

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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FOR THE USE AND APPLICATION OF THE
POLICY PRODUCTS OF THE COMMITTEE
ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY (CFS) BY
PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS

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SUMMARY:

Foundations fund food systems work on many fronts, often without a shared reference for how that work fits the global picture. The policy products of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) offer one. They are negotiated by governments together with civil society, Indigenous Peoples, the private sector and philanthropy, and they draw on independent scientific evidence from the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN). Being endorsed by governments, they give foundations, partners and public authorities a common reference for action on food systems. This Guidance Document shows how foundations can put the CFS policy products to work through three pathways:

1. Strategic Orientation: The policy agenda of the CFS reflects priority areas of action for food security and nutrition and food systems. Test your strategy against the CFS agenda to find entry points, identify areas of collaboration and emerging priorities.

2. Programme Design: CFS products are evidence-based, highly deliberate policy recommendations. Use CFS guidance to shape programmes and projects, inform grantmaking, and guide interventions.

3. Ecosystem Advocacy and Accountability: CFS policy products are endorsed by CFS Member States and supported by other stakeholders. Use them to support campaigning, translation and dissemination, advocacy, and accountability, connecting local action to national commitments and global agendas.

The pathways are options, not a blueprint. Choose those that fit your role, portfolio and partners. Each comes with a case study from philanthropic practice, and the Guidance will be updated as foundations share their experience.



1. Use CFS Policy Products to review and set strategies and align programmes to a global agenda for food security and nutrition.
2. Use CFS Policy Products to shape projects and programmes, putting the recommendations into practice through partnerships on the ground.
3. Disseminate CFS Policy Products and use them to support advocacy efforts and build networks based on globally-agreed policy priorities for food security and nutrition.

1. CFS Policy Products in Action - Pathways to Implementation

1.1

Introduction to the Guidance Document

Policy products of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) offer philanthropic foundations a uniquely powerful anchor for their work—one that combines inclusive multilateral and legitimate decision-making with scientific rigour and practical policy coherence.

The CFS strives for a world free from hunger and the progressive realization of the right to food. CFS recommendations are forged through the world's foremost inclusive intergovernmental and international multilateral platform, where Member States negotiate alongside civil society, private sector, Indigenous Peoples, farmers' organisations, researchers and other actors. This political credibility is reinforced by the robust, peer-reviewed evidence base provided by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN), guaranteeing that foundations are investing in scientifically sound solutions.

As CFS policies are international agreements adopted by national governments, foundations can align their strategies exploring synergies with state partners, enabling smoother collaboration, greater national ownership, and more sustainable, long-term impact.

The CFS Action Plan to Strengthen the Uptake of CFS Policy Products (2024) outlines that “strengthening the usefulness, ownership, awareness and use of CFS policy products is a collective responsibility that requires joint efforts as well as close collaboration between relevant stakeholders”. The Action Plan intends to be a roadmap with actions for promoting the uptake of CFS policy products at all levels towards the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

As emphasised by the reform of the CFS in 2009, the mechanisms and members of the CFS have different roles and responsibilities. Member states hold primary responsibility for translating CFS policy products into policies, programmes and legislative instruments, but all stakeholders of the CFS have a key role to play in supporting uptake of CFS policy products. **As funding institutions, philanthropic foundations have a specific role, power and function within the Committee.** This Guidance Document outlines the different pathways through which philanthropic foundations can leverage this differentiated role to put CFS policies into practice – thereby contributing to enhanced policy coherence for food security and nutrition.

This Guidance Document primarily focuses on the uptake of CFS policy products by philanthropic foundations, but should be taken in combination with engagement in all three strategic functions of the CFS: Platform, Policy and Uptake. The document is organized around the different ways foundations can contribute to CFS policy implementation, covering three overarching pathways:

1. strategic orientation
2. programme and project design
3. advocacy and campaigning

Supported by strategic engagement across the three functions and wide range of activities of the CFS and HLPE-FSN.

1.2

Who is this document for?

This document is for any philanthropic foundation **that works on topics related to food security and nutrition**: food systems, agroecology, nutrition and healthy diets, livestock systems, climate change and resource use, land tenure and land use, rights and governance, and more. **CFS policies can be useful reference tools, helping foundations to find entry points to global thematic priorities, orient their work, and save time.** This document is therefore for any foundation interested in grounding their work in global processes, and aligning investments and grants with globally-endorsed policy instruments for greater coherence and efficiency.

How to use this guide:

The guide is designed to be used as a toolkit, with which foundations may review their strategic and programmatic portfolio against the library of CFS policy products and find areas of potential engagement. Not all recommendations will be relevant to all foundations; foundations can assume a range of roles in policy and social change, including as advocates, opinion leaders, facilitators of advocacy, conveners, funders, or enablers of collective action. The specific role(s) each foundation assumes will affect how they interact with the recommendations. The ways in which philanthropic foundations will engage with CFS policies will also depend on organizational structure, strategic priorities, geographical focus, and the priorities of partner networks. The options for uptake presented below are precisely options: a menu of choices that can be adapted to organizational needs and realities.

The Guidance Document is also designed to be a living document: feedback, testing, and further experience of foundations implementing CFS policies may inform additional approaches to be included in the future.

1.3

Glossary of terms

The CFS's [Action Plan](#) defines '**Uptake**' as all activities that promote the implementation of CFS policy products, including increasing their "usefulness", "use", "awareness" and "ownership". Uptake is thus intrinsically linked with the policy and platform functions of the CFS: strong convening power and multistakeholder policy negotiations increase the value and positioning of CFS policy products, while active use of CFS policies reinforces the global value of the CFS as a platform and demonstrates the value of the policy convergence process.

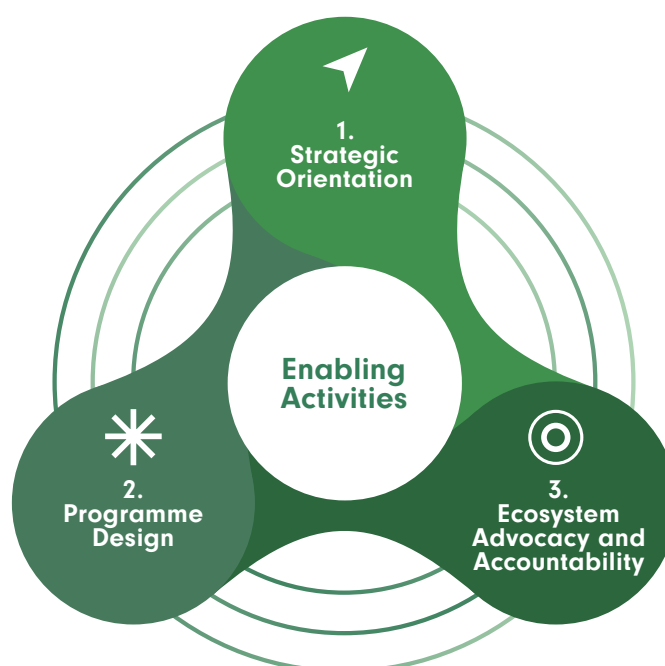
The CFS's [Action Plan](#) defines the '**Use**' - a form of uptake - of a CFS policy product as happening when "strategies, programmes and policies are designed and developed...[on the basis of] CFS products". As well as this formal use, another key component of CFS uptake covers the tools and guidelines developed on the basis of CFS policy products. These products are necessary to bridge global and local realities and lay the groundwork for formal use.

2. Pathways for Uptake: Summary

This document outlines three umbrella pathways for philanthropic foundations to support the uptake of CFS Policy Products: consulting CFS policies to inform **strategic orientation**; using them to shape **programmatic design and prioritization**, and referencing them to strengthen ecosystem **advocacy and accountability**. These are underpinned by a cross-cutting engagement with other elements of the CFS and HLPE-FSN work programmes.

An important note to consider is that philanthropies do not always have to be a conforming voice, but can be a dissenting one too - where this makes sense to their strategies and goals, and the goals of the organizations they partner with. While the participatory CFS process affords its policy products wide legitimacy, this process is not without its challenges: an unavoidable result of consensus-based negotiations is compromise, meaning the final products will not necessarily reflect all the critical topics and proposals presented by members and participants of the CFS during the process. Consulting with partners on the ground is crucial to using CFS policies in a way that amplifies the most relevant recommendations, but also works to fill any marginalized issues or blind spots within the policy recommendations.

Visual summary: Pathways for uptake



1. Use CFS Policy Products to review and set strategies and align programmes to a global agenda for food security and nutrition.

2. Use CFS Policy Products to shape projects and programmes, putting the recommendations into practice through partnerships on the ground.

3. Disseminate CFS Policy Products and use them to support advocacy efforts and build networks based on globally-agreed policy priorities for food security and nutrition.

2.1

Pathways for Uptake 1: Strategic Orientation

CFS policies can be used to inform philanthropic strategic orientation, aligning philanthropic areas of intervention in food systems with global priorities and evidence-based needs for food security and nutrition policy. Within the CFS, topics selected for policy development represent a negotiation between 127 Member Countries, as well as representatives of UN agencies, academic institutions, and the three mechanisms, representing philanthropic foundations, civil society and Indigenous Peoples, and the private sector. Furthermore, the policy products are typically based on a widely consultative scientific report prepared by the HLPE-FSN, and support the realization of the right to adequate food. Combined, this means that the policy agenda of the CFS typically reflects priority areas of action for food systems and food security and nutrition grounded in global political agendas and in scientific evidence, and thus can provide a contextual background for philanthropic action.

To integrate CFS policy products into strategic orientation, and therefore contribute to their wider uptake, philanthropic foundations may:

- Review strategic priorities against the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW). This can help identify any upcoming opportunities where foundations can expand or focus work plans to align with the CFS, making use of the global attention and scientific evidence brought by the HLPE-FSN and CFS processes.
- Review strategic priorities and country focus against the CFS library of policy products, to identify where ongoing work can benefit from the range of evidence-based and nationally-endorsed policy recommendations. *For example, a foundation developing a food systems strategy could consult the 2021 Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN) to identify effective strategies to address food security and nutrition through a food systems lens, and the periodic HLPE-FSN Critical, Emerging and Enduring Issues (CEEI) notes to anticipate upcoming priorities for food systems.*
- If conducting a strategic planning process, use CFS policies and the CFS MYPoW to provide input and inform where new programmes may be developed or existing ones expanded. This may inform philanthropic strategies' contextual background or specific programmatic choices.
 - To inform strategic context, CFS policy products may be used to connect philanthropic work to a globalized picture of the wider food system trends, priorities and action levers to contextualize a theory of change.
 - To inform specific programmatic choices, CFS policies may be used to identify areas of priority to invest in and different strategic programmatic levers for food systems transformation.
- If conducting a mid-term strategy review or final strategy evaluation, review against CFS policy products and the MYPoW to inform potential timely strategic pivots during a strategy period.

Understandably, foundations pursue strategy development and review through different processes. Therefore, these recommendations may be more or less relevant depending on the strategy process, timeline, and flexibility, particularly for foundations where food systems related issues do not represent the entirety or majority of the portfolio.

Case Study Strategic foundation of the Agroecology Coalition

Since its inception, and reinforced by the current [2024-2030 Strategy](#), the work of the Agroecology Coalition is firmly grounded in the 13 principles of agroecology put forward by the HLPE-FSN report on [Agroecological approaches and other innovations for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition](#) (2019), and referenced by [the ensuing CFS policy recommendations](#) of the same title. Similarly, the Agroecology Fund strategic plan calls to align funding and advocacy with the HLPE-FSN's 13 principles. By definition, therefore, the work of the Agroecology Coalition and the Agroecology Fund directly, consistently, and comprehensively contributes to the operationalization of the policy recommendations and the 13 principles.

2.2 Pathway for Uptake 2: Programme Design

Best practice for the uptake of CFS policy products involves formal 'use', integrating them into active programmes and policies. As it relates to philanthropic foundations, this can be applied to project and programme design, using CFS policy products to shape programmes, inform grantmaking strategies, and guide interventions.

In particular, the CFS's Voluntary Guidelines (VGs) can be most useful to foundations. Compared to annual policy recommendations, the VGs are longer documents, typically developed through a multi-year process. As they address the respective topic from a range of policy perspectives and contain more action-oriented guidance to policy implementation, the VGs can be more helpful tools for philanthropic foundations in designing specific policies, strategies and programmes in various contexts. These are: the Voluntary Guidelines on [Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition](#) (2023), the Voluntary Guidelines on [Food Systems and Nutrition](#) (2021), the Voluntary Guidelines on the [Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security](#) (2012), and the seminal Voluntary Guidelines to Support the [Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food](#) in the Context of National Food Security (2004).

Philanthropic foundations interested in taking up CFS policy products through project and programme design may:

- Interpret relevant CFS policy products into actionable principles. This translates the global guidance into foundation-relevant, locally-specific action agendas, particularly when co-created with civil society partners.
- Incorporate such principles into compliance processes for grantmaking strategies, aligning investments with CFS policy goals.
- Incorporate such CFS-inspired principles into collaborative project design to align multistakeholder projects with globally-endorsed instruments.

- Add indicators or questions informed by CFS policy recommendations to Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) frameworks and project evaluation processes. *For example, a MEAL framework for a gender equality project may look to the [CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women and Girls' Empowerment](#) for indicators of success and core principles to consider.*
- Connect CFS policy recommendations with the development of programme design, aligning programmatic activities with global policy guidance. This can mean using CFS policies and CFS policy-derived parameters as tools to guide project activities, to support the structure and goals of new projects, and to empower partners based on globally-agreed policy frameworks endorsed by their national governments.
- Working with partners on the ground, identify evidence gaps, underexplored issues, or blind spots in CFS policy products and address these through investments and grants. Ideally, any new issues should be supported by evidence generated through participatory, ground-level research and, where possible, aligned with emerging national positions. This can also help to reduce tensions between global recommendations and local priorities.
- Working with governments, map national policy positions, goals and political contexts in reference to CFS recommendations to target programmes most effectively and coordinate actions across philanthropies.
- Partner with universities and other research institutions to fill specific knowledge, research, and data gaps in the global food systems debate, particularly related to the implementation of the policy recommendations. This can also contribute to filling any gaps in the existing policy recommendations that result from the negotiation process.
- Where applicable, support civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organizations interested in CFS uptake activities through financial and convening support offered by foundations, taking a 'venture capital for public change' approach. In particular, such collaboration with civil society organizations can ensure this work prioritizes the agency and involvement of social groups most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition.
- Seek dialogue with HLPE-FSN drafting team and steering committee members and other experts, for additional guidance on how and in what contexts to best promote the policy recommendations.

To enhance impact, the work of philanthropic foundations is very often driven and shaped by the priorities of partners on the ground. It is important, therefore, that across all the options for programme design, actions are grounded in thematic and operational pull from partners. Each foundation, in reviewing the options for implementation, should consider the policy products most thematically relevant to, and aligned with, the priorities of their partners on the ground.

Case Study the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forestry and Fisheries (VGGTs) in Benin

Robert Bosch Stiftung works with TMG Think Tank for Sustainability and local partners in Benin to promote use of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forestry and Fisheries (VGGTs). The project is aimed at translating the VGGTs into the local context in Benin. Working in partnership with local land tenure civil society organizations, particularly women-led groups, the project uses the VGGTs to clarify their tenure rights, the decisions of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the international obligations endorsed by the national government. Using the VGGTs and the UNCCD decisions as a reference, the project involves finding points of entry in Benin's land degradation neutrality and land restoration policies, to strengthen tenure rights across land policy domains.

Case Study Philanthropy-supported agroecology transitions

The Global Alliance for the Future of Food (GA) supports initiatives identifying investment opportunities for agroecological transitions. By working in partnership, taking an ecosystem coordination role, and leveraging multilateral funding, the GA aims to support the development and rollout of national agroecological strategies in multiple countries. The Regenerative & Agroecological Food Systems Transitions (RAFT) programme aims to catalyse the transition towards agroecological food systems, including by supporting national agroecological strategies in relevant countries. RAFT is aligned closely with CFS policy products, particularly in referencing the 13 principles of agroecology and the policy recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems that Enhance Food Security and Nutrition, as well as the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI).

2.3 Pathway for Uptake 3: Ecosystem Advocacy and Accountability

CFS policy products represent evidence-based, globally-agreed policy guidance, and are endorsed by CFS Member States and supported by other stakeholders. As such, they can be a useful tool for campaigning, advocacy, and accountability at national, regional and global scales. This is especially so for the previously mentioned CFS Voluntary Guidelines. In some cases, the CFS Voluntary Guidelines and their development have marked significant leaps in global debates - such as the guidelines on the Right to Food and on responsible tenure. The VGs generally, but particularly in these cases, can provide an intellectual and normative standard for future policy negotiations, meaning they are especially strong reference points and carry a greater power for advocacy.

This type of work may involve activities such as dissemination, convening and knowledge sharing, which is crucial uptake precursor work to connect the international guidance tools with discussions and developments of legislative action, public policies and programmes on the national level.

Philanthropic foundations looking to integrate CFS policy products into advocacy, accountability, and campaigning activities may:

- Support the communications and dissemination efforts of CFS and HLPE-FSN Secretariats to build awareness of the policy products, such as

through using philanthropic communication networks or through financial support.

- Refer to CFS policy products in campaigning and advocacy. Endorsed by member states, these documents are voluntary commitments by national governments. They can therefore strengthen the legitimacy of national campaigns and be used as a framework around which to structure campaigning and advocacy goals, empowering civil society partners and local philanthropic actors in relations with local and national governments. This could include:
 - Pointing to voluntary commitments made by the government through CFS policies to strengthen campaign demands;
 - And reinforcing domestic and regional responsibility for use and application. A successful example of campaigning and dissemination working with regional bodies to reinforce their responsibility for implementing CFS policies comes from the 2014 CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture (CFS-RAI Principles). In 2018, with support from regional organizations and international research institutions, these were adapted into a regionally-contextualized document for the Association of Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN) - the ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (ASEAN RAI). In 2023, they were then developed into a practical handbook adopted by ASEAN Parliamentarians to guide and reinforce their implementation at national level.
- If leading projects related to national policy, call upon CFS policy products to help partners to orient their work towards globally-endorsed frameworks and therefore strengthen impact in influencing national policy where relevant.
- Translate and disseminate CFS policy products for wider familiarity, visibility, and impact. This could include linguistic translation beyond the 6 UN-language translations provided by the CFS, as well as context-specific interpretations, e.g. adapting the policy recommendations to national legislative, regulatory and socio-political contexts or to project needs.
 - A clear example of this is the People's Manual on the Guidelines on Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests, developed by and for civil society organizations as a popular education tool to encourage implementation of the CFS VGGTs. Another is the Portuguese-language poetic interpretation of the VGGTs developed by the Espaço Feminista do Nordeste in Brazil with support from FAO Brazil.
- Employ CFS Policy Products as an educational and intellectual tool within philanthropic networks. For example, reflecting global political and evidence-based priorities, CFS Policy Products may be a useful framework to connect the work of relevant partners (including CSOs, business owners, and researchers) to global shifts in food systems and contextualize their work across different scales. Foundations can support this connection by bringing their wide range of partners in contact with CFS processes and policies, embedding them in their project documentation, and raising awareness across philanthropic networks and beyond.

- Leverage philanthropic convening power to create dialogue and co-convene spaces, increasing the visibility and dissemination of CFS policy products in such spaces, with civil society and state collaborators and bringing in organizations such as global and regional development banks, other UN agencies, INGOs, climate funds, and other financial institutions.
- Map and build a network of allied organizations (including campaigning organizations, CSOs, research bodies and others) to support policy promotion and implementation in national contexts; identify system-level capacity, knowledge and evidence gaps, and redesign programmes with these in mind to strengthen the ecosystem.
- Champion CFS policies across fora and spaces, such as the COPs of the Rio Conventions, the UNFSS, Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, G20, World Bank meetings and others. This aligns messaging, avoids duplication, and raises the profile of the CFS more broadly; it can also create synergies in the work of foundations and other stakeholders across different global fora. There is a leadership vacuum in promoting CFS policy products across various policy spaces relevant to food systems, and philanthropic foundations have an opportunity to lead the way in making these kinds of connections.

Case Study Using the VGGTS to connect the three Rio Conventions

The women's land rights initiative - a collaboration which includes PFM member Robert Bosch Stiftung as well as partners such as TMG Think Tank for Sustainability - is focused on advancing women's land tenure rights. Through this initiative, partners use the VGGTs to connect clauses in the three Rio Conventions (the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Convention on Biological Diversity) to land tenure rights, and to find synergies and connectivity between the three Rio Conventions -- thus strengthening their overall coherence and relevance to tenure rights. The initiative works with civil society organizations to support them to push for tenure-related agreements in international fora (e.g. the Rio Conventions) through their national processes, thus bringing the VGGTs more concretely into international and national policy spaces.

2.4 Enabling Pathway - Engagement with the CFS Policy and Platform Functions

CFS policy uptake is cyclical - the more consultative and participatory the CFS is, the stronger and more applicable the policies it produces are. The use and uptake of CFS policies thus starts with the development of the policies in Rome; ensuring diversity and inclusive participation in CFS governance and the policy development process helps ensure ownership of the resulting instruments by all those ultimately responsible for their application and lays the groundwork for better collaboration between foundations, civil society organisations, and governance institutions at national or regional levels. In order for CFS policy products to be relevant and useful to philanthropic foundations, and for philanthropic foundations to be able to meaningfully contribute to their uptake, philanthropic foundations with the resources and relevant work programmes may consider engaging more broadly with the three strategic functions of the CFS: Platform and Policy as well as Uptake.

To strengthen the policy products of the CFS and their uptake by engaging across the three platforms of the CFS, philanthropic foundations may:

- Contribute to HLPE-FSN reports and processes. Beyond providing feedback through report public consultations, philanthropic foundations can use their on-the-ground experience to share relevant case studies and practical examples relevant to HLPE-FSN topics to strengthen the evidence base for recommendations. Additionally, the HLPE-FSN is limited by financial and human resources; philanthropic foundations can support the HLPE-FSN to ensure it is able to continue providing first-class evidence to the CFS. This supports uptake of the resulting policy products by philanthropic foundations as it widens the evidence base and includes philanthropic perspectives and experience in the inception, increasing the relevance and usefulness to foundations.
- Participate in Platform activities of the CFS, bringing perspectives from philanthropic experiences in other policy fora (such as the COPs of the Rio Conventions) to the CFS, supporting coherence and coordination across global policy spaces.
- Support wide and inclusive participation in policy development, particularly fostering the involvement of marginalized communities and constituencies through the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism to the CFS. Gaps or underaddressed issues in the final policy products policies may arise from lower participation and attendance to the policy convergence process, and addressing these gaps going forward can start with ensuring strong and diverse delegations.

3. Annex: Further Information - the CFS and Philanthropy

3.1

Annex 1

Introduction to the CFS

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is the foremost inclusive global platform for food security policy, established in 1974 and reformed in 2009. It is an intergovernmental and international platform representing governments, UN agencies, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, financial and research institutions, philanthropic foundations, and the private sector. The vision of the reformed CFS is to strive for a world without hunger and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. Using an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach, the CFS develops and endorses policy products on a wide range of food security and nutrition topics.

CFS Governance Structure

The CFS is open for participation by Members (UN Member States), Participants (UN agencies, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, financial and research institutions, philanthropic foundations, and the private sector), and Observers (other interested organizations working in the ambit of food security and nutrition). The CFS is governed by the annual Plenary and led by a Chair and a Bureau, elected by the Plenary on a biannual basis. The Bureau is accompanied by an Advisory Group and supported by a Secretariat based in Rome. The Bureau is a regionally balanced subset of Member States, while the Advisory Group comprised of the three mechanisms - the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM), the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM), and the Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism (PFM) - as well as the Rome-based Agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP), the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, the CGIAR, and other ad-hoc participants. The CFS follows a multi-year programme of work (MYPoW), developed on a periodic basis by the Bureau and Advisory Group and endorsed by the CFS Plenary. The CFS has a science-policy interface through the independent scientific advisory body, the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN). The HLPE-FSN is a network of over 2000 experts in the field of food security and nutrition, who can be activated to contribute to drafting and provide feedback and evidence, acting on an independent and pro-bono basis. It is governed by a Steering Committee of 15 members on a rotating 2-year term, supported by a small Secretariat. The CFS reports to the UN General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and reports to the FAO Conference through the FAO Council.

CFS Strategic Functions and Policy Development Process

The CFS has three strategic functions: Platform, Policy, and Uptake. Platform refers to the capacity of the CFS to convene stakeholders across food security and nutrition governance, and to create space for dialogue and knowledge sharing to advance policy coherence for food security and nutrition. Policy refers to the development, negotiation and endorsement of 'policy products', and the policy development cycle is determined by the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW). Uptake, meanwhile, refers to the activities encouraging the use and application of CFS policy products after their endorsement.

The main categories of CFS policy products are: *Policy Recommendations*, i.e. targeted policy documents on a specific topic affecting food security and nutrition; and *Voluntary Guidelines*, longer and broader policy documents typically resulting from a multi-year process. The Voluntary Guidelines developed through this extended process are: the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition (2023), the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (2021), the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (2012), and the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (2004). Policy recommendations and Principles have been developed on a wider range of topics, including on water and food security, youth engagement, social protection, price volatility, investment in smallholder agriculture, connecting smallholders to markets, agroecological approaches, responsible agricultural investment, protracted crises, climate change, fisheries, livestock, among others. The policy development process typically begins with an evidence-based report produced by the HLPE-FSN and/or through work supported technically by FAO, IFAD, WFP and representatives of the CFS Advisory Group. The Secretariat, supported by an ad hoc Technical Task Team, drafts the basis for the policy product, which is then iterated through written feedback cycles, discussed in Open-Ended Working Groups, negotiated by Members and Participants, and finally endorsed by CFS Members at the annual Plenary meetings.

Role and Impact of the CFS

The CFS plays a significant role in food systems governance as the only intergovernmental and international platform dedicated to the broad range of food security and nutrition related issues. Its governance is unique within the multilateral global governance system, as since the reform in 2009 it includes formal participation and representation of a wider range of stakeholder groups, particularly civil society, Indigenous Peoples, private sector, and philanthropic foundations. Additionally, the science-policy interface afforded by the HLPE-FSN - which is independent but mandated by the CFS and to which the CFS is obliged to respond - ensures the work of the CFS is grounded in evidence.

As a consequence, the library of policy products developed and endorsed through the CFS are a global public good. They are based on scientific input and negotiated by a full spectrum of stakeholders including the constituencies most affected by food security and nutrition; they cover a wide range of issues selected as highest priority by CFS Members and Participants. The policy products provide normative guidance for all actors involved in food security and nutrition worldwide.

The Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism

The Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism (PFM) is the mechanism through which philanthropic foundations engage with the CFS, working alongside two other mechanisms: the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) and the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM). Through its Coordination Committee (presently consisting of the Gates Foundation, the Global Alliance for the Future of Food, and the Agroecology Fund) and Focal Point, the

3.2

Annex 2

CFS and Philanthropy

PFM amplifies and coordinates the collective engagement of philanthropic foundations in CFS processes, by (i) facilitating information exchange, (ii) developing joint positions where appropriate, (iii) liaising between the CFS, its Bureau and members through representatives of the PFM, and (iv) conducting outreach and organizing forums and events for philanthropic actors aligned with CFS workstreams.

Philanthropic strategies often include funding localized projects as well as looking to interface with the global context: how do grants and investments fit into a wider, systemic shift? How can knowledge best be mobilized? What are the trends in how finance and policy moves? What are research norms and agendas? How do these add up to a shift towards more equitable, sustainable, just, safe and resilient food systems that can support the achievement of universal food security and nutrition?

Engaging with the CFS can be a compass for exploring some of these questions: the HLPE-FSN represents the state-of-knowledge for the policy topics selected and can point to research gaps and agendas; CFS workstreams represent the aggregate of national priorities within food systems; and CFS policies reflect globally-agreed norms and current debates. The CFS can therefore be a useful entry point for philanthropy into wider UN and multilateral systems. Sitting across the three Rome-based Agencies, with multistakeholder participation, and with institutionalized connections to other UN agencies and international organizations, the CFS can catalyze action across different parts of the UN.

CFS policy outcomes are opportunities for dialogue, for discussion, and for implementation. They can add value to philanthropic work by providing an opportunity for researchers, partners and implementers to see how their work connects into a larger system, and contextualize impact, supporting and strengthening global policy coherence for food security and nutrition.

Moreover, the philanthropic sector can contribute to the visibility - and thereby to the overall strength - of the CFS by centralizing the CFS in convening spaces and discussions, by bridging the experience on the ground with the capacity to engage globally, and by drawing connections across global fora in which foundations are active. Each philanthropic foundation has different experiences, focus areas, networks of partners -- and therefore different spaces to move and different points of connection with CFS workstreams.

Interested in joining the mechanism?

[Email the PFM for more information and to register your interest.](#)