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Synthesis Report – Volume II

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Evaluation of the European Union support to sustainable agri-food systems in Partner Countries (2014-2020)

Synthesis Report (Volume II)

The report consists of three volumes:

Volume I – Main report

1. Introduction
2. Policy and Institutional Framework
3. Methodology of the evaluation
4. Main findings
5. Conclusions

Volume II – Case study notes

1. Cambodia
2. Colombia
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4. Kenya
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Case study note – Cambodia

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Introduction

This case study report does not constitute a separate evaluation of European Union (EU) support in Cambodia or its situation with regard to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS). It presents country-related findings relevant to the overall Evaluation Questions (EQ) and feeds into the main evaluation report of the Evaluation of the EU Support to SAFS to which is attached as an annex.

Context

Main challenges in Sustainable Agri-Food Systems

Cambodia is a South-East Asian country with a population of 16.7 million people, most of which live in rural areas. Thanks to its garment exports and tourism, Cambodia's economy has grown at a very rapid pace since 1995 (on average 7.6% annually), with **the country reaching lower middle-income status in 2015**. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita increased more than fivefold over the last twenty years, contributing to a fall in national poverty from 50% of Cambodians to 13.5% between 2003-2014. The poor live overwhelmingly in rural areas.¹

Food security indicators reflect the dynamics seen in other fast-growing developing countries. In 2001, almost a quarter of Cambodians were undernourished, but this went down to a little more than 6% in 2019. Stunting in children almost halved from 58% in 1996 to 32% in 2014. Prevalence of anaemia in women of childbearing age, stayed stable at around 45% for the last two decades. Overweight among adults doubled from 10% in 1990 to 22% in 2016.²

Cereals, mainly rice, delivered almost 70% of the dietary energy in Cambodian diets, more so than the regional average of 60%. **Cambodians are some of the most prolific consumers of fish in the world:** fish consumption almost doubled in the last twenty years and provides about 70% of Cambodians' intake of animal protein. With diets rich in rice and fish, Cambodians eat less fruit and vegetables than the rest of South-Eastern Asia and the rest of the world.³

The agricultural sector delivers a fifth of the country's GDP: crops deliver about half of agricultural value creation, fisheries a quarter, and livestock and forestry a combined 20%. Being endowed with an abundance of natural resources for food production such as land, water (notably the Mekong and Tonle Sap Lake), and a favourable climate, there is potential to increase agricultural production and rural livelihoods.⁴ A third of Cambodians are employed in the agricultural sector, which is much lower than in 2000 when agriculture delivered 73% of employment. Still, the value-added per Cambodian worker in agriculture is just a third of the rest of South-Eastern Asia. Fisheries provide livelihood options to 30% of Cambodians, with the country's inland fishery production being one of the largest and most productive in the world.⁵

Cambodia is considered one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change impacts such as floods and droughts, which present a major threat to agricultural livelihoods. Drought could be particularly impactful on the productivity of Cambodia's fisheries and its rain-fed rice production, which are vital sources of employment and nutrition.⁶ Hydropower development and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing are some of the threats to the environment of the Cambodian food system: In 2020, increases in hydropower production up the Mekong River was seen as threatening fisheries.⁷ Because of IUU fishing, which depletes fish stocks and destroys marine habitats, **the EU bans import of captured fish from Cambodia** (a so-called 'red card') since 2014. Only two other countries – Comoros and St. Vincent and the Grenadines – have such a red card. Managing and monitoring the many small-scale fishers are seen as particularly challenging.

The Prime Minister has been in power since 1985, with his party winning all seats in the National Assembly in 2018. Because of human rights concerns, the EU partially withdrew Cambodia from its 'Everything But Arms' trade arrangement in 2020. It was the first time the EU withdrew an Everything But Arms status.⁸ Human rights concerns linked to land disputes were one of the reasons for the partial withdrawal. This withdrawal did not impact agricultural exports of Cambodia to the EU much, but particularly impacted garments and footwear, which represent most of Cambodia's exports to the EU.

¹ World Bank (2022): World Bank Open Data.

² World Bank (2022): World Bank Open Data.

³ FAO (2022): FAOSTAT statistical database; Global Burden of Disease (2019): Global Burden of Disease study 2019.

⁴ FAO (2021): Cambodia at a glance.

⁵ FAO (2022): FAOSTAT statistical database.

⁶ World Bank, Asian Development Bank (2021): Climate Risk Country Profile: Cambodia.

⁷ Eyster, B. (2020): Science Shows Chinese Dams Are Devastating the Mekong.

⁸ EC (2020): Cambodia loses duty-free access to the EU market over human rights concerns.

Policy framework and main actors

Policy framework: Cambodia's overarching socio-economic policy agenda for 2013-2018 was set by the **Rectangular Strategy (RS) Phase III**, which aimed to address Cambodia's sustainable development issues, as well as key challenges and opportunities to achieve upper-middle income status by 2030 and high-income status by 2050. The RS III objectives focused on sustainable, inclusive, equitable and resilient economic growth, which was expected to be achieved through, first, promotion of the agricultural sector, followed by infrastructure development. Achieving these required reforms of governance, improving the legal and judicial functioning, and public administration change.⁹ **Strengthening the public institutions was the core of the RS III.** Prioritised in the RS III is the attempt by the Government of Cambodia (GoC) to implement simultaneously three large cross-cutting public sector reforms: decentralization and deconcentration, public financial management, and public administration. The reforms are highly interdependent and are mutually reinforcing.¹⁰ The successor to RS III, the RS Phase IV, covers the goals of growth, employment, equity and efficiency for the period 2018-2023.¹¹

The National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2014-2018 operationalised the RS III, which included policy actions targeting the availability of, access to, utilisation of and stability of the food supply. To achieve the food security goals of RS III, the GoC launched a dedicated National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) strategy in 2014. Actions under the Strategy are sectoral in nature, with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Fisheries (MAFF) in the driving seat. Other major ministries involved are the Ministries of Health (MoH), and Economy and Finance (MEF).¹² The Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries (SPFF) 2010-2019 described how Cambodia wanted to develop its extensive fisheries sector in line with its NSDP, to guide donor investments, and to enhance integration of the sector. Human resources are most needed to implement the SPFF, followed by budget and funding.¹³ The SPFF was updated in 2015 for the period 2015-2024, which currently constitutes the principal public policy framework for the fisheries sector and reconfirms the need for public sector capacity building, and links the proposed objectives to the Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁴ **In general, Cambodia's agricultural (and fisheries) sector has suffered from weak governance** with unclear boundaries between public and private sector. Compliance and enforcement bodies were absent, as well as a lacking extension service.¹⁵

National actors: At least twelve ministries and government agencies are active in promoting FSN, but the MAFF, MEF and MoH are the most important ones. The Fisheries Administration (FiA), which is part of the MAFF, is the leading government agency charged with the management and development of Cambodia's fisheries. At the national level, the institution responsible for coordinating FSN-related policies, strategies, action plans, programmes and projects among the relevant ministries and departments is the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development.¹⁶ The MEF has taken an active role in shaping the policy framework of the fisheries sector and has a growing influence in shaping the planning for the sector.¹⁷ Other actors in Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS) actors include:

- Private sector actors, like (e.g., fish processing businesses);
- Farmer and fisheries organisations at the community level;
- Universities and Research and Innovation (R&I) actors engaged in SAFS-related research;
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Multilateral and bilateral actors: Net inflows of aid to Cambodia increased to USD 1 billion in 2018.¹⁸ **At the start of the evaluation period, the EU and its Member States were by far the largest granters of Official Development Assistance to Cambodia.**¹⁹ Other important donor countries were Japan, USA, Australia, South Korea, and Norway. Between 2021-2023, Team Europe countries²⁰ plan to distribute about EUR 1.3

⁹ Government of Cambodia (2013): Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency Phase III.

¹⁰ World Bank (2018): Cambodia's cross-cutting reforms: public financial management, decentralization and public administration reforms.

¹¹ Government of Cambodia (2018): Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency: building the Foundation Toward Realizing the Cambodia Vision 2050 Phase IV.

¹² OECD (2016): A territorial approach to food security and nutrition policy: The case of Cambodia.

¹³ Government of Cambodia (2010): The Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries: 2010-2019; Government of Cambodia (2015): The Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries: Update for 2015-2024.

¹⁴ Government of Cambodia (2015): The Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries: Update for 2015-2024; FAO (2021): ROM report of the FAO Complementary Support to the Cambodia Programme for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the Fisheries Sector: Capture component (CAPFISH Capture).

¹⁵ OECD (2016): A territorial approach to food security and nutrition policy: The case of Cambodia.

¹⁶ OECD (2016): A territorial approach to food security and nutrition policy: The case of Cambodia.

¹⁷ Landell Mills, EU (2021): External assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy, for 2021 and 2022 Budget Support payments: Eligibility assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy for EU budget support payment in 2021.

¹⁸ World Bank (2022): World Bank Open Data.

¹⁹ EU (2014): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2020.

²⁰ In the MIP 2021-2027, this includes the Czech Republic, EU, the European Investment Bank, France, Germany, Ireland and Sweden.

billion as development assistance in Cambodia. While other countries, such as Japan, are forecasted to distribute more development assistance than any other EU country, the collective disbursement of the EU is substantial.²¹ Important multilateral donors are the Asian Development Bank Special funds, the Global Fund, and EU Institutions.²² International organisations, like the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), are active as well in supporting Cambodia's development objectives, for example by supporting the FiA and food safety in the fish value chains (VC).

EU-Cambodia cooperation framework

The Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2014-2020 set out the EU's cooperation with the Kingdom of Cambodia for the period under evaluation. **Support for agriculture (including fisheries) and natural resource management (NRM) were the first focal sector for development cooperation between the EU and Cambodia and received the largest budget share of the EU's focal sectors** (EUR 144 million, or 35% of the total budget). The EU also supported education and skills, and good governance (respectively 34% and 29% of the total budget). These focal sectors were in line with Cambodia's RS III and the NSDP, as well as with Cambodia's Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategy. The EU chose agriculture/fisheries and NRM as a focal sector for Cambodia because it had already well-established EU cooperation activities, experience and lessons learned from past bilateral and thematic programmes (and had also acted as lead facilitator among development partners for dialogue with the GoC in fisheries), while also being in line with the European Commission's (EC) 'Agenda for Change'. Within the agriculture and NRM focal sector, the EU expected results in the enabling environment of agriculture/fisheries and NRM-related sectors, stronger VCs, and empowered local communities to participate in conservation and the management of agriculture and natural resources. An EU prioritisation of human rights, environmental protection and trade facilitation was evident in its choice of interventions. Through the Technical Working Group (TWG) and other policy dialogues, the EU aims to engage the GoC.²³ The TWG for Fisheries provides a forum for policy and programmatic dialogue between government and development partners, has been co-chaired by the EU and the FiA, and has taken a major role in developing the SPF 2015-2024.²⁴

Support to fisheries as a building block for a more sustainable Cambodian food system features strongly in the new MIP 2021-2027. The priority areas for EU-Cambodia development cooperation are 'Green Growth and Decent Jobs', 'Education and Skills Development', and 'Good Governance'. The first priority has a specific focus on SAFS and selected value chains of the export industry. Support to SAFS will build on the previous MIP's and ongoing programmes on fisheries and aquaculture. The new MIP reiterates the fisheries sector's high potential for further growth and jobs, especially in relation to the national and regional markets and access to several regional and bilateral free trade agreements.²⁵

Through joint programming, the EU and its European development partners, most of the EU Member States (MS),²⁶ adopted a joint European Development Cooperation Strategy (EDCS) for Cambodia for the period 2014-18. Within the EUR 1.4 billion committed within the EDCS, the largest donors are France with a commitment of EUR 557 million, followed by the EU with EUR 471 million, Germany with EUR 169 million, and Sweden with EUR 112 million. Between 2014-2019, cumulative disbursement through the EDCS was EUR 1.3 billion.²⁷

Focus of the case study – EU SAFS support

This case study is based on a sample of interventions that have been selected by the evaluation team in consultation with the EUD²⁸ from the complete SAFS inventory (portfolio) of the EU in Cambodia for the period

²¹ EU (2021): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027.

²² Aidflows (2022): Aidflows database.

²³ EU (2014): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2020.)

²⁴ Stakeholder interviews.

²⁵ EU (2021): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027.

²⁶ For the period under evaluation, these development partners were Belgium, Czech Republic, the EU, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

²⁷ EU (2019): European Development Cooperation Strategy for Cambodia 2014-2019: Second monitoring report for the period 2016-2018. Original amount in the report was USD 1.5 billion; converted to EUR at the June 2019 EUR/USD exchange rate. According to EU (2014): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2020, priority areas for the EDCS were social development (focus on education and health), sustainable and equitable economic growth (agriculture, food security, rural development, and trade facilitation), infrastructure (including electricity transmission and distribution, water supply, roads, irrigation schemes, sanitation and drainage), and governance and cross-cutting issues (public financial management, public administration reform, sub-national democratic development, human rights, gender equality, climate change, and civil society development).

²⁸ Sampling criteria include: focus on fisheries; the variety of EU funding instruments; type of interventions; volume of interventions; variety of interventions at different levels (regional, national, county and community); variety of interventions

2014-2020. The full inventory was provided by DG INTPA and is summarised in Annex 3. It includes decisions and contracts.

The case study focuses on EU support to the fisheries sector – the largest SAFS sub-sector in the country. Among the six countries selected as in-depth case studies for the global evaluation of EU support SAFS Cambodia provides a unique opportunity to study the fisheries sector in depth. This case study thus does not provide an exhaustive assessment of all EU support to SAFS in Cambodia during the evaluation period but focuses on the main activities in fisheries to inform the global evaluation report. Other SAFS interventions of the EU in Cambodia, such as agriculture and nutrition, have not been the central object of this case study but have only been briefly considered in the analysis of the overall SAFS strategy.

The sampled interventions together (EUR 69.5 million) represent more than one half of the EU SAFS budget in Cambodia. Within this sample, the most important EU programme is the *CAPFISH-Capture Cambodia Programme for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the Fisheries Sector: Capture component* (“CAPFISH Capture”). The sample includes the three main components of CAPFISH Capture, as well as two interventions from other programmes (Table 1).

Table 1: Case study sample of interventions

<i>Interventions</i>	<i>Budget (EUR million)</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Funding instrument</i>	<i>Implementing partner</i>
CAPFISH Capture: Budget Support to Fisheries Sector Reform	35.00	2019	DCI-geographic	GoC
CAPFISH Capture: FAO Complementary Support (FAO-CAPFISH)	17.00	2019	DCI-geographic	FAO
CAPFISH Capture: Post-Harvest Fisheries Development (UNIDO-CAPFISH)	16.00	2019	DCI-geographic	UNIDO
Strengthening capacity of fishers' network and NGO coalition towards fisheries resources sustainability and ownership in Mekong and Tonle Sap regions (SFIn-NGO)	1.00	2015	DCI-thematic	Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT)
Securing access to and control over land and natural resources for vulnerable community fisheries in the coastal areas of Cambodia (SECURE-LNRM)	0.50	2019	EIDHR	ActionAid

Budget and years refer to contracted amounts and years of contracting, respectively.

DCI = Development Cooperation Instrument

EIDHR = European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

Source: EU FNSSA Database provided by DG INTPA.

Data collection methods. The case study is based on a review of the documents, as well as key informant interviews and a field visit conducted in Cambodia in March 2022.²⁹

Design

Overview of EU support to SAFS

In the period 2014 to 2020, the EU SAFS portfolio in Cambodia had a total funding (contracted amounts) of EUR 131.95 million, according to the FNSSA database shared by DG INTPA.

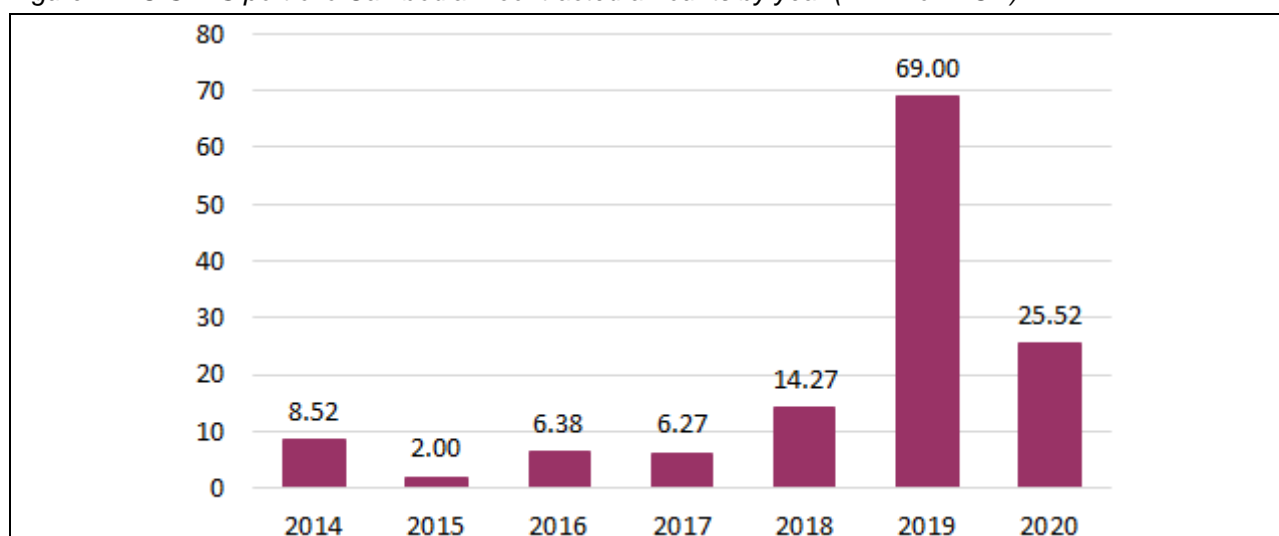
Funding has mainly been provided through the EU’s geographic Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI; EUR 125.25 million). Smaller shares of the portfolio were contracted through the thematic DCI (EUR 4.14 million) programmes), and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR; EUR 2.57 million).

More than 82% of the total funding was contracted only in the last three years (2018-2020) of the evaluation period (2014-2020). This, together with the Covid-19 pandemic affecting the implementation of interventions from March 2020, explains why the interventions considered in this case study had not yet implemented all activities and achieved all results by 2021/2022. See Section on Effects of EU Support for details.

that appear to have adopted a SAFS approach and other interventions based on preliminary assessment; variety of different implementation partners, with a preference for selected EU MS and Rome-based Agencies (RBAs).

²⁹ See Annex 1 for the list of people interviewed.

Figure 1: EU SAFS portfolio Cambodia – contracted amounts by year (in million EUR)



Source: EU FNSSA Database provided by DG INTPA.

The EU SAFS portfolio has a strong focus on the fisheries sub-sector, with support to public governance (for example budget support for reform of the fisheries sector) and land right and land access interventions. The EU SAFS portfolio has fewer interventions compared to other case study countries of the global SAFS evaluation. The largest intervention in the portfolio, **CAPFISH-Capture**, has a budget of EUR 84.11 million (almost two thirds of the total SAFS budget) and is the largest externally funded fisheries programme in the world.³⁰ It has three main components (all initiated in 2019):

- **Budget support** for the reform of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy, which includes a transfer of up to EUR 35 million into the Treasury account if disbursement conditions are met, monitoring of achievements of the reform objectives agreed with the GoC, policy dialogue with the GoC about fight against IUU fishing, revision of the legal and regulatory framework, etc.;
- **Complementary support by FAO** for marine and inland fisheries management, conservation, control and surveillance, in the form of capacity development to central and subnational administrations as well as concerned communities and their networks; and
- **Post-harvest fisheries development support by UNIDO** which includes, among other activities, technical and financial support to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); support to research and development; technical assistance to the competent authority for food safety of fish/fishery products; improvement of the legal and regulatory framework, etc.³¹

The **SFIN-NGO** intervention (2016-2019) supported fisheries-related NGOs and community fisheries to increase their capacity to engage in regular dialogue with national and local authorities on fisheries management, and to enhance their networking capacities and lesson sharing. The intervention is implemented by FACT.³²

The **SECURE-LNRM** intervention (2019-2022), implemented by the NGO ActionAid, promotes equitable access to and control over land and natural resources for vulnerable groups by building capacity and empowering communities for NRM and multi-stakeholder dialogue.³³

Other interventions of the EU SAFS portfolio in Cambodia include the programme *Promotion of Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in the Agricultural Sector: Fisheries and Livestock*, and selected contracts under the *Asian Investment Facility*. The first programme comprised three components: (i) support to the FiA in the implementation of the SPFF 2010-2019; (ii) sustainable small scale livestock production and animal health; and (iii) partnership farming. Given time and resource constraints, and the fact that relatively fewer documents (and no contact in Cambodia) have been available for this programme, it has not been included in the case study. Moreover, the two contracts under the Asian Investment Facility (water resources management and rural infrastructure development) were not specific to fisheries and have hence not been covered in the case study either.

³⁰ Stakeholder interview.

³¹ EU (2018): Action Document for Cambodia Programme for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the Fisheries Sector: Capture component.

³² ActionAid (2021): Interim narrative report: Securing access to and control over land and natural resources for vulnerable community fisheries in the coastal areas of Cambodia 2020-2021.

³³ FACT (2019): Final Narrative Report of the project Strengthening capacity of Fishers' Network and NGO Coalition towards fisheries resources sustainability and ownership in Mekong and Tonle Sap regions (SFIN-NGO) 2016-2019.

Figure 2 below shows the main categories of **key implementation partners** of EU support in Cambodia. More than half (55%) of the EU support in the evaluation period was contracted through **public sectors institutions**, and one quarter through **multilateral organisations** such as FAO and UNIDO.

Figure 2: EU SAFS portfolio Cambodia – distribution of contracted amounts by channel



Source: EU FNSSA Database provided by DG INTPA.

Specifically, key implementation partners include national public sector and other key national actors, smallholder producers and agribusinesses, communities, and global actors. More specifically, the main partners are national ministries (in CAPFISH Capture, mainly MAFF and MEF); international organisations (e.g., FAO and UNIDO); development agencies such as the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ); and NGOs like the FACT, Oxfam International, and ActionAid. The EU support includes interventions targeted at the national level (through budget and governance support), as well as interventions that seek to empower local community actors. Direct beneficiaries of EU support are government ministries and departments (such as the MAFF and FiA), RI& actors, private sector organisations (e.g., fish processors), fishing communities and farmers' organisations, and NGO networks. Women and youth are often explicitly targeted in the EU's support to local actors.

Quality of design & EU's role in promoting SAFS (JC2.1)

Integrated approach

The EU's strategy and portfolio of SAFS-related support to Cambodia is integrated with Cambodian Government priorities, links with EU global development priorities, and features nutrition and the environment as cross-cutting issues. The EU's strategy and portfolio of SAFS-related interventions is aligned with development priorities identified by the GoC in the RS III, including development of human resources, trade facilitation, further development of agriculture, and strengthening governance and capacity of public institutions.³⁴ The strategy links with the EU global development priorities of human rights and good governance, and inclusive and sustainable growth as outlined in the Agenda for Change. Nutrition and support for the environment are cross-cutting issues.³⁵ The portfolio also addresses land tenure insecurity, sector policy support, rural infrastructure development, resilience building in fisheries communities, civil society support, COVID-19 recovery, as well as agricultural production support. Potential linkages are not only pursued within the SAFS-portfolio in Cambodia, but also with EU interventions with a regional scope, for example, EU support to the Mekong River Commission.³⁶

There is evidence that the EU pursued an integrated approach in SAFS-support. EU SAFS support in Cambodia, with its focus on fisheries governance and development, and land tenures security has many aspects of integrated development. The EU decided on a restricted number of sectors in order to increase its impact.³⁷ **The integrated approach is reflected in the wide selection of entry points in fisheries development,** with strong entry points being governance capacity building and strengthening regulatory

³⁴ Government of Cambodia (2013): Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency Phase III; EU (2014): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2020.

³⁵ EU (2014): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2020.

³⁶ FAO (2021): ROM report of the FAO Complementary Support to the Cambodia Programme for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the Fisheries Sector: Capture component (CAPFISH Capture); stakeholder interview.

³⁷ EU (2014): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2020.

frameworks, and other entry points being community empowerment and supporting multi-stakeholder networks. **The CAPFISH-Capture programme is an example of a large, holistic programme with integration between interventions**, which builds on previous EU support³⁸ and complements other EU support.³⁹ Still other interventions had synergies in the implementation, but this synergy was not designed as such.⁴⁰

There is some evidence that the EU pursued a limited systems approach to the governance of SAFS in Cambodia during the period under evaluation, with several components of a system approach in place. The design of interventions often includes SAFS-related outcomes, such as sustainable production, adequate diets, climate change resilience and environmental protection, while working with a diversity of actors. The focus on building governance capacity in several SAFS-related interventions can be a leverage point for system change. However, a missing overarching food system strategy and the high focus on one, albeit important, sector limits the strategic linkages of the portfolio to the whole Cambodian food system.

Integration of gender equality

The EU mainstreams gender equality in its support, with support being broadly gender-sensitive. Both the MIP and the EDCS have the ambition to mainstream gender in all focal sector programmes and throughout all development cooperation programmes and projects.⁴¹ The EU and MS translated their commitments to gender equality in Cambodia through the implementation of the joint European Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2016-2020. The EU has appointed a Gender Focal Person within their agency responsible for facilitating the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality issues in the programme activities, and promotes, jointly with the MS, gender equality in policy dialogue.⁴² In its programming, the EU support policies aimed at advancing gender equality, such as updates of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy in the Fisheries Sector and the Action Plan for Gender Equality Promotion and Child Labor Elimination in the Fisheries Sector (2016-2020).⁴³ The CAPFISH-Capture programme has its own gender specialist ensuring implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme's gender action plan.⁴⁴ The EU's support to land rights in the SECURE-LNRM intervention has a strong component of providing gender equality awareness training to communities, together with support to representation and participation of women in land and NRM management.⁴⁵

EU policy coherence at country level

Trade is addressed through the UNIDO-CAPFISH intervention, which seeks to enhance the capacities of enterprises to comply with international standards and market requirements, in order to expand to regional and international markets. The harmonisation of national food safety standards to EU standards is a step to allowing Cambodian fish products onto European markets.⁴⁶ **Environmental aspects** are integrated in interventions aimed at the national and community level. The FAO-CAPFISH intervention supports the capacity of FiA toward IUU-compliant fishing and enhance environmental management, while the SECURE-LNRM intervention builds the capacity of communities and activists for sustainable NRM management. Linkages to **consumer protection** were found in the UNIDO-CAPFISH intervention as it introduces a voluntary quality scheme with a seal signalling certified food safe fish to protect consumers' **health** and provides training on food safety to VC actors that seek to comply with the quality scheme. The intervention also plants to enhance consumer awareness about food safety. **Research** is supported through both the UNIDO-CAPFISH and FAO-CAPFISH interventions, which seek to enable more effective and relevant fisheries research and support scientific institutions engaged in research on food processing and food safety. Linkages to **animal** welfare,

³⁸ Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in the Agriculture sector: Livestock and Fisheries, 2014-2018.

³⁹ EU (2018): Action Document for Cambodia Programme for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the Fisheries Sector: Capture component; FAO (2021): ROM report of the FAO Complementary Support to the Cambodia Programme for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the Fisheries Sector: Capture component (CAPFISH Capture).

⁴⁰ For example, the team involved with the SFiN-NGO intervention provided input to the new National Fisheries Law, whose development is supported by the FAO-CAPFISH intervention.

⁴¹ EC (2014): European Development Cooperation Strategy for Cambodia 2014-2018; EU (2014): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2020.

⁴² EU (2019): European Development Cooperation Strategy for Cambodia 2014-2019: Second monitoring report for the period 2016-2018.

⁴³ FAO, EU (2021): Annual Report of the complementary support to the Cambodia programme for sustainable and inclusive growth in the fisheries sector: Capture component (CAPFISH-Capture) 2020-2021; MAFF (2019): Synthesis Report of Implementation of the Sector Policy Support of the Programme: Promotion of inclusive and sustainable growth in the Agricultural Sector: Fisheries and Livestock 2013-2018.

⁴⁴ UNIDO (2021): ROM report of the CAPFISH Capture - Post Harvest Fisheries Development.

⁴⁵ ActionAid (2021): Interim narrative report: Securing access to and control over land and natural resources for vulnerable community fisheries in the coastal areas of Cambodia 2020-2021.

⁴⁶ UNIDO (2021): ROM report of the CAPFISH Capture - Post Harvest Fisheries Development; stakeholder interview.

specifically promoting animal health, and energy, namely renewable energy in the VCs, are strengthened by the policy reform in the fisheries sector, which received budget support.⁴⁷

Transformative potential

The EU's SAFS support has transformational potential, with catalytic impact depending on substantial spillovers to other sectors. Studies conducted by both the GoC and the EU highlight the need to support governance improvements in Cambodia in order to achieve development changes at scale. The EU contributes to this through several interventions aimed for building governance capacity and enacting policy reform related to SAFS. The focus on building governance capacity can be regarded as a leverage point for system change. However, the EU has a high focus on the comprehensive development of one sector, namely fisheries. While the fisheries sector is very important in terms of livelihoods and contributions to Cambodian diets, supporting transformative systems change of the Cambodian food system would require substantial spillovers to other sectors that strengthen the interventions' outcomes.

Active linkages with EU MS (JC2.1)

The EU and its Member States (MS) have been well linked in Cambodia in terms of developing joint strategies and taking joint positions. Links in programmatic collaboration were weaker in the evaluation period although this is expected to change in the 2021-2027 period.

The EU played a leading role in coordinating EU and MS support in Cambodia through its joint strategy for 2014-2018 (extended until 2020), and through dialogue facilitation with the GoC. At first, linkages between EU and its MS involved joint analysis and information sharing of EU and MS' development cooperation programming. Regular formal European development coordination meetings were facilitated and chaired by the EUD.⁴⁸ This led to common positions on certain topics of concern, which could be discussed by the EU and MS with high-level government officials through regular development partners-government dialogues. The EU has coordinated a monthly informal meeting with development partners as well, which has provided a forum for discussion on procedure, policy and technical issues. These informal meetings have continued beyond the evaluation period and have expanded in membership.⁴⁹ Programmatic collaboration between EU development partners in the period 2014-2020 was more limited, as development partners still had their own development strategy in Cambodia that was not substantially altered by the EDCS, and partners had different programming cycles. One example of closer joint programming are the CAPFISH-Capture and CAPFISH-Aquaculture programmes, where the EU (Capture) and AFD (Aquaculture) programmes complement each other by targeting different segments of the same sector.⁵⁰ The cooperation between the EU and MS in Cambodia were used as a pilot and as an example for their cooperation in other countries.⁵¹

The EU and MS plan to work more together in the coming period through Team Europe Initiatives and a successor to the EDCS 2014-2018. The successor EDCS is being drafted by the EU and MS in consultation with the GoC and concerned stakeholders. According to the MIP 2021-2027, the new joint strategy is expected increase alignment between the EU and MS, replacing some of the EU's development partners bilateral development cooperation strategies. GIZ, for example, will use the new joint strategy as their own development strategy for Cambodia, without developing a separate strategy.⁵² Embassies that are not active in development cooperation can now join the monthly informal EU-development partner meetings, in order to share development-related information more widely.⁵³ In the new MIP, the EU has included SAFS as a specific focus of its first priority "Green Growth and Decent Jobs". The EU will focus in this regard on sustainable production, food safety, and climate resilience, building on the previous MIP and its ongoing programme on fisheries and aquaculture.⁵⁴ At the national level, the EU is a driver and facilitator of development partners' coordination and policy dialogue with the GoC. EU and partner coordination has strengthened considerably through joint positions, strategy and programming with the EU, several MS, and Switzerland. This coordination has strengthened the EU's engagement with the GoC and allowed for more sensitive issues, such as human rights concerns, being brought forward and discussed with high-ranking government officials during an annual Joint Committee meeting. The issue of land evictions, for example, was brought into this meeting. There is a general

⁴⁷ Landell Mills, EU (2021): External assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy, for 2021 and 2022 Budget Support payments: Eligibility assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy for EU budget support payment in 2021.

⁴⁸ EU (2014): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2020.

⁴⁹ Stakeholder interview.

⁵⁰ EU (2018): Action Document for Cambodia Programme for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the Fisheries Sector: Capture component.

⁵¹ Stakeholder interview.

⁵² Stakeholder interview.

⁵³ Stakeholder interview.

⁵⁴ EU (2021): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027.

impression that EU and development partners are more integrated and organised than the subsequent line ministries on SAFS-related topics.⁵⁵

Effects of EU support

National agri-food systems governance (EQ2/JC2.2 & JC2.3)

Strengthening governance (JC 2.2)

Strengthening national and local governance in the fisheries sectors has been a major objective of EU support in Cambodia. It has relied on a wide range of entry points and actors, such as the development of legal and regulatory frameworks with government agencies; capacity strengthening for governance with public, private and NGO partners at different levels; land rights for fisheries communities; and multi-stakeholder support in the enabling environment of the sector.

The clearest signals of transformation in terms of governance are linked to EU support to the national government in updating legal and regulatory frameworks, such as the new Fisheries Law and the National Action Plan for Inspection and Control of Quality and Safety of Fish and Fishery Products. The EU has supported the rapidly evolving policy framework governing the fisheries sector, which has been part of a broader reform of the policy environment in agriculture.⁵⁶

To receive the variable tranches of **CAPFISH budget support, the GoC has to comply with certain conditions,** such as sufficient own budget allocation and **adoption of adequate regulatory frameworks and other measures to enhance governance of the fisheries sector.** Raising the commitment of the government to the fisheries sector has been partly successful, even though the response to COVID-19 hampered some budget allocation to fisheries.⁵⁷ The delayed approval of working plans and budget by the MEF impeded the achievement of some targets and resulted in the loss of funding from some variable tranches. Overall, government funding remains low compared to the food security and livelihood importance of the fisheries sector. Nevertheless, *"Since 2019, the policy framework features a rapid structuration and increasing relevance to the sector"*.⁵⁸

Between 2019 and 2021, EU support prioritised the development of the updated Fisheries Law, mainly through the FAO-CAPFISH intervention (and with the UNIDO-CAPFISH intervention also providing support). The updated Fisheries Law guides Cambodia's fisheries towards sustainable development, good governance, transparency, and participation by decentralising management from central to subnational entities; enhancing sustainable management and protection and conservation of fisheries resources; and developing new procedures against illegal fishing activities.⁵⁹ FAO-CAPFISH supported the MAFF/FiA in the drafting process of the new law. One of the last hurdles in the draft was related to IUU fishing, a major focal area of the FAO-CAPFISH intervention that is ultimately expected to lift the EU important ban (red card) for fish.⁶⁰ The updated Fisheries Law is also relevant for the UNIDO-CAPFISH intervention since it describes the measures for the management and control of food safety in the fisheries sector, such as health certificates and registration of fisheries business operations, laboratory testing and development of food safety regulation in accordance with international standards and regulations.⁶¹ With the support of these interventions, the law has been completed by the FiA and officially sent to the MAFF in late June 2021, and is expected to enter into force at the end of 2022.⁶² The submission to the MAFF was delayed by complications from the COVID-19 pandemic and the appointment of a new FIA Director-General.⁶³

Besides co-drafting the new Fisheries Law, **other support of FAO-CAPFISH to combat IUU** include strengthening of FiA's capacity to improve compliance with fishing regulations and protected fisheries through the SMART-based fisheries monitoring system, FiA staff training (95 FiA staff trained by 2021), and support to the development of the National Plan for Control and Inspection for Inland Fisheries to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU-fishing, as well as in the implementation of the National Plan of Action to Combat IUU Fishing.

⁵⁵ Stakeholder interviews.

⁵⁶ UNIDO (2021): ROM report of the CAPFISH Capture - Post Harvest Fisheries Development.

⁵⁷ Stakeholder interviews.

⁵⁸ Landell Mills, EU (2021): External assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy, for 2021 and 2022 Budget Support payments: Eligibility assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy for EU budget support payment in 2021.

⁵⁹ Landell Mills, EU (2021): External assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy, for 2021 and 2022 Budget Support payments: Eligibility assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy for EU budget support payment in 2021.

⁶⁰ FAO (2021): ROM report of the FAO Complementary Support to the Cambodia Programme for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the Fisheries Sector: Capture component (CAPFISH Capture).

⁶¹ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2021): Progress Report of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project 2020-2021.

⁶² Stakeholder interview.

⁶³ Landell Mills, EU (2021): External assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy, for 2021 and 2022 Budget Support payments: Eligibility assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy for EU budget support payment in 2021.

However, the reforms are not yet sufficient to withdraw the red card notice. **Overall, the observed effects of strengthening national governance for IUU-compliant fisheries are still limited because the FAO project started only in 2019 and departed from a weak institutional framework and limited capacities of national actors.**

Other actions – beyond combatting IUU – that strengthen national SAFS governance taken by the FAO-CAPFISH intervention are supporting the FiA in the development a new five-year action plan for Gender Equality Promotion and Child Labour Elimination in the Fisheries Sector for the period 2021-2025. This includes supporting the FiA in gender and child labour assessments.⁶⁴ **Another entry point of EU support to enhanced fisheries governance has been the wider FiA human resource strategy under FAO-CAPFISH.** Since the fisheries sector was generally perceived as a less interesting career opportunity in Cambodia, the FiA faced difficulties in attracting and retaining trained staff, which lowered its institutional capability.⁶⁵ FAO support to FiA has thus focused on the development and implementation of a new human resource strategy at FiA that aims, inter alia, to attract better-trained staff and develop better job descriptions.⁶⁶ Further training and university programmes were set up, which seem to have resulted in FiA being able to attract more skilled people.⁶⁷ The intervention has also sought to enhance general institutional capacity by training FiA staff with management skills in line with Cambodia's public sector reforms.

Through the UNIDO-implemented CAPFISH component on post-harvest fisheries development (since 2019), EU support has started contributing to an upgraded regulatory and institutional system for food safety in the fisheries sector. The project document highlights that the national food safety control system is fragmented in structures, with different ministries (e.g., MAFF and MoH) ruling over the “farm to fork” continuum. While the Department of Fisheries and Post-Harvest Technologies and Quality (DFPTQ) of the MAFF's FiA is empowered as Competent Authority in post-harvest quality control, it has not been officially designed as such and thus has a limited legal basis. The capacities of human and financial resources at central (DFPTQ) and provincial levels, and of testing laboratories for food analysis, are inadequate, and existing standards and codes of practice for a range of fishery products and processes are also lacking or insufficient.

To strengthen national governance for food safety control in post-harvest fisheries, Output 1 of the UNIDO project has focused on enhancing “*the technical competence and sustainability of the Competent Authority and Official Control services*”.⁶⁸ **UNIDO supported the FiA in drafting the National Action Plan for Inspection and Control of Quality and Safety of Fish and Fishery Products (2020-2024),** which was approved in December 2020 and describes the **two-steps approach towards reaching EU food safety standards.**⁶⁹ The food safety inspection will initially focus on compliance with a national quality seal for fish and fishery products (Cambodia Quality Seal, CQS, developed in 2015). In the second phase, food safety standards and VCs will be upgraded to regional and global markets (including import authorization from the EU).⁷⁰ The National Action Plan has produced **some early signals of governance strengthening in post-harvest fisheries**, such as trainings conducted with various government and research institutions and testing laboratories, as well as a reported increase in inspections.

Like FAO-CAPFISH, the UNIDO component of CAPFISH is still at an early stage and activities were delayed due to COVID-19. **Most of the potential effects** of the (initiated or planned) institutional and regulatory updates **on governance of post-harvest fisheries have hence not materialized yet.** However, the intervention logic and planned activities of the project (including the identification of risks) provide a clear pathway to governance strengthening and a relatively high level of confidence that it will be achieved⁷¹ if the key assumptions hold.⁷² The MAFF has also shown interest in replicating the UNIDO approach to governance strengthening for food safety control in the agricultural sector⁷³, which could possibly lead to broader effects in the Cambodian food system.

⁶⁴ FAO, EU (2021): Annual Report of the complementary support to the Cambodia programme for sustainable and inclusive growth in the fisheries sector: Capture component (CAPFISH-Capture) 2020-2021.

⁶⁵ Stakeholder interview.

⁶⁶ The work on job descriptions for FiA is considered a pilot for the whole MAFF, which will eventually be extended to all ministries; FAO, EU (2021): Annual Report of the complementary support to the Cambodia programme for sustainable and inclusive growth in the fisheries sector: Capture component (CAPFISH-Capture) 2020-2021.

⁶⁷ Stakeholder interview.

⁶⁸ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2019): Project Document of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project.

⁶⁹ UNIDO (2021): ROM report of the CAPFISH Capture - Post Harvest Fisheries Development.

⁷⁰ Landell Mills, EU (2021): External assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy, for 2021 and 2022 Budget Support payments: Eligibility assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy for EU budget support payment in 2021; UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2019): Project Document of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project.

⁷¹ Evaluation team assessment and UNIDO (2021): ROM report of the CAPFISH Capture - Post Harvest Fisheries Development.

⁷² Such as government commitment and passing of the updated Fisheries Law.

⁷³ Stakeholder interview.

At subnational levels, EU support has increased the capacity of NGO and community networks to engage in fisheries governance. Building networks and advocacy was the primary goal between 2016-2019 of the EU funded SFiN-NGO intervention.⁷⁴ The networks were successful in advancing **more inclusive governance** by establishing collaboration with the FIA, MAFF, Ministry of the Environment and MEF, but also the Ministry of the Interior.⁷⁵ The collaboration led to more proactive and responsive engagement on fisheries resource management and IUU-infractions, and resulted in members from the NGO networks and community fisheries joining law enforcement patrols at fish conservation areas. The strengthened networks actively engaged in processes that were about improving national laws and policies. Members of the network contributed to the new national Fisheries Law and the Sub-Decree on Community Fisheries Management through convening several forums, meetings among networks' members, and joining FiA hosted forums and meetings. The networks put forwarded amendments to the new national Fisheries Law on the inclusion of communities and other stakeholders in fisheries resource management.⁷⁶ Lastly, the project helped FACT (a coalition of NGOs which was also the main implementing partner) to **establish an NGO platform**, which is still active in regularly bringing together fisheries NGOs after the SFiN-NGO intervention ended, and which continue to engage with building capacity of community fisheries to engage with stakeholders.⁷⁷

Finally, against a background of concerns over land rights and the protection of natural habitats in Cambodia, **the EU supports the empowerment of communities** through the EIDHR-funded *Securing access to and control over land and natural resources for vulnerable community fisheries in the coastal areas of Cambodia (Secure-LNRM)* intervention since 2019. Specifically, the intervention engages in capacity building and empowerment of communities and activists, and in building more effective communication channels between government, civil society, and private sector actors, including multi-sector dialogue and legislative reform.⁷⁸ **Land rights and NRM management are linked in this intervention** as community fisheries are supported as environmental 'custodians', with space for the representation and participation of women.⁷⁹ The implementation has been slowed down by COVID-19, among other factors. While it is too soon to assess the results of the project, with only around 20% of the target indicators achieved by 2021, **it can potentially contribute to broader SAFS integration.** The training of human rights defenders and communication campaigns, in combination with EU policy dialogue engagement⁸⁰, could create a combined top-down, bottom-up approach to the issue of land rights.

Enabling services ecosystem (JC 2.3)

The EU has supported the development of an enabling services ecosystem of the fisheries sector, especially in the post-harvest segment, by supporting the access to finance and business services, and R&I. It has adopted a comprehensive approach with multiple food system actors, entry points, and time horizons.

In post-harvest fisheries, the need for an enabling services ecosystem became evident from a UNIDO study on VC actors in two provinces, according to which the enterprises were "*traditional, fragmented, informal, producing under very unhygienic conditions, have improper labelling and/or packaging practices and with inefficient technology, all of which eventually results in low market competitiveness*".⁸¹ The UNIDO component of CAPFISH has aimed to facilitate access to financing and business services for VC actors (under Output 2: "*Enhanced private sector capacity to comply with international standards and market requirements relevant to the post-harvest fisheries*") and foster R&I (Output 3: "*Enhanced business competitiveness of post-harvest fisheries through innovation and research and development*").⁸² While some activities under the two outputs have been delayed due to COVID-19, there are already **clear signals that EU support through UNIDO contributes to a better enabling environment in the sector, both in terms of access to financing and business services for CV actors (interim signals) and R&I (early signals).**

Access to financing and business services in post-harvest fisheries: The UNIDO project launched a **co-investment facility (Value Chain Investment Support – VCIS)** in August 2021. The facility aims to support

⁷⁴ FACT (2019): Final Narrative Report of the project Strengthening capacity of Fishers' Network and NGO Coalition towards fisheries resources sustainability and ownership in Mekong and Tonle Sap regions (SFIn-NGO).

⁷⁵ The Ministry of the Interior is seen as a powerful actor given their supervision of subnational authorities.

⁷⁶ FACT (2019): Final Narrative Report of the project Strengthening capacity of Fishers' Network and NGO Coalition towards fisheries resources sustainability and ownership in Mekong and Tonle Sap regions (SFIn-NGO) 2016-2019.

⁷⁷ Stakeholder interview.

⁷⁸ ActionAid (2021): Interim narrative report: Securing access to and control over land and natural resources for vulnerable community fisheries in the coastal areas of Cambodia 2020-2021.

⁷⁹ Stakeholder interviews.

⁸⁰ Concerns related to land rights have been included in the EU's high-level engagements with the Cambodian Government.

⁸¹ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2021): Progress Report of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project 2020-2021.

⁸² UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2019): Project Document of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project.

eligible Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), especially women and youth, via technical assistance and equipment, to upgrade their business to meet food safety requirements. Successful applicants – 40 MSMEs have been selected so far (March 2022)⁸³ – match the grants received from the project with own investment.⁸⁴ Some of the service providers for technical assistance (business development support, food safety and quality management) have already been contracted and received capacity development support from UNIDO. It is foreseen that the VCIS facility will eventually expand to a multi-stakeholder blending financing facility, in which project grants will be complemented with loans for 'bankable VC project proposals' from financial institutions, possibly guaranteed by the state-owned Credit Guarantee Corporation of Cambodia.⁸⁵ This extended platform has still been in the design stage at the time of writing. By having facilitated access of a wide range of post-harvest fisheries MSMEs to financing and technical business services, which are geared towards enhanced compliance with food safety standards, VCIS is clearly conducive to sustainable transformation of the sector.⁸⁶ Given its focus on **women and youth**, the facility has **improved the access to (and affordability of) business services** particularly among these groups to make their enterprises more sustainable in terms of food safety. Moreover, since the VCIS requires co-investment from successful applicants and plans to incorporate financial institutions in the future, it **leverages private sector investment for transformation of MSMEs in post-harvest fisheries**.

Research and innovation systems in post-harvest fisheries: R&I in the fisheries sector is characterized by low product development and market diversification, poor collaborative networks, and limited alignment of curriculum and research priorities of the universities with sector needs.⁸⁷ A 2020 FAO review found serious information gap in three major themes: i) gender, children and minorities; ii) the whole post-harvest sector, including VC; and iii) the monitoring of fish-dependent livelihoods.⁸⁸ The second theme is being addressed by UNIDO-CAPFISH, which has launched a **Food Technology, Research, and Innovation Platform** in February 2022. The platform is hosted by the Institute of Technology of Cambodia and includes key government ministries, academic institutions, and private sector associations. In this way, the platform offers **relevant food system actors** – albeit mainly at the national level – the chance to actively participate in R&I dialogue. The platform seeks to **enable R&I for product diversification and enhanced post-harvest processing quality and productivity**⁸⁹, thus ensuring that national R&I systems target key bottlenecks in the transformation of post-harvest fisheries. It is important that the platform generates tangible benefits for its participants, both for its sustainability⁹⁰ and effectiveness as R&I ecosystem enabler. For this reason, the focus is on **applied research with short cycles** that can be rapidly adopted by the private sector.⁹¹ The platform envisions further extension to the food production sector overall.⁹² The UNIDO project has also engaged in **curriculum development with local universities in the areas of fish/food technology and food safety**. The new curricula have not been applied yet but, once adopted, should in principle improve access of the private sector to qualified staff – another key bottleneck for more sustainable transformation of post-harvest fisheries. This work takes into consideration similar initiatives already taking place in Cambodia (e.g., the EU-funded FoodStem project) to avoid overlaps and potentially create synergies.⁹³ A **long-term perspective** on Cambodian fisheries research and coordination improvement lies in a focus on improved research coordination and research communication within the FiA.⁹⁴ The **FAO-CAPFISH** intervention supports the FiA with the **development of research for fisheries management**, including by setting up a research grant fund and assisting the FiA in the preparation of a long-term Strategic Plan for Fisheries Research.⁹⁵ Although progress has been good, with the target on staff training on fisheries statistics almost completed, most of the research

⁸³ Stakeholder interview.

⁸⁴ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2021): VCIS Leaflet of the Support to Private Sector Development in Post-Harvest Fisheries Sector.

⁸⁵ Stakeholder interview.

⁸⁶ In addition, the strengthening of technical capacities of inspectors and testing laboratories under Output 1 implies that public and private food control agents should be able to offer more and better food control services.

⁸⁷ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2019): Project Document of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project.

⁸⁸ Landell Mills, EU (2021): External assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy, for 2021 and 2022 Budget Support payments: Eligibility assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy for EU budget support payment in 2021.

⁸⁹ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2021): Food Technology, Research & Innovation Platform leaflet of the Support to Private Sector Development in Post-Harvest Fisheries Sector.

⁹⁰ UNIDO (2021): ROM report of the CAPFISH Capture - Post Harvest Fisheries Development.

⁹¹ Stakeholder interview.

⁹² UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2021): Progress Report of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project 2020-2021.

⁹³ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2021): Progress Report of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project 2020-2021.

⁹⁴ MAFF (2021): Roadmap for better coordination in Cambodian fisheries research. Technical report for the FAO project "Cambodia programme for sustainable and inclusive growth in the fisheries sector: CAPFISH-Capture fisheries".

⁹⁵ MAFF (2021): Technical report on establishing a small-grant fund for fisheries research in Cambodia for the FAO project "Cambodia programme for sustainable and inclusive growth in the fisheries sector: CAPFISH-Capture fisheries".

objective of the FAO-CAPFISH project has yet to be achieved.⁹⁶ Nonetheless, FiA has been achieved remarkable progress in recent years and has become a major producer of fisheries research in Cambodia.⁹⁷

Changes in agri-food systems value chains and nutrition (EQ3)

Sustainable production (JC3.2)

So far, there are no tangible signals yet that MSMEs have started diversifying or increasing their production, but different ongoing activities may potentially produce such changes in the future.

Diversification of livelihoods is specifically targeted by Component 2 of the **FAO-CAPFISH** intervention, which supports the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve (TSBR) and seeks to sustainably improve **livelihoods of local communities**. A mapping of livelihoods and diversification options has been conducted, with recommendations on diversifying community-livelihood opportunities being developed based on the assessment. While this has not led to results on the ground yet, sustainable beekeeping for communities is explored as a high-potential alternative livelihood opportunity for TSBR communities.

In the UNIDO project, income and employment generation is one of the expected impacts as well. In the short term, **VCIS funding** and technical assistance (which has recently become available to MSMEs) **might produce some increases in production and income** while **R&I** systems and initiatives strengthened through the project may lead to **product diversification in the longer term**. Given that VCIS applicants have only been selected recently, none of them have strengthened their position in the VC through new market links yet (according to the latest progress report). Likewise, the CQS and VCIS promoted by the project are expected to eventually induce fish processors and other VC actors to adopt improved food safety standards, and VC actors are expected to adopt Environmental and Social Management Plans, according to the logframe of the project. The project document envisages that MSMEs, because of the support package, will increase their income by “*upgrading of their infrastructure, enhancing management skills, supporting process improvement [...], linking to market and product diversification, mobilizing investments, and facilitating access to appropriate technologies for better returns, among others*”. During the mission in Cambodia, the evaluation team visited a fish processor who had applied for VCIS and expected this mechanism to improve her fish processing practices, business growth, and income.

Box 1: Case study – VCIS for a fish processor in Cambodia

The fish collector and processor visited by the evaluation team is a family business in the Cheung Prey District, Kampong Cham Province of Cambodia. The business was created in 2005, is led by a woman and has 10 employees. Since 2019, it focuses on fish processing, selling about 1000 kg per day of which 500-900 kg are processed fish and the remainder is fresh fish. The business owner seeks to equip the processing facilities with new equipment, such as a solar dryer, a dome, package reequipment, and a freezer. Her main target is to obtain certification for compliance with food safety and hygiene standards to open up new markets beyond the current area of operations (currently limited to two nearby garment factories and shops in Phnom Penh). For this purpose, her enterprise has submitted a proposal for USD 50,000 of VCIS funding. The selection decision by UNIDO was still pending at the time writing. If the proposal is approved, business owner expects that the equipment for sanitation, hygiene, and packaging (and subsequent certification) would approximately double the profit of her business. Given her experience, she also provides training for other stakeholders.

Women (who contribute to 75% of the activity 'around' fisheries but have limited presence and influence in community fisheries management committees and ownership of larger businesses⁹⁸) and youth are prioritized for VCIS. UNIDO has conducted studies on both themes – identification of promising VCs for MSMEs and gender issues in post-harvest fisheries.

Food processing (JC3.3)

In the UNIDO-CAPFISH, there are no signals yet that employment opportunities and working conditions in post-harvest fisheries have improved, but there are some early signals that strengthened governance in the sectors promotes sustainable changes in food processing and distribution. Besides the expected effects on individual entrepreneurs outlined in the previous JC, the UNIDO intervention aims to improve employment opportunities and working conditions in post-harvest fisheries more generally. Specifically, it expects to increase employment in the sector by 20% from the baseline (33,000 persons employed in post-harvest fisheries in Cambodia),⁹⁹ but no data on actual progress are available yet. In terms

⁹⁶ FAO, EU (2021): Annual Report of the complementary support to the Cambodia programme for sustainable and inclusive growth in the fisheries sector: Capture component (CAPFISH-Capture) 2020-2021.

⁹⁷ Landell Mills, EU (2021): External assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy, for 2021 and 2022 Budget Support payments: Eligibility assessment of Cambodia's fisheries sector policy for EU budget support payment in 2021.

⁹⁸ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2019): Project Document of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project.

⁹⁹ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2019): Project Document of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project.

of working conditions for vulnerable groups, the FiA has a strong Gender and Children Working Group and has developed an "Action Plan for Gender Equality Promotion and Child Labour Elimination in the Fisheries Sector 2016-2020"¹⁰⁰. UNIDO plans to provide support to develop an updated version of the plan. A gender analysis of post-harvest fisheries was conducted by the project and released together with the FiA. Based on this report, UNIDO is developing a gender action plan,¹⁰¹ which potentially also covers work conditions.¹⁰²

Although individual MSMEs participating in the UNIDO project are yet to change their practices in food processing and distribution, the activities under Output 1 are improving the regulatory framework for fisheries inspection and control, as well as the technical capacities of the public agents and laboratories involved in it. The CQS has now been adopted in the National Action Plan for Inspection and Control of Quality and Safety of Fish and Fishery Products (2020-2024) and should soon lead to changes in food processing and distribution among VC actors, such as fish landing sites and processors.

Food consumption (JC3.4)

EU addresses food consumption through tackling food safety issues in the fisheries VC and supporting vulnerable communities, but effects are not yet visible. A lack of food safety is a major concern in Cambodia, with 8% of infant mortality related to unsafe food and water.¹⁰³ The improved **food safety regulations, control, and practices** of public entities and VC actors promoted by the **UNIDO project** seek to ultimately ensure safer fish for consumers. A voluntary Cambodia Quality Seal (CQS) has been promoted by the project, but VC actors are only starting to adjust their equipment and practices to comply with it; the updated Fisheries Law has not been approved yet; and awareness of food safety standards is still limited in the population. The project has recently hired a service provider for large-scale food safety awareness campaign among fish consumers,¹⁰⁴ which may eventually help them to adopt safer dietary habits. In the **SECURE-LNRM** intervention, **enhanced livelihoods are related to adequate diet**, with certain livelihoods, land or resource access of some vulnerable communities under threat by commercial exploitation. The intervention indirectly links to food consumption by strengthening the capacity of communities to access land and natural resources. However, because of delays in enacting the updated Fisheries Law that stipulates protection measures, there were no successful cases yet.¹⁰⁵

Sustainability, inclusiveness, and resilience of agri-food value chains (JC3.1)

There are a few (very) early signals that EU support contributed to the sustainability, inclusiveness, and resilience of different segments of the fisheries agri-food VCs. Compliance with IUU-free fisheries is supported through the FAO-CAPFISH intervention, which is crucial for the sustainability and resilience of Cambodia's food system by helping Cambodia's wild fish stocks recover and defending its fish biodiversity. It indicates therefore an **early signal** for more sustainable and resilient fisheries chains.¹⁰⁶

In the UNIDO component of CAPFISH, the awareness of MSMEs of sustainable post-harvest fisheries practices (especially related to food safety) has likely started increasing due to the technical assistance for business diagnostics, business proposal development, and other skills received by VCIS applicants. Successful applicants will receive more specific training of food safety standards in the future.¹⁰⁷ Actual changes in these practices are still limited at this early stage of the VCIS facility. There are no data either to verify whether the intervention has reduced food loss or waste along the fisheries VC. Post-harvest losses are substantial, for example due to lack of ice to main cold chain for low-value fish or irregular (or high costs of) electric supply.¹⁰⁸ Although not originally foreseen in the project document, **UNIDO provided complementary**

¹⁰⁰ UNIDO (2021): ROM report of the CAPFISH Capture - Post Harvest Fisheries Development.

¹⁰¹ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2021): Progress Report of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project 2020-2021.

¹⁰² According to the project document, UNIDO also expects to be responsible for skills development in the fishery value chain of the 'United for Youth Employment in Cambodia' programme.

¹⁰³ Ebner, P., J. Vipham, L. Hok (2020). Food Safety in Cambodia: Current Programs and Opportunities.

¹⁰⁴ Stakeholder interview.

¹⁰⁵ ActionAid (2021): Interim narrative report: Securing access to and control over land and natural resources for vulnerable community fisheries in the coastal areas of Cambodia 2020-2021.

¹⁰⁶ The intervention's ROM report noted the tendencies among development partners to work with communities that are more responsive or willing to participate in activities. Development interventions sometimes select participating communities not based on the communities' needs, but rather on the capacity to successfully help attain the interventions' objectives. Poorer communities often have larger capacity gaps to successfully participate in formal governance arrangements, and they are further away from the urban areas requiring more transport resources. This can contribute to an 'urban bias' or the lower selection of poorer communities with larger capacity gaps, with consequences for the inclusivity of interventions.

¹⁰⁷ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2021): Progress Report of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project 2020-2021.

¹⁰⁸ UNIDO, EU, Kingdom of Cambodia (2019): Project Document of the CAPFISH-Capture: Post-harvest Fisheries Development Project.

support to the FiA in the collection of samples from aquaculture farms under the **National Residue Monitoring Plan** (approved in 2020), as part of its considerable effort in assisting FiA to achieve the CAPFISH budget support targets.¹⁰⁹ Stricter enforcement of the residue limits set in the National Residue Monitoring Plan, supported by Memorandums of Understanding with testing laboratories and training of their staff facilitated by UNIDO since 2021, is expected to reduce pesticides and chemical residues in fish.

Agri-food-system shocks (JC3.5)

The EU's support to improved resource access and the land rights of vulnerable communities – including women and youth – could increase the resilience of those communities. With many livelihoods derived from agriculture and the limited financial buffers of food system actors, the Cambodian food system is vulnerable to shocks.¹¹⁰ There are a few early signals that EU support facilitated the strengthening of responses to SAFS shocks, in the form improved resource access and the land rights of vulnerable communities (SFIn-NGO and SECURE-LNRM interventions).

System level effects (EQ4)

Economic opportunities (JC4.1)

EU support has contributed, or is in the process of contributing, to the creation of new economic opportunities in the fisheries sector through improved productivity, access of MSMEs to new markets following from increased compliance with food safety standards; decent work opportunities; and improved access to land or natural resources for livelihoods. The FAO-CAPFISH intervention potentially creates economic opportunities in the fisheries sector by addressing the declining yield of fisheries due to overfishing. If it contributes to reversing the EU's red a card notice in the future, it might also unlock potential export markets. UNIDO-CAPFISH contributes to the creation of economic opportunities for MSMEs and workers in post-harvest fisheries, especially through strengthened capacity for meeting the safety demands of the fisheries VC , increased income opportunities and decent work opportunities . Finally, SECURE-LNRM could improve access to land and resources of community fisheries (crucial for their livelihoods) by supporting their capacity to address one of the main threats to their land rights (ecosystem destruction by commercial developers).

Nutrition (JC4.2)

Some EU supported interventions, like the food safety component of UNIDO-CAPFISH or the promotion of equitable access over land and natural resources for vulnerable groups of SECURE-LNRM, are likely to contribute to better nutrition outcomes. The potential system-wide benefits seem strongest in the case of the UNIDO-CAPFISH intervention, given the high consumption of fish by Cambodians, both rural and urban. While nutrition is identified as a cross-cutting issue in the MIP 2014-2020 and the EDCS 2014-2020¹¹¹, the new MIP 2021-2027 drops nutrition as a cross-cutting issue.¹¹²

Climate change and environment (JC4.3)

NRM has been a focal area of EU support to SAFS in the evaluation period and beyond, and future EU support in the country will put more emphasis on climate change resilience. Climate change is likely to increase floods and droughts in Cambodia. The Mekong floodplain, for example, might see more water in the dry season, and less in the wet season, which may impact fish productivity in the future.¹¹³ In this context, EU support has fostered sustainable NRM and the potential of fisheries actors and institutions to build resilience, by strengthening public regulatory frameworks and the capacity of national and local actors. In FAO-CAPFISH, these objectives complement habitat enhancement, conservation measures, and livelihood diversification. While these features of EU support can in principle be expected to facilitate climate change adaptation, there were few indications that it was specifically targeted in the design of EU support in the evaluation period. In the new MIP 2021-2027, SAFS support is more explicitly linked with enhanced resilience to climate change¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ UNIDO (2021): ROM report of the CAPFISH Capture - Post Harvest Fisheries Development.

¹¹⁰ One of the recent 'shocks' to the Cambodian food system, fisheries particularly, is the hydropower development in the Mekong River, which lowered river and lake waters and was a main contributor to a severe reduction of Cambodia's fisheries yield in 2019.

¹¹¹ The MIP 2014-2020 also mentions the governance obstacles for tackling malnutrition: decreasing malnutrition requires a multi-sectoral approach, but cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial cooperation in this area has proven challenging in the past.

¹¹² EU (2021): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027.

¹¹³ Horton, A.J., N. V. K. Triet, L. P. Hoang, S. Heng, P. Hok, S. Chung, J. Koponen, M. Kummu (2022): The Cambodian Mekong floodplain under future development plans and climate change. *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences*, 22(3), 967–983.

¹¹⁴ EU (2021): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027.

Lessons learned and good practices

EU engagement in policy dialogue and partnerships

Multi-stakeholder dialogue, inclusive decision-making, and partnerships are key elements of a food system approach. EU support in Cambodia has been crucial for this in the fisheries sector.

The EU has substantially facilitated (and is well placed to further facilitate future) national and subnational food system dialogues, specifically in relation to the fisheries subsystem and how its reform could provide lessons learned for other sectors and institutions. This is coherent with the GoC's intention of continuing more inclusive and participatory multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral dialogues (such as those conducted in the context of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit), including the involvement of development partners.¹¹⁵ Food system dialogues are also in line with the MIP 2021-2027, according to which the EU aims to foster the participation of civil society in SAFS-related policy-making, accountability and implementation.¹¹⁶ This could potentially extend dialogue beyond national government and development partners to other food system stakeholders, such as MSMEs in the fisheries sector. In several instances, EU support has not only engaged stakeholders in policy dialogue but also increased their actual participation in public decision-making processes. The updated Fisheries Law is an example how the EU in Cambodia supported more inclusive decision-making and enabled non-state actors to contribute.

Regarding partnerships, the EU has clearly facilitated donor coordination (especially through the joint strategy with MS), which has resulted strengthened donor-government dialogues and an EU-MS cooperation framework that has served as good practice for other countries. The EU and MS plan to work more together in the coming period through Team Europe Initiatives and a new EDCS, which includes more joint programming.

EU instruments, modalities, funding channels

While the funding structure of the EU SAFS portfolio in Cambodia is dominated by the DCI-Geographic (95% of total funding), additional funding from the EIDHR helped the EU to engage with a larger set of food systems actors in the fisheries sector. Specifically, the smaller EIDHR funded SECURE-LNRM allowed EU support to engage more closely with local communities, especially regarding the more politically sensitive land tenure security, and facilitate dialogue between local and relevant national stakeholders (bottom-up approach). This intervention can build on wider policy reforms in the fisheries sector promoted by the EU among national and district-level public institutions under the larger, DCI-Geographic funded CAPFISH programme (top-down approach).

The aid modalities used by the EU in the sample of this case study were **budget support** (CAPFISH budget support component) and **project support** (remaining interventions). **These modalities were highly complementary:** budget support provided the financial resources for policy reforms and formulated disbursement conditions linked to those reforms, while project support helped the GoC and other food systems actor to comply with (or benefit from) budget support and the strengthened policy framework. For example, technical assistance to the FiA under FAO-CAPFISH considerably helped the GoC to meet the disbursement conditions of budget support. Likewise, budget support resources have been crucial (e.g. in terms of ensuring adequate human resources) for the enforcement of updated food safety standards promoted by the UNIDO project.

In terms of **funding channels**, the GoC (MEF, MAFF/FiA) and NGOs (FACT, ActionAid) were the main partners at the national and local level, respectively, while multilateral organizations (FAO, UNIDO) funded by the EU in Cambodia operated at both levels. **This wide range of implementation partners have increased the options of EU support for intervening at different entry points in the food system based on each partner's added value.** The choice for FAO as an implementation partner, for example, comes from its long and recognised experience in the fisheries sector in general, and its long-standing relationships with both public and private sector partners in Cambodia.¹¹⁷ Similarly, NGOs implementing EU support in Cambodia (e.g. ActionAid) are well connected to local stakeholders and work across multiple themes, thus contributing to the integration of fisheries, land rights, livelihoods, etc.

EU efforts to knowledge building

In the interventions included in this case study, **EU support has directly contributed to knowledge building through institutional capacity strengthening, trainings, and awareness campaigns.** A wide range and large number of government staff at national and subnational levels, private sector actors, NGO and community stakeholders participated in training sessions or awareness campaigns on governance, food safety,

¹¹⁵ Government of Cambodia (2021): Cambodia's Roadmap for Food Systems for Sustainable Development.

¹¹⁶ EU (2021): EU-Cambodia Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027.

¹¹⁷ FAO (2021): ROM report of the FAO Complementary Support to the Cambodia Programme for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the Fisheries Sector: Capture component (CAPFISH Capture).

business skills, land rights, and others. Many of these activities were conducted remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the R&I sector, EU support has created the basis for a stronger institutional framework for knowledge building and exchange. For example, through the recently launched Food Technology, Research, and Innovation Platform and academic curriculum development, UNIDO-CAPFISH increases the chances that research results and opportunities are being shared and used, and that academic knowledge on fisheries is transferred to students.

There is, however, little evidence of wider institutionalised mechanisms of direct knowledge sharing, such as strengthening of national monitoring and information systems in the fisheries sectors, or integration of M&E data from EU interventions in these systems.

Innovative approaches

A few features of EU support to SAFS in Cambodia are particularly innovative.

The EU in Cambodia effectively leverages on specific entry points for more comprehensive support and better coordination for SAFS. UNIDO-CAPFISH is a good example of how a specific entry point (an updated regulatory framework, including a national quality seal, for food safety in post-harvest fisheries) was used to support and involve the wider food system in the sector. In line with the updated regulatory framework, the intervention has broadened its capacity strengthening, dialogue, and financial support to the food system actors (private sector/value chain actors, testing laboratories, GoC, local authorities, R&I institutions, etc.) that play a key role in fostering – and ensuring that the sector benefits from – compliance with food safety standards. One specific benefit is better coordination among these actors. For example, the new framework for food safety in fisheries highlights the importance of traceability throughout the value chain. Addressing this issue through the different activities of UNIDO-CAPFISH is expected to prompt more information flows, coordination and lessons sharing in the fragmented value chains.¹¹⁸

The large weight of EU SAFS support on one important sector of the Cambodian food system – fisheries – has allowed the EU to address key bottlenecks in governance within this sector in a comprehensive manner at all levels. The many interventions in fisheries have worked with different partners and employed different funding instruments to strengthen governance from the national to the local level (e.g. development of the updated Fisheries Law together with national GoC counterparts under FAO-CAPFISH) and vice versa (e.g. supported to an NGO and community fisheries network that put forward amendments to the new law under SFIN-NGO). The strong focus on fisheries is likely to have deepened the identification and targeting of multiple gaps in governance more comprehensively and consistently than it would have been possible if the available resources had been distributed equally across more sectors.

Another innovative element of EU support in Cambodia is the creation of strong links between academic institutions and other parts of the fisheries food system to support policy reforms and objectives (governance strengthening, food safety, and value chain development). EU support has linked, or plans to link, academic research and teaching institutions in multiple innovative ways among each other and to government institutions and the private sector. For example, FAO and UNIDO have supported the design of specific university and training programmes that aim to help FiA to develop and recruit better qualified staff as part of its new human resources strategy (also developed together with FAO). Furthermore, the UNIDO component has established a Food Technology, Research, and Innovation Platform (hosted by the Institute of Technology of Cambodia) that brings together relevant food system actors to enable R&I for post-harvest fisheries and transfer it to the private sector, especially in relation to food safety regulations. Overall, these initiatives suggest good practices of how to involve academic institutions in the achievement of overarching policy reform objectives for SAFS.

¹¹⁸ Stakeholder interview.

Case study note – Colombia

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Introduction

Remark: The case study report does not constitute a separate evaluation of European Union (EU) support in the country or its situation with regard to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS). It presents country-related findings relevant to the overall assessed Evaluation Questions (EQ) / Judgement Criteria (JC) and feeds into the main evaluation report of the Evaluation of the EU support to SAFS to which it will be attached as an annex.

Context

Main SAFS challenges

Colombia is a middle-income country, member of the OECD since 2020, with a GDP of 5.334 USD per capita in 2020¹¹⁹. The agricultural sector makes up less than 6.6% of the economy - although it was the economic sector that grew the most in 2020.¹²⁰ According to the World Bank, the services sector is responsible for the largest part of GDP and is the country's main employer. Colombia's high level of inequality is an obstacle to social progress and economic growth.¹²¹ Challenges related to food insecurity and malnutrition are strongly linked to poverty and exclusion. In 2020, 2.6 million people were living in extreme poverty, meaning they were unable to cover basic food needs. Access to healthy diets is problematic in both urban and rural areas. Obesity and chronic malnutrition affect Colombia.

The drivers and consequences of high levels of territorial inequality have historically characterised Colombia's Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS) challenges. 81% of private land is concentrated in the top 1% of farms (the average in Latin America, already the most unequal region in the world, is 52%), making Colombia one of the most unequal countries in the world in terms of land concentration. The unequal access to productive factors, especially land, makes it more difficult for poor rural populations to access the same socio-economic opportunities and high-quality public services such as education and health. Weak government presence in peripheral rural areas, marked by high levels of informal land tenure and dysfunctional cadastre, has facilitated violent illegal dispossession of land, forced displacement and limited protection of human rights.¹²²

Rural inequalities embedded in economic and political power have characterised the political dynamics of Colombia and are closely linked to the armed conflict that has affected the country for over six decades. The problems around land tenure, the limited access to land by smallholders and the often inappropriate use of land (fertile land that is idle, or fragile ecosystems damaged) is further complicated by other factors. These include the expansion of illegal activities, most notably drug production and trafficking, illegal mining and logging and controlling territories by armed groups.¹²³ A peace agreement between the Government of Colombia (GoC) and the largest faction of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC) was signed in 2016. The first point of the peace agreement was about *Reforma Rural Integral* (RRI, Comprehensive Rural Reform) and included concrete commitments of the GoC to address land issues. Concrete efforts to work on these issues were already initiated by the government of President Santos (2012-2018), within the context of a wider agenda of political reforms to promote inclusive economic and social development¹²⁴. The political commitment to structural land and other reforms weakened with the election of President Duque in 2018.¹²⁵ The progress on food and nutrition security-related commitments of the peace agreement were the slowest compared to the other commitments of the peace agreement that are tracked by international observers.¹²⁶

Drivers of deforestation in fragile Amazon ecosystems are extensive livestock raising, coca production, illegal mining and logging.¹²⁷ In 2014, almost one-third of the country's poorest municipalities (Unsatisfied Basic Needs (UBN) index of above 50%) coincided with natural parks, protected areas or their buffer zones, where cultivation of coca plants, drugs and arms trafficking and antipersonnel mines indirectly affect civilians. These are also areas most affected by the conflict (*Zonas Más Afectadas por el Conflicto*, ZOMAC).¹²⁸ SAFS and

¹¹⁹ World Bank (2021): Colombia.

¹²⁰ EU (2021): *Note on the first tranche release*. Internal document.

¹²¹ EU (2014): *Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2014-2017*. p.3, World Bank Group (2021): *Building an Equitable Society in Colombia*

¹²² World Bank Group (2021): *Building an Equitable Society in Colombia*

¹²³ EU (2011): *Anexos varios sobre la política desarrollo rural*. Internal document.

¹²⁴ EU (2014): *MIP 2014-2017*. p. 1.

¹²⁵ FAO (2020): *Incorporación de Directrices de Gobernanza de la tierra con las comunidades locales habitantes de áreas protegidas y sus zonas de influencia*. Technical note: results and lessons learned (2016-2020).

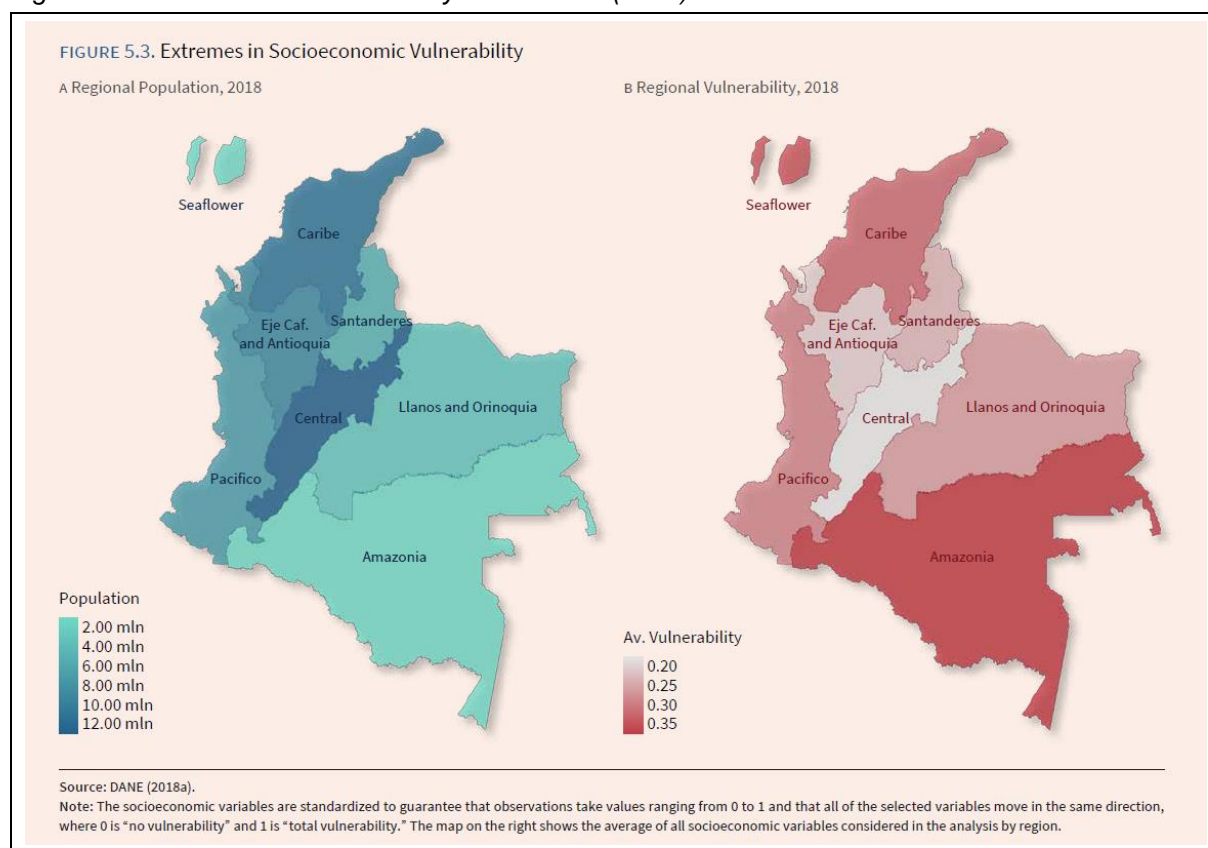
¹²⁶ Instituto Kroc (2021): *Powerpoint presentation prepared for the evaluation mission*.

¹²⁷ EU (2014): *MIP 2014-2017*.

¹²⁸ World Bank Group (2021): *Building an Equitable Society in Colombia*; EU (2014): *MIP 2014-2017*.

rural development challenges persist in these areas. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened existing inequalities, affecting informal and low-earning jobs disproportionality and worsening inequality and the related health burden.¹²⁹ Political instability in the last two years has increased, partly due to the inequalities worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Strikes and threats by the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army, ELN), a guerrilla group which did not sign the peace agreement, along with powerful drug trafficking organisations with no political agenda, cause unrest. Extrajudicial killings of human rights activists and environmentalists and weak rule of law persist, especially in 'post'-conflict areas.¹³⁰ Elections for the legislative chamber and primaries for the presidential elections (due in May 2022) took place on 13 March 2022.

Figure 3: Socioeconomic Vulnerability in Colombia (2018)



Policy framework and main actors

Policy framework: The *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2018 - 2022* (PND, National Development Plan) "Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity" sets out the long-term vision for the country. SAFS plays a central role in the cross-cutting areas of the PND: i) sustainability under the green growth strategy, "Producing while conserving and conserving while producing"; ii) gender equality, recognising the role and leadership of rural women as agents of change; iii) ethnic groups, with a focus on equal opportunities; and iv) peace, culture of legality, victims and stabilisation, under the "Peace with Legality" strategy.

The PND is embedded in the Sustainable Development Agenda, to which the GoC is an active contributor and aligned with eight of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 12). The PND is strongly embedded in the peace process; the PND's "Peace with Legality" strategy integrates a number of commitments from the first point of the Peace Agreements on the comprehensive rural reform (RRI). The *Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial* (PDET, Programs of Territorial Development) is a core component of implementing the first point of the peace agreement on RRI and an important tool for the territorial development agenda of the GoC, which has strong SAFS elements. The PDET covers 170 municipalities in 16 sub-regions where 6.7 million Colombians live. Other ministries, such as the *Ministerio de Comercio, Industria y Turismo* (MINCIT, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism), are encouraged to target these 'PDET municipalities specifically'.¹³¹

¹²⁹ World Bank Group (2021): *Building an Equitable Society in Colombia*.

¹³⁰ EU (2021): *MIP 2021-2027*.

¹³¹ EU (2020): *Note on the first tranche release DLS Phase II*. Internal document. MINCIT (2021): Powerpoint presentation prepared for the evaluation mission. Interviews with MINCIT and EUD staff.

Institutional transformations oriented towards generating real rural development governance were initiated in the PND 2014-2018, but already the 2010-2014 PND included four cross-cutting issues that scored high on the intervention logic of SAFS: i) innovation (science and technology), ii) good governance (fight against corruption), iii) participation in international trade, and iv) environmental sustainability.

The current administration shifted emphasis from implementing the peace agreement to issues around economic growth and employment. Despite the change in political priorities, key components of the peace agreement are firmly embedded in legislation. The political reforms initiated under the government that signed the peace agreement include efforts to strengthen the evidence base for policy making through the National Management and Results System (SINERGIA), enabling better targeting and monitoring of social protection programmes. At the same time, progress has been slow on more controversial elements of the Peace Agreement such as land restitution and reintegration of ex-FARC members. Regarding policy monitoring, the *Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural* (MADR, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) finds weaknesses within the coordination and articulation of institutions at the territorial level. The weakened political commitment of the Duque presidency has translated into fewer domestic resources being committed to fund the full implementation of the Peace Agreement.¹³² SAFS-specific strategies incorporated by the government include i) Investment in public goods (e.g., transport and irrigation infrastructure, property registry system, land registration) ii) institutional framework for coordination, planning & implementation and M&E and iii) public investments in agricultural innovation promoting increased export competitiveness. The government has been implementing inclusive productivity strategies. These strategies are oriented towards comprehensive interventions aimed at improving the productive capacities, organisation and access to assets and markets of small-scale producers to generate higher incomes. Main projects are related to rural entrepreneurial capacity building under the mandate of MADR and the integrated rural development projects implemented by ADR.¹³³ Crucial components of the policy reforms related to SAFS are on land tenure and land governance. Climate change and gender equality are increasingly being integrated in policy and enshrined in law.

The *Estrategia Nacional de Cooperación Internacional 2019-2022* (ENCI, National International Cooperation Strategy) 2019-2022 aims to 'direct the management of international cooperation provided and received by Colombia through five lines of action and/or thematic areas, to which the cooperation received by the country must be aligned: Peace and Territorial Stabilisation, Rural Development, Conservation and Environmental Sustainability, Entrepreneurship and Orange Economy¹³⁴ and Migratory Phenomenon.' In Colombia, international cooperation activities are managed by the *Agencia Presidencial de Cooperación* (APC, Presidential Agency for Cooperation), which, because it is directly under the President's Office, makes it more relevant when defining policy.

National actors: In 2015/2016, a rigorous institutional reform took place with the objective to institutionalise a more integrated and inclusive approach to rural development. It set forth policies, increased the implementation capacity at the central and local level and invested in improved results monitoring. The *Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo* (MADR, Rural Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) remained the central structure, and head of the sector responsible for coordination and in charge of several special funds.¹³⁵ A decentralised structure was created, among which three specialised agencies stand out: *Agencia de Desarrollo Rural* (ADR, National Rural Development Agency), *Agencia Nacional de Tierras* (ANT, National Land Agency), *Agencia de Renovación Territorial* (ART, Territorial Renewal Agency). The ADR's main function is to support plans and comprehensive projects execution for rural and agricultural development, based on services targeting producers' associations such as cooperatives and technical assistance, financing and public goods such as rural infrastructure and irrigation. The ANT is responsible for promoting land access, legal security and land use that fits with not only the productive function of land use but also the social function (for example related to indigenous' peoples land use rights) and administering public rural properties. The ART coordinates interventions in conflict-affected rural areas. Also part of the decentralised structure, and relevant especially for the financial and technical services related to agriculture, are the *Banco Agrario* (Agricultural Bank), *Fondo para el Financiamiento del Sector Agropecuario* (FINAGRO, Agricultural Sector Financing Fund) and the *Corporación Colombiana de Investigación Agropecuaria* (Agrosavia, Colombian Agricultural Research Corporation).

¹³² EU (2021): Note on the first tranche release. Internal document.

¹³³ Construcción de Capacidades Empresariales Rurales: Confianza y Oportunidad implemented by MADR and Proyectos Integrales de Desarrollo Agropecuario y Rural by ADR. Source: EU (2020): *Technical and administrative dispositions. Annex to the second phase of BS DRET*. Internal document.

¹³⁴ Orange Economy refers to the creative economy. The Ministry of Culture positions the Orange Economy as 'a development model in which cultural diversity and creativity are pillars of social and economic transformation of the country, from the regions. This model has cultural, social and economic development tools.' See <https://www.economianaranja.gov.co/abc-economia-naranja/>

¹³⁵ Agricultural Fostering Fund, Agricultural Guarantees Fund, Agricultural Solidarity Fund and Risk Capital Investments Fund.

These entities were strengthened in 2020. ADR created a greater capacity for territorial dialogue to be better able to offer comprehensive agricultural development projects, public agricultural extension services and adaptation of land and services for associativity and commercialisation.¹³⁶

Another key national actor for SAFS is the *Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible* (MINAMBIENTE, Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development) because of the emphasis of environmentally sustainable rural development and the strategy for a greener socio-economic rebuilding post-COVID-19 pandemic. SINCHI, the Amazonian Institute for Scientific Research, falls under MINAMBIENTE and generates knowledge, technologies and innovations related to the Colombian Amazon¹³⁷. Corpoamazonia is the main regional environmental authority in charge of the management of natural resources in Southern Amazonia.

MINCIT is also relevant to this evaluation, since it is responsible for sector development. The *Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público* (MINHACIENDA, Ministry of Finance) is the responsible Ministry for the national development plan and relevant in the framework of Public Finance Management (PFM). The *Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social* (CONPES, National Economic and Social Policy Council) is the national planning authority. It develops and coordinates the implementation of so-called CONPES documents, public policy documents that are drawn up with the aim of solving cross-cutting problems involving several sectors.¹³⁸

Multilateral and bilateral donors: Many EU Member States (EU MS) are active in Colombia. Germany and Spain are amongst the largest, both having bigger budgets than EC. The European Trust Fund for Colombia (EUTF) brought together 19 EU MS.¹³⁹ Currently, 21 EU MS, United Kingdom and Chile joined forces to support the GoC in the implementation of the peace agreement. There is also a UN Multidonor Trust Fund, and funds managed by World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (BID/IDB)¹⁴⁰. Canada and USAID are relatively large donors in Colombia.

In 2014-2017, the World Bank provided a loan of EUR 50 million to support a programme geared at strengthening territorial capacities. It is part of a broader package of programmes the GoC implemented aimed at strengthening decentralisation for an overall amount of around EUR 160 million.

The World Bank, together with Switzerland are an important partner in the support to PFM.

Donors prepare coordination and policy dialogue with the government in the Economic Development Group which has been chaired jointly by the EU and USAID since 2013.

EU-Colombia cooperation framework: Support to agri-food systems has been at the heart of the EUD strategy in Colombia for 20 years, as a conduit for inclusive local development and as an integral part of the peace process. The EUTF also focuses on integrated rural development in the poorest and most conflict-affected areas.

In the Multi-Annual Indicative Plan MIP 2021-2027, priority areas selected for cooperation with Colombia are Peace and Environment.

¹³⁶ EU (2020): *Technical and administrative dispositions. Annex to the second phase of BS DRET*. Internal document.

¹³⁷ SINCHI (2021): *Powerpoint presentation prepared for the evaluation team*

¹³⁸ EU (2020): *Technical and administrative dispositions. Annex to the second phase of BS DRET*. Internal document.

¹³⁹ EU (2017): *External Assistance Management Report (EAMR) Colombia*

¹⁴⁰ EUTF (2020): *Factsheet EUTF*. Hard copy

Table 2: Priorities of Colombia Multi-annual Programming (2007- 2027)

2008-2013 programming		2014-2017 programming		MIP 2021-2027	
Sector	Allocation (EURm)	Sector	Allocation (EURm)	Sector	Allocation (EURm)
Peace and stability, including alternative development	70%	Local development and institution building	53.6 (80%)	Peace	39
Rule of law, justice and human rights	20%	Sustainable trade and investment	10 (15%)	Environment	30
Competitiveness and trade	10%	Support measures	3.4 (5%)	Support Measure	6
Total	160		67		75

Focus of the case study – EU SAFS support

This case study focuses on a sample of interventions that are illustrative of the EU support to SAFS in Colombia.¹⁴¹ The portfolio of EU interventions related to SAFS in Colombia over the period 2014-2020 is dominated by four packages of sectoral budget support and projects funded through the European Trust Fund for Colombia (EUTF). Many of the projects financed through the EUTF are aligned with the PDETs.

The sector budget support (BS) was directed towards supporting the competitiveness of the dairy sector; support to the strategy for Desarrollo Rural Integral con Enfoque Territorial (DRET), a Sector Reform Contract for Local Sustainable Development in Colombia, and a Sector Reform Contract for Regional Competitiveness in Colombia (CReC). The case study focuses on DRET, the largest of the four, and the one with the strongest SAFS-related elements.

The EUTF was constituted in December 2016 in support of the peace process in Colombia and has a strong focus on inclusive and sustainable rural development. Within the EUTF, two interventions were selected for in-depth analysis: the project Rutas PDET para la Estabilización (Rutas PDET in short) and the project Territorios Caqueteños Sostenibles para la Paz (TCSP). The Rutas PDET project is one of the larger EUTF projects. During the field mission, the evaluation team met with stakeholders supported by the project engaged in the dairy value chain in Caquetá. The project *Territorios Caqueteños* is also aligned with the PDET and has a strong women economic empowerment angle. During the field mission, the evaluation team met with stakeholders involved in the cocoa value chain, but also stakeholders that benefited from road and processing infrastructure components of the project.

The visits were limited to the department of Caquetá, which has the largest population of districts comprising the Amazonian region and the lowest per capita income - 58% of the national average. The department is one of the most fragile in the country that suffered from the armed conflict and still suffers from high levels of inequality.

¹⁴¹ Sampling criteria include the variety of EU funding instruments; type of interventions; volume of interventions; variety of interventions at different levels (regional, national, county and community); variety of interventions that appear to have adopted a SAFS approach and interventions without clear SAFS linkages (based on preliminary assessment); variety of different implementation partners, with a preference for selected EU MS and RBAs.

Table 3: Overview of evaluation sample EU-funded interventions in Colombia

Intervention	Budget (EUR Mo)	Funding instrument	Implementing partner
Programa de apoyo a la política de mejoramiento de la competitividad del subsector lácteo colombiano - Fase II	20.4	DCI-Geo LA	GoC
Apoyo Presupuestario a la Estrategia de Desarrollo Rural Integral con Enfoque Territorial (DRET)	37.7	DCI-Geo LA	GoC
Apoyo Presupuestario Desarrollo Local sostenible en zonas marginadas de Colombia - FASE II	9	DCI-Geo LA	GoC
Rutas PDET para la Estabilización	18	EUTF	ICCO, CIAT, RedAdelco
Territorios Caqueteños Sostenible Para La Paz	1.3	EUTF	IMVF - RedAdelco
Promover la incorporación de directrices de gobernanza de la tierra (VGGT) con las comunidades locales habitantes de áreas protegidas y sus zonas de influencia	3.2	DCI-FOOD	FAO
Herencia Colombia: apoyando el nuevo enfoque integrado colombiano de la gobernanza territorial en paisajes sostenibles, productivos y resilientes	5.0	DCI-ENV	FAO

Source: EU FNSSA Database provided by DG INTPA to the evaluation team.

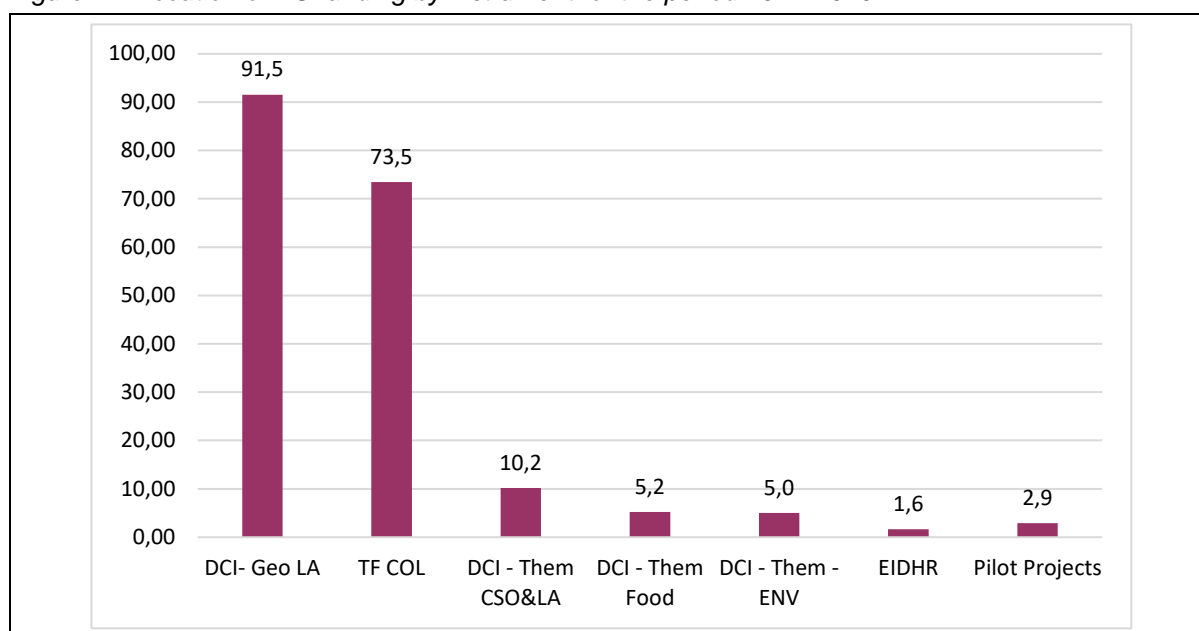
Data collection methods: The case study is based on a desk review and key informant interviews carried out during a field mission in and around Bogotá and Florencia, Caquetá in March 2022. The documentation reviewed includes: EU programming documents, reports and evaluations; EU and implementing partners' documents regarding the sample of interventions (evaluation, ROM, and progress reports); policy documents of the Government of Colombia; EU partners (World Bank) and Government reports, and academic literature related to SAFS in Colombia. During the mission, interviews were conducted with the EU Delegation, Government representatives involved in EU programmes and SAFS coordination, EU Member States (Spain, Sweden), UN agencies, NGOs, research organisations and national institutions contributing to the EU policy dialogue and implementation of the core sample of interventions.

Design

Overview of EU support to SAFS

The main instruments channelling EU support to SAFS in Colombia were the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) Geographic - Latin America and the European Trust Fund for Colombia. The total amount allocated between 2014 and 2020 was almost EUR 190 million, of which EUR 91.5 million was allocated through DCI-Geo LA and EUR 73.45 million through EUTF. DCI-Geo LA and EUTF together make up 72.2% of the EU's budget to support SAFS in Colombia. Other instruments were the Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities thematic programme (CSO-LA; EUR 10.2 million); the food and nutrition security, sustainable agriculture and fisheries (FOOD; EUR 5.2 million) and Environment and Climate Change (ENV; EUR 5 million); European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR; EUR 1.6 million) and pilot projects (EUR 2.9 million). FOOD and ENV are both strategic areas falling under the Global Public Goods and Challenges thematic programme.

Figure 4: Allocation of EU funding by instrument for the period 2014-2020



Source: FNSSA data base provided by INTPA (October 2021)

The three BS programmes are funded through the DCI-Geo LA. Starting in 2014, through the BS to Rural Development Policy (DRET) the EU supports the GoC in its efforts to reduce poverty and promote inclusive and sustainable growth in the most vulnerable and poorest rural areas of the country, territories most affected by the armed conflict. A total of EUR 36,65 million was disbursed directly to the MADR, with a complementary support package for EUR 2,45 million, including technical assistance and visibility activities. Other budget support was in aided the competitiveness of the dairy sector. The budget support to the dairy sector was an accompanying measure to the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between EU and Colombia to alleviate the perceived impact of the FTA on the Colombian dairy sector. Between 2014-2020, the Ministry of Commerce received budget support in the framework of Sector Reform Contract for Regional Competitiveness in Colombia (CReC), as well as support to sector reform for Local Sustainable Development in marginalised areas in Colombia. All of the BS envelopes have a strong focus on socio-economic inclusion in the most vulnerable and poorest rural areas.

The Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Colombia 2014-2020 (2014-2017, with an addendum for 2017-2020) pays particular attention to governance issues (peace and stability) and issues related to promoting inclusive economic and social development. According to the MIP, of the total envelope of EUR 127 million, EUR 100.6 million was allocated to the priority area 'Local development and institution building', and EUR 20 million to Sustainable trade and investment and EUR 6.4 million to support measures. Land governance, improving access to land and access to markets has been a priority area of support, strengthening the systemic and Sustainable Agri-food Systems (SAFS)-related elements in the EU portfolio. Working at the territorial level and involving civil society were seen as critical to contributing to inclusive socio-economic development and addressing the inequality issues. EU support is territorially focused on areas where the State has little presence and which have been particularly affected by the internal conflict. Engagement with local communities is an integral part of the EU approach.

Characteristics of the EU support in the country

The EU support to SAFS in Colombia covers agriculture and food systems as a part of the integrated support to rural development, in an approach that strongly focuses on strengthening governance (the presence of the State in peripheral regions) and on models of development that can address the high levels of inequality. Because of this approach that integrates conflict-related issues, the more 'classical' SAFS thematic areas such as resilience or nutrition are less pronounced or explicitly covered. It does not mean they are not addressed.

Halting deforestation and contributing to integrated approaches to biodiversity conservation gained prominence on the European agenda of support to Colombia between 2014 and 2020, and is a priority area in the MIP 2021-2027.

Another priority area of EU support has been sustainable trade and investment. Deemed especially relevant in the framework of the Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia, cooperation in the field of trade and investment is oriented to use trade as an instrument for poverty reduction.

The level of intervention combines strong government support with sector- and territorial level interventions implemented by national and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisation (CSOs). The main partner for the budget support is the Ministry of Agriculture and affiliated entities. The Italian Cooperation Agency and FAO are partners in the implementation of the technical assistance part of the second phase of DRET. The partnership between EU and FAO on the Food and Nutrition Security, Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation (FIRST) Programme has deepened the work on sustainable food systems. For example, accompanying the GoC in the preparations of the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021, explicitly linking it to the Colombian agenda around territorial development and the structural transformations called for in the light of the RRI¹⁴². NGOs and civil society are mostly partners for implementing the project and programmes, most of which are under the EU Trust Fund.

Stakeholders targeted to benefit from EU SAFS support are communities in post-conflict rural areas, specifically indigenous and/or Afro-descendant communities. The 2018-2022 NDP, to which the DRET also contributes, targets specifically small and medium agricultural producers.

Outcome monitoring for the different budget support envelopes is based on different indicators that track progress. For DRET for example, 6 indicators have been decided on in dialogue with the GoC tracking progress from the MADR, ADR and ANT databases recording detailed information.

Quality of design (JC2.1)

Integrated approach

The EU support in Colombia, with its priority areas on governance (peace and stability), inclusive rural economic development (with a focus on the territories most affected by the armed conflict) and environmental issues have led to the integration of many core SAFS aspects in the design of EU support. The BS to MADR (DRET) has had a strong focus on institutional strengthening and policy reform to contribute to more coherent and effective rural development policies, making policies more responsive and relevant to the communities in those fragile areas. The Peace Laboratories and New Peace Territories project (2002-2017) have shown strong multi-actor and multi-sector approaches, and emphasised the strengthening of local and adaptive governance and inclusivity of economic development. The Rutas PDET project is an example of a project that took a very participatory approach to problem identification, design and implementation of interventions. The prioritisation of which tertiary roads the project would work on, was carefully done together with the *Juntas de Acción Comunal* (Community Action Boards) and other local organisations and took one year.

Synergies within the EU's own portfolio were exploited, mainly by connecting the more top-down budget support programmes with the more bottom-up actions under the EUTF in the conflict-affected territories. Synergies were also exploited between the budget support programmes on rural development, local sustainable development and local competitiveness, and with thematic and regional programmes on the same subject. The EUD has worked towards developing an inter-ministerial agenda between MADR and MINAMBIENTE in the framework of a new budget support programme for 2022-2027. The inter-ministerial agenda is supposed to guide a more integrated approach between MADR and MINAMBIENTE in terms of policies but also for implementation at territorial level.

Risk assessments have been a useful tool to inform the EU strategy in Colombia, and efforts continue to broaden and share the use of these types of tools. A risk assessment at national level, encouraged by EU HQ, was done in 2020 to inform the formulation of the new MIP. All units within the EUD contributed to it. EUD staff found it useful, also at sectoral level; for example, on land tenure issues. The risk assessment included some dimensions of political economy analysis. EUD staff is developing a tool for risk assessment with local agencies and institutions like ANT, and working to obtain buy-in from these institutions to apply it. The idea is to integrate this tool in a geographic information system to visualise specific risk assessments. The French organisation ONF International is supporting this initiative with the development of a digital platform.

Transformative potential

The transformative potential in the design of the support is high. Because of its focus on governance and inclusive economic development, the emphasis has been on investing in the reform of processes, 'soft systems' and ensuring these reforms are embedded in institutional mechanisms that can withstand the pressure of electoral cycles. The efforts in addressing territorial needs and strengthening the institutional capacity of local CSOs and governments through EUTF support adds to the longer-term transformative potential. The EU support, through BS, EUTF and other projects and programmes, has been well aligned with government strategies (PND 2018-2022, programmes and commitments related to the peace agreement such as RRI and PDET). These reforms have transformational ambitions closely related to sustainable food systems

¹⁴² FAO (2021) *Impacto, Resiliencia, Sostenibilidad, y Transformación para la Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (FIRST)*. Annual progress report..

transformation. The EU support, although small compared to the overall GoC budget, has been able to leverage its funding and influence to influence and catalyse GoC policies and budgets. The support, not in the least, the policy dialogue and the strengthened European voice in this policy dialogue have contributed to transformational change.

The EUD is undertaking efforts to support the GoC in processes around the ambitious Colombian Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) related to the agri-food sector (reinforcing circular and low-carbon rural economies as well as green and zero-deforestation value chains), which is a potentially transformative agenda. The EUD has identified the Green Deal, in particular the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategy, as key to leveraging buy-in from and engaging in a dialogue with the large agri-food private sector in Colombia on a more transformative agenda for SAFS in Colombia¹⁴³.

Integration of gender equality

Gender equality is increasingly integrated in the EU support to SAFS, in terms of programming, implementation and monitoring. EU support is aligned with the government's priorities in this area. In the EUTF projects, women's economic empowerment is part of the strategic framework¹⁴⁴ and is addressed in projects such as those implemented by Fundación Alpina, Mercy Corps Europe and Corporacion Mundial De La Mujer Colombia. The TSCP has contributed to building capacity of community organisations, many of these made up of women, for example with Chocoamazonic, a women's association of cacao producers and processors¹⁴⁵. Rutas PDET has elaborated a gender strategy, ensuring the baseline study gathered the necessary sex-disaggregated information. The project aims to increase the participation of women in the infrastructure value chain (for example, in road construction). In DRET, EUD advocated successfully for a specific indicator that tracks the proportion of women benefiting from public policy¹⁴⁶. Gender equality is firmly on the agenda of the policy dialogue.

EU policy coherence at country level

European objectives of inclusive sustainable development, environmental conservation and fighting climate change are sometimes incoherent with the policy of promoting European companies' activities in Colombia. How to address this policy incoherence is often a challenge, not only to the EUD but to EU Member States in general. Indeed, despite strong environmental and labour protection laws in Colombia, their enforcement has been problematic, especially in the regions most affected by the conflict (Amazonian and Pacific region). Corruption, strengthened by the presence of criminal networks and the abundance of resources linked to illegal activities, contributes to a climate where the incentive for foreign companies and investors to do due diligence is weak. An example is the case of European energy providers purchasing coal from conflict-affected areas in Colombia associated with severe human rights and environmental harms.¹⁴⁷ The Spanish cooperation agency (AECID), has established dialogue with its private sector companies, but feel they have little leverage to change behaviour. They work closely with their Ministry of Trade to establish a dialogue with those companies and supported the Colombian *Consejería de Derechos Humanos* and other institutions to promote the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. AECID indicates that the EU is an important partner to provide stronger directives that would give them a mandate to stop Spanish companies from doing harm. The Commerce section within the EUD planned to discuss these issues with the French Embassy, in the framework of the French Presidency of the EU and their specific interest in the topic. Germany is also relatively vocal about it.

Private sector stakeholders have expressed concerns about potential changes in policies and directives following the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork strategy. The latter could have significant impact on key export-oriented agri-food industries. A concrete example is the potential prohibition of the use of the fungicide Mancozeb in the banana value chain as a consequence of stricter legislation around hazardous pesticides that would negatively affect the access of Colombian banana producers to the European market

Active linkages with EU MS (JC2.1)

EU cooperation and investments in areas related to green growth, such as circular economy, renewable energies and sustainable mobility are emerging, but could be further exploited, especially in the context of the European Green Deal ambitions.

¹⁴³ EU (2021): *MIP 2021-2017*

¹⁴⁴ Part of strategic pillar three on inclusion of youth, women and ethnic groups, and reflected in the indicators that are part of the Monitoring and Evaluation framework of the EUTF. The indicators track both economic positioning of women and their leadership and political participation. Source: EUTF Report Number 11, 30 September 2021

¹⁴⁵ TCSP (2020): *Second descriptive report.*; interview TCSP.

¹⁴⁶ EU (2020): *Technical and administrative dispositions. Annex to the second phase of BS DRET.* Internal document.

¹⁴⁷ SOMO (2021): *Coal mines must close, but not without just solutions for communities and workers.* Website.

The EU works closely together with EU Member States in Colombia. This is rooted in the strong support from the EUD and different EU MS to the GoC and civil society in the decades before the peace agreement was signed. The strong ties were reinforced by the establishment of the European Trust Fund for Colombia (EUTF), designed to accompany the GoC in implementing the peace agreement, in 2016. It brought together 21 EU MS, and Chile, specifically to support the first and third points of the peace agreement: integrated rural development and reintegration of former combatants into society.

The EUTF has provided a good framework for coordination and joint approach. The EUTF was governed by a Strategic Committee consisting of the EU Ambassadors and an Operational Committee consisting of the Heads of Cooperation. Despite slower decision processes for identification and implementation of interventions, the efforts of aligning between EU MS and with GoC policies and priorities resulted in increased visibility of the EU and a stronger voice in the policy dialogue concerning the implementation of the peace agreement. The GoC acknowledged that the EUTF has been instrumental in working in a more integrated way on the implementation of the peace agreement.

The EUTF monitoring and evaluation framework, strengthened in 2020, provided a good learning experience that the Team Europe Initiative is able to build on. In this framework, jointly defined objectives and indicators are tracked. There are Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) on Peace and Environment. Both TEIs have an indicative contribution of EUR 30 million, depending on the contribution of EU MS. As of this writing, the process around the TEIs is slowing due to the upcoming presidential elections in May 2022. Alignment with and buy-in from the GoC is an important factor for the TEIs' relevance and effectiveness, so EUD and EU MS are awaiting the change of government before taking any major decision on the strategic content of both TEIs.

TEI Peace priority areas (socio-economic development with a focus on strengthening local governance, reforms for social inclusion and local development, comprehensive rural policy) have a strong linkage with SAFs challenges such as more inclusive territorial and value chain development, land governance, investments in infrastructure and facilitating access to markets. Austria, Germany, Spain, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden, and Switzerland, Norway and the United Kingdom have been part of discussions around the TEI on Peace. There is a consensus on the need to work in a collective way between the participating EU MS. The EU MS interested in joining the TEI have developed a joint Theory of Change to define what they want to achieve. This process will hopefully help avoid the fragmentation of efforts and distorting the discussion by already thinking of instruments.

TEI Environment aims to contribute to Colombia's transition towards green development and to support Colombia as a model of sustainable development in Latin America. The Green Deal and Farm to Fork strategy are areas where EU MS have an interest and expressed willingness to support GoC, for example, by supporting efforts to improve access to the EU market for Colombian sustainably produced products (e.g., timber, agricultural products). There is potential to build on the German experiences on deforestation in the Amazon and Swedish efforts in the Sustainable Colombia Fund.

Effects of EU support

National agri-food systems governance (EQ2/JC2.2 & JC2.3)

Policies, regulations and institutions supported actors' actions to sustainable and inclusive value chains

The EU support has contributed to a shift (at least in narrative) of public policies from a very centralised approach to a much stronger focus on the most fragile, conflict-affected territories and their communities. The shift also entailed, at least at that territorial level, the promotion of civil society participation in public policy processes related to the peace agreement implementation (and hence related to integrated rural development).

The major institutional reform 'Mission for the Transformation of the Countryside' that was part of the PND and supported by DRET aimed at strengthening the articulation between national policy making and local level policy implementation. By creating ANT, ADR and ART as specialised entities with well-defined capacities, the objective was to create a greater regional presence of agencies in charge of rural and agricultural development. The BS was instrumental in establishing the Rural Women Directorate within MADR. DRET also supported the implementation of crucial SAFS governance issues such as access to land, property and land rights registry. It also contributed to improving monitoring mechanisms relevant to agri-food systems governance; e.g., integration of indicators monitoring 'sustainable use' of land and gender- and ethnicity-sensitive indicators.

Both the institutional reform and the investment in monitoring show signs of an integrated and systemic approach. The institutional reform have enabled existing and newly created institutions with the mandate and capacity to be more flexible and adaptive in how policies are implemented. It also strengthened the capacity to develop and implement policies in a more inclusive way by taking a multi-sectoral and multi-

actor approach. By strengthening monitoring mechanisms to track progress, especially related to tracking impact, coverage and effectiveness of policies, it has enabled the GoC to adjust course where necessary and it has provided civil society organisations with mechanisms to hold their government accountable.¹⁴⁸

The technical assistance provided by the EU in coordination with the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC) helped to improve the coordination between the MADR, the ANT and the ADR, to establish strategic planning instruments and to speed up the set-up of these entities. The coordination mechanisms of BS facilitated action planning, targeting and follow-up with MADR, ANT and ADR¹⁴⁹.

Despite the strong emphasis of EU support to the enhanced articulation between national- and territorial-level governance, the positive effect of this support is limited by a complex interplay of factors related to deeply ingrained inequalities between regions and within the conflict-affected territories, and persistent dynamics of violence and distrust to the government in the territories¹⁵⁰. This is resulting in an uneven delivery of services and weak implementation capacity of strategies and programmes.

Related to the multistakeholder dialogues organised in the framework of the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021, the international community, including the EU, was consulted as part of the preparatory dialogues. Colombia's participation in the Summit was broad-based and led by the First Lady and a high-level team (ministerial rank). A Road Map with five strategic pathways and a short- and medium-term agenda for the transformation of food systems has been constructed. The EUD relied on the FIRST Programme to follow up on this issue.

Enhanced technical, business and financial services including research and innovation supported actors' actions to sustainable and inclusive value chains

The EU has been able to enhance public and private services, making these more conducive to adopting more sustainable (economically and environmentally) and inclusive practices through policy and dialogue and TA provided under the budget support modality. Through BS the EU has supported the enhanced provision of technical agricultural extension services and enhanced access to land, other productive factors¹⁵¹ and business development services. A case in point is the effort to reform agricultural extension services. These efforts have resulted in the design of more differentiated approaches to extension (for example, the development of digital extension), integration of more forestry related knowledge and practices (highly relevant to the rural households in the conflict-affected areas) and provision of extension services that are more sensitive to environment and climate change. In 2020, the National System for Agricultural Innovation (SNIA) established Technical Committees for its Subsystems (Training Subsystem, Research and Development Subsystem, and Agricultural Extension Subsystem) to facilitate coordination and roll out of these changes.

Effects of this support have been, however, limited by systemic constraints. Delivery on the ground, especially in the more remote areas, has been problematic. One of the BS indicators tracked the number of producers benefiting from agricultural and livestock extension services. In 2020, the compliance with this indicator was just 23% and can be explained by the pandemic. However, the low coverage of public agricultural extension workers has been highlighted as a persistent problem by project staff from both the Territorios Caquetenos Sostenibles para la Paz project (TCSP), the Rutas PDET project, and other actors. It has been perceived that in many cases, international cooperation has been filling the gap left by the public extension system. Private extension service providers are taking up some of the work, for example, the Empresas Prestadoras de Servicios (EPSEA) and the *gremios* (producers' associations/sectoral unions). The EPSEA need to be accredited by the ADR to ensure they meet the requirements. Efforts are made to align the EPSEAs and the services provided by the *gremios* more closely to national government strategies, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁵²

As part of the FIRST project, the EUD, together with FAO, has contributed to the digitalisation of the 'Registro y Clasificación de Usuarios del Servicio de Extensión Agropecuaria' (Register and classification of agricultural extension services users). This system to register and classify the different users of the agricultural extension service has helped to facilitate the targeting and prioritisation of the public agricultural extension service.

¹⁴⁸ EU (2020): *Technical and administrative dispositions*. Annex to the second phase of BS DRET. Internal document.

¹⁴⁹ EU (2020): *Final report BS DRET*. Internal document.

¹⁵⁰ World Bank Group (2021): *Building an Equitable Society in Colombia*; Fundación Ideas para la Paz (2019): *Del capitolio al territorio. La implementación del Acuerdo de Paz en lo local. los desafíos y las oportunidades*; Amaya Panche (2021): *Implementing the peace agreement in Colombia*. Challenges for peacebuilding and reconciliation. European Union Institute for Security Studies. Conflict Series. Brief 11. June 2021.

¹⁵¹ BS contributed to the implementation of comprehensive agricultural development projects. ADR is mandated with the implementation of these economically, socially and environmentally sustainable productive projects especially targeting marginalised rural populations, and does so in close alignment with ANT. Source: EU (2020): *Final report BS DRET*. Internal document.

¹⁵² Interviews with MADR, FAO and stakeholders of the Rutas PDET project.

Synergies with trade, energy, health, research and other areas are exploited

The EU supported the signature of an inter-ministerial Agenda between MADR and Minambiente in 2019. The inter-ministerial agenda established a coordination mechanism to guide strategies and programmes. Inter-sectoral coordination has also been promoted to fight deforestation and promote comprehensive forest management, engaging with the private sector and civil society. This joint agenda will be pertinent in the context of the F2F and to elaborate appropriate accompanying measures. As concerns industry and trade policies, MADR participates in the “Pacts for Competitiveness” which are coordination mechanisms aiming at stimulating productivity, exports and employment. EU supported the utilisation of these synergies through different instruments: BS DRET, BS CRcC and BS DLS; accompanying policy dialogueTA, for example on ‘Negocios Verdes and in EU support to Minambiente.

Changes in agri-food systems value chains and nutrition (EQ3)

There are signals of change towards improved sustainability and inclusiveness of smallholder dominated agri-food value chains, especially in the areas most affected by the conflict (Caquetá, Guaviare, Putumayo, Nariño). Changes include the uptake of more environmentally sustainable practices in production and processing, strengthened capacities of producers’ organisations to access markets, an increase of areas under environmental protection, reforestation, agroforestry and silvopastoral systems or in transition towards otherwise more sustainable management models.¹⁵³ The improvement can be attributed to the efforts both by communities, government and development partners addressing the root causes of the conflict in the run-up to and in the implementation of the peace agreement. However, the advances of these potentially transformational changes (including all dimensions of sustainability but with a strong emphasis on the social dimension) are limited by the persistent presence of armed groups involved in illegal activities. This includes the coca value chain in the most fragile territories of the country (both socioeconomically and environmentally) and the dynamics highlighted in 3.1.1.

EU efforts to bring in private investment are limited in achieving sustained impact due to the security risks in these areas, but also to the limited progress in structural rural reform. Indeed, the security situation in some areas especially on the Pacific coast has actually worsened in the last three years. Local communities are suffering from high levels of violence and weak enforcement of the rule of law. This directly impacts the communities’ abilities to exploit economic opportunities and government and development partners’ efforts to support inclusive and sustainable value chain development.

Colombia’s private sector investments in agri-food have mainly focused on the development of export-oriented value chains such as bananas, avocados, coffee, cacao, flowers, and fruits value chains. Shrimp and palm oil are considered value chains with high potential as well. Rural households in these value chains often work as labourers, with weak bargaining positions. Successful EU- supported activities targeting export-oriented value chains able to include small-scale farmers and rural households are targeting more specialised niche markets, like those of speciality coffee and cacao, but also in more innovative value chains like the forest-based value chains TCSP has promoted. Smaller agri-food-SMEs are also targeted, for example, through programmes of MINCIT and Minambiente like *Negócios Verdes* (Green Businesses). In this regard, factors such as **(i) the lack of inclusiveness and sustainability in the dominant agri-food value chains in Colombia, (ii) the lack of incentives for private sector companies to adopt more responsible business conduct and (iii) the dynamics of persistent violence and illegal activities in some of the territories pose limits to the transformational potential of EU support to agri-food value chains.**

BS has contributed to the increased access of smallholder farmers to finance and increased the total volume of finance to the agri-food sector. Financial inclusion policies and legislation, such as the ‘Implementación de Estrategias para la Inclusión Financiera en el Sector Agropecuario Nacional, are developed and implemented to stimulate finance intermediaries to reach small-scale producers, family farming and MSMEs with special credit lines with subsidised interest rates (LEC). In 2021, Banco Agrario approved around 478.000 loans to the private agriculture sector for a total of 27 billion Colombian pesos. 80% of these loans were directed to small-scale producers. This represented only 20% in value of the total amount, illustrating the still persistent bottlenecks to reach broad rural populations, including more vulnerable groups. The EU has contributed to integrate a stronger tracking of this finance to small scale producers through the BS DRET.

The EU contributions to more inclusive and sustainable value chains have taken shape through various channels: mainly BS to different sectors and several projects financed through the EUTF. EU support has been aligned with government policies, programmes and projects implemented at the national, regional and local level. The Rutas PDET project, for example, has been funded through the EUTF and as such fully aligned with government policy. Also through BS DRET, the EU has contributed directly and indirectly to strengthened capacities of value chain actors. Three of the six BS DRET indicators track the number of producers that benefit from the inclusive productivity strategies the government has been implementing.

¹⁵³ EUTF hardcopy brochures, project documents

Supporting these instruments has improved rural populations' access to productive factors. The number of families that benefited from inclusive productivity policies increased from 4.610 to 174.581 households between the baseline in 2014 and 2018.¹⁵⁴ Through BS CReC, EU support contributed to the implementation of Productive Development Projects (PDP) by MINCIT. These PDPs were part of the MINCIT policy instruments, but the EU support, through the TA by RedAdelco, was instrumental in shifting MINCIT from a dominant urban perspective a stronger territorial and rural focus, increasing the number of rural value chains benefitting from the PDPs.¹⁵⁵

Another important way to support systemic changes at the value chain level is through investments in institutional strengthening. EU support to the reform of MADR and the creation of the ANT, ADR and ART in 2015, but also the strengthening of the extension services that have been emphasised in the current programming period through the TA with FAO and the Italian Cooperation are good examples of investments made in institutional strengthening. The strengthening of the network "RedAdelco" has also been strategic in this regard. Different EU instruments supported the institutionalisation of the Agencias de Desarrollo Económico Local and the platform that evolved from these 'Adels', the RedAdelco¹⁵⁶. Between 2010 and 2013, the first Adeles benefited from EU support, and between 2016 and 2020, through the technical assistance component of the CReC. EU support has contributed to more inclusive and effective national- and local-level policy processes related to private sector development. EU support to RedAdel has helped create institutionalised spaces for multistakeholder dialogue at local levels (public and private sector, producers' organisations and cooperatives). RedAdelco is currently implementing partner for several projects funded by development partners like EC, AECID, USAID.

Both government programmes and EU support through EUTF projects have explicitly targeted women, youth and marginalised groups like indigenous people and Afro-descendant people.

The investments in stronger value chains have been relatively well supported and explicitly linked to investments in the enabling environment, such as finance, research, and innovation. Through BS, the agri-finance infrastructure has aligned some policies with the prioritised value chain policies implemented by MADR, for example. TCSP has built a strong partnership with the Universidad de la Amazonia, providing a scientific basis for much of the cacao and forest-based value chains the project has worked on. By being embedded in the territory, the University was able to link TCSP to stakeholders on the ground, and grow stronger roots. TCSP invested in capacity building of small-scale producers together with the University by setting up Escuelas de campo (farmer field schools). This format initiated by the project – organising several days of very practical, context-specific training often in very remote areas- has been adopted by the University. The joint and participatory research with remote indigenous communities resulted in identifying local high-quality cacao varieties fit for niche markets. The research also helped develop the productive lines of the forest-based value chains and apply local researchers' know-how on deforestation and extension. The Escuelas de campo is a very valuable praxis for the students to gain practical experience working with local communities, and feeds into the extension services curricula that the University is developing. Both TCSP and Rutas PDET benefit from the different strands of research of SINCHI, such as fundamental research on germplasm and applied research on innovative agro-ecological value chains and non-wood forest products.

The efforts, effects and constraints related to supporting more inclusive and sustainable value chains are context- and value-chain specific. TCSP illustrates the integrated and participatory approach EU adopted to support MSME's, smallholder producers, women and youth, to diversify and increase sustainable production in the project intervention areas in Caquetá. It implemented a demand-driven approach based on existing organisations present in the area and their mandates. The results were that capacities of stakeholders in different segments of the cocoa value chain were strengthened, building commercial alliances between the local producers' associations with Italian and Colombian off-takers, investing in a local processing organisation and on post-harvest technologies like adequate storage facilities. BS CReC strengthened the institutional infrastructure around measurements in the cacao and avocado value chain necessary to comply with international and European Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards and other international quality standards. Capacity building through the Escuelas de Campo and technical assistance to the local organisations contributes to diversification and application of more sustainable agricultural practices by the farm households involved in TCSP. Limitations to supporting value chains geared towards high-end (European) markets is that, while such value chains can provide producers with higher incomes, they also require higher levels of capital (financial, human, social), which in practice can limit the inclusion of most vulnerable groups. Dependence on

¹⁵⁴ EU (2018): *Note on the fourth tranche release BS DRET*. Internal document. ; EU (2020): *Final report BS DRET*. Internal document.

¹⁵⁵ MINCIT (2021): Powerpoint presentation prepared for the evaluation mission, interviews MINCIT, EUD, RedAdelco

¹⁵⁶ The Adels are non-profit organisations committed to the promotion of sustainable local development. They are based on European models of public-private organisations for territorial development, instrumental for example in Italy in the creation of local small and medium sized enterprises at local levels. In Colombia, the first Adels were established in partnership by GoC and UNDP to promote inclusive models of development in vulnerable territories, able to adapt to the specificities of local contexts. (Source: interview RedAdelco)

export-oriented commodities also increases the exposure to external shocks such as fluctuations in world prices of cocoa.

The intervention “Rutas PDET” also works on the cocoa value chain in Putumayo and Tumaco, but identified the dairy value chain in Caquetá as a strategic value chain to work on to promote stability in this conflict-affected region through inclusive and sustainable development. Cattle ranching is the mainstay of family farmers in the region, and the dairy value chain is a major contributor to the local economy. At the same time, the current ranching practices are unsustainable in the long term in the fragile ecosystems of Caquetá. Extensive livestock systems have been one of the main drivers of deforestation and soil degradation and negatively impact water and biodiversity resources.¹⁵⁷ Rutas PDET is taking an integrated approach, working together with different types of private-sector companies (local small processors, producers’ cooperatives, rural women associations) on production, processing and retail segments of the value chain. Through targeted extension and technical support, the project helps cattle rangers adopt intensive silvo-pastoral system practices, resulting in higher milk yields with lower environmental impact. They also work on the demand side, supporting the establishment of a brand to market ‘deforestation-free cheese’, and investing in local tertiary road infrastructure to ease access to markets and inputs for local communities.

System level effects (EQ4)

Economic opportunities (JC 4.2)

The EU support contributed to policy- and institutional reform aiming at reducing inequalities between territories through strengthening local economic development and improving the reach of public services in the areas most affected by the conflict. The top-down efforts through DRET catalysed changes in rural policies and institutions, making them more conducive to increased and lasting economic opportunities for smallholder producers and MSME’s, increasing voice and empowerment of communities in conflict-affected areas and improving their capacities and bargaining power. Bottom-up programme-level efforts like TCSP and Rutas PDET have reinforced and contributed to Government and EU objectives to shift towards more inclusive local governance, inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic development, peace and stability by working directly with local food system actors.¹⁵⁸

At the same time, limits on the extent of transformational change are becoming evident. The reforms EU supported through DRET were high on the agenda under the presidency that signed the Peace Agreement but lost political traction under the Duque presidency (2018-present). An important system-level effect is that in the current presidential election campaigns, none of the candidates are questioning the implementation of the peace agreement and linked to it the importance of addressing rural inequalities in the conflict-affected areas, as was the case in the 2018 presidential campaign. In terms of systemic change in policies, there is now an increased territorial focus in a highly centralised country; a more participatory approach that enhances the legitimacy of the peace process and the integration of ethnicity and gender perspectives in the implementation of the peace agreement.¹⁵⁹ This can be partly attributed to the consistent support of the EU and other international partners to the peace process and the emphasis the EUD put on the institutional sustainability of these reforms. The skills to navigate political agendas, strengthened by the partnership with FAO (for example through FIRST and the lessons learned from the VGGT project) illustrate the importance of encouraging, growing, and capitalising on the skills and networks needed. When President Duque took office, the EUD found allies and agendas with which it could align without creating an antagonistic atmosphere, resulting in a weakened but continuing commitment of the GoC to the peace agreement. At the same time, when it became clear that the Duque government was not going to allocate resources to the reintegration of ex-FARC members, the EU and EU MS were able to react quickly and fill (part of) this gap taking it up as one of the priority areas of the EUTF. Implementing partners like RedAdelco in TCSP were able to maintain difficultly achieved engagement of local communities when trust in the peace process was very low.¹⁶⁰

The progress in addressing unequal access to land and productive resources has been significant¹⁶¹, yet the pace of implementation of the long-term commitments is insufficient to accomplish them in the

¹⁵⁷ SINCHI (2021): *Powerpoint presentation prepared for the evaluation mission.*; Interview Instituto SINCHI

¹⁵⁸ Interviews with EUD, FAO, MADR, RedAdelco, TCSP and Rutas PDET.

¹⁵⁹ Amaya Panche (2021): *Implementing the peace agreement in Colombia. Challenges for peacebuilding and reconciliation.* European Union Institute for Security Studies. Conflict Series. Brief 11. June 2021.

¹⁶⁰ Interviews EUD, Swedish Embassy, RedAdelco

¹⁶¹ Between 2010 and 2018 3,700,000 hectares were handed over to indigenous, Afro-Colombian and non-ethnic small producer communities; 36,950 people benefited from land restitution processes; 332,600 hectares of rehabilitated land or provided with irrigation districts; 139,400 rural housing subsidies granted; and 64,435 families benefited from trade alliances and agribusiness. EU (2020): Final report BS DRET. Internal document.

stipulated period^{162, 163}). This lack of progress is a constraint to achieving transformational change. Although the peace agreement is institutionalised through the PDET, financing the PDET projects and strengthening local institutional capacity of departments and municipalities remains challenging. Different interviewees indicated it is unclear how the different instruments adopted for the implementation of the peace process are aligned in institutional and budgetary terms and are articulated with national level development strategies, policies and instruments; for example how the PDET relates to the different National Plans for comprehensive rural reform (PNRRI) and the Proyectos Integrales de Desarrollo Agropecuario y Rural (PIDA, Comprehensive agricultural and rural development projects).

Concerns also relate to the lack of clarity around the public budget allocated to finance the implementation of the PDET and the PNRRI. The PDET are supposed to be funded through three different sources, including through the Sistema General de Regalías (SGR, general royalties system). According to the Instancias de Gerencia de Proyectos PDET (IGPPDET, PDET Project Management Bodies) have been created to support the local administrations to access public and private services to implement the PDET project. The IGPPDET are supposed to coordinate with ART and the national government to align demand and offer of prioritised public services such as extension services, infrastructure investments or health care. The high levels of bureaucratic and technical requirements create barriers for the PDET municipalities and projects to actually access funding and prioritised public services. Requirements for co-financing by local governments in practice exclude more vulnerable municipalities because of the bureaucratic hurdles and institutional complexities, which PDETs are financed and which ones are not, and through which resources, is perceived by some to have become a tool of political pressure.

Nutrition (JC4.3)

In the sample of interventions, there were few signs of EU contribution to nutrition-specific achievements. The NGO ICCO, with support from the EU (EUTF), has developed a number of initiatives around gastronomy and locally sustainable food production. Targeting rural and smallholder producers, the project builds capacity and creates linkages that result in profitable business models like catering services, restaurants, food products, etc., that generate revenues to reinvest in the project. Through the project local consumers have access to locally produced, affordable, healthy food and awareness is raised about the sustainability impacts (both socially as well as environmentally) of dietary choices. Gastronomy and ecotourism are proving to bridge the gaps between rural areas and cities; creating space for dialogue and making visible where food is produced and who produces it.

Climate change and environment (JC4.4)

Both at national governance level and at value chain level, the EU support has contributed to promote the adoption of more environmentally sustainable practices. In the first phase of DRET, the integration of climate change and environmental topics was one of six lines of action of the accompanying technical assistance. This was found particularly relevant because of the environmental fragility of rural and post-conflict areas. The effect of integrating more environmental and climate change issues, for example, in extension services, was limited because of the very weak coverage of extension services in the areas that most needed it. For instance, there are major difficulties to reach farmers involved in the coca value chain, a value chain with problematic use of agrochemicals that negatively impact both human health and the fragile environments where most coca is grown. There are different systemic constraints for this; the disinvestment in public rural extension services in the past decades being one. Part of these public services, for example livestock vaccination programmes, have been channelled to *gremios* (producer associations) who have not taken an integrated approach to extension, including providing information about climate change and environment. One of the self-assessed weak points of the first phase of DRET was the weak linkage with private sector. In the current phase of BS, with TA to institutionalise the inter-ministerial agenda, the EU has been able to support the linkage between MADR and Minambiente. It resulted in six value chain-specific guides that were jointly developed with the producers in those value chains, Ministries, the *gremios*, and CSOs. It is too early to tell if these guides have had an impact by encouraging value chain actors to adopt more sustainable practices. EUD staff and other interviewees (EU MS, FAO, RedAdelco) felt that the European Farm to Fork (F2F) was a powerful lever to catalyse these dialogues and achieve these results.

¹⁶² Amaya Panche (2021): *Implementing the peace agreement in Colombia. Challenges for peacebuilding and reconciliation*. European Union Institute for Security Studies. Conflict Series. Brief 11. June 2021. ; Instituto Kroc de Estudios Internacionales de Paz (2022) Informe trimestral: estado efectivo de la implementación del Acuerdo Final, octubre – diciembre 2021 <https://doi.org/10.7274/k0698626x28>.

Kroc Institute. International Peace Studies

¹⁶³ EUD funds the Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies, which is formally mandated to track the progress of the different accomplishments of the commitments made in the peace agreement. The institute publishes three monthly progress reports and thematic reports. See <https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/barometer/colombia-reports>

The transformational strength of the effect of EU support on climate change and the environment is limited by different factors, including the persistent weak coverage of public extension services. The current BS and TA are hoping to address this. However, factors outside the sphere of influence of the EU (geographical dispersion and limited accessibility of farmers due to geography but also security situation) will likely continue to pose challenges.

EU support has had little impact on major drivers of deforestation (coca value chains and other illicit crops; the expansion of cattle ranging) while dominant production systems continue to show excessive and inefficient use of agrochemicals that pollute soils and water sources. These are sectors that have little need of support from government or international cooperation, hence influencing transformational change is hard. There are opportunities to improve the coherence and coordination between the EUD's Cooperation and Trade sections in stronger actions to promote responsible business conduct. The F2F is already proving to be an important lever to push for these changes. Concerns around stricter environmental directives are voiced loudly, especially by representatives from the banana exporting companies, and coalitions are forged between banana producing countries to collectively oppose to them. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and the consequent price hike in cereals and agri-inputs are also putting pressure on the forcefulness with which the F2F will take shape in the external dimension of EU action.

Lessons Learned & Good practices

EU engagement in multi-stakeholder policy dialogue and partnerships

The EU in Colombia has built on strong foundations of dialogue and partnerships with EU Member States (EU MS), other development partners, the Government of Colombia and Colombian non-state actors. The central role of multi-stakeholder dialogues between civil society organisations and local and national governments has been an active effort of the EU during the armed conflict. The fruits of these efforts can be seen in the acknowledgement of the EU as a trusted interlocutor for the GoC (partly attributed to the leverage of the budget support instrument with different Ministries), the presidency of the international donor's coordination group (GRUC) in 2018 and the relative success the European Trust Fund (EUTF) in amplifying the voice of European development partners.

A lesson learned is that the EUD has leveraged BS and the joint EU action under EUTF to increase the influence of the BS related policy dialogue. Through BS and the EUTF interventions, policy dialogue has been continuous. This has ensured that support has been properly aligned with public policy objectives, especially regarding rural development. Thanks to the high-quality policy dialogue, the EU support has been able to adapt to political dynamics and strike a balance between adhering to country-led objectives and EU priorities.

EU efforts to support GoC in the preparations of the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 were appreciated, but limited in impact. The Summit and associated dialogue processes seem to have been limited in concretely influencing policy processes. The Summit was not mentioned by government officials in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development or in the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. They have contributed to position the concept of food systems in the country and allow for the idea of food systems transformation to take root.

EU instruments, modalities, funding channels

The case of Colombia illustrates how important solid public finance management for budget support to be effective. Together with the World Bank, the EU has taken an active role in the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) program, sitting in the Steering Committee. Through PEFA, a framework for assessing and reporting on the strengths and weaknesses of public financial management, the EU has been able to contribute in a coordinated and country-led way to strengthening the enabling environment for successful budget support implementation.

Departments within the Ministry of Agriculture report that the budget support has been instrumental for them to structurally increase their budget. Because the EU support is added to the existing budget, the following year the Planning department 'automatically' integrates this sum in the running budget and allocates the national budget to it. For the Parks Department within the Ministry of Agriculture for example, this has meant a 25% increase in their budget, using budget support smartly. The strategic use of sectoral BS was an opportunity for the Directorate for Rural Women within MADR to increase their permanent budget from government resources.

The slow disbursement of the budget support has caused a number of issues of the receiving departments. The planning and disbursement processes in Colombia are very strictly organised. The PND - developed by every incoming government through multi-sectoral and multi-actor consultations and approved by Parliament - covers the four-year period of that government, including very detailed policy plans and subsequent policy targets. Budgets, however, are allocated and valid for only one year. This mechanism aims to reduce the risk

of corruption and increase strict public finance management. Often EU support comes in the course of the year instead of neatly on the first of January; sometimes as late as October. In some cases, departments are obliged to spend these budgets before the end of the year. Problems with the internal accountants, or the risk of budgets being cut the following year are a real risk.

The set-up and strategy of the EUTF has proven to be efficient to implement interventions. Not many funds had the possibility to be deployed immediately after the signing of the peace agreement, so the fund itself and the commitment to the timely preparation were opportune. Indeed, after the conclusion of the peace agreement, the Operational Committee of the Trust Fund was able to adopt the first projects quickly. At the end of 2020, the Trust Fund was financing 34 actions, for a total budget of about EUR 113.8 M.

The Trust Fund was found to be an appropriate modality to continue the accompaniment of the GoC in the peace process.

In addition, the EUTF has increased the visibility of the EU as a whole in the international support to the peace process in Colombia, amplified the voice of EU MS in the policy dialogue around the implementation of the peace agreement and proved to be adaptive and flexible.

The EUTF has also allowed the reintegration of ex-combatants in its activities after it became clear that this aspect was at risk of being deprioritised by the GoC and other key development partners like USAID. This commitment to the reintegration agenda eventually translated into a budget support for the reintegration of ex-combatants (EUR 12.5 M) under the EUTF in 2020.

However, the management of its Operational Committee could be improved. The increased need for coordination and consensus-building between the different EU MS, aligning national and common interests, made decision-making slower than non-joint programmes. Even so, the Trust Fund provided a good learning experience that the Team Europe Initiative was able to build on. It increased.

Case study note – Haiti

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Introduction

Remark: The case study report does not constitute a separate evaluation of European Union (EU) support in the country or its situation with regard to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS). It presents country-related findings relevant to the overall assessed Evaluation Questions (EQ) / Judgement Criteria (JC) and feeds into the main evaluation report of the Evaluation of the EU support to SAFS to which it will be attached as an annex.

Context

Main SAFS challenges

Haiti is located on the western part of the island of Hispaniola, between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. It has a tropical climate and is a mountainous territory of 27,750 km², with plains below 200 m. of altitude occupying only one fifth of the territory.¹⁶⁴ It has a population of about 11.4 million, of which an estimated 43% lives in rural areas and close to a quarter in the metropolitan area of the capital.¹⁶⁵

Haiti is the poorest country in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region and among the poorest countries in the world. In 2020, it had a GDP per capita of US\$2,925, which is less than a fifth of the LAC average of US\$15,092.¹⁶⁶ Haiti ranks 170th out of 189 countries in the UN's Human Development Index¹⁶⁷ and it is classified as an extremely fragile context by the OECD.¹⁶⁸ The COVID-19 pandemic has further weakened an already weak economy.

There is high prevalence of food insecurity in Haiti. It is estimated that 45% of the population is chronically moderately (i.e., IPC level 3) or severely (IPC level 4) food insecure.¹⁶⁹ The nutritional status of children is marked by prevalence of stunting and underweight. The nutritional status of women is marked by overweight and obesity, with 32% of women overweight or obese in 2016-17.¹⁷⁰ It has been estimated that iron-rich foods are lacking in the diets of half of all households and that at least one in four households is deficient in the consumption of protein and vitamin A-rich foods.¹⁷¹

Access to food is a major limiting factor for food security, mainly due to the low and unstable purchasing power of food insecure families in a context of continuously rising prices of basic foodstuffs, most recently worsened by the war in Ukraine. This is made more significant by the fact that between 60% and 80% of the food consumed by households comes from market purchases.

The food system assessment of the FAO, the EU and CIRAD notes that the national food system is fragile and unbalanced and can be divided into five territorial food systems with their own characteristics and weaknesses. It, like other documents consulted for this case study, identifies four main challenges for sustainable agri-food systems in Haiti:

- Declining food production and dependence on imports;
- Loss of resilience of food systems, particularly in the face of the effects of climate change and natural resource degradation;
- Poor availability of road and agricultural infrastructure and basic social services;
- Socio-political instability not allowing for increased investment in the agricultural sector.

Declining food production and dependence on imports

The agricultural sector employs more than 50% of the active population¹⁷², while it accounts for around 20% of GDP, which points to an imbalance between the weight of the agricultural population and its contribution to GDP.¹⁷³ Many farms are too small to generate a decent income. At the last general agricultural census, there were almost one million farmers, with family farms representing 98%. Over the past two decades, Haitian

¹⁶⁴ EU (2016): Action Document "*Programme de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle du 11ème FED en Haïti*".

¹⁶⁵ World Bank (2020): *Data Bank World Development Indicators – Haiti*. Accessible at:

<https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>

¹⁶⁶ World Bank. (2021): *The World Bank in Haiti*. Accessible at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview#1>

¹⁶⁷ UNDP (2020): *Human Development Report 2020 – The next frontier Human development and the Anthropocene*.

¹⁶⁸ OECD (2020): *State of Fragility 2020*.

¹⁶⁹ EU & CIRAD (2022): *Des politiques favorisant l'importation vers des politiques au service de la durabilité et de la résilience des systèmes alimentaires en Haïti* (draft 22 March 2022).

¹⁷⁰ Government of Haiti (2021). *Feuille de route nationale en vue de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires pour soutenir l'Agenda 2030 en Haïti*. Accessible at: <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SSA-feuille-de-route.docx-version-avancee-au-17-septembre-2021.pdf>

¹⁷¹ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

¹⁷² EU (2020). Action Document "*Programme de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle du 11ème FED en Haïti*".

¹⁷³ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

agriculture has also been marked by a considerable decline in production, resulting in a decline in exports and an inability to cover the food needs of the population. Despite the potential of the agricultural sector given agro-climatic characteristics, Haiti imports more than half of its staple foods.¹⁷⁴ Imported food is often of low nutritional value, adding to the malnutrition challenges of the country.¹⁷⁵

Loss of resilience of food systems, particularly in the face of the effects of climate change and natural resource degradation

Haiti is highly vulnerable to climate change and natural hazards, such as hurricanes, floods and earthquakes, affecting agricultural livelihoods and food security. According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2021, between 2000 and 2019, Haiti was the third country worldwide most affected by the impacts of extreme weather events, with 80 such events in that period.¹⁷⁶ The extreme drought in 2014/2015, exacerbated by the influence of El Niño, as well as Hurricane Matthew that hit the country in 2016 and caused losses and damages estimated at 32% of GDP, are well known examples. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency, intensity, and impacts of extreme weather events, and the country lacks adequate preparedness and coping mechanisms.¹⁷⁷

Poor availability of road and agricultural infrastructure and basic social services

The public sector is weak and not able to provide good infrastructure and basic social services.¹⁷⁸ In its food systems roadmap prepared in the context of the global food summit, the government recently recognised that the deficiency of basic services and the social protection system limits the capacity of households to procure food, particularly affecting the most vulnerable populations, including women, the elderly, children and rural people.¹⁷⁹

Socio-political instability not allowing for increased investment in the agricultural sector

Haiti has a long history of chronic political instability and insecurity.¹⁸⁰ Since July 2018, when violent riots broke out throughout the country and the government fell¹⁸¹, Haiti has entered an acute political crisis that still prevails.¹⁸² This has contributed to violent unrest and paralysis of economic activity, as well as a serious weakening of the rule of law and institutions at all levels. It has proved impossible to organise elections as a way out of the crisis leading to the absence of a Parliament since January 2020, and of elected mayors since June that year. Armed gangs, and clashes between them, lead to increasing insecurity and further threaten the economic and democratic functioning of Haiti.

Policy framework and main actors

Policy framework

The overarching reference policy for Haiti's development is the Strategic Development Plan for Haiti 2030. However, it is not accompanied by shorter-term implementation plans¹⁸³, nor is there a functional system for monitoring its implementation.¹⁸⁴ The reference policy for the agricultural sector is the Agricultural Development Policy 2010 - 2025 and the National Agricultural Investment Plan 2010-2016, which is linked to it and has been further operationalised in the Triennial Agricultural Recovery Programme 2013 - 2016.

Plans and a policy dedicated to food security have been developed. A National Food Security Plan was developed in 1996 and updated at the end of 2009.¹⁸⁵ **After a process of several years, the national policy and strategy for food and nutrition sovereignty and security in Haiti (PSNSSANH, according to its French acronym) was finalised in 2018 and adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2021.** It is a multisectoral policy that reportedly concerns 11 ministries and 12 organisations, and is a precondition for achieving the objectives of the Haitian Strategic Development Plan.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁴ Government of Haiti (2021): *Feuille de route nationale en vue de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires pour soutenir l'Agenda 2030 en Haïti*.

¹⁷⁵ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁶ Eckstein, D., V. Künzel and L. Schäfer. (2021). *Global climate risk index 2021. Who suffers most from extreme weather events? Weather-related loss events in 2019 and 2000-2019*.

¹⁷⁷ World Bank (2021): *the World Bank in Haiti*.

¹⁷⁸ EU (2021): *République d'Haïti. Programme Indicatif Pluriannuel 2021-2027*.

¹⁷⁹ Government of Haiti (2021): *Feuille de route nationale en vue de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires pour soutenir l'Agenda 2030 en Haïti*.

¹⁸⁰ EU (2020): Document d'action relatif à l'Avenant au "Programme de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle du 11ème FED en Haïti".

¹⁸¹ Source: Internal document.

¹⁸² EU (2021): *République d'Haïti. Programme Indicatif Pluriannuel 2021-2027*.

¹⁸³ EU (2021): *République d'Haïti. Programme Indicatif Pluriannuel 2021-2027*.

¹⁸⁴ EU (2016). Internal document

¹⁸⁵ EU/EPTISA (2017): *Audit organisationnel du secteur de la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle (SAN) et appui à la rédaction des lois relatives à la thématique*. Rapport final. Volume 1.

¹⁸⁶ Government of Haiti (2021) : *Feuille de route nationale en vue de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires pour soutenir l'Agenda 2030 en Haïti*.

In 2021, the government adopted a roadmap for the transformation of food systems to support Agenda 2030 in Haiti, in the context of the UN Food Systems Summit that year. It builds on the PSNSSANH and identifies five priorities for the implementation of that policy, namely: (1) Investments in family agricultural production and trade in local products; (2) Raising import tariffs on agricultural products; (3) Investment in social protection programmes and nutrition; (4) Emergency preparedness and response; and (5) Communication campaigns around the implementation of the PSNSSANH.

Related policies that are relevant for sustainable food systems include:

- the National policy for social protection and promotion adopted in June 2020;
- the national climate change policy 2019-2030 and Haiti's Nationally Determined Expected Contribution;
- the National disaster risk management Plan 2019-2030;
- the National drought response plan;
- the Health master plan 2012 - 2022.

In general, **there is a considerable gap between policies and their implementation**.¹⁸⁷ In a similar vein, it is recognised in the recently adopted food systems roadmap that (translation from French) “[g]iven the governance constraints, weaknesses and institutional instabilities in Haiti, translating this roadmap into public policy and collective action, within the framework of the 2030 global agenda, is a huge challenge”.¹⁸⁸

Actors

Multiple ministries and governmental institutions are relevant for food systems in Haiti. According to the action document of the EU-funded food and nutrition security programme (PMSAN), the sectoral ministries most directly concerned with food and nutrition security are the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR), the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MAST). The organisational audit of food and nutrition security funded by the EU in 2017 notes that the Ministry of the Interior and Local Authorities (MICT), the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation (MPCE) and the Ministry of Economy and Finance are also relevant. Other sectoral ministries relevant for agri-food systems that are covered in the audit are the Ministry of Environment (MDE), the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MCI) and the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MENFP). As noted earlier, institutional capacities tend to be weak in Haiti.

The public sector is not only present at central level, but also at departmental and local level. For example, MARNDR has departmental agricultural directorates (DDA) and communal agricultural offices (BAC). Furthermore, the departmental delegate and local authorities, such as municipalities, can play a role to make agri-food systems more sustainable.¹⁸⁹ **However, the desk review and interviews point to a highly centralised power structure.** According to internal reporting documents reviewed by the team, a major obstacle to overcome is the lack of political will to make decentralisation really operational, despite the fact that it is provided for in the constitution.

Inter-institutional coordination at the various levels is weak. A structure set up to support food security and facilitate inter-institutional coordination for that purpose is the National Food Security Coordination (CNSA) created in 1996. The CNSA however experiences difficulties in carrying out its mandate.¹⁹⁰ According to the 2017 food security audit and several interviewees, one of the causes is that it is spearheaded by the MARNDR and lacks inter-ministerial legitimacy. The recent roadmap for the transition of food systems in Haiti announces the establishment of a national strategic commission to monitor the implementation of the roadmap, bringing together the Presidency, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministries concerned, the Haitian Parliament and civil society (including farmers' organisations, chambers of commerce, consumer associations, human rights organisations, the Office of the Ombudsman, universities and media associations).

Public interventions related to food systems, and to sustainable development in Haiti more generally, receive considerable financing and support from international development partners. **The state is very dependent on international support.**¹⁹¹ The EU, the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD) and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) are important European actors providing food system-

¹⁸⁷ EU (2021): *République d'Haïti. Programme Indicatif Pluriannuel 2021-2027*.

¹⁸⁸ Government of Haïti (2021): This quote has been translated from French. Throughout this document, this will be done for quotes taken from documents in French.

¹⁸⁹ EU (2016): *EPTISA 2017*.

¹⁹⁰ EU (2016): Action document "*Programme de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle du 11ème FED en Haïti*".

¹⁹¹ EU (2020): Action document "*Programme de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle du 11ème FED en Haïti*".

related support. Others include the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, Switzerland, USAID as well as UN agencies like the FAO, WFP and UNICEF.¹⁹²

EU-Haiti cooperation framework

The main framework for EU-Haiti cooperation in the evaluation period was the National Indicative Programme 2014 - 2020, which presents food and nutrition security as one of the four focal sectors. In the following programme that covers the period 2021-2027, support towards SAFS has become an explicit objective, as part of the focal sector of “productive and resilient territories”. More general information on SAFS-related support in EU-Haiti cooperation is presented in the section below.

Table 4: EDF Programming – Financial allocations per sector

2008-2013 programming (10th EDF)		2014-2020 programming (11th EDF)	
Sector	Allocation (EURm)	Sector	Allocation (EURm)
Infrastructure	175 (60.1%)	State Reform and modernisation of public administration	60-80
Governance	36 (12.4%)	Education	90-100
General budget support	48 (16.5%)	Urban Development and Infrastructure	120-140
Other programmes:	32 (11%)	Actions in favour of the Civil Society	10
		Support Actions	10-15
Total	291		420

Source: National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2008-2013 and NIP 2014-2020

Focus of the case study – EU SAFS support

The case study focusses on four programmes, namely ‘Programme d’amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire en Haïti, Initiative OMD’ (FED/2012/023-880), the Multisectoral Food Security and Nutrition Programme (FED/2016/039-097), PRO-Resilience Haiti (FED/2016/039-691) and ‘Action Mondiale contre le Changement Climatique’ (ENV/2012/024-368). Within these programmes, particular attention has been paid to a selection of interventions, which are listed in Table 2. The choice of sampled interventions reflects the following criteria: i) variety of thematic areas, ii) variety of funding instruments, iii) variety of implementation modalities, iv) volume of support, and v) perceived relevance to SAFS.

¹⁹² EU (2016): Internal document; EU(2021): *République d’Haïti. Programme Indicatif Pluriannuel 2021-2027.*

Table 5: Overview of evaluation sample EU-funded interventions in Haiti

<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Budget Million EUR</i>	<i>Funding Instrument & CRIS Decision number</i>	<i>Implementing partner</i>
Decision: Programme d'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire en Haïti, Initiative OMD.	24	EDF 10th	
- Projet de Sécurité Alimentaire (SECAL) en partenariat avec le MARNDR.	9	C-309378	AFD
Decision: Programme multisectoriel de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle visant les populations les plus vulnérables (PMSAN 1)	40	EDF 11th	
	3.2	C-402494	Fondazione AVSI
- Approche intégrée à la sécurité nutritionnelle	5.6	C-402484	PROTOS
- Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle et la Protection Sociale dans trois bassins versants de la zone hydrographique de Môle St Nicolas/Moustiques (GIRE-SECALM)			
Decision: PRO-Résilience Haïti	29	EDF 11th	
- Appui à la résilience en Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle dans le Bas Nord-Ouest par une approche systématique et le renforcement des capacités des acteurs communautaires et institutionnels	0.8	C-385879 (2017)	Initiative Développement
- Appui à la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle dans la Grand'Anse - Communes d'Anse d'Hainault et des Irais	3	C-401457 (2018)	ACTED
- Cartographie multirisque et gestion de l'occupation du Sol	2.2	C-401457	UNDP
Décision : Appui à l'intégration des aspects Changement Climatique dans le développement national d'Haïti (AP3C)	6	DCI	
- Mise en place appliquée de nouvelles pratiques agricoles climato-intelligentes et d'une gestion intégrée du bassin versant de l'Arcahaie-Cabaret.	1	C-432846	ACTED

Source: EU FNSSA Databased provided by DG INTPA to the evaluation team (October 2021)

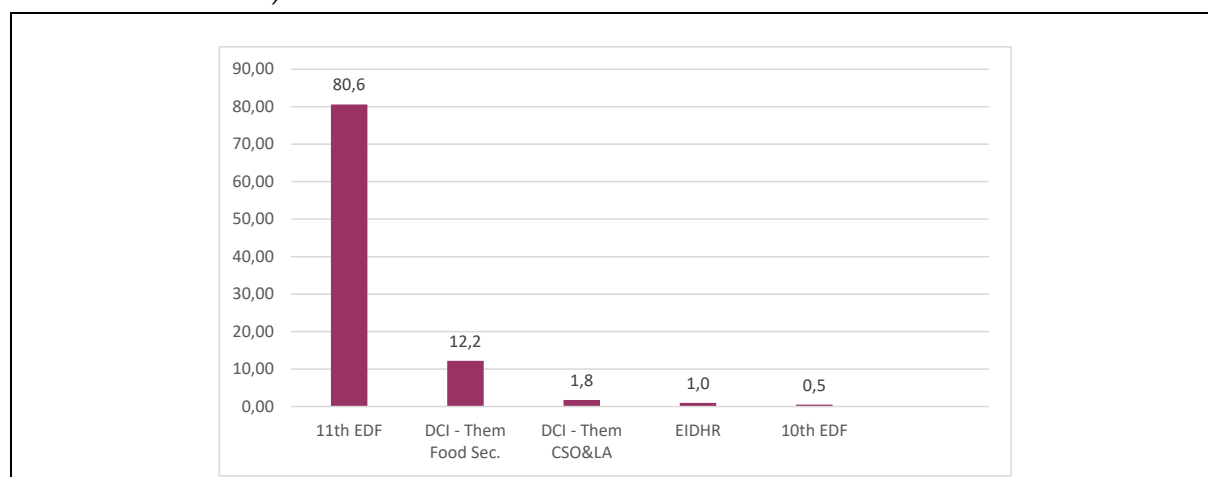
Design

Overview of EU support to SAFS

Food and nutrition security was one of the four focal sectors of the national indicative programme (NIP) 2014-2020. The indicative amount allocated to that sector was EUR 90 to 100 million, which represents 21 to 24% of the total NIP envelope of EUR 420 million. Other focal sectors also cover interventions relevant for sustainable agri-food systems (SAFS), such as education, which covers the strengthening of the structure of school canteens. Another example is the focal sector of state reform and the modernisation of the administration, which seeks amongst other things to support the process of “deconcentration” and decentralisation.

Based on the data available to the evaluators, covering 2014 up until 2020, EU spending related to food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture (FNSSA)¹⁹³ has amounted to EUR 96 million. The biggest share of EUR 80.6 million came from the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), while the remaining funding has been channelled through the thematic programmes of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and to a much less extent through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Figure 5: Breakdown funding allocations FNSSA interventions by financial instrument in million euros (2014-2020)



Source: FNSSA data base (2021)

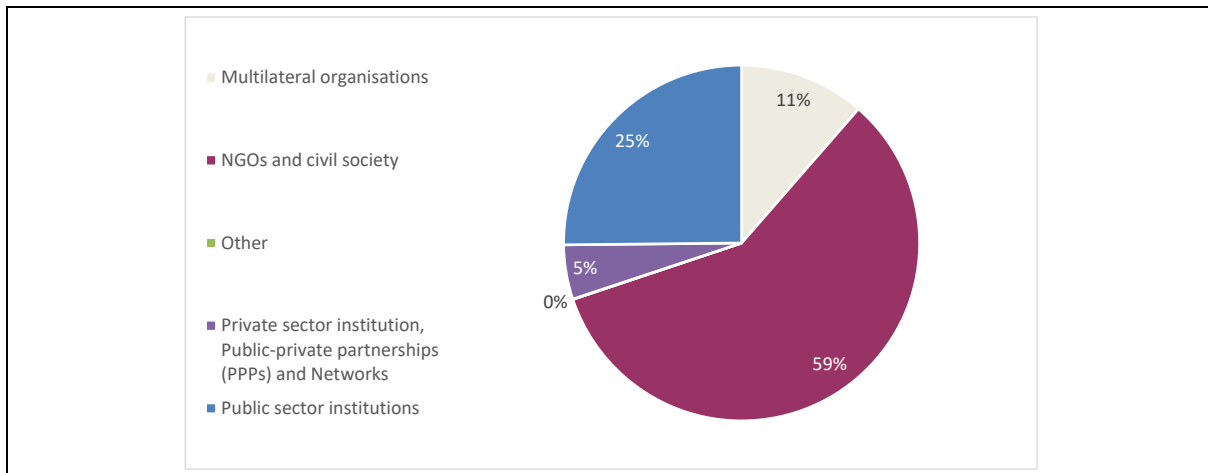
The funding has sought to contribute to a range of objectives such as strengthened resilience of chronic and acute food insecure households to food shocks; increased production and productivity in agriculture, livestock and fisheries; increased processing of locally produced agricultural goods; and strengthening of intersectoral governance of food and nutrition security. **According to the OECD DAC sector classification, 'food assistance' received most of the funding, equivalent to 30% of total FNSSA support.**¹⁹⁴ The second in line was 'rural development' (24%), followed by 'basic nutrition' (11%) and 'social protection' (6%).

Grants to NGOs have been the dominant implementing modality used, covering 58% of the EUR 96 million. Delegated cooperation agreements with EU member states (MS), such as AFD and AECID have also been used. Contribution agreements with international organisations such as the FAO, UNDP and WFP, as well as contracts with government institutions have also been used.

¹⁹³ In this case study, and the evaluation more broadly, FNSSA refers to four policy priorities: i) Inclusive agricultural growth, ii) sustainable agriculture, iii) systemic resilience to food crisis, iv) nutrition security and enhancement, and eight sectors: value chain/agrobusiness, livestock, Fishery, Land governance/right, agroecology, agricultural research, water, forestry. It is important to note that, while some interventions are clearly identified as FNSSA, EU support to SAFS has sometimes been embedded in interventions not focussing on SAFS (for instance, activities carried out under sector interventions in the area of health, governance, etc.). The interventions not explicitly and directly related to a strong SAFS dimension have not been taken into account in these figures.

¹⁹⁴ The OECD DAC food assistance category excludes household food security programmes (5,2% of FNSSA support) and emergency food assistance aid (4,2% of FNSSA support).

Figure 6 : Breaking funding allocations FNSSA by implementing partners in million euros (2014-2020)



Source: FNSSA database (2021)

In the NIP covering the period 2021-2027, support towards SAFS has become an explicit objective. The focal sector “productive and resilient territories” has two priorities, one of which is to “*promote and enhance equitable, climate-resilient, biodiversity-regenerating and sustainable agri-food systems*”. An indicative amount of EUR 36.5 million is allocated to that focal sector for the period 2021-2024, which is 30,5% of the full budget for that period. As in the previous NIP, other focal sectors are also relevant for SAFS, such as “strengthening democratic, economic and financial governance”, which includes support to improve the business climate and sustainable investments, and the “human development” sector, which includes strengthening of the social protection system and improvements of vocational training.

The 2021-2027 NIP specifically notes that “in a country with severe handicaps, it is essential to ensure **continuity of action beyond the 7-year programming periods**”. This is an argument for continued attention for areas, such as food and nutrition security, that received support from the EU and MS in preceding years.

Regional programmes are also relevant for SAFS in Haiti. Given the importance of relations of Haiti with the Dominican Republic, with whom it shares the island of Hispaniola, bi-national programmes for the two countries are particularly important. In the evaluation period, the bulk of regional support has consisted of bi-national trade and environment interventions.¹⁹⁵

Quality of design (JC2.1)

Integrated approach

During the evaluation period, the EU has made some strides in Haiti moving from a fragmented approach focussing on short-term needs to a more integrated and systems approach covering and connecting different sectors and levels (national, departmental and communal). A case in point is PMSAN, as is clear from the action document that states that “*it is becoming less and less obvious that the situation can be improved by implementing classic policies to support agricultural and rural production alone. The planned action thus contributes to the development of inter- and intra-institutional processes of governance of Food and Nutritional Security (FNS) as well as to the implementation of a concrete multisectoral response for the improvement of the FNS conditions of the most vulnerable populations.*” and aspires “[t]he implementation of truly integrated activities within a sustainable national institutional framework”. The programme focuses on three sectors, namely agriculture, social protection and health, and their interlinkages while targeting the national, departmental and communal levels. This is a shift, illustrated in the PMSAN action document, which notes that earlier actions of the Food Security Thematic Programme (FTSP) “*were more like small, scattered actions, without a global framework or systematic institutional anchoring*” and a ROM report that states that “*unlike PASAH, PMSAN provides structural assistance that addresses the root causes of food insecurity*”.¹⁹⁶ Another example is the PRO-Resilience project, which covers interventions with a “*multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral and territorial approach*” and a “*systemic approach*”¹⁹⁷, covering a diverse set of

¹⁹⁵ EU (2021): République d’Haiti. Programme Indicatif Pluriannuel 2021-2027

¹⁹⁶ EU (2021): ROM report: Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle et la Protection Sociale dans trois bassins versants de la zone hydrographique de Môle St Nicolas/Moustiques (GIRE-SECALM).

¹⁹⁷ EU (2017): Action document “Appui à la résilience en sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle dans le Bas Nord-Ouest par une approche systémique et le renforcement des capacités des acteurs communautaires et institutionnels”. FED/2017/385-879.

linked activities. With one exception, all interviewees recognise and value the EU shift to a more systemic and integrated approach, with some explicitly calling it “a necessity” or “the way to go”.

This shift is also reflected in the NIP 2021-2027. It specifies for the focal sector “productive and resilient territories” (which seeks to contribute to equitable, climate-resilient, biodiversity-regenerating and sustainable agri-food systems) that “*the aim is to combine an integral with a territorial approach*”. The EU seeks to realise this ambition amongst others through a second phase of PMSAN (funded under EDF 11th), for which a financing agreement is signed and that seeks to build on the lessons learned in the first phase.

The interviews point out that the integrated multisectoral nature of PMSAN was not sufficiently well incorporated from the outset, that is in the design phase and the call for proposals. A clear methodology was lacking, and an implementing partner noted that “*it wasn’t clear to us that we were entering a programme with an integrated multisectoral approach*”. For instance, the idea was for PMSAN to facilitate sectoral linkages through graduation; where, for example, malnourished children are treated in a health centre, for the family to then be integrated in a social protection scheme, followed by agricultural support to ensure their livelihood. While this graduation approach is identified as a good practice in a ROM report,¹⁹⁸ it has been hindered by initial differences between implementing partners in databases and criteria used to select beneficiaries. Harmonisation efforts in the first year of implementation have been made, but this conceptual weakness has slowed the project down and has limited its effectiveness. An interviewed implementing partner in the health sector stated that it had referred 2.965 households to also receive social protection or agricultural support within the programme, of which only 22% actually received it. Interviewees, including from the EUD, recognise that the integrated nature needs to be better reflected in the initial phase of a project, with a clear conceptual framework.

The EU has chosen to focus PMSAN on three sectors, to limit its complexity, but at the expense of comprehensiveness. In 2017, the EU funded an organisational audit of the FNS sector, which recommended focussing PMSAN not only on MARNDR, MSPP and MAST, but to also implicating a “second circle” of Ministries, notably the sectoral ministries MDE (environment), MTPTC (public works, transport and communication), MCI (trade and industry), MENFP (education and vocational training), as well as the crosscutting ministries of MICT (interior and local authorities), MEF (economy and finance) and MPCE (planning and external cooperation). The EU decided to involve MPCE as well as the Ministry for the Status of Women and Women’s Rights (MCFDF), but not others, which according to EUD interviewees would have been “too heavy”, “unfeasible” and “a recipe for failure”. In a similar vein, an interviewee from an EU member state argued in favour of an integrated multisectoral approach but pointed to the risk of an overfull “Christmas tree” approach, which can complicate projects and hinder their effectiveness.

Various interviewees (from the EU and implementing partners) note that **while combining institutional support at the national level with interventions in specific departments and communes is valuable, the geographical spread was still quite broad, limiting the results.** EUD interviewees expressed the intention to focus more within regions and go deeper in the current budgetary period 2021-2027. This is confirmed in the NIP, which states that “[i]t is a question of promoting an integrated approach, capable of producing results if it is concentrated on specific [geographical] areas in order to move away from a scattergun approach”.

Integration of gender equality

Although it varies between programmes, and it is based on very limited evidence collected in the context of this case study, gender equality seems to have been reasonably well integrated in SAFS-related EU support. The NIP 2014 - 2020 states that particular attention will be given to the inclusion of the gender dimension. To take an example of how that has been operationalised, a PMSAN ROM report¹⁹⁹ notes that gender has been well taken into account in the intervention strategy and the choice of beneficiaries, with the exception of initiatives to combat gender-based violence, which are judged insufficient. It also points out that the reporting is gender sensitive, with gender disaggregated indicators. A PRO-Resilience intervention provides a good example of a gender-sensitive approach to the organisational set-up of the project through a commitment to ensure gender parity in project-related committees.²⁰⁰

Programme-related documents tend to pay attention to gender but in most cases no in-depth analysis is done. An example illustrating this is a PMSAN ROM report that notes that no gender analysis has been done prior to the intervention.²⁰¹ This seems to fall short of the commitment in the NIP 2014-2020 that “a

¹⁹⁸ EU (2021): ROM report - *Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle et la Protection Sociale dans trois bassins versants de la zone hydrographique de Môle St Nicolas/Moustiques (GIRE-SECALM)*.

¹⁹⁹ EU (2020): ROM report – “*Approche intégrée à la sécurité nutritionnelle*” - C-402494.

²⁰⁰ EU (2018): Action Document “*Projet de réponse à l’insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle dans la Grande Anse - Communes d’Anse d’Hainault et des Irois*” - C-401457.

²⁰¹ EU (2021): ROM report - “*Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle et la Protection Sociale dans trois bassins versants de la zone hydrographique de Môle St Nicolas/Moustiques (GIRE-SECALM)*”.

particular effort of analysis will be made to better identify the possibilities of improving policies and cooperation actions to promote gender equality and combat discrimination”.

EU policy coherence at country level

Strong efforts have been made to ensure coherence and linkages between agriculture, health and social protection for food and nutrition security. Linkages have also been made with the environment, for example in the context of AMCC, in a project focussing on climate-smart agricultural practices and integrated management of the Arcahaie-Cabaret watershed.²⁰² The overall objective of the programme was to reduce Haiti's vulnerability to climate change and it included support to climate-smart agricultural practices and integrated watershed management.

In most of the evaluation period, EU support to SAFS lacked clear and strong linkages with Haitian trade policies and the role played by the small group of powerful importers. Food value chains in Haiti involve a large number of unorganised smallholder farmers, while there is also a small group of economically and politically powerful importers who benefit from Haiti's high dependence on food imports. To address immediate short-term food insecurity, and to the benefit of these importers, tariff barriers tend to be low to facilitate food imports, making local value chain actors uncompetitive.²⁰³ Nevertheless, interviewees note that this SAFS-unfavourable trade policy was not part of the political and policy dialogue of the EU with the government of Haiti for most of the evaluation period. This has changed more recently.²⁰⁴ The food and nutrition sovereignty and security policy adopted in 2020 represents a commercial policy shift, with an announced gradual increase in import tariffs for agricultural products to protect and stimulate local food production and transformation. Interviewees from the EUD and other international development partners highlight that the EU is committed to engage in a dialogue on the actual implementation of this policy commitment, and to join forces with other international development partners in this context.

Transformative potential

With its move towards a more integrated and systems approach that covers and seeks to connect different sectors and levels, EU support has increasingly had transformative potential. This does not exclude that there have been design weaknesses negatively affecting the transformative potential, such as a lack of a conceptual framework for an integrated multisector approach in the initial stages of PMSAN, a lack of attention for Haitian trade policies and a wide geographical spread. It is promising that EUD interviewees show consciousness that it is a learning journey, with one interviewee explicitly saying that the EUD in Haiti is learning by doing to more effectively support SAFS.

The EU seeks to advocate the Haitian government for a more integrated and systems approach to SAFS, including by promoting and supporting inter-institutional coordination at national, departmental and local level. However, **getting ownership proves particularly challenging, not least due to the socio-political instability.** The EU also advocates for this amongst international development partners, as is illustrated in the next section, which notes the EU role in the establishment of a new donor coordination group focussing on structural and multi-sectoral responses to tackle the food security crisis in Haiti.

Active linkages with EU MS (JC2.1)

The EU plays an active role in coordination groups with EU member states and beyond, which are groups led by Haitian authorities as well as groups for technical and financial partners only.²⁰⁵ This includes the group of EU heads of mission, the broader group of heads of technical and financial partners, as well as sectoral donor groups such as the ones for agriculture; environment; and food and nutrition security. The EU played a key role in the creation of the food security thematic group in 2019, which it chairs since February 2022. It complements the older food and nutrition security working group, which focusses mainly on emergency and short-term response to the chronic food security crisis. The new group seeks to focus on *“medium- and long-term exchange and reflection on the more structural and multi-sectoral responses needed to resolve the food security crisis in Haiti”*, as worded by the EU ambassador in an email to the members of the group when taking over the chairmanship.

The EU uses delegated cooperation as a means to collaborate with EU member states; for example, with AFD in the context of the PASAH programme, where EU funds were combined with AFD own-resources. According to the financing agreement of the upcoming new PMSAN II, the preferred option for the upcoming PMSAN II is also *“implementation with one (or more) Member State agency(ies)”*, which according

²⁰² EU (2019): Rapport final narratif *“Mise en place appliquée de nouvelles pratiques agricoles climato-intelligentes et d’une gestion intégrée du bassin versant de l’Arcahaie-Cabaret.”* EuropeAid/ENV/2016/377-834 Rapport final– Février 2017 à octobre 2019.

²⁰³ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ One interviewee specified that this is changing since 2020, but this specific year as not being triangulated.

²⁰⁵ Source: internal document (EU); interviews.

to interviewees will be the AFD. **Some evidence has also been found of efforts to ensure complementarity with activities already financed by an EU Member State or by other donors**, for example in the case of PMSAN, where this was a priority in the selection of dossiers submitted by civil society consortia in response to a call for proposals. As a result, EU funding consolidated interventions funded by the Belgians and the Swiss.²⁰⁶

The NIP 2021-2027 was developed jointly by the EUD with the main cooperation agencies of EU Member States present in Haiti, in particular AFD, Expertise France (EF) and the Service de Coopération et d'Action Culturelle (SCAC), as well as AECID. It is the first joint programming document of the EU and its Member States in the country, and interviews indicate that this is welcomed.

Regardless of efforts, the desk review and interviews indicate that donor harmonisation and alignment are deficient. According to internal reporting documents reviewed by the team, development partners, including member states, often find it very difficult to coordinate with each other for a number of reasons, like different interests and working methods, as well as insufficient human resources in terms of quantity and skills. Institutional weaknesses and political instability negatively affect the government's ability to provide leadership and direction for donor coordination.

Effects of EU support²⁰⁷

National agri-food systems governance (EQ2/JC2.2 & JC2.3)

The EU has contributed to improving the policy framework. A clear illustration is EU support to the development of the multisectoral National Policy for Food and Nutritional Sovereignty and Security in Haiti (PNSSANH according to its French acronym) finalised in 2018 and officially adopted by the council of ministers in December 2020. The EU has also supported the development of 10 departmental food and nutrition security plans and communal plans related to the PNSSANH, which were validated in 2018. The EU not only provided direct funding for the development of these plans through the FSTP, but EU support was also catalytic, according to a government interviewee involved in the process, to bring other international development partners on board. Furthermore, the EU, as a member of the policy's drafting sub-committee of the social protection coordination group, contributed to the development of the National Social Protection and Promotion Policy spearheaded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and adopted in June 2020. According to interviews, EU support for the development of these policies has been appreciated by other international development partners. Outside of the evaluation period, through the PMSAN, the EU has supported the development of a roadmap for the transformation of food systems to support Agenda 2030 in Haiti, which builds on the PNSSANH and was developed in the context of the Global Food Systems Summit in 2021. PMSAN helped the CNSA to organise regional multi-stakeholder consultations for the development of the roadmap

As noted earlier, the PNSSANH and the food systems roadmap not only embody multi-sectoral approaches, but also represent a commercial policy shift, with the announced gradual increase in import tariffs for agricultural products, to protect and stimulate local food production and transformation. This is a deviation from policies so far that facilitate imports, with the roadmap explicitly stating that *“trade policies that maintain exaggeratedly low tariffs (well below the tariffs practiced by CARICOM countries), handicap the development of export and food sectors”*.²⁰⁸

The EU has also contributed to strengthening information systems to inform the development and implementation of SAFS-related policies. The PRO-Resilience programme contributed to strengthening the information system of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (SIMAST). EU support allowed to widen the geographical scope and add a food security module to this national vulnerability database. The National Social Protection and Promotion Policy recognises the key role of SIMAST for the targeting of social protection measures. The institutionalisation of SIMAST is a challenge, though, as it is still to a large extent run by WFP. SIMAST now benefits from funding from the World Bank²⁰⁹, which should contribute to the transfer of the system to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour by 2025.²¹⁰ The EU also contributed through the PRO-Resilience Programme to the mapping, led by UNDP in collaboration with national institutions and

²⁰⁶ EU (2021) : ROM report - *“Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle et la Protection Sociale dans trois bassins versants de la zone hydrographique de Môle St Nicolas/Moustiques (GIRE-SECALM)”*.

²⁰⁷ The evaluation team used project documents, ROM reports and other relevant documentation to assess affects of EU support. However, it should be noted that very few evaluations were available to the team, only the PASAH mid-term evaluation and the SECAL evaluation report, also related to the PASAH programme. The fragile context has made it difficult to conduct more evaluations according to staff of the EU Delegation.

²⁰⁸ Government of Haiti (2021): *Feuille de route nationale en vue de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires pour soutenir l'Agenda 2030 en Haiti*.

²⁰⁹ World Bank (2021): *Furthering Economic and Social Inclusion for People with Disabilities in Haiti* ([link](#)).

²¹⁰ Source: Interviews.

decentralised state structures, of hazards such as earthquakes, marine submersion, flooding, drought and soil degradation.²¹¹ Workshops have been organised for the dissemination and ownership of the cartography; but as in the case of SIMAST, true institutionalisation is challenging due to weak capacities. It is therefore uncertain whether the government will continue to have the skills and manpower to employ and update these maps in the longer term²¹². The CNSA received long term support from the EU through FSTP and PMSAN for the collection, analysis and dissemination of information, particularly through the Integrated Food Insecurity Classification Framework (IPC).²¹³ Nevertheless, an EU programming document in 2020 notes that the CNSA still faces difficulties in carrying out its mandate, in which information provision plays an important role.²¹⁴

The EU has contributed to some more interinstitutional information exchange and coordination, but ownership is limited. This is notably a result of the multisectoral PMSAN, which included, for example, joint quarterly monitoring missions involving different ministries. Various interviewees (from the EU delegation but also from the government and other development partners) report that EU support has contributed to government officials' seeing the value of multisectoral approaches and engaging with other departments for that purpose. However, it is also widely recognised by interviewees that institutional ownership is still limited. In a similar vein, the AP3C programme has supported sectoral coordination by the government around climate change, but a ROM report notes that it *"currently seems to be losing momentum, slowing down the process of integration of climate change into the Haitian state. Paradoxically, in 2018 there is less coordination momentum on climate change in Haiti compared to 2015, creating doubts about what will happen after the closure phase in March 2019 without AP3C to facilitate it."*²¹⁵

The EU has provided support at departmental and communal levels, with some results, but the effectiveness is hindered by strong centralised powers at national level. PMSAN ROM reports point to some results, noting that departmental and local institutions have been supported to provide certain services in the implementation period of the programme.²¹⁶ However, after EU support has ended, the central state generally provides insufficient funds for the continuation of activities.²¹⁷ Furthermore, appointments of departmental delegates are politicised and not based on competencies and experiences, which greatly reduces their effectiveness.²¹⁸ Political instability is also a hindering factor, for example resulting in the absence of elected mayors since mid-2020. Interviews point to highly centralised power structures, a view which is supported by an internal EU report that indicates that the lack of political will to make decentralisation operational is a major obstacle to overcome.²¹⁹

Various interviewees have noted that overall, SAFS governance has not improved but worsened in the evaluation period. The capacity of the state to provide basic services to the population has weakened²²⁰ and capacities to implement policies are weak.²²¹ The multidimensional political, social and security crisis, with regular natural disasters, has weakened the state.²²² This crisis also limits results of EU SAFS-related support beyond governance, as described in the next subsections.

Changes in agri-food systems value chains and nutrition (EQ3)

Sustainability, inclusiveness, and resilience of agri-food value chains (JC3.1)

Unsustainable agricultural practices continue to prevail in Haiti. In monitoring reports, some evidence has been found of interventions having contributed to more sustainable practices, but this is limited and at small (pilot) scale. For example, one of the main strengths of food systems in Haiti is the limited use of pesticides in agriculture, but the use of chemical fertilizers in Haiti on the other hand is problematic, according to the draft food system assessment of the FAO, the EU and CIRAD.²²³ It notes that the uncontrolled use of certain fertilisers causes eutrophication of the aquatic environment (water tables, rivers and lakes), which seriously

²¹¹ EU (2021): Rapport intermédiaire #2 "Projet Cartographie Multirisque et Gestion de l'occupation du Sol".

²¹² Source: Interview

²¹³ EU (2020): Action document "Programme de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle du 11ème FED en Haïti".

²¹⁴ EU (2020): Action document "Programme de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle du 11ème FED en Haïti".

²¹⁵ EU (2018): ROM report - *Alliance Mondiale Contre le Changement Climatique - Haiti*.

²¹⁶ See for example EU (2021) : ROM report - "Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle et la Protection Sociale dans trois bassins versants de la zone hydrographique de Môle St Nicolas/Moustiques (GIRE-SECALM)".

²¹⁷ Ibid & EU (2020): ROM report - Approche Intégrée à la Sécurité Nutritionnelle.

²¹⁸ EU/EPTISA (2017): *Audit organisationnel du secteur de la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle (SAN) et appui à la rédaction des lois relatives à la thématique*. Rapport final. Volume 1.

²¹⁹ EU (2015). Internal document.

²²⁰ EU (2022): Convention de Financement "Programme Multisectoriel de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle Phase 2".

²²¹ EU (2020): Document d'action relatif à l'Avenant au "Programme de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle du 11ème FED en Haïti".

²²² EU (2020): Document d'action relatif à l'Avenant au "Programme de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle du 11ème FED en Haïti".

²²³ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

threatens the survival of corals and the protein source of fisheries resources. Similarly, an EU project document notes that chemical fertilizers in Haiti destabilise the microbial life in the ground and contribute to soil degradation.²²⁴ Some evidence has been found that the EU has contributed to a reduction of the use of chemical fertilizers. The AMCC programme intervention in the Arcahaie-Cabaret watershed provided training and awareness-raising to farmers. Reportedly, 70% of those farmers used more natural fertilisers in 2019 than they did before engaging in the AMCC programme in 2017-2018. And 44% of the farmers also started composting after the trainings.²²⁵ Nevertheless, an interviewed government official pointed out that the priority of the government is to reduce the costs of inputs, not the sustainability of farming practices.

Post-harvest food losses are high in Haiti.²²⁶ Some EU support has been provided in this area, although it has been limited. In the context of the PRO-Resilience project for example, support has been provided for storage facilities for agricultural produce and fish, as well as guidance for improved conservation techniques, to reduce food losses.²²⁷ These are early signals of positive change, but no evidence has been found of an actual reduction of food loss and waste along food value chains.

Sustainable production (JC3.2)

Regardless of the agricultural potential of Haiti, over the last two decades, agricultural production overall has decreased considerably.²²⁸ The position of vulnerable actors, such as small producers, transporters and traders, including women, remains weak. Land tenure insecurity and the small size of farms are important contributing factors, and weigh on the development of agricultural production by limiting productive investments.²²⁹ Many farms are too small to earn a decent income. Agricultural practices tend not to be adapted to a reasonable and sustainable exploitation of natural resources, leading to soil degradation.²³⁰ It is expected that agricultural yields will be negatively affected in the years by climate change. Furthermore, production has difficulty reaching the market, due to high insecurity levels.²³¹ The situation has been worsened by competition from imported product.²³²

Some evidence points to EU contributions to diversity and increased sustainable production in certain localities. For example, in the context of the PASAH programme, the EU with co-funding from AFD has provided training in good agricultural practices, as well as subsidies for the purchase of seeds, ploughing material and fertilizer. Value chains of focus were maize and haricots in the South and bananas in the West and the Artibonite departments. This programme started in 2013, but received a top-up for additional support after cyclone Matthew in 2016, thus providing particular support to smallholders affected by the cyclone, and as such promoting an approach of linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD). The evaluation report notes that the programme has enabled dozens of planters in the West and Artibonite to double their banana yields from 10 to 20 t/ha. In the plain of Les Cayes, the proposed technical itineraries have reportedly produced an average increase of 50% in yields for maize, beans and groundnuts. The evaluation report does note that this increase relies on chemicals that are often unavailable on the market or unaffordable for farmers in the recommended doses, which raises the question of the financial, as well as environmental, sustainability of these yield improvements over time. The project SECAL has rehabilitated about 5,900 ha of irrigated land, representing 8% of the target set by the national irrigation policy. It has also contributed to the creation (in the South) and legitimisation (in the West and Artibonite) of irrigators' associations by providing them with infrastructure, offices, tools (regulations, budgets) and by training their leaders.²³³

Another example with more limited results is the AP3C pilot project that sought to promote climate-smart agriculture through the creation of a farm that experiments with certain varieties to see which ones persist

²²⁴ EU (2019): Rapport final narratif "*Mise en place appliquée de nouvelles pratiques agricoles climato-intelligentes et d'une gestion intégrée du bassin versant de l'Arcahaie-Cabaret.*" EuropeAid/ENV/2016/377-834Rapport final– Février 2017 à octobre 2019.

²²⁵ EU (2019): Rapport final narratif "*Mise en place appliquée de nouvelles pratiques agricoles climato-intelligentes et d'une gestion intégrée du bassin versant de l'Arcahaie-Cabaret.*" EuropeAid/ENV/2016/377-834Rapport final– Février 2017 à octobre 2019.

²²⁶ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

²²⁷ EU (2017): Description de l'action. "*Appui à la résilience en Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle dans le Bas Nord-Ouest par une approche systématique et le renforcement des capacités des acteurs communautaires et institutionnels.*" FED/2016/39-691; EU (2018): Description de l'action. "*Projet d'appui à la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle dans la Grand'Anse - Communes d'Anse d'Hainault et des Irois.*"

²²⁸ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

²²⁹ Government of Haiti (2021): *Feuille de route nationale en vue de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires pour soutenir l'Agenda 2030 en Haïti*

²³⁰ EU (2020): Document d'action relatif à l'Avenant au "*Programme de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle du 11ème FED en Haïti.*"

²³¹ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

²³² *Ibid* & EU (2013): Fiche d'action "*Programme d'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire en Haïti, Initiative OMD.*"

²³³ MARNDR (2019): *Evaluation final du projet SECAL.*

better, and trains farmers. The final survey reveals that only 9% of beneficiaries have increased their production quantity and income.²³⁴

PMSAN made a link between local production and consumption support, as it set up local food and nutrition safety nets for the most vulnerable populations (i.e., food coupons) made up of locally produced food from value chain actors supported by the same PMSAN programme. However, a ROM report notes that the food products did not all come from local producers supported by the programme.²³⁵

Food processing (JC3.3)

The agri-food industry is small in Haiti and dominated by a few actors, producing primarily for export markets.²³⁶ Factors hindering food processing are an unfavourable fiscal policy, strong competition from cheap imported processed products and an unstable supply system.²³⁷ Unreliable energy access also hinders processing.²³⁸

Little attention was dedicated in EU programmes to food processing, and no strong evidence has been found of significant results in this area. For example, in the context of the PASAH programme, three maize processing units have been equipped with a semi-industrial line, but the evaluation report notes that an increase in productivity, quality and safety of semolina and flour remains to be demonstrated.²³⁹ The PMSAN programme has sought to provide means to improve food processing, preservation and marketing capacities, but interviews indicate that this has had limited results. Interviewees from the government and the EU delegation indicate that processing needs to receive more attention in the upcoming second phase of PMSAN. It was pointed out that while PMSAN I focused on the most vulnerable, PMSAN II will also include less vulnerable populations, which could lead to more space and potential impact of processing-related support.

Food consumption (JC3.4)

Food and nutrition security has deteriorated in the evaluation period, partly due to natural disasters, socio-political instability and insecurity. As noted earlier, access to food remains problematic also due to the low and unstable purchasing power in a context of continuously rising prices, as well weak social security systems. Women, the elderly, children and rural people are particularly vulnerable.²⁴⁰

The EU has been great efforts in the evaluation period to improve food access and utilisation. Evidence from both the documentations and interviews suggests that EU-funded awareness raising on nutritious safe dietary habits and preventing malnutrition has achieved particularly good results. In PMSAN this has included training of volunteer 'adult leaders' who sensitize the community and coordinate with the health system for active malnourishment screening of children and pregnant and breastfeeding women. Another example is training of staff of 50 school canteens on nutrition and hygiene. This was mentioned in multiple interviews as a strong component of the PMSAN programme with good results, and a PMSAN monitoring report points out that "[p]revention of acute malnutrition is improved at the community level through behavioural change among target community members".²⁴¹

Agri-food-system shocks (JC3.5)

Resilience building was at the heart of different EU programmes, not least the PRO-Resilience programme, but also a programme like PMSAN, which sought to reduce food and nutrition insecurity by tackling the root and underlying causes of vulnerability and reducing the negative impacts of shocks. One of the tools used is the strengthening of social protection mechanisms. It covered both support for the operationalization of social protection mechanisms for fragile communities through consortia of NGOs, as well as contributions to the elaboration of the national policy for social protection and promotion, which has been adopted in 2020.

As noted earlier, the EU has contributed to strengthening information systems, also to respond to shocks. Strengthening of the use of the Integrated Food Insecurity Classification Framework is a prime

²³⁴ EU (2019): Rapport narratif final- "Mise en place appliquée de nouvelles pratiques agricoles climato-intelligentes et d'une gestion intégrée du bassin versant de l'Arcahaie-Cabaret". EuropeAid/ENV/2016/377-834.

²³⁵ EU (2021) : ROM report - "Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle et la Protection Sociale dans trois bassins versants de la zone hydrographique de Môle St Nicolas/Moustiques (GIRE-SECALM)".

²³⁶ Government of Haiti (2021): *Feuille de route nationale en vue de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires pour soutenir l'Agenda 2030 en Haiti*

²³⁷ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

²³⁸ Source: Interviews

²³⁹ MARNDR (2019): *Evaluation final du projet SECAL.*

²⁴⁰ Government of Haiti (2021): *Feuille de route nationale en vue de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires pour soutenir l'Agenda 2030 en Haiti.*

²⁴¹ EU (2020): ROM report - "Approche Intégrée à la Sécurité Nutritionnelle".

example, which guides interventions of the government and its development partners. The multi-hazard mapping mentioned earlier is another example.

System level effects (EQ4)

The intermediate impacts of EU SAFS-related support are very limited. Agri-food systems in Haiti are still highly unsustainable.²⁴² The assessment is hindered by a lack of evaluations, but the available reports and interviews point to only small pockets of results, such as capacitated community leaders successfully sensitizing people on healthy, safe and nutritious dietary habits, or some farmers having adopted more sustainable agricultural practices in a limited set of communities. A few positive examples from very targeted interventions have been cited in the section on changes in agri-food systems value chains and nutrition, but it is not clear that all of these are sustainable. From a system-wide perspective, results observed are so scattered and modest that it is not possible to speak of serious intermediate impacts and real systems change.

Economic opportunities (JC4.1)

The food systems assessment for which the EU collaborated with the FAO and CIRAD concluded that food systems in Haiti still do not allow for a decent remuneration for farmers. Not only are plots of smallholders too small, but in many cases their natural capital is degrading due to unsustainable agricultural practices and climate change. A small group of powerful importers and exporters hold considerable power over local value chains, the economy and politics in general.²⁴³ There is growing reliance on food imports. Processing is rare, as it also faces harsh competition from imported (processed) goods, as well as unstable input supply. Furthermore, a parallel and illegal economic system exists, consisting of smugglers and criminal actors (e.g., theft, racketeering) that significantly disrupts the functioning of markets and calls into question the profitability of the legal activities of the other actors.²⁴⁴

Nutrition (JC4.2)

Food insecurity has continued to grow.²⁴⁵ Access to quality food is a major issue. High food prices and low agricultural incomes continue to negatively affect the purchasing power and food insecurity of poor households in Haiti. Furthermore, dietary habits are still inadequate, even among high-income households.²⁴⁶

Climate change and environment (JC4.3)

Environmental degradation continues to be an enormous challenge in Haiti. High demographic pressure pushes farmers to cultivate marginal land unsuitable for agricultural production, such as steep slopes. Furthermore, unsustainable agricultural practices continue to be widespread. This leads to the accelerated degradation of natural resources and makes the agricultural sector more vulnerable to natural disasters like floods and cyclones that are becoming more frequent due to climate change.²⁴⁷ Food waste and loss is high, as is the problematic use of chemical fertilizers.²⁴⁸

Lessons Learned & Good practices

EU engagement in policy dialogue and partnerships

It is widely recognised by interviewees that the EU has been actively engaged in political and policy dialogues with Haitian authorities on SAFS-related matters, both bilaterally and together with other international development partners. Some note that such dialogues have been complicated by a lack of leadership by the authorities; for example, to organise and steer the thematic coordination meetings between government authorities and development partners.

Policy dialogue needs to be further strengthened. Some interviewees expressed the view that, for most of the evaluation period, the topic of tariffs, and more generally trade policy measures affecting food systems, were not discussed. These became part of the dialogue only towards the end of the evaluation period. Interviewees note that it will be important to further strengthen the dialogue to advocate for actual implementation of the PSNSSANH and the roadmap for transformation of food systems, including the

²⁴² FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

²⁴³ Government of Haiti (2021): *Feuille de route nationale en vue de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires pour soutenir l'Agenda 2030 en Haiti.*

²⁴⁴ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ Government of Haiti (2021): *Feuille de route nationale en vue de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires pour soutenir l'Agenda 2030 en Haiti.*

²⁴⁷ Government of Haiti (2021): *Feuille de route nationale en vue de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires pour soutenir l'Agenda 2030 en Haiti.*

²⁴⁸ FAO, EU, CIRAD (2022): *Ibid.*

commercial policy shift reflected in those policy documents. The EU, as a driving force and current chair of the newly established food security thematic donor group, is well placed and committed to play a key role in this. In these efforts, it is not only worth teaming up with other EU member states and international development partners more broadly, but also to support a governmental body like the CNSA and the Ministry of Agriculture to advocate for the implementation of these policies by other governmental entities concerned.

It is valuable for policy dialogue to be informed by relevant studies. A good example in this regard is the analysis of the institutional setting of the food and nutrition sector conducted in 2017. It included a one-day reflection workshop with 6 inter-ministerial working groups.²⁴⁹ The study was highlighted in interviews as useful, with clear recommendations to improve FNS governance. Another example is the ongoing food systems assessment conducted by the FAO and CIRAD with EU support. Various interviewees, from the government, the EU delegation and member states as well as other development partners, expressed their appreciation for it. The two-day virtual multi-stakeholder webinar and draft findings are considered useful. With the food systems roadmap having been adopted in 2021, this assessment is considered to help maintain momentum to move on its implementation, and a useful advocacy tool moving forward.

EU instruments, modalities, funding channels

The EU uses a mix of instruments and implementing modalities. As noted in the overview of EU support to SAFS in Haiti, grants to NGOs have been the dominant modality used. Interviewees from the EU Delegation and Government) felt that a programme like PMSAN involved too many NGOs, which led to fragmentation and complicated coordination and management of the programme, thereby affecting the programme's effectiveness and efficiency. Six consortia were contracted, each consisting of several organisations. This will be addressed in the second phase of PMSAN.

A good monitoring practice that has been highlighted was the quarterly joint monitoring missions of different ministries in the context of PMSAN. During those in-country missions, implementing consortia of NGOs presented project progress. The missions involved the three sectoral ministries concerned, as well as the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation and the Ministry for the Status of Women and Women's Rights. While government officials valued these missions, some complained that the consortia did not systematically share reports with the government²⁵⁰ and often did not take government recommendations into account.

Monitoring and evaluation has been severely complicated by the fragile situation. Missions, including of EU staff and evaluators, were not allowed in certain areas and certain periods due to security constraints. Non-essential staff were evacuated from Haiti more than once during the evaluation period. This is an important factor explaining the very limited available monitoring and evaluation data, and their depth. To the extent possible, monitoring and evaluation deserves to be strengthened, to further guide EU support to SAFS.

Budget support has not been used as an instrument, as SAFS dimensions were not included in the sectoral budget support framework in place. Interviewees from the EU delegation indicate that at the start of PMSAN, it was envisaged that the institutional programmatic support to different ministries could make them suitable to receive FNS-related budget support as a follow up to PMSAN. However, given the state of the country towards the end of PMSAN I, it was only eligible for a 'State Building Contract', which is general budget support. Furthermore, interviewees noted that the ministries would not be strong enough to receive SAFS-related sectoral budget support. So instead, a second phase of PMSAN is in the making. Budget support can potentially be a powerful tool to capacitate the government and stimulate SAFS transformations, but the right conditions need to be in place.

EU efforts to capacity development, communication and documenting and sharing knowledge

Political economy dynamics could be better analysed and taken into account in EU support to SAFS. To quote an interviewee from the EU Delegation: "*There are too many agronomists in our programme. They take a technical approach. We need to better integrate political and sociological aspects.*" A recent good example to do so is a political economy study with FAO and PAM in coordination with the EUD under the Global Network Against Food Crisis (mainly funded by the EU globally), which for example states that "*Haiti's*

²⁴⁹ EU/EPTISA (2017): *Audit organisationnel du secteur de la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle (SAN) et appui à la rédaction des lois relatives à la thématique. Rapport final. Volume 1.*

²⁵⁰ According to the EU Delegation, the issue raised by the interviewees is linked to the contractual obligations between the EU and the NGOs. Normally NGOs are obliged to submit annual reports and reports when there is a request for payment to the EUD. The EU Delegation shares those reports with the BON, which distributes them to the sectors. However, given socio-political events and the COVID crisis, the annual requirement was lifted in 2019 and 2020, and the reports for 2021 were sent to the EU Delegation between March and June 2022, after which they were shared with the BON.

*deepest fault line is the opposition between agriculturalists and urban based power, which places the agri-food system at the centre of conflicting identities and aspirations.*²⁵¹

Different communication tools have been used in SAFS-related programmes, including booklets, leaflets, banners and videos. Examples of the latter are pedagogical videos in PMSAN on nutrition, prevention and detection of malnutrition, and breastfeeding.²⁵² An involved interviewee noted as a good practice that communities participated in making the videos, and that they have been disseminated via different channels, including social media, while suggesting that moving forward, more use should be made of social media. Relatedly, a ROM report of the AMCC programme made the criticism that, while numerous valuable studies to strengthen knowledge in Haiti on integrating climate change have been conducted, dissemination was limited; a missed opportunity for impact.²⁵³

A complicating factor for EU support to SAFS, and working in Haiti more generally, mentioned by various interviewees, is high turnover of staff in the EU Delegation and in programme/projects, as well as in Government. In such a context, knowledge management is particularly important, to avoid starting “*practically from scratch when a new person starts,*” as one interviewee, referring to regular changes of public officials supported through PRO-Resilience, put it.

Innovative approaches

Part of the PRO-Resilience programme started with a three-month diagnostic phase, which consisted of a participatory survey on communal risks, vulnerabilities and capacities. The information helped to tailor the project activities to the needs and priorities of the targeted communities.²⁵⁴ For example, it informed the selection of resource generation activities to support.²⁵⁵ Involvement of local actors in the design of the activities can enhance ownership and contribute to results.

The same PRO-Resilience project put in place a mechanism for complaints about the project from beneficiaries and their communities more broadly. It was created at the start of the project. An ‘accountability agent’ was present in all meetings with beneficiaries and the communities more broadly to promote the complaints mechanism.²⁵⁶

²⁵¹ FAO & PAM (2022): The Nexus of Instability and Food insecurity in Haiti (forthcoming).

²⁵² EU (2020): ROM report – *Approche Intégrée à la Sécurité Nutritionnelle*.

²⁵³ EU (2018): ROM report - *Alliance Mondiale Contre le Changement Climatique - Haiti*.

²⁵⁴ EU (2018): Description de l'Action. « *Projet d'appui à la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle dans la Grand'Anse - Communes d'Anse d'Hainault et des Irais* » Contrat FED/2018/401-457

²⁵⁵ EU (2021) Rapport narratif final « *Projet d'appui à la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle dans la Grand'Anse - Communes d'Anse d'Hainault et des Irais* » Du 18/12/2018 au 31/03/2021. FED/2018/401-457.

²⁵⁶ EU (2021) Rapport narratif final « *Projet d'appui à la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle dans la Grand'Anse - Communes d'Anse d'Hainault et des Irais* » Du 18/12/2018 au 31/03/2021. FED/2018/401-457.

Case study note – Kenya

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Introduction

Remark: This Kenya case study report does not constitute a separate evaluation of European Union (EU) support in the country or its situation with regard to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS). It presents country-related findings relevant to the overall assessed Evaluation Questions (EQ) and will feed into the main evaluation report of the Evaluation of the EU support to SAFS to which it will be attached as an annex.

Context

General country context

Kenya has the second largest economy in the East African region after Ethiopia, and the fourth largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2014, the World Bank has ranked Kenya as a lower middle-income country. Kenya's real GDP growth has averaged over 5% for the last decade.

About 75% of Kenyans live in rural areas, and 30% of the population lives in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), while the ASALs occupy 80% of the country. Nevertheless, since 2000, the urban population has more than doubled. This is less than 25 years ago, when that figure was around 35%. According to national statistics - defining poverty as living on less than EUR 30 per month in rural areas and EUR 60 per month in urban areas - 56% of Kenya's poor live in ASAL areas.²⁵⁷ Over 20% of Kenya's population suffers from undernourishment. In 2020, Covid-19 "has destroyed the livelihoods of many Kenyans, pushing an estimated two million people into poverty".²⁵⁸

Main SAFS challenges

There is no complete and recent agri-food systems assessment available for Kenya, although several studies have been done at sub-national level. FAO initiated a food-systems analysis in 2021, but the approved report is not yet available. The team derived below the key features of the country's agri-food systems from the various Government of Kenya (GoK) and international organisation documents. A striking observation is that most documents do not present a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approach in line with a food-systems approach, but rather a more sectoral approach. More comprehensive integrated analyses can sometimes be found, but only at sub-national level. This includes the ECDPM study on Nakuru county.²⁵⁹ Below some brief characteristics are mentioned for background information, but the overview is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive.

Agricultural sector

- Agriculture contributes one quarter to one third of GDP and this share hardly changed over the last decade.
- Agriculture employs 40% of total population and 70% - 80% of the rural population²⁶⁰
- Agriculture provides 65% of export earnings (tea, coffee, cut flowers and vegetables)²⁶¹
- There are many actors: private sector, government, para-statal and non-government.
- The competition for scarce resources, such as water and land, is increasing in view of population growth and climate change.

"Farmers, who are used to rain-fed farming systems, are being pushed into dryer, more marginal areas where they become increasingly vulnerable to drought and the unpredictability of weather patterns resulting from climate change. The population increase, coupled with the expansion of agriculture into arid lands, has affected the dynamics of pastoralism, where increased competition for natural resources has sparked escalated conflict in some areas. Furthermore, there has been a marked increase in the number of people dropping out of the nomadic livelihood, often moving into settled communities which are heavily reliant on food aid".

- The consequence is that agri-productivity for the main staple food crops (maize, dry beans, rice paddy and wheat) has been stagnating and even declining in recent years.²⁶²

²⁵⁷ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2017). *Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey 2015/2016*. pp. 44, 46 and 49.

²⁵⁸ World Bank (2020). *Kenya Economic Update: COVID-19 Erodes Progress in Poverty Reduction in Kenya, Increases Number of Poor Citizens*

²⁵⁹ ECDPM (2021). *Understanding and managing trade-offs in food systems interventions: the case of Nakuru county, Kenya*. February 2021

²⁶⁰ FAO (2022). *Kenya at a glance*. (<https://www.fao.org/kenya/fao-in-kenya/kenya-at-a-glance/en/>)

²⁶¹ FAO (2022). *Kenya at a glance*. (<https://www.fao.org/kenya/fao-in-kenya/kenya-at-a-glance/en/>)

²⁶² EU, IFAD, World Bank (2022). *Remarks delivered on behalf of the agriculture and rural development partners group chair - 4th Intergovernmental Forum on Agriculture-IGF-A*. 19th – 20th January, 2022, Mombasa County.

- In Kenya, women account for just 5% of registered land holders nationally and yet they contribute over 80% of the agricultural labour force, 64% of subsistence farmers, and produce approximately 60% of farm-derived income.²⁶³

Food security, nutrition, food processing and distribution

- The number of food-insecure people is increasing, while nutrition trends show gradual improvement over the last decades (stunting, wasting and underweight).
- Despite significant improvement in overall nutrition figures, Kenya's population continues to suffer from nutritional imbalances as exemplified by the triple burden of malnutrition (over-nutrition, under-nutrition and nutrient deficiency) as well as regional disparities in terms of dietary profiles.
- Kenya is increasingly dependent on food imports and prices are increasing as a troubling implication stemming from this reliance. According to the latest figures²⁶⁴ from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the overall year on year inflation rate as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 5.1% to end of February 2022. The biggest contributor was an increase in prices of commodities under food and non-alcoholic beverages at 8.7%. With Kenya importing over 80% of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine, the current war in the region will make the situation worse. In addition, fertilizer imports from the same sources are being affected and prices to farmers have doubled in the last weeks of the first quarter of 2022.
- The formalisation of food markets and access to processed foods is also impacting nutrition and health, especially among urban populations resulting in over-nutrition.
- Recently there have been more reports of food contamination, especially in densely populated urban settlements. These are due to poor environmental hygiene (for example, improper milk storage and transmission of antibiotic-resistant bacteria as livestock serve as reservoirs for multiple gastrointestinal pathogens of public health concern).

Climate change and natural resources:

- For agriculture, climate variability and change, including frequent and severe extreme weather events leading to more droughts and floods pose additional risks and uncertainties to the country's agricultural production and have the potential to significantly affect agriculture-based livelihoods.²⁶⁵
- There are signals increasing problems with the soil such as salinity and land degradation in various parts of the country.
- During the past decade, coping with drought emergencies has been on top of the agenda and in that context much attention has been paid to building resilience and climate change adaptation mechanisms.

While there are many partial assessments of important issues related to sustainable agri-food systems, some overarching issues are not very openly debated yet, such as Kenya's population growth in relation to carrying capacity (especially in ASAL areas), and the rapidly increasing competition for scarce natural resources with conflicting interests of bigger agro-entrepreneurs and smallholders. In addition, the co-existence of large ranches skived off as Conservancies and the rights of herders to pasture is an emotive subject and has been the trigger for conflict in various parts of Kenya, particularly in Laikipia Country.²⁶⁶

Policy framework, main actors and implementation challenges

The Government of Kenya has a good track record in preparing **policy frameworks** for the agricultural sector and other related areas. Very important national policy frameworks are Vision 2030, launched in 2008, which aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrializing, middle-income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens by 2030 in a clean and secure environment. Vision 2030 was meant to be implemented through Medium-Term Plans (MTP). In 2018, the Big Four Agenda was launched as the third MTP in which food security was one of the big four priorities (next to affordable housing, manufacturing, and affordable healthcare for all). It shows the policy priority for food security including a focus on the agricultural sector.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that the new Kenya Constitution 2010 established 48 Governments (1 National Government & 47 County Governments). This indicates that many responsibilities and functions will be transferred to county level. In agriculture, 85% of the functions should be at the county level, though the handover process of devolution is still ongoing.

²⁶³ FAO, EU (2015). *Land Programme: Support to the attainment of Vision 2030 through Devolved Land Reforms in Kenya PHASE I: Improved and inclusive decentralized Land Governance of Community Lands in ASAL counties of Kenya* .

²⁶⁴ KNBS (2022). *Consumer Price Indices and Inflation Rates for February 2022*. February 28, 2022

²⁶⁵ CGIAR-CCAFS (2020). *Climate change, agriculture, food and nutrition security policies and frameworks in Kenya*. Working Paper No. 330, 2020

²⁶⁶ Capital News (2021). *Matiangi touts 'broader approach' beyond herder-farmer conflict as Laikipia crisis intensifies*.

The 2019 **Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy (ASTGS)** presents the GoK's commitment to reforming the sector by increasing output and productivity, boosting incomes in agribusiness and ensuring household resilience and food security. In addition, many other relevant policy frameworks have been adopted or are being prepared, such as the Youth in Agribusiness Strategy, the National Agriculture Investment Plan, agricultural policy, food security, and nutrition security.

In 2021, as preparation for the UN Food Systems Summit (FSS), so-called **regional dialogues** were held within the six regions²⁶⁷ -each consisting of various counties- and in Nairobi city to prepare for this summit. The aim of achieving 100% food and nutrition security for Vision 2030 was underlined and specific targets for production increase, improved nutrition, increase of incomes, more jobs in agro-processing were set.²⁶⁸ After the Summit a summary report was published with five action tracks,²⁶⁹ but it is still too soon to assess progress.

The National Government of Kenya has been frequently reorganised. Since 2020 the following **Ministries** are directly relevant for agri-food systems: Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Environment and Forestry; Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation; Ministry of Devolution and the ASAL Areas; Ministry of Trade and Industrialisation; and Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning. In addition, the Ministries of Health (in relation to nutrition), the ministries dealing with wildlife, energy, transport and infrastructure also play a role in agri-food systems. This makes the **governance set-up** quite complex as there is no clear inter-ministerial coordination. The devolution process requires enormous effort in each sector and for each ministry to transfer responsibilities and budgets to county level, leaving hardly any time for more overall inter-ministerial coordination.

There are some **government coordination** set-ups at sectoral level such as the Joint Agriculture Sector Consultation and Cooperation Mechanism (JASCOM) which includes the Ministry of Agriculture and the ASAL ministry plus the counties, and the Intergovernmental Forum for Agriculture (IGFA). This forum brings together county bosses, County Executive Committee (CECs) in charge of Agriculture, top ministry officials, representatives of sectoral ministries, other State agencies, key private sector players and DPs. During the last Forum meeting in January 2022, participants indicated that from 2015-2020 the average age of the national budget allocated to agriculture was 4.95%, in comparison to the Malabo Declaration target of 10%.

Allocation to the agricultural sector is well below the Maputo Declaration of 10% of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development. In the 2021/22 budget of Ksh. 3.64 trillion only Ksh 79 billion (just over 2%) was allocated to the broad sector of Agriculture and Rural Development. In the FY 2021/22, "*the Agriculture, Rural and Urban Development (ARUD) sector's budget allocation was Kshs.79 billion, comprised of Kshs.55 billion (70%) for development activities and Kshs.24 billion (30%) for recurrent expenditure*".²⁷⁰ Other than low budget allocation, actual releases from the Exchequer are always late. At county level, the budget allocations to agriculture vary between 2% and 8%.

Private sector and civil society do participate in agricultural sector coordination mechanisms at national level – and at county level- through the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) and the Agricultural Sector Network (ASNET). However, coordination among sectors remains a challenge. For example, while the interrelatedness of environment and agriculture is obvious from a systems perspective, the current dichotomous relationship between the environment and agriculture donor groups presents a challenge.

In addition to challenges regarding coordination across Ministries, there are important challenges related to regulatory frameworks. For example, ineffective regulatory framework for agri-land governance that has been at the roots of many problems, including unresolved claims of historical land injustices among some communities, proliferation of unplanned urban settlements, unsustainable land use practices, land use and human-wildlife conflicts. Additionally other serious aspects of the land issues are environmental degradation, uneconomic land fragmentation, unjust land distribution and other land related problems.²⁷¹ Over the past years, some cases changes to the regulatory frameworks have been prepared or agreed upon, sometimes with assistance from the EU such as for land governance as discussed later in this report.

Finally, it is important to note that the country faces challenges relating to corruption affecting many issues such as agricultural inputs, land registration, and trade to name a few.

²⁶⁷ Kenya is divided in six Regional Economic Blocks: South Eastern Kenya Economic Block, Central Region Economic Bloc, Kenya Coast, Lake Region Economic Block, Narok and Kajiado Economic Block, and North Rift Economic Block plus Nairobi City Council.

²⁶⁸ GoK (2021). *Economic blocs and partners, Kenya's pathway to sustainable food systems, Kenya National Food Systems Dialogue Series*, 2021

²⁶⁹ Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives, United Nations Food System Summit (2021). *Summary Report*. August 2021

²⁷⁰ Controller of Budget (2021). *National Government Budget Implementation Review Report First Quarter FY 2021/2022*. October, 2021.

²⁷¹ EU, FAO (2015). *Land Programme, Land governance summary note*.

EU-Kenya cooperation framework

The European Development Fund (EDF)²⁷² is the main source of funding for EU-Kenya bilateral development cooperation. As summarised in the table below, two EDF funding/programming periods are relevant for this evaluation.

Table 6 *EDF programming - Financial allocations per sector*

2008-2013 programming (10th EDF)		2014-2020 programming (11th EDF)	
Sector*	Allocation (EURm)	Sector	Allocation (EURm)
Regional Economic Integration by means of Transport Infrastructure	126.8 (33%)	Food Security and Resilience to climate shocks (At MTR, renamed “Job Creation and Resilience to Climate Shocks”)	190 (44%)
Agriculture and Rural Development	(26%)	Sustainable Infrastructure	175 (40%)
Macroeconomic Support	128.8 (33%)	Accountability of Public Institutions	60 (14%)
Other Programmes:	30.6 (8%)	Support measures (incl. NAO support)	10 (2%)
- Trade and Private Sector Development	16.8 (4.4%)		
- Good Governance including NSA (*)	9.2 (2.4%)		
- Technical Cooperation Facility	4.6 (1.3%)		
Total	383		435

Source: EU-Kenya CSP&NIP (2008-2013) and EU-Kenya NIP (2014-2020)

As from 2021, the EDF has been integrated into the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), which has become the main source of funding for EU-Kenya bilateral development cooperation. Under NDICI, programming is carried out in the framework of Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs). For Kenya, a MIP for the period 2021-2027 has been prepared with a preliminary allocation of EUR 324 million for the period 2021-2024.

Focus of the case study

This Kenya country case study has relied on: i) a document review (see **Error! Reference source not found.**), i) key informant interviews conducted online and during a visit of the team in Kenya (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Additionally, the preliminary findings were validated in a debriefing session with the EUD Kenya. The work on the case study started with a portfolio overview of all EU SAFS-related support to Kenya mapping all interventions supporting agriculture, rural development, nutrition, resilience, etc (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). The team then selected: i) a small sample of interventions for in-depth analysis; and ii) a large sample for a general review to assess the possible linkages and contribution to SAFS.

One major challenge has been that no EU intervention took SAFS as a clear point of departure or an approach to be pursued in practice. A major explanation is that only around 2019 HQ provided a first instruction regarding SAFS. This means that the SAFS approach is very new and has not yet been operationalised for the EU support to Kenya. Given this challenge, it is important to keep in mind that this country case study assesses EU strategies and interventions only from a SAFS perspective. This means that for selected interventions (see below) the relevance, coherence and effectiveness and potential impact is analysed from a SAFS perspective, but no general assessments of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency are made.

²⁷² The EDF, which is related to the Cotonou Agreement for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP), is made up of contributions from EU Member States but is outside the EU budget.

Design

This Section analyses the SAFS strategies and portfolio of the EU in Kenya from a systems perspective. It covers findings related to some dimensions of the Evaluation Questions (EQ) 1 and 2²⁷³, which allow providing an assessment of the transformational potential of EU support to SAFS.

Main findings regarding the design of EU support to SAFS in Kenya:

- While SAFS is mentioned in the new programming (MIP 2021-2027), it can be questioned to what extent the concept of SAFS and related objectives have underpinned the definition of priority areas of cooperation. SAFS has not been operationalised yet and there is still no concrete planning of interventions from a systems perspective.
- The EU-Kenya portfolio 2014-2021 shows a very broad range of types of interventions that allows, in principle, to adopt a comprehensive SAFS approach, specifically in the areas of resilience and food security, but also in relation to research and nutrition. However, the design of the programmes was not supported by SAFS assessments.
- The portfolio reflects a gradual shift in strategic focus: from ASAL focused rural development and resilience interventions (incl. agricultural research) to interventions more focusing on private sector growth, with less attention for the GoK and not limited to ASALs. This shift may not be directly conducive to the adoption of a systems approach.
- The adoption of new modalities such as blended finance requires substantial efforts. In Kenya it was focused on improving access to finance, but issues of sustainability and inclusiveness were not addressed. Therefore, the huge focus on private investments making use of new aid modalities in combination with less focus on working with government appears not the most appropriate for adopting a systems approach.
- Formally there is due attention to policy coherence (including coherence between the support provided in the various focal sectors of cooperation) and to synergies within and among EU agriculture and rural development interventions and the support of other donors. In practice, implementing partners do want to work together and realise synergies, however, given the focus on project performance they are primarily focused on their own implementation. While they do aim to work together and coordinate especially at county level, there is limited evidence of coherence and realised synergies on the ground.
- Explanatory factors for the lack of coherence, which is a necessary dimension of an effective systems approach, are the high work burden related to the implementation of a vast range of project modality interventions that leads to working in silos, despite efforts at broad coordination.
- There are mechanisms in place for coordination among DPs, but coordination is mainly limited to information exchange. This also applies to EU Member States and there is no Team Europe SAFS approach or common understanding of a systems approach, though it should be noted that the TEI Green Deal has as one of its five pillars “sustainable agricultural value chains”.
- Policy dialogue with the host government on matters directly related to SAFS is ad hoc though there are periodic and regular discussions between the agriculture and environment donor groups and the government of Kenya on some key issues.
- In theory, there is huge transformation potential given the Kenyan context while the EU portfolio covers relevant areas. However, the role of a single donor and of all DPs together is limited in a middle-income country as Kenya, where the government is in the driver seat. The GoK has shown willingness and interest in SAFS, but the overall government priorities do not (yet) point in the direction of a full systems change. Nevertheless, some partial changes are possible and this is where the EU and other DPs can contribute through programme interventions.

Overview of EU support to SAFS

Overview of changes in EU support strategies

The main features of EU bilateral programming related to agriculture and agri-food systems support since 2008 are presented in Table 1:

Table 7 Key features of EU support to Kenya related to SAFS, 2008-2027

	NIP 2008-2013	NIP 2014-2020	MIP 2021-2027
Name of focal sector	Agriculture and rural development (second sector)	Food Security/Job Creation and Resilience to climate shocks (main sector)	Green Transition: Environmental

²⁷³ JC1.2 on Coordination with EU Member States, JC1.5 on Conducive internal institutional environment and JC2.1 on Synergies within country portfolio.

		Renamed: Job creation and resilience after the MTR	Sustainability and Resilience (main sector)
Budget focal sector	€ 99 million	€ 190 million increased to €228.5 million after the MTR	€147 million (2021-2024)
Main sub-sectors	Support to the Strategy for Revitalising Agriculture (SRA) with focus on ASAL areas and LRRD Community-based poverty reduction and environmental management	Food security and nutrition – renamed “Job Creation” in the MTR Productive climate resilient agriculture and community investments Conducive environment/ Climate proof infrastructure	Natural capital and resilience Green economy and sustainable business Sustainable energy

This overview shows that agriculture and rural development has been a focal sector of support since 2008²⁷⁴, while the focus of EU support to the sector gradually shifted from broad community rural development to more private-sector oriented Green Deal type of support over time. This means a gradual shift from a rather exclusive poverty and resilience focus on ASAL areas to a broader economic/entrepreneurial focus on value chains throughout the country plus a focus on sustainable energy. At the same time, during the MIP-period continued attention will be paid to strengthening resilience and drought management in ASAL areas. Most of the support covered by this evaluation is in the scope of 11th EDF support.

According to the NIP 2008-2013, the support to the National Strategy for Revitalising Agriculture (SRA, the predecessor of the ASTGS) was initially envisaged as part of an emerging Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) programme, preferably in the form of sector budget support.²⁷⁵ However, a SWAp to the SRA never materialised, as governance risks were thoroughly assessed after the 2008 post-election violence which led to the end of General Budget Support. Instead the support focused on agricultural research for ASAL areas, drought management activities via the Kenya Rural Development Programme (KRDP), food security initiatives and some crop-specific and livestock initiatives. This means that during implementation of the 10th EDF more attention was provided to food security and climate change issues than originally planned.

Similarly, as the 10th EDF support to agriculture focused on ASALs which was also the case for community-based support to a large extent. This included a large variety of activities such as investments in social infrastructure and environmental management practices that were quite dispersed. The 2014 evaluation of EU support to Kenya found that “*the EU had a coherent strategy for its support to ASAL areas, but a comprehensive strategy for the entire agriculture and rural development focal sector was lacking*”. The evaluation highlighted that the effectiveness of the support to the agricultural sector was hampered by the policy and institutional context. The evaluation found that EU support contributed to improved agricultural practices that might lead to improved food security in ASAL areas. However, no impact could be measured and clear sustainability challenges were identified.

The document review found no evidence that the 10th EDF support followed elements of an emerging agri-food systems approach. Some elements such as a focus on specific value chains, attention for land degradation and environmental issues emerged at the time. However, this cannot be labelled retroactively as a starting agri-food systems approach as there was no clear systems perspective and crucial aspects, such as a focus on food security, was missing.

The focus of the 11th EDF support changed quite substantially with food security and resilience emerging as key themes, though the geographical focus remained on ASALs. The change is visible in the overall objective for the focal sector support: “*Food security of the rural population and their resilience to future climatic shocks is sustainably improved*”. The specific objectives refer to: i) a multisectoral approach to nutrition, ii) agriculture productivity integrating market linkages, iii) diversification of livelihood sources, and iv) supporting climate proof investments at community and at county levels to be followed by various stakeholders to develop and implement Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies. At the sub-sector level, support reference is made to Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) principles for the food security. For the other two sub-sectors (i.e. climate-resilient agriculture and climate-proof agriculture), earlier support to agricultural value chains and community development would be continued with more emphasis on climate change adaptation. During the 11th EDF, in particular after the MTR, a shift in focus was decided in the direction of support to the private sector. This change is reflected in the change of the name of the focal sector to ‘Job creation and Resilience’ (see **Error! Reference source not found.**), and presents a shift away from direct support to the GoK.

The European Court of Auditors examined the EU development to Kenya in 2020, including the support to Food security and resilience to climate shocks/ Job creation and resilience (11th EDF). A main finding is that: “*A significant share of EU support in this sector went to communities in [ASAL] regions and to smallholder*

²⁷⁴ Also during the 9th EDF, 2003-2008, Agriculture and Rural Development was a focal sector.

²⁷⁵ Also Sector Budget Support for the second focal sector ‘Transport’ was envisaged but did not materialize. See: Evaluation of the European Union’s Co-operation with Kenya (2014). *Final Report*. Volume 1, June 2014, p.43

farmers (...) This support is likely to improve the living standard of those communities, but does not help progress towards the commercialisation of farming and the expansion of agro-processing”.²⁷⁶ The Court is criticising the focus on ASALs: “Actions for growth and productivity increased but sector support primarily focused on smallholder farmers and ASAL regions”²⁷⁷ as this would not contribute sufficiently to the overall change of the Kenyan economy, for which more attention should be given to manufacturing, including agro-processing. In its study, the Court did neither apply a food-systems lens, nor referred to the relevance of such an approach. It should be noted, however, that a shift to more high-potential areas was already considered and is reflected in the portfolio.

In the new MIP (covering the period 2021-2027), the title of the focal sector ‘Green Transition: Environmental Sustainability and Resilience’ reflects a systems focus, albeit not exclusively focused on SAFS. This focal sector includes some elements of the previous support such as resilience while adding sustainable energy as a new sub-sector. No overall objective at the sector level is formulated, but the following specific objectives for the first two sub-sectors are defined: i) sustainable and efficient management of natural capital and biodiversity conservation, including improved resilience of vulnerable populations in climate-affected areas, and ii) a stronger and more inclusive economic growth, built on practises which are climate resilient and preserves biodiversity. This shows that the second sub-sector Green Economy is broader than agri-food systems or agriculture. The MIP – contrary to the two previous NIPs – refers explicitly to SAFS three times:

“The green transition applies to a wide field of socio-economic areas, including a sustainable and circular economy linking environmental sustainability to sustainable agri-food systems, economic development, new technologies and ultimately job creation and poverty reduction”.

*“The **Farm to Fork Strategy** will guide implementation in the agri-food system, and innovative technologies, as well as nutrition, will be mainstreamed where relevant”.*

*“At the **regional level**, synergies should be sought in the areas of resilient and sustainable agri-food systems, sustainable trade, and increased integration of African Markets”.*²⁷⁸

The other two focal sectors in the MIP are ‘Leave no one behind, Human Development and Digital Inclusion’ and ‘Democratic Governance: Peace and Stability’. In addition, two Team Europe Initiatives were identified: Green Deal and Human-Centred Digitalisation.

However, while formal and documented attention towards SAFS in the MIP as a document of intent between EU and the Government is clearly defined, this intent has remained largely not operationalised so far. Interviewees at HQ and the EUD argued that, despite the formal attention in the MIP, there has been hardly any focus on the programming processes for SAFS in recent time. This can be considered as a missed opportunity since if the prioritisation of SAFS should have been visible in the focal sector choice, which is not really the case. This issue is further analysed below.

EU portfolio

During the inception phase of the evaluation, a mapping exercise was conducted of all EU support to SAFS from 2014 to 2020. This included support to food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture and fisheries. The mapping also covered the main areas linked to it, such as, resilience to food crisis, responsible investments in agriculture and value chains, land governance, inclusive economic, social and environmental growth, and innovations in agriculture. This resulted in a longlist of programmes supported for the six case study countries, including Kenya. The EU SAFS-related portfolio for Kenya, 2014-2021, is rather vast (see **Error! Reference source not found.** for an overview) and has the following key characteristics:

- Approximately 40 programmes, most of them consisting of various sub-programmes, varying in size from less than EUR 1 million to EUR 80-90 million.
- Different EU instruments with EDF as the most important one in terms of funding and number of programmes, followed by Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI Geographic and Thematic, in particular the Food budget line), European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), European Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) and European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).
- While most programmes are exclusively focused on Kenya, there are also a number of regional programmes. For example, on pest management and climate services, and global initiatives such as National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN) linked to the global Scaling-Up Nutrition Initiative (SUN).

²⁷⁶ European Court of Auditors, EU development aid to Kenya (2020). *Special report 2020/14*. p.5

²⁷⁷ European Court of Auditors, EU development aid to Kenya (2020). *Special report 2020/14*.p 23

²⁷⁸ EU, Republic of Kenya (2021). Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027, p. 4 and p. 7

- The portfolio shows a very vast range of initiatives that can all potentially be linked to SAFS, from agricultural research and extension, to resilience, food security, drought management, pest management, food processing and distribution, market access, trade and nutrition.
- The dominant implementing modalities are Delegated Cooperation Agreements with EU Member States (at least eight Member States institutions involved), Contribution Agreements with international organisations including the Rome-Based Agencies IFAD and FAO, grants to NGOs and contracts with GoK institutions. Over time, there are less contracts with GoK institutions.
- The dominant modality is project support, while blended finance (with the European Investment Bank) remains limited with only one funding of EUR 10 million.

This case study focusses on a sample of interventions. The sample was chosen to reflect the following features i) variety of thematic areas (agriculture, food security, resilience, blue economy, etc), ii) different funding instruments, iii) different implementation periods, iv) volume of support, and vi) perceived relevance to SAFS. Interventions were divided into those selected for in-depth analysis and the others for general analysis – see Table 8).

Table 8 Overview of evaluation sample EU SAFS-related support to Kenya

Decision year and instrument	Intervention title (Decision title)	Budget € million	Observations	Sample
2010 EDF	Kenya Rural Development Programme (KRDP)	83.8	5 components, MTR and final evaluation National Drought Management Authority (NDMA, FAO) and a later added Kenya Cereal Enhancement Programme (IFAD)	In-depth analysis
2013 EDF	Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience in Kenya (SHARE)	39.8	One big programme implemented by UNICEF and 9 other small ones, by different partners NGOs, FAO and Danida	In-depth analysis
2016 DCI	National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN)	3,5	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics	In-depth analysis
2016 EDF	AgriFI Kenya - Support to productive, adapted and market integrated smallholder agriculture in Kenya	45	4 programmes, including one Blended funding (EIB) for Kenya Agricultural Value Chain Facility and integrated smallholder agriculture (Danida), <i>including EIB blended finance</i>	General analysis
2019 EDF	Agri-Biz: Decent jobs for Youth and Women in Agricultural Value Chains in Kenya	43,5	5 programmes including new Kenya Cereal Enhancement Programme (IFAD), and role of women and youth in agribusiness (Danida)	General analysis
2015 EDF	Support to the agriculture sector transformation process and to decentralised land governance	16	2 programmes implemented by FAO and Sida	General analysis
2019 EDF	Coastal Economic Development in Kenya - 'Go Blue'	25	7 programmes by GIZ and AfD, a.o still early stages of implementation	General analysis
2017 EDF	Integrated pest management strategy	5,6	Counter the threat of invasive fall armyworm to food security in eastern Africa (FAW-IPM)	General analysis
2017 EDF	(EDE) Ending Drought Emergencies: Support to Resilient Livelihoods and Drought Risk Management	80,5	4 resilience programmes with different stakeholders including in particular NDMA	General analysis
2017 EUTF	EU Trust Fund: Support to The Kalobeyei Development Programme	39	5 EUTF programmes of which one is selected that is implemented by UNHCR	General analysis
2012 EDF	SMAP - Standards for Market Access Programme*		Plant Health Inspectorate Service, GoK, UNIDO. Not part of the agriculture and rural development focal sector, but governance	General analysis
2015 DCI	Kenya National Food Fortification Programme	3,2	Jomo Kenyatta university as lead implementing agency	General analysis

The sample shows a broad variety of interventions from the more traditional 10th EDF ASAL-focused rural development and resilience development, to the new 11th EDF Blue Economy, AgriBiz and AgriFi programmes), different support instruments and implementing modalities, broad range of interventions from agricultural support to resilience, pest management, nutrition and market standards.

Quality of design

Policy coherence at country level and integrated systems approach

Systems approach at country level

Although in the strategies, in particular the MIP, formal linkages between the focal sectors of support are emphasised (especially in the context of the SDG framework), in practice support to the focal areas has been (and is still being) implemented separately.²⁷⁹ For instance, the Standards for Market Access programme, focused on enhanced standards, regulation and certification of plant and animal-based products for exports, was implemented by the governance department with limited or no linkages to the agriculture and rural development department and programmes. In interviews various explanations for this limited attention for synergies have been provided:

- The EUD-development cooperation department is structured in various sections dealing with the different focal sectors and in-depth discussions between them are limited. The staff of the Agriculture and Rural Development section is very busy with planning and implementation of the high volume of support, which leaves limited time for cooperation with other staff.
- It is very difficult, given the roles and responsibilities for different EU financing instruments (EDF covering bilateral and regional cooperation, thematic programmes under the DCI and EIDHR, ECHO covering humanitarian funding, EUTF) to develop a practical and efficient approach for identifying and realising synergies.
- In fact, according to the EUD staff interviewed the staff is to some extent operating in silos, which is difficult to overcome given all bureaucratic procedures and requirements.
- The SAFS approach is not made operational, while there are also doubts to what extent SAFS is really a strategic priority as, for example, the MIP indicators from which the EUD could choose do not include any SAFS indicators.

Synergies in the portfolio

The difficulties to realise an integrated approach and achieve synergies between focal sectors and the support provided through different EU financing instruments, are repeated also within one and the same focal sector of support (agriculture and rural development, food security and resilience and green transition) even if one EUD section is in charge and very regular staff meetings are organised. The section covering Agriculture and Rural Development is in charge of the portfolio, which has been expanded with private sector interventions given the shift in focus in the course of the 11th EDF.

In practice, there are few examples of concrete synergies between EU interventions such as some programmes making use of agricultural research done by KALRO, and synergies at county level where (resilience) programmes funded by various donors tried to exchange and coordinate. The reasons are the same as indicated above. The staff members are each responsible for a few programmes and managing these programmes including identification and formulation (including getting approval from HQ), contracting, contacts with implementing agencies, field visits including meetings with county officials and beneficiaries, monitoring, reporting, organising MTEs or final evaluations, etc. takes up most of their time.

While, for complex programmes (e.g. KRDP, SHARE, AgriFi, AgriBiz, Blue Economy), there are single programme documents which cover all their components and reflect intended synergies between them, in almost all cases this coherence has been lost out of sight during implementation. In addition to the reasons mentioned above, some other factors have played a role:

- The start of various programme components may differ substantially from each other. E.g. in the case of KRDP an important programme KCEP-CRAL was added at a rather late stage with substantial additional funding, and no separate final evaluations were done. In the case of the Blue Economy programme with seven components with different implementing parties, only the GIZ component is well advanced, while the others implemented by Italy, Portugal, UN Human Settlements and France are lagging substantially behind, thus limited the possibilities for realising synergies.

²⁷⁹ Focal sectors: for the 10th EDF 1) Regional economic integration by means of transport infrastructure and 2) Agriculture and rural development; for the 11th EDF: 1) Food Security and Resilience to climate shocks, 2) Sustainable Infrastructure, 3) Accountability of public institutions and the MIP: 1) Green Transition: Environmental Sustainability and Resilience, 2) Leave no one behind: Human Development and Digital Inclusion, and 3) Democratic governance, peace and stability.

- The use of different implementing partners for different programme components hinder the options to implement an integrated systems approach.
- The different programme components are often implemented in different geographical areas (i.e. different counties) and deal with different stakeholders, thus limiting the potential for synergies.

SAFS assessments in programme documents

The programme documents reflect partial SAFS assessments. In general, they provide good quality descriptions of the main issues they are focussing on. These issues are often quite specific although linkages to related issues are being made. However, as indicated above none of the programmes has been formulated from a systems perspective. This means in practice that in all cases the assessments are partial and deal only with some aspects. For example, resilience programmes often pay due attention to the consequences of climate change such as an increasing number of droughts that affect specific segments of the population in various ways including food security. More recently, the effects of Covid- 19 on food security has been assessed in some cases. Not always issues of inclusiveness and political economy factors (i.e. that various target groups are affected in different ways by climate change and this may contribute to increased inequality) are given due attention. On the other hand, programmes focusing on enhancing economic opportunities in agricultural value chains may address issues of inclusiveness target women and youth but ignore to large extent climate and sustainability concerns. If all assessments in programme documents and the assessments in the minds of stakeholders were combined a very comprehensive overall assessment would emerge, although still some of the elephants in the room such as the fast population growth in relation to the carrying capacity might not emerge, while also conflicting interests of various groups competing for the land and scarce resources tend to be ignored.

Integration of gender equality and inclusiveness

The attention for gender equality in strategic documents has marginally increased over time. In the NIP 2014-2020 gender is mentioned as one of the three cross-cutting issues next to Environment & Climate Change, and Resilience. In the focal sector paragraph on Food security and resilience, some specific attention to the role of women (and youth is given) stating: “*Women contribute 80% of all labour in food production and 50% in cash crop production, it is estimated that over 40% of smallholder farms are managed by women as men increasingly migrate for non-agricultural labour. Female-headed households have lower income and higher poverty incidences and to a less extent land owners*”²⁸⁰. In the objectives and indicators for the focal sector support no reference is made to gender-sensitive indicators.

In the MIP 2021-2027, there is sector ‘Empowering Women and Youth’ as part of the second priority ‘Leave No One Behind - Human Development & Digital Inclusion’, while in the text on the main priority area ‘Green Transition’ there is no explicit attention for women. Although a few indicators have been made gender-specific (and age specific) such as indicators on nutrition, increased resilience and sustainable jobs created.²⁸¹

The programme and actions documents of the selected interventions show important variations in the depth of gender equality analysis. In a few cases, there are brief gender equality screening lists filled out for some programmes. However, these screening lists consist of approximately eight yes/no questions that according to an assessment by the country evaluation team do not really add value as it remains very superficial. A few projects do some gender analysis at the inception phase.

Also in the progress and evaluation reports there is in most cases some attention to gender, but no in-depth analysis. A minority of programmes presents gender- (and age-) specific data on output and outcome level. There are some relatively recent programmes such as AgriBiz and on agri-land governance that are more specifically focused on women such as Decent jobs for Youth and Women in Agricultural Value Chains in Kenya. In these programmes, there is often a gender analysis of reasonable quality in the programme documents and in the approach women are specifically targeted. This is reflected in qualitative terms in reporting where reference is made to gender-inclusive planning, set-up of gender-balanced committees and women targeted for training. In these programmes, there is some attention for gender-specific output reporting in terms of number of women or female-headed households reached, but there is still limited genders-specific information at outcome level such as improved land rights to women compared to men, performance of female-led businesses, etc. The same applies to age-specific reporting to a large extent.

This means that in practice real integration of gender equality still lags behind. This finding can be situated in the context of inclusive sustainable agri-food systems, which assumes that a clear distinction should be made

²⁸⁰ EU (2014). *Kenya Cooperation - 11th EDF – National Indicative Programme 2014-2020*. p.8, 9 and 10

²⁸¹ Indicators 1.1.b1. Number of people / communities benefiting from increased resilience to various types of risks and shocks, including climate-related ones, as a result of EU-support, disaggregated by sex (Own); 1.1.b2. Number of women of reproductive age, adolescent girls and children under 5 reached by nutrition related interventions supported by the EU (EURF 27); 1.2.1. Number of jobs supported/sustained by the EU, disaggregated for green jobs, sex and age (EURF 14)

between various target groups that have different -sometimes competing interests. There is some attention to these different interests in programme documents and especially in resilience-focused programmes due attention is paid to vulnerable groups. However, the real challenge in practice is to monitor programme implementation and the effects on these different groups. There are hardly good practices of programmes that have such a detailed reporting going beyond the own interventions.

With the shift of EU support in the direction of an enhanced role of the private sector and the use of blended finance there is a risk that gender equality and inclusiveness get even further out of sight. This is because much effort is needed to set-up for example viable credit schemes via commercial banks and the application of gender-specific and inclusive criteria for applicants is not considered as it would add to the complications. In AgriBiz a new guarantee scheme is being set up specifically targeting youth and women, but it is not yet operational.

Thematic SAFS issues and Rome-Based Agencies

In the context of this evaluation a thematic study on the collaboration between the three **Rome-Based Agencies** (RBAs) is done. Therefore, at country level specific attention is paid to the relation between the RBAs and the EU. The recent evaluation of the collaboration among the RBAs did a case study on Kenya²⁸², and concluded that the EU played in putting pressure on the RBAs to work better together. There is a coordination mechanism in place with a RBA focal point or coordinator and consultations on each other's country strategic processes. A technical working group for the three RBAs has been put in place with an annual rotating chair

While, there are two important joint programmes – both EU-funded²⁸³ – they represent only a small part of the three agencies' operations in the country.²⁸⁴ For the KCEP-CRAL programme an interesting -from a SAFS perspective- graduation framework was developed, where recipients of WFP food assistance i.e. food insecure farmers would be graduated to subsistence level and then transferred to other (IFAD) support to become a commercially-oriented smallholders with climate-resilient agricultural practices. This is a very interesting model, but implementation proved to be challenging. Graduating farmers would benefit from a decreasing subsidy over four years (first year 10% farmer contribution to inputs, 2nd year 40%, 3rd year 70% and no subsidy anymore in the 4th year) but most farmers were unable to meet these targets. In addition, despite good collaboration, procedural difficulties can be frustrating and may hinder progress and a planned socio-economic survey did not take place because administrative procedures could not be reconciled. Nevertheless, some elements of the programme have been adopted such as the digital e-voucher system for agricultural inputs that is used by FAO in supporting the Ministry of Agriculture to establish a digital platform for input distribution. The second Kalobeyi programme is a pre-cursor to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and global efforts aimed at area-based approaches in refugee hosting areas. It aims to set a new way of working on the ground and a transformative approach for the way refugee assistance is delivered. In this programme, the transformative joint approach proved to be very challenging as well, even though collaboration between FAO and WFP on farming and markets was good.

In the EU-Kenya SAFS-related portfolio substantial attention is paid to **research and innovations** at different levels. For a long period of time, the EU provided support (e.g. via the Kenya Rural Development Programme (including KCEP-CRAL) then through the 11th EDF AgriFI Kenya programme) to the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO). Although this support contributed to many promising research findings (e.g. improved seeds, improved agricultural practices, bio-farming, etc.) the adoption rate remains quite low. Therefore, the EU wants to focus in the new programming more on adoption and dissemination of research findings rather than funding the research itself. Through DCI-Food also research institutes are being funded sometimes only at national level (e.g. the lead role for Jomo Kenyatta University in the Food Fortification programme), but also with linkages to regional and global level (e.g. the National Information Platform for Food and Nutrition (NIPFN) related to the global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA), and the integrated pest management strategy to counter the threat of invasive fall armyworm for food security with the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology - ICIPE). There are other regional research activities funded by EDF such as the ongoing ACP-EU Climate services programme implemented by Intergovernmental Agency on Development (IGAD) Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) focusing on information regarding climate change. The climate services support has resulted in very solid and robust climate data, but the challenge is to use these data for policies and implementation. In the past the EU-supported regional rinderpest eradication programme deserves to be mentioned, which led to the declared eradication of rinderpest in 2011.

²⁸² Mokoro, FAO, IFAD, WFP (2021). *Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies*, October 2021.

²⁸³ The Kenya Cereal Enhancement Programme - Climate Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods Window (KCEP-CRAL), part of KRDP and the Kalobeyi Socio-Economic Development Plan for Turkana West (KISEDPA).

²⁸⁴ The EU is probably the main funder for FAO and co-funder for IFAD in Kenya. These two projects may be a small part of the portfolio, but the role of EU funding for the agencies is significant, while ECHO also funds WFP for cash transfers.

The GoK expenditures on research & innovation are still lagging behind with 0.5% of the budget. The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) is responsible for national coordination of research and indeed has “Food and Nutrition Security” as one of its priorities. However, it is not adequately funded.

While research plays a crucial role in enhancing the transformative potential, the main challenge is the actual dissemination and adoption of research findings.

Linkages with EU MS and other donors

There are quite some EU MS active in Kenya supporting in one way or another SAFS, although no EU MS has been found that provided its support directly under the SAFS-label as the approach to narrowly support a specific thematic area is still dominant.

At the overall level, the **Agricultural and Rural DPs Group** (ARDPG) is since 2016 the institution responsible for coordinating the DP support to the agricultural sector with 23 DPs at present. It operates with a troika system of leadership with a current chair (IFAD in 2022), an outgoing chair (EUD) and an incoming chair (World Bank). It has a secretariat. It is an ex officio member of the national agricultural sector coordination forum JASSCOM. As ARDPG Chair/troika member the EU gives opening remarks at the IGF-A (intergovernmental forum on agriculture) conferences, regularly meets at high level with Council of Governors and central government, and so on. EU MS are active in this ARDPG, including in the chairmanship troika. In addition, there is a related DP group focusing on support to the ASALs (which deals with the Ministry for Devolution and the ASALs and the NDMA), in which the EU is also active. In addition, the EU participates in the Environment donor group. The World Bank is probably the main donor of the sector with a huge portfolio totalling over USD 500 million, but they have traditionally not coordinated that well with others.²⁸⁵

The coordination mechanisms reflect the present sectoral structure of the GoK and the lack of **multi-sectoral coordination**, which is related to the devolution process that requires additional coordination efforts at county level. In the past, there was the Agriculture Sector Coordination Unit (ASCU). This was a short-lived development partner funded unit from 2006 to 2014. It was the secretariat of ten ministries addressing agriculture and rural development in Kenya. ASCU coordinated the preparation of the Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (ASDS), which was the sector strategy for addressing Vision 2030 and also marshalled the private sector as well as supporting sector activities such as budget making process and development of medium-term plans. It was a well-placed structure for policy which covered other Ministries as well and there were some structures for policy dialogue. *“The unit became fully established and staffed in 2006, although recruitment of key staff continued into 2008. ASCU served as a one-stop shop for the entire agriculture sector (...) and played a key role in coordinating issues that cut across ministries. However, in January 2014, ASCU’s functions were suspended, without a structured replacement”*.²⁸⁶

The Agricultural Transformation Office (ATO) was recently formed in 2020 to support inter-ministerial coordination and was expected to play a key role in collaborating with JASSCOM and the Council of Governors as a way to support implementation of the ASTGS. At present, there is no effective structure for **policy dialogue** anymore, but the ARDPG troika is leading the informal dialogue with the Ministry of Agriculture. In this context, the chair of the ARDPG also delivered a speech at the IGF, where for example in January 2022 the GoK was praised for its preparation of and contribution to the UN food Systems Summit in 2021, but also the commitments to the 10% commitments for the Maputo Declaration were mentioned (with for counties living up to the commitments, but most counties and central government lagging behind). Issues for policy dialogue included new agricultural strategies and regulatory frameworks, financial commitments, institutional issues, etc. The most significant results of the policy dialogue in relation to SAFS are mentioned in the section on national agri-food systems governance.

The ARDPG and related ASAL **DP coordination group** function satisfactorily according to the stakeholders interviewed. The main focus is on exchange of information. Also at county level there are some coordination and exchange mechanisms involving donors, including CASSCOM and NDMA coordination processes which are both EU co-funded. Given the complexities of the sector and the ongoing devolution process in a middle-income country that is not very donor-dependent in combination with the dominant project modality, which means that there are hundreds of donor-funded projects, it is difficult to realise coordination and joint food-systems approaches. In addition, it is questionable whether the political will is there to implement a joint systems approach both from the GoK side as well as from the donors.

²⁸⁵ This comprises the Climate Smart Agriculture programme (2017 to 2023 at USD 280 million), National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth project (2016 to 2022 at USD 200 million), Emergency Financing to support Kenya’s Desert Locust Response (2020) at US\$ 43 million. A new project, the Agriculture Value Chain Development project (from 2023) is under preparation.

²⁸⁶ Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (2017). *Agriculture Joint Sector Review Assessment for Kenya*. November, 2017, p. 15

Despite the statements in the new MIP covering 2021-2027, there is no specific **Team Europe** approach at this moment regarding the Green Deal or on SAFS or agriculture. The main reason appears to be that the existing ARDPG and ASAL DP coordination function satisfactorily according to the stakeholders and involve all major DPs including EU MS. One or two EU MS interviewed would be in favour of a more articulated and joint Team Europe approach on SAFS, but, according to the interviews, this has not been a shared concern so far. One of the five focal areas under the TEI green deal is focusing on Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains. However, the working group is just starting up.

Moreover, the interviews with the EU MS in Kenya made clear that every EU MS has its own interpretation of SAFS based on general understanding, but also based on the specific policies and strategies made at EU MS HQ and by Embassies. To what extent they share a common interpretation of SAFS in Kenya is not clear. It appears that it may be possible to identify some specific approaches on which they can work together. Some EU MS pay more specific attention to SAFS. This is the case of the Netherlands which offers a training course on SAFS to Embassy staff by Wageningen University and Research (WUR).

Transformative potential

Based on the SAFS assessment and challenges presented in the first section of the case study, in theory, there is a huge transformative potential as there is need for a systems change. However, the GoK is in the driver seat and the EU cannot and should not develop a full-fledged SAFS approach for Kenya as that would go beyond its responsibility and capacity. The GoK has shown willingness and interest in SAFS in the preparation of the UN FSS, but the overall government priorities and the way the government is organised including the devolution challenges do not (yet) point in the direction of a full systems change. Nevertheless, some partial changes are possible and this is where the EU and other DPs can contribute through programme interventions. In the design of potential SAFS-related programmes there are a few elements that may contribute positively to the transformative potential such as the attention for research even though it is felt that adoption and innovation is lagging behind. Nevertheless, the EU is confronted with an internal environment that is not very conducive to adopting a SAFS approach, while there is also no common EU MS approach.

Effects of EU support

In this Section a non-exhaustive overview of various types of effects that can be contributed to EU support is listed based on document analysis for the broad sample and interviews.²⁸⁷ The progress, review and evaluation reports mainly report against the detailed programme log-frames and in most cases no overview of higher-level (outcomes and impact) effects is presented. In addition, most reports are made at the level of programme components for which different implementing agencies are responsible and no overviews at programme level are being made. In general, reporting is mainly based on qualitative indicators and there is little attention for counting the number of beneficiaries and avoiding double-counting. There are hardly any longitudinal impact studies available that allow to assess changes in beneficiaries' livelihoods over time. This all limits the possibilities to present a clear overview of SAFS-related effects, but the overview provides an impression of the broad-ranged, scattered EU contribution to effects from a SAFS-perspective.

Main findings regarding effects of EU support pointing at transformation change and explanatory factors:

- The evaluation found a few good examples of global and regional governance relating to national initiatives to which the EU contributed such as the establishment of the National Information Platform for Food and Nutrition and the rinderpest eradication programme at regional level.
- The EU aimed to contribute to increased food production in ASAL areas, which was often related to adoption of agricultural and livestock research findings and innovations such as improved seeds and crop varieties and improved agricultural and livestock practices. There is some evidence that this led to improved incomes, livelihoods and food security, albeit it at a limited scale.
- In the area of enhanced resilience, the EU made important contributions through the establishment of NDMA, the set-up of an early warning system and drought management system, which made communities more responsive to shocks.
- The introduction of the e-voucher system for agricultural inputs with EU contribution can be considered as a game changer as this opened the market for new private-sector agro-dealers with the government in a regulatory role only. Nevertheless, important challenges related to roll-out of the system, inclusiveness and climate-smart agricultural input packages remain to be addressed.

²⁸⁷ The effects are reported against the Judgment Criteria and related indicators in Evaluations Questions 2, 3 and 4 (JC 2.2 National governance, JC2.3 Enabling ecosystem, JCs 3.1-3.5 Effects on agri-food value chains and nutrition and JCs 4.1 -4.5 System-level effects)

- The main factors explaining the positive contributions to potential transformation change are not very easy to identify as the contributions differ in nature and are rather scattered. One main factor is that the right intervention was planned at the right moment of time (for example set-up of NDMA after the drought, e-voucher system introduction when technology was available). Other factors are learning from experiences elsewhere such as for the global and regional initiatives and continuity in support.
- Factors limiting the contributions to transformation change are the problems related widespread adoption of research and innovations, the information gaps between the detailed, often rather qualitative output reporting at individual programme level and overall information regarding agri-food systems at county level and at the level of regional economic blocks or eco-systems, and for specific value chains. There are also important information gaps between the basic national statistics and programme-level information, which is needed for a systems approach. In general, the scattered programme approach by many different development partners might not be conducive to directly contributing to transformation change.

National agri-food systems governance

In this section, the EU contribution to strengthening national governance for SAFS (JC 2.2) will be analysed. In Section 1, the GoK's policy and strategic commitment to change agri-food systems has been presented and there is no doubt that progress has been made in policies and strategies, while much remains to be done. Nevertheless, main challenges are related to the slow reform of regulatory frameworks, actual implementation of the policies and the institutional set-up.

Given the lack of formal policy dialogue and the fact that the role of the GoK in the EU portfolio has been gradually reduced in the last decade, no substantial contribution on national governance can be expected. Via the ARDPG DPs are informed and consulted on changes in the policy and strategic frameworks including the preparations for the UN FSS and the important IGF in January 2022. In the past, DPs contributed more directly to the formulation of sector policies, but this is not anymore the case. Nevertheless, via specific interventions and related consultations and discussions, the EU – and other DPs - can affect national governance. The analysis of the broad sample of EU-supported SAFS-related interventions (see **Error! Reference source not found.**) highlights various governance changes to which the EU (and other stakeholders) have contributed. These changes and EU contribution to them are further discussed below.

Change of the agriculture input system with the introduction of e-vouchers as the game changer

Until recently, the GoK played an important role in the importation, storage and distribution of agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilisers through the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB). Costs were high and the system did not function efficiently and led to corruption according to interviewees. The GoK also applied fertiliser subsidy, which did not function well. This meant that food production and security targets were not met as only a small proportion of farmers had access to good agricultural inputs at an affordable price. The EU-funded KCEP-CRAL programme (part of KRDP) worked on the introduction of an e-voucher system. Through this system farmers receive an e-voucher value to an e-card or cell phone e-wallet and then have a choice from accredited agro-dealers and from a menu of eligible inputs. Agro-dealers have a point-of-sale (POS) equipment for direct compensation by the e-voucher system. KCEP-CRAL but also World Bank programmes experimented with the introduction of e-vouchers in specific counties.²⁸⁸ The testing proved to be very positive and the GoK decided to adopt this system nationwide in August 2020. A gradual roll-out of the system over all counties was planned. KCEP-CRAL also experimented with a financial insurance scheme to protect against drought-related crop failure, for which the test was also positive.

Various stakeholders indicated in interviews that the introduction of the e-voucher system and the adoption by the GoK is considered as a game changer to which the EU directly contributed. The e-voucher system is part of the Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy (ASTGS) and aims to:

“Increase small-scale farmer, pastoralist and fisherfolk incomes and targets 1 million farmers in ~40 zones (initially) producing crops, livestock and fish served by ~1000 farmer-facing SMEs that provide inputs, equipment, processing and post-harvest aggregation and shift nationwide inputs support programme focus to empower ~1.4 million registered high needs farmers to access a wide range of inputs (e.g. seeds, crop protection, fertilizer, equipment) from a variety of private and public providers, using e-vouchers for digital service delivery.”²⁸⁹

This formal adoption does not mean that the whole system is already functioning satisfactorily and that no setbacks take place. For example, after the adoption of the e-Voucher system the President announced free

²⁸⁸ World Bank Group, AFDB, AGRA (2021). *Design and delivery mechanisms of e-voucher systems in agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa*. June 2021.

²⁸⁹ Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation (2019). *Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy (ASTGS)*, p. xiv.

fertilizer subsidy for coffee farmers, but DPs -including the EU as chair of the ARDPG- conveyed a message to the President that this was not in line with new input system, which led to withdrawal of this initiative.

There are still many challenges to overcome in the role out of the system, notably the types of agriculture inputs included and the role of agro-dealers. Regarding the type of agriculture inputs, KCEP-CRAL worked with input packages designed and validated by KALRO experts and focusing on marketable crops. In the past, the system was primarily oriented towards the distribution of fertiliser. In principle, climate smart or biological inputs should be included in the package, but this is only the case to a limited extent, while also more crops need to be covered. The second challenge relates to the training and knowledge of agro-dealers especially in more remote area where there are still hardly any agro-dealers. The intention is to train specifically women and youth as agro-dealers, but important efforts in this area are still needed esp. also in view of increasing prices for agricultural inputs.

NDMA and drought coordination structures EDE

Since 1996, the EU has provided support in the establishment of the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) as an early warning system was needed and the communities needed to be better prepared for droughts and other emergencies. It is generally acknowledged that Kenya has made significant progress in strengthening and institutionalising its drought management system, which was also mentioned in interviews. The milestones include the formal establishment of the NDMA in November 2011, the formulation of the Ending Drought Emergencies (EDE) strategy in 2013 and the establishment of the Contingency Fund, and technical improvements to the early warning and contingency planning systems. In addition, policies, laws, and institutional frameworks for management of drought and other climate-related risks have been developed at national level and in a number of counties. These developments institutionalize drought risk management in national and county policy and planning. The EDE initiative, which set a timeline of 2022 for ending drought emergencies in Kenya (though it is proposed to extend this to 2027), is part of the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) implemented by all Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Its implementation is coordinated by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA).

Since 2014, the EU provided direct support to the NDMA via the KRDP and also support to implementation of EDE pillars notably regarding institutional support, and preparedness. The 2021 MTR of EDE noted:

“It is evident that whatever challenges may still be experienced at the operational level, drought risk management is now institutionalized in the policy and planning framework of both the national and county governments, with NDMA as a dedicated and specialized institution. The drought early warning system (DEWS) is fully functional, and funded by the Government, although NDMA indicates that it needs twice the current annual allocation of Kshs. 30 million to function optimally. Efforts are under way to modernize the DEWS by integrating appropriate digital technology to enhance efficiency, accuracy and speed. EDE developed in 2013-2014 as GoKs strategy to end the worst of the suffering by droughts by 2022”.

As the EU was for a long period almost the sole funder of NDMA, this important governance effect can be linked to EU support. At present, a new four-year EU-support programme is formulated, which foresees final phasing out by 2027, while new DPs are potentially interested such as the US, NL, and Sweden.

The establishment of NDMA and a good early warning system can be considered as a first step towards adopting a systems perspective, while new challenges need to be addressed. So far, the EDE and NDMA have rightly focused on slow onset drought emergencies, which are different from other types of emergencies that the ASALs are susceptible to. Floods, desert locusts, and more recently the Covid-19 pandemic are additional hazards that undermine livelihoods in the ASALs. The EU has funded quite significantly the locust response, while NDMA has been occasionally active on drought-related flooding. This means that new ways of enhancing resilience need to be developed. Therefore, the EU actually does try to engage on policy dialogue regarding overall disaster management.

Agriculture sector transformation in view of the devolution process

The results in this area are less tangible and many DPs have contributed to the changes observed.

Through various programmes (e.g. KRDP, and the Agricultural Sector Development Support Programme (ASDSP) II implemented and funded by Sida with EUR 30 million and co-funded by the EU with EUR 5 million), the EU has supported agriculture sector transformation in relation to the devolution to the counties. In this context, the EU has engaged in policy dialogue through chairmanship of and active participation in the ARDPG, as mentioned above.

The consolidation of ministries and the devolution of functions to county governments had major implications for both horizontal and vertical sector coordination and necessitated institutional restructuring within MoALF&C to align its structure and procedures to its reduced mandate, establish mechanisms for consultation and cooperation with county governments, and release the potential efficiency gains. This restructuring process

has been time consuming both at a national and county level and a capacity gap remains at the county level, in some instances. Various programmes, supported the set-up of horizontal and vertical coordination structures such as JASSCOM's and CASSCOM's. Also the establishment of the establishment of value-chain platforms at county level has been supported. In addition, EU supported programmes notably via FAO contributed to the digitalisation agenda in agriculture. In addition, some programmes worked with the regional economic blocks i.e. a group of counties, which creates additional challenges as well as opportunities.

According to interviewees, problematic issues that emerged such as the continued maize subsidies and limited allocations for agriculture were addressed in the policy dialogue, but this did not yet lead to changes.

Agri-land governance

There is one EU programme implemented by FAO, which has focused exclusively on land governance issues, especially on registration for community lands. There is a lack of clarity between the scope of the mandates of the Ministry of Land (MoL) and of the National Land Commission (NLC). The devolution process has added an element of complexity with the creation of County Land Management Boards (CLMBs) whose mandate is to manage all public land, to keep copy of the registry and to conduct research on historical land injustices that need to be addressed including exercising the right of women access to land in a context of traditional society as given in the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. The CLMBs are in charge of land planning, including allocating land and natural resources to livestock or agriculture, as well as for housing and public goods.²⁹⁰ The functioning of these CLMBs is problematic and capacity needs to be built in view of increasing challenges such as "land grabs". Large scale land acquisitions may become a future threat facing communal lands in the ASALs. Recent years have seen a renewed investor interest in acquiring rangelands or farmlands for investments not only in high potential areas but also in the ASAL counties that have traditionally been ignored by investors. Much of the land in the ASAL is classified as (unregistered) Community Land. The land governance programme aims to reduce uncertainty/corruption and transaction costs in land exchange, while enhancing land security for potential investors (through investing in digital land registration systems).

To address these challenges a programme was developed with a participatory approach to land registration in 8 counties with due attention to gender issues in order to register women as owner or co-owner of the land. This also included changes in the regulatory framework and capacity building of various stakeholders at national level. The approach is found to be interesting and the programme is now expanded to all counties (under AAP 2021).

There is a direct and significant EU contribution to this new land governance approach. Important issues remain to be addressed as there is still no precise indication of number of community titles registered in the progress reports.²⁹¹ While attention has been paid to resolving disputes over land, important issues remain especially because livestock owners don't have land and may be squeezed out by farmers.

National nutrition platform, food fortification alliance and food safety

One DCI-Food programme focuses on the set-up of a National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN). This is an international initiative of the European Commission with support from the United Kingdom Department for International Development and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in line with the global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative. Each NIPN will provide a country-led and country-owned platform to facilitate multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder dialogue on nutrition and support the use of existing information and data to develop or refine policies and programmes (see **Error! Reference source not found.**, for more information).

As food security is part of the Big Four Agenda, it was decided to set up a NIPFN in Kenya. However, responsibilities for food security and nutrition in the national government are scattered among the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health at national level, while also the counties play an important role. As the release of funds transferred by the EU to the Treasury was substantially delayed also the implementation of the programme and the set-up of the platform was substantially delayed. Therefore, governance effects can still not be reported, but a new programme is being planned with a better institutional set-up of the platform that should allow to contribute to improved nutrition. It is planned to set up an inter-ministerial National Food and Nutrition Council comprising relevant ministries responsible for food and nutrition.

Through the EU support to Food Fortification the Kenya National Food Fortification Alliance (KNFFA) governance structure has been strengthened, which coordinates food fortification agenda in Kenya. As a result, KNFFA has been convening quarterly meetings with all key stakeholders regularly.

Through a AgriFi programme 'Support to productive, adapted and market integrated smallholder agriculture' implemented by Danida through a Delegated Cooperation agreement, there is a link to improvement of national and county level food safety governance. Since 2016, the Danish Food Control Agency through a Danish

²⁹⁰ EU, FAO (2021). *Land Programme - Support to the attainment of Vision 2030 through Devolved Land Reforms in Kenya. PHASE I: Improved and inclusive decentralized Land Governance of Community Lands in ASAL counties of Kenya, Land Programme, Summary Note.*

²⁹¹ The evaluation team received information that 18 community land titles are now registered.

sector cooperation programme (form of twinning) has worked together with all food and feed control agencies and institutions on transforming the inefficient system. As indicated above, in Kenya, the nationwide food quality and safety systems are legally controlled by various government agencies under different ministries using separate laws. This has resulted in a new Food Safety Bill Food Safety Bill that is aimed at safeguarding consumers' health and increasing Kenya's produce access to the world market. A national food safety committee has been established. A new system of safeguarding is envisaged focusing on behavioural change of all actors involved focusing on self-regulation and compliance by Food Business Operators. The AgriFi programme is working in 13 counties to set up and roll out this system at county level such as county committees on food safety, improved market management, food safety integrated in all training curricula for value chain actors, more efficient inspection practices, etc. This appears to be an emerging key transformation in which the EUD is indirectly involved. The fact that this ongoing transformational change is not very well-known, also shows the challenges of EU and donor coordination.

Enabling National Agri-Food Business Ecosystem

Changes in the governance, as indicated in the previous section, are also expected to contribute to a more enabling eco-system. It is still too early to assess whether actual changes in the eco-system are taking place, but some early signals have been indicated in interviews with various stakeholders:

- More private sector engagement that may facilitate systems change, in particular the role of agro-dealers for the agricultural inputs;
- Continued role for research and innovation with due attention for adoption and dissemination, such as agricultural input packages developed by KALRO;
- Better collaboration among stakeholders at county and ward level, as well as at national level with due attention to horizontal and vertical linkages.

However, based on the information collected through document review and in interviews, various overall challenges have been identified that should be overcome before real enabling agri-food business ecosystems can be established:

- Weak inter-ministerial coordination, lack of performance on the Maputo Declaration in relation to the ongoing devolution process;
- Missing linkages between private sector and other actors, e.g. extension services;
- Adoption of research findings in practice;
- More attention to sustainable agricultural practices in view of climate change;
- Emergency systems focusing on all kinds of emergencies and not only on droughts;
- Awareness that ecosystems do not stop at county or country level and development of a broader ecosystem perspective;
- Creation of alternative livelihood opportunities beyond agriculture and livestock in view of carrying capacity;
- Need for a multisectoral approach.

Changes in agri-food systems value chains and nutrition

Sustainability, inclusiveness, and resilience of agri-food value chains

Many EU funded interventions have focused on more sustainable, resilient and inclusive value chains and at programme level scattered positive results are reported. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive overview or to aggregate the available information in a meaningful way. For example, when trying to estimate the number of beneficiaries reached through EU-funded value chain and resilience interventions, the range is very broad from 1-2 million people directly reached to a maximum of 4-5 million people directly or indirectly reached. The last estimate of 4-5 million is rather positive as most programmes target less than 100,000 people and only a few programmes such as **KRDP and SHARE** together have reached according to the 2020 MTR, between 400,000 and 800,000 farmers directly and indirectly, and are deriving economic benefits from the adoption of KALRO technologies. This is over a long period of time and these figures could not be double-checked.

Programme documents such as progress and completion reports as well as evaluation reports indicate various effects such as:

- Adoption of more sustainable agricultural practices (see 0) leading to increased productivity and production;
- Training of smallholders (including women and youth);
- Smallholder farmers (incl women and youth) benefitted from changes in value chains which led to increase of income and increased food security;

- Improved access to finance;
- Job creation;
- Set up of SMEs, etc.

The **case of the AgriFi Challenge Fund** that kicked off in 2018 illustrates the issues. AgriFi adopts a market system approach to value chains. The specific objective of the Challenge Fund is that 100,000 smallholder farmers/pastoralists are better integrated into value chains. The aim is to unlock investment in smallholder agriculture by providing grants (through a transparent and competitive mechanism) to agri-enterprises working with smallholders and pastoralists. According to programme documents, the expectation was that the companies would use the funds to grow their supply chains and overall business. The European Investment Bank (EIB) provides long-term local currency financing to Equity Bank (Kenya) for on-lending to eligible and suitable agriculture sector projects. EIB received a EUR 10 million grant from the EU, which would enable the Kenyan Equity Bank to provide loans to the agricultural sector in local currency and in longer tenure. In practice, the set-up of such a new innovative blended funding initiative takes time and delays are almost inevitable according to interviewees. While from a SAFS-perspective eligible smallholders should be selected on the basis of criteria of inclusiveness and would promote the use of new drought-resistant and higher-yielding climate-smart technologies, in practice this proves to be difficult as this would further increase the burden.

A value chains approach is also applied in the **case of AgriBiz**. For example, the Danida implemented five-year programme 'Enhancing the Role of Kenyan Women and Youth in Agribusiness', is aimed at supporting 2,400 women and youth-led agribusinesses, and creating over 17,000 job opportunities along agricultural value chains. The women and youth will receive training and 10 months support, after which the programme exits. As there is pressure on implementation, no clear eligibility criteria are established beyond being female or young. Interviewees indicated that there is still no clear value chain approach and sustainability/climate change criteria are not among the eligibility criteria and do not feature prominently in the training provided. It appears that the adoption of a new private sector-oriented approach is difficult to combine with issues of inclusiveness and sustainability. Therefore, targeting is important i.e. developing clear eligibility criteria for programme beneficiaries.

No clear conclusion can be drawn regarding overall value chain effects. It is likely that due to EU support some value chain actors are more aware of, and implement more sustainable -agricultural, livestock management, fisheries, natural resource management etc – practices, but the extent is impossible to assess. There is no evidence found regarding less food lost or wasted along the value chain or reduced use of dangerous chemicals, pesticides, insecticides has been reduced.

Sustainable production

10th and 11th EDF programmes have focused to a large extent on improved agriculture production and livestock practices. The following positive results have been reported in programme documents (non-exhaustive overview):

- Through the KRDP supported actions under KALRO and its partners, various dryland crops were promoted for sustainable and affordable food production that meets basic nutrition requirements. These crops included Sorghum, Grain Amaranth, Beans, Cassava and Green Grams. KALRO was able to develop and release 7 new high yielding crop varieties adapted to the ASALs. The promotion and adoption of various technologies are said to have resulted in improved food and nutritional security as well as higher incomes. These interventions range from fish in lake Turkana, green grams in Kitui and other counties, dairy milk in Kajiado County, and camel milk in Isiolo County, to name a few.
- The promotion of white sorghum for brewing is one of the cases that made a major impact in various ASAL counties under the support of KRDP.
- Another example is the promotion of "improved chicken" by KALRO. The "improved chicken" has become very popular in Kenya and has been adopted by many farmers to raise their incomes.
- Another programme has developed an inventory of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) technologies used in different value-chains and developed indicators to track the number and type of CSA technologies promoted, the number and type in use and the value chain actors using the technologies by gender and age. It has also identified service providers to deliver training to producers to help them understand usage of the different technologies. In disseminating weather information, the programme has partnered with Kenya Meteorology Department. This partnership has been useful in timely dissemination of weather information to support ideal sowing and treatment timing, etc. However, it has not been possible for the programme review to make an assessment of the impact of the programme on improved resilience of farmers, as adoption of the technologies remains low (as captured by the baseline) and utilisation is still at an early stage.
- There is some documentation on research programme adoption such as fall armyworm pest management, although it is mentioned that three best-bet technologies (Push-pull, maize legume

intercropping and community-based monitoring) were being promoted. The programme directly reached over 18,000 farmers, and it reports that at institutional and regional levels, over 240,000 people were directly reached, and 17 million people were reached through media.

- There are reports on the improvement and diversification of livelihoods in ASALs. For instance, it is reported that under the Farm Africa in Kitui County there was a shift from maize with 56% of adopters (farmers) preferring green grams as an income-generating enterprise.
- In the EUTF Kalobeyi programme the host communities benefitted more from agricultural activities as cattle ownership is prohibited for refugees and also irrigation schemes for refugees could not be realised as planned.

There are many more or less detailed examples of the introduction of new agricultural practices that appear to lead to increased productivity, production, improved livelihoods, increased incomes, more food security and better nutrition to which the EU clearly contributed through its multiple projects. These positive effects can be considered as pockets of transformational change. However, in many cases the adoption of these new practices remains dependent on continued project support. In the overall statistics, the effects at a larger scale are not yet visible in terms of increased production. The adoption of more climate-smart sustainable agricultural practices remains a challenge. In this context the linkages between trade and development objectives of EU MS deserve to be mentioned as these prove to be somewhat conflicting from time to time. For example, the Netherlands and Ireland aimed to introduce potato seed into the Kenyan market and acquire certification, but there was hostility from the National Potato Council of Kenya against imported varieties. This also sometimes led to fierce competition amongst the promoters of the new varieties on the one hand and foreign and promoters of local varieties on the other. This unfortunately was happening on the backdrop of acute shortages of potato seed during planting seasons sometimes shortages reaching as much as 80% of national needs.

Food processing and distribution

So far, there has been less attention in the EU programmes for food processing although there have been some specific activities, as shown in the portfolio overview. However, in view of the shift to the private sector, food processing may get more attention in future programming. The following effects related to food processing and related market standards have been in programme documents for the selected programmes found, but without any doubt many more examples are available:

- The promotion of white sorghum for brewing, which was already reported in the 2014 EU-Kenya country evaluation. No precise figures on the number and type of people involved (in view of inclusiveness) and increase of incomes is available.
- The Standards and Market Access Programme (SMAP) was aimed at increasing the competitiveness and market access of Kenya's horticultural products through improved food safety. One example of its outputs was the provision of equipment to the Kenya Plant Health Inspection Service (KEPHIS) for carrying out laboratory analysis. Its outcomes included the removal of French beans from the list of restricted exports to the EU. Another example is a fruit-fly free zone for mango growers, which is in the process of being established. The European Court of Auditors found that the SMAP had contributed to export volumes and to economic development. An investment of EUR 12.1 million (3% of total funding) supported an institution with a clear and indispensable role in the process of exporting agricultural products. Exports of horticultural products have increased in recent years. While this progress cannot be attributed to SMAP alone, the project did contribute to it. However, neither the Court of Auditors report nor other programme reports indicate that also attention was paid to sustainable production aspects and to inclusiveness.

Food consumption and nutrition

EU funded interventions in the area of food consumption and nutrition were also relatively limited, but some results mentioned in programme documents and referred to in interviews deserve to be mentioned:

- In Kenya, food fortification started with voluntary salt iodization in 1972. By 2012, fortification standards had been set and legislation passed for mandatory fortification of maize, wheat, and oil. In Kenya, all packaged wheat and maize flour are fortified with iron, zinc, folic acid, vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, B6 and B12. Edible oils/fats are fortified with vitamin A. The Food Fortification programme led by Jomo Kenyatta University is implemented in four counties with the aim to use science for targeted solutions for different target groups and different types of food. There is good compliance and coverage for staple foods, salt and oil, but less for wheat flour. More attention needs still to be paid to diet diversification, bio-fortification still to be done.
- The SHARE programme 'Contributing towards the nutritional wellbeing of deprived children & women in Kenya' implemented by UNICEF has led to increased community and individual capacities, practices, and demand for nutrition services in targeted and most affected populations. Social behaviour change communication and complementary feeding strategies were developed and

endorsed in all SHARE funded counties. A baby-friendly community initiative has rolled out. Given that inadequate complementary feeding behaviours and practices remain key bottlenecks to achieving optimal nutrition outcomes in the ASAL counties, UNICEF focused efforts to develop, implement, and monitor community-based strategies to improve practices such as breastfeeding practices and increase demand for nutrition-specific and sensitive services. This included also policy level support and commitment to enhancing nutrition KAP (knowledge, attitudes, and practices).

- Contrary to agricultural production statistics, nutrition statistics show significant improvement nationwide.

For the specific results achieved by EU-funded programmes, the EU contribution is clear and straightforward, but for overall nutrition improvements the EU contribution is difficult to assess.

Responses to agri-food-system shocks

The EU has provided substantial assistance to resilience programmes in ASAL areas over the years, including the abovementioned support to NDMA, but also to specific county-level resilience programmes as well as EUTF interventions. This has clearly contributed to strengthened responses to agri-food systems shocks, although the results cannot be aggregated. Some important results at the level of the population have already been mentioned, but a brief summary is provided below:

- Early warning system with different categories of indicators (environmental, precipitation, vegetation conditions, crop performance, access indicators, utilization) that allows to provide timely and adequate information to the population;
- Drought early warning systems, county committees etc. standardized contingency plans, community Disaster Risk reduction projects (water pans, dams stores, access roads...)
- EU Drought Contingency fund used to support the population moving to national drought emergency fund to disburse drought shock-responsive cash transfers to vulnerable households in Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir, and Turkana counties in 2017 and 2019. This has been upscaled/replicated in the National Drought Contingency Fund, which the Kenyan government has now formally established. The first budgetary payments into the fund are due in 2022.
- For SHARE: over 50% of the Agropastoral households surveyed have indicated enhanced food security, reduced disaster risk, and increase assets protection.

System level effects

In this section, higher system-level effects are presented based on the effects already reported above. The system-level effects are presented in terms of transformation change for which the evaluation will make use of indicative transformational change signals as explained in the inception report, which are “system characteristics that demonstrate progress toward transformation, whether at early, interim, or more advanced stages”. It distinguishes: i) Early signals, referring to enabling preconditions for transformation); ii) Interim signals, referring to process advancements such as policy development that support and advance progress toward transformational outcomes over time; and iii) Advanced signals – i.e. long-term, self-sustaining outcomes (sustainable, inclusive, and nutrition-sensitive changes in policy implementation / actions of public institutions, and practices and services by SAFS actors) are materializing.

At this stage some **early or very early signals of transformational change** have been found in Kenya to which the EU contributed. The results mentioned above are not repeated at length. The early signals are related to various systems effects and combine aspects of economic opportunities, vulnerable communities being more food secure and better prepared and resilient to shocks as well as climate change and environmental changes. The following early signals of transformation change have been found to which the EU contributed:

- **Main EU contribution to set-up of adequate drought management systems (NDMA)**, early warning and preparedness system, leading to increased resilience to shocks at community level. Now a more multi-sectoral approach is needed bringing in other stakeholders, going beyond a drought emergency approach to address other kinds of shocks as well, enhance economic opportunities and address food security.
- **Change of agricultural inputs systems (e-vouchers)**, now formally adopted by the GoK (no role for the GoK anymore in distribution of inputs), with ample opportunities for private sector engagement as agro-dealers. The system is still at early stages and roll-out requires due attention. However, both issues of inclusiveness (engagement of women and youth as agro-dealers) and environmental issues i.e. climate-smart agricultural input packages to be further developed and promoted addressed in packages to be distributed need more attention.

The following very early signals of transformation (still rather immature with risks not to be sustained) have been found to which the EU contributed:

- **Scattered value chains and resilience results**, 1- 5 million people directly or indirectly reached with many EU-funded agricultural production value chain approaches and resilience programmes. These programmes led to changes in livelihoods due to adoption of research and innovations, increased incomes in some cases and improved nutrition of people directly reached. However, many research and innovation results have not been disseminated and positive results at the level of target communities may not be sustainable because of new climate change and other challenges and in view of increasing competition for scarce resources.
- **Agri-land governance**, a new participatory approach for registration of community lands has been developed incl. ownership for women, and the approach is now planned to be rolled out in a large number of counties even if the evidence on actual respect of community land registration and reduction of land grab is still scattered. In addition, the challenges around land competition between agricultural communities and pastoralists might be insufficiently addressed by land registration for agricultural communities.

Lessons Learned & Good practices

In this Section emerging lessons and good practices from the Kenya country case are presented. Preliminary lessons have been discussed in a debriefing session with the EUD at the end of the country mission. Their comments have been taken into account.

Some **overall lessons** at the level of EU policies and strategies regarding SAFS emerge:

- If SAFS is meant as an important guiding policy priority for country programming and implementation of EU development cooperation **further guidance and operationalization** is needed. So far, SAFS has not affected the EU programming in Kenya. Although in the recent MIP process some formal attention has been paid to SAFS, this has not led to specific programming taking into account SAFS.
- As the MIP is finalised and the programming is largely in place, it is not possible to make fundamental changes. Therefore, the focus going forward is on **adjusting the nuts and the bolts to make the programming and implementation more SAFS-oriented**.
- The minimum requirement is to elaborate a **flyer on SAFS**, the definition, background and operationalisation in order to inform EUD staff on SAFS as the knowledge on SAFS is limited.
- Consider developing **SAFS workshops or short training courses and strongly incentivise staff to attend**, even if interest of EUD staff might be limited in view of the work burden and the other already existing training offers.

EU engagement in policy dialogue and partnerships

- DPs do realise and accept that **Kenya is in the driver seat regarding a systems approach and transformational change**. Therefore, **DPs, including the EU, can only initiate some changes** and stimulate that these will be taken over by the central and county governments of Kenya and other stakeholders.
- The EU has been actively engaged in the policy dialogue with the Ministry of Agriculture as member of the ARDPG troika and this will remain the main policy dialogue mechanism at sectoral level. This **policy dialogue should at least be continued in the same way but further strengthened and involve other ministries as well if possible**. While accepting fully the lead role of the GOK regarding the implementation of a SAFS approach, more key issues that might lead to systems change such as the e-voucher system should be put on the agenda in mutual consultation.
- Given the **interrelatedness of environment and agriculture** the current dichotomous relationship between the environment and agriculture donor groups, reflecting the silos in GoK, should be reconciled to the extent possible. Policy dialogue should also seek to influence more integrated / less silo-ed GoK structures.
- The EU is working with a broad range of partnerships on SAFS-related issues, including the Rome-based agencies and EU Member States. This works well. Nevertheless, **DPs could engage more in a dialogue on systems approaches** and their role to play. A **Team Europe approach** on SAFS might be considered where also conflicting MS trade/business agri-food interests in Kenya are discussed (e.g. Kenya-based export horticultural EU farms competing for scarce natural resources, competition over provision of agricultural inputs). First discussions have started on a Team Europe approach in this area and probably agro-ecological/green practices might be an area where the EU has common added value.

EU instruments, modalities, funding channels

- The very diverse SAFS-related portfolio with different EU instruments, modalities and funding channels allows on the one hand for a broad systems perspective, but on the other hand leads inevitably to

working in silos given the EU procedures. While due attention is paid to coherence and synergies in the programming stage, this focus is lost during implementation. Therefore, a clear lesson is **to keep focusing on realising synergies during implementation within EU programmes, among EU programmes and with other programmes in order to focus on enhancing the transformative potential.**

- For new programmes, basic assessments of agri-food systems, value chains, inclusiveness and political economy can be further improved aiming to adopt the SAFS approach (or elements thereof) in practice. However, the anchoring of future programming in the Green Deal may make this hard to implement as different priorities are set. While the adoption of a graduation framework - where recipients of food assistance i.e. food insecure farmers would be graduated to subsistence level and then transferred to other agricultural support to become a commercially-oriented smallholders with climate-resilient agricultural practices – appears promising, in practice it is still problematic. Nevertheless, graduation frameworks could be further developed and tested as they are potentially promising from a systems perspective.
- For existing programmes the SAFS approach can be reinforced by paying more attention to sustainability and inclusiveness issues in the private sector oriented programmes such as AgriFi and AgriBiz where these issues now fall between the cracks. This could be addressed to some extent if the approach would be adjusted by better targeting and agreeing on clear eligibility criteria for programmes dealing with issues of inclusiveness and sustainability.
- A set of SAFS-specific indicators could be included in the programme log-frames.

EU efforts to knowledge building

- So far the EU has contributed via its programmes, in particular programmes with a research component, to knowledge building, which is not exclusively focused on SAFS. The vast wealth of agricultural research resting in the funded research institutions still needs to find better ways to farmers to deepen market-led, private sector-delivered agricultural extension and advisory service (AEAS) models towards transforming Kenyan agri-food system.
- There are interesting efforts for knowledge building across Sub-Saharan African countries such as the experiences related to e-vouchers for agricultural inputs with the World Bank and the African Development Bank. The EU (DG INTPA) is in a unique position, given its national and regional programmes, to engage more in these kind of knowledge building initiatives.
- The EU could also engage in efforts to fill the knowledge gap between scattered programme information and strengthening national statistics. As a follow-up of the UN FSS there might be interest in setting up /strengthening SAFS information systems in Kenya and /or at regional level with relevant Kenyan stakeholders. These information systems should be able to make use of programme level information, which will facilitate knowledge exchange.

Innovative approaches

- The section on effects of EU support provided insight into a variety of innovative approaches that have started to be adopted at different scales. The focus of innovative approaches is mostly limited to one specific aspect (e.g. access to finance, a specific agricultural technique) ignoring aspects of sustainability or inclusiveness. It is important to focus on development and adoption of innovation approaches from a system perspective with clear roll-out plans once the innovations have been properly tested.

Case study note – Malawi

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Introduction

This case study report does not constitute a separate evaluation of European Union (EU) support in Malawi or its situation with regard to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS). It presents country-related findings relevant to the overall Evaluation Questions (EQ) and feeds into the main evaluation report of the Evaluation of the EU support to SAFS to which is attached as an annex.

Context

Main SAFS challenges

Malawi is a landlocked, low-income country in South-eastern Africa, with a young and predominantly rural population of 18 million. In spite of sustained economic growth ($\pm 3.7\%$ in 2010-2019), national poverty has declined only marginally, standing at almost 51% in 2019. In absolute terms, this decline was offset by the rapid demographic growth (2.6% in 2019; World Bank).²⁹² Inequality also remains high (0.6% Gini). **Agriculture accounts for more than a quarter of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provides employment for about 77% of the total labour force** (Ulimwengu et al., 2021). The decline of the sector's employment share in the past decade indicates a limited structural transformation and a slow expansion of non-farm activities (World Bank, 2018).

The growth performance of the agricultural sector has been erratic, due to low adoption of agricultural technologies, weak linkages to markets, an unequal land distribution and high dependency on rain-fed production – particularly among smallholder farmers. Exports of unmanufactured tobacco are by far the largest source of foreign exchange earnings, followed by tea and sugar (UN COMTRADE).²⁹³

The dominance of few crops – with maize being the major staple and main source of caloric intake – **and the lack of food diversification have hampered progress in addressing malnutrition**, with an average of 3.2 million people still undernourished in 2018-2020 (17.3% of the total population; FAOSTAT). Although declining, chronic child undernutrition is still higher than the African average, with almost 39% of children under 5 stunted (National Statistical Office and ICF, 2017). Conversely, in the past decade the prevalence of childbearing-age women suffering from anaemia has remained stable at around 31% (Global Nutrition Report, 2021). Overweight and obesity rates, as well as incidence of diabetes and high blood pressure, have been on the rise, but they remain lower than the regional average (Trijsburg, Ulimwengu and Magne-Domgbo, 2021).

Malawi is also **highly vulnerable to climate-related and other economic shocks** and suffers from recurrent food crises.²⁹⁴ In 2022, food insecurity is expected to worsen particularly in the southern and central districts due to the impact of multiple tropical storms, worsening market dynamics (including inflationary pressures and global supply disruptions linked to the Russia-Ukraine war), and below-average harvest expectations (FEWS NET, 2022).

The country's **heavy reliance on biomass**²⁹⁵ **as the primary cooking and heating energy**²⁹⁶ **is a key driver of deforestation** (1% per year, NIRAS, 2021), which in turn exacerbates land degradation and soil erosion, undermining the country's agricultural production potential. The intermittent energy supply also hampers economic development, particularly in rural areas (Ulimwengu et al., 2021).

While Malawi is politically stable and peaceful, it has been locked in a cycle of **poor policy implementation, weak public performance and widespread corruption** (MIP, 2021; GoM, 2019). Moreover, pressure from the Covid-19 pandemic response programs and the large subsidies to maize production have resulted in increasing deficits and a rise in public debt (World Bank, 2021).

Policy framework and main actors

Policy framework: Malawi's overarching development policy during the period under review was the **Malawi Growth and Development Strategy**. Its third phase (2017-2022) aimed at turning Malawi into a productive, competitive nation while developing its resilience to shocks and hazards. It identified priority areas for investment such as agriculture, water development and climate change management; education; transport and ICT; energy, industry, and tourism; and health and population planning. **Malawi 2063**, the current

²⁹² Malawi has an annual average GDP per capita of 501.6 US dollars (2010-2019), much lower than the regional (1,756) and Africa (1,979) averages (Ulimwengu et al., 2021).

²⁹³ The US, Germany and Egypt are the three top export destinations, followed by South Africa, Belgium and India (Atlas of economic complexity).

²⁹⁴ In the last two decades, Malawi has been hit by at least four severe droughts. The last major food crisis happened in May 2016 as a result of the impact of El Niño, with 6.7 million people, or 40 percent of the population, being in need of humanitarian assistance (MMP, 2021; Botha, Nkoka & Mwumvaneza, 2018).

²⁹⁵ The electricity access rate remains low (10% on average), thus biomass is still the main source of energy for virtually all households (EU Achievements in FNSSA 2014-2018).

²⁹⁶ 96% of households rely on biomass (fuelwood and charcoal) for energy (GoM, 2017).

overarching strategy, presents the country's long-term vision and places agricultural productivity and commercialisation at the top of three pillars (industrialisation and urbanisation being the other two) to make Malawi an inclusive, wealthy and self-reliant upper middle-income country by 2063.²⁹⁷ This long-term vision is translated into 10-year medium-term plans.

The **National Agricultural Policy** (2016), which is currently under revision, defines the vision for the development of the agricultural sector. To achieve its objectives (higher productivity and farm incomes, food and nutrition security, and increased agricultural exports), the policy promotes a shift towards commercial farming, output diversification and higher value addition. In line with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAAPD), the main implementation framework of the policy is the **National Agriculture Investment Plan** (NAIP, 2017) covering a five-year period. The plan, which replaced the **Agricultural Sector Wide Approach** (ASWAp, 2011-2016), provides a framework to guide government and development partners' investments. Like its predecessor, the NAIP adopts a matrix structure made up of four programs (enabling policy and institutional environment; resilience; production and productivity; and markets, trade and finance) and 16 intervention areas. These include: agricultural service delivery; agricultural innovation systems; farmers' organisations; land tenure security and women and youth empowerment; availability of and access to diversified and nutritious food; capacity to manage disasters and pest and disease outbreaks; sustainable management of natural resources and climate resilience; and access to financial services. Sustainable irrigation development is guided by the **Irrigation Master Plan** and the presidential **Green Belt Initiative** (GBI).²⁹⁸ Access to inputs captures the lion's share of the public agricultural budget through the **Affordable Inputs Program** (AIP, 2020), which provides fertiliser and maize seeds at a subsidised cost.²⁹⁹

In line with the Scaling Up Nutrition movement, in 2015 Malawi has adopted a multi sectoral 'Four Pillar Approach' to nutrition (including agriculture, health, education and communication for behaviour change and governance). The **National Multi-Sector Nutrition Policy** (2018-2022) aims at advancing adolescent, maternal, and child nutrition; reducing the prevalence of overweight and nutrition-related non communicable diseases; diminishing nutrition-related mortality; and improving the enabling environment for coordination and implementation of nutrition specific and sensitive interventions.³⁰⁰ It also emphasises community participation in the delivery of interventions. In addition, the **National Education Policy** promotes school feeding, along with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), HIV and AIDS and gender programs. The roll out of nutrition interventions is supported by the **Decentralisation policy**, which transferred implementation responsibilities to the districts.

The **Malawi National Social Security Programme** implements the **National Social Support Policy** (2012), whose vision is to enhance the quality of life of the poor and hungry and improve the resilience of those vulnerable to risks and shocks. The program's second phase (2018-2023) aims at developing an integrated social protection system³⁰¹ that provides consumption support (through cash and/or in-kind transfers), builds resilient livelihoods (through tailored packages of interventions based on individual, household, and community needs) and increases shock-sensitivity. This policy is aligned to the five-year **National Resilience Plan** (2016) and the **National Resilience Strategy** (2018-2030) that aim at making Malawi resilient to disasters and breaking the cycle of food insecurity. In recognition of the recurrent humanitarian caseload due to climatic shocks, the strategy adopts a multi-sectoral approach to resilience that incorporates the four pillars of agriculture, disaster risk reduction, social protection and natural resources management. Also, in 2016 the Government adopted a **National Climate Change Management Policy** to provide a framework for the application and implementation of adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and capacity building measures.³⁰²

In the context of the UN Food Systems Summit (2021), the Government held a series of national, regional and district dialogues which led to the formulation of a **National Pathway for Food System Transformation** including a set of short- and long-term propositions cutting across multiple sectors and voluntary commitments from a range of stakeholders.

National actors: Several ministries are directly relevant for SAFS support. The **Ministry of Agriculture** (MoA) designs the strategic direction and policy priorities for agricultural development. Within the Ministry, there are

²⁹⁷ Also the previous long-term document, Vision 2020, identified agriculture and food security as key priorities.

²⁹⁸ Launched in 2010, the GBI aimed at expanding the area under irrigation up to 1 million ha.

²⁹⁹ While its objectives are similar to those of the previous Farm Input Subsidy Program (2005-2019), the AIP budget has increased fourfold (Kateta, 2022).

³⁰⁰ This plan followed the National Nutrition Policy and Strategic Plan (2007-2011).

³⁰¹ It is based on a thorough review of its first phase that identified the need to strengthen the alignment of core programmes (such as social cash transfer, public works, school meals and village savings and loans) among each other and with other economic, social or humanitarian interventions, and to improve coverage and targeting.

³⁰² Malawi also formulated a Strategy on Climate Change Learning (2021) to address human and institutional capacity and finance gaps for climate change interventions.

six technical departments that oversee extension advisory services, crops development, animal health and livestock, agricultural research, land management, and agricultural planning services. The MoA is also responsible for irrigation and houses separate parastatal agencies for agricultural inputs and produce marketing. The **Greenbelt Authority** (within the Office of the President) oversees large-scale irrigation schemes. Other line ministries have been assigned responsibilities in support of productivity, marketing, processing, and consumption, including the Ministries of Lands, Finance, Industry and Trade, Energy, Mining, and Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs. An **Executive Management Committee** coordinates these ministries' activities in the framework of the NAIP, and an **Agriculture Sector Working Group** convenes meetings of state, non-state actors and donors. Other government entities with complementary roles include the Malawi Investment and Trade Centre and the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MMP, 2021). The **Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS** (DNHA) (initially established under the Office of the President and moved to the Ministry of Health in 2014) coordinates inter-ministerial efforts and provides technical guidance and high-level advocacy on the national nutrition agenda. The Ministries of Transport and Public Works and Local Government and Rural Development oversee the implementation of rural road networks programs.

The **National Authorising Office** (NAO) facilitates the government's cooperation with the EU, engaging in joint project preparation, implementation and monitoring and acting as a contracting authority.

Other SAFS actors include: **private sector actors**, including a few large export-oriented businesses and several micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs); **farmers' representative structures** such as the Farmers Union of Malawi and the National Smallholders' Association of Malawi; **civil society organisations and NGOs** organised in the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), very active in policy debate and advocacy; **national research institutes** such as the Lilongwe University of Agriculture; the **media** and **parliamentary committee**, providing checks and balances in agricultural policy reforms.

Multilateral and bilateral actors: Several development partners are active in SAFS-related sectors. These include the World Bank, US, UK, Norway and Japan, as well as a relatively small number of EU actors including Germany, Ireland, the Belgian region of Flanders and the European Investment Bank (EIB). Together, the EU and its Member States (EU MS) represent the second largest development partner, after the US. China has also become increasingly active, including in agriculture. UN agencies are also active. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), in particular, is a longstanding partner in EU programs and contributes to policy and institutional development. Eight research centres of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) are also active in Malawi.

EU-Malawi cooperation framework

Malawi is a major recipient of EU Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) funds, standing **amongst the top ten beneficiaries in the period under review**. In the National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2014-2020, Sustainable Agriculture is the main focal sector, with an indicative allocated amount of EUR 250 million, representing 45% of total support (EUR 560 million).³⁰³ Compared to the previous programming cycle (2008-2013), the relative allocation to SAFS has grown.

The two specific objectives of this focal area are (1) to enhance food and nutrition security and (2) to promote sustainable agricultural growth and incomes in Malawi.³⁰⁴ As such, the EU aims to support the transformation of the Malawi food system by significantly increasing and diversifying agricultural production; supporting value addition, market integration, and access to finance for farmers and SMEs; as well as improving the sustainable management of natural resources and reducing the country's vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters. While road infrastructure is no longer a focal sector, the EU continues working on the improvement of the rural roads network and supporting other rural infrastructure such as small and medium scale irrigation schemes.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing, as well as environmental protection remain an important focus in the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027, although inserted in the broader priority area 'Green and resilient economic transformation' (44% or EUR 155 million for the period 2021-2024)³⁰⁵ that also includes the energy sector,³⁰⁶ and with a stronger emphasis on blending operations through the mobilisation of the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+). The MIP's priority areas are aligned with the overarching objectives, pillars and enablers of Malawi 2063.

³⁰³ The other two focal sectors are Secondary Education and Vocational Training (29%) and Governance (21%).

³⁰⁴ The main expected results are: (1.1) Agricultural production increased and diversified in a sustainable manner; (1.2) Dietary intake, in particular for women and children, diversified with safe nutritious food; and (2.1) Increased commercialisation and value addition of smallholders' production; (2.2) Better access of farmers and SMEs to lending by Financial Institutions; (2.3) Access to markets by smallholder farmers facilitated by improved rural transport infrastructures; (2.4) Climate change mainstreamed into agricultural and land resources management.

³⁰⁵ The indicative allocations for 2025-2027 have not yet been determined.

³⁰⁶ Human development and social inclusion (34%) and democratic and economic governance (17%) are the other two priority areas, while climate action, gender equality and digital development are key cross-cutting priorities.

Focus of the case study

The case study focuses on a set of selected interventions illustrative of the EU support to SAFS in Malawi, as shown in Table 9 below. The detailed overall portfolio is included in Annex 3.³⁰⁷ The choice of sampled interventions reflects the following criteria: (i) variety of thematic areas, (ii) variety of funding instruments, (iii) variety of implementation modalities, (iv) volume of support, and (v) relevance to SAFS. Special attention is put on the two flagship programmes financed under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), i.e. KULIMA and Afikepo, that respond to the main agriculture and food and nutrition security constraints in Malawi, respectively low agricultural productivity and high levels of stunting.³⁰⁸ Within these programmes, a few contracts are selected for a more in-depth analysis, while others are covered only lightly (see Table 9). Moreover, the analysis at value chain level includes three inclusive agribusiness grants financed under the Farm Income Diversification Programme Phase II (FIDP II). As Malawi is highly vulnerable to climate-related shocks and natural resources degradation, the team selected a number of actions related to climate change, forest management, resilience and irrigation development. In addition, the case study assessed the EU's support for land policy reform.

Table 9: Overview of evaluation sample EU-funded interventions in Malawi

<i>Intervention and CRIS decision number</i>	<i>Budget (million EUR)</i>	<i>Funding instrument</i>	<i>Implementing partner</i>
KULIMA - Kutukula Ulimit m'Malawi (promoting farming in Malawi) (D-38578)	100	EDF	
A. Revitalising Agricultural Clusters and Ulimi wa Mdandanda through Farmer Field Schools in Malawi (C-386013)	A. 31.8		A. FAO
B. Improving the access to and use of agriculture research innovations by Malawian farmers (C-388417)	B. 8		B. GIZ
C. <i>Better Extension Training Transforming Economic Returns (BETTER) (C-392546)*</i>	C. 14		C. SHA
D. <i>More Income and Employment in Rural Areas (MIERA) (C-385832)*</i>	D. 20		D. GIZ
E. <i>Access to Finance Facility (C-412649)*</i>	E. 14		E. EIB
F. <i>Support to Parliament and Media to Strengthen Governance in the Agriculture Sector (C-395342)*</i>	F. 2		F. NIRAS
Afikepo (let them, the children, develop to their full potential) Nutrition programme in Malawi (D-38583)	86	EDF	
A. Tsogolo la Thanzi (TSOLATA) Healthy Future. Achieving Sustainable School Meals Programme in Malawi (C-420454)	A. 16		A. WFP
B. <i>Afikepo Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture (NSA) (C-486012)*</i>	B. 38		B. FAO, UNICEF
C. <i>Advocacy for Enhanced Nutrition Security and Community Empowerment in Malawi (C-397091)*</i>	C. 1		C. Save the children
Farm Income Diversification Programme Phase II (D-21346)	30	EDF	
A. Market-led Smallholder Farmer Development for Poverty Reduction in Malawi (C-379829);	A. 2.5		A. Malawi Mangoes and ACE
B. Developing integrated value chains to enhance rural smallholders' incomes and food security year-round (DIVERSIFY) (C-379825)	B. 2.5		B. United Purpose
C. Improved livelihoods through sustainable intensification and diversification of market oriented crop-livestock systems in southern Malawi (CLIM ²) (C-379827)	C. 2.5		C. ICRISAT
Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate Change (D-24099)	5.5	DCI-Thematic	FAO GCCA
Improved Forest Management for sustainable livelihoods II (D-21646)	7.8	EDF	
A. Enhancing forests for sustainable livelihoods (C-365850)	A. 1.3		A. United Purpose

³⁰⁷ Annex 3 contains all contracts identified in the global FNSSA database of the evaluation for Malawi. In consultation with the EUD, the team included two additional decisions in the sample (D-24099 and D-21646) given their relevance to SAFS challenges in the country.

³⁰⁸ KULIMA aims to (i) increase agricultural productivity and diversification by upscaling climate-smart technologies, (ii) support agricultural value chain and business development; and (iii) improve sector governance. Afikepo aims at addressing key drivers of malnutrition by (i) increasing and diversifying dietary intake of safe and nutritious food; (ii) increasing nutrition knowledge and awareness and hygiene practices in targeted communities and schools and training institutions; and (iii) strengthening multi sectoral governance.

Pro-Resilience Action 2017 (PROACT) (D-40160) A. FUTURE – Food and Nutrition for Resilience (C-390443)	9 A. 4.5	DCI- Thematic	A. United Purpose
Support to the implementation of the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp) and Green Belt Initiative (GBI) (D-23181) A. Rehabilitation and Expansion of medium scale rice irrigation scheme in Salima District and improvement of farmers' access to Market (C-376222) <i>B. Administrative Agreement with World Bank under the Malawi ASWAp MDTF (C-381445)</i>	56 A. 2.7 B. 27	EDF	A. COOPI, Agricane B. World Bank
Strengthening Land Governance System for Smallholder Farmers in Malawi (C-364676)	3	DCI- Thematic	Oxfam

**Note: Contracts indicated in italics were covered only lightly.*

The case study is based on a desk review and interviews with key informants carried out during a field mission that took place in Malawi in April 2022, during which representatives from the Government, EU Member States, UN agencies, and NGOs were consulted. Project sites were also visited in the Central (Kasungu and Salima districts) and Southern regions (Mulanje, Thyolo, Zomba, and Phalombe districts). In addition, the team's preliminary findings were discussed in a debriefing session with the EUD.

Design

Overview of EU support to SAFS

The main instrument channelling EU support to SAFS in Malawi was the EDF, with a total allocation of 330 million EUR or a 93% share of EU overall funding (see Figure 7).³⁰⁹ The EDF-funded programmes contributed to a range of objectives such as increasing and diversifying agricultural production; improving women and children's dietary intake; supporting commercialisation and value addition of smallholders' production; improving farmers and SMEs' access to finance; rehabilitating and improving rural transport infrastructure; improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities through the participatory management of forests; and mainstreaming climate change into agricultural and land management practices. A few other programmes were financed through the DCI-FOOD, DCI-ENV and DCI-CSO thematic and the DCI-Geographic instruments, with the objectives of supporting the poor and food insecure to react to crises and strengthen resilience to climate variability and change; improving climate change adaptation through research and uptake of innovations; increasing the participation of CSOs in tackling climate change challenges; and contributing to improved land governance frameworks in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on Land Governance.

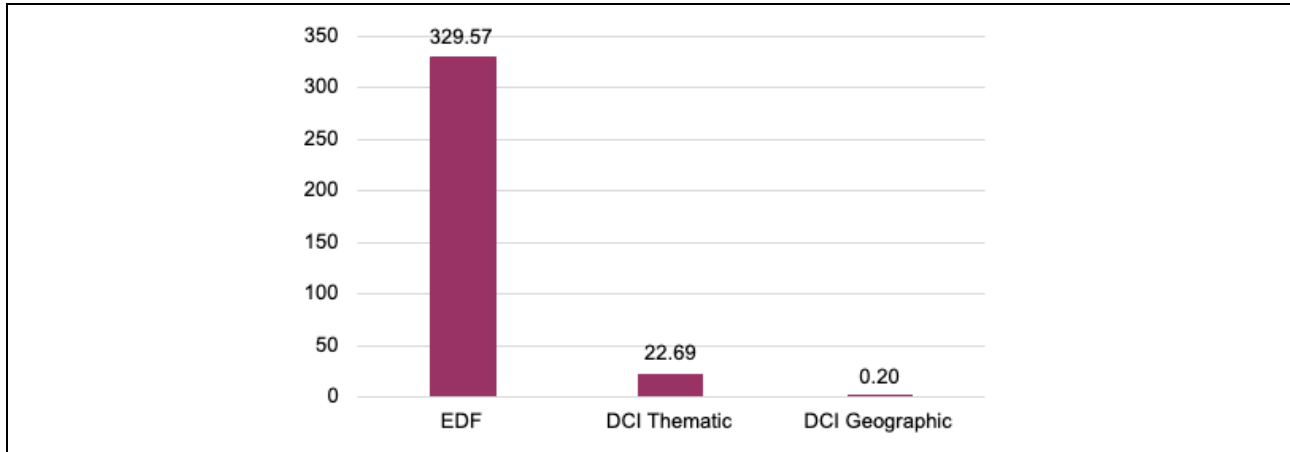
EU interventions targeted mainly the national, district and community level, while only one intervention (not SAFS-specific) targeted the regional level.³¹⁰ In terms of implementation modalities, following the Capital Hill Cashgate scandal in 2013,³¹¹ budget support has been suspended (although currently a roadmap is in place to restore it, provided progress in public sector reforms is made). As such, between 2014-2020 **the EU has used a broad range of other aid implementation modalities**, including agreements with Multilateral Organisations, EU MS Agencies, and the European Investment Bank (EIB), Programme Estimates, indirect management for works and supplies with the NAO, and direct management of grants by the Delegation (see Figure 9).

³⁰⁹ The analysis in this section is based on the entire portfolio (see Annex 3) and not limited to the interventions selected. As with the other case studies, the quantitative analysis is based only on the contracts identified in the global FNSSA database of the evaluation and does not include the two additional contracts included in the case study sample in consultation with the EUD.

³¹⁰ Namely, the support to Phase V of the ongoing Multinational Nacala Road Corridor Development Project, with a total budget of EUR 200 million. The main activities of the project are the rehabilitation and expansion of the road network and construction of a one-stop-border-post between Malawi and Mozambique. The project is supported by the AfDB, EU, EIB, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Korean Exim Bank (KEB).

³¹¹ This was a scandal of theft, corruption and illicit payments that took place at Capital Hill, the government's seat.

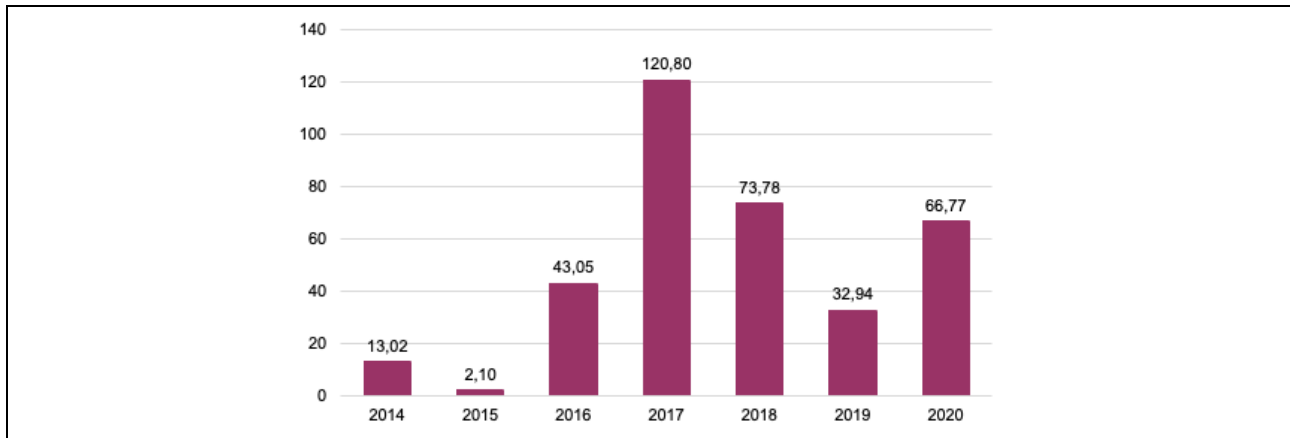
Figure 7: Breakdown of funding allocations for FNSSA interventions (2014-2020) by financial instrument (in million EUR)



Source: EU FNSSA Database provided by DG INTPA.

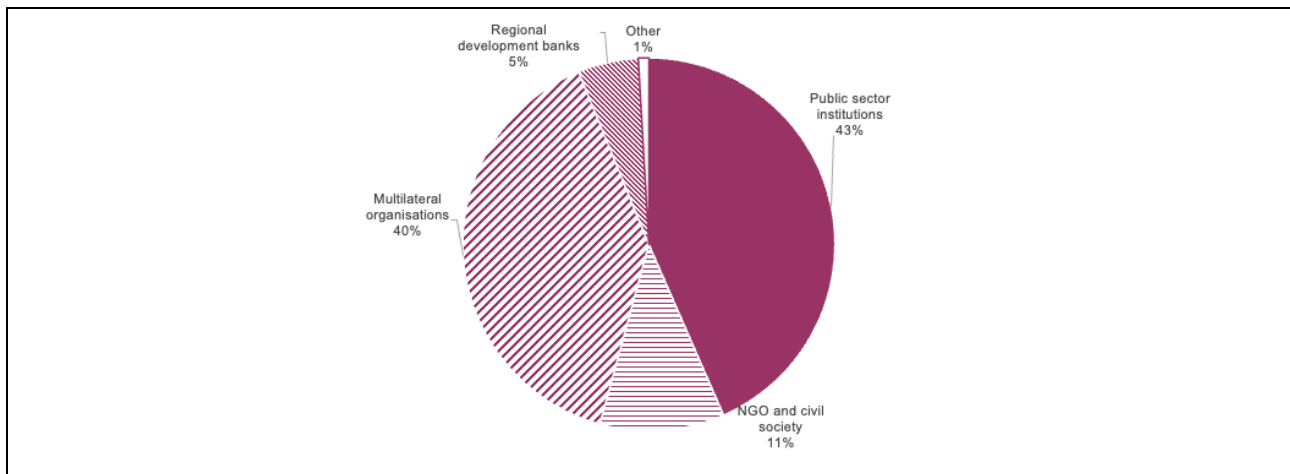
An overview of the yearly contracted amounts focussing on FNSSA is provided in Figure 8).

Figure 8: EU funding of FNSSA in Malawi during 2014-2020 (contracted amounts in million EUR)



Source: EU FNSSA Database provided by DG INTPA to the evaluation team.

Figure 9: Breakdown of funding allocations for FNSSA interventions (2014-2020) by type of implementing partners (in million EUR)



Source: EU FNSSA Database provided by DG INTPA to the evaluation team.

Germany, Ireland and Flanders are the main EU Member States active in the SAFS domain, with total aid funding amounting to 360, 143 and 44 million EUR respectively during the period under review (EU Aid Tracker). Germany has a vast portfolio of projects coordinated through a thematic cluster approach. It focuses on employment promotion and agricultural finance; promotes innovation in the agriculture and food sector through the Green Innovation Centres (GIAE) in selected value chains (notably cassava, soybean and

groundnuts); and supports private sector development in the macadamia, rice and chilli/paprika value chains (MIERA). Ireland supports farmers' resilience and agriculture diversification with a focus on legume and other non-maize seed production. It also supports CGIAR centres in promoting smallholder access to improved legume, orange fleshed sweet potato and Irish potato seeds. Flanders supports extension (through FAO, using the Farmer Field School (FFS) and Farmer Business School (FBS) approaches) and agroforestry.³¹²

Quality of design & EU's role in promoting SAFS (JC2.1)

Integrated approach

The EU support in Malawi has integrated several SAFS entry points, is well aligned to Malawi national development priorities, and consistent with EU's values and priorities. At the programming level, there is evidence of an increased recognition of sectoral interlinkages and the need to create synergies between the selected focal areas to meet multiple objectives in a coherent and integrated way. While the MIP (2021-2027) aims at ensuring continuity of successful interventions and focuses on sectors where the EU has developed a comparative advantage, the emphasis has shifted from the narrower 'sustainable agriculture' (in the NIP 2014-2020) to a broader impact area ('green and resilient economic transformation') that integrates agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors with energy and environmental protection. This shift is in line with the recent introduction of SAFS in EU frameworks, a concept that was not yet adopted at the time of the 2014-2020 NIP design. Potential synergies are also sought with interventions in the education and governance sectors, to ensure a more inclusive economic transformation.

The portfolio of interventions in the period under review addresses all four EU priorities for FNSSA (namely resilience, nutrition, responsible investments, innovations in agriculture), although to different extents, and integrates key cross-cutting issues (climate change, governance and gender equality).³¹³ The portfolio also addresses aspects of improved land tenure, rural transport infrastructure, social protection, resilience building, and sustainable natural resource management. Moreover, interviews highlight an increased emphasis on territorial approaches and locally-led implementation, as well as a willingness to improve monitoring and evaluation processes to enhance evidence-based programming and increase mutual accountability.

The formulation of the MIP 2021-2027 was based on a joint assessment of the EU and EU MS that identified the main sustainable development obstacles and priorities, based on an extensive consultation process and literature review, which integrated some (limited) elements of a political economy analysis.³¹⁴ This is also reflected in the MIP's risk assessment, which includes political factors and vested interests.

However, the pursuit of an integrated SAFS approach has faced some challenges in the formulation, design and implementation of the interventions reviewed. A case in point are the two flagship programmes financed under the 11th EDF, i.e. KULIMA and Afikepo, which were established in parallel and envisaged as closely complementary and mutually reinforcing interventions to promote sustainable agricultural growth and enhance incomes, employment, and food and nutrition security in the context of a changing climate. They target the same ten districts, with a community outreach approach, have major implementing partners in common, and pursue a variety of entry points in agriculture (such as climate-smart technologies; value chain and business development; and sector governance) and nutrition (through nutrition-sensitive agriculture, nutrition education, and multisectoral governance). They also build on the investments made during the previous programming period (e.g. FIDP II, GCCA). Nonetheless, the programmes lacked a common approach, workplan or vision integrating all contributing institutions, and the complex design and fragmented implementation modalities have limited progress, with the staff of implementing partners often remaining more activity- rather than outcome-oriented.³¹⁵ Coordination between the two main line ministries (the ones respectively in charge of agriculture and nutrition) has also been challenging, resulting in a mismatch between the governance structures in which the two programmes are anchored. As a result, while pragmatic, informal collaboration has emerged locally in areas where both programmes are active, the anticipated synergies of the integrated approach (e.g. having Afikepo supported care groups and primary schools as well as KULIMA trained farmers in the same villages) could not be realised at scale.³¹⁶

Integration of gender equality

Gender equality is a cross-cutting priority at the programming level and the MIP has the ambition to mainstream gender across the different actions in the EU portfolio. Actions in the nutrition and (secondary) education sectors in particular are key vectors through which the EU promotes gender equality.

³¹² Interviews with development partners.

³¹³ EU Achievements in FNSSA 2014-2018 (study annexes).

³¹⁴ Interviews with development partners.

³¹⁵ Mid-term review of the Afikepo KULIMA (2021).

³¹⁶ Afikepo/NAPE final report; stakeholder interviews.

The documentary analysis and interviews indicate that **gender has been highly considered in the design of the sampled interventions**. Women empowerment is a central feature of the Afikepo programme, particularly its second component (nutrition education and hygiene), which seeks to achieve optimal nutrition for childbearing age women, adolescent girls, infants and young children in the targeted districts. To the extent possible, key indicators are disaggregated by sex and age category throughout the action, to capture progress for women and youth. As the main target of KULIMA are smallholder subsistence farmers (70% of which are women in Malawi), the programme aimed at generating income, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities for women-headed households and promoted women's access to extension and training and female participation in leadership and decision-making. An in-depth gender analysis was conducted in 2019 in the context of the KULIMA-MIERA project and generated data on gender gaps as well as analysed the needs, constraints and economic opportunities of women and men in its target areas. Similarly, PROACT conducted a gender asset gap analysis in its first year of implementation, whose findings informed the design of interventions (e.g. integrating a gender module in the household approach to facilitate better power relations; training gender champions to mentor households on family visioning process). The action also carefully monitors impacts on a gender-disaggregated basis to ensure that interventions do not reinforce gender stereotypes nor impose additional burdens on women. The EIB facility was also envisaged to support bankable proposals from women smallholder farmers and women-led MSMEs, as well as women's groups and cooperatives.³¹⁷ For that, the EIB team conducted a gender analysis prior to the start of the action and included a gender expert in its team. In addition, the ASWAp support programme integrates gender elements in its design, representing one of the first examples of an EU-funded project in the road sector including gender in the project design.

EU policy coherence at country level

Infrastructure is mainly addressed through the support to the implementation of the ASWAp and GBI programme, with a focus on the improvement of the rural roads network, and through the EU contribution to the development of the Multinational Nacala Road Corridor, which has the objective of strengthening regional integration within the Southern Africa Development Community and improving trade competitiveness through the reduction of transport costs for imports and exports. A blending operation with the EIB also supports the rehabilitation of a section of the main national highway. Five grants have also been deployed for the development of small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes and one to build a large-scale scheme (Bwanje dam). However, transport, water and ICT are less prominent in the next programming phase (as compared to energy infrastructure). These aspects may be addressed through regional programmes and the EFSD+.

Trade aspects are addressed mainly through the support to agribusiness development, with a focus on developing contract farming and supporting agri-MSMEs. However, in-country consultations highlighted a general perception of agricultural commercialisation and market access as areas where EU support has been weak. Engagement to improve the business and investment climate is also seen as limited. Recently, (green and circular) business development, skills development, youth employment, private sector investment, and access to finance for MSMEs (through blending, guarantees and other financial instruments) have gained prominence, in the context of the 'Green growth' Team Europe Initiative. The MIP 2021-2027 also focuses on business environment reforms (e.g. for improved competition, regional integration and responsible business conduct) in its second priority area "economic and democratic governance".

Several interviewees stressed that **environmental protection and natural resources management** have received relatively limited attention in the period under consideration. This may be partly explained by the conversion of environment and natural resource management into a cross-cutting issue, which led to a decrease of direct support.³¹⁸ About 30% of the 2014-2020 portfolio targets climate change aspects.³¹⁹ While some interventions target climate change adaptation, environmentally sustainable farming systems and improved forest management, overall EU actions have been dispersed. Moreover, systematic environmental assessments of projects have generally been inadequate and most EU funded projects have weak or no safeguards components.³²⁰ The MIP scales up ambitions in these domains, in response to the rapid environmental degradation in Malawi and persistent vulnerability to disasters.

Linkages with **energy** do not appear in the current portfolio (beyond the promotion of improved cooking stoves in rural areas, for instance), but engagement in this sector is envisaged to increase substantially in the new programming phase, with a focus on renewable energy generation and access. Tackling energy practices in urban areas seems to be an important gap hindering the EU's ability to address underlying drivers of environmental degradation and deforestation (see also Section Climate change and environment).

³¹⁷ Mid-term review of the Afikepo KULIMA (2021).

³¹⁸ NIRAS (2021) and stakeholder interview.

³¹⁹ Based on an analysis of the EU FNSSA database provided by DG INTPA to the evaluation team.

³²⁰ NIRAS (2021).

The EUD does not have an explicit focus on **health**, as other donors cover this domain substantially. This is, however, perceived as limiting the EU's ability to address the country's unsustainable demographic growth rate. Some linkages with health issues, however, are established through investments in education and nutrition-sensitive interventions (e.g. school meals). WASH infrastructure components have been incorporated mostly in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. Lastly, the portfolio includes significant investments in **research and innovation** (R&I) activities, e.g. through a KULIMA component implemented by the GIZ's GIAE and the CGIAR centres, and the Development of Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA).

Transformative potential

The focus on interlinked areas such as (democratic and economic) governance, sustainable agriculture and education provides for a transformative potential of EU support in Malawi. First, the emphasis on improving public service provision and government's capacity and accountability has the potential to strengthen and amplify the outcomes of other efforts to achieve sustainable economic and social development. Secondly, the strong attention to gender equality and social inclusion is conducive to addressing the needs of marginalised and vulnerable populations and generating sustainable and inclusive economic opportunities for increased self-reliance. Also, the emphasis on a multi-sectoral approach to resilience building that considers the humanitarian-development nexus contributes to creating the conditions for lasting impacts at scale.

Nonetheless, the EU faces several challenges in advancing the SAFS agenda at country level, such as the political reluctance to implement evidence-based policy reforms, especially in the agricultural sector (e.g. moving away from large inefficient subsidies to maize and fertiliser), weak cooperation and coordination amongst line ministries and between central and local government authorities, and limited absorption capacity of government structures. This reality hinders the realisation of transformative ambitions.

Linkages with EU MS and other development partners (JC2.1)

As one of the key diplomatic, economic and development partners of Malawi, **the EU has played an active role in promoting coordination and harmonisation of donor-funded activities** and their alignment to national policies, in the framework of the Development Cooperation Strategy.³²¹ The presence of a limited number of donors in the country facilitates coordination, increasing the chances of reaching a consensus on policy priorities. However, there is a perception that the leadership of the Government in the donor coordination process could be improved.³²²

Donors' dialogue is particularly strong in the agricultural sector, through the the Donor Committee on Agriculture and Food Security (DCAFS)³²³ and the Donor Committee on Nutrition Security (DoNUTs). The DCAFS, chaired twice by the EU in the period under review, is regarded as an important tool to share information, harmonise program implementation and minimise duplication. The coordinator of the DCAFS also coordinates the Trade, Industry and Private Sector Development Partners group. The EU also had a leading role in the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition³²⁴ and currently facilitates the Enhanced Integrated Framework at the national level.³²⁵ **The EU is also a driving force in donor coordination on social protection** (which happens through the formal structures of the National Social Support Programme) and had a catalytic effect in terms of donors' funding to the Social Cash Transfer Programme.³²⁶ The EU also has regular consultations with ECHO to enhance the humanitarian-development nexus.

During the period under review, **the EU was the largest contributor to a Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF)** managed by the World Bank and financed also by Irish Aid, Flanders, USAID and Norway. Originally established in 2013, its second phase (2016-2022), with a total budget of 55 million USD, supports the implementation of ASWAp II and GBI. The EU contribution was earmarked for rural roads rehabilitation and construction to facilitate farmers' market access. The pooled arrangement is well received by the Government, as it is implemented directly by the MoA, strengthens public systems, reduces administrative work and is flexible to respond to emerging issues. It also provides development partners with a useful platform for policy discussions. However, there are concerns on the effectiveness of its implementation (e.g. the road networks

³²¹ The strategy (2014-2018), currently under review, established two main structures: the Development Partner's Dialogue Group and the High Level Forum (the highest forum for dialogue with the government; GoM, 2014).

³²² Interviews with Development Partners.

³²³ The DCAFS, established in 2010, meets once a month. The group originally comprised donors only, but membership was later extended to international organisations such as UN agencies, research institutes and other actors funding or supporting national systems and structures (DCAFS, 2021; stakeholder interview).

³²⁴ The Alliance, however, did not deliver on its commitments and planned policy reforms took very long to realise.

³²⁵ A partnership working with governments, agencies and civil society to assist Least Developed Countries in using trade as an engine for development and poverty reduction.

³²⁶ The Government's SCTP is an unconditional cash transfer program which targets ultra-poor and labour-constrained households. It is enshrined in the Malawi National Social Support Programme.

component has experienced severe delays and poor supervision has sometimes resulted in low quality of works) as well as the transparency of its management.

The EU and EU MS approach to Joint Programming has focused mostly on joint implementation and joint financing arrangements at sectoral level. In the SAFS domain, joint programs or pooled funding mechanisms (e.g. with Germany) have been developed to support nutrition, social protection and agribusiness. GIZ is also a key implementing partner in the flagship EU's KULIMA and Afikepo programmes. There are a few interesting examples of effective lessons sharing, with the EU scaling up successful pilots of EU MS (notably Flanders and Ireland), and vice versa EU MS taking up EU successful approaches in their own programming.³²⁷

The MIP 2021-2027 aims at building on the experience with joint implementation and financing to gradually shift towards a joint, multi-annual programming document (tentatively envisaged for 2024, at the occasion of the mid-term review) to further consolidate coordination, complementarity and synergy. The EUD and Germany are the key driving forces behind this shift. A revised, joint analysis formed the basis for the MIP, which was drafted in close consultation with EU MS. The intervention logic of two Team Europe Initiatives have recently been formulated by the EUD and EU MS, the first one being 'Green growth for Malawi' (150 million EUR), aiming at supporting a green and resilient economic transformation of the country.³²⁸ While the EU MS see this joint approach as broader than development, covering issues like political engagement or trade, interviews suggest that efforts to advocate for an improved business environment, in the framework of the European Economic Diplomacy agenda, have been limited.

Effects of EU support

Changes in National agri-food systems governance (EQ2/JC2.2 & JC2.3)

Strengthened effective national governance for SAFS (JC 2.2): The EU contributed to the formulation and reform of a number of sector policies and regulations in SAFS-related domains. This was achieved through continuous engagement with the Government in policy dialogue as well as by leveraging programmes' achievements to influence policy priorities and approaches.

In the agriculture domain, the EU has supported the revision of the **national agricultural extension and advisory services strategy** (2020), promoting the adoption of the participatory approach Farmers Field Schools and strengthening linkages between research and advisory services (see also JC 2.3). Moreover, a recent review of the **livestock development policy** (2021) was informed by a research project funded by the FIDP II (CLIM²) that contributed to identify key policy bottlenecks currently constraining the sector.³²⁹ The revised policy will also contribute to a long overdue review of specific acts to improve veterinary service and animal health. In partnership with other partners, notably Ireland and CISANET, the EU has also strengthened dialogue to ensure recognition and support of informal seed systems, the main source of seeds for smallholder farmers, in the **national seed policy** (2018). While this led to the acceptance of the category of quality declared seed, the government is still reluctant to acknowledge informal seed systems in the policy.³³⁰

Through the active engagement in the DCAFS³³¹ and the sizable contribution to the MDTF (see Section on linkages with EU MS and other development partners), the EU has supported other policy reforms meant to improve the regulation of the national agricultural markets. For example, the EU financed the drafting of the guidelines for the management of the Strategic Grain Reserve in 2016 and, together with the World Bank, promoted a structural review of the Agriculture Development and Marketing Corporation.³³² However, further

³²⁷ For instance, KULIMA scaled up the FFS approach, previously tested by Flanders in two districts. It also scaled up seed development activities financed by IrishAid in collaboration with the CGIAR. Also, Flanders is now engaging in an action strengthening land governance which builds on the lessons and achievements of an EU-funded pilot project.

³²⁸ The initiative focuses on supporting green, agroecological value chain development (including through dedicated support to business development and facilitating investment in renewable energy) while supporting natural resources management and ensuring nutrition.

³²⁹ These policy gaps were documented in a policy brief (ICRISAT, 2021) and presented at a high level policy dialogue led by CISANET in partnership with the MoA (stakeholder interviews).

³³⁰ Stakeholder interviews.

³³¹ Through the monthly DCAFS meetings, the EU and other development partners agree on key issues to be addressed in collective and bilateral discussions with the government. Monthly thematic meetings are also held for in-depth discussions on specific technical issues. Coordination outputs (e.g., consolidated comments on policy or strategy documents) are developed on a needs basis. The Troika and coordinator meet monthly with the MoA at Principal Secretary level to take forward agreed policy issues. The group also meets with the Parliamentary Committee for Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development to discuss policy priority issues and concerns.

³³² A parastatal institution mandated to provide price stability; market, process and dispose of agricultural produce; and provide adequate storage facilities for food reserves.

efforts will be needed to improve the governance and efficiency of these institutions. The enactment of the Control of Goods Act was also an important step towards a more transparent and predictable trade policy.³³³

Lastly, through the MDTF, the EU and other development partners have also promoted reforms of the Government's agricultural input subsidy programme (see Section on Policy framework and main actors) with the objective of increasing its efficiency and broadening the support to a more balanced package of crops and inputs beyond maize and conventional fertiliser. The uptake of the proposed reforms, however, has varied. While minor cereals (rice, sorghum) are included in the new input package, the introduction of a legume component (which would help enhance soil fertility and nutrition) has been short lived.³³⁴ Similarly, while development partners promoted targeting of productive farmers, the current programme has reverted to universal targeting, which in turn increases the cost of the programme exponentially.³³⁵

In the nutrition domain, **the EU has spearheaded the operationalisation of the multi-sectoral approach and strengthened nutrition coordination committees at central and district level**, by improving data collection, analysis and strategic use of nutrition and agriculture information at district level. Interviews and field visits show that EU-funded actions have helped improve inter-sectoral coordination and raised the profile of the nutrition agenda at the district level. Inter-ministerial coordination, however, remains challenging.³³⁶

An illustration of good dialogue in **social protection** is the 2016 review of the National Social Security Programme, to which the EU actively participated. The review helped to harmonise and rationalise social protection interventions. It also helped increase the shock-sensitivity of the social protection system, introducing a link to resilience building actions for the poorest and food-insecure. While the Government's ownership of the sector has improved, implementation is largely driven by development partners.³³⁷

In some areas, EU's interventions also piloted the operationalisation of national level policies and regulations. A case in point is the EU-funded pilot aimed at strengthening land governance and enhancing tenure security for smallholder farmers.³³⁸ Implemented by Oxfam and CEPA, the project has contributed to accelerating the enactment of a new **Customary Land Act** (2016) and ensuing regulations (2018)³³⁹ and has tested a model for customary land governance in three pilot districts, targeted for their diverse cultural settings (patrilineal, matrilineal, or mixed). The project has successfully conducted adjudication and demarcation of households and public land parcels and has facilitated the establishment of local land governance committees and tribunals in the pilot districts that include community stakeholders and traditional leadership.³⁴⁰ Sensitisation activities targeted particularly women land rights and broader gender issues, contributing to inclusiveness. The field visit suggests that the action is welcomed by community members and leaders, and results achieved can be sustained over time. The pilot has also drawn lessons to inform the implementation of the new reforms in other districts.

Another relevant example is a pilot project to operationalise the **National Forestry Policy** (2016), which promotes community-based forest management and alternative livelihood strategies as a way of protecting indigenous forests. According to stakeholder interviews, the EU's long-standing support has fundamentally transformed the Government's approach, which shifted from restricting communities' access to forest reserves towards collaborative management through which a broad range of village institutions are capacitated to develop participatory management plans to ensure sustainable use of forest resources (see Section on Climate change and environment). The EU also supported the Department in the development of a multisectoral **Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy** (2017), aimed at involving all sectors in efforts to regenerate forest cover in Malawi with a target of 4.5 million ha. However, the Department's budget remains severely underfunded, affecting conservation and restoration activities.

The EU has also designed and funded advocacy actions in support of a more conducive national governance for sustainable agri-food system transformation. Two relevant examples that display early signals of transformative potential include:

- **An advocacy programme for enhanced nutrition security and community empowerment** which built the capacity of District Nutrition Coordination Committees in the ten Afikepo districts to conduct budget analysis and tracking and lobby the Parliamentary Committee on Nutrition and HIV/AIDS as

³³³ Stakeholder interview.

³³⁴ The legume component in the FISP was financed by the MDTF during the period 2010-2017. But in the current AIP, financed exclusively by the Government, legume seeds are not made available to farmers (Nyirenda, 2021; stakeholder interviews).

³³⁵ Stakeholder interviews.

³³⁶ Stakeholder interviews and field visit in Thuchila district.

³³⁷ Stakeholder interviews and field visit in Zomba district.

³³⁸ The project complements other national interventions and international initiatives funded by various donors focused on the land governance framework and women's land rights (ROM report C-364676).

³³⁹ Field visit, stakeholder interviews and ROM report C-364676.

³⁴⁰ The establishment of local governance structures has followed international and regional principles of responsible land governance, such as the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines (VGGT).

well as the Directors of relevant line Ministries to allocate or advocate for increased resources for nutrition in the national budget. The action is also pushing for the enactment of a food and nutrition bill and related regulatory framework, in partnership with the DNHA. Media campaigns on nutrition are also supported. An evaluation of the programme's achievements is not yet available as the action is going. Based on the latest progress report, the programme contributed to an increase in the national level budget allocation to nutrition (up to 3.7% from 0.5% in 2019-2020) and all districts targeted have incorporated nutrition as a priority area. However, no change in the budgets at district level was observed. The bill is also yet to be enacted. Despite this, implementers are confident that the action will provide positive long-term benefits thanks to the increased ownership and skills of trained officials.

- **A project supporting the parliament and media to strengthen governance in the agriculture sector**, which aims at capacitating the media to better follow and report on agriculture policy issues, voicing the concerns of rural people and improve the capacity of parliamentarians to appraise agriculture budgets, track public expenditures and assess agriculture, food security and nutrition related policies and legislation. The action is very ambitious and it is too early to assess its long-term impact; nonetheless, there are encouraging signs, such as the excellent quality of the first workshops that stimulated interest, notably amongst journalists. Engaging Members of Parliament has proven more challenging, due to internal political tensions that arose after the 2020 rerun elections and the requirement of high allowances to participate (a widespread culture affecting capacity building activities).³⁴¹

EU interventions have also contributed to strengthening institutional capacity to implement SAFS policies and regulations. This happened through the provision of targeted capacity building at national and local level; the mobilisation of technical expertise responding to government's needs; and through asset creation (e.g. upgrading of the research equipment of government research stations; provision of motorbikes to extension staff). Also, by putting government services at the forefront of project implementation (including through direct financial transfers to some districts³⁴²), the EU contributed to building staff capacity, especially at district level. This is expected to increase sustainability of project results. Moreover, **EU support contributed to setting up national monitoring and information systems** with the aim of increasing evidence-based decision making (see Section on EU efforts to knowledge building and capacity strengthening for more details). The EUD has also been very active in the policy dialogue around **public financial management**, negotiating reform priorities and developing a strategy to improve financial accountability and domestic revenue generation.

Overall, while important advances have been made and the institutional, policy and regulatory framework has evolved towards a more integrated and inclusive SAFS approach (MMP, 2021), **implementation remains a challenge** due to persistent weak horizontal (siloes approach of line ministries) and vertical (only partial decentralisation) coordination and entrenched political dynamics shaping priorities and budget allocation.³⁴³ In particular, the public agricultural budget remains largely skewed towards financing the input subsidy programme, which is fiscally unsustainable and does not adequately promote agricultural diversification, soil fertility and nutrition outcomes. This also limits available resources for other strategic areas such as research and extension.

Enabling ecosystem environment (JC 2.3): The EU has significantly contributed to strengthening innovative agricultural extension and advisory services targeted to small scale farmers. The KULIMA component implemented by FAO has extensively trained agriculture extension officers and lead farmers in ten districts following the Farmer Field School approach.³⁴⁴ It has also helped to put in place an institutional framework that anchors, regulates and harmonises the FFS approach in the programming of the Agriculture Extension Services Department. The programme targets particularly the participation of youth and women and provides tailored training on a broad range of topics including Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture, Soil and Water Management, Livestock Management, Savings and Loans Schemes and Entrepreneurial Skills.

By training frontline workers and easing their mobility, while at the same time supporting lead farmers to constitute Community Outreach Groups in their respective communities, **the programme contributed to reducing the existing gap in extension services, improving their quality and enhancing farmers' access.** As a result, the proportion of farm households accessing extension in the target districts has increased by 30 percent.³⁴⁵ Thanks to the focus on capacity building and the embeddedness in government institutions, implementing partners expect that the benefits of the action will continue after the project phases out. However,

³⁴¹ ROM report C-395342 and stakeholder interview.

³⁴² For example, the KULIMA-FAO contract has allowed direct transfers of funding to Agricultural Development Divisions, District Councils and Government Departments (USD 4.9 million).

³⁴³ The input subsidy programme is an important "vote winner" and its implementation has been at the centre of rent-seeking and patronage activities, especially through its procurement processes (Chinsinga, 2018).

³⁴⁴ Four Regional Training Centres were established or revamped where training courses are held.

³⁴⁵ KULIMA cumulative performance indicators, 2021.

a number of factors risk hindering continued delivery: first, the national budget allocated to extension is very limited (which entails that many extension vacancies are not being filled); second, local authorities' still largely depend on the national government financially and are not able to generate sufficient additional funds to cater for extension support; third, the likely rotation of district services and extension staff may cause a loss of capacity. While the project has tried to overcome some of these challenges by training NGO extension staff in addition to government officials, results have been limited by low staff availability.

While the efforts to support farmers' access to quality advisory services are providing substantial results, the EU support to a more business-enabling environment – through the increased provision of financial and business services and leveraging private sector investments – **has faced some challenges.** KULIMA envisaged a range of interventions to provide access to credit to farmers, but most schemes have been limited in volume of financial resources or have not been operationalised (MTR, 2021). A case in point is the **EIB facility**, meant to allow smallholders and agri-MSMEs to access affordable loans, which has suffered severe delays. The facility has become operational only in 2021, with the signature of two agreements with commercial banks, who are currently in the process of developing a pipeline of bankable projects with the support of a technical assistance team. While external factors (2020 elections, Covid-19) contributed to slow down the process, long negotiations between INTPA and EIB on legal and administrative requirements stalled its initial phases.³⁴⁶ As such, **it is too early to say whether the facility will improve farmers' access to finance and business services.** However, the portfolio of projects under development seems largely skewed towards well-established SMEs involved in export value chains, as the loans backed by the Risk Sharing Facility are pegged in hard currency. This entails a risk of marginalising smallholder farmers and smaller enterprises that operate in more volatile domestic markets (although some attempts to encourage lending in Malawi kwacha have been done and MSMEs need a business or social 'exposure link' to smallholders to qualify for the loans).

The creation and strengthening of **village savings and loan (VSL) schemes** through several EU programs has helped increase access to credit in villages, as a way to offset the limited outreach of commercial banks in rural areas and considerable eligibility constraints to access formal loans. While this had positive impacts in terms of increased savings, productive assets and ability to invest in small income generating activities, especially for women, the VSLs is mostly an economic resilience strategy, not geared towards significantly increasing investments in agriculture. Nonetheless, VSL schemes could be used to leverage loans for small scale farmers by involving farmers' groups in contract farming arrangements or warehouse receipts systems.

As part of KULIMA, **the EU supported increased private investments in agriculture** through the GIZ's MIERA programme, whose main focus was to develop inclusive business models between the private sector, MSMEs and producers (see also Section on Sustainable production JC3.2). However, interviews suggest that this component has not been well integrated time-wise and design-wise with the actions on finance (EIB) and production (FAO's FFS), decreasing the overall expected impact of the action. Notably, as MIERA's implementation started before FAO's action, producers involved in the FFS could not be successfully integrated in business training and coaching provided by GIZ. Moreover, MIERA's support targeted specific value chains, making some of FAO's supported actions ineligible. This mismatch reduced the marketing potential of the production increases achieved by the FFS intervention.

The EU has supported farmers' access to relevant innovations and technologies, helping to bridge the gap between research, extension and the farmers. Through close coordination between the FAO's FFS component and the GIZ's project *"Improving the access to and use of agriculture research innovations by Malawian farmers"*, the EU's KULIMA programme has improved the organisation and delivery of the consortium of CGIAR centres. In this set-up, the CGIARs identify agricultural technologies and innovations suitable to different contexts with participatory methods and FAO trains extension staff and lead farmers in experimental plots. Trainers are then supported with starter kits to cascade the training to local farmers through the community outreach groups. CGIAR centres also conduct, on a demand-driven basis, applied research to identify improved technologies and innovations when needs and gaps are identified in the FFSs. The programme also contributed to the revision of technical material in the curricula of agricultural extension officers.³⁴⁷

While research actors have taken a more participatory approach to technology development, some weaknesses remain: the packages of technologies promoted by CGIAR are not always adjusted to the actual possibilities and resources of the various producer segments and training material not systematically translated in the local languages. As such, there are concerns on the effectiveness of the knowledge transfer (ROM report C-388417).

Lastly, **the link with national research and innovation systems remains relatively weak.** While the Government's Department of Agricultural Research Services was supported through the Programme

³⁴⁶ Stakeholder interview.

³⁴⁷ Stakeholder interview.

Estimates component of KULIMA in acquiring improved research equipment for its research stations³⁴⁸ and conducting research for good agronomic practices (e.g. banana micro and macro propagation, soil testing and pest and disease diagnosis and surveillance), the Department's activities were largely conducted in isolation (very limited collaboration or exchanging of information with the CGIAR centres working with GIZ under KULIMA), and with very limited follow up on dissemination, uptake, or performance of the technologies developed.³⁴⁹ According to the Department, these challenges resulted from a non-conducive funding arrangement and an overall design of the action that did not encourage stronger linkages with regional or international research centres and lacked proper monitoring and evaluation systems and a baseline analysis of available infrastructural and human capacity. Other explanatory factors such as technical weaknesses and resistance to change within the Department have been mentioned by other actors.³⁵⁰

Changes in Agri-food systems value chains and nutrition (EQ3)

Sustainable production (JC3.2)

EU support has contributed to improve and diversify agricultural production by investing significant amounts of resources in farmers' capacity building (see JC 2.3 in Section Changes in agri-food systems value chains governance) This support has explicitly targeted smallholder farmers, women, and youth. Under the first component of KULIMA, farmers have been provided with a set of knowledge and tools that is allowing them to increase productivity and diversify their farms by growing a more varied set of crops.³⁵¹ Significant yield improvements have been recorded for maize and groundnuts, and, to a lesser extent, sweet potatoes, cassava, beans, and rice. This has led to some results in terms of strengthening household income (e.g. 55% of the community outreach groups has diversified income generation at household level, and 44% of the groups are engaged in at least one of the emerging value chain including banana, pineapples, apiary, soya beans, and livestock, and to a smaller extent aquaculture).³⁵² Besides KULIMA, a number of other projects have contributed to support agricultural growth and diversification, including livestock (GCCA, FUTURE, WFP's Home Grown School Feeding, CLIM²).

Notably, the FAO's FFS trainings (see JC 2.3) **have also resulted in higher and more specialised knowledge of sustainable practices**,³⁵³ and has empowered farmers enabling them to understand the specific challenges of their area (e.g. characteristics of the soil, parasite risks etc.) and encouraging them to develop adequate methodologies for cultivation. However, as acknowledged by several stakeholders, the uptake of technology, while promising, requires strengthening.^{354,355} Two key factors concur to explain this finding: first, changing mindsets and convincing farmers of the benefits of new technologies takes time and requires long-term engagement at farm level; secondly, farmers are constrained in their access to finance (as discussed in 3.1), which hinders their ability to invest in the technologies they are exposed to.

The KULIMA project, complementing efforts of the MDTF's ASWAp II,³⁵⁶ **was also instrumental in rehabilitating the banana sector** in the targeted districts, after the outbreak and spread of the Banana Bunchy Top Virus had largely wiped production in Malawi. Through a participatory approach, the project was able to identify accessible varieties, multiply safe planting material and supply it to farmers through the establishment of community managed orchards, thus rehabilitating the country's genetic diversity. Also, the component on Fall Armyworm (FAW), swiftly adopted by FAO and EUD in response to an outbreak during the 2017-2018 growing season, has averted large crop losses and introduced more sustainable practices such as integrated pest management, maize-legume intercropping and the use of fish soup to draw predatory ants to FAW

³⁴⁸ Although benefitting from the new equipment, the Department also highlighted some challenges in terms of timely delivery of such equipment, frequent blackouts, limited training for the use of research supplies and information manuals not translated to English.

³⁴⁹ Stakeholder interviews.

³⁵⁰ Stakeholder interview.

³⁵¹ Stakeholder interview, field visit in Thuchila district.

³⁵² KULIMA cumulative performance indicators, 2021.

³⁵³ Examples include pest and disease management practices, livelihood diversification strategies, post-harvest handling and management practices, soil fertility and nutrient enhancements and management practices, and soil and water conservation practices.

³⁵⁴ In general, the technologies applied to traditional cultivations (.g. maize) are better accepted compared to the introduction of new cultivations like different varieties of maize, pigeon peas, cow peas, Irish potatoes, sorghum and millet (ROM report C388417).

³⁵⁵ Stakeholder interviews.

³⁵⁶ The two projects have taken a similar approach but target different districts. Besides banana production, under component 1 (Sustainable Agricultural Productivity and Diversification), ASWAp II has contributed to improved productivity and diversification by introducing drought tolerant crops as an alternative to maize, promoting diversified seed systems and the increased uptake of legume production on previously tobacco-production land.

larvae.³⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the FAW control technologies developed are still waiting for formal approval from the Department of Research, which is needed to move beyond research trials and effectively disseminate the technology to farmers.

The EU has also financed the development of five small-scale and one medium-scale irrigation schemes to sustainably increase agricultural production. While the action is highly relevant, considering that 96% of agricultural production in Malawi is still rainfed and thus subject to weather-related shocks, **such investments have not always translated into tangible production and income improvements.** A case in point is the Lifuwu irrigation scheme in Salima district (the only one visited by the team): while the existing infrastructure has been rehabilitated and expanded, the scheme is not currently operational due to the high costs associated to the connection of the pumping station to the electricity grid, which cannot be met by the rice growers' association intended as main users of the scheme. As a result, producers still rely on rainfed paddy production and the milling machine that was acquired through the project lies idle most of the year as a result of low output. Views on the possible causes for this situation differ between local actors and the implementing partner. On the one hand, beneficiaries and staff of the department of irrigation lamented limited involvement in decision making during the implementation of the scheme; criticised some of the choices made in the infrastructural design and the selection of a post-paid electricity metre (rather than a pre-paid one), which contributed to exponentially increase electricity costs (as the scheme was initially, and mistakenly, put in the highest tier of pricing by the national electricity company); and claimed that the handover of the scheme at the end of the project did not equip them with the technical tools and skills necessary for its maintenance. On the other hand, the implementing partner stressed how many of the problems the scheme experienced arise from challenges in its management by the Water User Association, coupled with a stark increase in electricity prices which occurred during the implementation as a result of damages to an important hydropower plant from El Nino drought.^{358,359} To resolve this issue, the EUD has recently initiated a technical assistance programme that will match the investment in hard infrastructure with the provision of soft skills for its effective management.

The EU has also made some progress in strengthening farmers' participation in agri-food value chains. Under KULIMA, the GIZ's MIERA³⁶⁰ programme aimed at developing more inclusive value chains, with the objectives of fostering producers' commercialisation and increasing farmers and MSMEs incomes and employment opportunities, with a strong youth orientation. This was achieved by working in partnership with private sector actors to encourage contract farming arrangements; improving value chain services such as market information and storage; and supporting the capacities of farmers and MSMEs through business knowledge and skills training. Overall, the programme reached 25,000 smallholder farmers, 517 MSMEs and 86 farmers organisations (2020 MIERA progress report). Value chains supported include macadamia, rice and chilli/paprika – which enlarged the scope of GIZ engagements from a previously narrower focus on soya, cassava and groundnuts.³⁶¹ In some cases (e.g. macadamia, rice), the programme also helped constituting or revitalising national-level value chain platforms to improve industry coordination and farmers' position in the value chains. However, the KULIMA and Afikepo MTR (2021), while acknowledging the relevance and usefulness of the approach, evidenced weaknesses in the implementation: the programme is capacity-constrained and has “too many interventions across a wide geography” which “does not always enable complex and long value chains to become more joined-up and efficient”. This risks hindering the ultimate objective of improving household incomes.

Food processing and distribution (JC3.3)

The EU has provided some support to small- and medium-scale food processing in selected value chains. Approaches have differed, ranging from grants awarded to private sector actors, NGO partnerships, research and innovation, and programme funding to other development partners for agribusiness development. The team visited three projects funded under the FIDP II programme, whose main results are described below.

First, an EU grant to the private company Malawi Mangoes has allowed the leading mango processing factory in Malawi (which employs more than 800 seasonal workers³⁶² and successfully supplies mangoes to the export market) to set up a smallholder outreach programme by establishing village mango orchards that supply the factory with specific varieties of mangoes, allowing the company to complement its farm output. Eleven producer cooperatives were established or strengthened and received technical support from the company's

³⁵⁷ Stakeholder interview.

³⁵⁸ Stakeholder interviews.

³⁵⁹ Although beyond the scope of this evaluation, stakeholder interviews suggest that other schemes, especially those gravity-fed, have not faced similar challenges and delivered sustainable increases in production.

³⁶⁰ MIERA is a primarily a bilateral programme commissioned by BMZ. Its first phase, co-financed by the EU, ended in October 2021.

³⁶¹ Stakeholder interview.

³⁶² Offseason/fixed staff includes around thirty people.

extension staff for the establishment of the mango orchards and sustainable land management practices. Cooperatives were supplied with solar powered irrigation equipment. The project contributed to a sustainable increase in processed (dried) mangoes for a premium export market that follows high quality standards and has an improved traceability system allowing the company to trace production to the farm level. The field visit suggests the project has significantly benefited farmers' cooperatives, who now can access a stable market and quality extension services. However, an impact evaluation on income and food security outcomes has yet to be undertaken.

The second project was led by an NGO, in partnership with research and technical advisory institutions, which partnered with the largest private player in the Malawi baking industry and targeted 3000 rural households for the development of orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) and pigeon pea value-chains. The objective was to facilitate the piloting of innovative and nutritious commercial products (e.g. OFSP puree/flour for bread). While the project was well designed, included promotion of small-scale value addition and addressed broad aspects of community development, the delayed procurement of the OFSP processing equipment for Mother Holding at the start of the project weakened trust among stakeholders causing unrest amongst farmers, who were promised a secure market. Nonetheless, since the processing equipment is in place, the adoption of the project varieties has been successful, smallholders have regularly supplied to the bakery, and are currently negotiating a new contract for 2022 while scouting for new market opportunities.^{363,364} The project's evaluation also highlighted that the three years' time frame was too short and improvements in productivity and incomes still need to be consolidated.

The third project was a partnership between two CGIAR centres (ICRISAT and ILRI) and a local NGO which used a multistakeholder approach to identify high-potential value chains (goats, dairy, poultry, feed and fodder value chains), diagnose their key bottlenecks and promote inclusive business models, with a view to develop integrated crop-livestock production systems. A range of existing and new farmer business groups and MSMEs was promoted in the various value chains. In the goat value chain, the project trained butchers in meat processing and supported local MSMEs to run a refrigerated container and upgrade a clean and hygienic environment for meat sales. Goat auction facilities were also set up to support adequate conditions for goat aggregation on specified market days for more effective and transparent sales. The project also supported local dairy bulking groups to venture into micro-dairy processing, providing milk and yoghurt pasteurisation equipment and packaging machines to three companies. The project also supported local feed processing, investing in twelve hammer mills which were provided to MSMEs and farmer groups to produce low-cost feed utilising crop residues and forage to improve livestock productivity. The field visit suggests that the project contributed significantly to improve processing and market infrastructure, thus contributing to improved incomes and livelihoods opportunities. However, the sustainability of these investments remains limited, as markets were not fully established during the project due to the short timeframe. For example, the dairy cooperatives have not yet secured stable markets for their processed products and are thus not able to use the equipment to full capacity. Delays in the procurement of the processing equipment also contributed to this. Moreover, the high cost of electricity hinders the cooperatives' ability to pump milk from the collection tank to the processing equipment. Lastly, institutional weaknesses, local conflicts and political interests at District level have contributed to delay the process of setting up dairy factories as well as goat auction facilities.³⁶⁵

In sum, **although EU projects contributed to some changes in food processing and distribution**, as outlined above, actions in this domain have been rather scattered and received significantly smaller amounts of funding. As such, **the team did not identify clear signals that employment opportunities and working conditions in agri-food value chains have improved substantially as a result of EU support**. The next programming cycle intends to place stronger attention on improving food processing, securing viable markets and fostering agribusiness, and may replicate or upscale the most successful experiences.

Food consumption (JC3.4)

EU support has contributed to enable communities, especially women and children, to adopt healthier, safer and more nutritious dietary habits by investing significantly in nutrition-sensitive interventions targeting school learners, their families, and surrounding communities.

The main programme addressing nutrition in the period under review is Afikepo, a multipronged programme covering agriculture, health, education and governance.³⁶⁶ Its conception was grounded in the Four Pillar

³⁶³ Transport costs, however, remain an important bottleneck and the initial problems and consequent lack of trust have hindered the producers' association from accessing a loan that would enable them to have their own truck (the loan requires a 30% co-financing but members have been unwilling to contribute).

³⁶⁴ Stakeholder interviews.

³⁶⁵ Interim narrative report CLIM² (2017-2021) and field visit at Thunga Milk Bulking Group.

³⁶⁶ Specific objectives are: (1) increase and diversify dietary intake of safe and nutritious foods to achieve optimal nutrition for women of childbearing age, adolescent girls, infants and young children in the targeted districts; (2) increase the use

approach (see Section Policy framework and main actors) and informed by a study commissioned by the EUD in 2014 that mapped the geographic and thematic coverage of nutrition interventions financed by other donors and led to the choice of focusing mainly on pillars 1 (nutrition-sensitive agriculture) 3 (nutrition education for behaviour change), and 4 (governance), targeting ten districts where nutrition indicators had been stagnant or declining.³⁶⁷ FAO and UNICEF jointly implement the pillar 1 activities, while GIZ and, more recently, the WFP, implement pillar 3 activities and part of pillar 4. Nutrition is further integrated (to different extents) in several other EU actions from where it can be addressed.

The implementation of Afikepo Pillar 1 followed a community outreach approach based on the provision of capacity building to 'Care Groups' through trained frontline workers and community-based facilitators who provide nutrition education (with a focus on maternal, infant and young children nutrition) and demonstrations for nutrition sensitive agriculture and integrated homestead farming. Capacity building activities target specifically women and many trainers are women. Moreover, Afikepo adopted a 'household approach' which supports improved gender dynamics and nutrition/WASH behaviours.³⁶⁸ By 2021, more than 6500 Care Groups were established or revamped in the ten districts, with a reach of almost 700,000 households, i.e. a population of around 3 million people.³⁶⁹

As a result, **targeted communities have been equipped with knowledge related to the utilisation of safe and nutritious food and have improved their dietary habits.** Moreover, **women and children in particular have improved access to affordable, diverse and nutritious food.** This is evidenced by the positive trends in dietary diversity for women, including adolescent girls, and children and the significant improvement in meal frequency and acceptable diets. Consumption of animal sourced protein, however, has improved only slightly. The project also promoted the consumption of biofortified foods (maize, iron fortified bean, orange fleshed sweet potato) and of food safety and hygiene practices, which also show positive trends, although to a lesser extent.³⁷⁰

While the programme was meant to complement KULIMA efforts and target the same population through similar outreach approaches, this has unfortunately not happened at scale (see also Section on Integrated approach). Nonetheless, interviews and field visits suggest that communities where both Afikepo and KULIMA are present have benefitted from this integrated approach.

As part of Afikepo, the WFP has recently started the provision of diversified school meals using the **home-grown school feeding** (HGSF) model, by sourcing commodities locally from smallholder farmers. This approach is gradually substituting WFP's centralised model of in-kind distribution of daily nutritious meals of Corn Soya Blend Plus in schools. While it is too early to assess the impacts of the action, as its implementation has recently started and suffered significant challenges due to the school closures and suspensions of meal preparation in schools enacted to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, the HGSF approach is recognised as highly relevant in Malawi and can provide multiple benefits, particularly when integrated with other nutrition interventions.³⁷¹ Not only does it enhance children's access to nutritious foods, improves school attendance levels, and reduces drop-out rates, especially among girls. It also benefits the broader community thanks to increased incomes as well as knowledge and skills on nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, crop and dietary diversification and meal preparation, which are enhanced through cooking demonstrations and nutrition messaging (WFP, 2021).

Sustainability, inclusiveness, and resilience of agri-food value chains (JC3.1)

As seen in previous sections, **there are (very) early signals of change towards improved sustainability and inclusiveness of agrifood value chains:**

- Significant investments in capacity building are empowering farmers, providing them with a set of technical tools to sustainably increase productivity and diversify production, while better managing natural resources, applying a combination of chemical and organic inputs in pest and disease management, and promoting the uptake of more sustainable agroecological practices to improve soil fertility. This knowledge transfer is frequently visible in the field, although uptake needs strengthening and long-term engagement.
- Farmers' resilience is increased through production diversification and uptake of sustainable practices. Moreover, farmers have increased their ability to manage environmental and market risks more

of enhanced nutrition knowledge and awareness and hygiene practices by the target communities, learners and Programme Development Agents in their daily routines; and (3) strengthen multi-sectoral governance of nutrition contributing both to national and district development planning and monitoring as well as informing national level policies.

³⁶⁷ Stakeholder interviews.

³⁶⁸ Field visit in Thuchila.

³⁶⁹ Current status of implementation of Afikepo NSA, December 2021.

³⁷⁰ Progress of selected outcome indicators of Afikepo, March 2022.

³⁷¹ Stakeholder interviews and field visit in Phalombe district.

effectively. Also, income increases from increased production in some cases allow the acquisition of assets (e.g. agricultural equipment) which increases resilience to shocks .

- The team did not find substantial evidence regarding the reduction of food losses and waste along the value chain. Nonetheless, the inclusion of post-harvest management in FFS training is expected to contribute to this result. Also, under the CLIM² project, efforts were deployed to reduce losses through the provision of improved support services and extended curricula on post-harvest management and value addition (e.g., dairy, goat, grain and crop residue processing). For example, encouraging the use of crop residues as feed not only contributed to reduced losses and waste but also decreased livestock mortality thanks to improved feeding in combination with health interventions.

Agri-food-system shocks (JC3.5 & JC4.5)

Over the years, the EU has increasingly invested in resilience building interventions, with a focus on strengthening social protection for food and nutrition security of vulnerable communities and improving farmers' adaptive capacity to deal with climate-related shocks. **This has significantly contributed to increasing social safety nets for the ultra-poor and their ability to react to shocks, as well as strengthening farming systems in the face of climate variability.** Moreover, as Malawi remains highly vulnerable to disasters and food crises, EU interventions have started to integrate *crisis modifiers* (i.e., additional resources earmarked to rapidly respond to short-term additional needs) that can be activated in response to shocks to ensure an adapted modality is implemented (e.g. resilience grants and school meals were activated in response to tropical storm Ana, which affected mainly two districts in the South in 2022; similarly the impact of Covid-19 was addressed by activating additional WASH modules in various programmes and the transition from school meals to take home rations during school closures). In addition, **by supporting land policy reforms, the EU is contributing to improve resource access and the land rights of rural communities.**

Although results cannot be aggregated, some important achievements are summarised below:

- Building on the existing support to the Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP), the EU funded a resilience building action (Pro-Act) implemented by two NGO consortia in eight districts with the objective of strengthening the resilience of the social cash transfer beneficiaries (which include the most vulnerable households) to agri-food-system shocks, thus breaking the cycle of chronic food and nutrition insecurity. By putting in place a differentiated strategy for different segments of the vulnerable population³⁷² and targeting households with tailored resilience-building actions (such as nutrition initiatives, VSLs, small livestock provision, lean season cash top-ups, irrigation, insurance and disaster risk management), and in coordination with other programmes such as Kulima and Afikepo, **the project substantially reduced the food insecurity of ultra-poor households and increased vulnerable households' adaptive and absorptive capacity to food shocks**, reaching around 34,000 households.³⁷³ Thanks to the project, overall about half of the beneficiaries were stepping up in agriculture through crop diversification and accumulation of assets. The project also provided valuable lessons on ways to strengthen policy systems to integrate resilience building in social protection. However, a comprehensive evaluation of the action will be needed to assess the real extent of the impact and to identify the most promising strategies for scaling up at country level.^{374,375}
- **The EU also contributed to strengthen community resilience to climate change, particularly in the Southern districts**, more often affected by floods and other natural disasters. Using an FFS approach, the FAO's GCCA project significantly contributed to farmers' uptake of climate smart agriculture practices and, by supporting increased income-generating activities and assets and diversifying crop production, contributed to increasing the ability of farmers to manage environmental and market risks and facilitate a quicker rebuild of the previous conditions before the shock. Field visits and a thorough evaluation (2020) show that community-level awareness of the effects of climate change has substantially increased, climate-sensitive-resilient practices³⁷⁶ have been adopted by a large number of farmers (at least 60 to 80 percent of the target population), and community capacity to monitor, self-assess and mitigate their risks and vulnerability has improved (FAO, 2021). Moreover, farmer-managed natural regeneration of degraded or deforested land has led to tangible results, as

³⁷² As categorised by the Social Support Policy, social protection beneficiaries are identified as: (1) the ultra-poor and incapacitated (including elderly or orphans), (2) the ultra-poor with labour capacity and (3) the moderately poor requiring occasional safety nets.

³⁷³ ProAct final report (2021).

³⁷⁴ The action was later scaled up with a much larger programme (SoSure) which follows the same approach, supporting poor farmers with productive assets to 'graduate out of poverty'.

³⁷⁵ Stakeholder interview.

³⁷⁶ These practices include managing soil and forest degradation caused by floods, heavy winds, prolonged droughts as well as those caused by poor crop and livestock husbandry (FAO, 2021).

visible in comparative assessments of land where project interventions took place. Lessons learnt from these interventions have been used and replicated under Kulima.³⁷⁷

System level effects (EQ4)

Economic opportunities (JC4.2)

While many farming households have been empowered through capacity building actions in improving their farming practices and outputs, agribusiness remains a weak link, as farmers still have limited marketing opportunities to capitalise on the production surpluses achieved and achieve tangible income improvements. This has also wider implications for farmers' motivation to continue investing in improved technologies and practices, which in turn could hinder the results achieved (agricultural productivity increases and diversification).

There is some evidence that the participation of smallholders, women and youth in value chains has been improving. However, their position, bargaining power, and capacity to respond to market, quality and safety demands of food value chains still need strengthening (e.g. risks of one-buyer dependency; power imbalances in out-grower schemes; lack of access to market information; lack of capital for investments and high interest rates; high transport costs etc.; see JC 2.3).

Substantial efforts to build the capacities of youth to engage in MSMEs have been deployed (e.g. KULIMA-MIERA) but risk achieving limited impact if they do not adequately address constraints of access to investment capital and land, which are not conducive to agribusiness start-ups.

Nutrition (JC4.3)

Over the period under review, **the EU has made important contributions to improving vulnerable communities' access to diverse, safe and nutritious food and reducing malnutrition.** Amongst the population targeted by Afikepo, diverse dietary intake has improved significantly, particularly for women and children. Also, positive trends have been recorded across key child, adolescent and maternal nutrition indicators. Moreover, by strengthening social support for the ultra-poor and targeting the most vulnerable with resilience building actions, the EU is contributing to increase vulnerable households' adaptive and absorptive capacity to food shocks .

However, these impressive advances are fragile. First, while the Care Group extension model used by Afikepo is strongly endorsed as an appropriate approach to nutrition security for priority target groups, the system relies on volunteers as leaders and trainers, who are themselves coming from very poor communities. As such, the risk of care groups not being able to continue the implementation of activities after the end of the project remains substantial. Resource poor beneficiaries will need material and financial support during and beyond the implementation period to effectively apply the technical knowledge and skills learnt through the programme. Secondly, the weak Government ownership³⁷⁸ and the limited budget available for nutrition programmes at the national and district levels further hampers prospects of post-project sustainability (MTR, 2021). Lastly, the widespread poverty leaves Malawi's population highly vulnerable to external shocks. As such, nutrition security achievements can be easily "wiped out". A case in point is shown by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which quickly worsened nutrition-related indicators. A number of factors contributed to this. First, wet feeding stopped during the school closure period, although EU-funded interventions (GIZ and WFP) provided take-home rations for school children, ensuring they can access a nutritious meal at home.³⁷⁹ These, however, were not sufficient to maintain the positive trend of enrolment and attendance rates, which experienced a significant drop, particularly for girls (NAPE, 2022). Moreover, nutrition screening also decreased as a result of limited access of mothers and children to health facilities, which were overwhelmed by Covid cases.

Climate change and environment (JC4.4)

The EU support contributed to promote community-level awareness of climate change effects and to increase resilience against environmental and climate risks. While environmental protection and climate change have been integrated as cross-cutting issues in several SAFS-related interventions, interviews suggest that measures specifically tackling climate change are not strongly prevalent in their design and that actions in the environmental domain have been fragmented and lacked a holistic approach.

Adaptation to climate change was promoted mainly through the uptake of climate smart agriculture, tree planting, water and soil conservation measures and livelihoods diversification. Land conservation and

³⁷⁷ Stakeholder interview.

³⁷⁸ The focus of Afikepo on grass roots delivery has led to a limited involvement of central line ministries, thus contributing to a reduced sense of Government ownership and control (MTR, 2021).

³⁷⁹ In a 2021 WFP post-distribution monitoring survey, 89% of interviewed households reported a positive change in the meals of their children after receiving the take-home ration.

reclamation promotion has been particularly successful, although remains limited to a few districts (e.g. GCCA).

To tackle the fast-paced deforestation in Malawi, **the EU has invested substantially in the sustainable management and conservation of forest ecosystems as well as in afforestation activities.** By promoting community-based forest management and the establishment of Forest-Based Enterprises for the commercialisation of forestry products (e.g. beekeeping, weaving, pottery, production of energy saving cook stoves), the EU significantly contributed to provide communities with incentives to sustainably manage forest resources while economically empowering them to meet their needs. The combination of improved forest governance, agroforestry activities at village and individual farm level, and alternative livelihood strategies provides for high sustainability of impact and helps protect indigenous forests from illegal charcoal production, whose increasing demand is the single main driver of deforestation in Malawi. Nonetheless, the chronic deficiency of Government funds allocated to environmental resources management and forestry limited the sustainability of these achievements.

However, from a systems perspective, **EU efforts on the ‘supply side’ of the charcoal value chain have not been matched by adequate actions to address the underlying drivers of deforestation, i.e. energy demand in growing urban areas.** The next MIP intends to integrate the provision of clean and sustainable energy more strongly, in conjunction with environmental protection and agriculture, forestry and fishing.

Lessons Learned & Good practices

EU engagement in policy dialogue and partnerships

The EU has forged strong formal relations with the Government, both at the technical and political levels. It has also strengthened policy dialogue and partnership with EU MS and other development partners through formal (e.g. DCAFS, MDTF) and informal channels. The development partners interviewed highlight that this structured and continuous policy dialogue has helped in conveying policy messages "with one voice", also on politically charged topics (such as the AIP reform). Beyond the convening power, partners stress that the large volume of funding, coupled with sizable trade relations, are key factors behind the EU's formal political power. EU MS seem particularly interested in leveraging this and look up to the Delegation in their engagement with the Government.

Some partners have expressed the need to navigate political economy dynamics more effectively, as technical arguments often fall short of convincing the Government to change course of action. A Team Europe approach to policy dialogue to shape a joint agenda (e.g. through regular meetings between Heads of Cooperation and Heads of Mission, a more structured engagement strategy with the ministries) is seen as an opportunity to be more strategic and impactful.³⁸⁰

EU MS are in favour of a more articulated Team Europe approach and are particularly interested in the identification of joint priority outcomes, root causes and drivers of change as well as the formulation of a joint monitoring framework with clear targets and indicators to strengthen mutual accountability. However, there seems to be different understandings on the shape that joint programming should take, with some MS stressing that aiming for a full alignment of programmes and systems would overcomplicate the exercise (owing to differences in cultural sensitivity as well as different accountability audiences). The progress made so far in designing two common Team Europe Initiatives and their intervention logic provides a good starting point for joint programming and common results reporting.

Lastly, **the EU partnership with and funding of local CSOs and policy advocacy networks³⁸¹ has increased government accountability** and allowed for more effective demand articulation from the grassroots level. In line with the second EU roadmap for engagement with civil society in Malawi (2021-2024), it is critical for the Delegation to build on and increase strategic engagement with civil society, building their capacities for evidence-based advocacy and fostering their active participation in policy dialogue and programmes' implementation.

EU instruments, modalities, funding channels

The EDF funding largely dominates the EU SAFS-related portfolio and targets primarily agriculture, infrastructure, forestry and nutrition objectives. Such funding is complemented by smaller but highly impactful and synergistic actions in land governance, climate change adaptation, social protection and resilience building financed by the DCI-Thematic and Geographic.

³⁸⁰ Stakeholder interviews.

³⁸¹ During 2014-2020, around EUR 70 million were funded through CSOs under the 11th EDF in a broad set of policy areas (human rights, governance, food security, social protection; EU, 2021).

The use of a broad range of implementation modalities shows the EU's willingness to experiment and provides ample space for learning. Some lessons³⁸² include:

- The **indirect management** arrangement with UN agencies with a longstanding presence on the ground, such as FAO, can be highly effective, delivering positive outcomes at scale; it is also well institutionalised and helps strengthen district capacities and monitoring systems;
- **Grants to NGOs** or mixed research-NGO consortia can also be quite successful, provided strong engagement with local authorities is pursued. Field visits, however, suggest that engagement and ownership at district level has varied across projects. Although implementation arrangements have allowed in some cases for transfers of funding to government departments, this is rarely planned in design, limiting the budget available at district level for coordination and monitoring activities. Moreover, government workers seem to be involved by NGOs on an ad hoc basis, for specific tasks and not in a systemic approach. Ensuring that NGOs carry out their programmes within existing government structures at district level in a more systematic way (rather than implementing activities directly with the communities) could engrain more sustainability and allow better capitalisation on investments.
- Results achieved through **private sector led grants** (such as the Malawi Mangoes) seem promising and could provide positive impact amongst rural communities while strengthening private sector's agency; a thorough evaluation of this relatively new implementation modality could help identify risk and success factors and inform future programming;
- Operationalising the **EIB backed loan facility** has proven to be a complex undertaking. While it is too early to assess results, it is crucial to draw lessons from this experience both from a process and outcomes point of view, given that blending operations are expected to take up a large share of funding in the next MIP.³⁸³ Also, a careful consideration of the EIB facility's requirements vis-a-vis local conditions and categories of targeted actors seems warranted.

Some points of concern merit special attention. As the largest share of funding is allocated to international organisations and other implementing agencies, **Government's ownership of the main flagship programmes (KULIMA and Afikepo) is questioned and the buy-in, commitment and steering capacity of central authorities limited.** This has made the coordination amongst the large number of implementing partners difficult and, compounded by limited inter-ministerial coordination,³⁸⁴ hindered synergistic outcomes.³⁸⁵ On the other hand, the Government-led Programme Estimates components have shown slow pace of activity execution.³⁸⁶ The MTR (2021) has provided extensive recommendations in this respect that should be carefully considered in future programming.

While budget support is not excluded as an option for future cooperation, it does not seem envisageable in the short term, as the process of strengthening public financial accountability is still ongoing and absorption capacity remains low. However, some steps can be taken towards creating a more enabling environment by enhancing the government's steering capacity through stronger monitoring and evaluation of projects' implementation at district level and better oversight at the central level. This requires fast-tracking the operationalisation of information systems for improved monitoring of progress to ensure reliable data and information is captured at district level and informs decision making.

Moreover, **to ensure coherent and integrated approaches at district level, there is a need to effectively capacitate District Councils to successfully manage projects and operationalise District Development Plans.** This is pressing since in the next programming cycle the EUD foresees to channel substantial amounts of resources directly through the districts. Low absorption capacity at district level also needs to be tackled, e.g. by devolving technical assistance to support procurement, financial and technical management. This would also ultimately support the decentralisation process by empowering the districts. A careful consideration of mandates between political and technical entities at district level is also needed to ensure that (technical) officers in charge of implementation are enabled to control resource allocation. The EUD could actively engage with the Ministry of Local Government to increase buy-in and oversight ensuring that central authorities do not feel sidelined.³⁸⁷

Regarding timing and scale of support, many acknowledge that the large volume of EU funding to SAFS has the potential to yield systemic impacts. However, stakeholders also highlight some challenges. **The**

³⁸² Based on stakeholder interviews and field visits.

³⁸³ EUR 33 million out of the 324 million for 2021-2024 are set aside for this (stakeholder interview).

³⁸⁴ For example, Afikepo's implementation was hindered by the lack of buy-in from the MoA and by the limited convening power of the DNHA after its transition from the Presidential Office to the Ministry of Health.

³⁸⁵ Also, external experts were hired in the Programme Implementation Units for effective delivery of project activities, while the Government would have preferred to have civil servants seconded.

³⁸⁶ Stakeholder interviews and MTR Kulima and Afikepo (2021).

³⁸⁷ Stakeholder interviews.

disbursement of funds is not always predictable nor timely, which hinders implementation of activities³⁸⁸ and, as stressed by some, risks diminishing the EU's influence on policy. Moreover, **the timeframe of contracts is not always adequate**, with examples of well-designed projects struggling to achieve lasting results and integrate rigorous learning in two- or three-years' time. Lastly, implementing partners generally appreciate the **flexible contract conditions**, which made it possible in several instances to revise action plans, request no-cost extensions and adapt the strategy of intervention to changing circumstances (including responding to Covid 19). However, in the case of projects indirectly managed (through the NAO as contracting authority), the additional layers of control tend to increase complexity of bureaucratic procedures. This, in turn, may impact the pace of indirectly managed projects' implementation.

EU efforts to knowledge building and capacity development

The EU has put significant efforts in building institutional and individual capacity at the national, district and community levels to engage in SAFS activities and improve SAFS governance. This was achieved both through the provision of targeted training and by closely involving government (especially at district level), NGOs, and community actors in programmes' implementation. Given the significant capacity gaps across Government agencies, district departments, and civil society, EU efforts in capacity building remain critical for a more effective implementation of SAFS-related policies as well as for long term sustainability of the results achieved.

The EU has also significantly contributed to improve national monitoring and information systems in the agriculture and nutrition domains through the development of web-based open access platforms collecting field data and information on weather and agricultural market information as well as nutritional indicators, disaggregated at district, traditional authority and village levels.³⁸⁹ These systems, however, are still in early stages of development and considerable investment and upgrading, as well as stronger buy-in from the Government, will be needed to make them effective management and monitoring tools.³⁹⁰ A management information system for effective implementation of the SCTP and a Unified Beneficiary Registry collecting and ranking data on the poorest households was also developed and gradually operationalised over time with substantial EU support.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems of EU programmes are envisaged to feed these national information systems to support evidence-based decision-making. The FAO's capillary data collection and robust monitoring³⁹¹ provide an important building block in that regard. Nonetheless, there have been some challenges to ensure consistency of M&E systems across EU-funded interventions. For instance, the M&E of KULIMA and Afikepo was under-resourced and dependent on the individual reporting systems of implementing partners. The MTR (2021) also signalled cases of resistance of some partners to share databases and quality issues of the data provided.

While knowledge sharing mechanisms across EU interventions and funding instruments are not systematic, there are good examples of lessons learned being taken up across programmes.³⁹² The EU's active engagement in dialogue platforms also contributes to sharing lessons amongst EU MS and other development partners. This allows partners to effectively build on each other's experiences and achievements.

Innovative approaches

By engaging in an iterative process that involves learning and feeding evidence generated from on-the-ground implementation to inform high level advocacy, **the EU is able to leverage programmes' achievements to influence policy priorities and decision making, thus improving SAFS governance.** EU's interventions also piloted the operationalisation of national level policies and regulations in key priority areas (e.g. land governance, forest management, social protection), thus contributing to bridging policy to practice. The

³⁸⁸ Some implementing partners lamented that after signing contracts, disbursements take a long time to come through (months, up to a year), reducing time left for implementation. However, since general contract conditions usually specify when payment requests can be submitted to the contracting authority (which depends on an implementing partner having used a certain amount of funds before being able to request for another pre financing), this challenge seems linked to the absorption capacity of different implementing partners. Also, in some instances late disbursements have led to late procurement of supplies, with cascading negative impacts on implementation (see Section 0).

³⁸⁹ The National Agricultural Management Information System (NAMIS) is supported by ASWAp and the National Nutrition Multi-sectoral Information System (NNIS) by Afikepo.

³⁹⁰ The development of the NAMIS has been slow and the system lacks a comprehensive approach, baseline data and an effective infrastructure to conduct data collection, validation, storage, analysis, and reporting. The NNIS was inactive for two years, a major setback that has hindered monitoring of progress and coordination of work at district level. Also, the system has yet to reach national coverage.

³⁹¹ In the 10 districts where Kulima and Afikepo are active, the FAO collects data on extension reach, climate emergency surveillance, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

³⁹² For example, the design of KULIMA (funded by EDF) was substantially informed by the lessons learned through GCCA (funded by DCI Thematic). Similarly, the design of SoSure incorporated lessons from the ProAct.

Government's uptake of evidence, however, varies and the sustainability and upscale of the results achieved remains subject to political will and the mobilisation of institutional funding. As such, strategic and politically-savvy engagement in policy dialogue continues to remain critical.

EU-funded interventions have also tested and contributed to the adoption of a variety of innovative approaches, with varying results and at different scales. Some examples include:

- Through KULIMA, the EU has promoted the adoption of the **FFS approach** and has contributed to strengthening the connection between extension and advisory services, farmers and the R&I community. While the FFS approach is not a new concept, the programme played a pivotal role in harmonising its use and embedding it in national level policies. Moreover, although some weaknesses remain (as discussed in the section on Effects of EU support), the programme fostered a more participatory approach to technology development and dissemination, thus contributing to enhanced adoption of relevant innovations and technologies at farm level. Continued efforts are required to further consolidate the results achieved, reach national coverage, improve farmers' agency and better integrate national research institutes in the R&I system.
- The ICRISAT-led CLIM² project has piloted **Innovation Platforms** as a new approach to the development of integrated value chains in Malawi. By bringing diverse stakeholders together³⁹³ and fostering their own experimentation and knowledge exchange, innovation platforms improve the relationships between value chain actors and allow them to move from discussing problems to developing common solutions.³⁹⁴ As such, these platforms help improve efficiency from the farm to the market and reduce transaction costs, while empowering members in agricultural innovation processes. Thanks to the bottom-up design, the project contributed to a shift in the mindset and collaboration modalities between farmers and local authorities; identified interlinked value chain and regulatory bottlenecks, with a focus on livestock systems (largely neglected by policy), and promoted innovations for income diversification opportunities. Besides engaging with local level actors, the project also involved national level partners in the design and implementation of the interventions, thus strengthening cross-scale dialogue between members of Innovation Platforms and policymakers. The key challenge with this approach is the need for continued facilitation of platform activities, which requires financial and (skilled) human resources. To consolidate and upscale the results achieved, this approach needs to be embedded in the national extension system and district authorities need to be properly resourced.³⁹⁵
- The EU has piloted innovative approaches to cash transfer delivery (e.g. e-payments) and has tested, through the engagement with CSOs, **pioneer approaches linking social protection** (e.g. cash transfers) **with interventions focused on increasing poor households' resilience**. This was achieved through *add-ons* (such as provision of training in business skills, VLS, climate smart agriculture, nutrition education and income diversification) targeting SCTP beneficiaries (usually excluded from other livelihood interventions) based on differentiated poverty graduation pathways.³⁹⁶ Moreover, the thorough documentation of approaches has helped implementing partners in identifying the most effective layering of interventions for specific categories of beneficiaries.

To ensure these innovative approaches are successfully adopted and upscaled, after having been tested, lessons learned need to be carefully drawn and clear roll-out plans developed and integrated in future programming.

³⁹³ Innovation platforms include farmer groups, associations and cooperatives; private sector actors; financial service providers; livestock buyers; food processors; retailers; extension staff; and NGOs.

³⁹⁴ The process typically begins with a series of exercises, joint problem identification, envisioning a better future, value chain prioritisation, mapping and characterisation, charting courses of action, and documenting process lessons (Sunday, 2018).

³⁹⁵ Stakeholder interview.

³⁹⁶ Particip GmbH (2018) and stakeholder interviews.

Case study note – Niger

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Introduction

Remark: This Niger case study report does not constitute a separate evaluation of European Union (EU) support in the country or its situation with regard to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS). It presents country-related findings relevant to the overall assessed Evaluation Questions (EQ) and will feed into the main evaluation report of the Evaluation of the EU support to SAFS to which it will be attached as an annex.

Context

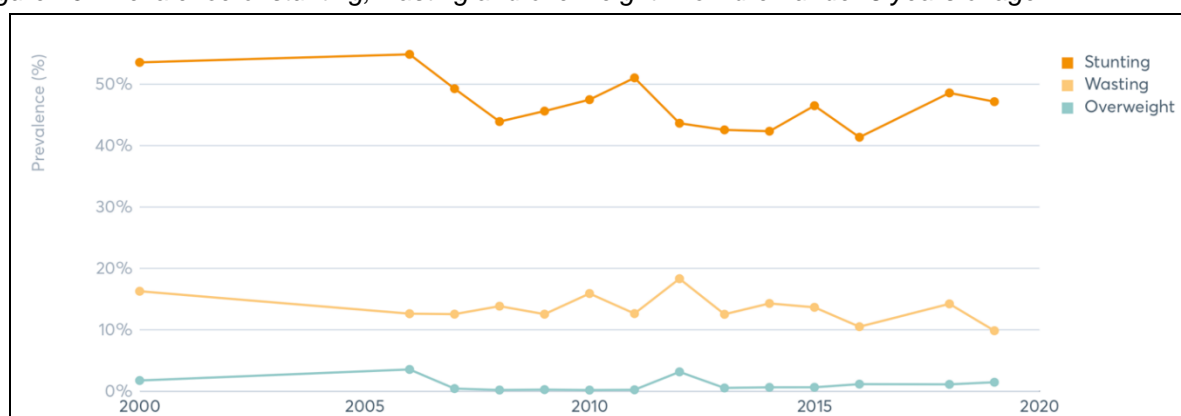
Main SAFS challenges

From 2014 to 2021, Niger Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was 5.5 % on average³⁹⁷ with agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sector accounting for 35 % of GDP. While the sector employs more than 80 % of the population, only a quarter of agricultural land is currently used for cereal production³⁹⁸ and only 5 % of the land with irrigation potential is equipped to provide water to crops.³⁹⁹ Formal land ownership is very limited, but almost all households have access to land.⁴⁰⁰ Most crop production is consumed locally and produced in the Niger valley and some areas in Zinder, Maradi, Tahoua and Diffa with a focus on rice and horticultural products under irrigated, intensive, year-round production conditions.

Agriculture development is spurred by an increasing domestic demand for food, in particular processed food, in line with the nutrition needs of a rapidly growing population⁴⁰¹ and key export sectors (onions, peppers, tomatoes, cowpeas, cattle/meat) on regional and international markets.⁴⁰² In terms of processing, besides a range of about twenty enterprises and traders more than fifty women associations are involved in grinding and processing of fruit, cereals, and dairy products along with 8,500 farmer cooperatives increasingly involved in this segment.⁴⁰³

Niger is a low-income and fragile country confronted to high food insecurity rates with alarming levels in conflict-affected areas (e.g., Lake Chad Basin). In 2022, 3.62 million people are at risk due to reduced cereal production, high food prices, and likelihood of market disruptions. This is a 40% increase compared to 2021.⁴⁰⁴ Moreover, 48 % of the children under 5 are stunted and women are highly affected by chronic undernutrition in rural areas, while overweight and obesity are emerging in urban settings. The high prevalence of malnutrition is associated with severe micronutrient deficiencies.

Figure 10: Prevalence of stunting, wasting and overweight in children under 5 years of age



Source: Global Nutrition Report 2021.

³⁹⁷ In 2020, growth was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (1.0% in 2020) with a rebound from 2021 onwards.

³⁹⁸ World Bank (2019). World Development Indicator.

³⁹⁹ FAO (2019). AQUASTAT website.

⁴⁰⁰ The average size of land owned is 3.4 hectares. Source : UEMOA (2021) *Enquête harmonisée sur les conditions de vie des ménages 2018/19*.

⁴⁰¹ Niger has one of the highest fertility rates in the world of 6.6 births per woman in 2021 resulting in a consistently young population where the median age is 15.2 years old. UNFPA.

⁴⁰² World Bank (2020). *Leveraging Export Diversification in Fragile Countries: The Emerging Value Chains of Mali, Chad, Niger, and Guinea*. International Development in Focus. López-Cálix, José R.

⁴⁰³ Niger - Deep dive of the agribusiness sector conducted by the World Bank in 2018 and World Bank and IFC staff assessments reflected in BTORs and Aide memoire.

⁴⁰⁴ Phase 3 (crisis) and above during the post-harvest October-December period according to the 2021 *Cadre Harmonisé* analysis.

Niger is a landlocked country where productivity, diversification, and commercialization are very low⁴⁰⁵ for the main rainfed food crops (sorghum, millet, and cassava). Smallholders, especially women⁴⁰⁶, are confronted to : i) limited access to inputs, finance, and services; ii) covariate shocks such as drought or flash floods; iii) insecurity in neighboring countries; and iv) poor connectivity to national and regional markets. Road transport is the most dominant transport mode. However, the country has only a total road network of 20,270 km, of which 50% are national roads and 10% are regional roads (2% are paved roads).

The agrarian trade is highly informal and depends, to a certain extent, on the economic performance of Nigeria⁴⁰⁷, which remains the dominant economy in West Africa. Trade between the two countries has been affected by the Nigerian government's decision to partially close its land borders since August 2019⁴⁰⁸, which has had a detrimental impact on Niger provinces relying on cross-border trade⁴⁰⁹. The country has, for example, the highest herd population in the Sahel region⁴¹⁰ with over 90 % of livestock income coming from the sale of live animals in large wholesale markets located along the border with Nigeria.

Policy framework and main actors

Policy framework: the Strategy for Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth (SDDCI Niger 2035) provides *Niger long-term vision* for the development of a diversified economy enhancing employment opportunities for the young population. It sets a series of goals including demographic control, the restoration of security, the development of the human capital, and the transformation of the rural sector.

The 2017-2021 Economic and Social Development Plan (ESDP)⁴¹¹, the Nigeriens Nourishing Nigeriens (3N) Initiative and its action plan for the period 2016-2020⁴¹² as well as the National Resilience Priorities (2015-2020)⁴¹³ delineate the *SAFS-related policy framework* and contribute to the Comprehensive Development Plan for Agriculture in Africa, the Common Agricultural Policy of ECOWAS, the WAEMU Agricultural Policy, and more recently the African Continental Free Trade Agreement actively promoted by the Government since 2018.

The *National Food Security Policy (2017-2025)* and its Action Plan (2017-2020) aim to implement a multisector approach to support agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries development, food and nutrition security, resilience building, and environmental management. While a new action plan is currently drafted, it should be noted that the share of the nutrition budget spending is 3,4% compared to a 15% objective⁴¹⁴. In 2020, a *climate change adaptation strategy* with an implementation plan were developed and a *Science Technology and Innovation* policy implemented since 2018.

The Government implements a Small-Scale irrigation Strategy and a National Action Plan for Integrated Water Resources Management (2017), which serve with the Water Code as a framework for the management and development of the water sector. An evaluation of the performance of the 20-year implementation of the Rural Code was performed and set out the main lines of action for land governance.

Finally, a 2016-2025 National Transport Strategy was developed with the support of the EU and the World Bank (WB). Niger is considered a key transit hub for West African migrants. With the support of the EU and EU Member States, the government developed a national migration policy (2020-2035) in the framework of the Global Compact for Migration, the Migration Policy Framework for Africa, and the joint migration policy approach of the Economic Community of West African States.

National actors: SAFS support lies in a complex institutional architecture. Playing a critical role in overseeing ministerial action, the *Haut-Commissariat of the 3N* (HC3N) is under the responsibility of the Presidency of the Republic while the institutions it interacts with are anchored at the level of the Prime Minister including the Ministry of Agriculture (MAG), the Ministry of and Livestock (MEL), the Ministry of Environment (MEDD), the Ministry of Trade and Private Sector Promotion (MCPSP), the Ministry of Water and Sanitation (MHA), the Ministry of Transport, and the *Dispositif National de Prévention et de Gestion des Crises Alimentaires* (DNP-GCA). Since March 2022, the HC3N responsibilities have evolved in terms of resources mobilization duties in the context of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus.

⁴⁰⁵ Niger has one main harvest season, a situation resulting in strong seasonality in rural labor demand, income, and prices.

⁴⁰⁶ World Bank Group (2019). *Economic impact of gender inequality in Niger. Africa Region*.

⁴⁰⁷ OECD (2019). *Aid For Trade Report*.

⁴⁰⁸ Ghins, L. and Heinrigs, P. (2019). *Nigeria's border closure: Why it will not pay off. OECD Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat*.

⁴⁰⁹ Since January 2022, cross border trade has also been impacted by the Economic Community of West African States and the West African Economic and Monetary Union economic measures against Mali, including border closures and a trade embargo.

⁴¹⁰ Households own 12 animals on average.

⁴¹¹ A new policy framework is developed based on the review of the 2017-2021 PDES.

⁴¹² In terms of objective, the 3N 2016-2020 Plan of Action aims to reduce from 45% to 30% the rates of chronic malnutrition for children under 5 years old.

⁴¹³ In the framework of the Global Alliance for Resilience AGIR Initiative.

⁴¹⁴ Commitment made by the government in 2017.

Other bodies critical for SAFS include the National Institute for Agricultural Research of Niger, the Central Supply of Agricultural Inputs and Equipment (CAIMA), the Office of Food Products (OPVN), the National Office for Hydro-Agricultural Development (ONAHA), and farmers organizations.⁴¹⁵ In 2017, the Government established an Agricultural Advisory Promotion Agency and an Investment Fund for Food and Nutritional Security (FISAN) to facilitate access to financing and services and support value chain development.

Since 2017, a *High Council for Investment* of Niger also serves as a platform of public-private dialogue to improve business environment and increase Foreign Direct Investments. A Nigerien Agency for the Promotion of Private Investment and Strategic Projects (ANPIPS) was set up in 2018 to implement policy initiatives under the auspices of the High Council. In addition, the National Network of Chambers of Agriculture (RECA) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Niger (CCIN) provide services to actors in agricultural value chain and capacity building to small and medium-sized enterprises.

Multilateral and bilateral actors: during the period reviewed the World Bank implements 19 projects and 13 regional projects valued at USD 3.19 billion. Approximately 10% of the WB portfolio is specifically dedicated to agriculture, and 10% to transport and infrastructure. In 2021, the WB approved a USD 570 million regional food system resilience programme⁴¹⁶ to promote intraregional value chains and build capacity to manage agricultural risks. The envelop for Niger amounts to EUR 126,5 million.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) portfolio comprises 15 operations for a total commitment of UA 393.43 million. More than 30% of these resources support transports and energy and 20% agricultural development.⁴¹⁷ While the World Food Programme (WFP) implements a limited set of interventions to address food systems issues, FAO contributes to policy and institutional environment, food systems and value chain analysis (Agrinvest-Food Systems initiative⁴¹⁸) and sustainable governance of natural resources.

EU-Niger cooperation framework

EU-Niger cooperation has taken place in the context of the Cotonou Agreement. During the period 2014-2020, it was mostly financed by the European Development Fund (EDF) and the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa⁴¹⁹. Bilateral programming was guided by the 10th EDF National Indicative Programme (NIP) for Niger. It is now guided by the 2021-2027 Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) and the broader framework of the EU's Neighborhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

Table 10: EDF programming – Financial allocations per sector

2008-2013 programming (10 th EDF)		2014-2020 programming (11 th EDF)	
Sector	Allocation (EURm)	Sector	Allocation (EURm)
Support for rural growth and regional integration (including infrastructure and food security)	160	Food and nutrition security and resilience	180 (30.2%)
Governance and support for economic and institutional reforms	95	Strengthening the capacity of the state to implement of social policies	200 (33.6%)
General budget support for the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy	180	Security, Governance and Peacebuilding	100 (16.7%)
Other programmes:	23 (total)	Opening up regions affected by insecurity and the risk of conflict risk	90 (15.1%)
- Support for trade development and miscellaneous	13	Measures to support civil society	16 (2.7%)
- Technical Cooperation Facility	4	Support measures O.N. Technical facility	10 (1.7%)
- Support to the ON	6		
Total	458		596

Source: Country Strategy document & National Indicative programme 2008-2013 and MIP 2014-2020.

⁴¹⁵ FAO (2021). Political economy analysis of the Food System in Niger.

⁴¹⁶ World Bank (2021). West Africa food System Resilience Program (<https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/document-detail/P172769?type=projects>)

⁴¹⁷ AFDB (2022). Country Strategy Paper 2018-2022.

⁴¹⁸ FAO (2021). Agrinvest Food Systems (<https://www.fao.org/in-action/agrinvest-food-systems/en/>)

⁴¹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/index_en

Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) was the first focal sector in the 2014-2020 NIP with a 30 %share of the EUR 596 million allocation.⁴²⁰ The EU aimed to transform Niger food systems via six objectives linked to SAFS economic, social, and environmental components:

- Agropastoral production and diversification,
- Greater resilience to mitigate threats and crises,
- Improved business environment and investment climate,
- Sustainable natural resource management and governance,
- Job creation and trade opportunities along nutritive/sustainable value chains (focus youth/women),
- Improved road access to areas affected by insecurity (national/regional markets access).

Aiming to step up its policy dialogue and catalyse further reforms, the EU mainly channelled its support through budget support since 2014. The EU portfolio includes State Building Contracts and Sector Performance Contracts supporting the Education and FNSSA sectors. Since 2016, the EU supports national food security, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture priorities through a Sector Performance Reform Contract (SPRC SANAD).

Launched in 2018, the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs⁴²¹ aims to increase private investments, address mobility and migration, and respond to Africa's demographic patterns, with a specific focus on jobs for youth. In this framework, the EU ambitions in Niger to further develop infrastructures for roads and renewable energy, step up its dialogue with private sector actors, and enhance – jointly with government's strategic partners – its support to private sector investments and regional trade.

Since 2021, the new EU Sahel Strategy⁴²² provides a critical framework to support G5 Sahel countries (including Niger) in their efforts to strengthen sustainable agriculture systems.⁴²³ The new EU Sahel Strategy will specifically support G5 Sahel countries' Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel and the Integrated Strategic Framework⁴²⁴, alongside the Emergency Plan for its implementation and the Priority Investment Plan⁴²⁵, both adopted at regional level. Moreover, in the framework of the 2015 Joint Valetta Action Plan⁴²⁶ and taking due note of the 2014 African Union's Malabo Declaration⁴²⁷, the EU seeks to facilitate responsible private investment, agri-business and agro-industries and boost trade and exports of agricultural products with a view to contributing to rural economic transformation.

Focus of the case study

The case study put special attention on the Sector Performance Reform Contract SANAD (SPRC SANAD) as it has been the cornerstone of EU support to SAFS in Niger⁴²⁸. Relying to a large extent on interviews and the findings of the mid-term review carried out in 2021, the team examined the SPRC SANAD outcomes in food security, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture and its main features as an implementation modality.⁴²⁹ During the period under review, EU support to specific value chains development was limited leaving few options to select specific interventions. The analysis at value chain level thus focussed on two interventions: i) a project implemented and co-funded by the AFD EUR 37 million) and the EUTF (EUR 30 million) aiming at developing rural hubs in Agadez and Tahoua (total funding: EUR 67 million); and ii) a project supporting hide and leather value chain development in the framework of a regional competitiveness programme (EUR 5 million).

⁴²⁰ NIP focal sectors also include the strengthening of State capacities to implement social policies (33%), security, governance & peace consolidation (16%) and the improvement of road access to areas affected by insecurity and conflict risks (15%).

⁴²¹ COM (2018) 648 final. *Communication on a new Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investments and Jobs: Taking our partnership for investments and jobs to the next level* ([Link](#))

⁴²² The strategy builds on previous EU strategies focusing on the region, including the EU Strategy for the Sahel ('European Strategy for security and development in the Sahel') launched by the EU Council in March 2011.

⁴²³ General Secretariat of the Council (2021). *The European Union's Integrated Strategy in the Sahel - Council Conclusions* (16 April 2021).

⁴²⁴ EU (2020). *Joint declaration of the members of the European Council with the Member States of the G5 Sahel*. April 2020.

⁴²⁵ G5 Sahel (2018). *Priority Investments Programmes 2019-2021*: (<https://www.g5sahel.org/programme-investissements-prioritaires-pip-g5-sahel/>)

⁴²⁶ The Action Plan laid down a series of priorities aiming at supporting enhancing migration governance between Europe and Africa. (Source: EU (2015). *Valetta Summit 11-12 november 2015 - Action Plan* ([link](#)))

⁴²⁷ African Union's Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods

⁴²⁸ See also **Error! Reference source not found.**

⁴²⁹ Budget support channeled 80% of the NIP funding. The SRC SANAD complements for example a State Resilience Building Contract-SRBC II and SRC Education articulating the EU support to government policies..

As Niger is plagued by high levels of stunting and wasting that have consequences for human capital and economic productivity⁴³⁰, the team has selected a range of actions related to nutrition, including two food fortification projects funded by the global DCI-FOOD thematic programme in the framework of a Call for Proposals launched in 2015. These two projects have been implemented by the WFP and the GRET (*Groupe de Recherche et d'Échanges Technologiques*) and have both a budget amounting to EUR 5 million. In a complementary fashion the case study also assesses the DCI-FOOD support to evidence-based policy decision making supported by the rolling out of the FIRST programme⁴³¹ and the Niger National Information Platform for Nutrition⁴³² hosted in the National Statistics Institute (INS).

The table below summarises the main EU-funded interventions examined by the team in the context of this case study.

Table 11: Overview of evaluation sample EU-funded interventions in Niger

<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Budget mEUR</i>	<i>Funding Instrument & CRIS Decision number</i>	<i>Implementing partner</i>
SPRC SANAD	243	EDF (EDF/2016/038-320)	Republic of Niger
Strengthening agri-food value chains in Agadez and Tahoua	67	EUTF (T05-EUTF-SAH-NE-03-01/2016)	AFD
Fortification de Produits Alimentaires Transformés	5	DCI-FOOD (FOOD/2015/038-326) (2016/C-383117)	WFP
Projet d'Appui à la Fortification Alimentaire	5	DCI-FOOD (FOOD/2015/038-326) 2017/C-380030)	GRET
Hide and Leather value chain	5	EDF (EDF/2017/040-489)	Republic of Niger
Niger National Platform for Nutrition	2,7	DCI-FOOD (FOOD/2016/038-332)	INS
Support to VGGT implementation	3	DCI-FOOD (FOOD/2013/024-921)	FAO
FIRST	0,5	DCI-FOOD (EDF/2016/038-320)	FAO

Source: EU FNSSA Database provided by DG INTPA to the evaluation team.

Regarding data collection and analysis, the team has carried an extensive review of the available documentation, including EU and EU Member States reports at strategy and project level, evaluations, audits, and lessons learned/good practices documents, EU implementing partner documentation with a focus on UN and other intergovernmental systems, EU partners (World Bank) and Government reports, and academic literature related to SAFS in Niger and the Sahel. Data and information captured during the desk review were triangulated using, among others, information gathered through interviews at DG INTPA HQ level and interviews carried out during a field mission conducted in Niamey between 7 and 11 March. During the in-country mission, interviews with key Informants were mainly carried out with representatives from the Government, EU Member States, UN agencies, NGOs, and national institutions contributing to policy dialogue and the implementation of the selected EU-funded interventions.

⁴³⁰ In 2019, 46 % of the children under five were stunted (have low height-for-age) and more than 10 % were acutely malnourished or wasted (low weight-for-height) National Institute of Statistics 2019.

⁴³¹ FIRST is an EU flagship programme implemented by the FAO to support governments in identifying national priorities and addressing context-specific bottlenecks, so that the conditions are set for sustainable agriculture to work for nutrition, health, welfare, economic growth, and stability (see: https://pnin-niger.org/web/lancement-du-processus-du-bilan-de-mise-en-oeuvre-du-plan-daction-2017-2020/#_ftn2)

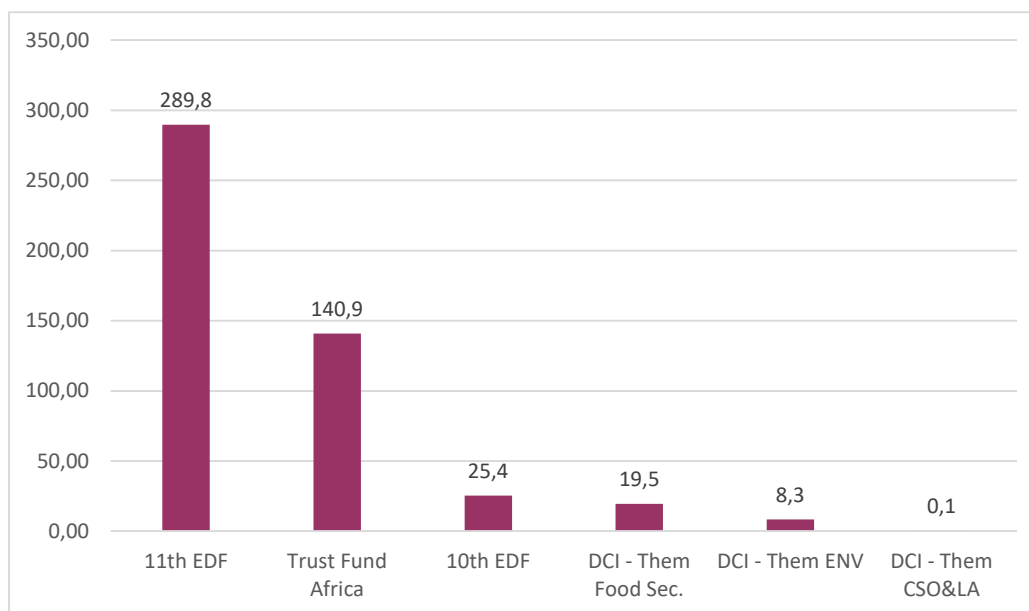
⁴³² NIPN (2017). Niger (<https://www.nipn-nutrition-platforms.org/Niger>)

Design

Overview of EU support to SAFS

EU support to SAFS was mainly provided through 11th EDF bilateral funding. EU allocations amounted to EUR 290 million⁴³³ or a 65% share of EU overall funding. Very few EU interventions supporting SAFS in the country identified by the team present a regional dimension.⁴³⁴

Figure 11: Breakdown funding allocations FNSSA interventions by Financial Instruments in Million EUR (2014-2020)



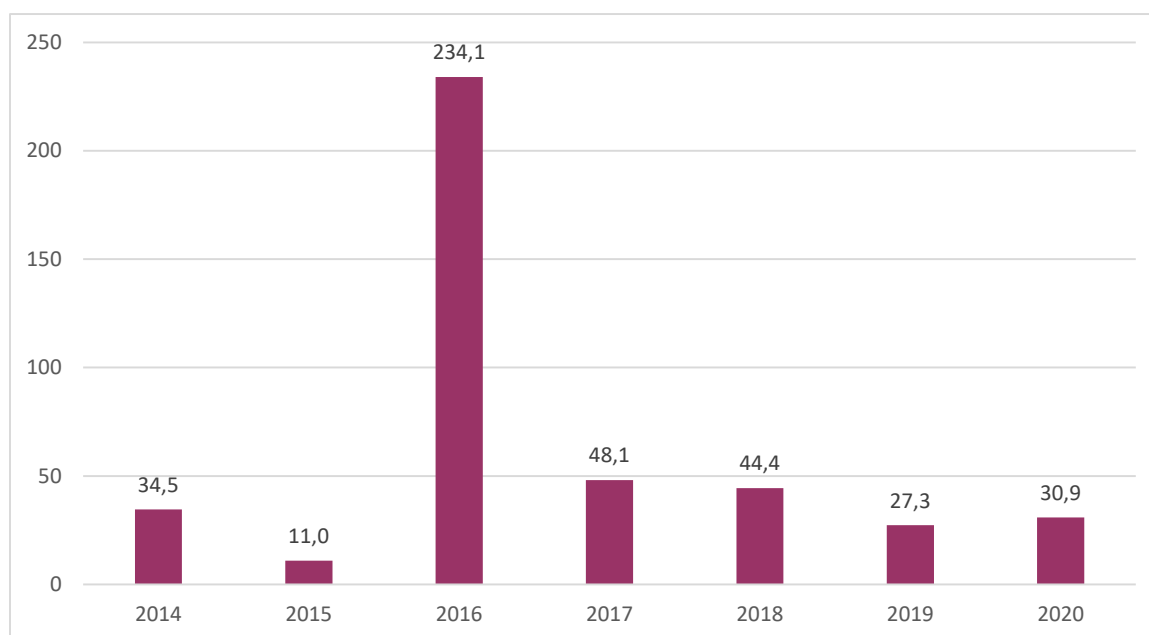
Source: EU FNSSA Database provided by DG INTPA to the evaluation team.

The figure below provides an overview of the yearly contracted amounts focussing on FNSSA during the period under review.

⁴³³ **Error! Reference source not found.**

⁴³⁴ Regional projects present a budget amounting to less than EUR 5 million on average, to support for example governance in the transport sector, increased competitiveness, roads renovation, the set-up of a food security reserve, or pastoralism and cross-border transhumance contribution to food and nutrition security and socio-economic development.

Figure 12: EU funding to FNSSA in Niger during 2014-2020 (contracted amounts, in million EUR)



Source: EU FNSSA Database provided by DG INTPA.

The main support to SAFS has been provided under the SPRC SANAD – see box below.

Box 2 Overview of the SPRC SANAD

The Sector Reform Performance Contract for food and nutrition security and sustainable agricultural development (SPRC-SANAD)⁴³⁵ is an EU-funded budget support intervention launched in 2016 which aims at improving sectoral governance, public service delivery and reforms in the SANAD sector while focussing on key drivers of agriculture transformation such as land tenure and land governance, water management and small irrigation, or food crisis prevention and management. The SPRC SANAD represented a significant shift in terms of policy dialogue and institutional collaboration moving from the implementation of a range of interventions⁴³⁶ to a programme approach followed in the context of a single intervention. The budget of the SPRC SANAD amounts to EUR 243 million. It covers: i) financial transfers up to a total EUR 231 million to be paid in annual fixed and variable tranches to the national Treasury⁴³⁷; ii) and complementary support, including various Technical Assistance (TA) contracts.

The budget support programme SPRC SANAD has been part of a broader portfolio supporting, in a synergetic manner, policy dialogue and specific outcomes contributing to SAFS. Preferred implementing modality for the EU, the use the budget support also stems from a strong request from the Niger government. Five on-going budget support programmes, worth 571 million EUR, support governance (public

⁴³⁵ SANAD : ‘Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle et Développement Agricole Durable’ in French (Food and nutrition security and sustainable agricultural development in English).

⁴³⁶ During the period reviewed, annual projects’ budgets amount to, on average, approximately EUR 30 million.

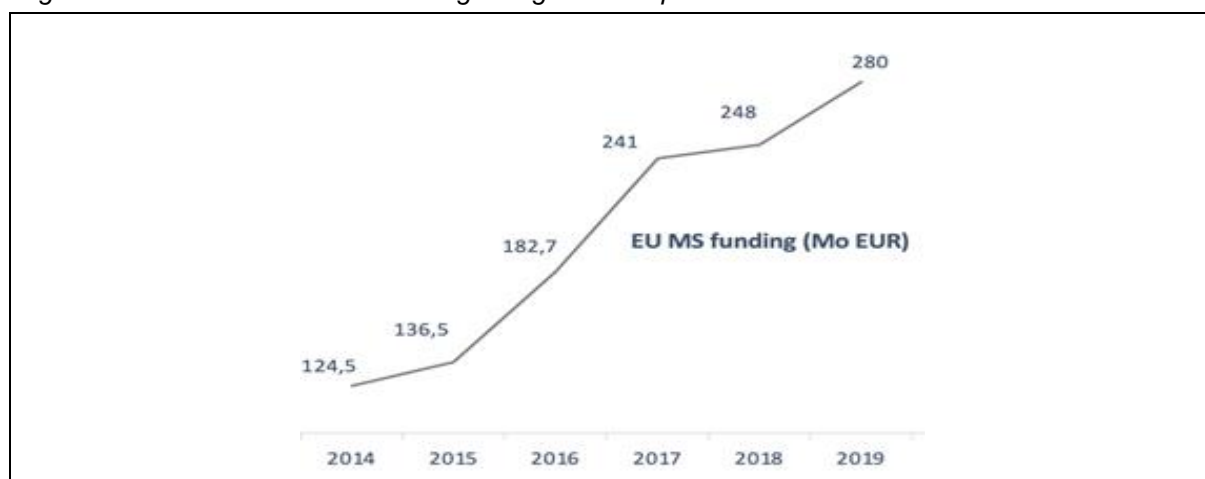
⁴³⁷ Fixed/variable tranche actually disbursed since 2016 represented between EUR 10 million and EUR 32 million of financial transfers. Consistent with the way the EU uses the budget support modality, variable tranches were disbursed upon satisfaction of specific performance indicators.

finance, justice, security, migration) rural development, food and nutrition security, education, health, and demographic control.⁴³⁸ While the SPRC SANAD revamped the EU policy dialogue with different levels of Niger public administration, outcomes pursued by the State and Resilience Building Contract focusing on the leading causes of fragility and the SPRC SANAD Education improving girls access to education impact directly and indirectly SAFS outcomes.

Beyond the SPRC SANAD, there is little evidence that a SAFS approach was pursued by the EU with interventions mainly addressing outcomes related to one or two SAFS components. EDF projects contributed to a range of objectives such as sustainable agro-pastoral intensification, improved water access for smallholders, strengthened institutional capacity at decentralized level, or improved nutrition⁴³⁹ however value chains development and more broadly a SAFS approach feature the design of the interventions to a very limited extent. This situation applies to the EUTF⁴⁴⁰ portfolio, which includes only one project dedicated to agri-food value chain development.⁴⁴¹ The latter forms part of a series of projects aiming at enhancing vulnerable groups resilience and economic opportunities (focus women and young entrepreneurs).⁴⁴² These projects represent a 30% share of the EUR 289 million funding channeled by the EUTF to Niger.⁴⁴³

France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Spain are the five top EU Member States working with Niger national counterparts. During the period reviewed, the EU Member States funding doubled from EUR 124 million EUR to EUR 280 million (see Figure 13). In terms of sectoral collaboration, the EU and EU Member States aimed mainly to support resilience for vulnerable people in a fragile context and increasingly contributed to SAFS transformation via job creation in inclusive and resilient value chains.

Figure 13 : EU Member States funding in Niger for the period 2014-2019



Source: EU Aid Tracker

Quality of design (JC2.1)

Integrated approach

The EU followed an integrated approach to support policy and institutional reforms in public services delivery, sustainable value chain development, and road infrastructures. Its portfolio is implemented mainly via sector budget support addressing drivers hindering efforts towards sustainable agri-food systems transformation. This modality enables a policy dialogue based on structured assessments carried out during annual reviews led by the HC3N. The main challenges identified across EU portfolio include: i) increased regional instability; ii) climate change effects, and iii) Niger demographic trends; weak sectoral governance;

⁴³⁸ EU (2022). DG INTPA Budget support Trends and Results report 2021.

⁴³⁹ See the PAPT project implemented by the Belgian Technical Cooperation in Tahoua (Projet d'Appui à la Production Pastorale – EUR 6 million) ; the PromAP project implemented by GIZ Tahoua in Tillabéry et Agadez (Programme de Promotion de l'Agriculture Productive – EUR 12,5 million) ; the PADSAR implemented by the government in Zinder and Dosso (Projet d'Appui au développement du secteur rural EUR 15,5 million); or the IAOMD implemented by the government in Tahoua, Maradi and Zinder (project fighting child malnutrition - EUR 25 million).

⁴⁴⁰ European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa. See level of investments in Annex 3 and Annex 4.

⁴⁴¹ Project implemented by the French Development Agency with a EUR 67 million budget.

⁴⁴² EUTF projects are mainly implemented by EU Member States cooperation agencies (AFD, GIZ, and ENABEL) and UN agencies (WFP and UNHCR) and present budgets of less than EUR 10 million.

⁴⁴³ In addition to the EDF and EUTF, the DCI-ENV also funds few projects with budgets amounting to less than EUR 25 million over the period 2014-2020.

poor performance of the agriculture development model; and smallholders' limited access to natural resources, services, finance, agricultural inputs, and markets.

Building on investments made during the 10th EDF, the EU intended to contribute to a conducive environment for economic and social development. A set of interventions enhance road sector governance and fund infrastructures to improve access to rural areas and better link Northern and Southern regions. More specifically, EU support to road infrastructures is expected to facilitate smallholders and pastoralists access to national and regional markets and increase trade and economic exchanges which features as an outcome of the PRODERRIC⁴⁴⁴ project for example.

Cornerstone of EU support to Niger, the SPRC SANAD addressed the three SAFS dimensions, but with an emphasis on the economic and social ones. “Game changer” in terms of the EU partnership with the government⁴⁴⁵, the programme provides a new platform for policy dialogue and supports specific entry points in agriculture value chain development such as water management, access to inputs, and improved land tenure. The SPRC SANAD also addresses food and nutrition insecurity, and resilience building issues as well as sustainable natural resource management, and the protection of the environment.

Beyond the SPRC SANAD, SAFS environmental dimension was addressed in a set of projects funded by different financing instruments. For example, an EUTF project aims to contribute to secure and manage natural and pastoral resources, protect biodiversity and support job creation. A project funded by the DCI-FOOD budget line and implemented in the context of the global DESIRA programme⁴⁴⁶ supports the sustainable intensification of irrigated agricultural systems resilient to climate change. An EDF-funded Regional Dialogue and Investment Programme for Pastoralism and Transhumance aims to enhance pastoral infrastructures, animal health, and pastoral information systems.

Interventions funded under the DCI-FOOD global thematic programme have complemented SPRC SANAD support in nutrition sectoral governance and evidence-based policy development. The SPRC SANAD main entry points to nutrition were access to water and sanitation at local level and the development of a framework for nutrition-sensitive safety nets despite a series of issues were flagged regarding the design of nutrition indicators.⁴⁴⁷ The EU has also strengthened the capacity of the Haut Commissariat 3N in policy and institutional development⁴⁴⁸ as well as the capacity of the National Institute of Statistics hosting a National Information Platform on Nutrition contributing to nutrition mainstreaming in health, rural development, social protection, water and sanitation, and education sectors.

Integration of gender equality

Gender equality and women empowerment was mainstreamed to a limited extent in the EU sectoral portfolio and in related policy dialogue, but these issues have gained traction in recent years. These issues have progressively been promoted in the framework of the EU Gender Action Plans or initiatives like the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative launched in the country in 2019.⁴⁴⁹ During the period under review, programmes contributing to SAFS have targeted specific actions to support economic and social rights and empowerment of girls and women. The EU funds, inter alia, women entrepreneurship in production, processing and marketing value chains segments, disaggregated nutrition information systems via the National Platform on Nutrition, or water and sanitation facilities in schools and health centers to support girls' access to education and health.

EU policy coherence to SAFS

Support to micro, small and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurship has been prominent including the development of a conducive business environment and improved access to national and regional markets⁴⁵⁰. The EU portfolio aimed to enhance MSMEs and entrepreneurs' access to finances, services, inputs, natural resources, markets, and information systems. Linkages with both sustainable energy and research appear tenuous⁴⁵¹ with few projects feeding the EU dialogue on climate change. On the other hand,

⁴⁴⁴ Programme de désenclavement des régions à risque d'insécurité et conflits (PRODERRIC).

⁴⁴⁵ EU (2021). *Mid-Term Review of the SPRC SANAD*.

⁴⁴⁶ Project « *Innovations pour l'intensification durable des systèmes agricoles irrigués résilients face au changement climatique au Niger* » implemented in the framework of the DeSIRA initiative.

⁴⁴⁷ EU (2021) *Mid-Term Review of the SPRC SANAD*. Annexes.

⁴⁴⁸ Support to the budgeting of a multisectoral action plan for the National Nutrition Security Policy. Evaluation of the Food and Nutrition Security, Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation (FIRST) Programme. Programme Evaluation Series, Rome. FAO. 2020.

⁴⁴⁹ Support provided in the context of this initiative aims at promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls through a multisectoral approach.

⁴⁵⁰ Hide and leather value chain development in the framework of the regional West Africa Competitiveness programme funded by the 11th EDF West Africa Regional Indicative programme supporting three pillars: (i) peace and security, (ii) regional integration and trade, and (iii) resilience and natural resources.

⁴⁵¹ EU (2014-2021). EAMRs reports.

the portfolio presents clear linkages with nutrition and health issues with institutional strengthening (information systems⁴⁵²) or private sector leveraging (fortification).⁴⁵³

Transformative potential

Many drivers of fragility (regional conflicts and insecurity, environmental shocks, and weak governance) played a significant role in terms of funding prioritization. As highlighted in the previous sections, EU support presented a transformative potential, especially through the SAFS approach pursued in the context of SPRC SANAD. The latter has been implemented in a context chronically affected by a multidimensional fragility⁴⁵⁴ including a high level of economic and environmental fragility; health and societal fragility being exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. Niger exposure to multiple security threats, notably emanating from terrorist groups in the east (Mali, Burkina Faso), the north (Algeria, Libya), and the south (Nigeria), has shaped the EU support to SAFS components in terms of regional targeting (infrastructures), interventions (rural transformation), beneficiaries (smallholders, women, and youth), selection of financing instruments (EDF/EUTF) and modality (budget support). During the period reviewed the regional security situation worsened⁴⁵⁵ with significant forced displacement and food and nutrition insecurity.⁴⁵⁶ In such context, peace, security, and governance were and remain key factors to develop resilient SAFS.

Linkages with EU MS (JC2.1) and other partners (JC4.1)

The EU has played an active coordination role in a context constrained by a complex multi-sector and multi-actor approach. Involved in different coordination mechanisms, the EU also pursued a strategic dialogue by co-leading with the government three coordination poles of the Economic and Social Development Plan⁴⁵⁷: rural transformation; demographic transition, health, education, and vocational training; and infrastructure and equipment. While the coordination framework set by this Plan and weak institutional capacity hampered good coordination at project level, it seems that the budget support modality provided for more successful coordination mechanisms feeding a SAFS approach via, for example, an agreement reached in 2018 between the Minister of Finance and the technical and financing partners.

EU Member States (EU MS) implement a range of projects targeting specific SAFS entry points and have stepped up joint efforts to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In a cooperation landscape featuring multiple projects⁴⁵⁸, often funded by one EU MS, joint programming remained limited until the COVID-19 crisis. Regarding on-going joint programming negotiation, the EU shift to the SPRC SANAD was felt like a “shock” by most EU stakeholders active in the country, including some EU MS (e.g., France and Belgium) which had increased their efforts to access EUTF funding.

A joint EU-EU MS approach aimed to contribute to mitigate the risks of the pandemic via a support to the implementation of the National Preparedness & Response Plan to COVID-19 while pending 2018/2019 disbursements were channeled to fund budget support programmes. This shift took place in the framework of the consultation laying the ground for the EU 2021-2027 multiannual indicative programme (MIP) and the rolling out a Team Europe Initiative contributing to SAFS.

The 2021-2027 MIP green growth priority sector and Team Europe Initiative “Future Generations” support private sector development in selected areas including access to financial services (especially for women) and markets via road infrastructures, as well as agro-sylvo pastoral value chains development. Value chains are still to be identified according to their contribution to food and nutrition security; agro-ecology, adaptation/mitigation approach, and environment footprint; and contribution to job creation. A joint analysis fed the drafting of the next MIP implemented by an EU Delegation increasingly promoting an evidence-based approach. In this context, a Food Systems assessment is currently carried out⁴⁵⁹ by the EU in cooperation with the FAO and the French agricultural research and international cooperation organisation (CIRAD), building on the lessons learned in terms of sectoral inclusiveness (e.g., health, education, social affairs, transport, energy) and interaction needed across regional, national, provincial, municipal, community multiple levels.

⁴⁵² NPIN at national level and ECOAGRIS project at regional level.

⁴⁵³ FOPAT (Fortification de Produits Alimentaires Transformés) project implemented by WFP and PAFAN (Projet Appui à la Fortification Alimentaire au Niger) implemented by the GRET.

⁴⁵⁴ OECD (2020) *States of Fragility Report 2020*.

⁴⁵⁵ Mali, Burkina Faso, Lake Chad region.

⁴⁵⁶ In 2019, the share of bilateral funding to food assistance and the agro-sylvo-pastoral sectoral was equivalent. Annex 15.5. SPRC Mid-Term Review.

⁴⁵⁷ Rural development and food security, education, private sector and doing business, health, security, migration, public finance. See EAMRs.

⁴⁵⁸ More than 40 projects are implemented by France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. Switzerland, Norway, and the United States are also important contributors. Niger. Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027.

⁴⁵⁹ As part of a DCI-FOOD funded programme rolled out in 50+ partner countries.

The EU has also a long-standing collaboration relationship with the WB and the Millennium Challenge Corporation in the transport sector.⁴⁶⁰ This collaboration implements an EU-WB division of labor in terms of rural road construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance to strengthen the economic, social, and climate resilience of the population and their access to markets. It should be noted that the EU has invested more than EUR 140 million in road infrastructures, projects didn't include activity specifically addressing smallholders' needs. The EU support contributed sectoral governance, pushing forward different reforms such as the implementation of the National Transport Strategy, the resources of the Niger Road Maintenance Fund, the adoption of a Highway Code, or the set-up of a Road Safety Agency.

Effects of EU support

National agri-food systems governance (EQ2/JC2.2 & JC2.3)⁴⁶¹

Accounting for 85% of the EU funding, the SPRC SANAD has contributed to reform public financial management systems in alignment with West African Economic and Monetary Union directives. The budget support modality has been critical to improve these systems in SANAD sectors with programming and accountability tools pioneered while significant funding was channelled to strengthen the institutional capacity of the HC3N and SAFS line ministries (e.g via organizational audits). SPRC SANAD complementary support measures (mainly in the form of TA) played a significant role in this respect and - despite delays faced in their implementation - these measures were a key driver supporting policy dialogue and performance assessment processes.

The increasing level of insecurity in the neighboring countries seems to have led to a significant reallocation of budgetary resources initially earmarked for SANAD programmes.⁴⁶² The implementation of the SPRC SANAD suffered from a challenging dialogue between the Ministry of Finances and SPRC SANAD line ministries,⁴⁶³ notably regarding a series of budget proposals. Sectoral ministries don't feel they "received the dividends" of the SPRC SANAD⁴⁶⁴ and lament time-consuming negotiations around the achievement of indicators – a situation which has been detrimental to a more strategic sectoral dialogue. Moreover, while the EU has strengthened the capacity of a range of institutions through performance contracts⁴⁶⁵ - funding allocations to these structures have generally fallen short compared to commitments made due to a limited absorption capacity.

EU support to a conducive environment attracting public and private investments faced obstacles. The SPRC SANAD mid-term review underlines two examples in this respect: i) the complex environment in which the Investment Fund for Food Security and Nutrition (FISAN) and the Agricultural Advisory Promotion Agency (APCA) were set-up and are expected to function; and ii) conflicting objectives pursued by the partners of Niger government with an EU support to the CAIMA Central Supply of Agricultural Inputs and Equipment (CAIMA) while a reform of the agricultural inputs policy - carried out in 2018 in the framework of a Millennium Challenge Account programme¹ - removed the institution from the fertilizers market. As for the EUTF project implemented by AFD to develop rural hubs in Agadez and Tahoua, activities are on-track at output level following significant administrative delays.

Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), women, and young people benefit from a more conducive business environment; however, the EU supported to a limited extent their participation in platforms and dialogues. A series of projects and programmes support the provision of technical and financial services to promote entrepreneurship, especially for women and young people, many of these interventions have experienced delays in their implementation and face sustainability issues while very few support holistically value chains development (focus on production and transformation segments) and investments in research and innovation systems remain very limited⁴⁶⁶. Farmers and women organizations play a critical role in policy and programme implementation via the Réseau national des Chambres d'Agriculture

⁴⁶⁰ In March 2022, the MCC and the Niger government signed a USD 442 million regional compact including an important trade and road infrastructures component covering the Benin-Niger corridor.

⁴⁶¹ This section builds on several reviews and evaluations carried out by the EU and Niger partners such as the Mid-Term Review of the SANAD Sector Performance Reform Contract (May 2021); the NIPN sustainability Study (March 2021), and the evaluation of the Food and Nutrition Security, Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation (FIRST) Programme (2020).

⁴⁶² Source: EU, Sogerom (2021). Evaluation à mi-parcours du contrat de réforme sectorielle en appui au secteur sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle et développement agricole durable (crs sanad) au Niger and interviews.

⁴⁶³ Source : EU, Sogerom (2021). Evaluation à mi-parcours du contrat de réforme sectorielle en appui au secteur sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle et développement agricole durable (crs sanad) au Niger

⁴⁶⁴ Quote from an interview carried out during the field mission in Niger.

⁴⁶⁵ For the Investment Fund for Food and Nutrition Security (FISAN), the Office for Food Products of Niger (OPVN), the National Network of Chambers of Agriculture of Niger (RECA), and the Central Supply of Agricultural Inputs and Equipment (CAIMA) for example.

⁴⁶⁶ See for example the PRISMA, BIOSTAR, SUSTLIVES, and CASSECS regional projects or the INV-NIGER country projects funded by the DeSIRA initiative.

(RECA) for example or the EUTF funded rural hubs programme respectively. Women organizations have also a paramount role in implementing the multisectoral plan of the national nutrition policy including value chain fortification projects funded by the EU.

Nutrition was addressed to a limited extent by the SPRC SANAD; interventions funded under the DCI-FOOD budget line contributed, in a complementary fashion, to nutrition evidence-based policy decision. Since 2017, the DCI-FOOD instrument funds a policy assistance facility⁴⁶⁷ strengthening institutional capacities, nutrition mainstreaming, governance mechanisms. This facility provided a critical contribution to the development, implementation, and review of the National Food Security Policy and its Action Plan. In a complementary fashion, the DCI-FOOD also strengthens national statistical systems via a National Information Platform for Nutrition (NPIN) hosted in the National Statistics Institute. The Platform faced a certain turn-over but performed multisectoral analyses on the underlying causes of malnutrition;⁴⁶⁸ enhanced a multisectoral approach of nutrition issues, notably in the context of the HDP nexus; and strengthened national capacity in a context where the collection of quality data remains a critical challenge for most of the sectoral ministries. According to a recent study,⁴⁶⁹ the institutional metabolization of the Platform is yet pending to national arbitrages to ensure its sustainability.

Despite some achievements, progress has been slow in adopting a well-informed nutrition multi-sectoral approach. Ministry of Agriculture land monitoring systems improved, National Institute of Statistics units better informed nutrition policy decision making and programming; and the DNP-GCA better responded and prevented food, floods, insecurity, or COVID⁴⁷⁰ crises – including an interesting support to smallholders' contribution to the national food security stock.⁴⁷¹ However, overall sustainability remains a challenge and this progress contributed to a limited extent to the implementation of a multisectoral lens. The latter was challenging due to: i) a lengthy metabolization of the SPRC SANAD experienced as "a shock" by most of the stakeholders including the EU; ii) a complex coordination engineering dampening sectoral dialogue; iii) delays in the implementation of audit recommendations relevant to six institutions;⁴⁷² and iv) challenges encountered by institutional monitoring mechanisms such as the Joint Annual Reviews.

EU support contributed to a limited extent to a more conducive environment for sustainable natural resources management and ecosystems conservation and restoration. EU support mainly contributed to better information systems regarding the Ministry of Environment, Urban Hygiene and Sustainable Development (MESUDD) land rehabilitation monitoring systems, and the Ministry of Water and Sanitation (MHA) groundwater monitoring systems. Regarding MESUDD systems for example, data collection, storage and management didn't provide reliable real-time statistics/information to measure progress against commitments and steer authorities in decision-making, therefore, in July 2020, a decree was adopted to set up the Environmental Information System in Niger (SIEN) of which a new computerized system on restored land is a component.

Changes in agri-food systems value chains and nutrition (EQ3)

EU support contributed to value chains development in different upstream and midstream segments. Signals are indeed reported in agricultural production (including fortified food production), diversification, equipment inputs and services supply (upstream) and transformation and logistics (midstream) segments where EU investments have undoubtedly strengthened the institutional capacity of regional authorities, inter-professions, public bodies such as RECA, and private sector actors such as the MSMEs and smallholders. Regarding agriculture financing, the set-up of the FISAN introduced a credit scheme for producers that created a momentum but needs to be consolidated and expanded. The EU portfolio also presents interesting signals regarding access to inputs, data, techniques, and services and the increased participation of smallholders in institutional purchase is a promising avenue at downstream level. Unfortunately, linking these signals with improved trade and market access signals proves to be difficult. The EU significant funding to road infrastructures, for example, present very limited evidence in terms of contribution to SAFS.

EU investments in lasting economic opportunities for rural MSMEs and smallholders is gaining momentum. During the period reviewed, this support was limited to few interventions that have, overall, experienced significant delays (due to design issues and low national capacity), and sustainability issues. However, projects identified for this case study⁴⁷³ present a set of common objectives and results in terms of value chains development, namely their inclusiveness dimension with a support targeted to strengthen

⁴⁶⁷ Funded by the EU and implemented by FAO, the global FIRST programme was evaluated in 2020.

⁴⁶⁸ WFP (2018). *Fill the Nutrient Gap and the Cost of Hunger*.

⁴⁶⁹ SOFRECO, HC3N, EU (2021). *NPIN Sustainability Report*.

⁴⁷⁰ As the disbursement of variable tranches was well below what was forecasted, the accumulated amount of these variable tranches fed a fixed tranche in 2021 to respond to the Covid-19 crisis.

⁴⁷¹ In the framework of a National Strategy for Local Food Purchases from Smallholders that has strengthened the dialogue between producer organizations and the RECA (Network of Agriculture Chambers).

⁴⁷² MAG/EL, MESUDD, MCPSP, MHA, HC3N, and DNP-GCA.

⁴⁷³ Section Overview of EU support to SAFS

producer organizations, women's groups, and/or young people position and participation in value chains. They also developed the entrepreneurial capacity of these groups and support the provision of technical and financial services and infrastructure such as the communal “Smallholder House” serving as vocational center, stock warehouse, supply and repair center, community radio station etc.

EU support to the National Agricultural Advisory System (NAAS) aims to contribute to food security for rural actors including women and young entrepreneurs. Established in 2017, the NAAS addressed the fragmentation landscape in previous systems and new demands tending to include managerial and economic aspects. The Agency for the Promotion of Agricultural Advice, also set up in 2017, coordinates the NAAS and aims to strengthen synergies between public and private organizations. The EU plans to support the NAAS and the operationalization of the Agency in the next SRBC⁴⁷⁴ in a context where - beyond production - extension systems are also expected to address natural resource management, human health, resilience, and climate change adaptation.

The EU partnership with national institutions such as the DNP-GCA increased SAFS resilience in a context of multiple crises. During the period reviewed the DNP-GCA capacity to analyze and address vulnerabilities to shocks and stresses improved dramatically and is expected to be further strengthened in a national and regional policy landscape increasingly marked by the combination of chronic and acute crises. The EU provided, for example, a sustained support to the development of social safety nets schemes for food and nutrition security by strengthening DNP-GCA organizational and delivery capacity. A peace component complements the humanitarian-development approach as revealed by recent changes observed at policy and institutional level including the set-up of the MAH in 2016, a Tripartite Committees in 2018 co-led by MAH and HC3N, and a related Roadmap in 2019.

System level effects (EQ4)

The EU contributed to policy and institutional reforms enabling conditions for rural financial services development. Investments in systemic transformation enabled for example the set-up or development of institutions such as the FISAN. The latter proposes facilities to support finance access for producers and local authorities, advisory services, and applied agronomic research aiming to increase smallholders' bargaining power in value chain development. While the implementation of the FISAN faced a series of challenges, the EU will focus its efforts to build on the gains made and support its operationalization in the next SRBC⁴⁷⁵ at the end of which lasting effects should be assessed.

The EU promoted resilient SAFS with its support to the development and implementation of a National Purchase Strategy to Smallholders. Implemented by a wide range of stakeholders⁴⁷⁶, the Strategy was developed in 2015 and approved by the Council of Ministers in 2020. In the framework, of the Strategy, the DNP-GCA contributes to the replenishment of the National Security Stock (SNC) with annual cereals purchases based on tenders and direct purchase to small producers supported by the RECA. From 2016 to 2020, these purchases increased from 1% to almost 10% of the SNC, which represents a significant trend. The EU aims to support this trend with further investments planned for example in purchase and payment procedures more conducive to farmer organizations development.

The EU also contributed to land governance dialogue at national level and land reforms at regional level. EDF and DCI-FOOD investments were channeled to contribute to the organization of a participatory land tenure forum which was a critical step facilitated by FAO to take stock of the tenure situation in Niger (2019)⁴⁷⁷. The forum laid the ground for an EU-Niger collaboration towards the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests. In the meantime, at regional level, land use planning schemes were pioneered in the Dosso region with a joint support from ENABEL, LUXDEV, and Switzerland. These schemes should be rolled out in seven other regions provided they also benefit from good ownership and continued EU-MS support.

While ending the scourge of malnutrition was a top national policy priority, the EU has provided pivotal facilitation to evidence-based policy decision making and nutrition mainstreaming. However, beyond the achievements made in strengthening an enabling policy and institutional environment, EU support did not feed a policy dialogue able to increase national financial capacity to achieve nutrition objectives. The EU portfolio presents indeed a piecemeal approach with a range of projects addressing undernutrition, access to health and water, and fortification issues⁴⁷⁸. These interventions didn't contribute to SAFS transformation, little

⁴⁷⁴ Action document: Niger State and Resilience Building Contract. CRIS: NDICI AFRICA/2021/043-180.

⁴⁷⁵ EU (2021): Action document: Niger State and Resilience Building Contract. CRIS: NDICI AFRICA/2021/043-180.

⁴⁷⁶ HC3N, the DNP-GCA, the OPVN, the RECA, WFP, and FAO.

⁴⁷⁷ FAO (2019). Towards a national land policy in Niger (<https://www.fao.org/3/ca4351en/ca4351en.pdf>)

⁴⁷⁸ Food fortification value chain projects experienced a wide range of bottlenecks in terms of inputs supply, production costs, R&D investment, certification process, taxation system, or access to markets. Group interview with stakeholders contributing to value chain fortification. 2

evidence has been found on the nutritional impact of EU investments in agricultural production and value chains, diversified production and diets or improved processing methods making healthy foods available in a context where the most pervasive form of malnutrition was and will likely remain undernutrition.

Regional interventions support a nexus approach linking food security, water, energy, and ecosystems objectives. Besides a country project on climate resilience⁴⁷⁹ (PARC-DAD⁴⁸⁰) a set of regional interventions aim to enhance national capacities in multisectoral and regional dialogues (Nexus ABN project⁴⁸¹), to support pastoralists and transhumance (PREDIP programme⁴⁸²) or to improve the livelihoods of local communities depending upon ecosystems and watersheds environments in the Mekrou river basin⁴⁸³. The objectives pursued stem from the EU regional programming in Western Africa⁴⁸⁴ for which little evaluative documentation is available, and limited and fragmented information is accessible to assess if, and to what extent, transformative effects were reached both at beneficiary and at systemic level.

Lessons Learned & good practices

EU engagement in policy dialogue and partnerships⁴⁸⁵

The SPRC SANAD has been a ‘game changer’ in EU support to SAFS. It played an important role in contributing to macroeconomic stability and to the reinforcement of the credibility of the public finance system, therefore creating an environment of economic and financial stability, conducive for public and private investment. It did contribute to sectoral policies, strategies, and programmes with a focus on economic and social dimensions. Support to resilience to food crises was a significant component and will likely be part of a broader approach embracing resilience to external shocks in the context of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus strategy recently developed by the government.

The SPRC SANAD paved the way to a higher-level policy dialogue, institutional reforms and evidence-based policy development and implementation. This dialogue builds on the mainstreaming of environment, climate change, and nutrition⁴⁸⁶ issues and complements the dialogue undertaken in the framework of Peace and Education budget support programmes. Based on the time-consuming experience around the payment of variable tranches, a more balanced approach between a dialogue on strategic issues and a dialogue on performance issues should be sought in future interventions - based on indicators for the variable tranches developed in close concertation with national counterparts and EU member states.

The SPRC SANAD has been critical to enhance good sectoral governance, coordination mechanisms, and programming and budgeting systems. However, facilitating a multisectoral approach has proven to be challenging in a complex and fragmented governance landscape; therefore, a paradigm shift from a multisectoral to an intersectoral approach is recommended to frame future EU support. National policies are expected to present harmonized and complementary frameworks to facilitate such intersectoral approach and the annual review exercises should evolve from an informative to a more operational process to monitor the effects and prospects related to policy implementation.

The next State and Resilience Building Contract (SRBC)⁴⁸⁷ provides an avenue to deepen a strategic dialogue structured around key entry points. Most of the reforms and institutional changes contributing to SAFS are still being implemented given their long-term breath and their complex decision-making context. Building on the achievements made, the future SRBC will be instrumental in incentivizing the government to pursue transformative changes in land governance, access to agri-food services and inputs, value chain development, and crises response and prevention including food and nutrition crises - these domains requiring challenging institutional interaction and complex technical and informational inputs.

Building on the good practices and missed opportunities identified in the evaluation of past cooperation could enhance future budget support. Good practices touch on the set up of i) an appropriate level of complementary measures to further strengthen national capacities; ii) an adequate technical assistance with skilled profiles assisting national counterparts strategically; iii) a planification of disbursements

⁴⁷⁹ PARC-DAD project funded by the Global Alliance against Climate Change from 2016 to 2020 (budget EUR 11 million).
⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁸¹ EU, GIZ (2019). *Le dialogue régional nexus dans le bassin du Niger* (https://uploads.water-energy-food.org/legacy/giz_factsheets_niger_sept2019_fr.pdf)

⁴⁸² See /

⁴⁸³ Integrated management of watersheds and ecosystems to sustain growth and protect our planet. Budget EUR 4 million covering Niger, Burkina Faso, and Benin.

⁴⁸⁴ Regional Indicative Programme 2014-2020 – and specifically the priority area # 3 combining support to resilience, food and nutrition security, and natural resources.

⁴⁸⁵ This section largely builds on the findings of the Mid-Term Review of the SRPC providing for a series of lessons learned and good practices.

⁴⁸⁶ Including food diversification according to WFP Fill the Nutrient Gap study carried out in 2018.

⁴⁸⁷ EU (2021): Action document NDICI AFRICA/2021/043-180.

avoiding financial bottlenecks (although the SPRC SANAD enabled a swift reallocation to respond to crisis situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic). The documentation related to project value chains selected for this case study presents limited opportunities to assess value chains economic, social, and environmental dimensions as per for example VC4N approach – most of them focusing primarily on economic outcomes (e.g. rural hubs and hide and leather value chain), a more holistic and integrated approach is thus expected in future budget support programming. In terms of joint programming and collaboration between the EU and the EU MS, most of the people interviewed underline that a series of opportunities were missed during the period reviewed - despite interesting initiatives supporting the DNP-GCA for example. There is a consensus about the fact that Team Europe labelling needs “substance” in the next programming cycle.

EU instruments, modalities, funding channels

The mix of instruments and variety of delivery modalities allowed the EU to focus strategically on country priorities and needs with a short-, mid-, and long-term lens. The EDF funded food crises response and prevention via the SPRC SANAD and DG ECHO interventions (EUR 50 million). In the medium term, the EDF contributed to improved services (SPRC SANAD) while EUTF interventions supported livelihoods and entrepreneurship in a complementary fashion. The EDF and DCI-FOOD instruments contributed to long-term system level effects in land governance and nutrition: in the latter sector for example, the SPRC SANAD entry point to nutrition (access to water) was complemented by a DCI-FOOD support to evidence-based policy decision making (NPIN and FIRST). The SPRC SANAD Land Use Planning Schemes build on the DCI-FOOD support to pastoral systems and to the rolling out of the VGGT⁴⁸⁸; this in turn complement activities of the regional PREDIP programme strengthening pastoral organizations capacity and dialogue on pastoralism and transhumance.

EU efforts to knowledge building

EU support has been critical to develop and to improve information systems contributing to food systems sustainability. Partnerships with the national counterparts – at centralized and decentralized level – contributed to build institutional and individual capacity in different segments of targeted value chains. It has also enhanced policy dialogues fed by a better knowledge related to land and water governance and management, the prevention of malnutrition via data production and analysis, and food crises response and prevention in a context of increased regional fragility. Significant efforts are still needed to feed capacity gaps across SAFS sectoral ministries and HDP nexus priorities. Therefore, sustained capacities are required at all levels to provide high-quality information, data, and statistics able to measure and monitor progress towards resilient SAFS including via systems monitoring, preventing, and managing crises and disasters.

Innovative approaches

Promoted as a cost-effective tool to “significantly and sustainably improve health, wellbeing, and resilience⁴⁸⁹”, food fortification is an innovative approach deserving a careful attention. Multi-sector partnerships were developed to support, advocate, and monitor food fortification interventions in different value chains segments. These actions aim to enhance micronutrient intakes for the most vulnerable people in a context of worrying nutrition status for women and children. While Niger private sector is underdeveloped and food fortification attract domestic and foreign private sector actors in investing against malnutrition, safeguards are needed. These safeguards include a sustained high level political commitment, an updated situation analysis on availability, access, and consumption of healthy diets, a driven strategic approach stemming from this analysis, and effective coordination mechanisms allowing partners from public, private, and civil society sectors and bilateral and multilateral agencies exchange views on a regular basis and work more collectively. These components are lacking in Niger food fortification landscape but are paramount to further contribute to SAFS programming.

⁴⁸⁸ EU (2014-2021): EAMR reports.

⁴⁸⁹ EU (2020). *Guidance Note on Food Fortification in development cooperation*. European Commission. DG INTPA. July 2020.

Case study note – EU’s engagement with the RBA

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Introduction

Remark: The case study report does not constitute a separate evaluation of European Union (EU) support to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS) through Rome-Based Agencies. It presents findings relevant to the overall assessed Evaluation Questions (EQ) / Judgement Criteria (JC) and feeds into the main evaluation report of the Evaluation of the EU support to SAFS to which it will be attached as an annex.

Context

EU engagement with RBA towards resilient and sustainable agri-food systems is not new. It has been enshrined in EU policy framework since 2011. Very few interviewees are aware of a Statement of Intent signed by the European Commission and the Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs) – the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and World Food Programme (WFP) – in 2011.⁴⁹⁰ Aligned with most SAFS areas, the Statement refers to a set of core priority areas across SAFS dimensions: enhanced collaboration is sought across value chain segments with a focus on sustainable intensification and market access; trade issues are not referred to, but the engagement of the private sector is promoted. Land governance, safety net systems, food assistance, and nutrition in the humanitarian-development continuum are well outlined. Finally, climate change adaptation and mitigation are set as a priority linked to, for example, biodiversity, support to ecosystems services, and transboundary plant pest and animal disease.

In a crowded global governance architecture, the EU has continuously advocated for and contributed to RBA collaboration. This engagement took place as extraordinary crises, characterized by their breadth and depth, and disruptive nature, are likely to have profound implications for the future. EU and the RBAs have evolved while a set of energy, environmental, and diet transitions are shaping the global economy and a shift is observed from North–South to South-North and South-South investment patterns. In this context, RBAs' convener role in global governance systems and reforms lies at the heart of EU policy frameworks⁴⁹¹ including those promoting the implementation of the Delivering One UN approach⁴⁹² and aiming for horizontal (cross-sectoral) and vertical (from farm-to-fork) integration.

RBA agenda and priority setting reflect dynamics within and between groups of member states. Member states have, for example, different views regarding the FAO global public goods function, which tends to be supported by developed countries, and its technical assistance function, for which developing countries have high demand. Both groups of constituents, as well as a growing number of member states graduating to middle-income status, are served by FAO. Responding to the needs of the latter has also become critical, as the appetite for knowledge has increased in the more advanced developing countries in Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. Contributing to this has been the development of new sources of information, often from their own neighbourhoods⁴⁹³.

Much of RBA funding is earmarked and comes from a relatively small pool of government donors which have shaped RBA strategies. In a constrained funding environment characterised by reduced resources, earmarking, and greater accountability vis à vis the EU taxpayer, RBAs share the same concerns regarding resources predictability, flexibility, and continuity. A series of evaluations have raised concern that funding streams are driving strategy rather than the other way around⁴⁹⁴. In a context where genuine support from RBA leadership to enforce inter-agency collaboration is questioned⁴⁹⁵, funding issues have often been raised as a

⁴⁹⁰ EC, FAO, IFAD, and WFP (2011). Statement of Intent Programmatic Cooperation on Food Security and Nutrition. 27 June 2011. Accessible at: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/signed_statement_en.pdf

⁴⁹¹ EU (2016). A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy. European Union. June 2016.

⁴⁹² EC (2010): Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges. COM (2010)127 final. Accessible at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0127:FIN:EN:pdf> & EC (2012): Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - The Eu Approach To Resilience: Learning From Food Security Crises. COM (2012) 586 final. Accessible at: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com_2012_586_resilience_en.pdf. Both were released in the aftermath of food crises in 2010 and 2012 respectively and outlining the importance of RBA collaboration. See for example EC (2021). Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism (2021). JOIN (2021)3. Accessible at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/en_strategy_on_strengthening_the_eus_contribution_to_rules-based_multilateralism.pdf.

⁴⁹³ Uma Lele, Manmohan Agarwal, Brian C. Baldwin, and Sambuddha Goswami (2021). Food For All: International Organizations and the transformation of agriculture.

⁴⁹⁴ WFP (2020). Strategic evaluation of funding WFP's work & FAO (2019). *Evaluation of FAO's Strategic Results Framework*.

⁴⁹⁵ FAO, IFAD, WFP (2021). *Joint Evaluation of Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies*. FAO Office of Evaluation, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, and WFP Office of Evaluation. Evaluation Report. October 2021..

limitation by interviewees. Lack of funding has remained a constraint despite the fact that governance and procedural reforms aiming to enforce RBA collaboration have contributed, to a limited extent, to progress in reducing overlap and duplication.

Flagship programmes illustrating EU engagement with RBAs.

This case study illustrates efforts towards SAFS transformation based on interventions implemented by RBAs ranging from support to global governance mechanisms, global public goods access, crisis response and prevention, research and innovation, and gender equality and women's empowerment. Data collection is based on a documentation review and interviews with key informants from RBAs and EU Directorates General.⁴⁹⁶ As most of the interviews could take place remotely, no field mission was foreseen for this case study.

Joint engagement in influencing the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Both EU and the RBAs have provided a long-standing support to the functioning of the CFS including its Secretariat and High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE). Both have promoted the implementation of CFS norms helping the implementation of CFS norms such as a set of Voluntary Guidelines on natural resource tenure, responsible investments in agriculture and food systems, action in protracted crises, or healthy diets.

Joint engagement in developing and protecting Global Public Goods (GPG). EU engagement with RBAs has contributed to support joint analysis including the global State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI), State of the World's Forests, and State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture reports, the Global Nutrition Reports (GNR), and the Food Crises, and Hunger Hotspots reports (GRFC). Built on joint efforts, the GPG provide the most up-to-date information on complex and evolving contexts.

Joint engagement in improving food crises analysis, response, and prevention. Launched in 2016, the Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC) has progressively played a critical role in global governance architecture by increasing political uptake and coordination based on consensus-based information (budget EUR 57 million). In 2019⁴⁹⁷, the EU and its Member States⁴⁹⁸ have provided their support to GNAFC contribution towards more resilient food systems across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

Joint engagement in encouraging integrated agri-food research and innovation systems. In the framework of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) programme, joint efforts aimed at shaping the international research agenda, strengthening the coordination of multilateral systems, and scaling up technological innovation⁴⁹⁹ (budget EUR 335 million). Since 2020, funding has continued to be secured by the EU through the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) flagship programme.⁵⁰⁰

Joint engagement in giving a new impetus for gender equality and women's empowerment. Launched in 2016, the Gender Transformative Approaches for Food Security and Nutrition programme (JP GTA)⁵⁰¹ aims to contribute to SDG 2 by further embedding gender transformative approaches in RBA policy dialogues, programmes, working modalities and institutional culture (budget EUR 5 million). Its implementation suffered some delays⁵⁰² but are now on track to address a range of issues including access to/control over resources, services, markets, gender-based violence, and women participation, representation, and leadership in platforms.

⁴⁹⁶ Only one informant from DG ECHO was interviewed due to the limited availability of the personnel.

⁴⁹⁷ High-Level Event of the Global Network Against Food Crises organized in April 2019: *Food & Agriculture in times of crisis: working better together for long-term solution*.

⁴⁹⁸ The Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy, and Finland.

⁴⁹⁹ Such as community foresight, agro-biodiverse systems, farmers rights to genetic resources, or smallholders' access and use of open data. See FAO (2019). *Support of the European Union to the Global Forum on Agricultural Research 2013-2018*. Final Narrative Report. GFAR.

⁵⁰⁰ Interviews have underlined the limited traction and funding contribution from FAO, IFAD, and other donors. See also EC (2019): *Evaluation of the Support to the Global Forum on Agricultural Research programme*. May 2019.

⁵⁰¹ High-level event "Step It Up Together with Rural Women to End Hunger and Poverty" organized in collaboration with UN Women. EC (2020): *Evaluation of the EU's external action support to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment (2010-2018)*.

⁵⁰² Due to negotiations around financial contractual arrangements between RBA and personnel turnover among DG INTPA.

EU-RBA partnership design

The overall partnership framework (EQ1)

EU engagement has evolved while RBAs underwent restructuring

EU-RBA dialogues have been increasingly structured and strategic, involving higher-level and broader participation from both EU representatives⁵⁰³ and UN representatives.⁵⁰⁴ These dialogues took place while the IFAD decentralization process was gaining pace⁵⁰⁵, WFP increased its role in development and peace areas, reinventing itself at country level⁵⁰⁶; and FAO streamlined and reviewed its strategic objectives following a series of evaluations.⁵⁰⁷ FAO evaluation of its support to sustainable food systems commended achievements in the development of data and normative products and support to an enabling environment for value chain development, but limitations were also pointed out regarding its fragmented approach in green food value chain and capacity gaps in food safety, value chain development, rural finance, trade, and agribusiness.⁵⁰⁸

EU funding and (somehow) fragmented influence on RBA governance mechanisms

With its EU Member States (EU MS), the EU has remained the largest contributor to the RBAs and to promote its interests and values, has leveraged its funding and used its influence on RBA's constituents - coordinating, whenever possible, with EU MS. While it has an observer status in WFP and IFAD Executive Boards, EU is a full member of FAO and exercises its rights along with EU MS. But there is "no common EU plan"⁵⁰⁹ to steer UN agencies in a certain direction"; therefore, the EU's cohesion as a bloc is weakened by diverging domestic politics and interests within Europe.⁵¹⁰ In addition, high shares of earmarked contributions⁵¹¹ contribute to RBA funding vulnerability and increased competition which undermine the pursuit of joint objectives.

Transactional footprint and lack of guidance towards joint SAFS approach

EU staff capacity constraints⁵¹² have increasingly turned RBAs into critical implementing partners, valued for their neutrality and expertise, engagement at scale, and connectedness with governments. EU efforts towards a better division of labour among RBAs contribute to SAFS; however, the implementation of the Farm to Work strategy suffers from lack of relevant tools to serve EU Delegations' programming. According to most of the interviewees, opportunities have been missed in moving away from an overly transactional and projectized way of working towards a strategic partnership. EU-RBA engagement has remained characterised by an accountability perspective, including cumbersome procedures compared to other major donors⁵¹³, and intense negotiation processes raising the issue of the trade-offs between conditionalities and results.

⁵⁰³ Participation of Commissioners for International Partnerships, Health and Food Safety, and Agriculture and services from the DG INTPA, DG AGRI, DG CLIMA, DG MARE, DG SANTE, DG NEAR, European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department, and the European External Action Service.

⁵⁰⁴ UNIDO, WFP, WHO, IFAD, and UNEP for example.

⁵⁰⁵ IFAD (2013) Country Presence Policy and Strategy 2014–15. Accessible at: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwirvoLcl4_4AhV-7rsIHf-zA2AQFnoECACQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwebapps.ifad.org%2Fmembers%2Feb%2F110%2Fdocs%2FEB-2013-110-R-5.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2VT2GLSM93Z5-1QavMB-BO & FAO, IFAD, WFP (2019). Country-level collaboration between FAO, IFAD, and WFP. Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN).

⁵⁰⁶ See WFP (2018): Overview of the integrated road map framework (2016–2020). Accessible at: https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document_download/WFP-0000116953

⁵⁰⁷ Each Strategic Objective was evaluated between 2016 and 2018. These exercises were complemented by a synthesis review and the Evaluation of FAO's Strategic Results Framework performed in 2019, notably to inform the formulation of FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031.

⁵⁰⁸ FAO (2017). Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Strategic Objective 4: Enabling Inclusive and Efficient Agricultural and Food Systems. Accessible at: https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/bodies/Progr_Comm/PC_122-documents/MU657e.pdf

⁵⁰⁹ Alfonso Medinilla, Pauline Veron and Vera Mazzara (2019). EU-UN cooperation: confronting change in the multilateral system. ECDPM.

⁵¹⁰ EU treaties define development policy as a shared competence between the EU and its member states but also mandate the EU to provide a forum for promoting the consistency and coordination of the EU MS bilateral development policies.

⁵¹¹ OECD (2020). Earmarked funding to multilateral organizations: how is it used and what constitutes good practice? October 2020.

⁵¹² OECD (2018). OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) peer Reviews: European Union 2018.

⁵¹³ USA, Germany, and United Kingdom providing the bulk of RBA funding.

EU engagement with FAO has been significant but might requires recalibration

During Mr. Graziano da Silva's mandate⁵¹⁴, FAO has been a valued partner both in terms of depth of cooperation⁵¹⁵ and funding. In 2019, following a hard-fought campaign⁵¹⁶, Dr Qu Dongyu took over FAO's leadership by a large margin of votes against the EU backed French candidate. Many interviewees have mixed views regarding FAO's restructuring processes and Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and have raised concerns regarding possible bias towards Chinese foreign policy. The implementation of EU resilience strategy⁵¹⁷, the COVID-19 pandemic and conflict in Ukraine have increasingly brought to light diverging priorities among RBA member states, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where most of EU funding decisions will be made⁵¹⁸ and UN reformed system is reshaping RBA collaboration.

The collaboration with RBA at the intervention level

Few documents report on RBA collaboration funded by the EU and its EU MS⁵¹⁹. Yet, investments channelled through RBA have been significant - particularly in Western Africa, Eastern Africa, and in the Middle East regions.

EU funding to FAO totalled USD 1,6 billion between 2014 and 2021. Annual investments amounted to USD 200 million on average. FAO is a recognized convenor for policy and institutional reforms, public goods, capacity development, and strengthened information systems. A large share of EU investments contributed to natural resources governance and management (e.g., land, forests⁵²⁰, fisheries and ocean governance⁵²¹ and food crises response and prevention (e.g., Global Network Against Food Crises). Overall, the portfolio presents the same focus during the period reviewed, apart from a digitalization agenda which has gained prominence recently. Joint efforts have aimed at improving i) sustainable agri-food value chains; ii) food security and resilience; iii) the implementation of the One Health approach⁵²² and iv) climate change, biodiversity, and natural resources governance and management. DG INTPA has been FAO's privileged interlocutor⁵²³, supporting mainly global- and country-level interventions with funding envelopes amounting to less than EUR 10 million on average. Bigger and long-standing investments were allocated to the Eastern Africa region including Somalia, Malawi, Kenya, and South Sudan and to a lesser extent the Middle East (Yemen and Iraq). According to many interviewees, FAO's unique and multifaceted knowledge in interrelated land, water, soils, forests, and fisheries issues represents an untapped potential in context where demands for assistance have increased, notably to address resilient SAFS.

⁵¹⁴ Graziano da Silva has been FAO Director General over the 2011-2019 period.

⁵¹⁵ Paolo Sarfatti, Fatima Laanouni, and Adriano Spinelli (2018). Study on highlights of FAO-EU cooperation 2007–2017. Landell Mills. ISS-FANSSA 2018.

⁵¹⁶ Nature (2019). Pick a leader with vision for the Food and Agriculture Organization. Editorial 19 June 2019. Nature. Accessible at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01902-3> & C.Lynch and R. Gramer (2019). Outfoxed and Outgunned: How China Routed the U.S. in a U.N. Agency. Foreign Policy Magazine. Accessible at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/10/23/china-united-states-fao-kevin-moley/>

⁵¹⁷ Join (2017) 21 final. Joint communication to the European parliament and the council. A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action.

⁵¹⁸ EC (2021). NDICI Factsheet. Accessible at: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/factsheet-global-europe-ndici-june-2021_en.pdf.

⁵¹⁹ Madagascar is cited as an example in FAO, IFAD, WFP (2019). Country-level collaboration between FAO, IFAD, and WFP. Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN).

⁵²⁰ FLEGT Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Programme and Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme.

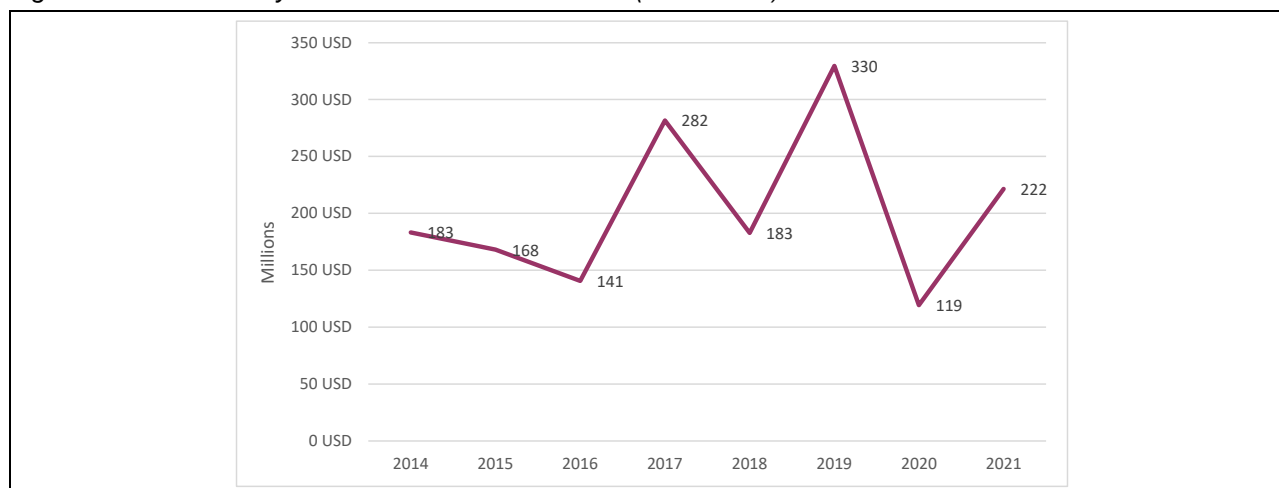
⁵²¹ EU support to fisheries/aquaculture and ocean governance amounts to more than 1 billion EUR during the period.

See FISH4ACP programme (https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/eu-provides-eu40-million-boost-sustainable-fisheries-and-aquaculture-africa-caribbean-and_en) implemented by FAO since 2019 to develop value chains in ten African, Caribbean and Pacific partner countries. The initiative is funded by the European Commission (EUR 40 million) and Germany (EUR 8 million).

⁵²² Notes on 2017 EU-FAO strategic dialogue meeting and Aide-Mémoire 2021. EU-FAO strategic dialogue. Advancing the transformation of agri-food systems jointly.

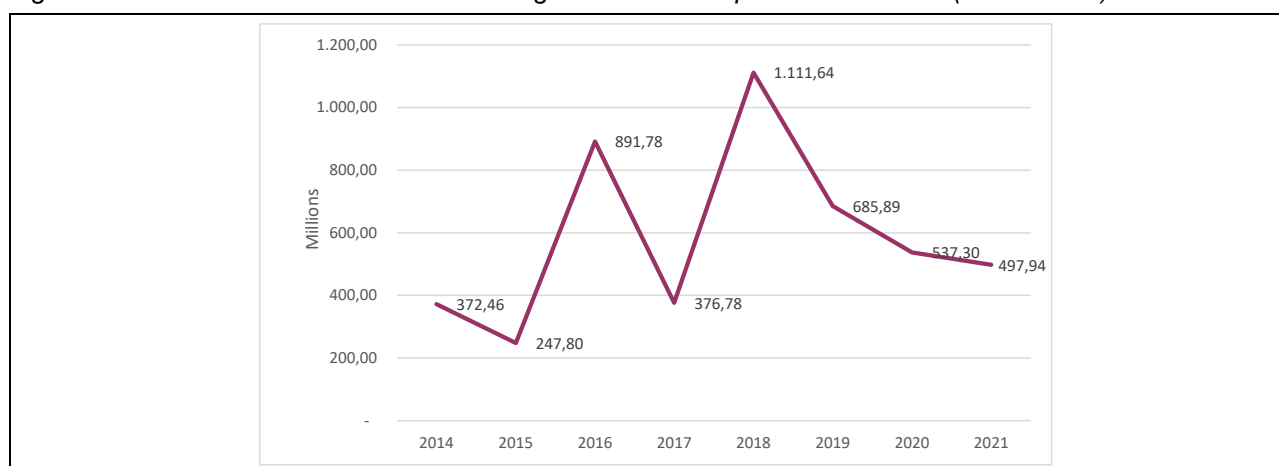
⁵²³ See FAO collaboration with the DG INTPA in value chain development, DG SANTE in food safety emergency prevention, early warning and foresight, DG TRADE in Plant Protection, DG ENV in soils management, DG MARE in fisheries organizations management, or DG NEAR in capacity strengthening, livelihood programmes and food and nutrition security. Paolo Sarfatti, Fatima Laanouni, and Adriano Spinelli. (2018). Study on highlights of FAO-EU cooperation 2007–2017. Landell Mills. ISS-FANSSA 2018.

Figure 14: EU voluntary annual contributions to FAO (2014-2021)



Source: Data provided by the FAO to the evaluation team (May 2022)

The EU has been WFP's single top contributor, with funding amounting to USD 4,72 billion. In 2018, the European Commission funding alone has totalled USD 1,1 billion. Conflicts and climate change (el Nino) were key drivers to food and nutrition crises in Western Africa (Niger, Mali, and Chad), Eastern Africa (Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia) and the Middle East (Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon, Yemen, and Turkey). The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), launched in 2016, has remained a significant flagship programme implemented in the framework of the EU Facility for Refugees. The facility was set up swiftly by the EU MS to address the needs of Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey (budget EUR 6 billion). A strategic mid-term evaluation of the Facility found notably that it has been of paramount importance for the provision of social services but support to economic opportunities needed to be strengthened.⁵²⁴ If DG ECHO has remained WFP's main donor (90% EU funding channelled on average), both DG NEAR and DG INTPA have scaled up their support during the period reviewed.

Figure 15: EU and EU member states funding to WFP for the period 2014-2021 (million USD)⁵²⁵

Source: Data shared by the World Food Programme (Brussels Office) in May 2022

EC has encouraged WFP to develop its core strengths; i.e. emergency assistance across the humanitarian, development, peace nexus⁵²⁶. Committed to deliver 35% of its humanitarian assistance in cash transfers (Grand Bargain), the EU has dramatically funded WFP's use of multi-purpose cash-based assistance to

⁵²⁴ Landell Mills for DG NEAR (2021). Strategic Mid-term Evaluation of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, 2016-2019/2020. Accessible at: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2021-09/Vol II - Sector Report - Socio-economic support.pdf>.

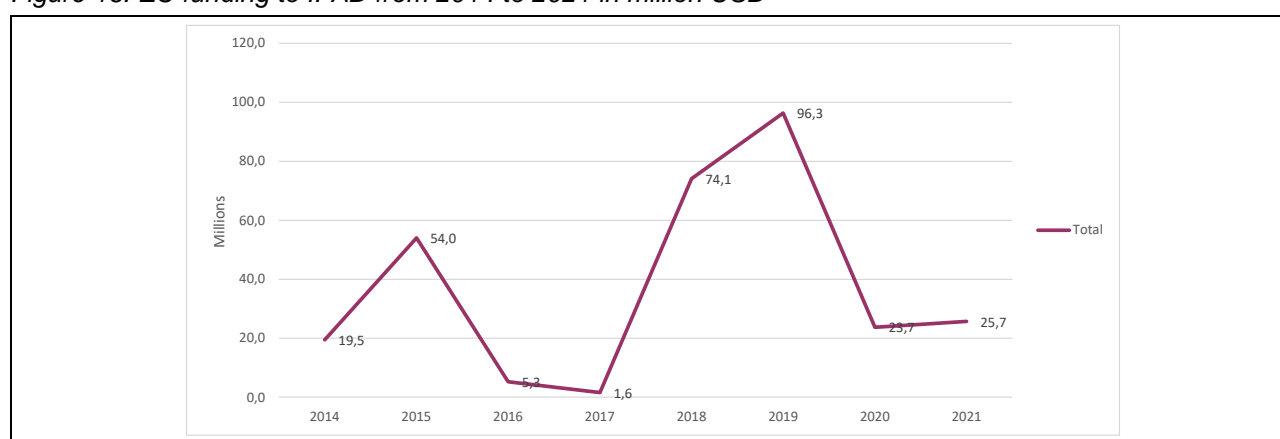
⁵²⁵ UK contributions cover 2014-2019 period. Contributions amount to USD 574 million for 2014-2021.

⁵²⁶ EC (2021). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the EU's humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles. COM (2021) 110 final. Brussels. & Council of the EU (2021). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the EU's humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles - Council Conclusions (20 May 2021).

respond to humanitarian needs⁵²⁷, enhance resilience and economic recovery, and complement social protection systems.⁵²⁸ The latter support political stability, social cohesion, and health objectives conducive to growth. Increasingly funding social protection across the HDP nexus, EU and WFP have built risk sensitive systems while WFP is also increasingly engaging with financing institutions such as The World Bank to improve information systems.

EU contributions to IFAD amounted to USD 1,7 billion⁵²⁹ including USD 300 million European Commission funding. In 2018, EU-IFAD dialogue was revamped to improve smallholders' capacities, rural agri-food businesses, and research and innovation: joint efforts aimed particularly at strengthening farmers organisations' voice in governance mechanisms and their integration in agri-food value chains.⁵³⁰ Support to small and medium agribusiness enterprises was given a renewed impetus through blending (Agribusiness Capital Fund launch in 2018⁵³¹). Finally, research and innovation represent another significant pillar of cooperation with for example funding allocated to Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CIGAR initiatives "Support International Agricultural Research for Development" (EUR 50 million) and "Putting Research into Use for Nutrition, Sustainability and Resilience" (EUR 30 million). In the same vein, IFAD contributes to DESIRA and aims to contribute to reforms with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme ex-Pillar IV Africa (budget EUR 30 million).

Figure 16: EU funding to IFAD from 2014 to 2021 in million USD



Source: Data provided by IFAD (May 2022)

Linkages with EU MS at RBA level (EQ1)

Germany has been a top contributor to FNSSA objectives including via RBA. Germany was, by far, a critical donor in the framework of its G7 Elmau commitment⁵³² (Figure 17). Few new flagship interventions are funded and implemented in sub-Saharan Africa: since 2019 a five-year programme is led by FAO, WFP, and UNICEF to support resilience in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (EUR 120 million)⁵³³ and a SD3C programme⁵³⁴ to support the Sahel Alliance launched with the EU and France in 2017.⁵³⁵ SD3C aims to support food systems

⁵²⁷ See EU (2019) Joint donor statement on humanitarian cash transfers released in by the DG ECHO, Germany, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and the United States of America. March 2019 Accessible at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/joint-donor-statement-humanitarian-cash-transfers-march-2019>

⁵²⁸ Council of Europe (2015). Council Conclusions on Common Principles for Multi-Purpose Cash assistance. Accessible at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10184-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

⁵²⁹ IFAD 9th, 10th, and 11th replenishments covering 2013-2021 period.

⁵³⁰ See for example the FO4ACP programme (EUR 42 million budget) implemented with FAO in the Caribbean region.

⁵³¹ The ABC Fund was initiated by IFAD, the EU, the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, the Luxembourg Government, and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa to provide loans and equity investments to FO, and rural SMEs and financial institutions (budget EUR 200 million). EU contribution is EUR 45,7 million.

⁵³² In 2015 G7 countries committed to lift 500 million people out of hunger and malnutrition by 2030, marked a milestone, in this regard see German special initiative "One World – No Hunger" (<https://www.bmz.de/en/development-policy/one-world-no-hunger>).

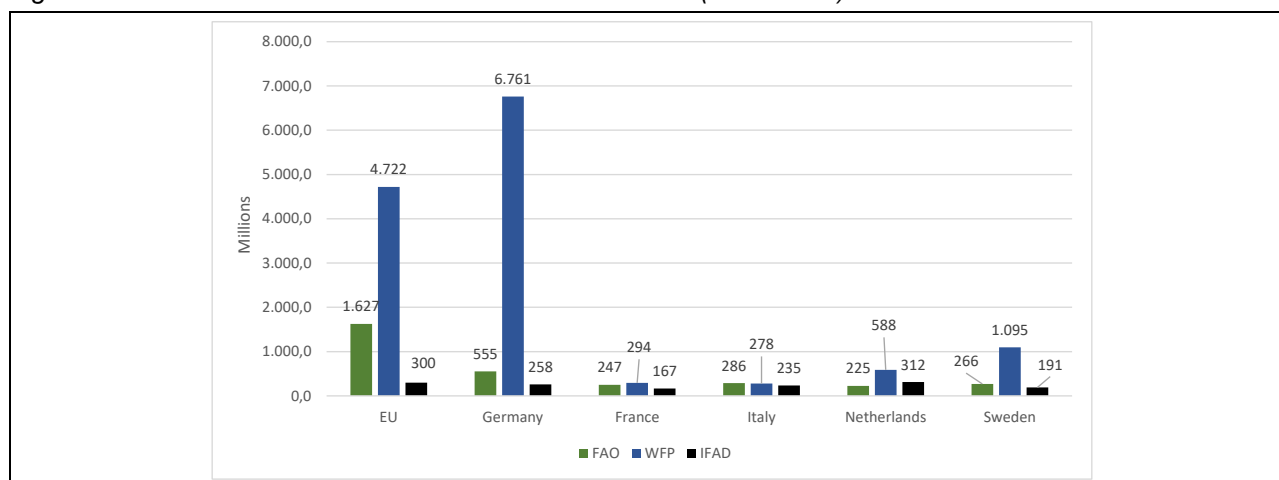
⁵³³ WFP (2018). Country Strategic Plan 2018 - 2020

⁵³⁴ Programme conjoint Sahel en réponse aux Défis COVID-19, Conflits et Changements climatiques (SD3C) FAO/FIDA/PAM/ G5 Sahel + Sénégal. Accessible at : <https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/131R/docs/french/EB-2020-131-R-R-8-Rapport-de-conception-d-taill-e-DCP-REGIONAL.pdf>

⁵³⁵ In 2020, Sahel Alliance funding amounted to EUR 22 billion. Top contributors were the World Bank (43,7%), France (12,5%), the EU (12,3%), the African Development Bank (11,2%), and Germany (9,1%). Agriculture, rural development, and food security are priority areas of the Alliance, channeling 22% of the Alliance funding. Alliance Sahel (2020). Alliance Sahel Results Report. Accessible at: https://www.alliance-sahel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/AS_digital_EN.pdf

in G5 Sahel countries⁵³⁶ (USD 180 million)⁵³⁷. BMZ future investments towards the transformation of sustainable SAFS are planned to i) focus on food and nutrition security, rural development, and agriculture priority areas⁵³⁸ and ii) engage in triangular cooperation⁵³⁹ including with Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, and Viet Nam to further influence regional and international fora.

Figure 17: Contributions of the EU and EU MS to the RBA (2014-2021)



Source: compilation of data from FAO, WFP and IFAD (May 2022)

Germany and the United Kingdom were among FAO top EU MS contributors. Voluntary contributions to FAO have increase.⁵⁴⁰ In 2019, top five contributing members were the EU (USD 330 million), USA (USD 245 million), Saudi Arabia, (USD 99 million), Japan (USD 82 million), and Germany (USD 77 million).⁵⁴¹ In the case of Germany, reviews underlined the many ministries financing FAO programmes including, for example, the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture in forestry and genetic resources, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, the German Federal Foreign Office (FFO) in crises response and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) directly and through GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) and KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau). Overlap and coordination issues between the Foreign Office (humanitarian aid, stabilization) and BMZ (development- oriented support) have been identified. Also problematic is the impact of earmarking “raising questions about member states’ readiness and organizations’ ability to support the collective action required to advance the 2030 Agenda.”⁵⁴²

⁵³⁶ The alliance supports Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger plus the Republic of Senegal and includes Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, the DG INTPA, the European Investment Bank, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme.

⁵³⁷ Alliance Sahel (2021). Declaration of the Alliance Sahel on food security and nutrition in the Sahel. February 2021. Accessible at: https://www.alliance-sahel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Alliance-Sahel-Declaration-on-food-security-and-nutrition-in-the-Sahel.EN_.pdf

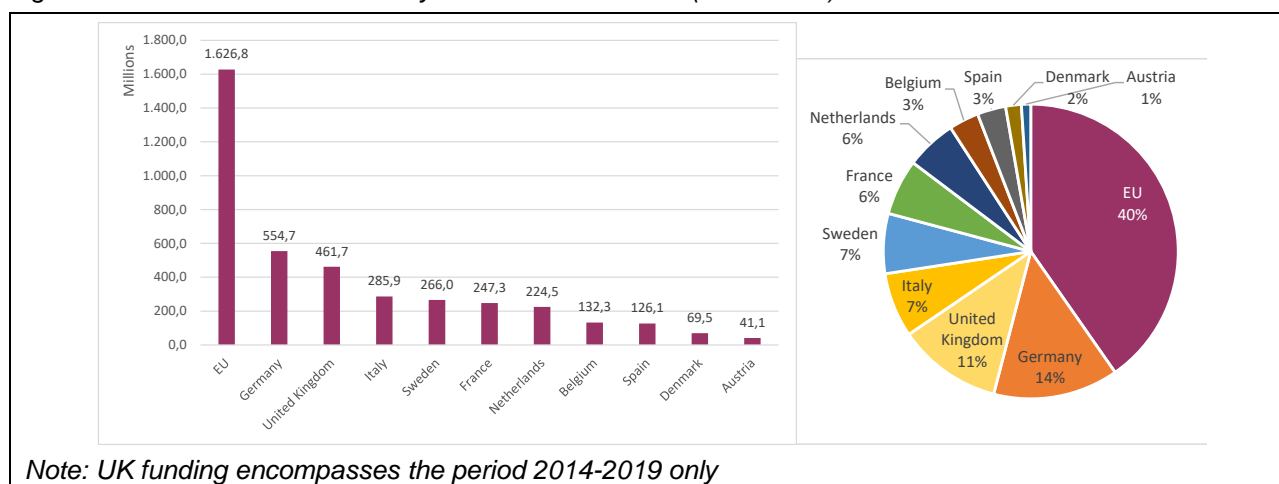
⁵³⁸ BMZ (2021). Sustainable Agri-Food Systems. A world without hunger. BMZ Strategies Paper.

⁵³⁹ BMZ (2021). Shaping the future together. Strategic cooperation with global partners. Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

⁵⁴⁰ The level of assessed contributions has remained flat, these contributions fund for example FAO normative work.

⁵⁴¹ FAO (2019). Resources, Partnerships – Impact 2020. Accessible at: <https://www.fao.org/3/ca9351en/CA9351EN.pdf>

⁵⁴² Silke Weinlich Max-Otto Baumann Erik Lundsgaarde Peter Wolff. (2020). Earmarking in the multilateral development system: Many shades of grey. German Development Institute.

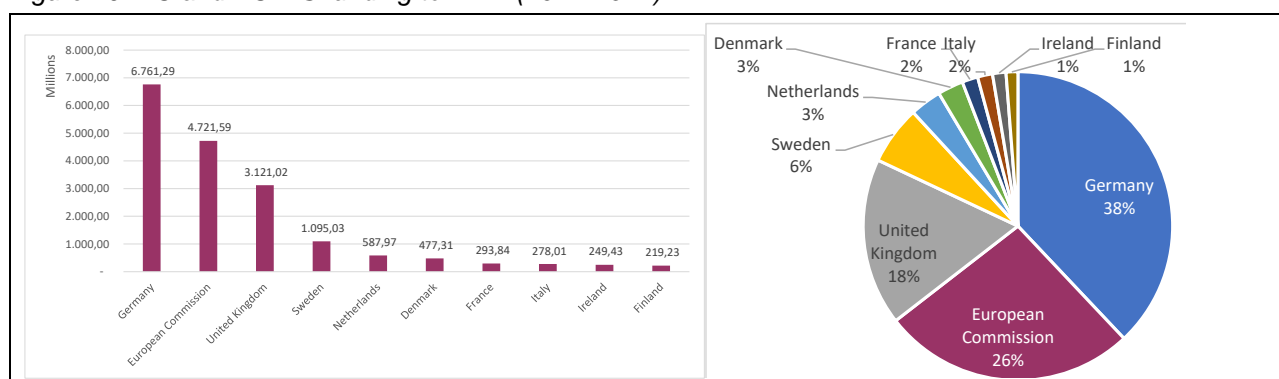
Figure 18: EU and EU MS voluntary contributions to FAO (2014-2021)⁵⁴³

Note: UK funding encompasses the period 2014-2019 only

Source: Data provided by the RBA (May 2022)

Germany has been WFP's top contributor, with funding peaking at EUR 1.4 billion in 2021. Contributions span the entire WFP humanitarian-development mandate. FFO and BMZ have committed to more multi-annual and programmatic funding during the World Humanitarian Summit (2016) and contribute to the HDP nexus including through BMZ strategy and the budget-line related to transitional development assistance (TDA), which amounts to EUR 1.2 billion).⁵⁴⁴ Designed to engage in fragile and volatile contexts, TDA enables BMZ to implement projects with a massively shortened funding process (four to six weeks). WFP is one of BMZ's most important partners and implements TDA-related interventions contributing to its dual mandate thanks to i) less earmarked multi-year funding and ii) programmes with an average duration of three to four years.

Figure 19: EU and EU MS funding to WFP (2014-2021)



Source: Data provided by WFP (May 2022)

The Netherlands, Germany, and Italy were IFAD's top EU MS contributors. Germany and the Netherlands have provided long-standing support to land governance interventions, including the implementation of the International Land Coalition Strategy 2016-2021 aiming to bring changes in policies, practices and agendas at country, regional and global level. With support from Italy, Germany, France, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development, IFAD implements the Platform for Agricultural Risk Management (PARM).⁵⁴⁵ The latter is a EUR 10 million programme enhancing the integration of agricultural risk management in investments. Notably, PARM supports knowledge transfer in nine countries⁵⁴⁶ through the engagement of technical advisory members including FAO and WFP and has, for example, launched free-accessible e-learning courses on agriculture risk management as part of the broader joint effort led by the EU, IFAD, FAO, and NEPAD.

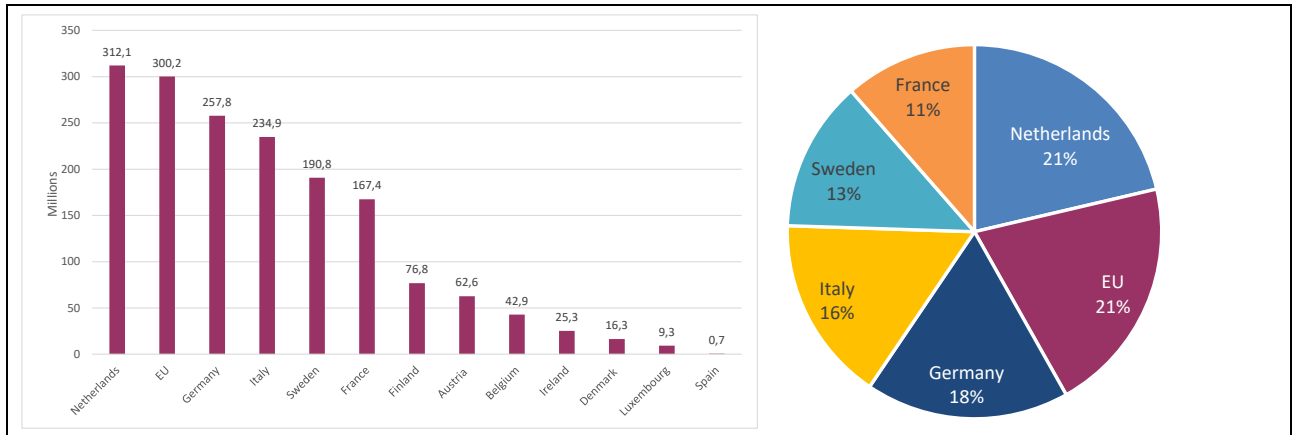
⁵⁴³ UK contributions cover 2014-2019 period. Contributions amount to USD 574 million for 2014-2021.

⁵⁴⁴ BMZ (2020). BMZ Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance. Accessible at: https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/83022/a203f08e4f796c1d9442b93bde3ed868/Strategiepapier505_01_2020.pdf

⁵⁴⁵ IFAD (2018). Overview of Supplementary Funds Received, Committed and Used in 2020. Accessible at: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiP-PXPmi_4AhUVg_OHhf_HABwQFnoECAIQAAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwebapps.ifad.org%2Fmembers%2Feb%2F127%2Fdocs%2FEb-2019-127-INF-4.pdf&usq=AOvVaw3ASSu772wuHiK9xcYZcc1v

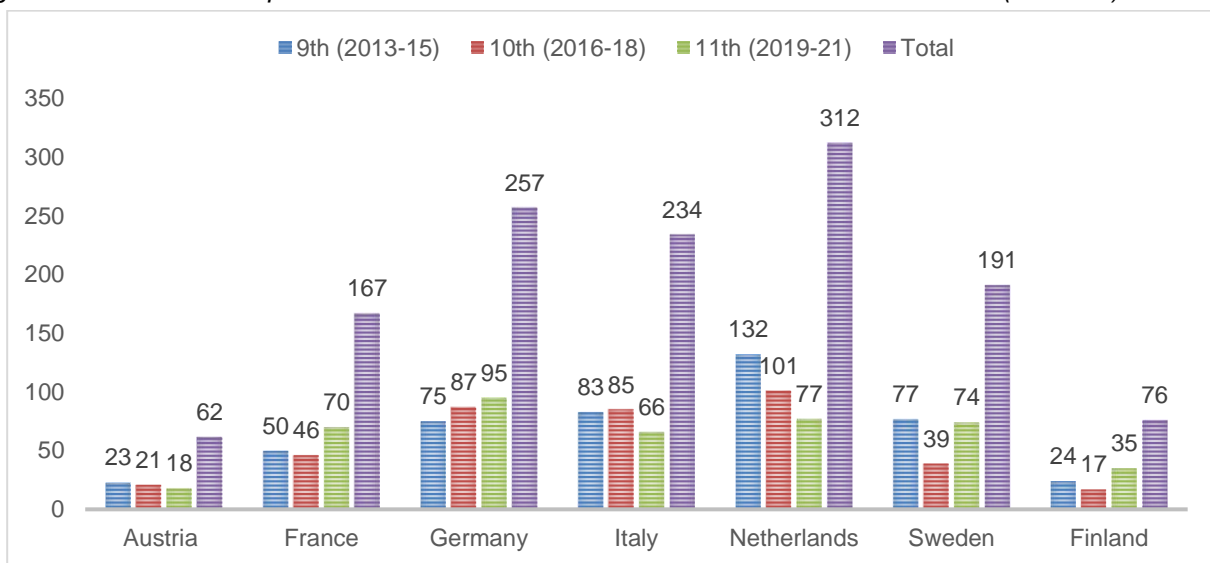
⁵⁴⁶ Including eight countries in PARM first horizon (2014-2019) and Burkina Faso in programme second horizon (2019-2024). PARM (2019) Final Report - Managing risks to improve farmers' livelihoods Accessible at https://www.p4arm.org/app/uploads/2019/12/PARM_Final-Report_2014-2019_Dec2019.pdf

Figure 20: EU and main EU MS contributors' allocations to IFAD for the period 2014-2021 (in million USD)



Source: Data provided by IFAD (May 2022)

Figure 21: Evolution of top EU Member States contributions to IFAD from 2013 to 2021 (Mo USD)



Source: Data provided by IFAD (May 2022)

Effects of EU support through RBA

Global policies and strategies, and regional governance frameworks

Paramount support to CFS and contribution to the development of global policy products. EU has promoted its interests and values in a CFS arena featuring stiff competition among and beyond RBAs. Members of CFS Advisory Group and Plenary and critical contributors to the CFS Secretariat, RBAs have engaged, upon shared interest, jointly with the EU, in strategic negotiations around global policy products such as the set of Voluntary Guidelines⁵⁴⁷. The CFS governance mechanism offers a space for a large diversity of views to be represented and heard but also information and data collection to be discussed.⁵⁴⁸ Challenges in reaching consensus are well acknowledged as well as is the political imperative to maintain a multilateral space to shape policy change.

EU and its MS are expected to bring a stronger single voice and RBAs asked to play a key role in the rolling out of CFS outcomes. The uptake and use of CFS Voluntary Guidelines⁵⁴⁹, developed at a steady pace, involves resource-intensive processes in challenging contexts, particularly in low-income countries, where institutional landscapes may present weak governance and low absorption capacities (see Niger country case study). This uptake seems to have been more successful when global products benefited from strong ownership by one RBA and/or donor support. FAO joint efforts with the EU and Germany to support natural resources governance and management provide for good examples in this respect.

Steady engagement in the delivery of knowledge, norms, and standards to EU partner countries. During the period reviewed, partner countries were supported to deliver information and data necessary to develop and implement reforms and contribute to international consensus and agreements.⁵⁵⁰ EU engagement with RBA has contributed to develop frameworks, metrics, methods, and standards that provided the foundation for coordinated action, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic⁵⁵¹. Hence, in a context where institutions, foundations, and private sector entities are competing in statistics and norms production⁵⁵², a good deal of work has been done by EU and RBA.

Joint efforts helped provide reliable global products and up-to-date data systems which help countries better track progress towards SDGs⁵⁵³, address malnutrition through global partnerships such as the Scaling Up Nutrition movement, and/or respond to and prevent food crises through, for example, the Global Network Against Food Crises. This support has contributed to EU partner countries' access to global public goods and EU-RBA partnerships have critically underpinned joint action to accompany agri-food food systems transformation doom to fail as it remains increasingly jeopardized by the social, environmental, and economic effects of sudden and slow onset crises.

Support to UNFSS in evolving transformative narrative discourses. Many interviewees emphasized EU and RBA engagement with the UNFSS through support to its Secretariat⁵⁵⁴, contributions to panels, events, dialogues, or follow-up via a coordination Hub hosted by FAO. The Hub should address needs at country and regional level including those emerging from coalitions and initiatives⁵⁵⁵ to which EU and RBAs will jointly

⁵⁴⁷ See last guidelines developed: CFS (2021). *Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN)*. Accessible at: https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/publication/cfs-voluntary-guidelines-food-systems-nutrition-vgfsyn_en

⁵⁴⁸ See quote of the High-Level Panel of Experts first chairman, M.S. Swaminathan "one of the key roles of the reports is to help members and participants in CFS to understand why they disagree in Jessica Duncan and Priscilla Claeys (2018): "*Politicizing food security governance through participation: opportunities and opposition*".

⁵⁴⁹ CFP voluntary guidelines aim at shaping countries' action in natural resources governance and management, food systems, responsible investments, or the right to food for example. See CFS policy products at: <https://www.fao.org/cfs/policy-products/en/>

⁵⁵⁰ Paolo Sarfatti, Fatima Laanouni, and Adriano Spinelli. (2018). *Study on highlights of FAO-EU cooperation 2007–2017*. Landell Mills. ISS-FANSSA 2018.

⁵⁵¹ WFP *Update on collaboration among the Rome-based agencies*. Draft decision. Reports 2020 and 2021. Accessible at: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwip0-bLmY_4AhXAhP0HHQG6CwgQFnoECBIQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdocs.wfp.org%2Fapi%2Fdocuments%2FWFP-0000132207%2Fdownload&usg=AOvVaw21-Lp1nbka0N80R_2yL2C2

⁵⁵² See for example the EU-RBA support to the multi-donor 50X2030 Initiative developed under the SDG 2 Roadmap Group to strengthen national agricultural data systems. Global Donor Platform for Rural Development. *Donors announce "50 by 2030" initiative for data to end hunger*. Accessible at: <https://www.donorplatform.org/news-agenda-2030/donors-announce-50-by-2030-initiative-for-data-to-end-hunger.html>

⁵⁵³ Such as EU-RBA joint efforts to develop the MDD Women Indicator (WFP (2019) *Update on collaboration among the Rome-based agencies*. Draft decision. Accessible at: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000108554/download/>) providing sound evidence to influence policies and investment choices towards more nutrition-sensitive agriculture production. See EU (2016). *EU guidance document Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women: A Guide to Measurement*. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000108554/download/>

⁵⁵⁴ Notably through funding to the UNFSS Secretariat (EU contribution amounted to EUR 2 million). The Summit Trust Fund mobilized contributions totalling USD 20 million.

⁵⁵⁵ EC (2022). *Food security: Commission steps up support for global action to transform food systems via eight Global Coalitions*. Press release 23 March 2022. Accessible at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1971

contribute; namely, the Food Systems Transformation through Agroecology Coalition (EU-WFP-IFAD), the Coalition for Fighting Food Crises along the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus (EU-RBA), the Coalition for Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children & All (EU-FAO-WFP), the Coalition on School Meals (EU-FAO-WFP), and the Coalition of Action for Achieving Zero Hunger (EU-RBA).

The UNFSS has generated an intense political debate over the future of food systems and food systems governance regarding the choice between supporting a multilateral versus a multi-stakeholder approach. The rise of UN and food systems corporate influence is well documented as is the tentative bypassing of CFS structures⁵⁵⁶ by the leadership of the Summit questioning CFS High-Level Panel of Experts authority⁵⁵⁷. EU creation of a High-Level Expert Group⁵⁵⁸ to analyse the potential set up of an International Platform for Food Systems Science⁵⁵⁹ is noteworthy in a context where the global discourse around the contribution of science, technology, and innovation to SAFS transformation reflects diverging interests calling for different mechanisms to serve as global science-policy interfaces.

Changes in agri-food value chains and nutrition

Better informed policy decision-making, particularly regarding resilient SAFS. EU and RBA have provided a *la carte* support via FIRST⁵⁶⁰, NIPN⁵⁶¹, DESIRA⁵⁶², INFORMED⁵⁶³, and PRO-ACT⁵⁶⁴ multi-country programmes. This engagement has contributed to support assessments, policy reforms, and programmes, which in turn have enabled, to a certain extent, a more integrated approach towards SAFS transformation. Interviews point to EU Delegations limited efforts in articulating strategically these flagship programmes and/or reporting on their cumulative effects. Issues were also raised regarding the contribution of such programmes to a broad political economy analysis serving EU Delegations dialogues. Such analysis has not necessarily been carried out systematically to support for example long-term processes leading to policy reforms⁵⁶⁵ and capacity strengthening to address the sustainability issues affecting agri-food systems.

EU support to natural resources governance rolled out from CFS to EU partner countries. EU and RBAs have strengthened participatory processes improving natural resources governance and tenure with the development of VGGT and RAI global norms, adherence to which is at the core of EU support to agri-food value chains. In partnership with FAO, the EU has contributed to VGGT roll-out and enhanced inclusive land governance processes promoting food security in about 40 countries.⁵⁶⁶ The EU has steadily supported civil society participation in land governance platforms facilitated by the International Land Coalition fund and transparency in large-scale land acquisitions monitored by the Land Matrix Initiative. The latter and the International Land Coalition are both hosted by IFAD.

Joint contribution to UNFSS food systems transformation pathways. EU, FAO, and CIRAD have also joined efforts to support food systems assessments in EU partner countries where FNSSA was a sectoral priority⁵⁶⁷. Aimed at informing dialogues, these assessments analysed interlinked issues related to food security, nutrition, and health; inclusive economic growth; equity and territorial balance. Emerging findings were captured in a

⁵⁵⁶ Matthew C. Canfield, Jessica Duncan, and Priscilla Claeys (2021). Reconfiguring Food Systems Governance: The UNFSS and the Battle Over Authority and Legitimacy.

⁵⁵⁷ FAO (2021). The UNFSS and its implications for CFS. CFS 49th session. Accessible at <https://www.fao.org/3/ng881en/ng881en.pdf>

⁵⁵⁸ The HLEG preliminary report presented in a parallel session during FSS pre-Summit: EC (2021): Everyone at the table - Co-creating knowledge for food systems transformation. Accessible at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b3e25405-eb99-11eb-93a8-01aa75ed71a1>. The report should be completed in May 2022 to move ahead in discussing, shaping and strengthening science-policy interfaces.

⁵⁵⁹ HLEG Minutes of the meetings attended by DG RTD, DG SANTE, DG AGRI, and EFSA. Accessible at: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3739>

⁵⁶⁰ Food and Nutrition Security, Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation programme (budget EUR 47 million from 2015 to 2022)

⁵⁶¹ National Information Platforms for Nutrition.

⁵⁶² Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) results from a G7 declaration to strengthen support to agricultural research for the poor (Elmau, 2015, German Presidency) and from Council conclusions published on 20 June 2016).

⁵⁶³ Information for Nutrition, Food Security and Resilience Decision Making programme (budget EUR 33, 5 million from 2015 to 2019).

⁵⁶⁴ PRO-ACT supports resilience building based on joint assessments carried out notably by EU-RBA and mobilized almost EUR 620 million during the period reviewed.

⁵⁶⁵ FAO (2020). Evaluation of the Food and Nutrition Security, Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation (FIRST) Programme.

⁵⁶⁶ Land governance budget amounts to EUR 245 million. Sub-Saharan Africa has received more than 60% of the total share of EU assistance for responsible land governance, followed by Latin America (22%) and Asia (8%). EU support to responsible land governance. State of play 2018.

⁵⁶⁷ See FAO's countries Food Systems Assessments publications. Accessible at: <https://www.fao.org/support-to-investment/our-work/projects/fsa2021/en/>

synthesis brief released in September 2021 which outlined two key points: i) the need to better consider the influence of drivers such as political stability, policy, fair governance, demography, education, and infrastructure and ii) the need to embrace a broader multi- sectoral approach involving health, education, social affairs, transport, and energy services operating from national to community level.⁵⁶⁸ The breadth and depth of next assessments are currently fine-tuned to better equip EU Delegations with the information necessary to address SAFS transformation.

System level effects

Joint contribution to global governance and GPG has remained rather confidential. EU strategic convergence with RBA has contributed to multilateral governance mechanisms; policy products; reliable and up-to-date information and data systems; and improved natural resources governance. If much remains to be done, these striking outcomes stemmed from joint forces, shared analytical and technical capacities, and willingness to catalyse stakeholders' participation around common objectives, networks, and initiatives. This participation has often involved research and academia, producers' organisations, and civil society organisations. However, in areas such as nutrition, outcomes resulting from joint efforts are difficult to identify as is their contribution to EU high-level commitments⁵⁶⁹ and action⁵⁷⁰. Overall, the documentation and visibility of EU engagement with the whole RBA family are patchy, making therefore outcomes difficult to capture.

EU engagement has increasingly been confronted by RBA mission creep. RBA support to SAFS has been formally stated in 2016 (Joint Paper) and renewed in 2018 (Memorandum of Understanding). According to EU representatives interviewed, RBA progress has not been and continues to not be monitored adequately, despite the recent putting in place of a results framework.⁵⁷¹ If the EU has actively and steadily promoted a more effective RBA collaboration, it appears that such collaboration has not been a top priority for RBA Governing Bodies and management.⁵⁷² Joint programming to address complex issues may entail high transaction costs in an increasingly difficult competitive environment. RBAs, perceiving that they often have little to gain from engagement in new partnerships⁵⁷³, have expanded their areas of work and positioned themselves as multi-mandated operational agencies. In a context where the EU has ambition to move from a donor-partner to a strategic-partner position, EU programming to SAFS is expected to shift to country level where new funding sources, such as blended finance or, to a lesser extent, South-South and Triangular Cooperation have gained prominence.⁵⁷⁴

Limited evidence about outcomes at country level. FAO and WFP have been paramount implementing partners in a core set of countries where the bulk of EU funding has been channelled by DG INTPA, DG ECHO, and DG NEAR. Most EU and RBA representatives interviewed have shared their concerns about the siloed approach that did put a footprint on past programming and regarding gaps in critical areas such as gender equality and women empowerment.⁵⁷⁵ Capturing the outcomes that result from EU-RBA long-standing support in these countries has proved to be difficult: limited efforts seem to have been put to review and share information specifically dedicated to outcomes encapsulating the cumulative effects of two or three RBA made possible thanks to EU support. This finding should be correlated with EU institutions and member states sense that increased visibility and political return should be given with regards to EU development financial weight, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

⁵⁶⁸ EC (2021). Food Systems Assessment. Working towards the SDGs. Interim Synthesis Brief. September 2021.

⁵⁶⁹ The first Nutrition for Growth Summit was held in London in June 2013. It was a turning point in financing the fight against malnutrition. The EU made a policy commitment to support countries in reducing the number of stunted children under the age of five by at least 7 million by 2025. The EU also made a financial commitment to spend EUR 3.5 billion between 2014 and 2020 on nutrition interventions.

⁵⁷⁰ Mid-Term Review of the 2014-2024 Action Plan on Nutrition which identifies three strategic priorities: 1) enhancing mobilization and political commitment for nutrition; 2) scaling up actions at country level; and 3) knowledge for nutrition.

⁵⁷¹ FAO, IFAD & WFP (2019). Joint RBA Action Plan (2019-2020). Draft. Rome. 25 March 2019.

⁵⁷² FAO, IFAD, WFP (2021). Joint Evaluation of Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies. FAO Office of Evaluation, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, and WFP Office of Evaluation. Evaluation Report. October 2021.

⁵⁷³ FAO, IFAD, WFP (2019). Country-level collaboration between FAO, IFAD, and WFP. Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN).

⁵⁷⁴ Since 2012, China and FAO have, for example, mobilized more than USD 370 million in capacity development, technology exchanges, and policy dialogues. Side Event at the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40): the role and contribution of China and RBA. UN (2019). Concept note on 'Investing in South-South Cooperation for better food security, nutrition and rural transformation: the role and contribution of China and RBA'. Accessible at https://www.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Concept_note_China_RBAs-Side-event.pdf

⁵⁷⁵ EC (2018). Evaluation of the EU's external action support in the area of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment. November 2018. & FAO, IFAD, WFP (2021). Joint Evaluation of Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies. Evaluation Report. October 2021.

There is willingness to overcome “silo syndrome”. Positive change, such as the participation of a larger range of services in follow-up meetings dedicated to strategic dialogues, is shaping EU-RBA collaboration. Yet, siloed approaches are embedded in work routines and organizational set up. From the EU side, the management of fisheries, aquaculture, and ocean governance issues provides for a good example in this respect. In 2022, EU support to this sector is significant: more than EUR 1 billion. There is good coordination between DG MARE and DG INTPA. The latter benefit from limited in-house personnel which has a heavy workload and often work under tight pressures. More importantly, most interviewees agree with the position that fish is not necessarily regarded as food but rather as a trade commodity, highlighting the need for a strategy informing EU-RBA contribution to SAFS transformation in an area where EU MS sector coordination has been weak and where EU processes and procedures offer limited room for quality coordination.⁵⁷⁶

Social protection contribution to resilient SAFS. In the framework of their commitments to encourage a ‘New way of working’ (2016) and, more recently, to better address needs via humanitarian, development, and peace actions in fragile situations (2019), EU and RBA have developed ‘shock-responsive’ social protection mechanisms including large-scale cash transfers. The EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis⁵⁷⁷, implemented notably by WFP, has improved refugees’ short- and longer-term resilience and self-reliance and contributed to ease the pressure on host communities and administrations in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq⁵⁷⁸ (in Lebanon alone funding amounts to more EUR 100 million). EU spending contributed to political stability and state building, social cohesion and inclusion, education and health, and enhanced consumption and production patterns.⁵⁷⁹

Lessons Learned & Good practices

Missed opportunity to promote and enhance EU-RBA visibility: EU engagement with the RBAs is part of its long-standing support to global commitments and has contributed to translating these commitments into strategic partnerships⁵⁸⁰ that often did not contribute to EU visibility. Many interviewees from EU institutions pointed to a missed opportunity in communicating strategically a narrative around EU contribution to RBAs at both global and country level. Public diplomacy and visibility issues have gained traction since 2018⁵⁸¹ and should remain critical according to the NDICI aiming “to promote a widespread understanding and visibility of the Union and of its role on the world scene, by means of strategic communication, public diplomacy, and outreach activities”.

Key role of social protection: fostered in the aftermath of 2008 and 2012 food crises, strong linkages between EU-RBA short-term, mid-term, and longer-term support proved to be of utmost importance to both respond to food crises and address structural issues challenging SAFS transformation. Joint assessments when they have taken place, have laid the ground for action to address multi-dimensional challenges such as food and nutrition insecurity, unsustainable use of natural resources, political instability, and the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵⁸² However, gains have been jeopardized by the effects of the latter and war in Ukraine, whose full impacts on global supply chains is yet to be gauged. Social transfers have been scaled up, notably thanks to the deployment of Trust Funds supporting refugees, displaced and other vulnerable populations. Looking forward, it seems acknowledged that better synergies need to be sought between (shock-responsive/adaptive) social protection systems and (resilient) food systems, including the potential of social transfers to protect natural resources and offer a more integrated support to urban populations.⁵⁸³

Implementing modalities: Most EU-RBA interventions are country projects with funding amounting to less than EUR 10 million (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).⁵⁸⁴ Few of them are pilot programmes implemented jointly by two or three RBAs such as RBA joint resilience interventions in the Sahel or gender equality in Malawi. A recent review has emphasized budget support as an aid modality relevant to address issues in strategic

⁵⁷⁶ Limited time allowed to contribute to programme formulation with EU Delegations and to institutional mechanisms such as inter-service consultations.

⁵⁷⁷ Trust Fund budget: EUR 2.2 billion with contributions from 21 EU Member States, the United Kingdom and Turkey.

⁵⁷⁸ The Fund has mobilized over EUR 950 million for Lebanon, over EUR 530 million for Jordan, over EUR 500 for Turkey, and more than EUR160 million for Iraq.

⁵⁷⁹ DG INTPA, DG ECHO, and DG NEAR (2019). Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. A Game Changer in Supporting People through Crises. Tools and Methods Series Reference Document No 26.

⁵⁸⁰ EC (2018). *Lessons learned from the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) Multi-annual Indicative Programme.*

⁵⁸¹ Programme on Global Public Goods and Challenges 2014-2020. Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2018-2020.

⁵⁸² See UN (2021). Joint United Nations assessments of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and agriculture in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Egypt, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan and Peru.

⁵⁸³ DG INTPA (2021). *From food crises to sustainable food systems. A review of EU interventions to build resilience to food crises.*

⁵⁸⁴ See section 2 and annexes. EU-WFP interventions in Turkey are an exception.

areas that would otherwise have been overlooked.⁵⁸⁵ In many cases, EU Delegations have indeed used budget support complementary measures packages to mobilise RBA expertise. FAO and WFP have both contributed to inclusive policy dialogue, information systems, and institutional capacity strengthening in Sector Performance Reforms Contracts implemented, for example, in Niger, Honduras, and Rwanda.⁵⁸⁶ Expertise of both FAO and WFP has also been used in fashion complementary to budget support through assistance provided via the DCI funded FIRST facility and/or the DCI and EDF funded PRO-ACT activities.

Programmatic design: in 2019, RBA Governing Bodies expressed their concerns regarding the limited evidence about lessons learned.⁵⁸⁷ The latter have been captured in facilities such as FIRST, INFORMED, NIPN, or FLEGT⁵⁸⁸ programmes which design presents two components: one to assist partner countries upon requests from EU Delegations, and one to aggregate lessons learned and systematize knowledge sharing. This design has proved to be relevant in terms of building on lessons learned and best practices. The EU-FAO land governance programme implemented in 18 countries is a good example⁵⁸⁹, with lessons learned across the projects emphasizing the need to combine political buy-in, institutional stability, inclusive participatory platforms and processes and a government willing to promote responsible investments and prevent and resolve conflicts and dispute around natural resources.

⁵⁸⁵ DG INTPA (2021). From food crises to sustainable food systems. A review of EU interventions to build resilience to food crises.

⁵⁸⁶ DG INTPA (2020). Evaluation of EU Budget Support to Rwanda (2011-2018).

⁵⁸⁷ FAO, IFAD, WFP (2021). *Joint Evaluation of Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies*. Evaluation Report. October 2021.

⁵⁸⁸ The FAO-EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) programme is a global, demand-driven initiative aiming to tackle illegal logging, promote trade in legal timber products and ultimately contribute to sustainable forest management and poverty reduction. FLEGT has endorsed over 370 projects in 26 EU partner countries.

⁵⁸⁹ Cecilia Ravn-Christensen (2021). Best practices, challenges, and emerging issues on improving responsible governance of tenure. Lessons learned from the European Union Land Governance. FAO.

Case study note – R&I Africa Innovation

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Introduction

Remark: The case study report does not constitute a separate evaluation of European Union (EU) support to Research and Innovation (R&I) in Africa with regard to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS). It presents findings relevant to the overall assessed Evaluation Questions (EQ) / Judgement Criteria (JC) and feeds into the main evaluation report of the Evaluation of the EU support to SAFS to which it will be attached as an annex.

Context

The EU has been at the forefront of support to SAFS-related R&I, globally and in the framework of the EU-Africa partnership specifically.⁵⁹⁰ There is consensus that to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement, a huge increase in investment in innovation for agrifood systems is needed. Indeed, the EU has been amongst the most vocal donors to underline the important role R&I has to play in the transformation of food systems.

In the complex and crowded landscape of global donor support to R&I, the EU has emphasised its value-driven approach, as well as the efforts to strengthen multilateral partnerships based on reciprocity and co-creation.⁵⁹¹ This approach is underlined in a context of increased pressure for global, regional and national players and partnerships in R&I to deliver on the challenges food system actors face, while geopolitical and economic interests are shaping regional and national R&I agendas. This context increases the risk of R&I becoming more vulnerable to political winds.⁵⁹²

DG INTPA supports food systems-related R&I through various channels including being the main funder of specific African continental and regional R&I organisations, while DG RTD and DG AGRI are in the lead for the main EU-Africa R&I partnership on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture (FNSSA). Although intentions of a coherent EU agenda are visible and efforts abound to ensure coordination and complementarity, there are opportunities to better align approaches and instruments.

The food price crisis offers a window of opportunity to increase the volume of R&I funding. The emergency characteristics of the crisis pose risks to lose the opportunity to integrate valuable lessons on what is needed to support more long-term partnerships and coherent, effective and relevant support to innovation ecosystems in Africa. An example of the opportunity to integrate more systemic approaches in food security responses is the recent mapping of global initiatives to tackle rising food insecurity shared by the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Donor Coordination Group (DPCG)⁵⁹³. None of the initiatives mention research or innovation, and only the Global Alliance for Food Security G7 Initiative refers to knowledge sharing.

Focus of the case study

This case study **focuses on the EU partnership with Africa on R&I and the way it has contributed to food systems transformation**, illustrating these efforts on the basis of a number of interventions and partnerships. The sampled interventions give a sense of the type of engagement of the EU with the African continental R&I landscape.

Data collection and analysis focused on examining the **main platforms of collaboration** on R&I. It included semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from key institutions and review of relevant documents.

⁵⁹⁰ This case study will shorthand this to 'support to R&I' but refers broadly speaking to support to research and innovation related to food systems, agriculture, natural resource management, nutrition, rural development and other relevant dimensions.

⁵⁹¹ EC (2021): Communication *Global Approach to Research and Innovation*.

⁵⁹² Di Ciommo and Thijssen (ECPDM) (2019): *Refresh and reload. EU and Africa working together on research and innovation*.

⁵⁹³ Includes the Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS) with Germany in the co-lead with G7; France's Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission initiative (FARM); African Development Bank, IFAD, FMI and other initiatives.

Table 12 Main platforms of collaboration on R&I

Initiative / platform	Budget (EUR Mo)	Funding DG	Main partners
The European support to CAADP-XP4 organisations As part of DeSIRA (2019) between 2010-2017 EU support was channelled through the CAADP Multi-Donor Trust Fund	30 ⁵⁹⁴	INTPA	IFAD
Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA)	345 ⁵⁹⁵	INTPA/DCI	Several
DeSIRA LIFT	6.5 ⁵⁹⁶		Agrinatura (WUR programme manager)
The projects and platforms following the HLPD FNSSA Roadmap, part of Horizon 2020 LEAP4FNSSA LEAP-AGRI	5.1 ⁵⁹⁷ 9.2 ⁵⁹⁸	RTD	35 partners in 23 countries; main partners include FARA, CIRAD

Source: Authors' compilation

The European support to CAADP-XP4 organisations

The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), adopted by African Heads of State in 2003 and reaffirmed by commitments in 2013 in Malabo, is the African Union's initiative to 'accelerate agricultural growth, improve food security and strengthen environmental resilience on the continent'. As part of the CAADP architecture, continental and regional research organisations working on agricultural research for development (ARD) were established: the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the ARCH (AFAAS) at continental level and three sub-regional organisations that aim to function as technical branches of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs): the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) and the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA). EU support to CAADP ex-Pillar 4 (CAADP XP4) organisations has aimed to increase the coherence of action among the African R&I organisations, in turn strengthening national Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS).

The funding aims to improve their capacities, promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing among various actors. The Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) support sets out an ambitious agenda for AFAAS to play a role in reviewing and bringing together existing frameworks and policies on agricultural extension and advisory services (AEAS) and how they integrate with national innovation systems.⁵⁹⁹ These are crucial activities that can help bridge the gap between research and smallholder farmers. To judge from the mid-term review that is currently underway, performance of the programme is on track.⁶⁰⁰

Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA)

The objective of the DeSIRA initiative is to contribute to climate-relevant, productive and sustainable transformation of agriculture and food systems in low- and middle-income countries. The interventions funded through this initiative aim to support research and innovation projects globally to strengthen research capacities and research governance by taking a multi-stakeholder approach to innovation and combining fundamental research and participatory research or action-research to achieve desirable impacts at scale.

The projects and platforms following the HLPD FNSSA Roadmap

The Long-term EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (LEAP4FNSSA) is a four-year coordination and support action (November 2018- October 2022) funded through Horizon 2020, Europe's Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation that ran from

⁵⁹⁴ IFAD (2022): IFAD and the EUROPEAN UNION Partnering to transform rural realities

⁵⁹⁵ EC (2021): DeSIRA Newsletter 7. Available at: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/desira/documents/desira-newsletter-7>

⁵⁹⁶ EC (2021): DeSIRA LIFT : Leveraging the DeSIRA initiative for agri-food systems transformation

⁵⁹⁷ EC website. Support to the implementation of the Long-term EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture. Available at: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/817663>

⁵⁹⁸ EU contribution. Total: 27.9 million EUR. EC website. A long term EU-Africa research and innovation partnership on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture. Available at: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/727715>

⁵⁹⁹ DeSIRA (2020): project document CAADP XP4/AFAAS: African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services

⁶⁰⁰ Website CCARDESA. Blog on MTR of CAADP-XP4 programme. 25 May 2022. Available at: <https://www.ccardesa.org/ifad-satisfied-caadp-xp4-programme-performance>

2014-to 2020 to support and foster research in the European Research Area (ERA). Its main objective is to provide the main partnership platform for European and African institutions on SAFS-related R&I. Currently, it is launching the continuation of this platform; the AU-EU International Research Consortium (IRC). One of the more relevant partnerships for this case study that were launched between 2014 and 2017 was LEAP-Agri. These actions were also funded as part of Horizon 2020. The Horizon Europe programme runs from 2021 to 2027 and will include a Horizon Europe Partnership called Safe and Sustainable Food Systems for People, Planet and Climate. This builds on preparatory work by the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR)'s Strategic Working Group (SWG) on Food Systems.

Quick scan of EU support to R&I in Malawi

The case study highlights the findings from the evaluation team's mission to Malawi to illustrate to what extent approaches and interventions at national level are connected with regional and continental EU support to R&I.

Policy framework

Currently, policies, regulations and programming and funding related to SAFS related R&I are fragmented. These policies, regulations, programming and funding for R&I are intricately connected to the broader architecture of food systems-related institutions, processes and platforms, which has evolved in an ad hoc way without a clear food-systems framing.⁶⁰¹ They are also connected to discussions taking place on the strengthening the broader European Research Area Forum for Transition, which aims to ensure consistency among EU and Member States' external research and innovation policies.

The main guiding policy that frames EU support to global research and innovation is the EC 2021 Communication 'Global Approach to Research and Innovation'. The communication urges the EU to strive for multilateral research and partnerships focused on finding solutions to global challenges and sets out the ambition of the EU to lead global efforts towards a just green transition. It highlights EU support to food systems and soil health as priority areas for EU global support to agricultural research. The EC intends to do this through the International Bioeconomy Forum, the International Research Consortia and the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases. The 2021 Communication specifies *how* to implement this approach, namely by i) modulating EU bilateral cooperation; ii) mobilising R&I for sustainable and inclusive development and transition to more resilient societies and iii) maximising effect by combining actions with financial institutions and EU Member States. DG RTD is in the lead to implement this approach.

EU support to R&I is part of a broader commitment to take a holistic approach to tackling global challenges by supporting knowledge and capacity building in the Global Public Goods and Challenges thematic programme.⁶⁰²

EU commitment to international openness and fundamental values in research and innovation is presented as central in the Global approach to R&I and is relevant for this case study since it expresses the ambition to support global innovation ecosystems and the development of the R&I capacities of institutions from low and middle-income countries (LMICs). Funding and requiring their participation in some of the Horizon Europe actions and co-designing initiatives to support countries in upgrading their R&I ecosystems are ways to do this. The European Research Area (ERA) Forum for Transition is the main platform to discuss and ensure consistency among EU and Member States' external research and innovation policies. One of the issues the EU aims to advance in dialogue with international partners is evidence-informed policymaking, considering the EU and EU- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as frontrunners. The Global approach also commits to making research data as open, standardised and interoperable as possible; and contributing to FAIR datasets: findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable.

The FOOD 2030 strategy aims to identify the R&I landscape that will help to future-proof the systems of food production, processing, distribution and consumption for a sustainable future European society. The policy provides the framework for Horizon Europe funded actions; joining up R&I activities in different areas and across disciplines, to accelerate food systems transition. It identifies four research areas: i) Nutrition for sustainable and healthy diets; ii) Food systems supporting a healthy planet; iii) Circularity and resource efficiency, and iv) Innovation and empowering communities. The ten pathways for action are aligned with the proposed partnership on Safe and Sustainable Food Systems for People, Planet and Climate (Safe and Sustainable Food System partnership or SSFS). The section on Partnerships and governance frameworks at global and regional level expands on this partnership.

Also relevant for SAFS-related R&I is the ambition to pursue international digital partnerships; e.g., the use of digital technology to tackle climate change and environmental challenges and digital connectivity projects to support the pooling of research and innovation efforts. The Digital 4 Development Hub is the EU global multi-

⁶⁰¹ SCAR (2021): *Narrative European Partnership on Safe and Sustainable Food Systems for People, Planet & Climate*; GDPRD (2020): *Donor contributions to food systems. Stocktaking report*; LEAP4FNSSA 2022 Zero Draft IRC for elaunch

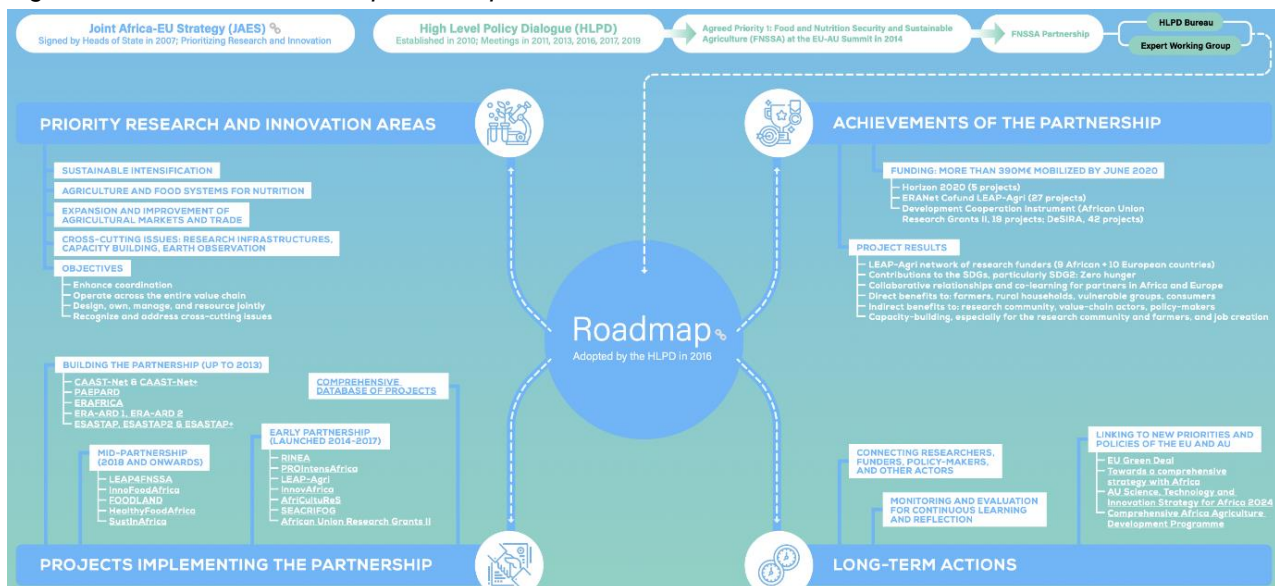
⁶⁰² EC (2014): *Programming Document MIP 2014-2017 Programme on Global Goods and Challenges 2014-2020*

stakeholder platform that bundles a multitude of digital initiatives and seeks to bring together EU, EU MS and European Financial Institution resources through the Team Europe approach for coordinated impact.

EU-Africa cooperation in research and innovation is embedded institutionally in the AU-EU High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation, adopted at the 3rd AU-EU Summit in Tripoli in 2010 as an important element of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES). The HLPD defines priority areas for research cooperation to support the implementation of the JAES. Research on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture (FNSSA) has been at the heart of the R&I partnership between EU and AU and formally adopted as the first priority in the framework of AU-EU Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) cooperation during the AU-EU Summit in 2014. The R&I partnership and roadmap on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE) was endorsed at the 2017 AU-EU Summit.

A number of platforms and partnerships, such as the Research and Innovation Network for Europe and Africa (RINEA), LEAP-Agri, ProIntensAfrica and InnovAfrica, followed the political prioritisation of EU-AU collaboration on R&I for FNSSA. LEAP4FNSSA was the project funded under Horizon2020 that was supposed to set in place the infrastructure for the long-term EU-African HLPD Roadmap on FNSSA. The latest initiative that is meant to contribute to this partnership, building on the work of LEAP4FNSSA, is the International Research Consortium (IRC). LEAP4FNSSA and IRC are discussed more in detail in the section on Partnerships and governance frameworks.

Figure 22 Overview of FNSSA partnership modalities



This infographic provides a useful overview⁶⁰³ of the different ways the FNSSA partnership has and is being implemented.

Source: LEAP4FNSSA, 2021

The EC 2020 Communication Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa provides the overall political agenda that frames EU's partnership with the African continent. It sets out how innovation is key to drive the green transition and how the development of environment-friendly agricultural practices, promotion of local production and integration of biodiversity concerns is at the heart of a partnership on agriculture. The contribution of agri-food systems to balanced territorial development is mentioned, as well as the successful experience of the Sectoral Task Forces set up under the Africa-Europe Alliance on Sustainable Investment and Jobs.⁶⁰⁴ In 2019 the Rural Africa Taskforce suggested as one of six short- to medium-term actions to 'start a knowledge, innovation and networking initiative for transformation of agriculture and rural areas'.⁶⁰⁵ At the time of the recommendation, the LEAP4FNSSA was already launched; it started in November 2018 and runs until October 2022, following a Horizon 2020 Call for Proposals set out in 2016.

Also, the Africa Initiative offers a broader framework of R&I collaboration in adjacent sectors. The Africa Initiative is a series of initiatives under Horizon Europe that follow from the 2020 EU-AU Ministerial meeting High-level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation that the EC proposes to implement in close collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC). It sets out four pillars of cooperation to be supported:

⁶⁰³ The online version (<https://leap4fnssa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/FNSSA-Partnership-Infographic.pdf>) has hyperlinks to the respective projects, policies and institutions. It was one of the products of the LEAP4FNSSA project, funded by Horizon 2020.

⁶⁰⁴ EC (2020): Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa

⁶⁰⁵ EC (2022): Task force rural Africa – Strengthening the EU-Africa partnerships in food and farming. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/farming/international-cooperation/africa/eu-africa-partnership_en

i) Public health, including resilience and pandemic preparedness; ii) The green transition; iii) Innovation and technology for job creation; and (iv) Capacities for science and higher education, particularly for women and youth⁶⁰⁶. This third priority area of cooperation on innovation and technology emphasises the role of start-ups, SMEs and incubators, the importance of connecting these type of innovation platforms within each continent and between each other and their potential for sustainable growth, development and jobs. A working group of experts, EU and AU representatives and representatives of the FNSSA and CCSE R&I partnerships started its activities in March 2021 to elaborate this agenda and 'coordinate international innovation cooperation policies and activities in Africa and Europe'.⁶⁰⁷

The working version of the joint AU-EU Innovation Agenda⁶⁰⁸ illustrates how FNSSA and sustainable food systems risk losing visibility in the relatively recent Green Transition framing. They are not being explicitly mentioned under the short-term actions (to be implemented within three years) under the Green Transition header and appear as one of many sectors under the Innovation and Technology header ('supporting R&I collaboration [...] in sectors like agro-food-nutrition'). Support related to SAFS is explicitly mentioned⁶⁰⁹ in the mid-term actions on Green Transition. The report identifies needs and gaps around 5 areas: i) The innovation ecosystem, ii) Innovation management, iii) Knowledge exchange, including technology transfer, iv) Access to financial resources, and v) Human capacity development. In the annexed summary overview of STI initiatives at the AU and EU level of the report, there is no mention of FARA or the other regional agricultural research institutions.

From the African Union side, a number of policies shape the framework around R&I and food system related R&I. Eradication of hunger and achieving food security was identified as the first priority area of the 10-year Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 adopted during the 2014 African Union Heads of State and Government Summit (STISA-2024).⁶¹⁰ African Development Bank new Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA).

Main actors, institutions and platforms

The landscape of EU-African partnership is complex. Numerous platforms, networks and institutions work on different aspects of food system transformation.⁶¹¹ It is not straightforward to isolate the actors, institutions and platforms that work specifically on public or public-private research and innovation related to food systems and those working on food, agriculture and/or rural development in general, especially when the definition of innovation⁶¹² is broadened. This is illustrated by the indicative mapping of the global food system architecture where organisations are working at different points of a process running between fundamental research to the adoption of innovations.

⁶⁰⁶ EC (2021): Communication Global approach to research and innovation

⁶⁰⁷ EC website. Partnership on Innovations. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/europe-world/international-cooperation/eu-africa-cooperation/partnership-innovation_en

⁶⁰⁸ AU-EU (2022) AU-EU Innovation Agenda. Working document. Version of 14 February 2022. The draft for the four priority areas, proposing specific objectives with short-, medium- to long-term actions was presented on 17 and 18 February 2022 at the 6th AU-EU Summit of Heads of State and Governments.

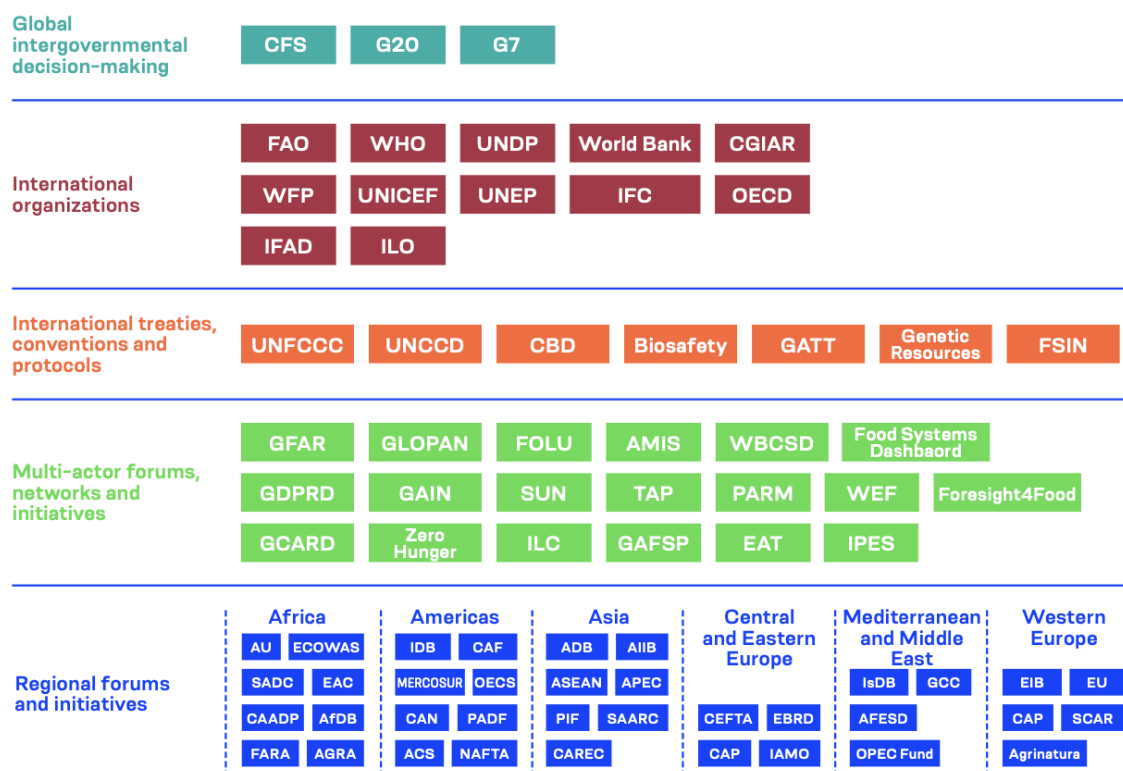
⁶⁰⁹ The report refers to these actions in terms of 'Fostering digital applications and green technologies; co-design with food system actors; support sustainable and agroecological transition'.

⁶¹⁰ AUC (n.d.): Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024)

⁶¹¹ EC (2021): Everyone at the Table. Co-creating Knowledge for Food System Transformation. Independent Expert Report. DG RTD.

⁶¹² Innovation in the agricultural and forestry sector can be described as the introduction of something new which turns into an economic, social or environmental benefit for rural/food system related practice. It can be technological, non-technological, organizational or social, and based on new or traditional practices. (Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/what-innovation>)

Figure 23 Indicative mapping of global food systems architecture



Source: GDPRD 2021 Donor contributions to food systems. Stocktaking report (p.27)

On the African side: African Heads of State and Government and Ministers of Agriculture, Science and Technology and other relevant sectors; the AU Commission (AUC) and its Departments (including Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), former Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) and Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency (AUDA-NEPAD).

The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) and Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA). These organisations are known as the CAADP ex-Pillar IV organizations (CAADP XP4). They were created by AU Member States in 2010 to coordinate regional cooperation in agricultural research and development as technical branches of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

At the European side: EU Member States; the European Commission and its Directorate-General (DGs); specifically, DG for Research and Innovation (DG RTD), DG for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI), DG for International Partnerships (before 2021 DG International Cooperation and Development, DG DEVCO).

The Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) is established through a Regulation of the European Council to advise the Commission and the Member States on the coordination of agricultural research in Europe and represents 27 different EU Member States (EU MS), the members being ministries (or other organisations such as research councils). SCAR Food Systems Strategic Working Group (SCAR FS SWG) supports the development of the EU R&I policy framework FOOD2030. By mandate it has a European focus, but this is shifting because of the interconnectedness Europe's food system challenges with global and African food system challenges. Another relevant group falling under SCAR is the European Agricultural Research towards greater impact on global Challenges (ARCH) Strategic Working Group. It aims to improve linkages between Agricultural Research and Agricultural Research for Development.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) co-financed the EU grants to CGIAR research centres and administers the EU funding to the CAADP XP4 organisations. Between 2014 and 2021 IFAD also co-financed the project Putting Research into Use for Nutrition, Sustainable Agriculture and Resilience (PRUNSAR). The action aimed at scaling research on sustainable agricultural systems with large potential impacts on nutrition and resilience. R&I is considered an important pillar of EU-IFAD collaboration. Jointly, the

partnership identified climate change, youth employment, and innovative financing as priority areas of engagement.⁶¹³

From the European Universities and Research organisations, the French agricultural research and international cooperation organization CIRAD and the Dutch Wageningen University and Research (WUR) are the most influential in the EU-Africa R&I landscape. CIRAD has seconded an expert to support DG INTPA in policy development regarding food systems and support to R&I. It is the only national research institute mentioned on the resources page the EC's Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security.⁶¹⁴ CIRAD also co-leads with FARA the Management and coordination work package of LEAP4FNSSA. Wageningen University and Research has been lead-authoring key publications of the SCAR FS SWG and is co-leading the development of the European Food systems partnership.

Other development partners in R&I funding, the three major bilateral donors to food systems are the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom. France and Netherlands are in the top 10, amidst non-European countries such as Japan, United Arab Emirates and Turkey. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is the biggest private donor.⁶¹⁵

Design

Overview of EU support to SAFS related R&I

How much the EU has invested in SAFS related R&I is not so easy to pinpoint. The GDPRD stock taking exercise illustrates the complexity of tracking funding to food systems⁶¹⁶ and how, by taking a broader or narrower perspective on SAFS-related R&I, more or less flows are captured. This exercise builds on data from the OECD CRS database. The data provide an overview of all the development aid commitments and/or disbursements that go to specific recipient countries, with details about the amount, purpose, pathway and recipient of each project by tracking DAC purpose codes. In its biennial report that tracks EU food and nutrition security commitments⁶¹⁷, the EU used a relatively broad set of DAC codes to capture their priorities; including, for example, codes for gender equality and environmental education. The variation in these lists of codes illustrates the challenge to capture the full scope of investments in food systems. Adding to this complexity is the fact that often R&I is integrated in projects as one aspect of a larger set of activities.⁶¹⁸

EU support to SAFS related R&I is distributed over different channels. EU funding to SAFS-related research and innovation actions under Horizon 2020 amounts to around EUR 64 million, DeSIRA allocated funding of EUR 345 million⁶¹⁹ and the African Union Research grants were funded with an estimated EUR 32.2 million for 2016-2020.⁶²⁰

SAFS-related R&I makes up the largest part of investments in R&I⁶²¹. EU support to SAFS-related R&I by DG INTPA was channelled through global, regional and national research institutions, platforms and research programmes and as research components of other programmes and projects. Part of this funding is co-financed and administered by IFAD. The EU has channelled its funding to the CGIAR (Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research) through IFAD as "Support International Agricultural Research for Development" (EUR 50 million) and to PRUNSA (EUR 30 million). In the same vein, IFAD is the implementing partner of the DeSIRA funded CAADP XP4 programme (budget EUR 30 million).⁶²²

⁶¹³ IFAD's website. Accessible at: <https://www.ifad.org/en/agricultural-research-for-development>

⁶¹⁴ EC's website, "Online resources on "Research and Innovation in food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture". Accessible at: https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/global-food-nutrition-security/topic/research-innovation/online-resources-research-innovation-food-nutrition-security_en

⁶¹⁵ GDPRD (2021): Donor contributions to food systems. Stocktaking report

⁶¹⁶ GDPRD (2021): Donor contributions to food systems. Stocktaking report. p.22

⁶¹⁷ EC (2020): Implementing EU food and nutrition security policy commitments- Fourth biennial report

⁶¹⁸ EC (2016): Evaluation of the EU Support to Research and Innovation for Development in Partner Countries (2007-2013)

⁶¹⁹ EC (2021): DeSIRA Newsletter 7.

⁶²⁰ HLPD FNSSA n.d. CONCEPT NOTE EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/strategy_on_research_and_innovation/documents/2_concept_note_hlpd_fnssa_final_0.pdf

⁶²¹ EC (2016): *Evaluation of the EU Support to Research and Innovation for Development in Partner Countries (2007-2013). Volume 2 – Sector Evaluation Matrices.*

⁶²² IFAD website. Agricultural research for development. Available at: <https://www.ifad.org/en/agricultural-research-for-development>

Quality of design and EU's role in promoting SAFS related R&I

Integrated approach

EU support to R&I has transformational ambition, and it has advanced in adopting a more integrated approach, especially over the evaluation period. An increased emphasis by the food systems unit (F3, former C1) within DG INTPA on multiannual programming and structures has helped to consolidate a better linkage between strategy, planning and funding. The thematic program for food security with its three priorities (governance, resilience, R&I) has helped to build a more coherent 'supply chain' between narrative, policy, budget allocation and results. Internally, broader and more systemic views of the mandate of F3 have led to the unit to work 'beyond production' and to respond to different issues; for instance, related to environment and health. There is recognition that there is still room for improvement. This shift towards a more integrated approach to food and nutrition security has spilled over in the way R&I is supported.

The integrated approach to food systems has led to increased efforts on agroecological approaches and related research. This translation of a food systems approach into more actively supporting agroecological approaches can be partly attributed to the secondment of an expert from CIRAD in the unit within F3 responsible for R&I. France is one of the more outspoken EU MS and has an explicit focus on agroecology. The DeSIRA programme partly reflects this increased emphasis; for example, by funding a regional project in the Sahel on with agro-ecological and climate relevant agricultural practices⁶²³ and other relatively large projects in the DeSIRA portfolio like FAIR Sahel and LEG4DEV.⁶²⁴ The EU is leading the UN Food Systems Summit coalition on agroecology.

EU support to agroecology is permeating to levels of formal statements of European Heads of State (e.g. the German Chancellor recently on a visit to India). **At the same time this emphasis on agroecology has also met with resistance**, both internally and externally. Diverging views on pathways towards more sustainable food systems (e.g., on basing approaches on agroecological principles, on the role of the market and on the extent to which market failure can or should be addressed by structural change) have the potential to negatively influence the partnership between Africa and EU. Too-divergent political agendas could reduce the relevance of EU-supported initiatives.

While the long-term nature of EU support to the CAADP XP4 institutions and to AFAAS has aimed at achieving a transformative impact, several factors have hindered its realisation. First, the shift in focus of EU support from more technical aspects of R&I, to a broader focus on uptake and impact of innovations has been very slow. Second, the SAFS-related R&I agenda, lacking a systemic approach, tends to be defined in a highly sectoral and fragmented way. This has led, for example, to neglecting thematic areas that are at the juncture of multiple sectors (such as post-harvest loss reduction). Third, financing mechanisms have been fragmented in time and space. This limited the domestication of innovations and capacity building of institutions involved. Last, EU support has sometimes financed pre-conceived solutions prior to investing in a thorough understanding of 'the problem' and lacked dialogue with and effective involvement of local constituencies.

Integration of gender equality, youth and other marginalised groups

The evaluation team could find little evidence that the EU took a systematic approach to the integration of gender equality, youth and other marginalised groups in support to R&I. A quick scan of the titles of the DeSIRA projects reveals no initiatives explicitly targeting women or youth. Pastoralists and small-scale fishing communities are targeted. CAADP recognises women and youth as key players and valuable assets in the transformation of the agricultural sector. In the IFAD-managed support programme to the CAADP XP organisations, EU is also funding contributions to GFAR and TAP.

DG INTPA has made efforts to more strongly integrate farmers and farmers' organisations (FOs) in innovation systems. The unit that is in the lead on R&I within F3 has taken up the role to encourage a more systemic approach in supporting innovation systems. This is in line with INTPA's contribution to debates with the Tropical Agricultural Platform and follows the Ceres2030 study finding that FOs should be better targeted in SDG2 related R&I. An interesting example of efforts to more strongly integrate FOs through the set-up of a new programme called FORI is described in more detail in the lessons learned section.

Alignment, complementarity and coherence between SAFS-related policies, instruments and implementation modalities of the various DGs and in the EU portfolio (JC1.5 and ~JC2.1)

The Green Deal and food systems provide a more unifying agenda and concept to bring together different DGs than previous policy frameworks. There has also been more integration between food systems and health and energy sectors. The divergent perspectives between DG RTD and DG INTPA on the role of R&I to contribute to food systems transformation are growing closer together, at least in the narratives used to frame the different actions and programmes. The narrative for the Food Systems Partnership that is

⁶²³ EC AAP (2018): *DeSIRA Climate-relevant actions at country level*

⁶²⁴ Evaluation team's analysis of relevant projects to R&I Africa from the FNSSA database

in the making describes how the driving force of the envisaged food systems knowledge hub would not be technology uptake, but ‘the multi-objective societal problems to be addressed and the associated risks’. In the case of the UN Food Systems Coalitions⁶²⁵ on Agroecology and Sustainable Production where the EC is in the lead, DG AGRI sees a role for itself to bring the different perspectives together.

A translation of the EU Green Deal’s ambitions to Africa needs to be compatible with African needs and work on areas where the EU and Africa share challenges, although at different levels and with differentiated perspectives. An active role of the EC (DG AGRI or DG INTPA) in the UN Food Systems coalitions could bridge not only divergent views between DG AGRI and DG INTPA, but also between EU and Africa, since in the Agroecology Coalition there are more participating African organisations, while in the Sustainable Production Coalition, there are more European private sector companies involved.

Divergent views on how the EU should engage in R&I partnerships and support are apparent from interviews, but these often not made explicit. Within F3 and DG INTPA, the emphasis on agroecological approaches in R&I for example is not shared by everyone. Between DG RTD and DG INTPA, interviewees mention ‘they have a different take’ on R&I; *in extremis* RTD is portrayed as mostly putting central research excellence and the European interests, while DG INTPA is said to equate R&I with digitalisation, and risks underexploiting the potential of more strategic support to R&I. Between EC and EU Member States (EU MS) and between EU MS, perspectives diverge on for example the support to small-scale actors in the food system and the role of commercial interests. These implicit divergent views and competing agendas risk discouraging the EU to optimise the investments in R&I different DGs make and miss out on synergies between bilateral and multilateral R&I portfolios.

The efforts by the EC to support SAFS R&I both through the DG RTD channels and through the DG INTPA channels run the risk of EU support losing relevance, adding to an already fragmented R&I landscape and weakening coherence and effectiveness of support. Despite the INTPA-funded institutional support to continental R&I organisations to strengthen their advocacy role in articulating the needs and position of African R&I organisations, the input of FARA, AFAAS and the subregional research organisations in the RTD- and AGRI-funded architecture (Horizon Europe cluster 6) has been weak- to non-existent.

In the preparations of the upcoming Food Systems Partnership, part of Horizon Europe, DG INTPA’s engagement is weak. The absence of DG INTPA in the design phase raises the risk of widening the gap between DG RTD and DG INTPA and losing the opportunity to connect this platform to an international agenda. This is something that Germany and France have already requested. A stronger involvement could help DG INTPA to take a more systemic approach (more holistic and problem-driven, less fragmented in small projects and guided by logframes, outcomes and indicators). It would also be a way to foster science and innovation capacity in Africa through the instrument of DG RTD.

One of the constraints the EU faces to advance an integrated approach has been the lack of human resources. Involvement of DG INTPA in the Food Systems Partnership is limited due to a severe lack of human capacity. The costs of working in a more integrated and systemic way between DGs also needs to be factored in by managers, who need to provide time to staff to prioritise and engage on the topic. DG INTPA should also strategically target their involvement on topics they consider most relevant to their agenda. If the potential of support to R&I is taken up more broadly throughout DG INTPA, the capacity constraints that hinder involvement in the design and management of the Food Systems Partnership could be overcome.

Increased attention to the need to link the European food systems agenda to the international, and especially African as can be seen in the Food Systems Partnership Narrative prepared by SCAR, one is a shift from previous periods and should be taken advantage of. In DG RTD’s 2016 document⁶²⁶, the importance of the DCI instrument to fund R&I actions is acknowledged yet in the further mapping of the R&I policy landscape, the DCI instrument is explicitly left out of the analysis and is not mentioned in the list of different EC services leading funding programmes, strategies, and initiatives that make up ‘the rich European R&I landscape of FNS’. The 2016 document sets out how European R&I policy contributes to ‘the major global challenge of ensuring food and nutrition security’ without translating this into concrete choices in design process, programming or partners. The Food Systems Partnership does offer the opportunity to place the EU-Africa collaboration on R&I in that Partnership and for African stakeholders to have an equal role.⁶²⁷

There have been some examples of platforms that have contributed to bring together different DGs. An example is the framework programme FOOD SECURE (2012-2017), which provided a safe space for different

⁶²⁵ The UN Food Systems Summit held in 2021 promoted the formation of coalitions. These groups of people or institutions (state and/or non-state actors) are to champion integrated, systemic and scalable actions to address specific food systems issues. Coalitions aligned themselves with one of the Action Tracks (GDPRD, 2022). See for an overview of the coalitions: <https://foodsystems.community/coalitions/>.

⁶²⁶ EC RTD (2016): *European Research & Innovation for Food & Nutrition Security*

⁶²⁷ Source: Interviews

stakeholders to share different visions of desired futures and discuss the impacts of agricultural and trade policies. This, in turn, helped deepen the understanding of the complex factors underlying food security crises and encouraged policy makers to go beyond quick fixes and simple solutions.⁶²⁸

The relationships between the different thematic units of F3 is characterised by some as disconnected/fragmented. Other thematic units, apart from the one where R&I is housed formally and the Nutrition unit, do not influence the decisions around prioritisation, programming and implementation on R&I.

Knowledge management and learning systems between F3 and EUDs are challenged by human resource capacities. It is difficult to reach EUDs with information and guidance to support them on research related issues.⁶²⁹ The lack of a mechanism to track the progress of R&I related projects implemented at EUD level back to Headquarter limits the ability of F3 to gather insights on outcomes and achievements and draw lessons from EUD experiences.⁶³⁰

The issue of intellectual property rights is an important point in the R&I domain and can hinder the engagement of private sector. The 2021 Global Approach to R&I points to the need for the EU to safeguard its interests in a context of 'geopolitical tensions at a time of economic transformation' and a 'level playing field and reciprocity to respect fundamental values and principles'. Distortions by 'undue rules' or subsidies and the protection of intellectual property rights are issues pursued in EU trade and investment agreements and taken up in the R&I cooperation roadmaps in non-EU countries with whom the EU wishes to negotiate. The countries with whom EU wishes to negotiate R&I cooperation roadmaps will most likely not be LMICs (except South Africa and India), but it is important to understand the impact of intellectual property rights on SAFS related R&I. China is explicitly mentioned as 'an economic competitor and a systemic rival to the EU'. The research areas of food, agriculture, aquaculture are identified as mutually beneficial research fields with China.

Effects of EU support

Global and regional agri-food systems governance

Partnerships and governance frameworks at global and regional level (JC1.1 and 1.4)

The EC, through its support to global and European initiatives, has made some relatively successful efforts to improve multi-stakeholder governance at the global and regional level, with the aim to the increase the transformative potential of EU and other donor's support to agri-food systems-related R&I. The long-term support to the CAADP XP4 organisations, GFAR and TAP has helped African countries to be better connected to and have a stronger voice in continental and global dialogues and partnerships. The EU support has stimulated other development partners to increase finance for R&I and to improve donor coordination. This has created pressure at national level in priority setting and programme implementation.

Efforts to contribute to stronger partnerships and governance frameworks at global and continental level are undertaken by different DGs in parallel, without apparent coordination. DG RTD established a 19-member High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) in February 2021 to advise on '(...) appropriate approaches for science-policy interface(s) (SPIs) to support food systems transformation'.⁶³¹ DG INTPA, through their support to the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD), contributed to a 2022 White Paper that sets out directions on how donors can support food systems transformation.⁶³² It identifies systemic innovations (technological, institutional and governance/process innovations) at the heart of the *how* of food system transformations. **EU efforts would gain in internal and external traction if the EU would call for more frank dialogue and increased transparency concerning diverging perspectives and interests (e.g. between European Member States and between EU and African stakeholders)** regarding different mechanisms serving as global science-policy interfaces and diverging views on the contribution of science, technology, and innovation to SAFS transformation.

Despite the investments of both DG INTPA and DG RTD in the partnership between Europe and Africa, the equality of this partnership remains problematic. Most European-African partnerships on R&I are shaped at bilateral level. There is a disincentive for donor countries to invest in multilateral partnerships like EU-Africa partnership or the CAADP MDTF because, in doing so, they lose visibility and the ability to promote their own priorities. The advantage is that speaking with one voice as Europe increases the chances to coordinate, align and leverage R&I efforts at continental and regional levels.

⁶²⁸ Source: Interviews

⁶²⁹ Source: Interviews

⁶³⁰ Source: Interviews

⁶³¹ EC (2021): Everyone at the Table. Co-creating Knowledge for Food System Transformation

⁶³² GDPRD (2022): Transforming Food Systems Directions for Enhancing the Catalytic Role of Donors

Coordination with EU member states in effects (JC1.2)

Coordination through EIARD to speak with one European voice and influence CGIAR has been successful. At continental level, this has been much less the case. There is for example no one European voice in the CAADP Development Partners Group (CAADP DPCG). The EU has been unsuccessful in convincing EU MS to continue supporting the CAADP XP4 organisations after the CAADP MDTF phased out. The country evidence from this evaluation (Malawi, Kenya, Niger) reveals that R&I follow-up by EUDs is low. Efforts to stimulate a joint European approach or some sort of coordination on R&I is not likely. *Cooperation on R&I is much larger between EU member states and African countries and harnessing the opportunities of coordination would help to build a more comprehensive and integrated action with an EU-wide breadth* according to Di Ciommo and Thijssen.⁶³³

Global and regional policies, strategies and regulations (JC1.3)

LEAP4FNSSA has been working on the launch of the AU-EU International Research Consortium (IRC). The IRC is supposed to become the long term bi-continental platform for research and innovation. The IRC will connect existing structures, such as regional and sub-regional organisations or partnerships on research and innovation with the aim of increasing their coherence and impact. 180 Research and Innovation institutions have declared their interest to join the IRC Platform⁶³⁴. The AU-EU IRC zero draft identifies the absence of coordination infrastructure and lack of knowledge management mechanisms and frameworks on food related R&I as the premise of the need to be addressed by the IRC. The zero draft does not build strongly on an analysis of the existing platforms or elaborate on the opportunities to synergize with existing platforms and initiatives. This is unfortunate, since pointing to the *lack* of platforms and initiatives as the reason for weak implementation of FNSSA goals, impact and paradigm shifts, risks ignoring other structural constraints to achieving joint EU-Africa goals and missing other opportunities. An example of this is that the zero draft recommends to 'Develop and co-fund projects and programmes between Africa and Europe' as a delivery mechanism to facilitate 'appropriate funding opportunities' without referring to the Food Systems Partnership that is in development by SCAR and strongly embedded in EC processes such as the Horizon Europe programme.

EU support has contributed to improved regional governance of XP-4 CAADP institutions. For example, the EU has contributed to a reform process of ASARECA, the main actor for AR4D in EAC, COMESA and IGAD, in 2015-2016. This process led to the adoption of a new governance structure and a new strategy redefining the institution's added value/niche as regional mobilisation, partnership brokering, catalysing, facilitating and communicating. In the new governance structure, REC's priorities directly inform ASARECA's activities, ensuring a better connection in setting the agenda of member countries and bringing the REC agenda down for implementation at country level. ASARECA's voice has also helped to bring ARD higher on the political agenda; e.g., by organising policy discussions based on achievements and challenges of R&I programmes.⁶³⁵

The EU support to the XP-4 CAADP institutions has contributed to create a platform for increased collaboration between innovation and extension systems (e.g., AFAAS' extension week impact on shaping the ARD space; innovation and extension are being incorporated in strategic plans of SROs).

Changes in country level agri-food systems (EQ2/JC2.2 & JC2.3)

National level monitoring and information systems have received adequate attention and investments. Current data systems are limited in their capability to assess the relative benefits of different types of food systems investments⁶³⁶. Efforts to improve these can be crucial in governments' efforts to adopt approaches more integrated than those now in evidence, and for civil society organisations to hold their governments accountable⁶³⁷. EU efforts to invest in monitoring and information systems were observed during the Colombia and Malawi field visits. In Malawi, efforts were undertaken to improve national monitoring and information systems; e.g., on weather, agricultural markets and nutrition indicators. In Kenya, through the regional research activities funded by EDF (ACP-EU Climate services programme), the Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) was supported in improving the availability of information regarding climate change. The challenge in both Malawi and Kenya is the commitment of government to make sure these information systems become effective management and monitoring tools and ensure that data are fed into policies and implementation.

⁶³³ Di Ciommo and Thijssen (2019): Refresh and reload. EU and Africa working together on research and innovation

⁶³⁴ LEAP4FNSSA (2022): Zero Draft IRC for elaunch.

⁶³⁵ Source: Interview

⁶³⁶ GDPRD (2021): Donor contributions to food systems. Stocktaking report

⁶³⁷ Fanzo et al. (2021): Viewpoint: Rigorous monitoring is necessary to guide food system transformation in the countdown to the 2030 global goals

There are opportunities to link related efforts by different EU agencies and DGs on monitoring and information systems at European, continental and global levels. The Food Systems Partnership expresses the ambition to establish a European food systems observatory to harmonize the way food systems drivers and outcomes are mapped and monitored across the EU. Current efforts by European Commission's Competence Centre on Composite Indicators and Scoreboards (COMESA) at the Joint Research Centre (JRC), involved in the Food Systems Countdown Initiative, are relevant to enable comparisons across countries. JRC has developed and assisted in a number of modelling exercises. *In the period reviewed, EU made investments in the delivery of information and data necessary for partner countries to develop and implement reforms and contribute to international consensus and agreements. The engagement of the EU with Rome-Based Agencies (RBA) has contributed to develop frameworks, metrics, methods, and standards. (From RBA case study).*

Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA)

The Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) is the most recent and visible initiative of INTPA F3 that aims to boost innovation in agriculture and food systems transformation at country level. Capacity development of organisations and individuals, enhancement of the effectiveness of agricultural policies and support to agriculture knowledge and innovation systems are at the heart of this initiative. Apart from the country-level actions, DeSIRA also funds the CAADP XP4 programme. The DeSIRA programme funds multi-stakeholder dialogues with the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and the Tropical Agricultural Platform (TAP). INTPA counted on strong involvement of CIRAD in its design phase. The programme can be considered successful by some in connecting to relatively unusual partners, such as farmers' organisations, in research and by leveraging funding from EU MS (e.g., EUR 5 million from Agence Française de Développement (AFD)), as well as EUR 33 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)⁶³⁸ and the Global Climate Change Alliance. The EU and EU MS have supported DeSIRA since 2016, and after the EUR 270 million pledge at the One Planet Summit in 2017, an increased budget was allocated to the initiative. EUR 334.21 million was committed between 2018 and 2020 (from the EUR 208.9 million contracted end of 2020, EUR 166.2 million in Africa).³⁶

The country-level actions funded by DeSIRA might not live up to the high expectations, for several reasons. Ownership at EUD level of the DeSIRA projects was in many cases low and buy-in from the partner countries, in some cases, as well. This is consistent with a more general diagnosis of weak ownership of research projects and disappointing follow-up of national research agendas by EUDs. A scarcity of human resources often leads to a focus on directly managed projects, but also hindering knowledge sharing between projects and between EUDs and headquarters was the initial lack of a mechanism to feedback information on the different country-level DeSIRA projects to F3.

'Leveraging the DeSIRA Initiative for agri-food systems transformation' (DeSIRA-LIFT) is a service facility that aims to increase the impact of the DeSIRA Initiative. It was launched in June 2021 and is implemented by Agrinatura, the network of European agricultural universities and research institutes. WUR is lead partner and responsible for programme management. It aims to provide support in three areas: i) the country-based DeSIRA projects, ii) the CAADP XP4 organisations and partners, GFAR and TAP (including strengthening linkages with the HLPD FNSSA process), and iii) policy support. The third area includes linking the country level projects and continental/global organisations to relevant and/or emerging EU, AU, and wider policy processes. Recommendations on the role of R&I to DG INTPA, EU Delegations and their partners is an explicit part of the programme's mandate.⁶³⁹

A follow up of the programme, with the working title Desira+, is in the making⁶⁴⁰. The objective is to integrate stronger elements of agroecology and to involve the CAADP XP4 organisations and RECs more intensely to co-design and lead more in the programme and projects, including in related policy dialogue. Budget will come from the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP), which will limit country-specific themes and raises the issue of which EUD will manage and own the programme in each region. At the moment, there is an informal group of more enthusiastic EUD staff engaging, but the risk is that EUDs at individual country level will not follow up closely on the Desira+ projects. This could lead to missed opportunities in portfolio coherence, partner-country ownership and linkages between national, regional and continental efforts.

⁶³⁸ EC AAP (2018): DeSIRA Climate-relevant actions at country level

⁶³⁹ EC (n.d.) Programme document. LIFT: Leveraging the DeSIRA initiative for agri-food systems transformation

⁶⁴⁰ Source: Interview

Lessons learned and good practises

Lessons learned

Different instruments, modalities, funding channels

INTPA has been able to provide time (one year of project preparation) and funding that permitted the FORI project to involve and link with a large number of partners with different interests and at different levels to co-design the programming process. This time and investment was instrumental not only in achieving a high-quality programme, but also in shaping relationships and fostering the trust and sense of togetherness necessary to strive for a shared vision, which in turn can be translated in goals and programmes. FORI is an upcoming INTPA-funded 4-year project that aims to build R&I capacity of farmers' organisations and agri-agencies (AAs). It is co-designed by AgriCord, the global alliance of agri-agencies.⁶⁴¹

The co-creation of the programming process allowed for the development of a tailor-made selection of project proposals. Coaching and refinement of proposals based on qualified and external feedback helped to forge stronger partnerships between the FOs, AA's and research organisations that submitted the proposals. The programme will fund FOs at different levels (local, national, regional and global) to strengthen capacities necessary to effectively lobby and influence global and local food systems transitions.

The experience of a stronger involvement of FOs and the importance to feed their input in broader EU policy processes around SAFS-related R&I and SAFS in general, would warrant **FOs' participation in the consultations related to and design process of the upcoming mid-term review of the Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2021- 2027.** FOs' and their partners' engagement in the co-design phases of future priorities, projects, and programmes could improve the inclusivity and diversity of processes aimed at scaling up and adapting and adopting innovative pilot approaches.

Systematically generating knowledge (FC1.2)

The FAO CIRAD food systems assessments were meant to inform the most recent round of programming. Delays and concerns over the quality of some of these assessments prevented the full exploitation in use by the EUDs.

There were interesting efforts undertaken by the African Forum on Agricultural (AFAAS), funded through the DeSIRA CAADP-XP4 programme, that aim to capitalize on experiences in research and innovation projects through the Country Fora AFAAS has established.

Good practices

Experience in partnerships

The EU support to R&I illustrates the importance of aligning with other agendas to gain in political traction. Support to food systems related R&I has for example been linked with the Youth and Job creation agenda through the support to incubators, and innovative start-ups in the food sector. This type of efforts has shown to improve the adoption of technologies and innovations by the private sector (EC RTD 2022). At the same time, there is a lack of systematic testing and finetuning to understand what factors contribute to successful joint innovation processes.⁶⁴²

Climate funding can be used as an opportunity to scale up innovations, making climate funding more relevant and compatible to African needs.⁶⁴³ Aligning investments in R&I with climate finance also positions support to R&I in a more equal partnership of a joint climate action agenda, instead of a development/food security agenda.

Innovative approaches

R&I is also key to understand and test what can work to change food systems actors to healthier or more sustainable behaviour. Business innovations can contribute to test small but systemic changes. For example how street vendors can use the agency they have to make their customers eat healthier, whilst economically benefitting themselves.

Another domain where the safe space of R&I is necessary to test proof of concept is current trade rules. Current trade rules look at food as a commodity. They are a major driver in food systems, often moving outcomes against the ambitions of the Green Deal. Even so, they are out of reach for EU to change. EU can

⁶⁴¹ AgriCord alliance is the initiative of mainstream farmers' organisations from OECD countries. The alliance currently consists of 12-member agri-agencies, representing farmers' organisations from Europe, Canada, West-Africa and Asia.

⁶⁴² PAEPARD (2022): Presentation PAEPARD: brokerage, capacity building, communication, funding & impact. Available at: <https://www.slideshare.net/francoisstepman/paepard-brokerage-capacity-building-communication-funding-impact>

⁶⁴³ PAEPARD (2022), Ibid.; interview

support R&I that develops and tests private sector-oriented solutions that can nudge the transition at country of origin on a fundamental scale. DG AGRI and INTPA have a joint agenda, strengthening the systems approach and sustainably engaging the private sector.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴⁴ Source: interviews.

Case study note – EU & EU MS cooperation in SAFS

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Introduction

Remark: The case study report does not constitute a separate evaluation of European Union (EU) policy coherence and coordination with regard to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS). It presents findings relevant to the overall assessed Evaluation Questions (EQ) and Judgement Criteria (JC), particularly related to global governance issues. It feeds into the main evaluation report of the Evaluation of the EU support to SAFS.

Focus of the case study

The evaluation of EU support to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS) builds on six country case studies and three thematic case studies. The thematic case studies cover three crucial ‘partnerships’. This report presents the findings of the partnership between the European Commission (EC)⁶⁴⁵ and the European Union’s Member States (EU MS). This case study focusses on Learning and Coherence regarding SAFS at EU level.

With regard to the evaluation framework, this case study focusses on collecting evidence regarding the following Evaluation Question (EQ): *To what extent has the EU supported changes in governance at global and regional level that are conducive to support transformation to more sustainable agri-food systems?* The case study looks specifically at the Judgement Criterion JC1.2: *The EU has strengthened the coordination with EU Member States regarding the development and implementation of the SAFS approach.* JC1.2 covers the indicators listed in Table 13.

Table 13: Indicators for strengthened EU coordination

JC1.2	The EU has strengthened the coordination with EU Member States regarding the development and implementation of the SAFS approach
I1.2.1	EU policy frameworks such as, European Green deal, Farm to Fork Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change and EU Carbon Farming Initiative, are used to develop a more coherent and integrated EU approach to SAFS.
I1.2.2	Regular meetings with EU MS (especially Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and United Kingdom (until 2020) on SAFS
I1.2.3	Existing EU platforms such as HARD, Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security (KC-FNS) are used to develop a more coherent and integrated EU SAFS approach
I1.2.5	Perception of leading EU role on SAFS among EU MS

The evaluation team, in consultation with the Reference Group of the evaluation, selected eight EU MS – Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium and Spain – for analysis. The other two thematic case studies focusses on EU-Africa collaboration on Research and Innovation (R&I) and EU’s engagement with the Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs).

Methodology

The case study has been based on a documentary review and the following sources have been collected and analysed: i) Overall policy and strategic as well as agri-food policy documents for the selected EU MS; and ii) Relevant broader literature, evaluations and studies. In addition, the team interviewed representatives of the relevant EU MS international policy departments (in most cases the Heads of Agriculture and Rural Development (HARD) group representatives⁶⁴⁶), some implementing agencies and an international expert in this area (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). The analysis is expected to highlight lessons and good practices. In addition, it was envisaged to pay due attention to the linkage between this thematic case study and the six country case studies since the analysis was expected to enhance the assessment of not only the coordination of the EU at the overall strategic level, but also at partner country level.

In the section on EU Member States SAFS-related policies, the SAFS-related policies of the eight EU MS are presented to examine the link to the EU policy frameworks (indicator I1.2.1). In the following section, the coordination between EC and the EU MS at central level (with a focus on HARD) and at country level (I1.2.2 and I1.2.3) are presented, in addition to perceptions of EU MS regarding the leading role of the EC. The fourth section is about EU MS perceptions on global governance issues, while in the last part of the case study, main bottlenecks and suggestions for the way forward are detailed.

The following limitations of this case study can be reported:

⁶⁴⁵ In the rest of the evaluation, the terms “EU” covers the main EU institutions (e.g. the Directorate-General for International Partnerships – DG INTPA, EEAS, other Commission DGs) that are involved in EU external actions in the areas of SAFS. In this case study report, the team uses EC or DG INTPA in order to align with the way EU MS refer to the main EU institutions with whom they are interacting.

⁶⁴⁶ This is an informal network where HARDs of EU MS, representatives of implementing agencies such as GIZ, Enabel, AECID, etc. meet with DG INTPA on agriculture and rural development issues and where SAFS approaches are being discussed.

- Only eight EU MS have been included in this case study as agreed with the RG during the inception phase. The eight EU MS were selected based on various criteria such as varying degrees of attention to SAFS, variety of funding envelopes for agriculture and rural development, being active in international cooperation including in the field of agriculture and rural development. While this selection ensured the feasibility of the case study and includes the EU MS most active in international cooperation most related to SAFS, 19 EU MS are not included. Some of which are not present in HARD, but others (such as Austria, Finland, Portugal, and Italy) are. Therefore, we need to be careful when generalising findings.
- The findings in this report are based on the methods for data collection described above, while also use has been made of the country case studies. However, it does not include views of the EC or DG INTPA regarding EU policy coherence and coordination as this was part of the strategic analysis. These views will be included in the evaluative report.
- DG INTPA provided names and contact details of EU MS representatives that are active in HARD and/or participate in coordination meetings. In practice, it was not easy to agree on interviews for various reasons. In some cases, people contacted were working for the Ministry of Agriculture in their country and less aware of international cooperation or they were very new in the area. In these cases, other representatives more familiar with SAFS and the EU approach to it had to be found. Furthermore, EU MS representatives were often not aware of this ongoing evaluation and their role in it.
- While it was the intention to capture good practices of EU-coordination at country level through the six case country case studies, this has only been realised to a limited extent as the situation on the ground varied much from one country to another.

EU Member States SAFS-related policies

In this section, a brief overview is provided of the SAFS-related policies of the eight EU MS included, based on documentary review and interviews. However, it serves as background information to shed more light on the question whether there are indications that MS are moving in the direction of a more coherent and integrated EU approach to SAFS (indicator I1.2.1). Some indications on the EU MS approach regarding R&I and RBAs have been included to the extent possible.

Table 14: Overview of SAFS-related policies and trends for eight EU MS

Country	SAFS-related policy priorities and trends
Belgium	<p>After 2017, food security was not a policy priority. Recently, there is some renewed attention and interest for systems approach.</p> <p>In 2017, the government of Belgium took a decision to end the Fund for Food Security that united Belgian development actions on food security and related areas. Nevertheless, a new Strategy Note on agriculture and food security was elaborated⁶⁴⁷, focusing on the private sector “From Subsistence to Entrepreneurship”. In practice, almost all bilateral cooperation agriculture programmes were ended. Nevertheless, through Enabel, which is implementing Delegated Cooperation Programmes for the EU, some focus was kept on agriculture and food security.</p> <p>As there is a new government now, and in view of climate change (and more recently the Ukraine crisis), agriculture and food security (or food systems) are becoming a new emerging priority again for the bilateral country programmes.</p> <p>Belgium always supported RBAs and CGIAR. Recently there is some renewed attention for R&I. As Belgium does not have SAFS-related R&I capacity, it relies on France. The EU coordination around CGIAR and/or the EU initiative for Agricultural Research for Development are considered as interesting initiatives</p> <p>Enabel explicitly aims to make use of research in implementation, but that is complicated. In this context, the EU DESIRA initiative is found to be of specific interest to Enabel.</p>
Denmark	<p>Since 2010, there has been no priority for agriculture or food security, but it is part of PSD. Now there is renewed attention to it as part of the Green Growth agenda.</p> <p>Since 2021, there is a new overall strategy “The world we share”⁶⁴⁸. Denmark aims to “lead the fight to stop climate change and restore balance to the planet”, a goal which is part of Green Growth agenda. In this context, agriculture and food security it is coming back again to some extent. It is embedded in the Green climate department in Danida. There is interest to adopt some sort of SAFS approach, but Danida is still looking how.</p> <p>Regarding RBAs, Denmark is an engaged partner of UN agencies, but collaboration with RBAs does not specifically stand out.</p> <p>Regarding R&I, Denmark has research programmes in collaboration with Danish partner countries and international institutions, which includes some agricultural research, but there is no specific attention for SAFS-related research.</p>
France	<p>France has adopted an integrated approach to achieve SDG 2 (zero hunger), which France considers as a food systems approach</p> <p>France always focused on food and nutrition as a policy priority. In 2019, a new ‘International Strategy For Food Security, Nutrition And Sustainable Agriculture’ was published⁶⁴⁹. There are five objectives: 1: Reinforce global governance of food security and nutrition, 2: Develop sustainable agricultural and food systems, 3: Reinforce France’s action in nutrition, 4: Support the structuring of sustainable agri-food sectors to promote the creation of decent jobs in rural areas, particularly for youth, 5: Reinforce food assistance actions for vulnerable populations and improve their resilience. On this basis, France sees a food systems approach as an integrated and multisectoral approach to achieve SDG 2.⁶⁵⁰</p> <p>Regarding RBAs, France supports them and pays specific attention to the role of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) with the secretariat based at the FAO and the related High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) (see Section on global governance).</p> <p>Regarding R&I, France has major research capacity on food systems related issues including agro-ecology focused on the South. In addition, it supports international R&I.</p>

⁶⁴⁷ ENABEL (2017): From Subsistence to entrepreneurship Strategic policy note “Agriculture and Food Security” (https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/strategic_policy_note_agriculture_and_food_security_2017.pdf)

⁶⁴⁸ Danida (2021): Denmark’s strategy for development cooperation (<https://um.dk/en/danida/strategies-and-priorities>)

⁶⁴⁹ https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/frances_international_strategy_for_food_security_nutrition_and_sustainable_agriculture_cle4f3e1a.pdf

⁶⁵⁰ The 2021 GDPR Donor profiles (p. 12) state the following regarding France’s food systems approach: “However, its strategy and other official documents are still based on a food security and nutrition lens. Various food systems components are increasingly being taken into consideration, for instance looking at the interlinkages between food security and nutrition and environmental health, climate change and agriculture. “Food systems” is considered a useful frame from a strategic

Country	SAFS-related policy priorities and trends
Germany	<p>Germany has started adopting a food systems approach based on its 2014 special Initiative, ONE WORLD – No Hunger⁶⁵¹, followed in 2019 by a new strategy A World without hunger⁶⁵². Gradually, more of a food systems approach was adopted and, in 2021, Sustainable Agri-Food systems became a BMZ core area strategy. GIZ also developed policy documents in 2019 on Agricultural policy and rural development⁶⁵³ and on Food and nutrition security⁶⁵⁴. Germany now aims to adopt a SAFS approach and the mainstreaming of food systems thinking into its One World – No Hunger strategy portfolio. In this context, GIZ plans to analyse its BMZ-funded portfolio to assess compliance with the systems approach and to revise the programmes accordingly.⁶⁵⁵ Regarding RBAs, Germany support them, and BMZ focuses on IFAD (German VP) and WFP (Germany is the 2nd largest donor). Regarding R&I: Support is mainly to international organisations.</p>
Ireland	<p>Ireland traditionally has a strong focus on Zero Hunger, which is maintained with some emerging systems focus. Ireland is committed to a world without hunger and poverty. Ireland has always focused on hunger and ending famine. Therefore, responding to humanitarian crises has been an important priority. There is no specific policy document on the zero hunger focus, but the website mentions agriculture and nutrition as additional priorities.⁶⁵⁶ In addition, gradually a focus on nutritious food systems is being developed. Ireland has a Hunger task force and is a strong supporter of SUN. Ireland has also its own National Food Strategy. Regarding RBAs: Ireland provides support to all three RBAs. Regarding R&I: Ireland also supports R&I with a specific focus on hunger and nutrition.</p>
Netherlands	<p>Since 2011, agriculture is an important priority for the Netherlands in international cooperation, which is based on the comparative advantage of the Netherlands. The focus is now broadening to a food systems approach Before 2008, there was limited attention for agriculture. Since 2011, there is a strong Private Sector focus, based on NL's comparative advantage in agriculture, i.e. the specific knowledge and interests of NL's agricultural sector. This focus has been gradually broadened to food security and ecological aspects. Food systems are relatively new and reflected in the 2019 Policy letter on global food security⁶⁵⁷ stating: "Systematic action, look at the entire food supply system, circular system, making food systems more sustainable" Regarding RBAs: RBAs remain important for the Netherlands despite FAO being considered as rather conservative and IFAD as a bit more open. Regarding R&I: Science-policy interface is considered as a main challenge. The NI perceive the EU collaboration around CGIAR as good. NL has some research capacity (esp. WUR) and took some initiatives also In relation to DG Research and the EU Research Area Ambition.</p>

point of view in trying to better connect different investment areas, for instance understanding the impacts of food systems on biodiversity or climate change. However, from an operational point of view, its projects focus on a few components rather than the whole food system".

⁶⁵¹ "Farming has to become more sustainable and less resource-intensive, conserve biodiversity and avoid cutting down forests, target small holders. Green innovation centres". Source: <https://www.bmz.de/en/development-policy/one-world-no-hunger>

⁶⁵² BMZ (2019): *A world without hunger is possible*

(<https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/23634/ab2272eb08a77798ab8e712bd10f250b/flyer-without-hunger-data.pdf>)

⁶⁵³ GIZ (2019): *Agricultural policy and rural development* (<https://www.giz.de/expertise/html/60136.html>)

⁶⁵⁴ GIZ (2019): *Food and nutrition security* (<https://www.giz.de/expertise/html/60135.html>)

⁶⁵⁵ The 2021 GDPR Donor profiles (p. 15) state the following regarding Germany's food systems approach: "Germany has been instrumental in putting sustainable hunger reduction on the international agenda. The food systems framing aligns with some of the BMZ's development programmes. Germany provides significant food systems-related investments across the globe.....Currently, the BMZ's new One World – No Hunger strategy is being finalized. It emphasizes that a world without hunger is possible within planetary boundaries and recognizes food systems as an overarching frame. The strategy aligns three key areas of action: sustainable agriculture; rural development, including agroecology; and food and nutrition security".

⁶⁵⁶ Irish Aid (2022): *Our Priority Areas – Hunger* (<https://irishaid.ie/what-we-do/our-priority-areas/hunger/>)

⁶⁵⁷ <https://www.government.nl/topics/development-cooperation/documents/parliamentary-documents/2019/10/29/food-security-letter-to-the-parliament>

Country	SAFS-related policy priorities and trends
Spain	<p>For Spain, agriculture and food security are not considered as a priority and there is no food systems approach.</p> <p>In Spain, agriculture and food is not a prioritised sector anymore. Nevertheless, AECID considers rural development, food security and nutrition as one of nine sectors of cooperation⁶⁵⁸. Only one person forms the RD and nutrition unit. In the past, there was more involvement and more means. With the actual crisis, no more resources are foreseen in this area.</p> <p>Regarding RBAs: Spain works with all three RBAs. The Committee on Food Security is now chaired by a Spaniard</p> <p>Regarding R&I: Spain does not have a clear focus on good systems related R&I.</p>
Sweden	<p>Sweden has a continued focus on food security and agriculture, which is gradually broadened but no food systems approach.</p> <p>Food security and agriculture is one of 12 themes, also including forestry, fishery and rural development.⁶⁵⁹ Sweden is still mainly talking about the market for the poor M4P approach. In addition, Sweden is paying attention to climate change, resilience, need for innovation and food security issue. Neither policy documents or the website refer food systems, which is considered by Sweden to be the new buzz word as indicated in the interview.</p> <p>Regarding RBAs: Sweden provides strong support to all three RBAs indicated on website. Sweden considers that FAO could play more of a leading role on food systems, but perceived bottlenecks are political issues and silos within FAO</p> <p>Regarding R&I: Sweden funds some R&I activities</p>

Source: authors compilation based on interviews and a documentary review of EU MS policies and strategies.

The table above shows the **range of priorities and approaches** of the eight EU MS regarding SAFS. **Only three EU MS – France, Germany and the Netherlands – claim to adopt a food systems approach** that they have gradually developed. Most other EU MS are interested in the food systems approach and have adopted some elements of the approach or are planning to do so. In Belgium and Denmark, food security and agriculture ceased being a priority in international cooperation, but in the view of the climate change agenda it is now re-emerging again as priority, with interest in the systems approach. Only for Spain this area is not a priority and, given limited resources, no change is expected.

Various interviewees have stated that not only the climate debate, but also the Ukraine crisis, which affects food prices and food security, has created some momentum. However, it is also expected that fewer resources will be available for international cooperation, including this area. Interviewees argue that this would enhance the need for a more joint EU approach.

None of the EU MS covered sees the EU policy frameworks (including the Farm to Fork Strategy) as determinant for their own policies and priorities, although they acknowledge that these policy frameworks are valuable. They may refer to it in some statements and documents, but there is no evidence that these frameworks directly influenced EU MS policies and implementation or are used to develop a more coherent and integrated EU approach to SAFS.

Coordination between EU and Member States

EU HQ is engaged in various partnerships on SAFS at European and global level. Within the EU, the EC/INTPA coordinates with the EU MS via diverse platforms such as: i) the HARD group, ii) coordination between the EUD and EU MS at country level including Joint Programming and, more recently, Team Europe initiatives. These two levels of coordination are dealt with in the two sub-sections. The third level i.e. platforms to coordinate EU external action with EU MS at the overall level, including dialogue on policy coherence for development is largely outside the scope of this thematic study. Evidence on policy dialogue found at country case study level is included in the second level.

Coordination at central level through HARD

HARD is an informal platform to exchange experience on SAFS-related issues. The evaluation team collected documents on HARD meetings that took place between June 2018 and November 2021. In Table 15 the number of meetings per year, the main issues on the agenda, and participation are presented. For a few meetings the minutes were not accessible, but most documents were available for these years.

⁶⁵⁸ AECID.(2022). *Cooperation*

⁶⁵⁹ SIDA (2021): *Agriculture and Food Security* (<https://www.sida.se/en/sidas-international-work/agriculture-and-food-security>)

Table 15: Main characteristics HARD-meetings, 2018-2021

Year	Number of meetings	Overview of agenda issues	Participation EU MS ⁶⁶⁰	Remarks
2018	2	IFPRI presentation, upcoming and past global events, Global Network against Food Crises, Action Plan on Nutrition Progress report, DeSIRA, Global Network against Food Crises, implementation of the Council Conclusions (COM), Value Chain Analysis for Development (VCA4D) tool. Some presentations EU MS	7 MS	December meeting in Berlin, co-chaired by EC and Germany
2019	2	Updates on global events and meetings, study reports, presentation EU MS on policies, initiatives, studies and events (no overview for October meeting)	7 MS	April-meeting back-to-back the High-level Event of the Global Network against Food Crises: "Food & Agriculture in Times of Crises, 2 nd Oct meeting in Madrid
2020	4	Global Report on Food Crises 2020, Farm to Fork and 2020 Nutrition report, COVID-19 and agriculture, food & nutrition security, DeSIRA / GCCA+ implementation, Rapid assessments and food systems analyses at country level, UN FSS preparation, EU Biodiversity Strategy, EU-Africa cooperation	9 -12 MS	Virtual meetings due to Covid-19. In November meetings some NGOs participated. Preparation UN FSS main topic
2021	5	Preparation UN FSS, Update on Food Crises / Global Network, presentations WB and OECD, One planet summit, Global report on food crises, main global events incl. G7 and G20 Presidencies, NDICI Programming update and Africa Regional Team Europe Initiatives, Nutrition for Growth Summit,	13 MS	Virtual meetings due to Covid-19 Feb meeting also non-EU MS countries, World Bank

Source: authors compilation based on HARD meeting notes 2018-2021

This overview shows the following:

- The meetings focus mainly on global events and global initiatives, EC communications and strategies, specific studies and progress reports. From the second half of 2020 the UN Food Systems Summit (UN FSS) is the most important item on the agenda.
- In 2018 and 2019, there were two meetings per year. Meetings were also organised in Madrid and Berlin, where the host country co-chaired the meeting. In 2020 and 2021, the number of meetings considerably increased to four or five meetings per year, all virtual due to Covid -19.
- The number of participating EU MS increased somewhat over time: from seven in the early years to a maximum of 13 EU MS for one meeting in 2021. In the virtual meetings, always more than 10 EU MS participated. Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain participated most frequently, while some EU MS, such as Ireland and Belgium, increased their participation over the years, and others participated sporadically. In total 15 EU MS participated over the years and three non-EU MS. In some HARD meetings also Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or international organisations participated.
- The minutes indicate that EU MS apart from presenting some specific topics also share their opinion on the agenda issues. However, but it is impossible to determine from the minutes whether their opinions on key issues were converging or diverging.

The EU MS representatives interviewed regarding the question whether HARD is an effective forum for coordination and policy coherence related to food systems had different opinions, depending on the level of development of their own food system policies, their size and volume of ODA, their personal background and

⁶⁶⁰ All eight MS included in this thematic case study participated and also Finland, Estonia, Portugal, Austria, Italy, Latvia and Slovenia, while also non-EU MS Switzerland, Norway and UK (after Brexit) participated in some HARD meetings

the number of times they participated in HARD meetings. The following main findings emerge from these interviews:

- The MS representatives with less experience and which are relatively understaffed appreciate in general the HARD meetings. They are of the opinion that valuable information is shared, which is useful for shaping their own policies.
- The more experienced MS that have developed already some form of food systems approach are of the opinion that HARD is mainly a forum for transmitting messages, primarily by DG INTPA. They are of the opinion that there is no real dialogue or discussion. Therefore, HARD is considered as a forum for presenting mainly EC ideas and some EU MS ideas, but not as one seeking to develop a common framework.
- Interviewees mention that HARD overlaps with other EU coordination initiatives (e.g.; on research and Rome Based Agencies (RBA), which limits its effectiveness.
- The agenda is perceived to be overburdened with too many topics and too many documents that are shared late. In addition, interlocutors felt that new important related political initiatives are insufficiently grasped, which might be due to the role of DG INTPA. They also indicated that differing views expressed by DG INTPA and by EUDs are not discussed. This means, according to more than half of the interviewees, that the agenda should be considerably improved focusing on important strategic issues allowing for sufficient time for debate and agreeing on the way forward if possible.
- Some interlocutors are of the opinion that coordination was more strategic in the past. These interviewees refer to the former food and nutrition platform with results reporting.
- The EU policy frameworks and the powerful financial instruments are considered by all as a good basis for strategic leadership. However, implementation is the main problem. In addition, some MS believe that the food systems approach is not yet sufficiently articulated and clear, which hinders implementation.
- However, the opinion on the actual strategic leadership of DG INTPA varies along the same lines as the appreciation of the discussions. The less experienced MS appreciate the knowledge and leadership of DG INTPA, while the experienced ones are rather critical. DG INTPA is perceived to be too much focused on transmitting its own messages and not sufficiently focused on dialogue and developing a common way forward.
- MS also point at room for improvement from their side, as there is quite some as some indicated. However, other MS are of the opinion that some MS are only promoting their own agenda. In addition, it is also mentioned that the virtual meetings limited the possibilities for more informal exchange.

Interviewees express the view that, while there are no fundamental differences in SAFS approaches, some MS take a pragmatic approach and are of the opinion that they have clear policies, while others struggle with the concepts.

Interviewees point at some clear differences among EU MS. France is considered by interviewees as the most outspoken MS with a clear focus on agroecology. France would welcome more political initiatives as initiated by the French EU Presidency. Some MS such as Spain and Belgium are very interested in the French agroecology approach, while the Netherlands is rather opposed. The Netherlands was partnering before the Brexit more with the UK, favouring a Private Sector-driven approach. The position of Germany is not perceived to be very outspoken on SAFS.

EU coordination at country level

This section summarises the findings related to EC-EU MS partnership at country level identified in the six country case studies of the evaluation.

Table 16: EU and EU MS coordination in the six countries selected for this evaluation

Case study country	No of active EU MS on SAFS*	Findings regarding coordination EUD and EU MS	Findings regarding EUD lead role in SAFS coordination
Cambodia	2 Germany France	Some Joint Programming based on joint analysis and information sharing of EUD and EU MS' development cooperation programming. According to the MIP 2021-2027, the new Joint Strategy would increase alignment between the EU and MS: GIZ, for example, will use the new Joint Strategy as their development strategy for Cambodia, without	The EUD and EU joint programming discussions led to common positions on certain topics of concern, which could be discussed by the EUD and EU MS with high-level government officials through the regular development partners-government dialogues.

Case study country	No of active EU MS on SAFS*	Findings regarding coordination EUD and EU MS	Findings regarding EUD lead role in SAFS coordination
		developing their own separate strategy. The new EDCS would feature SAFS as a specific focus of its first priority “Green Growth and Decent Jobs”. The EU and MS will also work more together in the coming period through Team Europe Initiatives Limited joint implementation.	
Colombia	3 ⁶⁶¹ Germany Spain Sweden	The EU has worked closely together with many MS in relation to the peace agreement, which was signed in 2016. A EUTF was established in 2016 to accompany the peace agreement, while a Team Europe Initiative on Peace has recently started. The EUTF has provided a good framework for coordination and joint approach. The EUTF was governed by a Strategic Committee, consisting of the EU Ambassadors, and the Operational Committee, consisting of the Heads of Cooperation. The EUTF monitoring and evaluation framework, strengthened in 2020, provided a good learning experience that the Team Europe Initiative is able to build on. In this framework, jointly defined objectives and indicators are tracked. There are Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) on Peace and Environment.	Despite slower decision processes around identification and implementation of interventions, the efforts of aligning between EU MS and with Government of Colombia policies and priorities resulted in increased visibility of the EU as a whole and a stronger voice in the policy dialogue around the implementation of the peace agreement. The peace agreement has some linkages to SAFS as the first and third points refer to integrated rural development and reincorporation of former combatants. This appears to have resulted in a stronger focus on the most fragile, conflict-affected territories and their communities and some signs of adopting a systems approach.
Haiti	2 Spain France	Delegated Cooperation (DC) as instrument to collaborate with MS. NIP 2021-2027 was developed jointly with MS France and Spain.	The EUD plays an active role in coordination groups with EU MS and beyond. The EU has played a key role in the creation of the food security thematic group in 2019, which it chairs since February 2022. This complements the older food and nutrition security working group, which focusses mainly on emergency and short-term response to the chronic food security crisis. The new group seeks to focus on “ <i>medium- and long-term exchange and reflection on the more structural and multi-sectoral responses needed to resolve the food security crisis in Haiti</i> ”. Nevertheless, donor harmonisation and alignment remain deficient in all sectors.
Kenya	6	DC is an important instrument also in SAFS-related areas to enhance collaboration between the EUD and EU MS. As the donor coordination groups for agriculture and the Arid and Semi-arid Lands (ASALs) function well, there are hardly any separate EUD- EU MS meetings on SAFS At present a Team Europe Initiative around the Green Deal is being considered but relations to SAFS are not clear yet.	The EUD (and EU MS) has been active in the Agricultural and Rural Development Partners Group (ARDPG) and is the outgoing chair (as part of a troika system). This is also the case for the donor group on ASALs. These donor coordination groups function satisfactorily to exchange information. There is no multi-sectoral coordination, which is related to the devolution process that requires additional coordination efforts at county level. There is also no effective structure for policy dialogue anymore, but the ARDPG troika is leading the informal dialogue with the Ministry of Agriculture.

⁶⁶¹ As 21 EU MS participate in the implementation of the peace agreement, which includes integrated rural development that is related to SAFS, the number of active MS is not easy to define. From the eight selected MS, the three mentioned MS are directly active on SAFS-related themes.

Case study country	No of active EU MS on SAFS*	Findings regarding coordination EUD and EU MS	Findings regarding EUD lead role in SAFS coordination
Malawi	2-3 Germany Ireland (Flanders-BE)	<p>The EUD and EU MS have adopted a pragmatic bottom-up approach to Joint Programming that focuses mostly on strengthening joint implementation and joint financing arrangements at sectoral level. In the SAFS domain, joint programmes or pooled funding mechanisms have been developed to support nutrition, social protection and agribusiness. The EU and EU MS joint approach goes also beyond development, encompassing issues like political engagement or trade, in the framework of the European Economic Diplomacy agenda.</p> <p>A Team Europe initiative on “Green growth for Malawi” will support a green and resilient economic transformation of the country, driven by private sector growth and investment, with a focus on improving productivity, resilience, diversification, value addition and commercialisation of agriculture and fisheries and enhancing environmental sustainability.</p>	<p>The EUD has played an active role in promoting coordination and harmonisation of donor-funded activities. Cooperation is particularly strong in the agricultural sector, where the EU chairs, on a rotational basis, the Donor Committee on Agriculture and Food Security (DCAFS)³² and the Donor Committee on Nutrition Security (DoNUTs).</p>
Niger	6	<p>Joint programming remained limited until the COVID-19 crisis. Regarding the on-going joint programming negotiation, the EU shift to a new State- and Resilience Building Contract related to SAFS (Budget support) was felt like a “shock” by most EU stakeholders active in the country, including some EU MS (e.g., France and Belgium) which had increased their efforts to access EUTF funding.</p> <p>A joint EUD-EU MS approach aimed to contribute to mitigate the risks of the pandemic via a support to the implementation of the National Preparedness & Response Plan to COVID-19.</p> <p>A new Team Europe Initiative related to SAFS is being prepared.</p>	<p>The EU has played an active coordination role in a context constrained by a complex multi-sector and multi-actor approach. Involved in different coordination mechanisms, the EU also pursued a strategic dialogue by co-leading with the government three coordination poles of the Economic and Social Development Plan. While the coordination framework set by this Plan and weak institutional capacity hampered good coordination at project level, it seems that the budget support modality provided for more successful coordination mechanisms feeding a SAFS approach via, for example, an agreement reached in 2018 between the Minister of Finance and the technical and financing partners.</p>

*Only the eight selected MS for this thematic case study have been considered.

Source: Country case study reports

Table 16 shows that in four countries – Cambodia, Colombia, Haiti and Malawi – there is relatively recent attention for new coordination efforts related to SAFS especially related to Joint Programming, Team Europe initiatives and EUTF. These initiatives can be considered as early signals of improved EU coordination. However, concrete evidence on enhanced EU coordination with EU MS related to SAFS is hardly available, i.e. developing joint food systems approaches and agreements on implementation. In some countries – Kenya and Niger – overall donor coordination mechanisms are as important or even more important than specific EU MS coordination. Also in Kenya a Team Europe Initiative around the Green Deal is being developed but no clear links to SAFS are foreseen for now.

In addition, Delegated Cooperation, where MS implement EU funded SAFS-related programmes might be an instrument for further coordination around SAFS. For example, in Kenya, many MS are involved in implementing EU-funded SAFS-related programmes, but there is still limited exchange and coordination due to working in silos.

Global governance issues

In this section, perceptions shared by EU MS representatives on some global governance issues are presented.

UNFSS

In the section about coordination, it has been stated that the preparation (and follow-up) of the UN FSS was an important issue on the HARD agenda. UN FSS was considered to be a good event for enhanced EU coordination but also with other global actors. Initially, there was enthusiasm and EU MS were involved in funding the national dialogues. It was felt that the Summit would put food systems high on the agenda. Most interviewees were of the opinion that the Summit indeed created momentum and increased the visibility of food systems, especially in the preparations and during the Summit.

In principle, UN FSS was a good umbrella for strengthening EU cooperation, but EU MS had different positions, even during the preparations, which became problematic over time. The CFS, in particular the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM), took a critical position towards the Summit and felt that the Summit was not grounded in human and (indigenous) people's rights. They felt that it did not embrace the urgency of deep system change for justice, was dominated by corporate interests and replaced international public institutions by multi-stakeholders platforms.⁶⁶² While this statement did not reflect the overall position of CFS, it led to heated debate. France was of the opinion that the position of CFS was very important and was, therefore seen by other MS, as supporter of those criticising the FSS.

All interviewees agreed that the preparations of the UN FSS were confused. In addition, they underlined that the outcomes did not create much enthusiasm despite good visibility and improved interconnectivity. There were far too many dispersed topics and coalitions, for which the leadership was criticised. The prevailing view expressed was that nothing new resulted and original high hopes and expectations were not fulfilled.

Nevertheless, most EU MS still wanted to be proactive in the follow-up and joined coalitions for follow- and some aim to assist partner countries in implementing national pathways. However, coordination of the follow-up is not clear, as the suggested UN Coordination hub, most interviewees believe, will not work. Stable funding of follow-up is also not guaranteed. Some EU MS are looking for appropriate mechanisms for follow-up such as a World Bank trust fund. No EU MS mentioned a form of joint EU follow-up, and the EC is not perceived to play a facilitating or leadership role.

Perceptions on progress regarding global governance

Some other perceptions regarding progress in global governance on SAFS were collected. These are rather ad-hoc, but they shed some light on key governance issues.

None of the interviewees considers that, despite many initiatives and significant funding, good progress in global governance has been made. Change is perceived to be very slow. Persons who were interviewed expressed their current and ongoing concerns:

- The fact that civil society and CFS did not support UN FSS remains a bottleneck and this problem needs to be overcome.
- Despite efforts to improve collaboration among RBAs, there is very limited progress. Even though FAO technical staff often plays a good role in implementing SAFS, the political level at FAO is perceived to be problematic. Therefore, FAO is not perceived to be a natural leader for SAFS, while IFAD (with fewer member states) has a more limited role and WFP remains focused on food aid.
- Global platforms are overlapping, which hinders global governance progress.
- An overall issue is the actual lack of global leadership on SAFS, which was recognised by all interviewees. For example, some interviewees suggest an international panel on food systems like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), others prefer to improve the functioning of CFS and the HLPE, and the position of others is unclear. Challenges and suggestions for the way forward

Key findings and challenges

Four key findings, including main challenges, emerge of this case study:

- Although there are some good policy frameworks, including EU ones, in place, many interviews indicate that the food systems approach needs to be further elaborated. Especially at the level of implementation, interviewees perceive a lack of operationalisation. It is felt that the systems approach is not yet sufficiently unfolded in practice.

⁶⁶² Civil Society Mechanism – CFS (2021): , *What is wrong with the Food Systems Summit (FSS)?* <https://www.csm4cfs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Common-analysis-EN.pdf>

- The potential leadership role of the EC is acknowledged in light of its policy frameworks, its formal position, and its resources, but the majority of interviewees is of the opinion the EC should become more demand-driven and less focused on its own programmes.
- There is an urgent need for good joint implementation practices at central and country level that really implement the intentions of Joint Programming allowing for joint learning.⁶⁶³
- Finally, the design of this case study was based on the assumption that some form of joint EU approach to SAFS would be emerging, which would allow to collect lessons learned & good practices. However, it proved to be too early for such an exercise since, as further detailed in the rest of the case study, each EU MS has a different approach to SAFS, in some cases relatively well developed and in other cases almost non-existent.
- The war in Ukraine (formally outside the temporal scope of this evaluation) affects food systems worldwide and there is consensus that this crisis creates momentum to take bold steps to further develop a joint systems approach.

Suggestions for the way forward

Interviewees made the following suggestions:

- Further development and operationalisation of the food systems approach focusing on how to break the barriers to implementation is urgently needed. A new generation of interventions is needed that adopts a systems approach and allows to learn and develop good practices. This should go together with an appropriate results focus.
- More effective (and perhaps fewer) global governance platforms are needed. In this context, the complementary relation between HARD on the one hand and the EU Practitioners network for European Development Cooperation on SAFS-related issues on the other should be considered⁶⁶⁴. In this context HARD might focus on more strategic and political issues and the EU Practitioners Network more on operational issues
- To enhance exchanges within the HARD group, the following should be considered: the agenda should focus on a few strategic and/or political issues with sufficient time for dialogue, while the chair should rotate. EU MS should play a more pro-active role, and INTPA should focus on facilitation and real dialogue.
- There is need to discuss follow-up of UN FSS (Including coordination, role CFS and HLPE) and to develop a joint EU approach.
- OECD-DAC reporting and classification need to be changed to allow for tracking system approaches.
- The momentum should be grasped for more Team Europe food systems initiatives.

⁶⁶³ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/t-and-m-series/documents/guidelines-ndeg8-joint-programming-guidance>

⁶⁶⁴ In this network, EU development agencies such as GIZ, Enabel, AECID, Sida, but also MFAs (eg. Danida) are working together. There is overlap with the HARD group, although the EU practitioners network focuses more on operational issues.

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