



Collaborations and synergies for sustaining the implementation of SWITCH-Asia Programme for a more impactful #WeSwitch focused on:

VALUE CHAIN APPROACHES IN THE AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS: SUPPORTING THE GREEN RECOVERY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM TRANSITION



26 May 2021 • 1500-1700 (Bangkok Time) • WEBEX

BACKGROUND

The Agri-food systems (AFS) face multiple and interlinked challenges, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, resource scarcity, food loss, and waste generation along the supply chain. Globally, about 30% of all food that is produced and consumed is wasted. Asian countries have a range of specific challenges, including levels of economic development, resources availability, and regulatory systems. Asian farms are also typically smaller than their American or European counterparts, with significantly lower capacity and capability for investment in technologies. MSMEs are the backbone of the Agri-food sector and in addition to constituting a significant part of the economy, they have a critical role to play in addressing a number of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015, particularly those related to hunger and poverty reduction. The EU SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility in close cooperation with EU Delegations, National Focal Points, experts organised the Internal Thematic Consultative and Brainstorming Meeting on Agri-food, focusing on Value Chain Approaches in the Agri-Food System: supporting the green recovery and sustainable food system transition. About 60 participants from various countries and different regions attended the meeting.

Arab HOBALLAH, Team Leader SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility opened the meeting, underlining the most important issues

related to food and agriculture from an SCP perspective. Considerable progress has been done in this sector but still a lot need to be done considering the pressure from the increasing middle class and its demands. The EU has been a leader in promoting sustainable food systems, from which the region could draw lessons for improving the situation and elaborating relevant policies. The SWITCH-Asia Programme provided support to countries on the national level and through grant projects in close cooperation with the line Ministries, National Focal Points, and experts. In the context of the UN, FAO and UNEP are two leading organisations in Agri-food systems with their respective mandates, working in partnership at several occasions such as when promoting the global “Think-Eat-Save” campaign. Partnerships among all concerned key actors is crucial to achieve good results, to share and replicate good practices, to induce consumers towards responsible behavior.

Miroslav BOZIC, European Commission, DG INTPA delivered a welcome speech, highlighting that there is an opportunity for all stakeholders of the SWITCH-Asia Programme to improve cross-fertilisation of their activities and find synergies among them and other partners in the region. The EU is committed to work hand-in-hand with partner countries and organisations to achieve the EU ambition of building a greener and more sustainable societies

and economies, where the benefits are equally shared and where none is left behind. The European Commission has adopted the EU Green Deal in December 2019 as the growth strategy outlining that the EU Member States are committed to zero-emission by

2050 and to achieve an economic growth decoupled by resource use. The Farm-to-Fork Strategy (F2F Strategy), Circular Economy Action Plan, and Biodiversity Strategy are all part of the EU Green Deal and are highly relevant to the Agri-food system.

SESSION I: REGIONAL AND GLOBAL AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS POLICIES

Moderated by Mr. Miroslav BOZIC, European Commission, DG INTPA

Mr. Jan BLOEMENDA (DG SANTE) and **Mr. Olaf HEIDELBACH** (DG AGRI) from European Commission introduced the EU Farm to Fork Strategy.

Mr. Jan BLOEMENDA pointed out that the EU Green Deal is a central document for the EU with clear targets to addressing climate change, global warming, and the loss of biodiversity by 2050. Climate and environmental ambitions of the Green Deal cannot be achieved without sustainable food systems. The F2F Strategy contains 4 general goals and concrete proposals to achieve them. Therefore, developing partnerships and generating innovation and synergies are of high importance, requiring an integrated approach from F2F. He also explained the central role of government in providing legislation, financial incentives, education, research and innovations, procurement, and voluntary/mandatory commitments.

Value Chain Approaches in Agri-food Systems

When it comes to sustainable development, food is a major subject to address globally.

We need to find more ways to produce food sustainably and we cannot do this alone. An integrated approach and international partnerships are needed.

JAN BLOEMENDAL
Policy Officer, DG SANTE, European Commission



Value Chain Approaches in Agri-food Systems

Without research and innovation we cannot achieve the targets of the EU Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy.

Innovation and alternative solutions are key for a paradigm shift in food systems.

OLAF HEIDELBACH
Economic and Policy Analyst, DG AGRI, European Commission



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Mr. Sridhar DHARMAPURI, Leader of the Agriculture and Food Systems Team, from FAO Regional Office for the Asia-Pacific, focused his speech on Asia Pacific countries which have experienced significant economic growth in the last two decades. At the same time, they still have major problems associated with the food system, including most notably malnutrition, unequal distribution, and inequality among countries. FAO has implemented many projects on value chain in countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh and the Pacific Islands. The key project objectives include the introduction of agricultural approaches that promote appropriate solutions based on local resources and capacity on strengthening the local value chain to shortening them to become more efficient and low food loss and waste.

Value Chain Approaches in Agri-food Systems

Food is not always at the centre of the Sustainable Development Agenda. This is the year to put it back.

Nature and society are interrelated and sustainable food systems are those that will turn the tide on poverty and food insecurity.

SRIDHAR DHARMAPURI
Leader of the Agriculture and Food Systems Team, FAO Regional Office for the Asia-Pacific Group



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Mr. James LOMAX, Food Systems and Agriculture Adviser, Biodiversity and Land Management Branch, Ecosystems Division, Seconded to the UN Food Systems Summit Secretariat, referred to the Marrakech Process where the food system approach was launched as one of the working groups before it became one of the programmes of the 10YFP for SCP. Food systems can accelerate a country's achievement of SDGs. The food and agriculture sectors are the starting points that connect production to consumption. Agriculture and the food system can evolve from being negative to becoming positive, carbon zero or carbon negative. We need to connect the dots among policies to foster a systemic transformation.

“ **Value Chain Approaches in Agri-food Systems**

Food systems can accelerate a country's achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals.

Systems don't change systems.
It's people who change systems.



JAMES LOMAX
Food Systems and Agriculture Adviser, Biodiversity and Land Management Branch, Ecosystems Division, UNEP, Seconded to the UN Food Systems Summit Secretariat

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SESSION II: AGRI-FOOD IN ACTION: SHARING OF EXPERIENCE FROM NATIONAL SUPPORT AND GRANT PROJECTS

Moderated by Zulfira ZIKRINA, Key Expert for Central Asia, SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility

“ **Value Chain Approaches in Agri-food Systems**

We need a systems approach in the seafood sector in Vietnam, addressing concerns and needs of all stakeholders.

Delivering practical actions in the framework of the National Action Plan on SCP



XUAN THINH LE
SWITCH-Asia Expert

“ **Value Chain Approaches in Agri-food Systems**

Strong business cases for sustainability are needed to motivate SMEs and banks to scale up green solutions



UJJWAL POKHREL
Project Manager, Tha Bar Wa, WWF Myanmar

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The first presentation was delivered by **Mr. Xuan THINH LE**, SWITCH-Asia Expert from Vietnam. He shared the information on enhancing SCP in the Seafood Sector, as a follow up to the elaboration and adoption of the National Action Plan (NAP) on SCP for Vietnam, which includes targets for the Seafood Sector in terms of resources efficiency and materials used. The support provided to Vietnam will also result in Guidelines on the implementation of SCP tools such as a certification scheme, eco-labelling, seafood supply chain covering consumption and production.

The second speaker, **Mr. Yerbol ORAZBEKOV**, SWITCH-Asia Expert, presented progress on the “Implementation of a food and biodegradable waste management system in Kazakhstan”. Kazakhstan has a good legislation landscape on the policy level. At the same time, he stressed the difficulty of accurately assessing the real volumes and projections of the generation of biodegradable waste in the Republic of Kazakhstan. He also pointed out the unpreparedness of the infrastructure for the management of biodegradable waste in regions.

The next presentation was delivered by **Mr. Ujjwal POKHREL**, Project Manager from Myanmar, WWF, Tha Bar Wa project on “Cleaner production practices in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Food and Beverage industry”. Mr. Ujjwal POKHREL showed practical results related to the improvement of resource efficiency, including, five Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) designs and strong capacity building programmes, training more than 200 MSMEs on Energy Efficiency, building local capacity for sustainable products.





Value Chain Approaches in Agri-food Systems

SCP through Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production make SMEs activities more profitable and more competitive



LUYDMILA KIKTENKO
Project Manager, REAP, CAREC



Value Chain Approaches in Agri-food Systems

Bhoomi Ka has reached 300,000 consumers in India and educated them on sustainable food systems



ABHIJEET DABHOLE
Project Manager, Bhoomi Ka

Change is happening on the ground!

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Ms. Luydmila KIKTENKO and Ms. Valeria Orlova from CAREC (Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia) presented on the SWITCH-Asia grant project "Resource efficiency in agri-food production and processing" (REAP) implemented in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Using the experience and good practices from the METABUILD grant project, they have demonstrated practical results related to agri-food in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

The last speaker from India, Mr. Abhijeet Dabhole, Bhoomi Ka project manager, presented valuable project results. More than 3000+ farmers have received PGS organic certifications. In addition, Bhoomi Ka developed value chain for some specific products, created nutrition gardens at schools, and shared information and educational resources to educate consumers on sustainable food systems. Main results achieved within the project are directly connected to positive changes in the agri-food system in India at local level.

SESSION III: PANEL DISCUSSION DRIVING GREEN RECOVERY THROUGH SCP PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABLE VALUE CHAIN APPROACHES - A WAY FORWARD

Moderated by Mr. Miroslav BOZIC, European Commission, DG INTPA

Guiding questions

1. How agri-food value chain approaches embedding SCP practices can foster transformation to resilient, efficient, sustainable and inclusive food systems;
2. Examples of successful regional value chain in the agri-food systems, including implementation of sustainable production and consumption tools: lessons learned and potential for up-scaling/replicability;
3. Potential of the EU "Farm to Fork Strategy" to inspire measures that support the SCP agenda on a more sustainable footing and ensuring sustainable food production and consumption



Ms. Pouchamarn WONGSANGA, Senior Regional Coordinator of the ASEAN Sustainable Agri-food Systems GIZ Project, pointed out that the region recognizes the challenges faced by the agriculture sector, including: conversion of arable land to non-food production, impacts of natural disasters, particularly induced by climate change, urbanization,

and migration of labor from rural areas. Food and agriculture remains a strategic sector of the region. In addition to food security, the sector provides means of livelihoods, a major source of employment, incomes and foreign exchange earnings for a large proportion of the population. The project worked on the development of regionally-coordinated policies, strategies and dialogue for a sustainable Agri-food sector, as well as on the promotion of sustainable cross-border value chains in collaboration with the private sector.



Mr. Marcus GOVER, Chief Executive, WRAP, presented important information on the use of resources in food production. In the UK, 25% of carbon footprint (150 million tons of CO₂) came from food production, where 80% is in the supply chain. A quarter of food

has been wasted, that is equivalent to 25 million tons of CO₂. 70% of UK food waste is created by households, and 30% by the food supply chain. 70% of freshwater has been used by the agriculture sector. 80% of biodiversity loss has been caused by food production. One-third of food has been thrown away, which means that we throw away one-third of energy, water, and labour, affecting biodiversity loss. The UK launched a campaign to tackle household system behavior change on food waste. The campaign was complemented by a programme to change food packaging design and labelling to make it easier for people to buy. Through this systematic approach, UK aims to decrease 25% of its food waste.



Mr. Ply PIROM, Project Manager Sustainable Consumption and Production, WWF- Thailand, delivered a presentation on value chain approaches in the Agri-food system, supporting the green recovery and sustainable food system transition. He focused on recommendations to foster transformation to sustainable food

system through the integration of food systems into other key agendas and mechanisms, enabling environment to promote agricultural value chains with a focus on the vulnerable and under-represented, finding ways to integrate small producers into more modern value chains.



Mr. Asan ALYMKULOV, Consultant Federation of the Organic Movement Bio- Kg, Kyrgyzstan, informed that the majority of people in Kyrgyzstan are living in rural areas and organic agriculture remains a main priority for the country. The Organic Agriculture Roadmap and national Action Plan have been prepared. For the implementation of related goals and targets, organic villages (aimaks)

were established. Aimaks are certified on alternative quality system PGS that guarantee the quality of products produced by farmers. Aimaks are located in remote mountains and united in Public Union to centralize producing and sales of their organic products. He showed how 10 principles of FAO of sustainable value chain development are working in Kyrgyzstan.



Mr. Manish Shankar, Associate Vice President Intelicap Advisory Services Private Limited, focused the presentation on challenges raised by the export of one third of agriculture produce to achieve price stabilization, inefficiencies in the value chains, agriculture infrastructure related deficiencies resulting in sluggish deployment. He has indicated

possible areas for collaboration such as: mainstreaming circularity in agriculture and actively engaging with the government to advocate ecosystem strengthening, promoting initiatives on regenerative agriculture practices and scaling up it amongst farmers. Promoting circularity in agriculture processing, distribution and consumption, developing business models to minimise the impact on the environment was also identified as a possible area. Another point is stimulating the reuse and recycling of inevitable resource losses, reducing food loss and waste and ensuring that by-products from food production, processing and consumption are recycled back in the food system.



Ms. Gitika GOSWAMI, Senior Programme Director - Policy Research and Planning Development Alternatives Group, described the Agri-food transition in India as a successful example of Agri-food system adopting a SCP approach. India is among the world's leading producers of many commodities viz., dairy, cereals,

spices, fruits & vegetables, rice, wheat, cotton, and others. Three economically viable models of farming for small and marginal farmers were presented. Around 40 trainings were conducted on crop diversification, resource efficient farming practices and technologies, 7 innovative farmers were supported in starting their individual enterprises covering 510 farmers, and 12 low cost vermicompost units were set up. The entire system follows a sustainable consumption and production approach.

In his closing remarks, **Arab HOBALLAH** stressed the need for more partnerships to move further towards sustainability. This requires an integrated and inclusive approach in order to put people and stakeholders together, supported by the need to get the right data and information, skills, and innovations, as well as required investments. Cross border collaboration with the private sector is a necessity in order to be able to effectively decarbonise the system throughout the supply chain. We can work on this transition towards a sustainable food system and take this message to the Food System Summit later this year.

KEY POINTS HIGHLIGHTED DURING THIS MEETING

- The sustainable food system approach clearly can help all countries achieve SDGs because it is a cross-cutting issue, being part of the SCP approach, which is throughout at least 13 of 17 goals;
- Closer collaboration with the private sector is a necessity in order to implement a policy successfully. Helping SMEs to access banks, creating collaborations with banks and accessing green finance to promote green innovative solutions is also key;
- Strong awareness-raising among consumers is needed, particularly on responsible behaviour from health and financial perspectives. It is only through a systematic change involving all stakeholders that serious problems of food waste and food losses can be solved. Bringing up the core community approach and promoting farmers in specific market products is key;
- Circularity is essential to stakeholders in all sectors to close the loop of materials and substances, reduce resource consumption and emissions into the environment. The SCP approach can effectively deliver the needed changes;
- The Government plays a significant role in finding incentives for small farmers and SMEs, develop policy at the country level to support SCP practices implementation in Agri-food.

