 'climate-friendly' in close proximity of consumers, can guarantee transportation of local food among the different chains of the local food system and contribute to the efficient running of the local supply chain, mostly from producers to consumers.

#### **Recommendations of the Task Force**

- (i) Different platforms should be reviewed to **increase understanding of different scenarios of advocacy and emerging work on food crises** in the most vulnerable contexts.
- (ii) Funds will have to be mobilised for the Alliance to procure technical expertise and staff to oversee the work.





# Research and Innovation, Dr Simon Heck, Director General, International Potato Center (CGIAR)

Members of the TF agreed that the purpose of the TF should be to facilitate and support the Alliance in knowledge sharing - sharing of scientific evidence, technical information, successful innovations and research and innovation capacities. Main objectives are to (i) enable and link member states and (ii) convene research and innovation forums through engaging with ongoing R&I programs.

The TF will engage in activities in three main areas which are inter-linked (i) Publication of Research findings & Innovation good practice: provide a compendium of impactful research and innovation examples in local food supply chains; (ii) Matchmaking of innovation demand and supply: provide a platform to link research demand and existing capacities; and (iii) Facilitation of regional research and innovation networks: support the creation of research and innovation networks.

The TF will seek to (i) improve access to research results, (ii) convene, participate and advocate in technical and policy forums, (iii) increase participation of Alliance member states and research and innovation leaders in regional and international initiatives, and (iv) publish and disseminate scientific research.

### Recommendations of the Task Force

- (i) The Alliance should support efforts to create more visibility and credibility of the TF as a network and also at a scientific level
- (ii) Resources will be needed to finance a consultant to compile the relevant research
- (iii) Technical focus areas to cover several topics, such as **enabling investments in circular bioeconomy**, selection of diverse local crops for production and consumption, improving access to and promoting healthy diets with appropriate information for consumers, reducing food loss and food waste, public food procurement, etc.

# Finance and Investment, Krishan Bheenick, Regeneration Mauritius

In line with the UNFSS, Action Track 5, The TF considered it important that the Alliance and the actions in this area are limited to ensure in-depth analysis of the financing required and risks.

The Group analysed several aspects:

- (i) Why should the Alliance be supported
- (ii) How does this TF operate at the supra-national level, what supra-national interventions of the supply chains are worth investing in,
- (iii) What can countries offer to investors, and
- (iv) What concrete results do Alliance partners want to achieve

## **Recommendation of the Task Force**

**Innovative finance** represents a fundamental key aspect for each programme/project to be undertaken by countries.

## Short Value Chains, Lieve Claeessen, ReFood Network

The TF considered short food value chains as a key to sustainability and a way to adapt or reduce costs to consumers stressing two main objectives: policy transformation/governance and evidence-based models;

TF recognised the interdependence of all countries concerning food diversity and their importance for achieving food security and for sustainable agricultural development.

#### **Recommendations of the Task Force**

- (i) **Leveraging indigenous knowledge and recognising the role of digitalisation** (an app in Brazil that connects producers and consumers was recommended)
- (ii) The Alliance will establish or continue **collaboration with local authorities and producers**, highlighting legal, administrative and financial implications when, for example promoting policies for local procurement for locally produced and healthy food.





What are win-win solutions or actions for scaling resilient local food supply chains? Examples of activities - at local and regional levels. How or what levers can we use to accelerate actions by state and non-state actors in implementation that can be supported through Alliance efforts

The high-level approach must be maintained and more ministries should be involved in food systems transformation activities and building resilient local food supply chains. Ministries of Finance have a role to play in supporting initiatives from domestic resources. For example there was an absence of ministers of finance during the UNFSS in 2021.

Good examples should be explored, such as those of Mauritius where the government plans to develop a knowledgesharing platform to scale up the tourism sector.

#### **Recommendations**

- 1. Review and publish differences among local contexts and **produce cross-cutting evidence that can be** easily adapted.
- 2. Advocate for **building capacity and leadership in communities** and local institutions to **implement community-based initiatives** and for focus of investments priorities.
- 3. Advocate for countries to **provide adequate governance and institutions to reinforce local control**, including providing equitable access to credit for youth and women.
- 4. Offer field visits to different countries to collect best practices for the Alliance and organise roundtable discussion at the end of each visit to share the lessons learned. In this regard, Italy would be a good pilot for a learning exercise complemented by a field visit.
- 5. Promote self-reliance and food sovereignty, not self-sufficiency.
- 6. Set up the Alliance as a professional body to attract investors and resources.

# Towards the Strategic and Action Plan: Agreements on key activities for the Alliance in 2023/202

The activities that the Alliance will need to undertake with the caveat that all activities will require financing. The Strategic and Action Plan will highlight all of the activities that Alliance partners would like to be addressed, but will be limited for the period 2023-2024.

# Supporting countries in building resilient local food supply and value chains

#### Short-term needs:

- notune

- Funding & financing
- Monitoring progress (M&E tools)
- Communication and advocacy
- Knowledge & technical expertise

pathways

approaches

Knowledge-sharing and

technical expertise

priority action on building local

Practical example of governance

Food systems resources tracking

on territorial and integrated

• Peer-to-peer exchanges

• Costing & mainstreaming of

food supply chain national

#### Funding and finance

- Diversified resource mobilization
- Call for a global funding mechanism
- Strategic funding for catalytic investments

# Long-term needs: contribution to relevant SDGs by 2030

- Systemic policy change
- Leveraging local, regional & global ecosystems
- Monitoring progress
- Institutional strengthening

# Monitoring progress



- Milestones to keep the momentum
- Guidance on global reporting framework & indicators
- National baselines, tracking / mainstreaming achievement of
- relevant indicators and SDGs
- Virtual platform & analytical tools
- Continued advocacy to maintain
- country-level momentum
  Greater convergence of various inter-governmental processes
- Centralized portal to disseminate success best practices and relevant information





#### **Recommendations**

- 1. **Provide a comprehensive study of supply chains in different sectors and regions**, considering the Agriculture Treaties of the World Trade Organisation and Water and Land Management and provide a shared glossary.
- 2. Develop a process of research to **bring different countries together, collect different regions' strategies for food security** such as nutritional crops, and package them to make valuable strategies for investments.
- 3. Urge governments to **acknowledge the importance of producers and consumers as intermediaries** at the market level and **elaborate a clear strategy the country** possesses of the food supply chains, including monitoring prices and supporting local producers.
- 4. **Monitor and follow up on national progress of building resilient local supply chains implementation** that will anticipate complex situations in countries and identify those not having efficient tools to respond. Monitoring could also identify making healthy food affordable to the poor and ensuring local markets serve poor segments of society.
- 5. Highlight the important role of the final consumer to drive change within food systems.

# Normative and technical narrative/advocacy/communication for building resilient local food supply chains to address multiple risks and crises and achieve the SDGs

This retreat has driven us towards identifying opportunities for future collaboration and for the Alliance to move forward at scale.

The retreat also discussed different contexts and geographical areas of agrifood systems and identified the risks and impact affecting populations, such as food insecurity, lack of healthy diets or access to food, food safety, climate change, biodiversity, pollution, health (Covid-19), pests and diseases, water scarcity, drought, acute food insecurity and malnutrition.

#### **Recommendations**

- 1. **Developing an activity-based and capacity building Strategic and Action Plan** is only the beginning. Financial resources to ensure adequate capacity and technical expertise for implementation of the Strategic and Action Plan will be essential to bring about changes and improvements that countries require as they mobilise resources to support sustainable local food supply chains.
- 2. Before implementation can commence, it will be vital for countries and partners to **disseminate and** advocate for the Strategic and Action Plan with decision and policy-makers in their respective countries to obtain endorsement.
- 3. The Executive Summary of the Strategic and Action Plan should be made available for international donors and development partners to **mobilise resources for implementation**.
- 4. All partners should use opportunities provided by global, regional and national fora to raise awareness of the work of the Alliance.
- 5. High-level leaders of various agencies that play a role in food systems transformation should be asked to commit to the Strategic and Action Plan of the Alliance. This is important to encourage the effective participation of staff from their agencies in follow-up on country national pathway documents and for supporting countries' priorities for building resilient local food supply chains.
- 6. To support implementation, these agencies should have adequate resources (expertise, competencies and funds).





# The Stocktaking Moment (STM), Rome, July 2023

The Stocktaking Moment in July 2023 will provide opportunities to raise greater awareness of the Alliance, its work and objectives for building resilient local food supply chains that will contribute to transforming resilient food systems for food sovereignty and self-reliance.

In light of multiple crises since the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 and the exacerbation of hunger, the STM provides an opportunity for countries to highlight the importance of building resilient local food supply chains to reduce dependence on imported food.

#### **Recommendations**

- 1. Countries can consider what are **the actions and challenges of achieving the SDG targets** as part of their report back at the STM.
- 2. Countries should **reflect on their achievements and challenges** and how they can be supported by being part of the Alliance.
- 3. Countries should also reflect and make known what they expect from the Alliance.
- 4. Countries should **advocate for resources for activities that the Alliance can undertake** to support them and in so doing advocate for resources to solidify the Alliance's architecture.
- 5. Countries should **highlight and endorse the scoping missions as a model of the work of the Alliance** moving from theory to practice.

## Conclusions

The Retreat in Rome focused on the strategic work of the Alliance, specifically supporting countries in their food systems transformation objectives from producers to consumers, proposing solutions to achieve food and nutritional security, through building resilient local food supply chains and to plan and implement adaptation and mitigation strategies in the context of climate change.

The Alliance plans to address its objectives to support countries integrate solutions for local producers, raise awareness of local food supply chains and disseminate sector-specific studies.

The Alliance will support capacity building and provision of technical assistance, knowledge-sharing for the implementation of local production, compile information on different local food supply chains involve all relevant stakeholders in the follow-up process.

The Alliance will agree on formats for progress reports and criteria for monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan, with conclusions brought to the attention of concerned governments and institutions. Each country should make every possible effort to provide financial support and seek international cooperation for sustainable production of local food.

The Alliance will seek to forge partnerships with organisations involved in the food supply and value chain processes.

The Alliance will monitor progress on SDGs indicators, local/national governance and legislation and local food supply





# **List of Participants**

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