

14. PROMOTING SITE-ADAPTED AGRICULTURE ASSURING FOOD SECURITY THROUGH ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TECHNIQUES WITHIN A TERRITORIAL APPROACH FRAMEWORK

ACTION AREA	FOOD SYSTEMS RESILIENCE
SOLUTION CLUSTER	INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS
THEMATIC AREA	AGROECOLOGY FOR RESILIENCE
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WHAT, IN BRIEF, IS THE SOLUTION?

With a stronger focus on **rural development** according to local conditions, culture, climate, capacities, knowledge and policies the vulnerability of small-holder farmers can be reduced significantly, resilience against external shocks can be increased. This requires to take appropriate land use into account that focusses not only on the benefits of each individual actor, but also on environmental factors with an eye on keeping the land sustainable. Such **site adapted agriculture** has to be stronger covered within the **territorial approach**. It involves that the local and subnational level will have to play a crucial role to overcome inequality, power imbalances and environmental vulnerabilities. Although the importance of **small-scale agriculture** in developing countries is increasingly recognized as the most significant lever in national strategies to combat poverty and provide food security, it is rarely given the necessary political priority. It is essential that small-scale agriculture (including food processing and distribution) is inserted in a sustainable local economy (including local markets and public procurement from small and intermediary cities). **Turning unproductive small-scale and subsistence agriculture into an economically viable, socially and ecologically sustainable productive sector, is one of the most important factors in overcoming hunger and poverty.** To achieve this, it will be necessary to overcome the challenge of limitations to growth by implementing a socially acceptable structural reform including environmental sustainability of rural areas. An important component of a successful territorial approach is developing local strategies that have proven to be successful, including participatory planning, and capacity building for local institutions and actors (i.e. women and youth) to ensure their participation in the longterm (please refer her to the need for good governance, see game changer Nr. 6). At the same time it is also important to note that when addressing nutrition and promoting sustainable diets the various dimensions of **urban-rural linkages and integrated territorial development** can be brought together²².

²² Discussion Paper 'Urban-Rural linkages for nutrition', United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition, January 2020

WHAT WAS/ WERE THE SOURCE(S) FROM WHICH THIS SOLUTION EMERGED?

Welthungerhilfe policy paper on Rural Development reflecting years of experience in rural environments. The paper is currently updated. In addition, the following three papers played a role in the development of the solution as well:

<https://www.donorplatform.org/publication-agenda-2030/fostering-territorial-perspective-for-development-white-paper-jointly-released-by-platform-members-and-partners.html>

https://www.welthungerhilfe.org/files/upload/9%20Dateiablage%20PDFs/ZLR%20-%20Territorialer%20Ansatz%20Studie/2020-11-24_TLD%202020_workshop%20documentation_low%20res.pdf

<http://www.fao.org/3/bq853e/bq853e.pdf>

CFS HLPE Report Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5602en/ca5602en.pdf>

WHAT PROBLEM IS IT TRYING TO ADDRESS WITHIN FOOD SYSTEMS?

The global food system is at a crossroads. Agriculture must meet the challenges of hunger and malnutrition – against a backdrop of population growth, increased pressure on natural resources including soils and water, the loss of biodiversity and the uncertainties associated with climate change. While past efforts focused on boosting agricultural output to produce more food and maximize commodity profit, today's challenges – including climate change – demand a new approach.

Sustainable food systems are needed – food systems that produce more, with more socio-economic benefits and with fewer environmental negative consequences. In many countries, especially in industrialized countries, agriculture is increasingly seen as an enemy of the environment and partly counter-productive policy decisions have been put in place, but there is increasing recognition that a regenerative, productive farming sector can provide **environmental benefits and services** while recognizing the multi-functionality of agriculture, creating rural employment and sustaining livelihoods.

We need to acknowledge that previous contributions often focussed on isolated groups, sectors and locations or benefitted rather economic interests than the environment and the population in the entire area. This means that power asymmetries have not been addressed which finally resulted in an even bigger challenge for those most in need. The challenge to enable all stakeholders to coordinate effectively with each other failed far too often.

WHY IS ADDRESSING THAT PROBLEM IMPORTANT FOR ACHIEVING THE GOAL OF YOUR WORKING GROUP?

The territorial approach in agriculture is not only addressing improved access to nutritious food but keeps especially the vulnerable groups in the southern hemisphere in mind that are not as privileged and with limited access to diversified food. The solution is especially important as it improves their **resilience**. It focusses not only on production but other factors, like the environment by considering the growing pressure on natural resources, above all due to population increases and changing consumption patterns. An appropriate investment in and design of rural development integrating site adopted agricultural approaches therefore is likely to increase the resilience of food systems. It is built on a framework among all stakeholders to integrate policy and practices for multiple land users.

HOW CAN THIS SOLUTION ADDRESS THAT PROBLEM?

The strongest lever of the agricultural sector to promote rural development is **to increase productivity**; other factors include diversification strategies, processing of produce, access to markets and provision of environmental services. **The range of agricultural functions – from ensuring food security, adequate income and sustainable use of natural resources to environmental protection and**

preservation of cultural assets – can only be fulfilled **when site specific strategies can be developed and implemented**. There are no global solutions to this issue and no blueprints for success. Environmental conditions, the level of development and the cultural background in the different locations demand specific agricultural solutions. Above all, agricultural strategies should secure sustainable food supplies – even when the population is growing. At the same time, the local economy, in particular the creation of territorial markets and structures should be supported. Technologically appropriate processing and storage to reduce post-harvest losses are also important.

Based on the local context this includes measures like (further details on measures can be found in other game changers presented by the AT5 environmental WG)

- **To promote and raise awareness of territorial approaches** that are small enough to enable stakeholders to coordinate and maintain control and at the same time large enough to accommodate diverse interests while addressing inter-dependencies and conflict.
- **Capacity building and empowerment of national & sub-national institutions & actors, especially marginalized groups & individuals**, to encourage them to participate in the development of their future living
- **Agroecological** approaches: They are based on applying ecological concepts and principles to optimize interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment while taking into consideration the social aspects that need to be addressed for a sustainable and fair food system. By building synergies, agroecology can support food production and food security and nutrition while restoring the ecosystem services and biodiversity that are essential for sustainable agriculture. Agroecology can play an important role in building resilience and adapting to climate change.
- **Sustainable use of local natural resources**, including the use of renewable energy sources, applying mainly organic fertilizer & opting for integrated farming systems in which a high proportion of nutrients are recycled.
- **Environmentally friendly forms of conventional agriculture** that use modern means of production in crop cultivation and animal husbandry while respecting principles of environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources as well as ethical norms for animal welfare.
- The **different forms of sustainable agriculture** utilize improved seeds, irrigation & mechanization in order to increase yields, within the framework of their specific standards & regulations.
- **Site-specific cultivation methods** can only make sustainable contributions to the conservation of natural resources such as soil, water, air & biodiversity if they are continually adapted to changing framework conditions
- **Increase the positive impact of nutrition programmes and policies by taking into account how rural-urban linkages and territorial approaches affect nutrition**
- **Supporting small-scale farming to increase productivity and farmers' incomes**. The cultivation methods applied are innovative and efficiency-focused, based on up-to-date knowledge. We support access to the necessary resources (loans, infrastructure, seeds, information, etc.). Orienting cultivation methods towards a diversity of plants and varieties. - The focus is on sustainable use of natural resources (soil, water, biodiversity, energy).
- **Agroforestry and integrated farming systems**²³ are significant in this context and are promoted, as are integrated crop protection systems, breeding of adapted seeds, sustainable irrigation management and measures to improve soil fertility (compost, mulching, crop rotation, erosion control and soil conservation techniques).
- **Supporting appropriate methods of keeping and feeding livestock**; including measures for growing feed crops and veterinary provision. Promoting measures to support avoidance of post-harvest losses (e.g. storage) to increase the availability of food and create jobs. Promoting marketing activities (local, regional and export) and the processing of agricultural primary produce for strengthening the local economy. This can take place in partnership with the private sector in order to use existing know-how, capital and logistics structures.
- Poverty eradication and food security must be at the core of **national agricultural policy** in countries affected by hunger. Agriculture should be given higher priority in rural development by international development organisations, matched by an equivalent level of funding. **Site-specific agriculture is an important tool for realising the human right to food.**
- **Industrialised countries must reduce their agricultural and export subsidies where these impair the agricultural development of poor countries** by distorting the markets.

²³ Reference is made to SIFS, Sustainable Integrated Farming Systems, that has been submitted as a game-changing solution on local level by Welthungerhilfe

- Development projects and private business should not use technologies or make investments which conflict with **the conservation of natural resources and the implementation of the right to an adequate standard of living** in the recipient countries.

WHY DOES THIS SOLUTION ALIGN TO THE DEFINITION AND CRITERIA FOR A 'GAME CHANGING SOLUTION' DEVELOPED BY THE SUMMIT?

Site adapted agriculture in a territorial approach is a feasible existing action that has proven to shift operational models according to the local context. It has in addition also the potential to act on multiple parts of the food system. For smallholder farmers it increases the potential impact at scale while it does also take the local politics, capacities and economic challenges into consideration.

WHAT IS THE EXISTING EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE ARGUMENT THAT THIS SOLUTION WILL WORK, OR AT LEAST THAT IT WILL ACHIEVE THE INITIAL OUTCOMES DESCRIBED ABOVE?

Welthungerhilfe is implementing projects that cover integral parts of the approaches mentioned here. There are individual evaluations available that analyse the outcome of these projects and include key recommendations that have already been addressed in follow up projects on global level. Specifically related to territorial approaches the following document provides a very valuable evidence:

<https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/Territorial%20Approaches%20for%20Sustainable%20Development.pdf>

WHAT IS THE CURRENT AND/OR LIKELY POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THIS IDEA?

The support for rural development has been shown by various donors, i.e. German government through the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, BMZ. It states on its webpage that "Germany stands by its promise to contribute significantly to the efforts to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. The BMZ has therefore launched a special initiative 'ONE WORLD – No Hunger' and is spending about 1.5 billion Euros a year on food security and rural development", see also <https://www.bmz.de/en/issues/Food/index.html>.

In addition, the German government recently stated it attaches "very high and increasing importance" to agroecological and other innovative approaches to promoting sustainable agricultural and food systems. This is also shown through this workshop by FAO, BMZ and GIZ:

https://www.weltoehnehunger.org/files/upload/9%20Dateiablage%20PDFs/ZLR%20-%20Territorialer%20Ansatz%20Studie/2020-11-24_TLD%202020_workshop%20documentation_low%20res.pdf

ARE THERE CERTAIN CONTEXTS FOR WHICH THIS SOLUTION IS PARTICULARLY WELL SUITED, OR, CONVERSELY, CONTEXTS FOR WHICH IT IS NOT WELL-SUITED AT ALL?

A territorial approach should be small enough to enable stakeholders to coordinate and at the same time large enough to accommodate diverse interests while addressing inter-dependencies and conflict. Site-specific strategies need to be developed and implemented as part of the solution. This can be related to the geographic area, the level of development as well as key food system indicators. Part of the approach is to build around the local conditions and this enables implementation at global scale. Welthungerhilfe implemented rural development projects in Africa, Asia and South America and as long as the the local context has been taken into consideration there is in theory no limitations in regard to location, level of development or other factors.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE KEY ACTIONS REQUIRED TO ADDRESS THIS SOLUTION? PLEASE MENTION THE IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH FOR 3 LEVELS, IF APPROPRIATE:

The site adapted agriculture approach can easily be connected to the 1st game changer of the environmental working group "Advanced wide-scale adoption of agroecology with farms and rangelands", the 6th gamechanger "Engaging with cities & local governments for resilient territories" & action track 3.