



The European Commission's Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security



Analysis of Priority Actions for Food Systems Transformation – Bhutan

Introduction

There is a global consensus that most food systems are unsustainable: they generate food insecurity and hunger, malnutrition (from stunting, wasting, micronutrient deficiencies to obesity), environmental degradations (natural resources depletion, climate change, and biodiversity loss), and inequalities and vulnerabilities among territories and food stakeholders. A transformation toward more sustainable, inclusive and resilient food systems is urgently needed, and the identification of ad hoc levers to implement this transformation strategic.

On the one hand, the [National Pathways](#) to sustainable food systems are one of the outcomes generated by the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS). They have been informed by national dialogues organized during the preparation of the Summit. It should not be assumed that these pathway documents are final or endorsed by the respective government as [most countries](#) approach their pathway as 'living documents', but they still give a picture of the priorities.

On the other hand, under a partnership between the European Union, FAO, and CIRAD, and in cooperation with national and food systems stakeholders, country level [Food Systems Assessments](#) are being conducted, at different level of completion, in more than 50 developing countries.

Both National Pathways (NP) and Food Systems Assessments (FSA) profiles have identified country specific priority actions for the transformation of food systems.

The ambition of this synthesis report is to provide the comprehensive list of these priority actions in a condensed format that helps to gain an overview of the main results of both approaches and allows to some extent a comparison.

Methodological approach

This synthesis report is developed using a three steps approach:

- First, screening NP and FSA reports and extraction of the priority actions. In the National Pathways, the priority actions are called "game changers" and grouped around five "actions tracks" (i.e. thematic areas) defined in the frame of the UNFSS. In the FSA, the priority actions are called "systemic levers" and are grouped around four thematic areas. Notwithstanding these differences, it remains possible to extract from these documents "priority actions" and group them around the five "actions tracks";
- Second, reformulation, simplification and grouping of NP and FSA priority actions and classification according to the UNFSS five action tracks (Tables 2 and 3). These tables are displayed below to keep trace in a systematic and transparent way of the modifications performed during this step;
- Third, overview in a single table of the NP and FSA priority actions per action track (Table 1).

The European Commission's Knowledge Centre
for Global Food and Nutrition Security

Advancing knowledge towards zero hunger and sustainable food systems

Table 1: Summary of Priority Actions for the Sustainable Transformation of Food Systems in Bhutan

UNFSS	FSA	UNFSS – National Pathway – Priority Actions	Food Systems Assessment – Priority Actions
AT1: Ensure safe and nutritious food for all	Food security, nutrition and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring fallow land in productive use Expand irrigation coverage Invest in infrastructure and their maintenance (farm road) Ensure access to agricultural inputs and machineries Develop digital extension and information services Strengthen research in agriculture and nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop basic infrastructure: road connectivity, electricity, access to markets Provide farmers supportive services: technologies, finance, Promote production of high-attitude horticultural crops for high value markets Support production of non-timber forest products for Asian and European markets Create rural transformation hubs: extension, inputs, microcredit
AT2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns	Food security, nutrition and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide locally produced and nutritious food in public institutions Support Biofortification and the production of nutrient dense crops Nutrition education campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong support for consumption of locally produced foods Awareness campaigns: healthy food, dietary diversity, nutrition
AT3: Boost nature positive production	Sustainable natural resource use and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect forests Support agroforestry Support organic farming (organic seeds, bio fertilisers, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration of fallow land Support diversification strategies (e.g. quinoa, egg and poultry production)
AT4: Advance equitable livelihoods	Inclusive economic growth, jobs and livelihoods; Territorial development and equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support marketing of agricultural production: stronger aggregators (private companies and cooperatives) and introduce digital marketing tools Strengthen financial services in the agri-food sector (e.g. insurance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop certification systems Establish food-based logistic companies: youth and women employment Support SMEs to emerge and engage in agri-food businesses connected to farmers Promote PPP models to enhance effectiveness of state owned enterprises Develop market infrastructure: warehouses, processing, packaging Develop soft infrastructure: internet Encourage small businesses to process local products: Public sector canteen supply
AT5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stresses		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve food systems governance (dashboard, framework for collaboration, capacity building of stakeholders, monitoring impact) Develop early warning systems (weather, pest and diseases) Support climate-smart agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote climate-resilient agriculture

Source: KC-FNS, 2022

Table 2: Priority Actions - Food Systems Assessment (FSA)

Thematic Areas	FSA – Priority Actions (Systemic Levers)		FSA – Reformulation Priority Actions		Links to AT	Comment
Addressing the double burden of malnutrition	1	Promoting sustainable consumption, healthy food and dietary diversity. Examples might include food and nutrition awareness campaigns; stronger support for locally sourced alternatives to unhealthy imports; supporting small agri-businesses willing to process local products (for which consumer preference is currently low); or aiming for full coverage of public-sector canteen needs (public administration, schools, universities, hospitals) by local farmers.	1.1	Strong support for consumption of locally produced foods	2	
			1.2	Awareness campaigns: healthy food, dietary diversity, nutrition	2	
			1.3	Encourage small businesses to process local products: Public sector canteen supply	4	
	2	Improving infrastructure and road connectivity will facilitate access to food markets. Complementary efforts include improving the connectivity of rural areas to other hard infrastructure, such as electricity supply, and soft infrastructure – the Internet.	2.1	Develop basic infrastructure: road connectivity, electricity, access to markets	1	
			2.2	Develop soft infrastructure: internet	4	
Develop agrifood value chains	3	Improving the value chain by encouraging better production and storage practices, quality standards and marketing. Invest in cold storage, warehouses, and processing and packaging facilities, to reduce spoilage and losses	3.1	Reduce food spoilage and losses		Grouped with 3,2
			3.2	Develop market infrastructure: warehouses, processing, packaging	4	3,1, 3,2, 5 grouped
	4	Strengthening private-sector participation by creating conditions for local agrifood small and medium enterprises to emerge that will connect small-scale farmers to markets through access to appropriate technology, finance, markets and use of digital tools and innovative technologies. Promoting and encouraging public-private partnership models to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of services provided by State-owned enterprises.	4.1	Promote PPP models to enhance effectiveness of state-owned enterprises	4	
			4.2	Support SMEs to emerge and engage in agri-food businesses connected to farmers	4	4,2, 7,3 grouped
			4.3	Provide farmers supportive services: technologies, finance,	1	
5	Encouraging organized aggregation and marketing of crops to achieve some economies of scale and improve competitiveness, particularly in areas where cheaper imports are available.		Capacity building of POs: aggregation, bulk marketing, economies of scale		Grouped with 3,2	
Addressing discrepancies in territorial development	6	Rehabilitation of fallow land – where possible – could help to increase productivity and contribute towards achieving food self-sufficiency goals. Promoting climate-resilient approaches and diversification strategies (e.g. quinoa, egg and poultry production); encouraging peri-urban food production (low food miles); and incentivizing food system investments through blended finance, soft loans, tax breaks or access to green finance. In the medium to long term, a “fallow land investment plan” should be considered as a key priority in the 12th Five Year Plan and in the upcoming 13th Five Year Plan budget.	6.1	Restoration of fallow land	3	
			6.2	Promote climate-resilient agriculture	5	
			6.3	Support diversification strategies (e.g. quinoa, egg and poultry production)	3	
	7	Leveraging the food system for inclusive development by improving prospects for young people in rural areas. Incentives to improve prospects in the countryside could be provided for local private-sector companies to operate, if not in the most remote areas, at least close to secondary cities. The creation of hubs could gather a range of support services, such as inputs, microcredit and extension, and strengthen market access, possibly through the establishment of food-based logistics companies, storage and processing facilities.	7.1	Create rural transformation hubs: extension, inputs, microcredit	1	
			7.2	Establish food-based logistic companies: youth and women employment	4	
			7.3	Support local private-sector companies to operate		Grouped with 4,2
Addressing unsustainable farming practices and natural resource use	8	Further promoting high-altitude horticultural products and non-timber forest products with specific uses for expanding sales in high-end markets in Asia and Europe. This would need to be accompanied by other actions, such as developing certification systems to promote the sustainable sourcing of wild-collected products.	8.1	Promote production of high-altitude horticultural crops for high value markets	1	
			8.2	Support production of non-timber forest products for Asian and European markets	1	
			8.3	Develop certification systems	4	
Total	8				17	

Source: KC-FNS, 2022

Table 3: Priority Actions – UNFSS National Pathway

Thematic Areas	National Pathway – Priority Actions (Game Changers)		National Pathway – Reformulation Priority Actions		Links to AT	Comment
Area 1: Secure production and smallholder livelihoods	1	Comprehensive plan to ensure fertility and secure Bhutan's limited arable land will be put in place.				Not selected. Not specific
	2	Innovative mechanisms to bring fallow land into productive use.		Bring fallow land in productive use	1	
	3	Expand irrigation coverage.		Expand irrigation coverage	1	
	4	Improve farm roads.		Invest in infrastructure and their maintenance (farm road)	1	4, 17 grouped
	5	Modalities and mechanisms to ensure adequate inputs of quality seeds, livestock inputs, animal breeding stocks, feed and fodder, fertilizers and farm machineries will be put in place.		Ensure access to agricultural inputs and machineries	1	
	6	Opportunities for farmers to obtain carbon credits for tree crops including fodder trees will be created and implemented.				grouped with 22.2
	7	Uptake and support for climate smart production technologies will be expedited by provisioning soft loans, tax breaks, and easy access to state land lease.		Support climate-smart agriculture	5	
Area 2: Enhance value, standards and markets	8	Private enterprises and farmer cooperatives (aggregators) will be promoted and strengthened.		Support marketing of agricultural production: stronger aggregators (private companies and cooperatives) and introduce digital marketing tools	4	8, 12.2 grouped
	9	Scale-up linkages to meet demands for school feeding programs through farmer cooperatives and private aggregation firms.				grouped with 19
	10	Develop proposals to implement Bhutan's NDC and the LEDS for the agriculture and livestock sector.				Not selected. Not specific
Area 3: Unleash the power of digital tools	11	An ensemble of digital tools will be developed and rolled out to provide crop and livestock advisory services, early warning on weather, and incidences of pests and diseases.	11.1	Develop digital extension and information services	1	11.1, 12.1 grouped
			11.2	Develop early warning systems (weather, pest and diseases)	5	
	12	To address information asymmetry within the agri-food market ecosystem, support will be provided to develop dynamic real time digital platforms to provide information on agri-food produce and also facilitate digital marketing.	12.1	Develop digital information services		grouped with 11.1
			12.2	Facilitate digital marketing		grouped with 8
	13	At the national level, in collaboration with the National Statistical Bureau, a food systems dashboard will be launched to track performance, and provide a standard reference for all actors within food systems.		Improve food systems governance (dashboard, framework for collaboration, capacity building of stakeholders, monitoring impact)	5	13, 24, 26, 27 grouped
Area 4: Secure financing and de-risk the agri-food sector	14	Current agri-food related financial institutions will be strengthened.		Strengthen financial services in the agri-food sector (e.g. insurance,	4	14, 16 grouped
	15	Buy back and minimum price schemes will be re-designed to suit the needs of both producers and consumers				Not selected. Not specific
	16	Innovative schemes to insure crops and livestock to buffer financial loss of farmers will be established.				grouped with 14
	17	Establishment of an infrastructure fund to ensure quality and timely maintenance of agri-food related infrastructure				grouped with 4

Area 5: Accelerate science and technology	18	Draw up investment and operational plans with clear deliverables for the research sector. Priority will be accorded to research and technology aimed at building resilience, securing and increasing production, helping build value chains, and enhancing nutrition.		Strengthen research in agriculture and nutrition	1	
Area 6: Boost nutrition positive initiatives	19	Supply chains to institutions (schools, universities, monasteries and military) will be rebooted to ensure that menus provide for adequate nutrition.		Provide locally produced and nutritious food in public institutions	2	9; 19 grouped
	20	Research and technology initiatives will prioritize biofortification and production of nutrient dense crops.		Support biofortification and the production of nutrient dense crops	2	
	21	Educational and outreach programs aimed at changing consumer behaviour will be ramped up to help transition towards healthier diets.		Nutrition education campaigns	2	
Area 7: Sustain nature first approaches	22	Forests which cover over 70% of Bhutan's land area will be conserved and sustainability managed. Enterprises involving the sustainable use of non-wood forest products and agro-forestry initiatives will be promoted.	22.1	Protect forests	3	
			22.2	Support agroforestry	3	6, 22.2 grouped
	23	Facilities and enterprises to provision for organic seeds, organic composts, biofertilizers, bio-feed and bio-pesticides will be fast tracked and established.		Support organic farming (organic seeds, biofertilisers, etc.)	3	
Area 8: Build capacity, strengthen coordination and partnerships	24	Broad frameworks to foster collaboration and partnerships across agencies and actors will be established.				grouped with 13
	25	A complete review and harmonization of all the policies and acts will be initiated to facilitate the transformation of the food systems.				Not selected. Not specific
	26	A multi-year capacity building initiative will be rolled out targeting all actors within the food systems and aimed at elevating standards and efficiency.				grouped with 13
	27	An annual 'food systems and agri-business' conclave will be convened to promote value addition, establish business ventures, create synergistic inter-agency plans, and track impact.				grouped with 13
Total		27			17	

Source: KC-FNS, 2022