

Evaluation title	Evaluation of the European Union support to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems in Partner Countries (2014-2020)		
Lead EU Service	European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INTPA)	EU Delegations involved	Cambodia, Colombia, Haiti, Kenya, Malawi and Niger
Associated EU Services	European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI), Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (SANTE), Directorate-General for Climate Action (CLIMA), Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement (NEAR), and Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). European External Action Service	Main policy areas addressed by the evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable agriculture • Food and agricultural systems – Resilience to food crises • Agricultural Growth (value chains): • Nutrition • Policy and Planning
Evaluation budget	EUR	Contractor	Particip GmbH
Date of approval of final report		Date of the response	
Additional information	The evaluation focused on the EU support designed and implemented under the previous MFF, covering the period 2014-2020, considering all partner countries that selected food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture as a priority sector for partnering with the EU.		

Recommendations from the independent Evaluation		Response of the EU services (to be updated one year later)
R1	<p>Adopt a framework to foster a ‘One EU’ approach to SAFS</p> <p><u>Details:</u></p> <p>1.1 Develop clearer overarching ‘rules of engagement’ for European actors</p> <p>1.2 Anchor external action support to SAFS in long-term EU-country partnership agendas</p> <p>1.3 Maintain a clear focus in the support to SAFS at country and regional level</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>Note: there is a certain degree of overlap between recommendations 1 and 2</p> <p>[1.1.] The recommendation from the evaluation to strengthen a common European approach and voice on SAFS is highly relevant, but also ‘work in progress’. There is an overarching policy direction on SAFS agreed at EU level, based on the Farm-to-Fork Strategy and the European positioning at the Food Systems Summit, and reinforced through various Council Conclusions (including the June 2022</p>

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	<p>Conclusions on the Team Europe response to the global food crisis). Nevertheless, this has not yet been reflected in operational common guidance for engagement with partner governments and multilateral institutions. This is partly being addressed through ongoing work, but may need reinforcement by developing a common operational document that contains the common ‘hymn sheet’ and can guide interaction with external partners. Work is going on with respect to renewed common priorities for FAO; the Commission Services are jointly drafting an EU Food Systems Pathway; and there is common work of the EU and its MS in support of partner countries through Team Europe Initiatives.</p> <p>[1.2.] Long-term cooperation with partner countries is captured in multi-annual indicative programmes (MIPS, usually covering 7 years), which are reviewed regularly. In a number of the MIPS, SAFS have been well-captured. In others, this can be improved. Further engagement by the EU and its MS with partner countries around the strengthening and implementation of the national food systems transformation pathways (developed in the context of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit) offers the opportunity to anchor SAFS approaches in partnership agendas.</p> <p>[1.3.] The focus on the most vulnerable food systems actors (including small producers, MSMEs, women, youth) has been enshrined in Agenda 2030 and in the European Consensus for Development, hence this focus will remain relevant for the years to come, also in the SAFS support at country and regional levels.</p>
<p>R2 Operationalise this ‘One EU’ approach at all levels <u>Details:</u> 2.1 Upgrade coordination between EU and EU MS at HQ level 2.2 Develop a common understanding on context-specific challenges and opportunities at country and regional level 2.3 Co-develop and empower Team Europe agri-food initiatives 2.4 Strengthen EU sustainable agri-food system diplomacy</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>[2.1.] To strengthen information exchange and discussions between the EU and MS, the frequency of HARDs meetings has been increased. Moreover, a number of topics are repeatedly placed on the agenda to allow for iterations and updates, as a basis for enhanced cooperation. Nevertheless, the HARDs is an informal group of thematic experts and middle-management level, and involves only a minority of MS. More strategic discussions are better placed in Council (CODEV Working Party) and in the regular meetings of Director-Generals of the Eu and its MS. In both cases, global food security questions have been on the agenda repeatedly, following the effects of the war in Ukraine, which allowed also for deliberations on SAFS.</p> <p>[2.2.] The EU already uses diverse analytical tools, including food systems assessments and value chain analysis, to obtain insight on context-specific challenges and identify useful entry points for cooperation and shares this information with interested MS. A systematic exchange of relevant information between the EU and MS, notably at partner country level, could further assist in improving the quality and synergy of assistance by the EU and its MS.</p> <p>[2.3.] The EU and its MS develop and present common positions for governance and technical bodies in FAO. Coordination and alignment in WFP and IFAD have proven more difficult, due to different</p>

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	<p>governance and membership arrangements. Joint EU and MS programmes or projects that finance activities by one or more of the RBAs exist but are a small minority of the finance provided. There is scope to increase this form of cooperation.</p> <p>More than 30 Team Europe Initiatives with a significant SAFS component exist at partner country level and several regional and continental level TEIs are under development, particularly in Africa.</p> <p>[2.4.] The EU (DGs INTPA-AGRI-SANTE) has communicated SAFS positions to EU delegations around the world in the framework of explanations of the F2F strategy. DGs have asked the EU Delegations for their cooperation in identifying affinities and controversial issues in third countries as regards the sustainability of the food system and the EU F2F Strategy. EU Delegations were also requested to send detailed reports about third country positions or potential positions in relation to common goals, challenges and solutions.</p> <p>Following the war in Ukraine and its effects on global food security, the Commission and the EEAS have stepped up interaction with EU Delegations and developed lines-to-take in support of diplomatic outreach. In the CODEV Council Working Party meeting of 17 November 2022, it was in principle agreed to share such EU lines-to-take with EU MS to support common diplomatic messaging.</p>
<p>R3 Enhance learning at EU, national and global level</p> <p><u>Details:</u></p> <p>3.1 Intensify support for networking, experimenting and learning</p> <p>3.2 Enhance local participation in co-innovation processes</p> <p>3.3 Strengthen learning at EU level</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>[3.1.] Joint learning at local, national, international level is effectively key to identify bottlenecks and opportunities for supporting and/or scaling relevant practices, innovations and policies for Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS). Several mechanisms could help such as the EU evaluation of interventions (ROM, etc.), the dialogue between EU Delegations and CSOs, private sector, public sector in the design of Multi-Annual Indicative Programmes (MIPs). We can also mention the diagnosis of SAFS in about 50 countries carried out in 2021/2022 with the use of participatory methods (consultation, workshops). In some countries it paved the way for national roadmaps for SAFS. The next programme on SAFS (CAST-SPI: Catalysing Agricultural System Transformation-science Policy Interface) with AGRINATURA and FAO will provide more opportunities for joint-learning at country and international level. The recommendation regarding the follow-up, application, and scaling of relevant innovations in agri-food policies, regulations, services, or practices far beyond their introduction date is relevant but remain a challenge. The global M&E systems recently put in place for the DeSIRA initiative is an example of what can be done.</p> <p>[3.2.] We fully agree with the recommendation. That's the reason why INTPA increases its emphasis on agroecological approaches based on technical and social principles. The social principles emphasize the co-construction process of innovation and the participation of local actors in the planning, implementation and evaluation of interventions. However, it remains a challenge. EUDs are encouraged to adopt agroecological approaches when SAFS are a priority area. The last</p>

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	<p>communication on fertilisers (November 2022) produced in this context of food crisis makes clear this need to support agroecological practices (and to make better use of fertilisers). Specific support to EUD is provided when it is required but certainly with a need to scale/intensify this support. We can also mention the DeSIRA Lift intervention aiming at supporting DeSIRA projects to truly develop fair and efficient multistakeholder approaches to support innovation by making use both of scientific and local knowledge.</p> <p>[3.3.] Learn from EU and EU partners successful experiences on how to better support food system stakeholders in achieving sustainable agri-food system outcomes is effectively key. The HARDs group is an option but it is insufficient to achieve this objective. Other platforms /networks involving EU and Member States (MSs) could be key to document and learn from experiences and finally share lessons. We can mention the DeSIRA platform or EIARD with EU MSs. Other platforms/networks with MS and other actors could provide opportunities to learn (Food crisis network, Gain, coalition on agroecology, etc.). To feed this learning process and support decisions, we need specific tools such as DeSIRA LIFT to support R&I interventions, VCA4D to analyse and support decision regarding value chains, CAST-SPI (new intervention) to analyse food systems and help design policies. However, some challenges remain and need further actions (i) to strengthen the capacities of EUD to make use of such knowledge to better design and monitor interventions, (ii) to strengthen the dialogue with partner countries to support such processes especially in countries where participation of local actors and multistakeholder approaches are still not a priority.</p>