

Updates from Rome

May 2022

1. Updates on the UN Food Systems Summit Coordination Hub

A. *Developments and structure of the Coordination Hub*

To support the follow-up of the UN Food System Summit held on 23 September 2021, the UN system has committed to jointly lead a “UN Food Systems Coordination Hub” that collaborates with and draws upon wider UN system capacities. The RBAs are tasked to lead the follow-up efforts of the Summit, mobilizing the UN agencies and all key partners to provide policy and technical assistance.

The Hub will be hosted by FAO and has been placed under the management of the Office of Sustainable Development Goals (OSG; Director, Stefanos Fotiou), reporting within the Office of the Director-General. The work of the Hub will be overseen by a Steering Group, which includes Principals of the RBAs, the Development Coordination Office (DCO), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) as the initial Chair of an evolved UN Task Force. The Chair of the UN Task Force will rotate among interested UN agencies with strong connections to the work of the Hub. Moreover:

- **6 AFPs (Agencies, Funds, and Programmes) have committed to assigning dedicated staff to the Hub.** These include FAO (2 professionals), DCO, IFAD, UNEP, WFP, WHO (1 each), and UNICEF (1/2).
- **Trust Fund:** the existing UNFSS Trust Fund hosted by WFP will close as of 31 March 2022. A new trust fund hosted by FAO will be established to support the operations of the Hub.

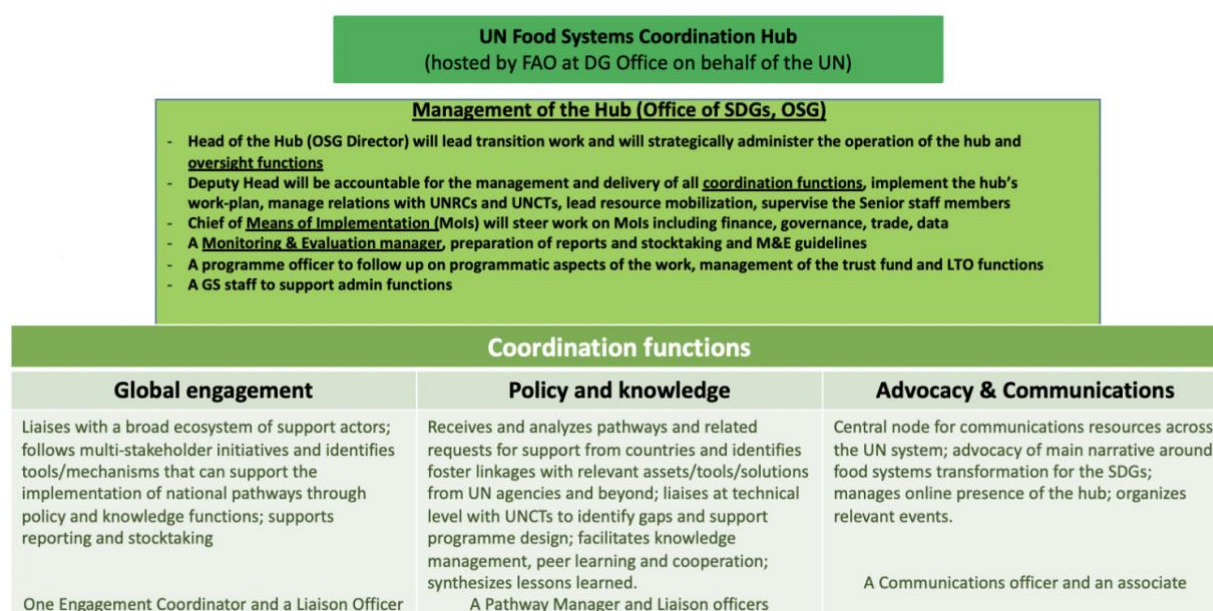


Figure 1 The preliminary organizational structure of the Hub

B. Implementation of National Food Systems Pathways:

The Summit resulted in the submission of “National Pathways” by 103 countries for agrifood systems transformation by 2030. The Hub has conducted an assessment survey on the needs of the countries to implement National pathways and coalitions of action, 84 countries have responded to the survey. Here is a synthesis of the first results (the consultation will continue further):

- 52% of the respondent countries have already endorsed their National Pathways, and 25% of the countries' National Pathways are under political consideration and likely to be endorsed soon.
- **Countries will pursue** a phased approach towards 2030, with biennial stock-takes as milestones, prioritizing advocacy-driven systemic policy, and institutional strengthening as the first step towards the 2023 stock-take.
- The main expected support (74% of countries) from the Hub is to **leverage finance** (for human and financial support, build technical capacities, national vision and implementation plan, budgeting). Several countries also call for a **specific global funding mechanism** to accelerate national pathways intervention, provide start-up funding, and bridge current funding gaps.
- 68% of countries expect the Hub to facilitate technical support through **monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools**, i.e., helping countries to create a national integrated monitoring framework. The 71% expect the hub to **leverage connections, fast-track support needs, and promote coordination** through coalition building.
- Countries seek **continued global advocacy support** as well as easy access to up-to-date scientific data to confront the challenges to nationwide ownership of agri-food systems approaches.
- Finally, **increased collaboration with private sector stakeholders** is sought regarding infrastructure, innovation, and technology for rapid sustainability gains in implementing national pathways.

C. Next steps

The Hub will focus its work until the end of 2022 on:

- a. Finalize its program of work (at the strategic level) and budget;
- b. Convene coordination meetings with National Convenors and UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams to advance the support to National Pathways;
- c. Provide technical support as per request from countries and subject to availability of resources.
- d. Prepare information reports to be shared at the upcoming High-Level Political Forum in New York in July 2022;
- e. Establish a stakeholder engagement and networking group;
- f. Develop a peer-learning and cooperation platform between coalitions of support and countries; and
- g. In cooperation with WFP, liaise with donors to transfer the projected surplus of the WFP-hosted Food Systems Summit Trust Fund, to the FAO-hosted trust fund to support operations of the Hub.

2. Update on the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture

At its 164th Session in July 2020, the FAO Council endorsed the proposal for FAO to host the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. This decision followed a request by the 12th Berlin Agriculture Minister's Conference, in the context of the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) in 2020. The Council approved the ToRs of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture at its 166th Session.

Objectives of the Platform¹:

The International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture aims to “*provide an inclusive multi-stakeholder forum to promote dialogue on the digitalization of the food, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture, and forestry sectors, as well as land-use planning and land-use change. The main function of the Platform is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences on best practices and policy approaches between stakeholders, including Members, agri-business and the private sector, farmers, the civil society, academia, and international organizations.*”

The operational structure of the Platform:

The Platform will operate based on the four mechanisms that FAO has started to constitute:

- *The Inter-governmental Representative's Group:* it will be the decision-making body, working to develop a long-term strategic vision and identify issues and priorities. It will be composed of 27 senior officers/technical experts of FAO Members.
- *The Advisory Committee:* will undertake technical analysis and provide scientific evidence on the effects of digital technologies on food, agriculture, fisheries, and forestry and the related challenges, and support the work of the Intergovernmental Representatives' Group. FAO hosted multiple meetings with international organizations that will join the Advisory Committee.
- *The Online Multi-stakeholder Forum:* initiated through an informal global stakeholder mapping exercise and ad-hoc meetings with partners such as the Digital Agri-Hub (developed by Wageningen University and Research), to collaborate on ensuring the inclusion of all stakeholders in future discussions.
- *The Coordination Unit:* dedicated resources and funds are yet required for this operational unit.

¹ The detailed Terms of Reference are presented in the document PC 130/6, available for consultation [here](#).