Key Messages

- A food systems approach to policymaking involves bringing people together to work collectively to achieve policy objectives. It requires (1) identifying the relevant stakeholders, (2) bringing them together through a multistakeholder mechanism, and (3) identifying policy entry points for action. Bringing relevant stakeholders together helps ensure that the exploration of available policy entry points is comprehensive, creative, cohesive, and inclusive.

- The mix of stakeholders will differ depending on local contexts. Relevant stakeholders can be identified through stakeholder mapping exercises. It is crucial to identify all of the stakeholders across government, civil society, private sector, and elsewhere whose work could influence the policy issue at hand or whose interests could be affected by the benefits and risks resulting from the relevant policy.

- When identifying stakeholders, it is important to clearly articulate the purpose of the stakeholder engagement, to understand the power dynamics at play, and to meaningfully include women and girls and other often marginalized and underrepresented groups.

- To convene identified stakeholders, an appropriate multistakeholder mechanism should be used or created to increase the connections among food system actors and allow stakeholders to work together effectively to address the policy objective at hand. Such a mechanism can be formal or informal, permanent or ad hoc, and national or subnational in scope.

- When identifying policy entry points, a useful first step is to identify relevant policies that already exist.

- Another potential starting point is to look at the whole food system to identify entry points to achieve a specific objective or series of objectives. Tools for analyzing food systems this way tend to start with a clear objective and seek to understand food system drivers and functions before suggesting practical policy solutions (see Table 1).
Background and Purpose

A food system includes the entire chain of activities from farm to fork and beyond, as well as the interconnections between the activities in the chain. Taking a food systems approach to policymaking means adopting a way of thinking and doing that considers the food system in its totality, taking into account all the elements, their relationships, and related effects1 (for more on the basics of a food systems approach to policymaking, see brief 1 in this series, "What, How, and Why"). This approach involves engaging a diversity of people in the conversation and working together to achieve policy objectives.

Yet policymaking is typically fragmented, leading to piecemeal policies that do not work together to harness the power of food systems to benefit people and the planet.

This brief suggests how to take a more collective approach to policymaking to develop and design policies and associated instruments to achieve multiple objectives across the food system. It sets out three core processes in this approach:

- Identify stakeholders whose responsibilities or interests are relevant to achieving a particular policy objective or range of policy objectives;
- Use multistakeholder mechanisms to bring these stakeholders together, and;
- Once the stakeholders are assembled, identify policy entry points for action.

This brief assumes that the policy issue to be addressed has already been determined at the outset and motivates the stakeholder engagement and policymaking process. The tools and resources are applicable to all levels of policy implementation, from local to national, regional, or global.

How to Identify and Map Stakeholders Relevant to the Policy Objectives

At the outset of a food systems approach to policymaking, it is crucial to identify all relevant stakeholders—including nutrition champions—across government, civil society, the private sector, and other organizations or communities whose work could influence the policy objective or objectives at hand or whose interests could be affected by the benefits and risks resulting from the relevant policy.

Relevant stakeholders can be identified through stakeholder mapping exercises that use workshops, focus groups, and/or individual consultations to gather information and analyze existing policy responsibilities. Examples of tools and resources are listed in Table 1 (page 9) and include the following:

- **Mapping stakeholders across government.** City, University of London’s Centre for Food Policy mapped the national-level government departments involved in making food policy in India,2 South Africa,3 and England4 to identify stakeholders relevant to food. The team reviewed the mandate of each ministry to determine whether the ministry conducted any activities relevant to the policy issue addressed. This in-depth review resulted in succinct informational maps of the national government’s responsibilities for food policymaking in the three countries. According to these maps, each country has about 15 government agencies relevant to food system policymaking. This process can also be used at the sub-national level as well.

- **Participatory food system mapping.** In Bolivia a participatory process was used to identify stakeholders relevant to agroecological food systems.5 This exercise involved several rounds of reflection and discussion between stakeholders, during which the researchers traveled to key locations of food system activities (such as farms and mills) to understand the scope, flow, and context of the system. They then held a two-day workshop to map the system and the relevance of the actors within it from the information gleaned.

Stakeholder maps can also help identify nutrition champions—influential people who use their platform to advocate for a food systems approach to food- or nutrition-related policymaking. These champions may come from government, media, the private sector, or another field and often fall into one of three groups: decision makers, influencers, or clients. The Transform Nutrition Consortium and the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement have developed a toolkit to identify, engage, and sustain champions for nutrition.6
There are several important considerations to keep in mind while identifying the stakeholders relevant to the policy issue of interest:

Policymakers should clearly articulate the food systems issues around which they are bringing stakeholders together. These policy issues will drive the purpose of the mapping and help narrow the scope of stakeholder involvement to those most relevant to the policy issue on the agenda.

Identifying stakeholders’ power, influence, interest, and importance can make the maps more useful. In the Bolivia mapping example, the stakeholder mapping workshop not only identified the most important actors in the food system but also assessed their decision-making power and level of interest in the sustainability of the system. The resulting graph plotted each stakeholder’s interest in fostering agroecological food systems against that stakeholder’s relative power to do so (Figure 1, next page). Taking stakeholder power into account can also help identify who can champion the cause (for more information on managing conflict, see Brief III in this series, “Developing a Shared Agenda”).

The legitimacy of the mapping exercise depends on ensuring that marginalized groups relevant to the policy issue are meaningfully included and heard. Stakeholder mapping should thus incorporate groups that include and represent women and other marginalized groups often excluded from policy consultations, including gender equality allies and those addressing the needs and priorities of women and girls and other traditionally underrepresented groups. The World Food Program’s brief “Gender and Stakeholder Analysis” describes when, why, and how to conduct a gender-sensitive stakeholder analysis.
How to Bring Relevant Stakeholders Together

Identified stakeholders can be convened through a multistakeholder mechanism. By providing a forum for stakeholders to discuss, design, and develop policies, such a mechanism increases the connections among food system actors and makes it possible for them to work together to address the policy issue at hand. Initially, it is useful to determine whether existing networks, mechanisms, or platforms are suitable for bringing stakeholders together around a specified policy issue or set of issues. If they are not, new mechanisms can be established. Table 1 (page 9) provides examples of tools and mechanisms for bringing stakeholders together.

The One Planet Network recently studied 10 examples of multistakeholder mechanisms for sustainable food systems. These examples include mechanisms that are formal and informal, permanent and ad hoc. Of the mechanisms, three are national in scale and seven are subnational; all include stakeholders from different stages of the value chain. Important for successful implementation of these bodies, the One Planet Network report found, is balanced representation of all food systems actors, conducive leadership and governance, trust built on years of networking and collaboration, and perceived political support. The most significant challenges related to these platforms’ legitimacy, effectiveness, and accountability were identified as precarious financial sustainability, low political support, limited time to engage in activities, and frequent changes in participants (for more information on financial sustainability, see Brief IV in this series, “Costing and Financing”). The report drew lessons from these 10 examples of successful multistakeholder mechanisms for policymakers to use to inform the creation, facilitation, and governance of their own mechanisms adapted to the policy objectives of interest (see Box 1, next page).
LESSONS FOR CREATING MULTISTAKEHOLDER MECHANISMS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

The 10 examples of multistakeholder mechanisms for sustainable food systems examined by the One Planet Network’s Sustainable Food Systems Program provide seven lessons:

1. Successful mechanisms identify and articulate their vision, mission, goals, and good governance principles and have well-defined policy and advocacy priorities (these priorities will likely be driven by the identified policy issue that precipitates the creation of this coordinating body).

2. Establishing procedures to address power relations, imbalances, and conflicts of interest, though difficult, is important (for more information on managing conflict, see brief III in this series, “Developing a Shared Agenda”).

3. Building effective and successful coordinating platforms takes time (one to four years in the cases examined).

4. A history of prior positive collaboration between platform members is a strong driver of success.

5. To ensure representativeness and legitimacy, it is important to aim for gender balance and to include the voices of disadvantaged and informal actors at the grassroots level in the coordinating body.

6. Regular funding is critical for the continued efficacy of the platform. A funding mechanism may be necessary to fund participation by marginalized groups, as the organizations they represent may not be able to cover participation costs (for more funding considerations, see Brief IV, “Costing and Financing”).

7. Connecting with similar structures and networks at different levels (such as national, subnational, and local) can increase the reach and impact of the coordinating body and the policies it develops to address the policy issue.

One example from the One Planet Network report is the French National Food Council (CNA), a national-level multistakeholder mechanism. Known as the French “food parliament,” the CNA was created by the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Economy, and the Environment. This mechanism—which includes 63 members from various government ministries, civil society, the private sector, NGOs, the farming sector, and academic institutions—acts as an advisory body for food-related issues in France. Led by a CNA Secretariat, it has an operating budget of €350,000 from public funds to cover staff salaries, meetings, learning exchanges, new projects, studies, and communication products and materials. Since its creation in 1985, it has issued 89 opinions related to food and nutrition policy that inform legislation and ministry work. Major benefits of the CNA, according to members, are relationship building and networking, which build trust, promote joint action, and increase their organizations’ public visibility to bring attention to these issue areas.

Another example from the report is the Quito Agri-Food Pact (PAQ), a subnational multistakeholder mechanism in Ecuador. Created in 2016 by ConQuito, the city’s economic promotion agency, PAQ includes stakeholders from multiple government ministries, civil society, the private sector, NGOs, academic institutions, and international organizations. Though it brings together about 30 stakeholders (identified through a stakeholder mapping exercise), PAQ does not have an operating budget; stakeholders must
cover their own expenses to attend meetings. Other activities of PAQ, ranging from data collection to the production of a geographic information system, have been financially supported mainly by RUAF. Acting as a citizen consultation and advisory body, PAQ plays a strong lobbying and advocacy role at the city-region level. It has elevated the voices of agrifood actors in policymaking, created valuable networks between agrifood actors, and contributed to policy formulation.

A third example comes from Ethiopia, where a technical working group composed of representatives from government ministries, NGOs, academia, and civic organizations used the development of food-based dietary guidelines as an entry point to a more holistic change process. In some countries the four SUN networks—the SUN Business Network (SBN), SUN Civil Society Network (SUN CSN), SUN Donor Network (SDN), and the UN Network (UNN)—have been engaged for their ability to access, convene, and influence their respective groups in support of a food systems approach to nutrition.

**How to Identify Policy Entry Points**

Bringing relevant stakeholders together can help ensure that the exploration of available policy entry points is comprehensive, creative, cohesive, and inclusive. A useful first step is to carry out a collective process of identifying existing policies relevant to the objectives. Methodologies for tracking policies in this way were used, for example, by the Food Research Collaboration to track all food system policies introduced by the Indian, South African, and UK governments in response to COVID-19 between March and July 2020.

Once the stakeholders have identified relevant existing policies, they can turn to the food system itself, undertaking a collective process of identifying entry points throughout the system to achieve a specific objective or series of objectives. Several tools for doing so exist.

One example of identifying entry points is the Glopan which aims to identify the actions required to develop coherence across food systems in support of healthier and more sustainable diets. The tool consists of six steps:

- Set a clear diet quality objective (the policy objective in this case);
- Understand consumer perceptions;
- Review the role of the food system;
- Prioritize actions;
- Create a cooperative climate; and
- Ensure actions are long-term and sustainable.

The tool includes a comprehensive question guide to remind policymakers what to consider in the different parts of the food system to achieve the diet quality objective. For an example, see Figure 2 (next page).

Another example is the Food Systems Decision Support Toolbox, developed by Wageningen University, which is a “step-by-step approach to translating insights in food systems into practical policy solutions.” The toolbox includes the following steps:

- Identify policy objectives;
- Map the food system outcomes, activities, and drivers relevant to the policy objectives, including trends, trade-offs, and synergies;
- Draw causal diagrams to map the relationship and the influence of the food system processes;
- Determine if any feedback mechanisms cause systemic problems within the food system;
- Identify actionable entry points that can result in systemic changes within the food system and amend the identified problematic behavior;
- Identify relevant actors and their influence on and interest in addressing entry points; and
- Provide policy recommendations based on entry points, policy objectives, and relevant actors.

Box 2 (page 8) demonstrates how this support tool can be applied to Ethiopia. Additional examples of tools are shown in Table 1 (page 9).
Local diet data show that low-income women in rural areas experience high levels of micronutrient deficiencies compared with higher-income women. Dairy is identified as the diet gap.

Women are aware of the health benefits of dairy foods, but these products are too expensive and retail stores are not in convenient locations or open at convenient times.

Infrastructure does not support safe milk supply to retailers. Cultural attitudes and a lack of support reduce home production. Retail and agriculture are thus identified as crucial entry points.

Align infrastructure investments toward safe milk transportation from farm to retail.

Develop existing food-at-work programs at women’s workplaces.

Establish retail hubs that sell milk at convenient times. Support women’s production of dairy products.

Once stakeholders are convened, developing a shared agenda among them is key to designing food systems policies that maximize benefits and minimize risks. Brief III in this series, “Developing a Shared Agenda,” details how to use evidence to create awareness of the benefits and risks of relevant policy options. It also shares tools and methods to guide policy decision-making, to help assess policy coherence, and to mitigate and manage conflict.
The Food Systems Decision Support Tool has been applied in Ethiopia to develop a trade and investment program in support of the agrifood sector for the Dutch government. The first step was to define the existing policy objectives and the mandate of the Dutch Embassy in Ethiopia (step 1). These objectives were defined as follows:

- Reduce household vulnerability, improve resilience to shocks, and promote community-based nutrition in food-insecure areas of rural Ethiopia.
- Increase agricultural productivity and market access in surplus-producing areas with increased participation of women and youth.
- Increase the competitiveness and business climate for several agribusiness subsectors.

The mapping of food system outcomes (step 2) found the following:

- The level of child stunting in Ethiopia has been declining, noncommunicable diseases are on the rise, diets are dominated by starchy staples, and consumption of both nutrient-rich foods and processed foods is increasing.
- Gross domestic product increased by an annual rate of 10% between 2007 and 2017, with agriculture being a major contributor.
- Agricultural expansion contributed to a reduction in biodiversity. Rising demand for food led to an increase in cultivated area, but the number of farmers increased even faster, resulting in smaller crop areas.
- Environmental drivers of the food system include declining rainfall, major floods, soil erosion, and land and forest degradation. Potential trade-offs include greater dietary diversity and the impact on the environment, as well as a risk of more prevalent obesity and overweight due to higher calorie consumption.
- Potential synergies include more diverse production and consumption with a more resilient ecosystem.

Diagramming causal processes (step 3) through consultations and an expert workshop for each of the policy objectives helped reveal feedback mechanisms causing issues in the food system (step 4). These feedback mechanisms included increasing pressure on available land resources given population growth, the limited carrying capacity of the agroecological environment, and possible reliance on food aid by vulnerable households. The causal diagrams and expert workshops helped identify entry points for addressing the different feedback mechanisms (step 5). For example, to address the limited carrying capacity of the agroecological environment, one entry point would be to diversify cropping systems, focusing on agroecologically suitable crops. Another would be to create employment to support income diversification as a way of boosting the resilience of the livelihoods of households in food-insecure areas. Through participatory mapping, the tool helped define actors in the private sector, public sector, and donor community who could develop programs for the small-scale private sector and create jobs, indicating their influence and interest (step 6). Finally, policy recommendations were given for social protection, landscape restoration, and employment creation to promote income diversification, based on the measures available to stakeholders and the relative costs of each option (step 7).
## TABLE 1

### TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR MANAGING STAKEHOLDERS AND IDENTIFYING POLICY ENTRY POINTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOOLS AND RESOURCES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools and resources for identifying relevant stakeholders</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NetMap Toolbox: Influence Mapping of Social Networks</strong></td>
<td>This interview-based tool maps different actors to help understand who the different stakeholders are, how they are linked, and what their goals and influence are.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eva Schiffer, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WFP Gender and Stakeholder Analysis</strong></td>
<td>This resource summarizes why, when, and how to conduct a gender-sensitive stakeholder analysis.</td>
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<td>World Food Program Gender Office</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Audience Analysis Tool</strong></td>
<td>This tool maps stakeholders based on their influence and interest, placing them in four categories: whom to keep satisfied, whom to partner closely with, whom to monitor, and to whom to show consideration.</td>
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<td><strong>Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping</strong></td>
<td>This mapping tool identifies which stakeholders are doing what, where, and how. It generates qualitative and quantitative data on core nutrition actions implemented through the health, food, education, and social protection systems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN Network for Scaling Up Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Participatory Research Tool to Map Food Systems</strong></td>
<td>This research paper describes in detail the participatory stakeholder and power mapping process the researchers took in Bolivia and Kenya to map relevant stakeholders in each country.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacobi et al., 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Who Is Making Food Policy in [Country]</strong></td>
<td>This protocol provides guidelines for using a simple method of mapping individual countries’ food policymaking. Results can be submitted to the project to facilitate analysis and comparison.</td>
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<tr>
<td>City University of London, Centre for Food Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Identifying, Engaging, and Sustaining Champions for Nutrition</strong></td>
<td>This toolkit suggests ways of identifying, engaging, and sustaining nutrition champions, based on lessons from 30 SUN countries.</td>
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<td>Transform Nutrition Consortium and Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement</td>
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This report explains the importance of multistakeholder mechanisms in policymaking for sustainable food systems and shares lessons from 10 national and subnational mechanisms to bring stakeholders together.

This framework can be used to engage and strengthen capacities of governments and stakeholders to apply a food systems approach to its policies, programs, and strategies in 4 ways:
1. Identify an individual or group of food systems champions and build momentum
2. Conduct a holistic food systems assessment
3. Initiate a multistakeholder process for dialogue and action
4. Strengthen institutional capacity for food systems governance in the long term

The tool helps users identify the actions required to develop more coherence across food systems in support of healthier and more sustainable diets in 6 steps:
1. Set a clear diet quality objective
2. Understand consumer perceptions
3. Review the role of the food system
4. Prioritize actions
5. Create a cooperative climate
6. Ensure actions are long-term and sustainable

This tool helps policymakers scan the food system and identify entry points to inform policy recommendations in 7 steps:
1. Identify policy objectives
2. Map the food system relevant to the policy objectives: trends, trade-offs, and synergies
3. Draw causal processes
4. Determine feedback mechanisms in the system behavior of the food system
5. Identify actionable entry points within the food system
6. Define relevant actors and their influence on and interest in addressing entry points
7. Based on entry points, policy objectives, and relevant actors, provide policy recommendations

### Table 1 continued

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<td>National and Sub-National Food Systems Multistakeholder Mechanisms: An Assessment of Experiences One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems Program, 2021</td>
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| Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation OnePlanet, 2020 |
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Notes


8 World Food Programme (WFP), “Gender and Stakeholder Analysis” (Rome: WFP Gender Office, n.d.), https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/02cb728b1db4c5f98a747afa7c17ce5/download/.


10 This box is based on UNEP et al., National and Sub-National Food Systems Multistakeholder Mechanisms.


Brief II was prepared by Ursula Trübswasser, Corinna Hawkes, Caroline Andridge, Natasha Ledlie, Augustin Flory and Albertha Nyaku.

Citation for the overall resource: Centre for Food Policy at City, University of London and Results for Development (R4D), Taking a Food Systems Approach to Policymaking: A Resource for Policymakers. London, UK and Washington D.C. 2022.

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