FOOD SYSTEMS

TRENDS IN NDC PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

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NDC PARTNERSHIP

WWF

CLIMATE FOCUS

INTRODUCTION

Accounting for a third of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, agriculture and food systems emit over 17 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2e) each year, with agricultural production and land use accounting for over 70% of these emissions. At the same time, in agriculture and food systems, policy measures including addressing land-use change and agricultural emissions combined with demand-side measures like reducing food loss and waste could contribute to around 20% of the global mitigation needed by 2050 to deliver on the 1.5°C Paris Agreement target.

Therefore, transforming agriculture and food systems is crucial to meeting global climate goals. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that outline a country's plans for reducing GHG emissions to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement and for adapting to the impacts of climate change, present a key opportunity for identifying domestic mitigation and adaptation needs and measures to tackle climate change through agriculture and food systems. However, many developing countries need technical and financial support to implement policies and projects targeted at climate change mitigation and adaptation in food systems.

This Insight Brief analyzes requests for support the NDC Partnership has received from developing country members that are related to food systems. It identifies trends related to country requests and support offerings, informing how the Partnership can refine and scale up needed support for food-related initiatives and interventions.

ABOUT INSIGHT BRIEFS

Insight Briefs are analyses developed by the NDC Partnership's Support Unit, members, or its partner institutions to share insights into thematic issues based on requests received by countries and the support provided by the Partnership. The following Insight Brief based on NDC Partnership data, addresses requests related to food systems and provides recommendations on how to strengthen support to countries.

This Insight Brief was developed by the NDC Partnership Support Unit, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Climate Focus.

FOOD SYSTEMS REQUESTS: FACTS & FIGURES

A total of 210 requests for support have been submitted by 41 countries on the topic of food systems (4% of all requests circulated through the NDC Partnership).[1]

34%
Fully supported requests

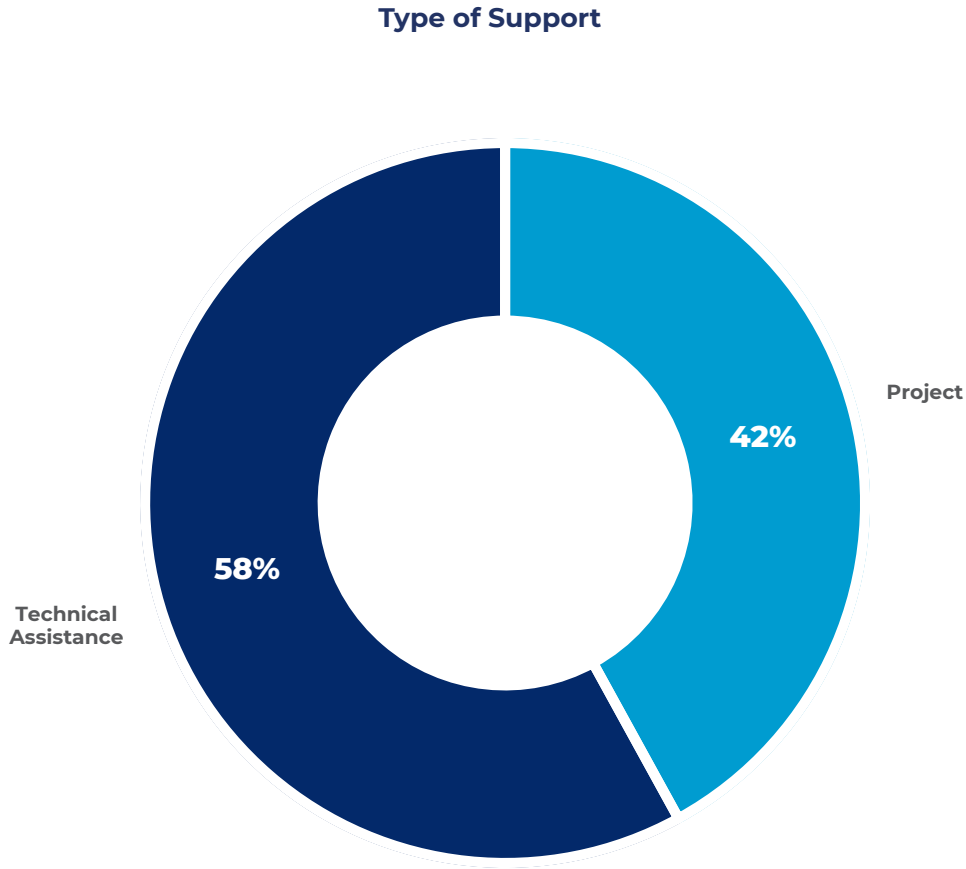
61%
Partial support, indicative support, or no support

Definitions used in this analysis

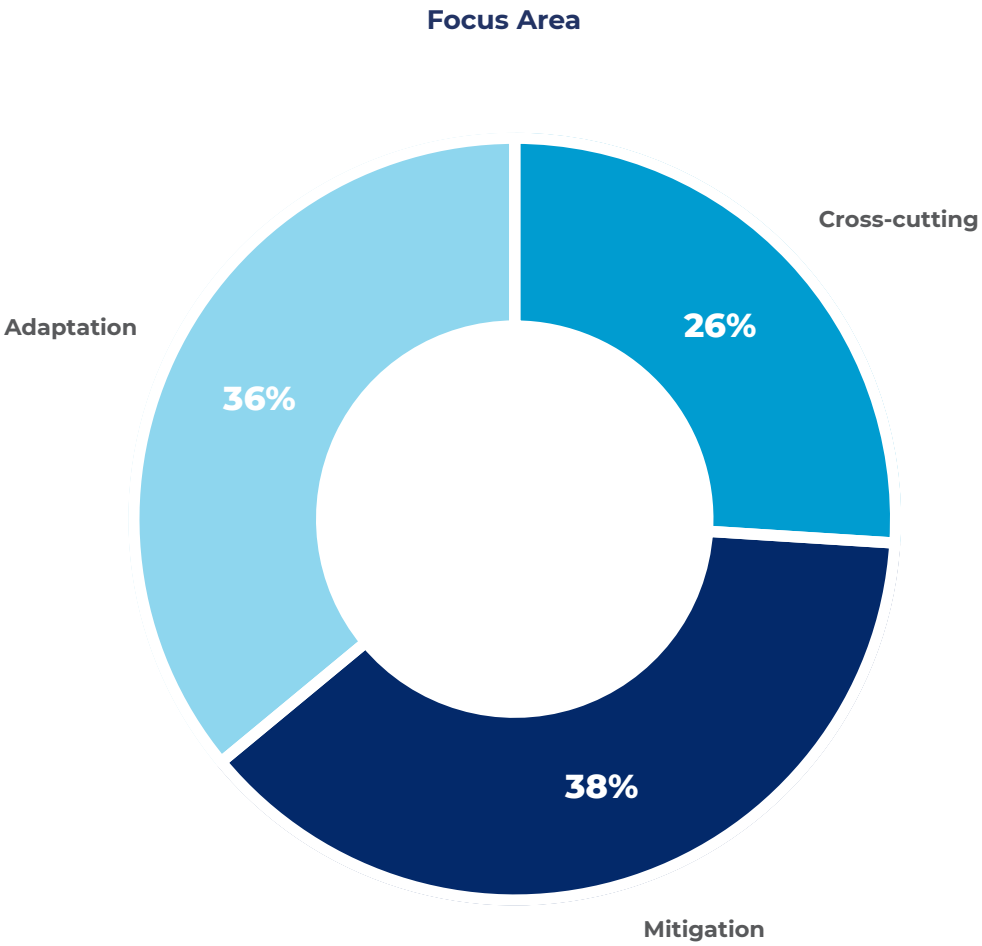
Food Systems: The food system encompasses all the activities and actors in the production, processing, manufacturing, consumption, and waste of food, and their impacts on nutrition, health and well-being, and the environment. Food system transformation includes activities related to food security, nature-positive food production (including agroecology and agroforestry approaches), reducing food loss and waste (such as post-harvest loss), and a shift to sustainable cooking and healthy diets. Requests which center around production of specific foods like rice or wheat, or food groups such as fruits and vegetables, are included in food systems. General requests related to agriculture, livestock, or fisheries are excluded from food systems tag unless an explicit linkage with this definition is present.

1. All support data is reflective of information communicated by partners and developing country members through the Support Unit. For fully supported requests, partners responded with support fully meeting the need the country expressed in their request. Partial support refers to support that meets a subset of the activities expressed within the country's request. For indicative support, partners indicated interest in exploring support for the request, but have not committed support. No support refers to country requests where partners have not yet committed or indicated any support. A small portion (5%) of requests in the analysis do not have support data available.

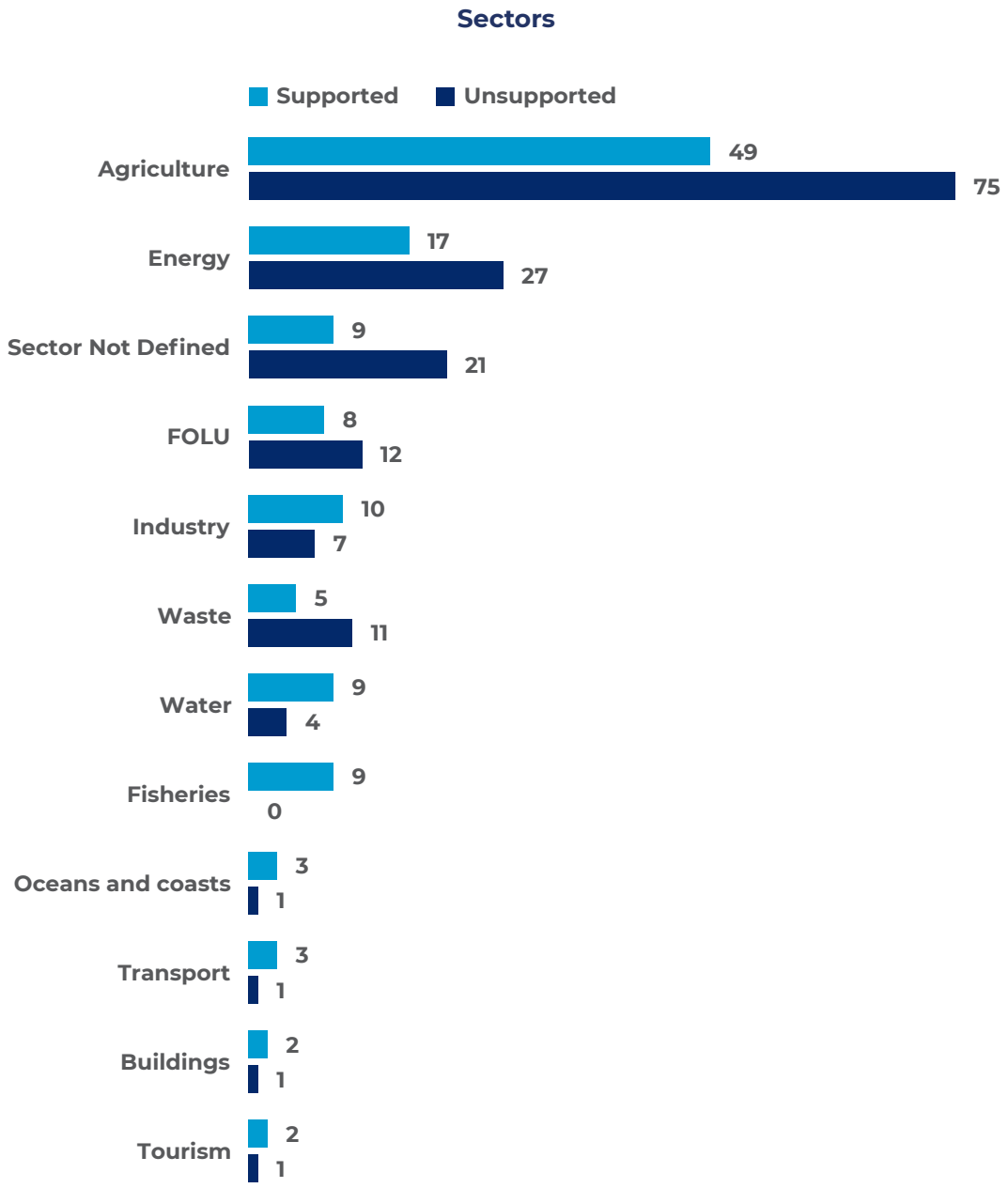
BREAKDOWN OF REQUESTS



Just over half of food systems requests are for technical assistance, compared to project support. Forty-two percent of food system requests are for project support, significantly higher than the 25% of all requests received by the NDC Partnership overall.



Food systems requests are nearly evenly split between mitigation and adaptation, with only 26% of requests representing cross-cutting activities. This reflects a slightly stronger focus on sole mitigation and adaptation actions compared with all requests to the NDC Partnership, 42% of which are cross-cutting requests.



Agriculture is the most common sector, representing 60% of food systems requests. Energy and food and land use (FOLU) also standout as key sectoral linkages, and 15% of food systems requests do not specify a sectoral focus.

Food System Intervention Areas

While the majority of the 210 country requests for support presented above relate to food production, requests also refer to food loss and waste, clean cooking, and nutrition and diet.

Food Loss and Waste

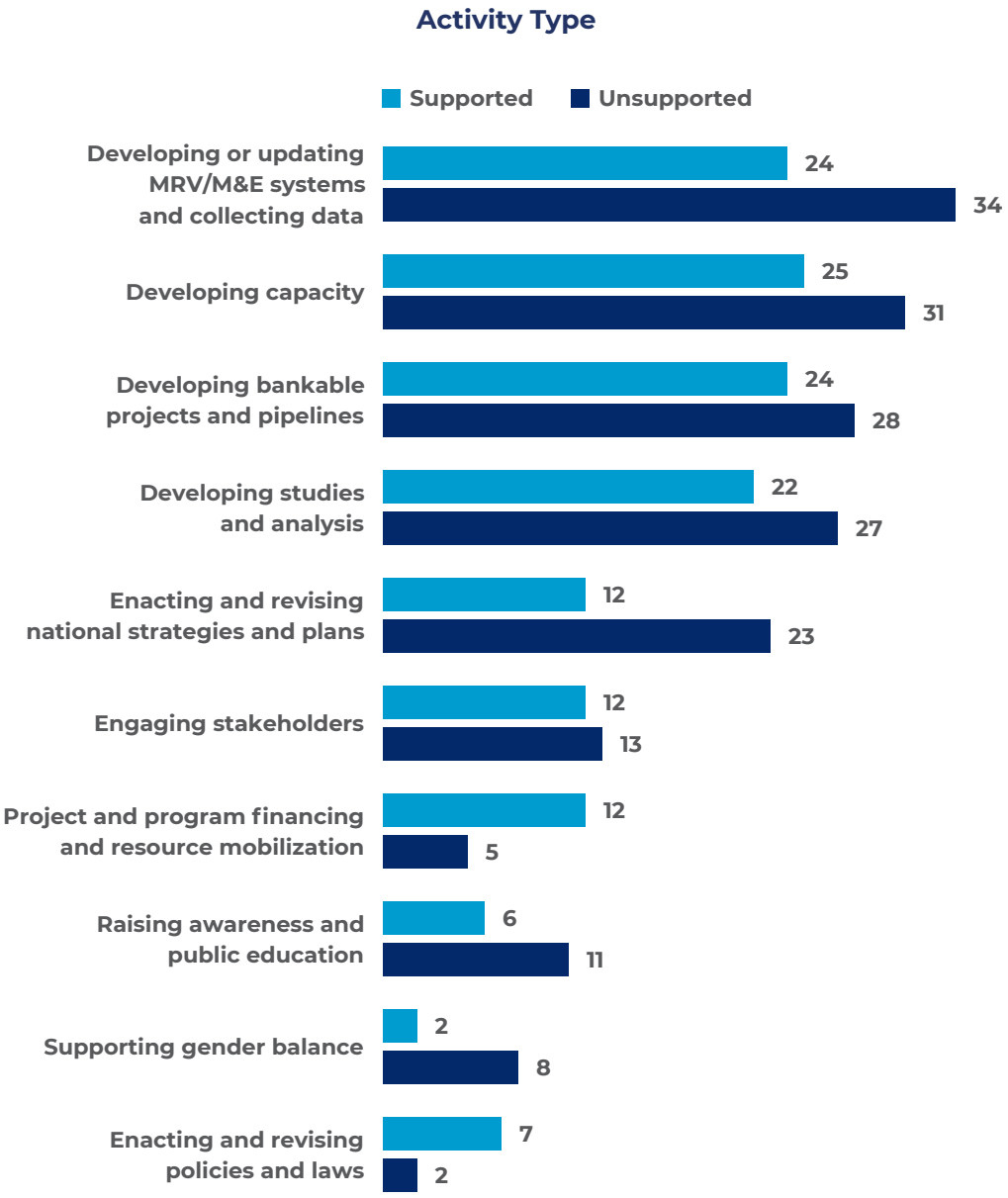
Of the 210 country requests, 39 requests relate to food loss and waste. Activities include developing strategies for food loss and waste reduction, adoption of low-carbon technologies to promote GHG mitigation at the intersection of food loss and waste and renewable energy, providing relevant actors with tools and training to reduce post-harvest loss, and promoting climate resilience in the food value chain. Many requests on food loss and waste also relate to finance and investment, measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems, data collection, and capacity development.

Cooking

Of the 210 country requests, 35 requests relate to cooking. Activities include promoting clean and energy-efficient cookstoves, managing charcoal and firewood usage in cooking, and reducing deforestation. Within cooking-related requests, 80% include linkages to the energy sector, reflecting a strong focus on energy efficiency and access for cooking activities. Additionally, many cooking requests focus on women, children, people with disabilities, rural households, and indigenous communities as key participants and beneficiaries of activities.

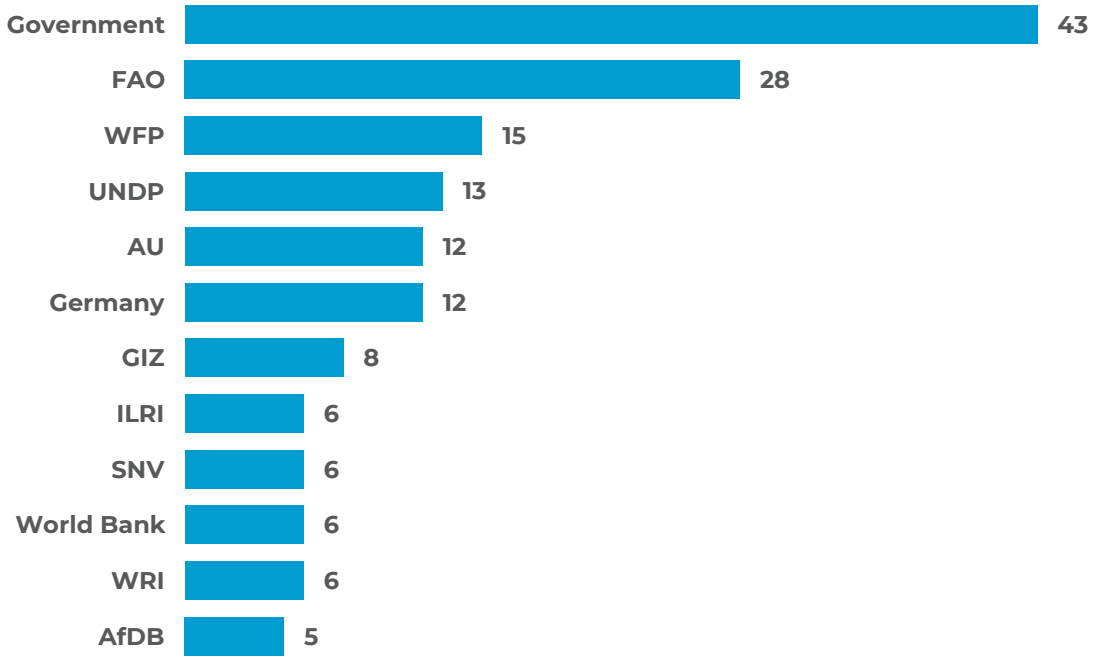
Nutrition and Diet

Of the 210 country requests, 36 requests relate to nutrition and diet. Activities include increasing food security and decreasing malnutrition, developing dietary guidelines, cultivation of climate-resilient and nutritious crop varieties, improving cookstoves, and agroforestry efforts. Many nutrition- and diet-related requests include a focus on gender equality, technical trainings, health, and wellbeing.



Many food systems requests focus on developing MRV or M&E systems, and enhancing institutional capacities. The prominence of activities focused on developing bankable projects and pipelines is in line with the relatively higher percentage of requests for project support.

Number of Requests Supported, by Partner (Top 12)



45 out of 183 partners (25%) have provided support to at least one food systems request. The top 12 partners (by number of food systems requests supported) are shown here. Twenty percent of all food systems requests are supported by Governments themselves.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TO FOOD SYSTEMS INTEGRATION IN NDCS

Food systems transformation is critical to meeting the global goals of the Paris Agreement and achieving climate-resilient, sustainable development. The food systems value chain — from production to consumption — represents a key policy area for many developing countries. It intersects multiple vital economic sectors, including but not limited to agriculture, energy, land use, and waste. Despite rising global attention toward the intersection of food systems and climate policy, key barriers exist to the integration of food systems in NDCs and the implementation of food systems projects. These challenges are summarized below[2].

- **Gaps in common understanding of food systems** limit the effective integration of food systems priorities in NDCs and reporting for ongoing activities. An initial entry point for food systems work is often to develop a joint understanding of what the food system comprises (including activities from production to consumption), but diverse and sometimes misaligned organizational definitions for food systems can create confusion for countries. This issue can increase tensions between countries' legal reporting obligations and political commitments around food systems work. It can also exacerbate support gaps for food systems MRV activities, due to extensive knowledge and coordination requirements for measurement and reporting.
- **Ministerial alignment and multistakeholder coordination** can prove challenging for food systems integration in NDCs. Because of the diverse nature of food systems activities, ministries that are responsible for NDCs are frequently not aligned with ministries that work on food and agriculture. Additionally, facilitating informed participation of relevant stakeholders (including farmers) in the NDC development process is crucial to integration. But simple changes — such as changes in government — can disrupt stakeholder engagement in the NDC process and inhibit the whole-of-society approach.
- **Financing project implementation** needs to be tailored to the food systems context. Countries may have trouble working with finance mechanisms to receive project support or engaging with the right parts of implementing organizations to successfully advance food systems activities. When projects do move forward, misalignment between systems stakeholder consultations and project finance requirements can limit overall impact. Although mitigation and adaptation outcomes are frequently intertwined for food systems activities, the funding sources remain separate, which can complicate financing and disrupt implementation efforts.

2. These barriers and solutions were identified through the NDC Partnership's September 2024 Thematic Partner Discussion, which brought together experts from across 22 organizations on the topic of food systems.

Integrating food systems into the NDCs 3.0 presents a tremendous opportunity for climate-resilient and sustainable development. Doing so requires a common understanding of food systems, their cross-cutting linkages across adaptation and mitigation, and sectoral co-benefits. The development of NDCs 3.0 offers the chance to resolve the dichotomy between food systems and climate priorities, bring agreement between stakeholders, and integrate priorities into financial packages to ensure countries' climate strategies are ambitious and readily implementable.

Way Forward

The following recommendations support the content and process for food systems integration in the NDCs 3.0:

1. **Shift to nature-positive production:** Governments should integrate nature-positive food production systems, based on agroecological principles into national climate actions and their implementation. These practices enhance biodiversity, rehabilitate degraded ecosystems, and ensure food security to deliver a future in which people and nature can thrive.
2. **Reduce food loss and waste and increase circularity:** Food loss and waste is a major cause of emissions and over-use of resources and land. In implementing NDCs, there needs to be an increasing emphasis on circularity to reduce emissions and build more sustainable food systems.
3. **Transition to healthy and sustainable diets:** A transition to healthy diets that are based on local food contexts and produced within planetary boundaries can reduce GHG emissions, protect and restore wildlife, reduce land-use, and improve health.
4. **Develop a common understanding of food systems:** Aligning organizational definitions and country understanding of food systems can support NDC integration by identifying cross-cutting linkages and co-benefits. This can improve policy coherence (including for NBSAPs and NAPs) while easing country reporting requirements for ongoing activities.
5. **Establish multistakeholder coordination mechanisms:** Bringing together ministries and key stakeholders that work on food systems is crucial for informed and effective NDC integration. This contributes to whole-of-society outcomes and improves government ownership of food systems in the NDC process.
6. **Integrate food systems into financial packages:** Ensure that food systems priorities from the NDC process translate to financed implementation on the ground, creating actionable plans and efficient use of budgets.

Food Systems

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