

Mid-term review of the Government's Action Plan on Sustainable Food Systems in the Context of Norwegian Foreign- and Development Policy

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Final report

Mid-term review of the Government's Action Plan
on Sustainable Food Systems in the Context of
Norwegian Foreign- and Development Policy

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The report is the product of its authors, and responsibility for the accuracy of its data included rests with them. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of Norad.

Abbreviations and acronyms

AFDF	African Development Fund
AGP II	Agricultural Growth Programme II
ATA	Agricultural Transformation Agency
ADMARC	Agriculture Development and Marketing Cooperation
ASWAp	Agriculture Sector Wide Approach
ASP	Agriculture Stakeholder Panel
TWGs	Agriculture Technical Working Group
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CAFI	Central African Forest Initiative
CSM	Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism
CAV	Climate Adaptive Vages
CARD II	Climate Resilient Rural Livelihoods Programme
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAESS	District Agricultural Extension Service System
DCAFS	Donor Committee on Agriculture and Food Security
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
EU	European Union
SMARTEX	Experiments for Development of Climate Smart Agriculture
EPAs	Extension Planning Areas
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FOLU	Food and Land Use
FOLU	Food and Land Use Coalition
FLW	Food Loss and Waste
FBDG	Food-based dietary guidelines
FFB	Fresh Fruit Bunches
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms
GHG	Global Greenhouse Gas
GYGA	Global Yield Gap Atlas
ACC	Greening the Agricultural Commercialization Clusters
HGSM	Home Grown School Meals
HRP	Humanitarian Development Plan
IDA	International Development Association
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JPGE	Joint Programme for Girls Education
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LUANAR	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
MDGS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MTR	Mid-term Review
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MDTF	Multi-donor Trust Fund
NAIP	National Agricultural Investment Plan

NAP	National Agriculture Policy
NASFAM	National Farmers' Association of Malawi
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
Norhed	Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development
NICFI	Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NOK	Norwegian Kroner
NMBU	Norwegian University of Life Sciences
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PSNP	Productive Safety Nets Programme
PPPs	Public–private Partnership
RIP	REDD+ Investment Programme
PFM	REDD+ Participatory Forest Management
R&D	Research and Development
RLLP	Resilient Landscape and Livelihood Project
SO	Subsidiary Objective
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TRANSFORM	Sustainable Food Systems for Rural Resilience and Transformation
FoodMa	Sustainable food systems in Malawi
UNFSS	United Nations Food Systems Summit
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
COP	United Nations Climate Change Conference
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
EFS	Vision 2030: Transforming Ethiopian Food Systems
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive Summary

KPMG AS has been commissioned by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) to undertake a mid-term review of the Norwegian government's Action Plan for sustainable food systems in the context of Norwegian foreign- and development policy, entitled, "Food, People and the Environment". The main goal of the Norwegian Action Plan is to ensure increased food security through the development of sustainable food systems. Seven ministers of the Norwegian Government (Ministers of International Development; Fisheries and Seafood; Agriculture and Food; Health and Care Services; Climate and Environment; Trade and Industry; Foreign Affairs) are signatories to the plan.

Purpose. The purpose of the review is to assess how the food systems approach, as described in the Action Plan, has been integrated in Norwegian foreign- and development policy, and whether the efforts are properly designed to achieve the intended goals of the plan.

Main objectives. The review has three main objectives:

1. To assess whether the Action Plan has been adopted, coordinated and implemented effectively by the five ministries, Norad and the embassies;
2. To assess how the principles and action points of the plan have been received and addressed by implementing partners of Norwegian foreign- and development policy, including multi-donor organisations, national governments, international and national civil society organisations, private sector entities and academic institutions.
3. To identify good practices as well as challenges and provide recommendations and opportunities for the remaining period of the plan, and propose improved modes of work and possible investments in order to achieve better results with reference to the eight subsidiary objectives of the plan.

Scope and methodology. The OECD-DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluations have served as a reference point for the review, in line with the more specific review questions from the Terms of Reference related to the OECD-DAC criteria on *Relevance*, *Effectiveness* and *Sustainability*.

The review methodology has been based on a mixed methods approach at the design, data collection and analysis stages in order to enhance the integrity of findings. As part of the review, KPMG has conducted two comprehensive country studies in Malawi and Ethiopia, focusing on the application and delivery of the Norwegian Action Plan. Key data and excerpts from the country studies are included in the main report and overall assessment, and the full country reports can be found in Annexes 1 and 2.

Key Findings and Lessons Learned

There are strong indications that the Action Plan has to some extent been adopted, coordinated and implemented by the five ministries, Norad and the embassies. However, it is to a lesser degree done in a systematic way, and especially at embassy level there is low uptake of the plan. This is largely due to a lack of operationalisation, targets, budget allocations and a clear understanding of responsibilities to deliver on the goals of the plan. A contributing factor is also that the plan is well aligned with ongoing work, but it is less clear what new types of interventions it is supposed to incentivise. The Action Plan is largely seen as a consolidated reference document for existing policies and thematic interventions, rather than something entirely new.

The Plan has been received positively by a number of stakeholders, especially in Norway, and seen as a basis for a more coherent Norwegian policy approach. Having said so, it has not led to any significant changes in Norwegian policy positions, or additional funding towards food systems. A contributing factor may be that two out of three years of the Action Plan have been affected by the COVID-19 crisis, and many stakeholders still see it as being in its early days. Nevertheless, there is unanimous praise by implementing partners regarding the content of the plan. Criticisms are more related to the lack of clarity in terms of (increased) funding, priority areas and new approaches. In this

respect, the proposed increase of NOK 500 mill. for Chapter Post 162.71 for 2022 in the revised budgetary proposition to the Storting for 2022 is an important new element. If approved, it would constitute a considerable increase of earmarked funding towards food systems.

There are a number of examples of good practices, pilot interventions, policy developments and research initiatives towards achieving the objectives of the plan. A general challenge is perhaps the fragmentation of efforts, and lack of geographical and thematic focus. Identification and targeting specific value-chains could be one way of approaching this, as well as improving dialogue and coordination both at policy level and, perhaps more importantly, at country level. Based on the two country studies, there are limited synergies to be found between different projects and programmes, and apart from the Norwegian Embassy in Malawi, no other embassy has attempted to establish a holistic country strategy for interventions targeted towards food systems.

Relevance

- ✓ **Findings cannot be considered conclusive in terms of whether projects and programmes implemented under the Action Plan are relevant to achieving one or more of the eight subsidiary objectives.** This is because of the absence of a results-management system designed for follow-up on Action Plan implementation, tagged budget allocations, as well as clearly defined responsibilities for follow-up in embassies, MFA and Norad.
- ✓ **Still, Norwegian-funded projects and programmes largely cover the eight subsidiary objectives of the Action Plan,** thereby demonstrating how the portfolio as a whole is well aligned with the Action Plan's overall objectives.
- ✓ **Nutrition and safe drinking water are largely absent from projects and programmes reviewed,** however it is possible that there are other projects that support nutrition and diet in the global health portfolio. Clear linkages with the Action Plan are harder to determine, which may be due to how allocations are made and organised.
- ✓ **Still, the Action Plan is of high relevance to many areas, projects and programmes funded by Norway,** particularly for agriculture and fisheries, as well as climate adaptation. These largely build on ongoing efforts and initiatives that started ahead of the Action Plan. In particular, many NICFI-funded programmes are deemed to be of high relevance.
- ✓ **The Action Plan is very well aligned with international discourse on food systems,** as well as country-level focus from national governments. The Action Plan is a direct response to SDG 2 Zero Hunger and is in line with SDG 2 targets. SDG 2 is fundamental for Norway's partner countries, further adding to the Action Plan's relevance in this regard.
- ✓ **Norwegian embassies find the Action Plan relevant and aligned with policies and initiatives at individual country level.** However, the plan is to a lesser degree seen as relevant to the embassies' day-to-day work.
- ✓ **In Ethiopia and Malawi, the plan's purpose and goals have been reflected in several project documents,** and the Embassies and Norad have communicated with partners about the plan. This is most clearly seen in Malawi, where the Embassy has taken an initiative to establish a portfolio of projects specifically delivering on the different objectives of the Action Plan.
- ✓ **Norwegian governmental bodies largely consider the Action Plan of high relevance, building on their ongoing work in their respective areas.** The Action Plan is actively used as a reference document in many settings, whilst less considered an operational document for concrete policy interventions or new positions.
- ✓ **The Action Plan is referred to in many different policy documents,** and is also demonstrating Norway's strong commitment to sustainable food systems. Nevertheless, it is utilised more of a reference document than contributing to changing practices and more operational aspects.

Effectiveness

- ✓ **The Action Plan's purpose and goals are reflected in a number of policy documents,** such as the Norwegian Whitepaper on the SDGs: *Meld. St. 40 (2020–2021) Mål med mening — Norges handlingsplan for å nå bærekraftsmålene innen 2030*. The Action Plan is also mentioned budget proposals and Award Letters.

- ✓ **Collaboration and communication between Norwegian policy makers and implementing partners have worked well in some areas.** However, the overall impression is that it is largely ad-hoc, and less coherent.
- ✓ **Norad is actively contributing to the preparation and implementation of the Action Plan.** In MFA's 2021 annual award letter to Norad, the latter is specifically instructed to follow up on the Action Plan – both in terms of technical inputs as well as financial allocations.
- ✓ **There is clear evidence to suggest that a more coherent operationalising and platforms for dialogue on implementation of the plan, is required.** The fact that many embassies do not see the Action Plan as particularly relevant, and to a very limited degree contributes to achieving the targets set forward in the plan, is an indication of little involvement, and insufficient communication of expectations and responsibilities.
- ✓ **A significant result is the development of CFS' voluntary guidelines on Food systems and nutrition.** The guidelines aim at promoting policy coherence between sectors that impact food systems and nutrition, and contain many recommendations towards promoting more sustainable food systems.
- ✓ **There are also early indications of results and alignment at the policy level related to plans, discussions, and awareness raising.** Yet, it is difficult to strictly attribute these initiatives to the Action Plan itself.
- ✓ **Overall, results from projects and programmes implemented under the plan are largely yet to emerge.** Many projects and programmes under the portfolio have been disrupted significantly due COVID-19.
- ✓ **There is no results-management system designed for follow-up on Action Plan implementation,** tagged budget allocations, as well as clearly defined responsibilities for follow-up by embassies, MFA and Norad. Many relevant projects were active prior to the Action Plan launch, suggesting that the Plan is well aligned with already existing initiatives, but not spurring many projects and programmes.
- ✓ **Norway as a donor is perceived by be focusing more on social issues and sustainable production,** but having less emphasis on private sector- and value-chain development, and trade facilitation for developing countries.
- ✓ **There are also gaps in terms of concrete follow-up and accountability mechanisms** when it comes to global supply chains, profit making, exploitation, promotion of GMOs, monocultures, low level of nutrition in certain products, etc.
- ✓ **There has been an overall modest increase of relevant channels of support to food systems, under the Development Aid budget.**
- ✓ **Support to fisheries has declined (2019-2020).** Adding to this, support and focus on aquaculture constitute an even smaller share of Norwegian aid, despite being a high priority by key agencies such as FAO and many partner countries.
- ✓ **Good practices that identified throughout the review involved the collaborative and multi-sectoral approaches employed by stakeholders.** Interview participants from Embassies, Academia, and NGOs discussed how the continuation of long-term partnerships were helpful in incorporating the Action Plan into current projects and programmes.
- ✓ **Most embassies consulted report a relatively good level of dissemination of the Action Plan, as well as familiarity.** The Action Plan is not however, seen as an instrument to ensure sector coordination and alignment, or clear prioritisation of efforts. Lacking operationalisation, there are some clear gaps identified to implementation:
 - i) Lack of clear targets in terms of funding and budget allocations.
 - ii) Lack of clear sector strategies and/or selection of specific value-chains, as well as geographical focus.
 - iii) Lack of clear priorities towards areas of engagement.
 - iv) Lack of synergies and coordination between projects and programmes at country level.
 - v) Unclear delegation of authority and definition of responsibilities for delivering on specific parts of the Action Plan.

- vi) Unclear to what extent the Action Plan is to be operationalised in terms of thematic funding, policy interventions, safeguards – or a mix of everything.

Sustainability

- ✓ **Collaboration across sectors and in Norwegian policy making related to food systems has worked relatively well.** There are indications of sustainability within Norwegian policy making related to food systems, and the new government may continue the work with the Action plan since food system thinking has become a global discourse, not only limited to the Norwegian Action Plan.
- ✓ **Apart from the inter-ministerial group and joint collaboration in preparation for the UN Food Systems summit,** follow-up of the Action Plan is less coordinated for instance when it comes to the Norwegian Mission in Rome and interaction with the Rome-based agencies.
- ✓ **The reference group was supposed to meet twice a year.** However, it appears that the it has been less active after the launch of the Action Plan, although there have been several preparatory meetings ahead of the UN Summit on Sustainable Food Systems.
- ✓ **The Action Plan has brought awareness when it comes to systems thinking, and the interrelation across sectors.** However, this has not led to significant new thinking or approaches among implementing partners, as most interventions are still a continuation of previous work.
- ✓ **Half of Norway's development assistance to food systems is channelled through multilaterals.** Even if the Action Plan mentions a number of strategic multinational institutions as key partners, the extent to which this is the result of a deliberate strategic approach is unclear.
- ✓ **Involvement of the private sector is crucial to food systems at many levels.** A more coherent value-chain approach could potentially bring together different interventions that are currently uncoordinated.
- ✓ **Although too early to say, evidence from the two country case studies suggest that national policies are well aligned with the food systems approach.**
- ✓ **Projects and programmes launched under the Action Plan as well as the food systems approach will need time to create sustainable changes,** both at global and national level. There is no quick fix to food systems, and as such, it is extremely important that funding is made available and is consistent.
- ✓ **Projects and programmes launched under the action plan as well as the food systems approach will need time to foster sustainable change both at the global and national levels.** Given the various disruptions due to the pandemic, the necessity of time appears to be more valuable now more than ever.

Key Recommendations

- ✓ **Consider how Norwegian policy positions can be further operationalised in interaction with multilateral agencies,** particularly the Rome-based agencies. It is unclear to what extent there is coherence in the dialogue many of these agencies have with Norad (as a donor) vs. the ministries (as policy makers).
- ✓ **Determine how the newly elected Government's priorities can be aligned with the Action Plan.** With the long-term perspective required to make sustainable changes to the food systems approach, it is important to consider how the newly elected Labour and Centre Party Government's focus will be aligned with the existing Action Plan.
- ✓ **Revitalise the reference group.** It appears that the reference group has to a limited degree been following the implementation of the Action Plan, and it would perhaps be useful to consider how it can be revitalised to maintain continued dialogue on progress/opportunities/challenges, contribute to the strategic implementation, and assist in the operationalisation of subsidiary objectives.
- ✓ **Establish a clear target on financial support, as well as indicators relating to food systems.** This should cut across several chapter posts, and could potentially be tied to financing of SDG2 as soon as the SDG indicators for all new projects and programmes have been implemented.
- ✓ **Increase funding to the Fish for Development programme,** and to consider whether support to aquaculture development can be further intensified – as this is a key priority by many partner

countries and central agencies such as FAO. This would also be better aligned with the political signals and ambitions for an increased focus on aquatic food systems.

- ✓ **Establish Agriculture for Development as a programme.** The programme is suggested to be launched in 2022 according to the revised budgetary proposition to the Storting for 2022.
- ✓ **Appraise the strategic approach towards prioritisation of the multilaterals vs. other channels.** As multilaterals appear to be the largest channel for Norwegian support towards food systems, it is important to appraise this strategically within the context of the Action Plan.
- ✓ **Establish clear sector strategies, and potentially select 1-2 specific value chains at country level.** Identification of one particular crop or value chain could then form the basis for a number of interventions to address bottlenecks in the value chain.
- ✓ **At country level, Norwegian embassies should develop a Food Systems Strategy Document.** Within Norwegian support structures there is scope for promoting coordination and synergies among existing programmes and institutions to align under a coherent and strategic approach.
- ✓ **The MFA, embassies and Norad should fully engage at a management level to ensure that all Norwegian funded projects and programmes are aligned at country level.** Close monitoring is required to ensure changes under a food systems banner are not just adjustments to vocabulary, but actually lead to improvements.
- ✓ **Clarify which parts of the Action Plan will be followed up by whom.** Ideally, this could be done by having embassies focus on 1-2 selected areas of the Action Plan, whereas Norad could, in collaboration with relevant sectoral ministries and underlying bodies, provide technical assistance and advise.
- ✓ **Consider outreach activities in selected partner countries about the Action Plan's objectives and action points.** There is significant room for improvement in terms of communicating both contents and objectives to national partner governments. This should be based on a country-level strategy as well as seen in relation to ongoing programmatic- and policy dialogue of relevant embassies.
- ✓ **At a field level, new thinking and approaches should be piloted using project-based support working with national governments.** At a project level the new thinking and approaches introduced by the Action Plan should be piloted to learn what works. Piloting should be performed with close government collaboration at local, regional, and national levels.
- ✓ **Consider whether there is a need for a lead agency at national level to coordinate all efforts on food systems.** At a national level the different branches of government (e.g., ministries and bureaus) and development partners (donors, UN organisations, private sector and NGOs) require coordination. This is likely to require a structure containing various platforms and groupings with regular and effective meetings.
- ✓ **Establish platforms for exchanges at country level, for instance an annual conference or meeting between various stakeholders,** i.e. research institutions, NGOs, private sector, and government. There is a tendency towards fragmentation at country level, not only between Norwegian-funded partners, but in general. Such coordination should ideally also be done in collaboration with other relevant donors and agencies, or built into existing donor structures at country level.
- ✓ **Establish a new set of safeguards to be implemented in all food-related programs.** In the screening and appraisal of food related programs, there ought to be a more detailed scrutiny of whether the intervention entails any potential negative impact in terms of sustainability. This could for instance build on the CFS Voluntary guidelines.

More detailed recommendations and findings can be found in chapter 4. Note that also the country study reports (annex 1 and 2) contain findings and recommendations at country level.

Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Abbreviations and acronyms	iii
Executive Summary	v
Key Findings and Lessons Learned	v
Contents	x
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Context and background	1
1.2 Purpose	2
2 Methodology	3
2.1 Methodology for data collection and analysis	3
2.2 Scope, constraints, and limitations	4
3 Analysis	6
3.1 Normative work and implementation at policy level	6
3.2 Development aid to Food Systems	10
3.3 Relevance	18
3.4 Effectiveness	22
3.5 Sustainability	28
4 Conclusion and Recommendations	31
4.1 Relevance	32
4.2 Effectiveness	34
4.3 Sustainability	38
5 Annexes	41
5.1 Annex 1: Case study Ethiopia	41
5.2 Annex 2: Case study Malawi	54
5.3 Annex 3: References	67
5.4 Annex 4: People Interviewed	76
5.5 Annex 5: Survey responses	78
5.6 Annex 6. Review Matrix	82
5.7 Annex 7. Terms of Reference	84

Figures

Figure 1: Total earmarked aid to agriculture, fisheries and food security (Source: Norad)11

Figure 2: Share of assistance to agriculture, fishing and food security in total aid (Source: Norad)11

Figure 4: Share of multilateral institutions in total aid to agriculture, fishing and food security (Source: Norad)12

Figure 3: Budgetary allocations 2018-2020 for key multi channels of the Action Plan (Source: Norad).....13

Figure 5: Total aid to Ethiopia and Malawi 2018-2020 (Source: Norad)13

Figure 8: How familiar are you with the contents of the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems?15

Figure 9: To what extent are the objectives of the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems relevant and aligned with policies/initiatives in the country in which you work?15

Figure 10: Are you working with any of the four pillars of the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems? (Please tick all that apply).....16

Figure 12: Please tick the subsidiary objectives (SOs) from the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems where you feel your embassy is contributing the most.....17

1 Introduction

1.1 Context and background

In 2019, the Norwegian government launched its Action Plan for sustainable food systems in the context of Norwegian foreign- and development policy, entitled, 'Food, People and the Environment'. In total, seven ministers of the Norwegian Government (Minister of International Development; Fisheries and Seafood; Agriculture and Food; Health and Care Services; Climate and Environment; Trade and Industry; Foreign Affairs) were signatories.

The idea behind the Action Plan was based on a request from the Storting to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), to develop a plan for increasing support to food-related initiatives. This builds on the former Strategy *Food Security in a Climate Perspective* (2013)¹ as well as the former Action Plan *Agriculture against poverty* (2004)². However, there are many close linkages between national and international policies in this area, further sustained by the SDGs. As such, it makes sense to have a broad-based approach to food systems, in close dialogue with other relevant ministries.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), food systems can be defined and understood as “encompassing the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded”.

The national Action Plan provides a guiding framework for an integrated approach in achieving the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and its corresponding targets, thus advancing efforts to end hunger, achieve food security, and promote sustainable food production. Furthermore, the Norwegian Action Plan for sustainable food systems also circuitously supports efforts to achieve the entire sustainable development agenda by making important linkages between food security, health, climate, and the environment and by building upon previous efforts to strengthen international cooperation on food security.

The main goal of the Norwegian Action Plan is to ensure increased food security through the development of sustainable food systems. The Action Plan was built on the following four pillars:

- ✓ **Pillar 1:** Food production, with the objective of increased sustainable, climate-resilient food production and increased productivity from agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
- ✓ **Pillar 2:** Value chains and markets, with the objective of increased sustainable value creation and private sector development in the food sector that ensures stable access to healthy and safe food and reduces food waste.
- ✓ **Pillar 3:** Nutrition and diet, with the objective of improved nutrition and sustainable consumption patterns due to improved knowledge and access to healthy and varied diets, safe food and clean drinking water.
- ✓ **Pillar 4:** Policy and governance, with the objective of sustainable food systems are promoted at national, regional and global levels, and strengthened through institution building.

These four pillars are realised in eight subsidiary objectives which include:

1. The knowledge and technology needed for sustainable and climate resilient food production has been developed, made accessible and scaled up.
2. Biodiversity in food production has increased.

¹ See [Matsikkerhet i et klimaperspektiv - regjeringen.no](https://www.regjeringen.no)

² See [Landbruk mot fattigdom - regjeringen.no](https://www.regjeringen.no)

3. Food production has become more sustainable and climate smart.
4. Food producers and their local communities are better equipped to deal with natural disasters and other adverse impacts of climate change.
5. Sustainable value chains from source to market have been developed and strengthened.
6. Food safety and animal and plant health in partner countries have been improved.
7. Information and guidance on maternal and child health have been enhanced and measures to improve nutrition for school children, young people and adults have been implemented.
8. Global and regional frameworks for sustainable food systems, as well as national policies and governance structures for these systems, have been developed and strengthened.

The subsidiary objectives are then followed by tangible actions points.

This mid-term review (MTR) has been commissioned to shed light on progress made on implementation of the Action Plan pillars and subsidiary objectives.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the review is to assess how the food systems approach, as described in the Action Plan, has been integrated in Norwegian foreign- and development policy, and whether the efforts are properly designed to achieve the intended goals of the plan.

The review has three main objectives:

1. To assess whether the Action Plan has been adopted, coordinated and implemented effectively by the five ministries, Norad and the embassies to achieve the goals set out in the plan.
2. To assess how the principles and action points of the plan have been received and addressed by implementing partners of Norwegian foreign- and development policy, including multi-donor organisations, national governments, international and national civil society organisations, private sector entities and academic institutions in order to achieve the goals of the plan.
3. To identify good practices as well as challenges and provide recommendations and opportunities for the remaining period of the plan. Propose improved modes of work and possible investments in order to achieve better results with reference to the eight subsidiary objectives of the plan.

The mid-term review is further broken down into more specific review question related to the OECD-DAC criteria on *Relevance, Effectiveness and Sustainability* (see full ToR, Annex 7).

2 Methodology

2.1 Methodology for data collection and analysis

The methodology has involved a mixed methods approach for the review design, data collection and analysis to enhance the integrity of findings through triangulation and ensure a comprehensive mid-term review. The combined use of qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches included document reviews, semi-structured qualitative interviews online or in person as COVID-19 restrictions permitted, analysis of available statistics, and an online survey. See Annex 6 for the review matrix.

Data collection instruments. The review team mainly gathered data from:

1. **Desk study/document review** of policy documents, decision documents of projects/programs, statistics, and other relevant documentation, including annual reports (where available)³. Documents are listed in Annex 3. The team employed a multidisciplinary and descriptive approach to the document/project review. A matrix helped organise this analysis in two steps: first, the team categorised relevant documents; and second, the team extracted and analysed data using a traffic light rating scale to develop findings and draw conclusions about the implementation of the Norwegian Action Plan, See Annex 3 for the document review and project review matrices.
2. **Semi-structured interviews with key informants** across programme level, including the inter-ministerial working group; the Action Plan reference group; relevant embassies (management and staff); beneficiaries; partners; and other stakeholders (donor community, private sector etc). Interviews were structured to include key questions stemming from the review matrix (Annex 6), took approximately 1 hour, and were conducted between August and October. Interview participants were organised in the below categories:
 - Ministries of the Norwegian Government
 - Norad
 - Norwegian Embassies
 - Multilateral organisations
 - National governments of beneficiary countries
 - NGOs
 - Private Sector
 - Academia
 - Other relevant stakeholders
3. **Qualitative case studies / deep dives** focus on the application and delivery of the Norwegian Action Plan in Ethiopia and Malawi. Field visits were conducted by local consultants in Ethiopia and Malawi to assess whether the Norwegian Action Plan has been adopted, coordinated, and implemented to achieve goals set out in the Action Plan, as well as how the principles and action points of the plan have been received and addressed by implementing partners.
4. **An online survey** was administered to stakeholders in the embassies of Egypt, Israel, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Georgia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda, Indonesia, South Sudan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sudan, Malawi, Angola, Mozambique, Kenya, India, South Africa, Morocco, Italy, Myanmar, Madagascar, Nigeria, Thailand, China, France, the United States, Cuba and Vietnam. The survey was distributed as the initial round of interviews was being completed and helped ensure triangulation of data findings. Response rate was somewhat low (50%). Detailed results from this can be found in annex 5.

³ Since several of the projects/programmes have recently started, annual reports were not consistently available for this review.

5. **A digital workshop with the reference group of the Action Plan** to verify findings and recommendations was held 18th October, at the end of the data collection and analysis phase. The purpose of the workshop was to present and refine preliminary findings and recommendations.

2.2 Scope, constraints, and limitations

2.2.1 Scope

This report assesses progress made on implementation of the Norwegian Action Plan for sustainable food systems at mid-term as per the ToR and the terms agreed with Norad in the inception report.

Qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews with key informants were analysed using a qualitative content analysis to identify and group concepts together to identify key themes and draw interpretations. The process comprised preparation, organisation, and reporting. Preparation included interviews and making sense of the data. During organisation, the team developed a codebook and coded notes, created categories, and synthesised the data. Finally, in the reporting stage the team described results/findings. Content analysis was used to objectively capture the direct insights of stakeholders. Quantitative data generated from surveys was analysed using descriptive statistics.

The deliverables of the MTR are as follows:

- Inception report
- Presentation of the inception report for the Inter-ministerial Working Group and Norad
- Interviews, including in Malawi and Ethiopia for case studies
- Draft report
- Key stakeholder workshop to verify findings and recommendations
- Final report

2.2.2 Constraints and limitations

Methodological strengths include the mixed-methods design which allows for a blending of data which can provide a more in-depth understanding of the MTR objectives and questions explored. Furthermore, the mixed-methods approach allows for data triangulation which enhances the integrity of findings and methodological rigor. Additionally, the interviews conducted with a diverse group of stakeholders provide a holistic overview of how the Norwegian Action Plan has been adopted, coordinated, and implemented in a variety of settings and contexts.

Although the mixed-methods approach allows for both subjective and objective approaches, since the aims of this study lean toward a more exploratory assessment of the overarching system and efforts to implement the Action Plan, the MTR does not provide a complete objective assessment of the Action Plan (e.g. including an investigation of effectiveness in terms of whether specific targets were achieved). Rather, the MTR provides an exploratory and descriptive assessment aiming to enrich future implementation regarding good practices, challenges and opportunities, and lessons learned.

Additionally, methodological limitations may involve the purposive sampling strategy, self-reported responses, and challenges related to virtual data collection, as well as data collection in the field under COVID-19 restrictions. The MTR also heavily relies on document reviews and self-reported answers and it is possible that information in documents might be incomplete or inaccurate and that stakeholders' self-reported responses may be subjected to response biases and thus be unreliable.

Moreover, time has proven limiting for the depth and breadth of the MTR. This is particularly salient for constraints posed by COVID-19 in conducting stakeholder interviews, especially in the field. The pandemic has forced many development actors to quickly adjust to new realities, as it has severely restricted access and mobility and forced the reprioritisation of resources. This is well understood by the review team, as it has likely caused delays also to implementation of the Action Plan.

The MTR relies on existing documentation such as policy documents, project-related decision documents, and other relevant documentation, interviews, and survey responses with Action Plan stakeholders. No additional research has been undertaken by the review team given the limited timeframe, available resources, and COVID-19 restrictions.

The team has also relied on Norad to assist in identifying prioritised interviewees. Additional interviewees have also been added throughout the review period, as names were proposed by interview subjects.

3 Analysis

The Action Plan sets out a number of “action points” to be implemented during the five-year course of the plan, both in terms of 1) funding of projects and programmes, as well as 2) normative policy work at national and international level. Individual Norwegian line-ministries will follow-up the Action Plan within their respective areas of responsibility, addressing the issue of sustainable food systems in international negotiations as well as including the concept in relevant policy documents.

Many development interventions take place at national level in partner countries, consisting of both concrete project interventions as well as normative/policy work. In fact, most development interventions assessed by the team consist of a mix of these two, largely aligned with the eight action points of the plan. The World Bank’s sustainable landscape programme in Ethiopia for instance, supported by Norway, is one such example. The programme has practical interventions among smallholders trying to restore ecosystem services, introduce technologies to avoid further degradation of land and strengthen smallholders’ access and supply to markets, while simultaneously working closely with the Ethiopian government on land use planning and management (see Ethiopia case study, annex 1).

Subchapter (3.1) focuses mostly on the normative work undertaken at international level by Norwegian stakeholders, whereas subsequent chapters (3.2-3.3) focuses more on projects and programmes funded over the development aid budget. This is further assessed in more detail in the following chapters, as well as in the two country studies on Ethiopia and Malawi (annex 1 and 2). Note however, that almost all areas mentioned in the Action Plan are likely to be of some relevance at both national and international level, and may contain elements of normative work at the international level.

3.1 Normative work and implementation at policy level

From interviews, it is clear that all the Norwegian ministries involved in the development of the Action Plan perceive the document as an important point of reference in their ongoing work. Moreover, several reported also that the Action Plan has had an effect in terms of acknowledging the interrelation between many factors and sectors in food production, as well as the importance of safeguarding the various elements of food systems (not only volumes, but also safety, health, climate and environment, etc.). Promoting such a holistic perspective is seen as important in itself, because it brings the various line ministries, underlying institutions, and other actors, together. It also acknowledges fish as an integral part of food production, in addition to agriculture, which distinguishes the plan from the two former policy documents referred to in the introduction⁴. As such, the Action Plan is largely constituted by pre-existing and established Norwegian policies and priorities, but bringing all these perspectives together in a unified document has contributed to improved alignment of Norwegian policy positions.

An example of this is the recent White Paper on the Sustainable Development Goals⁵, in which the Action Plan is referred multiple times and the focus on food systems is emphasised. In the White Paper, Norway pledges to actively promote sustainable food systems in Norway's multilateral work, strengthen efforts to increase sustainable food production and good nutrition, with a particular focus on reaching small-scale producers in the least developed countries and in sub-Saharan Africa, and contribute to more climate-resilient agricultural and food systems.

There are many examples on how the Action Plan is used by individual line-ministries, for instance has Ministry of Health and Care Services referred to the plan as a Common Platform during WHO’s World Health Assembly, to advocate for the interrelation between a healthy diet and sustainable food production. Also the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries has actively referred to the plan in a number of contexts, with high relevance to for instance the launch of the UN Nutrition discussion

⁴ MFA (2013): *Food Security in a Climate Perspective*, MFA (2004): *Agriculture against poverty*

⁵ Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation: Meld. St. 40 (2020–2021) Mål med mening — Norges handlingsplan for å nå bærekraftsmålene innen 2030. Accessible at: [Meld. St. 40 \(2020–2021\) - regjeringen.no](https://www.regjeringen.no)

paper on the role of aquatic foods in sustainable healthy diets⁶, as well as the paper *The Future of food from the Sea*⁷ launched under the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy⁸, were Norway was one of the key initiators. It has also been an important reference document pertaining both to the UN Summit on Sustainable Food Systems as well as Nordic collaboration on food systems (further described below). Norway has also provided inputs to the development of the Committee on World Food Security's (CFS) Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition.⁹ The guidelines aim at promoting policy coherence between sectors that impact food systems and nutrition, and contain many recommendations towards promoting more sustainable food systems. The Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food has also had an active role in the FAO's Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, an intergovernmental body focusing on management of biodiversity of relevance to food and agriculture, as well as co-chairing an expert group on intersessional work. The Ministry is also in charge of the Svalbard Seed Vault¹⁰, managed by the Nordic Genetic Resource Centre (NordGen) under an agreement that also includes the Crop Trust (in which FAO, CGIAR and others are on the board). In 2020, Norway hosted a meeting on Svalbard for members of the UN group of Advocates for the Sustainable Development Goals, announcing an *Arctic Call to Action on Food Security and Climate Change*¹¹.

In general, the plan builds and reinforces much of the ongoing work by the Norwegian government – and is seen by most as an important reference document. It is also an agenda with high relevance to the Norwegian International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI), led by Ministry of Climate and Environment (see sub-chapter 3.3.4 for more on NICFI).

3.1.1 Nordic cooperation on food systems

The Action Plan has also become an important point of reference to the Nordic cooperation, and the Nordic Food Policy Lab¹² which is one out of six flagship projects under "Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges" initiative launched by the five prime ministers of the Nordic countries in 2017.

In June 2021, the Nordic ministers of Fisheries, Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry, met for a political discussion on food systems, and the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit. The high-level meeting resulted in a joint statement in which the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and Greenland, Faroe Islands and Åland Islands) emphasised the full support for the UN Food Systems Summit, as well as the commitment to work actively with the global community to reach a Summit leading to concrete action, and achieving the Agenda 2030. An important part of the statement was also about how Nordic countries will continue to strengthen the sustainability of food systems, as well as a willingness to share experiences, innovations, and best practices as well as partnerships with third countries.¹³

Norway has also taken an active part in the Nordic Council of Ministers' discussion as preparation to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021.¹⁴ Norway has also actively contributed the preparation of the updated 2022 Nordic Nutrition Recommendations¹⁵, providing a framework for integration of sustainability into the national food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG) in the Nordic and Baltic countries, and their national food and health policies and programs.

⁶ See [FINAL-UN-Nutrition-Aquatic-foods-Paper_EN_.pdf \(unnutrition.org\)](#)

⁷ See [The Future of Food from the Sea | High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy \(oceanpanel.org\)](#)

⁸ See [Home | High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy \(oceanpanel.org\)](#)

⁹ See [CFS: Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition \(fao.org\)](#)

¹⁰ See [Svalbard Global Seed Vault – A site about seeds!](#)

¹¹ See [arctic call to action.pdf \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

¹² See [About Nordic Food Policy Lab | Nordic cooperation \(norden.org\)](#)

¹³ The full statement can be found here: [Towards sustainable food systems – the Nordic approach | Nordic cooperation \(norden.org\)](#)

¹⁴ See [From science and guidelines to food system transformation | Nordic cooperation \(norden.org\)](#)

¹⁵ See [Nordic Nutrition Recommendations 2022 - Helsedirektoratet](#)

3.1.2 UN and Food Systems

The Action Plan emphasises the importance of multilateral agencies, in particular the Rome-based agencies: The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP). These agencies play a key role when it comes enhancing food and nutrition security, promoting sustainable development, responding to humanitarian crises and emergencies, and reducing poverty.

Dialogue with these agencies are closely followed up by the MFA and the Norwegian Mission in Rome, in close cooperation with ministries such as the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs, Norad and other Norwegian institutions. Many Norwegian international objectives on food systems are followed up through both funding as well as active participation in the governing bodies of these agencies. Norway has for instance promoted the importance of climate change as a cross-cutting issue, an issue which has been – according to interviews – been integrated into key governing documents of IFAD, in addition to promoting gender equality and Indigenous Peoples' rights. IFAD has also incorporated a more holistic approach to food systems both as a thematic focus in programming, but also by incorporating some of these principles into its revised safeguards policies.¹⁶ Whether this can be attributed as a direct result from Norwegian inputs and positions is less certain, but interview data suggest that at least Norway's strong emphasis on this, with basis in the Action Plan, has contributed to reinforce such principles.

Another example is the focus on aquatic food systems, and the role of aquatic foods in sustainable healthy diets. This is an agenda Norway and particularly the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries has worked actively to promote for many years. This has among other things contributed to FAO's *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (2015)¹⁷, and a web platform (initiated by Norway) to provide information on the causes of and solutions to Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in fisheries and aquaculture value chains,¹⁸ in addition to a number of reports and statements (both pre- and post the Action Plan). Note that many of these initiatives predates the Action Plan though, but according to interview data, the plan reinforces Norway's commitment to these important initiatives.

As already mentioned, this largely builds on previous and ongoing work, and may not be directly attributed to the Action Plan in itself. Most stakeholders more see it as a consolidation of existing work and policies, but reinforcing them in a more coherent manner. Nevertheless, the increased acknowledgement of fish as being part of "food" and emphasis on aquatic food systems, is very much linked to the Action Plan. In fact, during the recent UN Summit for Sustainable Food Systems, Norway co-convoked the May 28 Global Summit Dialogue on *Food from the Ocean, Rivers, and Lakes - Essential for Food Systems*¹⁹, as a preparation to the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021. Norway as the leader of the Global Action Network on Sustainable Foods from the Oceans and Inland Waters under the UN Nutrition decade, arranged three independent dialogues as part of the preparation to the UN food system Summit.

3.1.3 UN Summit for Sustainable Food Systems

In September 2021, the UN Summit for Sustainable Food Systems was held in New York, bringing together UN Member States and a multitude of stakeholders around the world. The objective was to bring about tangible, positive changes to the world's food systems, and encourage action to transform global food systems.²⁰

The summit was considered by some as an important event, whereas it was criticised by others and boycotted by the NGOs in the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM), which

¹⁶ See [IFAD's Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures \(SECAP\)](#)

¹⁷ See [Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication \(fao.org\)](#)

¹⁸ See [Food Loss and Waste in Fish Value Chains | Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations \(fao.org\)](#)

¹⁹ See [Global Summit Dialogue on food from the ocean, rivers and lakes focuses on the vital role aquatic foods play in food systems | United Nations](#)

²⁰ See <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/summit>

principally represent small farmers. The criticism pointed at the lack of real commitments to address the root causes of hunger and climate crises, in particular by not addressing global trade and multinational corporations.²¹

Nevertheless, despite it being too early to see whether Norway's position and the Action Plan will lead to tangible change, important commitments were put forward – with basis in the Action Plan. Norway has been putting aquatic foods and its role for food security and nutrition on the food system agenda for many years, and was requested by FAO and WHO to take the lead to highlight this important food group in the UN Decade of action on nutrition and towards achieving the SDGs especially SDG2.

The Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg pledged Norway's strong support to promote food safety, reduce food waste, make food production more climate-friendly and ensure that supply chains do not contribute to deforestation in tropical countries, empower small-scale farmers in development aid, promote secure food supply, and to support indigenous food systems. She also emphasised the importance of Food from the oceans, and that Norway will engage with the Alliance on Aquatic Food, continuing Norway's leading role in the Ocean Panel and the Global Action Network on sustainable food from the oceans and inland waters.²²

Case study 1: Put Farmers' and Indigenous Peoples' Access to Crop Diversity First in Seed Policy and Practice

Leading up to the UN Food Summit, a coalition consisting of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Norad, the Norwegian Farmers' Union, Development Fund Norway, Caritas Norway, Fridtjof Nansen Institute and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, developed a joint concept as part of the "Solution Clusters" linked to the summit. The concept developed focused on crop diversity in Seed Policies and practice, and was selected as one of the "game-changing ideas" to be presented at the summit.

In short, the concept addresses the need to tailor seed systems to meet the needs of most farmers in the Global South. In most low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), farmers' seed systems supply the bulk of the seeds used by smallholders. The Norwegian proposal addresses the problems of meeting the needs of farmers and halting loss of agrobiodiversity by moving seed security centre stage in all seed policies and actions.

For further information about this policy initiative, see: [Put Farmers' and Indigenous Peoples' Access to Crop Diversity First in Seed Policy and Practice - Food Systems Summit Community](#)

3.1.4 Concluding remarks

It appears that Norway has been very consistently promoting many of the same issues for many years, and the Action Plan is reinforcing this. It has generally contributed to improved dialogue between the five ministries, Norad and the embassies on normative work to achieve the goals set out in the plan.

The UN Rome-based agencies largely see Norway as both a constructive and active donor, good at developing strategies and providing technical inputs. Yet, many of the Norwegian-funded projects are perceived as focusing more on social issues and sustainable production, but having less emphasis on value-chain development, and trade facilitation for developing countries. And lastly, despite Norway being seen as "leading by example", there are also gaps in terms of concrete follow-up and accountability mechanisms when it comes to global supply chains, profit making, exploitation, promotion of GMOs, monocultures, low level of nutrition in certain products, etc. The UN Global Compact is one attempt at addressing this, but so far, few Norwegian food retailers have committed to this initiative.²³

²¹ See <https://www.csm4cfs.org/policy-processes/challenging-the-food-systems-summit/>

²² See <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/food-systems-summit/id2872301/>

²³ See [Our Participants | UN Global Compact](#)

3.2 Development aid to Food Systems

According to the Action Plan, the Government will “intensify its efforts to promote sustainable food systems”. Funding will, however, be provided over several budget chapters, within the overall yearly budgetary frames. An important question for assessing the plan's implementation is whether additional funding has been allocated to relevant programmes and partners.

However, a general challenge is that there is no clear definition of what is to be considered relevant - or not - under the Action Plan. And with such a broad-based approach, it is difficult – if not impossible – to establish a clear baseline and measure whether there has actually been an increase in funding to promote sustainable food systems. As an example, NICFI is intended to address key drivers of deforestation, which largely consists of (unsustainable) food production (e.g. beef, soy, palm oil, etc.). Even though much of NICFI is of high relevance, there is no clear system to indicate which programmes are to be considered relevant - or not. And what about governance programmes - crucial to ensure a functioning enabling environment – which ones are to be considered of relevance? The same applies to other thematic areas and budgetary chapter posts. There is no dedicated policy tag to measure support to food systems, and there is no one-to-one relation to the OECD-DAC codes and the Action Plan. This makes it difficult to measure progress. The plan would clearly benefit from a consistent results framework, including a baseline and a comprehensive set of indicators and targets, in order to indicate how progress is to be measured

In terms of scope, a starting point would be to look at agriculture and fisheries, but there are also many other DAC codes that could be of relevance. Support to the World Bank's ProBlue Trust Fund²⁴ is for instance of high relevance to sustainable aquatic food systems, an area recently highlighted by Norway under the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021.²⁵ However, the Norwegian support to this Trust Fund is in Norad's statics reported under DAC Code 410 - *General environmental protection*.

In 2019, the Action Plan was referred to in the Annual Proposition from the MFA to the Storting, thereby used as an argument to increase allocation to *Chapter Post 71: Food Security, Fisheries and Agriculture*²⁶ by NOK 100 mill. But whether it has led to increased funding over other Chapter Posts as well, is more uncertain.

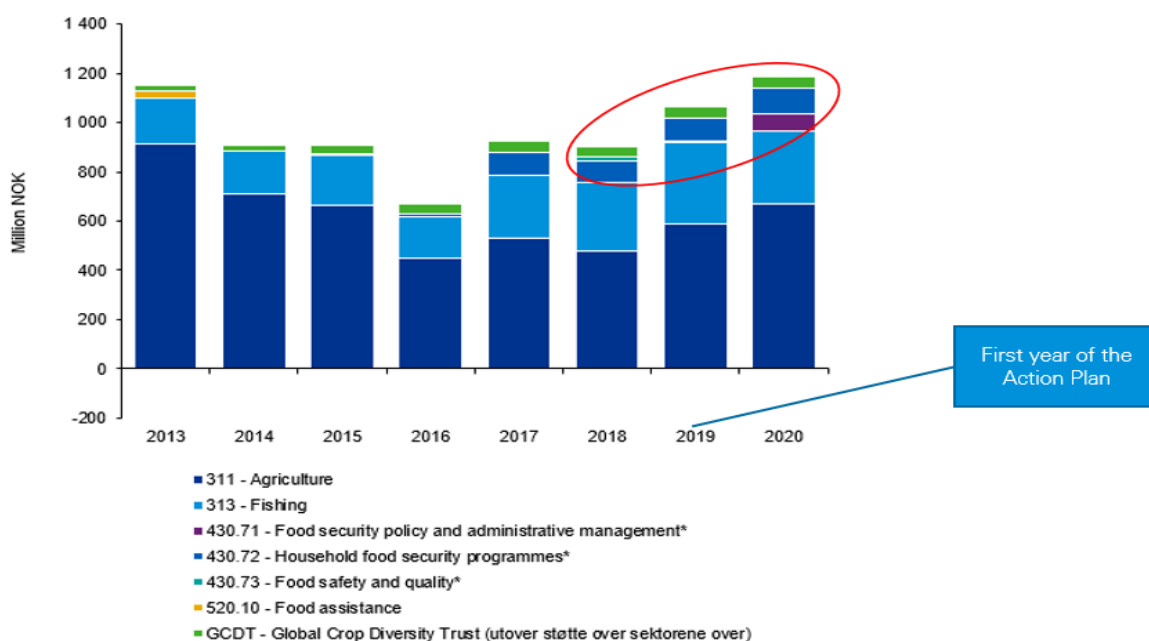
Nevertheless, the team has tried to identify what we believe to be the most relevant sectors. Below is an indicative overview of support according to relevant DAC sectors (note that aid statistics for 2021 are not yet made available):

²⁴ See [PROBLUE: The World Bank's Blue Economy Program](#)

²⁵ See [Global Summit Dialogue on food from the ocean, rivers and lakes focuses on the vital role aquatic foods play in food systems | United Nations](#)

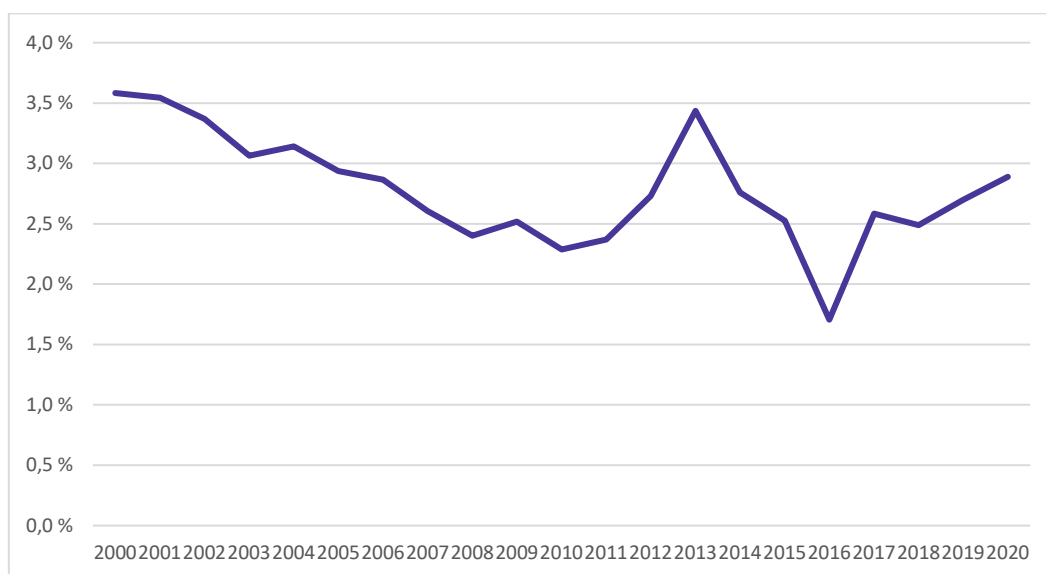
²⁶ Utenriksdepartementet (2019): Prop. 1 S (2019 –2020) Proposisjon til Stortinget (forslag til stortingsvedtak)

Figure 1: Total earmarked aid to agriculture, fisheries and food security (Source: Norad)



In absolute numbers, the budget increased by NOK 280 mill. from 2018 till 2020. However, looking a few years back in time, it is evident that there has also previously been a significant drop in funding from 2013 (NOK 1,153 mill.) till 2016 (NOK 667 million). This trend shifted in 2017.²⁷

Figure 2: Share of assistance to agriculture, fishing and food security in total aid (Source: Norad)



Total allocation in 2019 was NOK 1,062 mill., and NOK 1,183 mill. in 2020 – an overall increase of 11%. Looking at the total aid budget in 2019 (NOK 37.8 billion) compared to 2020 (NOK 39.5 billion), there is also a slight % increase of relevant funding: 2.8% in 2019, till 2.99% in 2020. In other words: it appears to have been a *moderate* increase not only in absolute numbers, but also by share of the overall development budget – but one that has not yet fully compensated the trend decrease in the share of development aid going to agriculture, fishing and food security (see Figure 2).

Agriculture is by far the largest sector, whereas *fisheries* are relatively small – with only NOK 331 mill. allocated in 2019 and a decrease to NOK 293 mill. in 2020. This seems somewhat odd, considering

²⁷ Note that numbers from 2021 are not yet available.

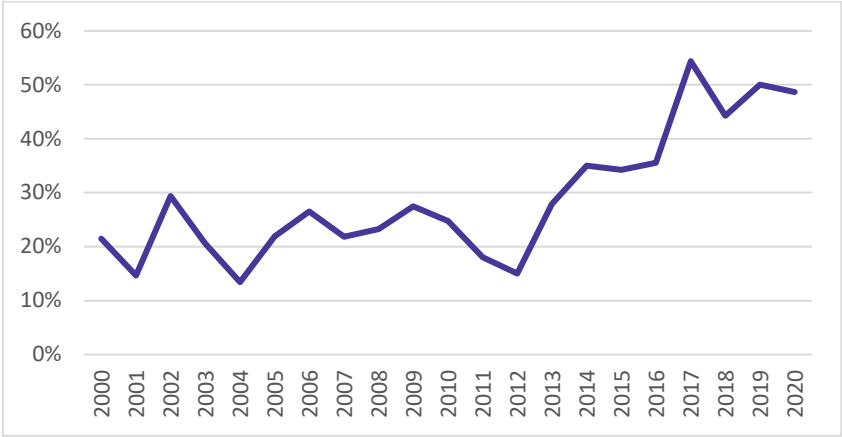
the stated ambition in the Action Plan to expand the Fish for Development programme, as well as Norway’s emphasis on the importance of aquatic food systems. *Emergency Food Assistance* has had a slight increase the past few years, from NOK 531 mill. in 2018 to NOK 551 mill. in 2020. But it is uncertain whether to what extent this should be considered relevant for the Action Plan.

3.2.1 Key partners

The Action Plan mentions a number of strategic multinational institutions as key partners. A preliminary observation in this regard is that the share of share of aid to agriculture, fishing and food security that is oriented towards multilateral institutions has dramatically increased in the past decades, from an average of about 20% in the years 2000-2012 to close to 50% currently. The orientations taken since the adoption of the Action Plan seem to confirm this tendency.

The channelling of half of Norway’s development assistance to food systems through multilaterals is an important strategic development that should be appraised within the context of the Action Plan – in particular in order to assess alignment on and contribution to the Plan’s objectives.

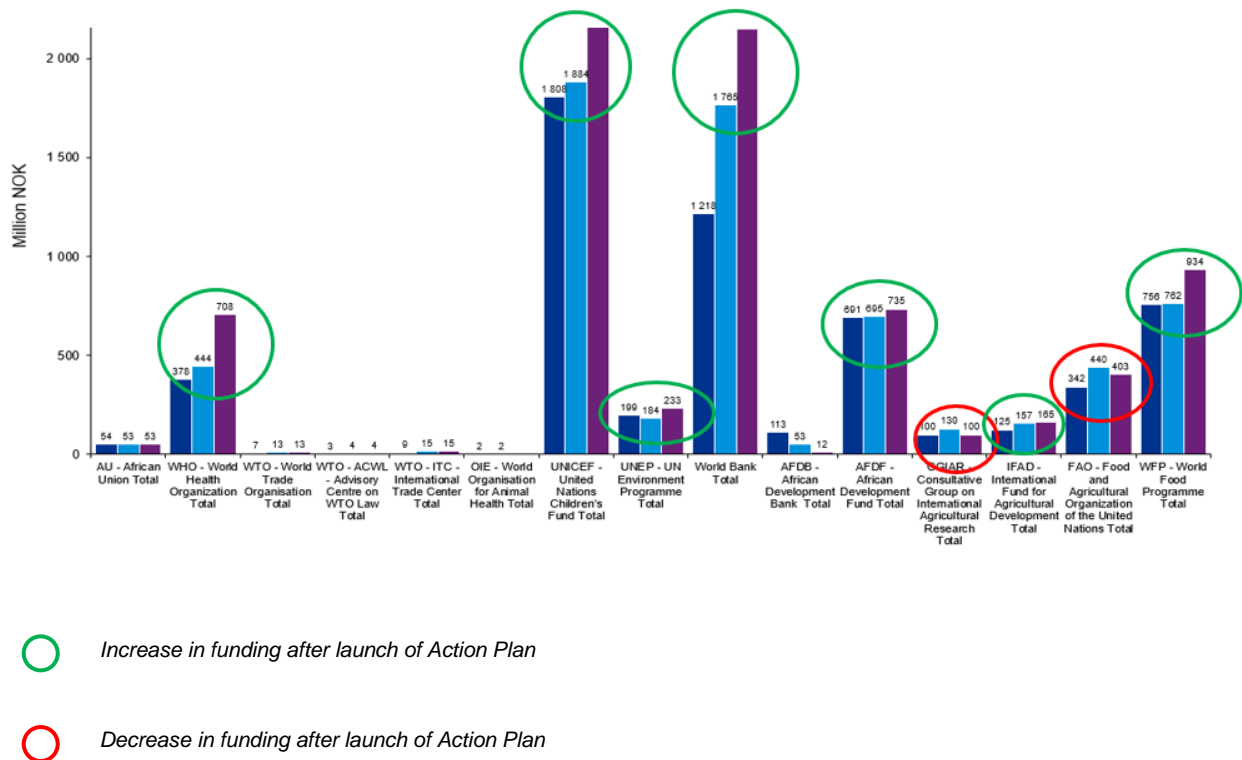
Figure 3: Share of multilateral institutions in total aid to agriculture, fishing and food security (Source: Norad)



One way of assessing whether there has been a scaling up is to look at budgetary increases per partner (see figure below). Note however, that this overview encompasses both core support, as well as earmarked support to a number of different thematic areas – not only food systems. Nevertheless, it may be seen as an indication of which partners are truly acknowledged as more strategic to the Norwegian government.

Judging from the overview below, UNICEF and the World Bank are the budgetary winners: both with sizeable budgets above NOK 2 bn. – and big increases in support over the past two years. WHO, UNEP, AFDF, FAO and WFP are also important channels for Norwegian aid, most of which have had budgetary increases the past two years - apart from FAO. The latter had a decline of NOK 37 mill. from 2019 to 2020. The same applies to CGIAR, which also had a decrease of NOK 30 mill. from 2019 to 2020. As such, there is no clear correspondence between key partners mentioned by name in the Action Plan and budgetary allocations. Note however, that this may have changed recently and also for the year 2022, as there is a proposed substantial increase towards food systems for 2022 (mentioned further below).

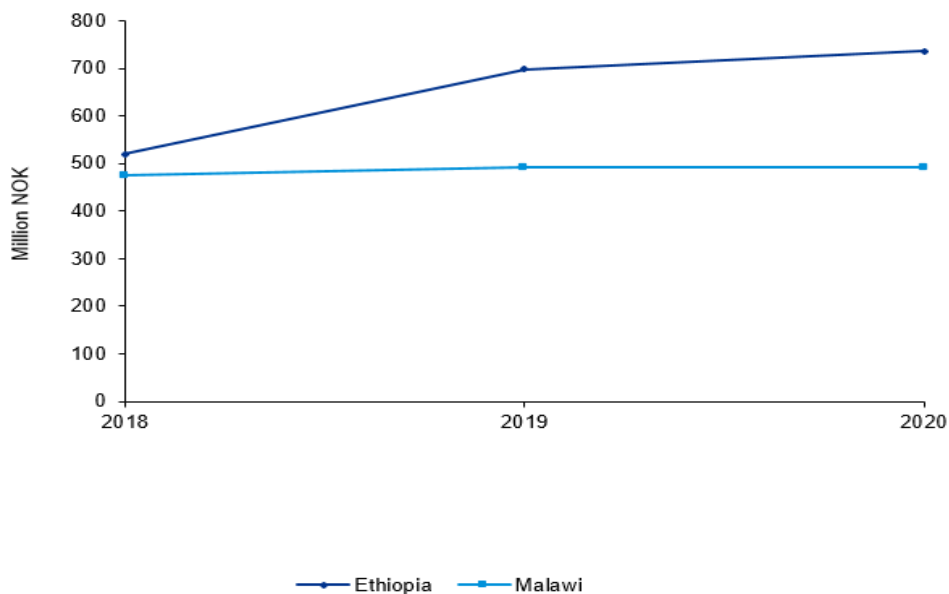
Figure 4: Budgetary allocations 2018-2020 for key multi channels of the Action Plan (Source: Norad)



Ethiopia and Malawi

Looking at country level relating to the two deep-dives (see annexes in sections 5.1 and 5.2), it is also difficult to see any clear coherence between the ambitions of the Action Plan, as compared to budgetary allocations. In Ethiopia, the overall financial allocation from Norway increased from NOK 520 mill. in 2018, to NOK 736 mill. in 2020, whereas in Malawi, there is an overall increase from NOK 475 mill. in 2018 to NOK 492 mill. in 2019 and 2020. There was no increase from 2019 to 2020, however.

Figure 5: Total aid to Ethiopia and Malawi 2018-2020 (Source: Norad)



There may be some initiatives that are more targeted towards food systems than others, such as Yara and the Development fund's support to technical and vocational training in Ethiopia (ETH-17/0011), focusing on education for youths in Afar, as well as the joint NGO consortium on improving Resilience and Climate Smart Agriculture Practices to agro-pastoral communities (QZA-16/0389-48). Many programmes may, however, consist of sub-components that could also be of relevance to food systems. Still, looking at the allocation over various chapter posts, it is difficult to draw any clear conclusion whether the overall increase in funding to Ethiopia is a result of the Action Plan.

In Malawi, total aid has maintained same level from 2019 to 2020 (NOK 492 mill.). Some chapter posts have been decreased, whereas support to *Private Sector Development, Agriculture and Renewable energy* has increased (by NOK 37 mill.), as well as a slight increase in support to *Civil Society* (by NOK 3 mill.). This is likely due to the Embassy's strong focus on building a portfolio related to food systems and the Action Plan (see Malawi case study, annex 2).

Award letters for 2020 and 2021 and revised budgetary proposition 2022

Aid statistics for 2021 has not been made available yet. However, in the award letter from the MFA to Norad in 2021, food systems is flagged as a priority area. Allocations over chapter post *Chapter Post 162.71: Food Security, Fisheries and Agriculture* (NOK 816 mill.) and *Chapter Post 163.70: Environment and Climate* (NOK 1.12 bn), are earmarked towards food systems – in addition to other priority areas.²⁸ It is also mentioned in the annual reports of Norad for 2019 and 2020, stating that Norad is actively contributing to the preparation and implementation of the Action Plan. In Norad's 2020 annual report, it is reported that most work till date has focused on hunger and COVID-19, but also that Norad is in the process of structuring a portfolio of partners and projects with relevance to food systems.²⁹ Notably, in the revised budgetary proposition to the Storting for 2022, Chapter Post 162.71 is suggested to be increased by NOK 500 mill, with total allocation of NOK 1.452 bn. to support climate smart agriculture, small-scale producers in food systems, including school feeding.³⁰ This constitutes a considerable increase of earmarked funding towards food systems, if approved.

Adding to this, there are also other parts of the government administration in which the Action Plan is mentioned, such as the award letter from Ministry of Agriculture and Food to the Norwegian Research Council³¹; award letter from Ministry of Trade and Fisheries to the Norwegian Veterinary Institute³²; the budget proposals for the Ministries of Agriculture and Food in 2020 and 2021; of Climate and Environment in 2019, 2020 and 2021; of Health and Care Services in 2020; and of Industry and Fisheries in 2020 and 2021. The Action Plan is referred to as an overall priority area of the Government, but funds are not earmarked towards the specific objectives of the Action Plan. Note also that the newly elected Labour- and Centre Party Government has announced in its "Hurdals Platform" that fighting hunger and food security is a priority area with Norwegian development cooperation, with a particular emphasis on sustainable small-scale production and climate-smart agriculture.³³

3.2.2 Survey results from embassies

Out of 34 embassies to which the survey was administered, 17 responses representing 15 embassies were received (approx. 50% response rate). Worth noting is that two embassies responded that they did not wish to be interviewed or take part of the survey, as they did not see any direct relevance to the work of the embassy. Below, key findings are summarised. See Annex 5: Survey responses for the full overview of questions, respondents and responses.

²⁸ See [norad_tildelingsbrev_2021.pdf \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

²⁹ Norad (2020): annual report. Available at: [Norads årsrapport \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

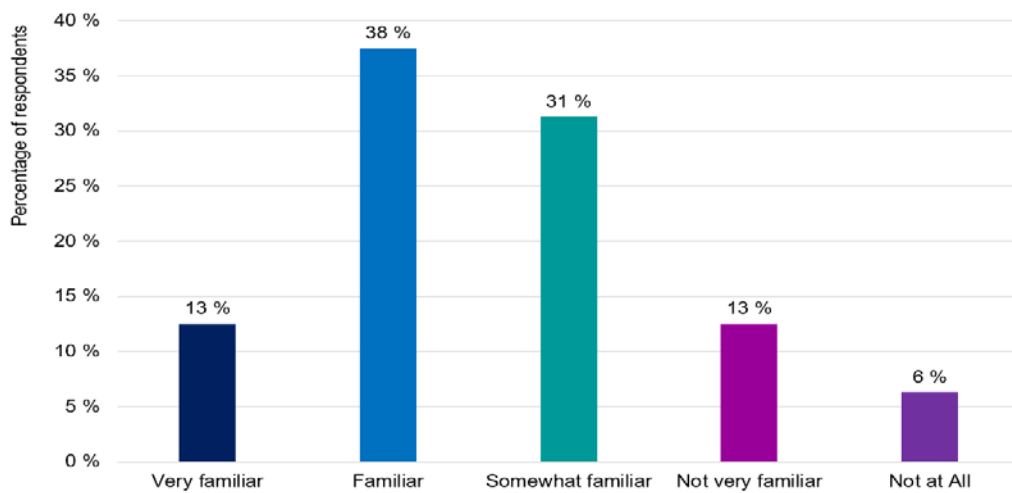
³⁰ See [Prop. 1 S Tillegg 1 \(2021–2022\) \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

³¹ See [Statsbudsjettet 2021 - Tildelingsbrev til Norges forskningsråd \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

³² See [Statsbudsjettet 2021: Tildelingsbrev for Veterinærinstituttet \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

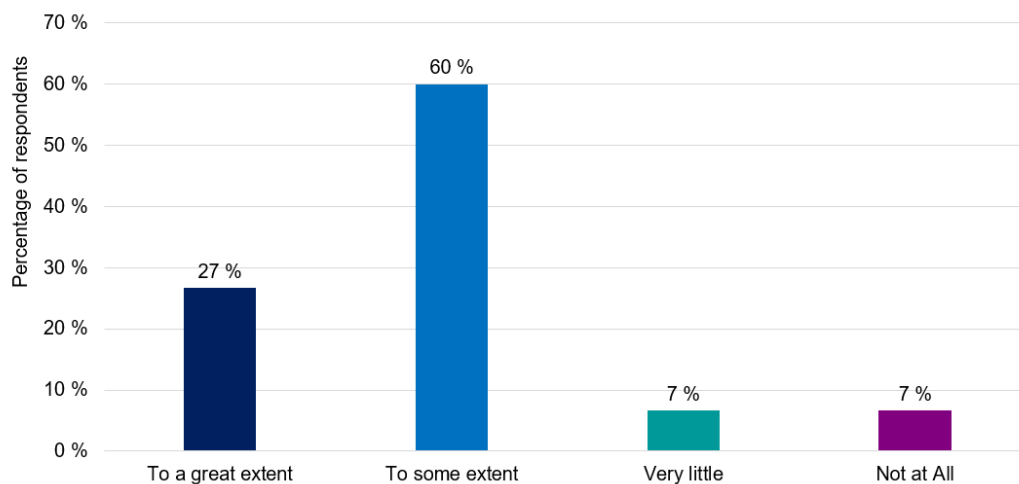
³³ See [Hurdalsplattformen \(cloudinary.com\)](#)

Figure 6: How familiar are you with the contents of the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems?



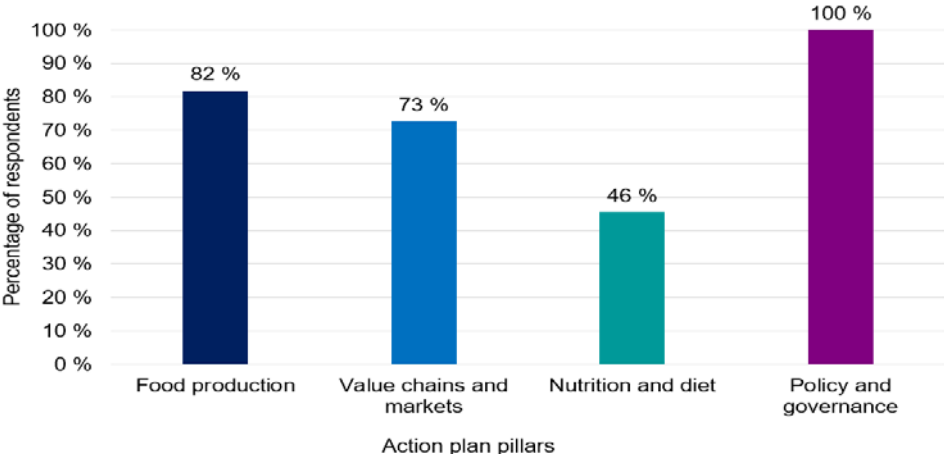
A significant majority (81%) of respondents report to be either very familiar (13%), familiar (38%) or somewhat familiar (31%) with the contents of the Action Plan (Figure 8). Only 19% of respondents were either not very familiar (13%) or not at all familiar (6%). The results indicate a relatively good level of dissemination of the Action Plan, and a satisfactory level of familiarity among the embassies surveyed. Only one respondent reported no familiarity with the plan.

Figure 7: To what extent are the objectives of the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems relevant and aligned with policies/initiatives in the country in which you work?



A majority of respondents (86.7%) consider the objectives of the Action Plan to be relevant and aligned with policies and initiatives in their relevant country context, 27% to a great extent and 60% to some extent (Figure 9). This is corresponding well with interview data collected, in which many stakeholders viewed the Action Plan as timely and pertinent to ongoing work on food systems. Many praised the Norwegian government for formalising a clear commitment to the food systems approach. However, interviewees also noted that the Norwegian Action Plan was not the catalyst of this approach, nor the source of sectoral alignment. Rather, as previously mentioned, the Action Plan is seen more as complimentary to already existing policies and ongoing work.

Figure 8: Are you working with any of the four pillars of the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems? (Please tick all that apply)



When it comes to the four pillars of the plan, respondents report that they work mostly on policy and governance (100%), food production (82%) and value chains and markets (73%) (Figure 10). Only 46% of the respondents report a particular focus on the nutrition and diet pillar. This finding may reflect the general status quo in the current food systems approach, in which food quantity is more often prioritised over food quality. Several stakeholders interviewed raised this concern and emphasised the need to focus not only on food production (quantity), but also on nutrition and diet (quality) to avoid malnutrition in the form of both under- and overnutrition. The high ranking on policy and governance may be due to the fact that many embassies generally work on such issues. However, it is not possible to ascertain that this is specifically related to food systems in this case.

Even though many embassies found communication to be somewhat adequate, there is significant room for improvement. Interview data suggest that several embassies consider that guidance and follow-up on the Action Plan from MFA and Norad, has not been consistent and at times insufficient. Interviewees also noted that communication, focus and follow-up of the Action Plan have been highly dependent on individual staff members. As such, individual engagement with the Action Plan have largely determined the extent to which food systems have been prioritised and pursued as an area of work at both Embassy-level, as well as in Norad and the MFA.

Figure 9: Please tick the subsidiary objectives (SOs) from the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems where you feel your embassy is contributing the most ³⁴

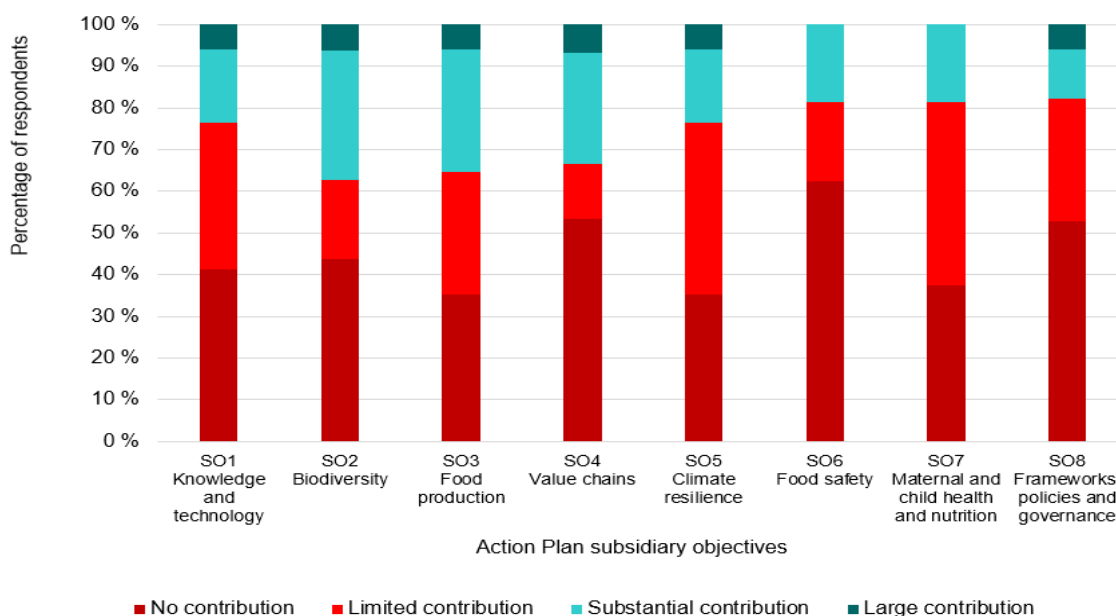


Figure 12 shows the perceived degree to which embassies have contributed to the eight subsidiary objectives of the plan. The objectives most contributed to are SO2, 3 and 4. However, in general contributions are low across the board, with the majority of respondents reporting no or limited contributions.

This is a notable finding for several reasons. On the one hand, it seems clear that embassies largely find the Action Plan to be both relevant and aligned with local policies and initiatives. It is also perceived to be both relevant and aligned with the various embassy programme portfolios. On the other hand, the limited contribution reported towards the subsidiary objectives of the plan, may indicate a low degree of understanding among the embassies of how the Action Plan should be operationalised. It could also mean that there are few tangible results from the Embassies' work on food systems.

3.2.3 Concluding remarks

In conclusion, there seem to have been an overall modest increase of relevant channels of support to food systems from 2019 - 2020, but apart from earmarked funding to *Chapter Post 162.70 and 163.70*, there is no evidence to suggest that there has been any intentional increased funding to promote sustainable food systems across different budget allocations. It is exceedingly difficult to identify what is considered relevant or not, as there is no clear definition of "support to food systems".

³⁴ SO1: The knowledge and technology needed for sustainable and climate resilient food production has been developed, made accessible and scaled up.

SO2: Biodiversity in food production has increased.

SO3: Food production has become more sustainable and climate smart.

SO4: Sustainable value chains from source to market have been developed and strengthened.

SO5: Food producers and their local communities are better equipped to deal with natural disasters and other adverse impacts of climate change.

SO6: Food safety and animal and plant health in partner countries have been improved.

SO7: Information and guidance on maternal and child health have been enhanced and measures to improve nutrition for school children, young people and adults have been implemented.

SO8: Global and regional frameworks for sustainable food systems, as well as national policies and governance structures for these systems, have been developed and strengthened.

A clear target on financial support, as well as indicators relating to food systems, should be considered for the remaining years of the Action Plan. In this regard, Norad's statistical department is in the process of establishing SDG indicators for all new projects and programmes, which means that relevant support to SDG2 can be tracked more coherently in the future. There is also a substantial increase of NOK 500 mill. proposed over Chapter Post 162.71 for 2022 in the revised budgetary proposition to the Storting for 2022. This constitutes a considerable increase of earmarked funding towards food systems.

Support to fisheries have declined, which stands in stark contrast to the Action Plan's focus on strengthening the Fish for Development programme, as well as the recent Norwegian statements made at the UN food Summit in 2021.³⁵ It is recommended to increase funding to the Fish for Development programme, and to consider whether support to aquaculture development can be further intensified – as this is a key priority by many partner countries and central agencies such as FAO.

Overall, survey results show that although the Action Plan is reported to be relevant by most embassy respondents, the uptake of the plan as a normative framework has been limited, as has the framing and prioritisation of related programmatic work. The fact that the survey response rate is somewhat low may also be an indication that the Action Plan is not considered very relevant by many of the embassies. These findings also correspond with interview data, in which embassy staff interviewed noted that despite relevance and alignment of the Action Plan, the plan has limited importance and utility in their daily work. This is largely due to the broad and generic focus of the plan, making it difficult to apply it as anything more than a policy reference document. A notable exception to this is the Embassy in Malawi, which has developed a project portfolio with basis in the Action Plan (Annex 2: Case study Malawi).

3.3 Relevance

3.3.1 Relevance of projects and programmes for achieving the subsidiary objectives

In terms of whether projects and programmes implemented under the Action Plan are relevant to achieving one or more of the eight subsidiary objectives, findings cannot be considered conclusive. This is because of the absence of a results-management system designed for follow-up on Action Plan implementation, tagged budget allocations, as well as clearly defined responsibilities for follow-up in embassies, MFA and Norad. Interviews do indicate a level of relevance of projects and programmes, such as NICFI detailed further in chapter section 3.3.4 below. However, many projects found to be relevant were active prior to the Action Plan launch, suggesting again that the Plan is aligned with already existing initiatives, rather than spurring new projects and programmes. As noted in chapter section 3.2.2 above, despite the fact that embassies to a great/some extent find the Action Plan relevant and aligned with policies and initiatives in their country contexts (Figure 9), they contribute to a very limited degree to the eight subsidiary objectives (Figure 12). Contributions to SO2, 3 and 4 are the most substantial, perhaps reflecting the issues perceived by embassies as most salient in their contexts:

- ✓ SO2: Biodiversity in food production has increased.
- ✓ SO3: Food production has become more sustainable and climate smart.
- ✓ SO4: Sustainable value chains from source to market have been developed and strengthened.

As previously mentioned, the Action Plan itself promotes a holistic and integrated approach, illustrating the importance of food as cross-cutting issue among several dimensions of Norwegian foreign and development policy. Throughout this MTR, several relevant projects and programs that are implemented under the action plan were reviewed including relevant projects under 161.70; 161.71; 162.70; 162.71; 162.72; 163.71; 163.70; and 170.70 chapter posts which were identified as food systems-relevant portfolios. From our analysis of KII with implementing partners and a desk review of available documentation (document list is available in Annex 3), the team observed that collectively the projects largely cover the eight subsidiary objectives of the action plan. This demonstrates how the portfolio as a whole is well aligned with the Action Plan and its overall objective of ensuring increased food security through the development of sustainable food systems. While several projects and

³⁵ See: [unfss_pre-summit_statement_norway.pdf](#)

programmes can be categorised as working toward at least one specific objective of the action plan (e.g. Climate smart innovations in agriculture in Uganda: Improved food security, livelihoods and soil carbon (NORGLOBAL2) which aligns with SO4: “Food producers and their local communities are better equipped to deal with natural disasters and other adverse impacts of climate change”), in Malawi, the Sustainable Food Systems for Rural Resilience and Transformation (TRANSFORM) programme illustrates how a single project was specifically redesigned and reorganised to encapsulate several components of the food systems approach, thus aligning with all eight subsidiary objectives. Furthermore, although there is a clear focus on nutrition in several projects such as, GROWNUT-2 (NORHED II), Co-producing Gender-responsive Climate Services for Enhanced Food and Nutrition Security and Health in Ethiopia and Tanzania (NORGLOBAL2); Scaling up nutrition (SUN) movement (QZA-18/0269); IFAD support to programmes on nutrition (QZA-19/0183); and the Joint Programme for Girls Education (Malawi) demonstrating alignment with SO7 (Information and guidance on maternal and child health have been enhanced and measures to improve nutrition for schoolchildren, young people and adults), based on the information available for this review, it was apparent that efforts may be improved to connect and highlight the importance of nutrition and food safety to food systems and agriculture throughout the portfolio which is discussed further in Section 3.4.4.

3.3.2 Relevance and alignment with policies in Norwegian partner countries

Norwegian partner country stakeholders interviewed for this MTR noted that the Action Plan objectives are relevant to and aligned with their local policies on food systems. Norway was also commended for highlighting sustainable food systems in current international discourse through the Plan. However, interviewees also stressed that their local policies either already existed or had been developed independently of the Norwegian Action Plan. In this sense, the Norwegian Action Plan is perceived as complimentary to, rather than a catalyst for, local frameworks and policies.

The Action Plan is a direct response to SDG 2 Zero Hunger and is in line with SDG 2 targets, all of which pertain to sustainable food systems³⁶. SDG 2 is also foundational to policy documents in Norway’s partner countries, further adding to the Action Plan’s relevance in this regard. Furthermore, that five ministers under seven Norwegian ministries are signatories to the Action Plan adds to its relevance. This holistic approach to food systems thinking was commended by many stakeholders interviewed for this MTR. It was also noted that this makes the Action Plan well aligned with current shifts in the international community, in a move towards a more comprehensive approach to sustainable food systems under the SDGs and Agenda 2030.

3.3.3 Relevance of policies, guidelines, and outreach to implement the Action Plan

Many partner country stakeholders stated that although they were familiar with the top-level messages of the Action Plan, they lacked in-depth knowledge of its objectives and action points. As such, there is significant room for improvement in terms of communicating the contents and objectives of the Action Plan to national partner governments. For example, this could be done through the establishment of more international fora where key stakeholders can debate crucial issues and join forces to ensure a more efficient approach to sustainable food systems. The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit is an example of such a platform. Having said that, such fora need to be decisive, forward-looking, and action-oriented to safeguard a targeted and practical food systems approach.

3.3.4 Relevance: Norway’s International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI)

NICFI is one of the more important ODA funded initiatives of relevance to the Action Plan. It is administered by the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and the Environment in collaboration with Norad. The initiative supports bilateral agreements with forest countries, multinational organisations, and civil society. Norad manages significant parts of the NICFI funds under the climate and forest initiative on behalf of the Ministry and is responsible for the initiative’s grant scheme for civil society. To date, Norway has disbursed more than NOK 23 bn., contributing some 70% of the overall global funding to REDD+. NICFI also facilitates the collaboration with other European countries to address deforestation issues, for instance the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI), the largest international collaboration to protect the Congo Basin. Another example is the Amsterdam Declarations

³⁶ See: [United Nations SDG 2 Zero Hunger](#)

Partnership, with an overall ambition to promote sustainable production of deforestation-free commodities through cooperation with private sector and producers.

NICFI is acknowledged as an important contributor to the Action Plan, in particular relating to action point 3 on reducing deforestation caused by food production supply chains in tropical areas. The goals of NICFI is to seek mitigation and emissions reductions from deforestation and forest degradation, through establishment of mechanisms for Results Based Payments (RBPs). A large portion of the revenue from these RBPs is then reinvested in actions decided by the country or jurisdiction in questions, e.g. climate adaptation initiatives, such as land tenure, ecosystem protection and management, and sustainable agriculture. Climate adaptation is an area flagged as top priority in many interviews, particularly at country level as many producers and farmers are increasingly suffering from climate change effects such as droughts, floods, and other unpredictable consequences. It is also a theme that is increasingly relevant for humanitarian aid and disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

Interviewees confirm that the Action Plan is highly relevant and well-aligned with NICFI, but also noting that key focus areas of the plan has been integrated in the NICFI portfolio well ahead of the launch of the Action Plan. In particular NICFI's support to sustainable food production, protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems, is seen as highly relevant. Addressing unsustainable practices in food production both by industrial and smallholder producers, is a key focus of NICFI. Adding to this, NICFI at large, is really attempting at addressing the key drivers of deforestation, largely consisting of unsustainable food production (soy, palm oil, beef, etc). As such, there is little doubt to the importance and well alignment of NICFI to the Action Plan. Still, national food systems approaches need to be anchored at country level, and NICFI may be less relevant in terms of nutrition and diets.

The Action Plan may be a useful policy framework to develop NICFI's work further in this area. However, several interviewees highlighted the need for more clarity on budget allocations, follow-up, and concrete implications of the Action Plan.

Case study 2: The Global Yield Gap Atlas Palm Oil Project (Source: Norwegian Embassy in Jakarta, interview data)

Oil palm expansion in Indonesia has long been a global concern for deforestation as plantations in Indonesia now produce approximately 50% of global palm oil. The sustainability of production is obstructed by the low productivity of an increasing number of smallholder farmers, who are driven to unnecessarily expand plantations and in turn cause further deforestation. For these farmers to secure more sustainable production, it is essential to narrow the gap between actual and attainable yields as an alternative to expansion¹. Norway, through NICFI, has had a committed partnership with Indonesia to reduce deforestation since 2010. 1 Norway then committed to fund Indonesia with up to USD 1 bn. if Indonesia delivered results. Since 2017, the rate of loss of primary forest cover has steadily dropped in Indonesia. However, in 2021 the Indonesian Government decided to pull out of the agreement with Norway. This is unfortunate, but nonetheless, NICFI's support is by many seen as instrumental to incentivising preservation of natural forests in Indonesia. It is yet uncertain whether the disagreement will be resolved.

Since 2018, Norway has supported the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's (UNL) Global Yield Gap Atlas (GYGA) oil palm project, an initiative primarily intending to increase yields of independent smallholder oil palm farmers in Indonesia, while also benefiting commercial cultivation.

The project is a partnership between UNL and professionals from various Indonesian and international research institutions, with the research units of key commercial oil palm growers in Indonesia also contributing. The project works with 1,200 farmers to implement activities at six sites located in the provinces of Jambi, Central-, East- and West- Kalimantan, Riau, and South Sumatra. Implementation is supported by local, Indonesian non-governmental organisations. The Norwegian Embassy assists the project by coordinating communication with the office of the Indonesian President, visiting the project and discussing with farmers and private sector stakeholders, and providing inputs for project improvements.

The GYGA Oil Palm Project consists of two phases. During phase 1 (2018-2019), the size of the exploitable yield gap was estimated. It was found that on average, there is a 42% yield gap, with the potential to produce an additional 128 million MT of palm oil fresh fruit bunches (FFB). This is a 64% increase compared with current production at the time. This would potentially save land use of approx. 7.3 million ha.

Phase 2, which is ongoing (2019- 2023), intends to close yield gaps in independent smallholder plantations. The phase includes sampling of the six project sites, identification of causes of yield gaps, and demonstration of cost-effective Best Management Practices (BMPs) between trial sites and reference sites. As of February 2021, there is a consistent 13% increase in FFB yields in trials. The GYGA palm oil project is well-received by the private sector. It is noted however, that even knowing that there is a yield gap, they cannot manage to close this alone.

Going forward, results will be disseminated to key stakeholders such as ministries, private sector, and oil palm farmers' associations in order to improve current policies and extension programmes, as well as "Farmer to Farmer" learning. Production intensification, along with policies and institutions to ensure land conservation, can help Indonesia and other developing countries to reconcile both economic and environmental goals.

Source: [Report of GYGA Oil Palm February 2021 Symposium with Universities](#)

3.4 Effectiveness

3.4.1 Overview of how the plan's purpose and goals are reflected in documentation

The Action Plan received ample praise among key informants across various stakeholder groups (e.g. academia, bilateral organisations, embassies, ministries, multilateral organisations, NGOs, private sector and within Norad) who underlined its versatility and clear presentation, emphasizing that it is a good reference tool for a number of different audiences. In addition, it was by a stakeholder in academia mentioned that the Action Plan was also useful for reminding stakeholders, ministries, and politicians of their commitments. Nonetheless, many participants felt that the operationalization of the Plan could be further strengthened.

It is clear, that to some extent, the Norwegian Royal Embassy in Lilongwe used the Action Plan to guide decisions and budgetary allocations, with all projects referencing the Action Plan explicitly in their respective programme documents. Furthermore, a majority of local key informants indicated that they were familiar with the plan. However, in interviews conducted with stakeholders outside of Malawi, it was suggested by stakeholders from academia, embassies, the private sector, NGOs, and within Norad that the Action Plan could have been more visible. Key informants from these groups also emphasised that since the Action Plan was not attached to special financing it may be overlooked. Another participant from academia suggested that more frequent updates from Norad, may help make the plan more visible. It was noted, that at the time, Norad had not included the Action Plan in their prioritised thematic areas, making it challenging to follow progress of the work currently being done to support the implementation of the Action Plan. For example, one implementing partner shared that the Action Plan is an impressive and important document, illustrated by the engagement of so many ministries/ministers but also cautions that when this document becomes everyone's responsibility, then there is a slight risk that it loses distinct ownership and thus may become no one's responsibility or agenda. Therefore, it was suggested numerous times, that there needs to be someone who is committed to the Action Plan and follows it closely in order to ensure that the plan's goals and objectives are reflected thoroughly in policies and other relevant documentation.

For example, it was pointed out that calls from the Research Council were somewhat incongruous when it comes to references of the Action Plan. While the Norhed II's description of sub-programmes references food systems, there is no explicit mention the Action Plan. One stakeholder from academia pointed this out, suggesting that referencing the Action Plan could perhaps contribute to lifting food systems a bit more because when the linkage is on paper, it has the ability to send the message that it is a central reference document in the call. Furthermore, according to the document review, in both Norhed II and Norglobal2, 'food systems' is referenced under *sub programme 3: Climate Change and Natural Resources* and the *Environment, Climate, Oceans and Renewable Energy* priority area, respectively. This focus on climate and environment (although relevant) may unintentionally conceal nutrition projects that tend to be organised and categorised under the health-related portfolios. It could be suggested that linking agriculture to nutrition and vice versa can help strengthen the cross-sectoral collaboration and enhance the importance of food systems in these calls.

One participant from Norad described the Action Plan as a signal that is indicative of Norwegian priorities. Nevertheless, although projects funded under the Action Plan are reflective of Norwegian priorities, it was also communicated that the Action Plan may not have necessarily had an influence on shifting such priorities. Participants from Norad and embassies also pointed out that there were few new projects that were generated under the Action Plan, rather a majority of projects were a continuation or extension of ongoing projects and programmes. Also, it appears that in some areas, progress has been delayed or postponed. For instance, despite mention of the Knowledge Bank's Agriculture for Development programme in the Action Plan, one participant from Norad shared that the Agricultural for development has not yet materialised.

3.4.2 Collaboration and communication

Interviews revealed that key informant's perception of the communication surrounding the Action Plan was mixed. On one hand several implementing partners reported that they felt that communication surrounding the Action Plan was satisfactory and collaborative. Many development partnerships are built upon previous relationships since genuine partnerships are difficult to build. According to interview participants in Academia, NGOs, and Embassies, the existence of existing relationships

helped promoting good communication and collaboration surrounding the Action Plan. However, other participants from within Norad, Embassies, Academia, and the private sector suggested that communication surrounding the Action Plan was limited, infrequent, or ad-hoc with a few participants highlighting that they had not heard about the Action Plan since its launch or have only attended few meetings since 2019 where the Action Plan was discussed. Another participant from Academia shared that although the Action Plan is relevant and well-written, without frequent use and follow-up it is possible that document can be forgotten. Additionally, the combination of a lack of institutional follow up and a results framework may have made it appear to some that responsibility was unclear thus generating non-action relating to the Action Plan. Other key informants discussed that without a comprehensive results framework, it makes it challenging to systematically follow-up on the Action Plan, therefore the Action Plan was not perceived to be followed up in a coherent and consistent way.

Silence or non-response can also be seen as an important part of communication in the context of a review, that may include underlying implicit meaning which can further contribute to our understanding of effectiveness. Despite the global relevance of the food systems approach and the necessity of promoting sustainable food systems to combat poverty and promote development, several key-informants from embassies indicated that they did not perceive the Action Plan as particularly relevant for their work, demonstrating that perhaps there were gaps in communication of expectations and/or responsibilities surrounding the implementation of the Action Plan. This also reveals a somewhat fragmented portfolio that although relevant, given breakdowns in communication and/or follow-up key stakeholders might overlook the relevance of the Action Plan.

3.4.3 Early signs of result achievements

Interviews and document reviews also revealed that signs of result achievements were also mixed. This was due in large, to the COVID-19 pandemic, which played a role in slowing or disrupting progress for several projects and programmes under the Action Plan. However, several key informants reflected that some positive lessons learned emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, one being that emphasis on food security is more important and relevant now illustrating the continued timely relevance and importance of the Action Plan. COVID-19 led to increases in food insecurity globally, reversing developmental gains and magnifying weaknesses in the food systems (e.g. supply chain disruptions, price surges, and post-harvest losses for smallholder farmers)³⁷. Although there were significant disruptions toward progress achieved, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, several key informants shared positive learnings from the pandemic. For example, it was mentioned by a stakeholder from a multilateral organization that COVID-19-related travel restrictions have led to more engagement with local consultants which contributes to contextual insights to their project. It was also shared that COVID-19 helped to shed light on some weaknesses and challenges related to project implementation that may otherwise be overlooked.

While several key informants discussed challenges related to COVID-19, others suggested that the development of a results framework may be helpful in conceptualizing indicators for success and describing progress achieved. One participant at the embassy level also suggested that the inclusion of a results framework that is tied to the various indicators of the Action Plan could assist in more strategic planning and thinking. Additionally, they shared that more discussion and strategic thinking could have been made about fund allocation to help implement the Action Plan and how financial support should be distributed or used.

In large, results from projects and programmes linked to the Norwegian Action Plan are yet to emerge. As previously mentioned, many projects and programmes under the portfolio have been disrupted significantly in large due to the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore a traditional assessment of project/programme effectiveness was not feasible for this review. In Ethiopia, while projects and programmes are delivering results, Embassy representatives report that most initiatives commenced prior to the Action Plan launch, therefore there were no examples of results that were attributable to the Action Plan. Stakeholders in Ethiopia also noted that project results are delayed due to the Tigray conflict causing a focus on humanitarian aid (impacting projects such as the Climate Resilient Rural Livelihoods Programme (CARD II) and the Sustainable Vegetable Value Chain project). However, in Malawi, the review team was able to obtain an overview of early signs of result achievements as a result of projects and programmes including the TRANSFORM programme, NASFAM, and FoodMa.

³⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-and-covid-19>

According to report documents and KIIs, the TRANSFORM programme has increased food production through the introduction of simple and affordable irrigation technologies enabling farmers to harvest three times a year as opposed to previously when increased production was achieved solely by cutting down trees³⁸ (SO 1, 3, 4, and 5). Furthermore, other projects like The National Farmers' Association of Malawi's (NASFAM) "Enhancing Member Livelihoods through an Aligned, Self-Sustaining Enterprise" are currently involved in training farmers on how to increase food production and linking them to

Case Study 3: the Action Plan in Ethiopia

The eight subsidiary objectives of the Norwegian Action Plan are highly relevant to Ethiopian national policies addressing agriculture, food, nutrition and economic reform. Ethiopia faces chronic food security issues which clearly require improvements in food production, value chains and markets, nutrition and diet, and policy and governance as emphasised in the Action Plan.

Coverage of the eight Action Plan objectives is improving in Ethiopia. Embassy staff and implementing partners have been following guidance to incorporate Action Plan objectives into initiatives. This can clearly be seen in the most recent phase of the Sustainable Food System through Education and Research project (2021-2025) which covers all eight Action Plan objectives.

Moreover, an MTR field visit to the Climate Adaptation & Rural Development (CARD) II project found that Development Fund implementers are using the Norwegian Action Plan. 6,500 farming households benefited from the CARD I (2017-2020) project intended to create income and livelihood opportunities by increasing food and nutrition security, adaptation capacity to climate change, business and entrepreneurship development, and social inclusion and gender equity. The project also provides and creates a link where farmers and the local government can access improved seed varieties.

Now in phase 2, CARD II (2020-2025) is introducing a new holistic community-focused approach known as Climate Adaptive Villages, intended to implement clustered projects in a community in line with government policies and services linking to the communities needs and priorities.

This new approach is also consistent with one of the propositions presented during the Food Systems Summit 2021: "Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all," stressing strengthening farmers' seed systems and calling for a bottom-up demand-driven approach to seed security.

For further detail, see Ethiopia case study in Annex 1.

markets (SO 1 and 5). While "Sustainable food systems in Malawi (FoodMa)" has also made progress including the near completion of a baseline study. Additionally, early indications of result achievements for each country case are described in Annex 1 and Annex 2.

Overall, results from projects and programmes implemented under the plan are yet to emerge. In our review, we found that there were some alignment and early indications of results at the policy level related to plans, discussions, and awareness raising-related activities on food systems (although it is difficult to strictly attribute these initiatives to the Action Plan itself) such as UN Food System's Summit and the game changing initiative from Norway to the UN Food Systems Summit on farmers' access to crop diversity first in seed policy and practice; FAO's side-events that were organised with Norway on fish processing and the biodiversity of fish stocks; the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) initiative; in addition to the Nordic co-operation on food systems transformation. Furthermore, key informants from a multilateral organization described how they identify the risks within the project with an integrated approach that begins with a situation analysis and works to understand how the social and environmental aspects come together (e.g. how do these aspects affect women, nutrition, social and environmental harms?). Other key informants from multilateral organizations discussed how an important contribution to the awareness on food systems thinking is that dismantles silos and encourages a more holistic approach, working towards an enabling policy environment and food systems thinking also brings in a gender perspective, recognizing the vital role of women in food production, e.g. post-harvest work related to fishing. However, although Norway is actively engaged

³⁸ Norwegian Church Air, NMBU, and the Development Fund. Transform Inception Report: Second Progress Report

and supports several Rome-based agencies, the aforementioned indications of progress cannot be directly attributed to the implementation of the Action Plan.

3.4.4 Key areas not sufficiently covered

Figure 10 in section 3.2.2 shows that nutrition and diet is the Action Plan pillar least covered by the embassies in their relevant partner countries. The lack of coverage of this pillar was evident also in the MTR interviews, as only a handful of interviewees mentioned working on nutrition- and diet-related issues. Moreover, nutrition activities when they were in fact mentioned were not supported by Norway. Mentions of contributions to subsidiary objective 7 specifically on maternal and child health and nutrition (MCHN) – as well as nutrition for school children, young people, and adults – were largely absent in stakeholder interviews and document reviews with few exceptions. The survey of embassies also found that the majority of representations offer limited (44%) to no contribution (38%) to this overall objective (Figure 12). Relatedly, several stakeholders interviewed at the embassy, NGO, academic, and national government levels raised their concerns with the focus of the current food system on increasing food production (quantity) and emphasised the need to rather focus on nutrition and diet (quality) as a key tool to avoid malnutrition in the form of both under- and overnutrition. One interviewee from the multilateral sector receiving Norwegian funding e.g. proposed for Norway to work more closely with the private sector to develop more nutrition-dense and -appropriate products designed to increase beneficiaries' Dietary Diversity Score.

Nutrition and safe drinking water are largely absent from the projects and programmes funded under the action plan, however it is possible that there are other projects that support nutrition and diet in the global health portfolio – linkages to these projects and programmes with the Action Plan are harder to determine. This may be due to how allocations are made and organised. For example, in both Norhed II and Norglobal2, 'food systems' is referenced under sub programme 3: Climate Change and Natural Resources, and the environment, climate, oceans and renewable energy priority area, respectively. This focus on climate and environment (although relevant) may unintentionally exclude nutrition projects that tend to be organised/categorised under the health portfolio.

Furthermore, although food safety was noted by implementing partners as a current challenge, it appears that little work has been done on improving food safety and animal and plant health in partner countries for Norwegian development assistance. Figure 12 shows how this is the least contributed to of all eight subsidiary objectives, with no embassies reporting a large contribution and the highest share of respondents (63%) reporting no contribution vis-à-vis the seven other subsidiary objectives. This was reflected in interviews, as food safety as an overall topic was hardly ever raised by stakeholders as an issue on which they worked. The topic was raised only in relation to research on use of chemical fertilisers vs. micronutrients for soil enrichment, as well as in relation to export of agricultural products to European markets. In none of these instances where the food safety initiatives funded by Norway specifically, however.

Interestingly, despite the stated focus on fisheries in the Action Plan, there is a gap in coverage as this has not been followed up with an increase in funding. As noted in chapter 3.2.1, this MTR finds that in terms of funding, agriculture is by far the largest sector, whereas the fisheries sector is relatively small – with only NOK 331 mill. allocated in 2019, which further decreased to NOK 293 mill. in 2020. This seems somewhat mismatched, considering the stated ambition in the Action Plan to expand the Fish for Development programme, as well as Norway's emphasis on the importance of aquatic food systems. Adding to this, the Action Plan also states that a new Agriculture for Development should be established under the Knowledge Bank, and secure the involvement of relevant institutions in projects within their respective areas of expertise. It was further intended to be coordinated with the Fish – and Oceans for Development programmes. However, this has not yet happened, which is likely due to the process of reorganising Norad - in which the Knowledge Bank no longer exists. It is however proposed to be launched in 2022, according to revised proposition to the Storting.³⁹

Relatedly, stakeholders from multilateral partners, NGOs, private sector and academia interviewed also highlighted the lack of focus on aquaculture in Norwegian development cooperation and characterised it as curious, considering Norway's competence and competitive advantage in this field. It was suggested that Norway might consider narrowing their field of focus within the wide food system

³⁹ See [Prop. 1 S Tillegg 1 \(2021–2022\) \(regjeringen.no\)](https://www.regjeringen.no)

to target specific sectors with clear strategies (aquaculture and soy production were specifically raised) to bolster the impact of its support.

Case study 4: Norges Vel's Value Chain Model for Tilapia Smallholder Farmers in Africa



Photo: Norges Vel

Norges Vel has developed climate resilient, sustainable value chain models for tilapia farming, organisation and sales in Madagascar (since 2011) and Mozambique (since 2017). The main objectives of the aquaculture interventions are income generation, better access to healthy food and laying the basis for private sector and industry development. Norad and the Norwegian MFA support the work.

Approach: Norges Vel is professionalizing the complete value chain, taking care of and quality assuring all levels from production to market. Capacity building in professional, profitable tilapia production, business management, climate resilience and gender considerations are all key in Norges Vel's work.

Main challenges: Shortfalls in regulatory frameworks within aquaculture; lack of access to capital for establishment or expansion of production; time investment required for change of mindset to become professional fish farmers and for capacity building; lack of collaboration and coordination within sector.

Achievements: Around 600 tonnes of tilapia will be produced in 2021 in Madagascar (nearly 400 tonnes in 2020, 1160 tonnes expected 2023). In Mozambique, Norges Vel expects production of 200 tonnes in 2021. The projects are serving 140,000 persons with their current national average fish consumption. Income levels lie at minimum USD 100 per month, well above national levels. Norges Vel has achieved professionalised, functional hands-on structures from production to sales, including improved market access. Jobs and incomes have increased across the value chain. Inputs have been provided and partly adopted e.g. on tax regulations and aquaculture strategies.

Source: Norges Vel

3.4.5 Good practices, challenges, and weaknesses

Good practices that were identified throughout the review involved the collaborative and multi-sectoral approaches employed by stakeholders. Interview participants from Embassies, Academia, and NGOs discussed how the continuation of long-term partnerships were helpful in incorporating the Action Plan into current projects and programmes. Key-informants also highlighted how the cross-sector collaboration of several ministries illustrated the need for a holistic approach when addressing

Case study 5: Sustainable Soyabean Production in Northern Ghana

In 2021, Norad allocated a NOK 30 mill. grant to Yara and Felleskjøpet for a project in Ghana on sustainable soy production. A number of stakeholders are also included in the project, such as Wageningen, IITA, wholesalers, seed companies, 11 larger soyabean processors-exporter, and a national inoculant company.

There is international demand for non-GMO soya export, also due to Covid-19 which has led to insufficient supply of soya from major producing countries like Brazil, United States and China. The project has a value-chain approach, aiming at addressing the various gaps in terms of outputs, inputs information, mechanization, financial services, capacity constraints, enabling environment, etc.

The project will ultimately target 100,000 farmers, aiming at doubling Ghana's soybean production in four years. An estimated 56,000 additional jobs is expected to be created as of result of the initiative.

Source: Yara

sustainable food systems. For many, this was seen as a novel reference document which describes the Norwegian position on food systems, but also helps locate the Norwegian Agenda in the global paradigm shift to more holistic food systems thinking.

Challenges largely focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, although some key-informants shared important lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic as exemplified above, it was widely reported that COVID-19 had led to disruptions or delays in some way. Additionally, challenges were reported regarding the Action Plans visibility and perceived relevance, follow-up, and operationalization of the plan using a comprehensive results-framework.

It was also acknowledged that the importance and incorporation of 'informal' food systems into any food systems approach by implementing partners from Embassies, NGOs and National Governments, since the reality in many countries is that a majority of food is sold in local markets which often lack formal regulations and/or guidelines crucial to addressing sustainable value creation, private sector development, and food safety within the food system.

Case Study 6: Examples of good practices drawn from Malawi

KII interviews with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Lilongwe revealed that embassy staff put in a great deal of effort to translate the Norwegian Action Plan on Sustainable Food Systems into a framework that responds to the Malawian context, demonstrating how the Action Plan was tailored to the Malawian context in order to ensure implementation. There were also indications that the embassy worked on developing an overview of how existing projects contributed to different focus areas/pillars and how they could reorganise their existing portfolio to align with the plan.

Interviewees agreed that building on collaborative long-term relationships has had a positive effect on their ability to implement the Action Plan. Not only do these long-term collaborative relationships foster equitable and genuine partnerships, but establishing long-term relationships with partners demonstrates how the development of collaborative partnerships long exceeds the time constraints of the Action Plan (e.g. three years) which support the continuation of existing projects that may further contribute to effectiveness and sustainability. Our interpretation of key informant responses is that these long-term partnerships also fostered an enabling environment for consistent and effective communication surrounding the plan (especially during COVID-19).

For further detail, see Malawi case study in Annex 2.

3.5 Sustainability

Overall, given that due to the delays generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, sustainability has been difficult to assess. One participant at the embassy level even indicated that although this is a mid-term review, given the disruptions experienced in 2020 and 2021, it might be perceived that this mid-term review was coming too soon as many of the projects and programmes reviewed are still in their start-up phases.

3.5.1 Indications of sustainable changes in the Norwegian policy making related to food systems

Given the positive perceptions associated with the content of the action plan, the general relevance and alignment of the Action Plan with the work of the ministers involved, as well as those involved with the implementation of policies and programmes (e.g. NGOs, academics, etc.), there are indications of sustainability within Norwegian policy making related to food systems. For example, one participant from academia shared that the new government may continue the work with the Action plan since food system thinking is up and coming. Additionally, since food security and food systems have become increasingly relevant during the pandemic, there is an important opportunity for the work on sustainable food systems forward. Participants discussed how although the action plan is a useful document to understand Norwegian priorities within a framework, however, sustainability is difficult to assess without further monitoring.

Key informants reflected how projects and programmes launched under the action plan as well as the food systems approach will need time to foster sustainable change both at the global and national levels. One participant from academia shared that to develop competence and knowledge ample time is needed. Especially in the context of developing high-quality research and/or developing research capacity takes time, and over the course of a research project, many unexpected obstacles take time to overcome. Given the various disruptions due to the pandemic, the necessity of time appears to be more valuable now more than ever. Participants discussed several practical issues that needed time to mature and overcome, emphasizing that there is no one-size-fits-all or quick fix to quality research or programme implementation.

Many stakeholders interviewed noted that involving the private sector in food systems work is crucial to ensuring sustainability. This applies to everything from food production including fertilisers, harvesting, and processing; infrastructure and logistics; markets, trade, and investment. Although the Norwegian Action Plan addresses this and efforts are being made to bolster private sector partnerships on food systems through collaboration with e.g. Yara on soil enrichment or support to the TRANSFORM project in Malawi working to commercialise smallholder goat farming with private slaughterhouse Nyama World Malawi Ltd., there is still some way to go to ensure sustainability. Key stakeholders interviewed e.g. emphasised the need to focus international trade related to food systems, as governments and the international community must ensure and enforce fair regulation of industries and the enabling business environment. Others highlighted possibilities for development and aid agencies to procure local products for their projects in a bid to create collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships with local private sector actors. Some, additionally invited Norway to consider how more Norwegian private sector stakeholders may contribute to sustainable food systems, both domestically and abroad. Relatedly, collaborating more closely with Norfund might be prudent in an effort to join forces for greater impact particularly with regards to the private sector.

Several key informants from embassies, academia, and NGOs shared that building off long-term partnerships helped to facilitate sustained change, for example, Norhed II and Norglobal2 both contribute to research capacity development in Norway's partner countries for development policy, which may help fill capacity gaps and facilitate more long-term, collaborative, and contextually relevant engagements. Participants discussed that a lack of capacity at both university and national ministry levels in several contexts can impede progress toward more sustainable food systems. Additionally, several interview participants mentioned that the development of capacity and local contextual knowledge would be key for sustainability. One implementing partner shared that without a longer-term perspective, it is difficult to operationalise such an ambitious and comprehensive plan. Other key stakeholders interviewed noted that in order to achieve real results in many areas of food systems work, it is more prudent to choose a narrower field of focus and scale up with a long term perspective, rather than spreading support thin across several disbursed initiatives. They noted as well, however,

that this requires close coordination with other actors to ensure relevance and coherence in the relevant context. In this regard, Norway was praised by many as a constructive, altruistic, and collaborative partner, skilled at and actively engaged in coordination on food systems both on the global and country level.

Furthermore, it was shared that the Action Plan contributes to sustainability by leveraging the work that is already been ongoing, thus linking the Plan to efforts to sustain long-term resilience. It was also raised that disaster risk reduction is increasingly important due to shocks and extreme weather due to climate change. Although climate adaption was prioritised by several initiatives, further links could be made toward climate adaption, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian needs. This was discussed by participants working in the humanitarian sector. One key informant from an NGO also shared that one area of particular importance is food systems and food security in the humanitarian sector. Although the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 contributed to increases in humanitarian aid worldwide, from our assessment it was difficult to distil to what extent humanitarian aid aligned with and implemented the action plan.

Key informants across sectors also shared that they saw the Action Plan as unique and distinctive, with e.g. partner country and multilateral participants reflecting on how the beauty of this plan in large derives from the cross-sectoral collaboration which involved different ministries and ministers working together to establish a common and reliable knowledge basis or policy framework to tackle food systems. One Norwegian public sector participant discussed how this common framework is important for the plan's sustainability because it creates a common language or platform that can be referred to. Others more generally indicated that the collaboration across sectors and in Norwegian policy making related to food systems, has worked well.

Although several stakeholders discussed the value of developing this common language or conceptual framework in which to frame a food systems approach as valuable, it was also flagged that a more concentrated and targeted follow-up of the Action Plan has the potential to influence sustainable change in the Norwegian policy landscape related to food systems.

3.5.2 Institutional structure of the implementation of the Action Plan

The Action Plan is to be followed up at ministerial level by the five ministries, as well as an independent reference group consisting of representatives of civil society, the private sector, and the research community. However, from interviews it appears that the reference group has had few meetings after the launch of the Action Plan, and is to a very limited degree involved in dialogue on progress, and on opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of the action plan, as intended. The reference group has not met twice a year, as intended, and it seems that it is somewhat fluent who are actually to be considered members of the group as many of the original reference group has shifted positions. It would be useful to consider how the reference group can be more involved in a constructive way, for instance in relation to the operationalisation of the plan, i.e. development of more concrete strategies for certain regions and/or countries, as a basis for more concrete interventions.

At the MFA level, there is mainly one position set aside to follow-up on the Action Plan, whereas Norad has been requested in the annual Award Letter from the MFA (2021) to follow up on the plan in relation to chapter post 162.71 and 163.70, as well as technical assistance in the preparation for the UN Summit and may also receive individual tasks from the inter-ministerial working group. In Norad's annual reports for 2019 and 2020, it is stated that Norad is actively contributing to the preparation and implementation of the Action Plan. This has mainly been done by the former Section for Environment and Food security, whereas it appears as other sections covering areas such as fisheries, private sector development, health, and nutrition, etc., has to a lesser degree been involved. It is not entirely clear what management decision has been taken from Norad when it comes to allocating clear roles and responsibilities for following up on the plan, across sections and different budgetary chapter posts, and vis-à-vis relevant embassies.

3.5.3 New thinking and approaches

Several stakeholders indicated that the Action Plan on Sustainable Food Systems provides an important basis conceptual basis for a food systems approach, however, several acknowledges that

the food systems approach was not novel rather illustrating a shift in international discourse that is also supported by the United Nations as illustrated in the Food Systems Summit and several other multilateral organisations (e.g. IFAD, FAO, WFP among others). However, several interview participants shared that the launch of the Action Plan has brought awareness when it comes to systems thinking, and the interrelation across sectors. For example, in Malawi projects and programmes that received support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Lilongwe built upon work that was previously done but organised/collaborated in a larger project that spoke to the multi-dimensionality of food systems and responds to the contextual needs on several levels. Several participants expressed a positive outlook that the action plan would be sustainable, indicating a general shift toward food systems thinking which has saturated the international discourse and fora relating to SDG 2 and/or food security.

3.5.4 Sustainable national policies in countries investigated

In many ways, the action plan aligns with the international discourse, and it seems like more cross-sectoral approaches to food systems thinking are becoming more universal. Although it may be too early to tell, it seems as though in the country case studies, national policies are also well aligned with the food systems approach, which is central to the Norwegian action plan. For example, Malawi has several well-aligned long- and short-term policy and strategic documents such as the National Agriculture Policy (NAP) and National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) which provide a policy framework that aims at achieving a sustainable agricultural transformation and mainstreams key elements of the Norwegian action plan such as gender and climate resiliency (See Annex 2). Furthermore, the eight objectives of the Norwegian Government's action plan on sustainable food systems are highly relevant to Ethiopian national policies addressing agriculture, food, nutrition, and economic reform. Ethiopia faces chronic food security issues (see Section Annex 1) that require improvements in food production, value chains and markets, nutrition and diet, policy, and governance emphasised in the action plan.

4 Conclusion and Recommendations

The review team prepared an assessment framework, organised according to the OECD-DAC criteria, based on the midterm-review questions provided by Norad. In the following, findings and recommendations have been structured according to the specific review questions in the ToR. This, together with the analysis in the previous chapter, responds to the three overarching evaluation questions:

- ✓ *Objective 1: To assess whether the action plan has been adopted, coordinated and implemented effectively by the five ministries, Norad and the embassies to achieve the goals set out in the plan.*

There are good indications that the Action Plan has to some extent been adopted, coordinated, and implemented by the five ministries, Norad and the embassies. However, it is to a lesser degree done in a systematic way, and especially at embassy level there is low uptake of the plan. This is largely due to a lacking operationalisation, targets, budget allocations and a clear understanding of responsibilities to deliver on the goals of the plan. A contributing factor is also that the plan is well aligned with ongoing work, and it is less clear what new types of new interventions the plan is supposed to incentivise. It is largely seen as a consolidated reference document for existing policies and thematic interventions, rather than something entirely new.

- ✓ *Objective 2: To assess how the principles and action points of the plan have been received and addressed by implementing partners of Norwegian foreign- and development policy, including multi-donor organizations, national governments, international and national civil society organizations, private sector entities and academic institutions in order to achieve the goals of the plan.*

The Plan has been received positively by a number of stakeholders, especially in Norway, and seen as a basis for a more coherent Norwegian policy approach. Having said so, it has not led to any significant changes in Norwegian policy positions, or additional funding towards food systems (2019-2020). A contributing factor may be that two out of three years of the Action Plan has been dominated by COVID-19, and many stakeholders still see it as early days. Nevertheless, there is unanimous positive praise by implementing partners towards the content of the plan. The criticism is more related to little clarity of what the Action Plan really entails in terms of (increased) funding, priority areas and new approaches. However, there is also a substantial increase of NOK 500 mill. proposed over Chapter Post 162.71 for 2022 in the revised budgetary proposition to the Storting for 2022. This constitutes a considerable increase of earmarked funding towards food systems, if approved.

- ✓ *Objective 3: To identify good practices as well as challenges and provide recommendations and opportunities for the remaining period of the plan. Propose improved modes of work and possible investments in order to achieve better results with reference to the eight subsidiary objectives of the plan.*

There are a number of examples of good practices, pilot interventions, policy development and research initiatives towards achieving better results towards the objectives of the plan. A general challenge is perhaps the fragmentation of efforts, and lack of geographical and thematic focus. Identification and targeting specific value-chains could be one way of approaching this, as well as improving dialogue and coordination both at policy level, but perhaps more importantly at country level. Based on the two country studies, there is limited synergies to be found between different projects and programmes, and apart from the Norwegian Embassy in Malawi, not other Embassy has attempted at establishing a holistic country strategy for interventions targeted towards food systems.

4.1 Relevance

Is the intervention doing the right things?

Key Findings on Question 1. Whether the projects and programmes implemented under the Action Plan are relevant to achieve one or more of the eight subsidiary objectives.

Findings cannot be considered conclusive in terms of whether projects and programmes implemented under the Action Plan are relevant to achieving one or more of the eight subsidiary objectives. This is because of the absence of a results-management system designed for follow-up on Action Plan implementation, tagged budget allocations, as well as clearly defined responsibilities for follow-up in embassies, MFA and Norad. Many projects found to be relevant were active prior to the Action Plan launch, suggesting again that the Plan is aligned with already existing initiatives, rather than spurring new projects and programmes. Embassies find the Action Plan relevant at country level, but only contribute to a very limited degree to the eight subsidiary objectives. Contributions to SO2, 3 and 4 are the most substantial by the embassies' work.

Still, Norwegian-funded projects and programmes largely cover the eight subsidiary objectives of the Action Plan, thereby demonstrating how the portfolio as a whole is well aligned with the Action Plan's overall objectives. The review assessed a broad number of relevant projects and programmes funded by various thematic chapter posts. Several projects and programmes can be categorised as working toward one specific objective of the Action Plan, whereas others are multidimensional. One example of this is the Sustainable Food Systems for Rural Resilience and Transformation (TRANSFORM) programme in Malawi, which illustrates how a single project was specifically redesigned and reorganised to encapsulate several components of the food system aligning with all eight subsidiary objectives (see Malawi country study, Annex 2).

There is a clear focus on nutrition in several projects, whereas others demonstrate alignment with SO7 (maternal and child health). However, although certain projects such as TRANSFORM focus partially on food safety, it was apparent that efforts may be improved to connect and highlight the importance of nutrition and food safety to food systems and agriculture. Several stakeholders interviewed raised their concerns with the focus of the current food system on increasing food production (quantity) and emphasised the need to rather focus on nutrition and diet (quality). One interviewee proposed for Norway to work more closely with the private sector to develop more nutrition-dense and -appropriate products. Nutrition and diet is also the Action Plan pillar least covered by the embassies in their relevant partner countries.

Nutrition and safe drinking water are largely absent from projects and programmes reviewed, however it is possible that there are other projects that support nutrition and diet in the global health portfolio. Clear linkages with the Action Plan are harder to determine, which may be due to how allocations are made and organised. For example, in both Norhed II and Norglobal2, 'food systems' is referenced under sub programme 3: *Climate Change and Natural Resources, and the environment, climate, oceans and renewable energy priority area*, respectively. This focus on climate and environment (although relevant) may unintentionally exclude nutrition projects that tend to be organised/categorised under the health portfolio.

Still, the Action Plan is of high relevance to many areas, projects and programmes funded by Norway, particularly for agriculture and fisheries, as well as climate adaptation. These largely build on ongoing efforts and initiatives that started ahead of the Action Plan. In particular, many NICFI-funded programmes are deemed to be of high relevance, despite an overall focus on forests and deforestation rather than food systems.

Key Findings on Question 2. To what extent the objectives are relevant and aligned with policies in Norwegian partner countries?

The Action Plan is very well aligned with international discourse on food systems, as well as country-level focus from national governments. The Action Plan is a direct response to SDG 2 Zero Hunger and is in line with SDG 2 targets. SDG 2 is fundamental for Norway's partner countries,

further adding to the Action Plan's relevance in this regard. From the deep dives in Malawi and Ethiopia, it is clear that national policy priorities are leaning more towards objective 1 (transfer of knowledge and technology), 3 (sustainable and climate smart food production), 4 (dealing with natural disasters/climate change), 5 (strengthening value chains) and 7 (improved nutrition). Having said so, many countries have picked up on the agenda in relation to the UN Food Systems summit in 2021, and produced their own policy papers with a more holistic perspective – entailing a possible revision to some of the existing policies currently in place at country level. The Ethiopian 2030 Vision on Food systems is for instance consistent with the Norwegian Action Plan.

Norwegian embassies find the Action Plan relevant and aligned with policies and initiatives at individual country level. However, the plan is to a lesser degree seen as relevant to the embassies' day-to-day work. They also report that they only to a very limited degree contribute to the eight subsidiary objectives of the plan. Contributions to objective 2 (biodiversity), 3 (sustainable and climate smart food production), and 4 (sustainable value-chains), are considered the most substantial. Many partner country stakeholders lack an in-depth knowledge of the Action Plan's objectives and action points.

In Ethiopia and Malawi, the plan's purpose and goals have been reflected in several project documents, and the Embassies and Norad have communicated with partners about the plan. This is most clearly seen in Malawi, where the Embassy has taken an initiative to establish a portfolio of projects specifically delivering on the different objectives of the Action Plan.

Key Findings on Question 3. Relevance of policies, guidelines and outreach processed by the Norwegian governmental bodies in order to implement the Action Plan.

Norwegian governmental bodies largely consider the Action Plan of high relevance, building on their ongoing work in their respective areas. The Action Plan is actively used as a reference document in many settings, whilst less considered an operational document for concrete policy interventions or new positions. It is however, acknowledging to a larger degree fish as food, and the importance of aquatic food systems, an area flagged by Norway in different settings.

The Action Plan is referred to in many different policy documents, and is also demonstrating Norway's strong commitment to sustainable food systems. Nevertheless, it is utilised more of a reference document than contributing to changing practices and more operational aspects. A general challenge is that the Plan covers "everything" – e.g. climate-resilience, reduced pollution, conservation of biodiversity, reduced deforestation, increased productivity, private sector development, health, improved nutrition, sustainable consumption, healthy and varied diets, safe food and clean drinking water, institution building, improved policies at global, regional and national level, etc., etc. It is indeed hard to find areas within Norwegian foreign and development policy which is *not* deemed relevant. Without a more operational approach and priorities of some selected areas, entailing budget allocations, clear targets and corresponding indicators, it could lead to fragmentation of responsibilities and little clarity of what change the Action Plan has triggered, as opposed to "business as usual".

Recommendations

- ✓ **Clarify which parts of the Action Plan will be followed up by whom.** Ideally, this could be done by having embassies focus on 1-2 selected areas of the Action Plan, whereas Norad could in collaboration with relevant sectoral ministries and underlying bodies, provide technical assistance and advise. It would be natural to see this in correlation with relevant public bodies already involved in providing such assistance, i.e. Directorate of Fisheries, Institute of Marine Research, the Veterinary Institute, SSB, etc.
- ✓ **Consider outreach activities in selected partner countries about the Action Plan's objectives and action points.** There is significant room for improvement in terms of communicating both contents and objectives to national partner governments. This should be based on a country-level strategy as well as seen in relation to ongoing programmatic- and policy dialogue of relevant embassies.

4.2 Effectiveness

Is the intervention achieving its objectives? Are the efforts taken by all groups of stakeholders optimally designed to reach the goals set out in the Action Plan?

Key Findings on Question 1. Whether the plan's purpose and goals have been properly reflected in policy documents, guiding and outreach products, decisions and budgetary allocations made by the five ministries, Norad and the embassies.

The Action Plan's purpose and goals are reflected in a number of policy documents, such as the Norwegian Whitepaper on the SDGs: *Meld. St. 40 (2020–2021) Mål med mening — Norges handlingsplan for å nå bærekraftsmålene innen 2030*. It is also reflected in the MFA's propositions to the Storting, as well as in some calls for grant schemes and (internal) decision documents (e.g. Norglobal2, NORHED2), as well as earmarked support to key strategic partners such as FAO (*Resilient and Sustainable Food Systems Programme*). There are also a number of additional policy documents referring to the Action Plan, more notably the UN Food Systems summit in 2021 and a number of national and independent dialogues leading up to the summit.

The Action Plan is also mentioned budget proposals and Award Letters, i.e. budget proposals for the Ministries of Agriculture and Food (2020 and 2021), Climate and Environment (2019, 2020 and 2021), Health and Care Services (2020), and Industry and Fisheries (2020 and 2021). It is also mentioned in several award letters from the ministries to underlying governmental bodies (e.g. the Norwegian Research Council, the Norwegian Veterinary Institute, etc.). Notably, the Action Plan is referred to as an overall priority area of the Government, but funds are not earmarked specifically towards the eight objectives of the Action Plan. Note also that the newly elected Government has announced in its "Hurdals Platform" that fighting hunger and food security is a priority area, with particular emphasis on sustainable small-scale production and climate smart agriculture. And the latest proposed budgetary proposition to the Storting for 2022 suggest a substantial increase of NOK 500 mill. allocated towards food systems.

Key Findings on Question 2. Whether the plan, including the collaboration and communication between the Norwegian policy makers and the implementing partners have been managed effectively to achieve the plan's objectives.

Collaboration and communication between Norwegian policy makers and implementing partners have worked well in some areas. However, the overall impression is that it is largely ad-hoc, and less coherent. The reference group of the Action Plan has to a limited degree met to discuss follow-up of the plan after the launch, and little is being communicated back to stakeholders on status, best practices, and future plans. This may also be due to COVID-19, largely re-shifting focus, and attention at all levels. The fact that 2 out of 3 years of the Action Plan has been dominated by a global pandemic, may also be why coordination and implementation of more operational aspects have been delayed. Still, there are also examples of how COVID-19 has led to more engagement with local consultants at country level, thus contributing to better contextual insights.

Norad is actively contributing to the preparation and implementation of the Action Plan, according to its annual reports (2020 and 2021). In MFA's 2021 annual award letter to Norad, the latter is specifically instructed to follow up on the Action Plan – both in terms of technical inputs as well as financial allocations. Nevertheless, there are relevant departments in Norad that have been less involved, and it is somewhat unclear how responsibility for the different parts of the Action Plan is coordinated and followed-up internally, across departments and sections. Till date, it is mostly the former department of *Environment and Food Security*⁴⁰ that has been involved. How implementation should be operationalised within Norad, and vis-à-vis the embassies, is less clear, indicating a lack of management ownership and involvement.

⁴⁰ Now replaced in Norad's new organisational structure, see: [Organisasjonskart \(norad.no\)](https://www.norad.no/organisasjonskart)

There is clear evidence to suggest that a more coherent operationalising and platforms for dialogue on implementation of the plan, is required. The fact that many embassies do not see the Action Plan as particularly relevant, and to a very limited degree contributes to achieving the targets set forward in the plan, is an indication of little involvement, and insufficient communication of expectations and responsibilities. This also transcends to country level, where relevant programmes and projects do not necessarily communicate or share experiences across, and appears largely fragmented when it comes to a coherent approach on food systems. Also, the Agriculture for Development programme has not yet been established, as intended in the Action Plan.

Key Findings on Question 3. Identify potential early signs of result achievements as a result of projects and programmes, with reference to the eight subsidiary objectives.

A significant result is the development of CFS' voluntary guidelines on Food systems and nutrition. The guidelines aim at promoting policy coherence between sectors that impact food systems and nutrition, and contain many recommendations towards promoting more sustainable food systems. The Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food has had an active role in the development of these guidelines, and they provide an important normative framework for the food systems approach.

There are also early indications of results and alignment at the policy level related to plans, discussions, and awareness raising. Yet, it is difficult to strictly attribute these initiatives to the Action Plan itself. Examples include the UN Food System's Summit, which led to a number of dialogues and initiatives across. Examples include the Norwegian-led initiative on farmers' access to crop diversity first in seed policy and practice, as well as FAO's side-events organised with Norway on fish processing and the biodiversity of fish stocks. Some key informants from multilateral organisations described how the discourse on food systems have changed, and how risks are now identified based on an integrated safeguards approach (e.g. how do these aspects affect women, nutrition, social and environmental harms, etc.). One good example of this is IFAD's new safeguards, revised to be more in line with the food systems approach. However, this cannot be directly attributed to the Action Plan, although Norway's clear and consistent dialogue with the Rome-based agencies is deemed important in terms of sustainability and social issues, as well as highlighting the importance of fisheries.

Overall, results from projects and programmes implemented under the plan are largely yet to emerge. Many projects and programmes under the portfolio have been disrupted significantly due COVID-19. In Ethiopia, while projects and programmes are delivering results, most initiatives commenced prior to the Action Plan launch, and cannot be attributed to the Action Plan. Stakeholders in Ethiopia also noted that project results are delayed due to the Tigray conflict causing a focus on humanitarian aid. However, in Malawi, there are indeed signs of early result achievements, including the TRANSFORM programme. The latter has increased food production through the introduction of simple and affordable irrigation technologies, thereby enabling farmers to harvest three times a year as opposed to previously when increased production was achieved solely by cutting down trees. Furthermore, other projects like The National Farmers' Association of Malawi's (NASFAM) "Enhancing Member Livelihoods through an Aligned, Self-Sustaining Enterprise" are currently involved in training farmers on how to increase food production and linking them to markets.

COVID-19 has played a role in slowing or disrupting progress for several projects and programmes, albeit there are also some positive lessons learned from the pandemic. One such issue is that the emphasis on food security is more important and relevant now, as COVID-19 has led to increases in food insecurity globally, thereby magnifying weaknesses in the food systems (e.g. supply chain disruptions, price surges, and post-harvest losses for smallholder farmers). The importance of incorporation of "informal" food systems has also been highlighted in some interviews, since the reality in many countries is that a majority of food is sold in local markets which often lack formal regulations and/or guidelines crucial to addressing sustainable value creation, private sector development, and food safety within the food system.

The lack of a clear results framework make it otherwise challenging to measure progress and determine level of results achievement. Several key informants suggested that the development of a results framework may be helpful in conceptualizing indicators for success and describing progress

achieved. It was also suggested that the inclusion of a results framework tied to the various indicators of the Action Plan, could assist in more strategic planning and thinking. More discussion on how financial support should be distributed or used, has been raised in several interviews.

Key Findings on Question 4. Identify areas of the action plan that is not sufficiently covered and propose measures that will increase effectiveness of the implementation.

There is no results-management system designed for follow-up on Action Plan implementation, tagged budget allocations, as well as clearly defined responsibilities for follow-up by embassies, MFA and Norad. Many relevant projects were active prior to the Action Plan launch, suggesting that the Plan is well aligned with already existing initiatives, but not spurring many projects and programmes. This may also be because the plan is too broad and general, and it may be difficult to operationalise what is deemed relevant or not. In this regard, Norad's statistical department is in the *process* of establishing SDG indicators for all new projects and programmes, which means that relevant support to SDG2 can be tracked more coherently in the future over the Development Aid budget.

Norway as a donor is perceived by be focusing more on social issues and sustainable production, but having less emphasis on private sector- and value-chain development, and trade facilitation for developing countries. Several stakeholders interviewed highlighted the lack of focus on aquaculture in Norwegian development cooperation. It was suggested that Norway might consider narrowing their field of focus within the wide food system to target specific sectors with clear strategies (aquaculture and soy production were specifically raised) to bolster the impact.

There are also gaps in terms of concrete follow-up and accountability mechanisms when it comes to global supply chains, profit making, exploitation, promotion of GMOs, monocultures, low level of nutrition in certain products, etc. The UN Global Compact is one attempt at addressing this, but so far, few Norwegian food retailers have committed to this initiative.

There has been an overall modest increase of relevant channels of support to food systems, under the Development Aid budget. Allocations over chapter post *Chapter Post 162.71: Food Security, Fisheries and Agriculture* (NOK 816 mill.) and *Chapter Post 163.70: Environment and Climate* (NOK 1.12 bn), have been earmarked towards food systems in 2021 – in addition to other priority areas. Apart from this, budget allocations to other chapter posts do not appear to have any basis in the Action Plan. Allocations to fisheries have actually been reduced (2019-2020), and constitute a relatively small share of the overall development budget. There is a notable proposed increase for 2022, however, as mentioned above.

Support to fisheries has declined (2019-2020). Adding to this, support and focus on aquaculture constitute an even smaller share of Norwegian aid, despite being a high priority by key agencies such as FAO and many partner countries. The decline in support to fisheries stands in stark contrast to the Action Plan's focus on strengthening the Fish for Development programme, as well as recent Norwegian statements made at the UN Food Systems Summit. It is also an area where Norway – perhaps – naturally would have a comparative advantage in terms of available competencies, institutions, and technology.

Key Findings on Question 5. Identify good practices, challenges and weaknesses in collaborative arrangements between policy makers and implementing partners and recommend adjustments.

Good practices that identified throughout the review involved the collaborative and multi-sectoral approaches employed by stakeholders. Interview participants from Embassies, Academia, and NGOs discussed how the continuation of long-term partnerships were helpful in incorporating the Action Plan into current projects and programmes. Key-informants also highlighted how the cross-sector collaboration of several ministries illustrated the need for a holistic approach when addressing sustainable food systems. For many, this was seen as a novel reference document

which describes the Norwegian position on food systems, but also helps locate the Norwegian Agenda in the global paradigm shift to more holistic food systems thinking.

Most embassies consulted report a relatively good level of dissemination of the Action Plan, as well as familiarity. It is also well-known among Norwegian stakeholders. It is seen as both timely and pertinent to ongoing work on food systems, and Norway is praised by many for formalising a clear commitment towards food systems. The Action Plan is not however, seen as an instrument to ensure sector coordination and alignment, or clear prioritisation of efforts. Lacking operationalisation, there are some clear gaps identified to implementation:

- i) Lack of clear targets in terms of funding and budget allocations.
- ii) Lack of clear sector strategies and/or selection of specific value-chains, as well as geographical focus.
- iii) Lack of clear priorities towards areas of engagement.
- iv) Lack of synergies and coordination between projects and programmes at country level.
- v) Unclear delegation of authority and definition of responsibilities for delivering on specific parts of the Action Plan.
- vi) Unclear to what extent the Action Plan is to be operationalised in terms of thematic funding, policy interventions, safeguards – or a mix of everything.

Recommendations

- ✓ **Establish a clear target on financial support, as well as indicators relating to food systems.** This should cut across several chapter posts and could potentially be tied to financing of SDG2 as soon as the SDG indicators for all new projects and programmes have been implemented.
- ✓ **Increase funding to the Fish for Development programme,** and to consider whether support to aquaculture development can be further intensified – as this is a key priority by many partner countries and central agencies such as FAO. This would also be better aligned with the political signals and ambitions for an increased focus on aquatic food systems.
- ✓ **Establish Agriculture for Development as a programme.** According to the Action Plan, it was intended to be established under the Knowledge Bank, in order to secure the involvement of relevant institutions in projects within their respective areas of expertise. The programme is suggested to be launched in 2022 according to the revised budgetary proposition to the Storting for 2022.
- ✓ **Establish clear sector strategies, and potentially select 1-2 specific value chains at country level.** Identification of one particular crop or value chain could then form the basis for a number of interventions to address bottlenecks in the value chain. One possible entry point could for instance be sustainable soy production, as well as aquaculture.
- ✓ **At country level, Norwegian embassies should develop a Food Systems Strategy Document.** Within Norwegian support structures there is scope for promoting coordination and synergies among existing programmes and institutions to align under a coherent and strategic approach. Having a combination of policy dialogue and programmes that complement each other should augment results. This will involve integrating support in agriculture, nutrition, sustainable land use, REDD+/forestry and value chains together at national, regional, and global levels.
- ✓ **Consider whether there is a need for a lead agency at national level to coordinate all efforts on food systems.** At a national level the different branches of Government (e.g., Ministries and Bureaus) and Development Partners (donors, UN organisations, Private Sector and NGOs) require coordination. This is likely to require a structure containing various platforms and groupings with regular and effective meetings. Capacity, leadership, and some form of coordinating body will be required to take this forward. Considering limited capacity at Embassy level, there may be a need to consider whether there is a partner agency that can coordinate efforts. From the Ethiopia study, it has been suggested that FOLU could – potentially – fulfil the coordinating role. Such an arrangement may also be considered for other country contexts.

- ✓ **Establish platforms for exchanges at country level, for instance an annual conference or meeting between various stakeholders**, i.e. research institutions, NGOs, private sector, and government. There is a tendency to fragmentation at country level, not only between Norwegian-funded partners, but in general. Such coordination should ideally also be done in collaboration with other relevant donors and agencies or be built into existing donor structures at country level. Another option is to have a partner agency take on the role as coordinating entity, as suggested above.
- ✓ **Establish a new set of safeguards to be implemented in all food-related programs.** The existing cross-cutting areas (gender equality, corruption, climate and environment, Human Rights) must be further concretised. In the screening and appraisal of food related programs, there ought to be a more detailed scrutiny of whether the intervention entails any potential negative impact in terms of sustainability. This need to be scaled according to size of the grant to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy. It could for instance contain a threshold of programmes above NOK 15 mill. which should always undertake an ESG/Safeguards Due Diligence. This could for instance build on the CFS Voluntary guidelines.

4.3 Sustainability

Will the benefits last? Considering how it has been managed so far, can the Action Plan be expected to change policies in the thematic areas covered by the definition of a food system in a sustainable way?

Key Findings on Question 1. Whether the work with the action plan is likely to create sustainable changes in the Norwegian policy making related to food systems. For example, whether Norwegian ministries, Norad and the selected embassies are likely to work more cross-sectorial after the action plan period is over.

Collaboration across sectors and in Norwegian policy making related to food systems has worked relatively well. There are indications of sustainability within Norwegian policy making related to food systems, and the new government may continue the work with the Action Plan since food system thinking has become a global discourse, not only limited to the Norwegian Action Plan. Additionally, since food security and food systems have become increasingly relevant during the pandemic. The Action Plan is a useful document to understand Norwegian priorities within a framework, however, sustainability is difficult to assess without further monitoring.

Apart from the inter-ministerial group and joint collaboration in preparation for the UN Food Systems summit, follow-up of the Action Plan is less coordinated for instance when it comes to the Norwegian Mission in Rome and interaction with the Rome-based agencies. It is unclear to what extent there is coherence in the dialogue many of these agencies have with Norad as a donor, vs. the ministries as policy makers. It is also unclear to what extent the different ministries have a clear and structured interaction with the Norwegian mission, and appears to be somewhat ad-hoc and dependent on individual engagement. It is thus too early to say whether Norad and the embassies are likely to work more cross-sectorial after the action plan period is over, as this would rely on what steps will be taken to operationalise the Action Plan for the remaining period. Till date, it is only the embassy in Malawi that has fully attempted at operationalising the plan.

The reference group was supposed to meet twice a year. However, it appears that it has been less active after the launch of the Action Plan, although there have been several preparatory meetings ahead of the UN Summit on Sustainable Food Systems. It is also not entirely clear who are the current members of the reference group, as several members of the group has changed positions. It appears that the group has to a lesser degree followed the implementation phase, as intended in the Action Plan.

Key Findings on Question 2. Whether the action plan is likely to create new thinking and approaches among implementing partners that will sustain after the action plan period is over.

The Action Plan has brought awareness when it comes to systems thinking, and the interrelation across sectors. However, this has not led to significant new thinking or approaches among implementing partners, as most interventions are still a continuation of previous work. The Action Plan is also more of a synopsis of existing policy positions, rather than the development of entirely new ways of thinking. This could be seen as a sustainable approach, as Norway is commended by many for maintaining a coherent approach over time – with strong emphasis on sustainability and social issues. Still, there is potential for exploring more what could be done in terms of private sector involvement and value-chain development. This is an area that could benefit from a more systematic and holistic approach – for instance by focusing on certain crops or commodities.

Half of Norway's development assistance to food systems is channelled through multilaterals. The share of aid to agriculture, fishing, and food security oriented towards multilateral institutions has dramatically increased in the past decades, from an average of about 20% in the years 2000-2012 to close to 50% currently. Even if the Action Plan mentions a number of strategic multinational institutions as key partners, the extent to which this is the result of a deliberate strategic approach is unclear.

Involvement of the private sector is crucial to food systems at many levels. A more coherent value-chain approach could potentially bring together different interventions that are currently uncoordinated. Another issue is how multinational companies and their global supply chains will be held accountable. Many NGOs have flagged this point as highly problematic, and despite accountability initiatives such as the UN Global Compact, there are still gaps in terms of accountability when it comes to ESG compliance and responsible business conduct.

Key Findings on Question 3. Whether projects and programmes launched under the action plan as well as the food systems approach is likely to create sustainable national policies in the countries investigated.

Although too early to say, evidence from the two country case studies suggest that national policies are well aligned with the food systems approach. For example, Malawi has several well-aligned long- and short-term policy and strategic documents such as the National Agriculture Policy (NAP) and National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) which provide a policy framework that aims at achieving a sustainable agricultural transformation, and mainstreams key elements to the Action Plan such as gender and climate resiliency. Furthermore, the eight objectives of the Norwegian Government's action plan on sustainable food systems are highly relevant to Ethiopian national policies addressing agriculture, food, nutrition, and economic reform. Ethiopia faces chronic food security issues that require improvements in food production, value chains and markets, nutrition and diet, policy, and governance emphasised in the action plan.

Projects and programmes launched under the Action Plan as well as the food systems approach will need time to create sustainable changes, both at global and national level. There is no quick fix to food systems, and as such, it is extremely important that funding is made available and is consistent. A system approach means that change is slow, and larger impact is only likely to be visible after many years, and it may be too early to draw strong conclusions. A typical programme intervention of 3-5 years is not sufficient time to expect real impact.

Projects and programmes launched under the action plan as well as the food systems approach will need time to foster sustainable change both at the global and national levels. Developing competence and knowledge for high-quality research and/or developing research capacity, takes time. And over the course of a research project, many unexpected obstacles take time to overcome. Given the various disruptions due to the pandemic, the necessity of time appears to be more valuable now more than ever.

Recommendations

- ✓ **Consider how Norwegian policy positions can be further operationalised in interaction with multilateral agencies**, particularly the Rome-based agencies. It is unclear to what extent there is coherency in the dialogue many of these agencies have with Norad as a donor, vs. the ministries as policy makers. It is also unclear to what extent the different ministries have a clear and structured interaction with the Norwegian mission in Rome, and appears to be somewhat ad-hoc and dependant on individual engagement.
- ✓ **Appraise the strategic approach towards prioritisation of the multilaterals vs. other channels**. As multilaterals appear to be the largest channel for Norwegian support towards food systems, it is important to appraise this within the context of the Action Plan – in particular in order to assess alignment on and contribution to the Plan's objectives.
- ✓ **Determine how the newly elected Government's priorities can be aligned with the Action Plan**. With the long-term perspective required to make sustainable changes to the Food Systems approach, it is important to consider how the newly elected Labour- and Centre Party Government's focus on fighting hunger and food security, with a particular emphasis on sustainable small-scale production and climate-smart agriculture, will be aligned with the existing Action Plan.
- ✓ **Revitalise the reference group**. It appears that the reference group has to a limited degree been following the implementation of the Action Plan, and it would perhaps be useful to consider how the reference group can be revitalised to maintain continued dialogue on progress/opportunities/challenges, contribute to the strategic implementation, and assist in the operationalisation of subsidiary objectives for the remaining time period covered by the Action Plan. This could for instance be in relation to strategy development for certain regions or countries, as a basis for more concrete interventions.
- ✓ **The MFA, embassies and Norad should fully engage at a management level to ensure that all Norwegian funded projects and programmes are aligned at country level**. Close monitoring is required to ensure changes under a food systems banner are not just adjustments to vocabulary, but actually lead to improvements in food production, incomes, health, and beneficial adjustments to climate change. The Embassy will also have to follow up on a regular basis with national government to make sure the different Ministries and agencies do work together.
- ✓ **At a field level, new thinking and approaches should be piloted using project-based support working with national governments**. At a project level the new thinking and approaches introduced by the Action Plan should be piloted to learn what works. Piloting should be performed with close Government collaboration at local, regional, and national levels. The objective should be to develop new approaches that governments can adopt into policy and sustain itself. This will require a ten-to-twenty-year time frame.

5 Annexes

5.1 Annex 1: Case study Ethiopia

5.1.1 Context

Ethiopia has a growing population of more than 112 million people (2019) with a per capita income of US \$1,038⁴¹. 80% of the population live in rural areas.⁴² Ethiopia's economy is slowing, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 4.1% in 2020/21⁴³, declining from an average annual 9.4% from 2010/11 to 2019/20.⁴⁴ GDP composition by sector of origin is agriculture: 34.8%, industry: 21.6% and services: 43.6%.⁴⁵ While COVID-19 impacted the broader economy, agriculture was not affected by the pandemic and its contribution to growth slightly improved in 2019/20 compared to the previous year.⁴⁶ Livestock are important and assets are valued at 720 USD per farm on average.⁴⁷

Ethiopia has grappled with a civil war centred on the northern Tigray region since the end of 2020.⁴⁸ Thousands have been killed, millions displaced and many are in desperate need of aid.⁴⁹ The conflict further exacerbates an already precarious food security situation, as the 2020 Humanitarian Development Plan (HRP) reported an estimated 8 million people already requiring food assistance before the conflict. This figure includes internally displaced persons (IDPs), uprooted due to unrest or natural shocks. Ethiopia also houses a large refugee population of over 750,000 registered refugees.⁵⁰

Ethiopia's population growth, with more than 40% of the population below age 15, puts increasing pressure on land resources and exacerbates environmental degradation and vulnerability to food shortages.⁵¹ The effects of climate change also contribute adversely. Available climate forecasts include increased frequency of extreme weather events and changes to seasonal duration, precipitation and temperatures.⁵² On top of this Ethiopia has been experiencing the worst locust invasion in decades, which again threatens food security and livelihoods of millions of Ethiopians.⁵³ All this has weakened the currency and fed inflation. Official statistics show the cost of basic consumer goods has risen - they were on average around a quarter more expensive in July 2012 than a year earlier.⁵⁴

Key National Policies on Food Security / Systems

The Ethiopia Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda: A Pathway to Prosperity⁵⁵ presents the country's overarching national policy to safeguard macro-financial stability and rebalance and sustain economic growth. Formulated in 2019, this agenda emphasises (i) enhancing the provision of modern inputs and services to producers; (ii) developing legal frameworks to allow leasing of land use rights and shareholding in commercial farms; (iii) improving veterinary infrastructure, research and innovation; (iv)

⁴¹ <https://cepheuscapital.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Ethiopia-Macroeconomic-Handbook-2021-rev1.pdf>

⁴² <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ethiopia/#people-and-society>

⁴³ <https://cepheuscapital.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Ethiopia-Macroeconomic-Handbook-2021-rev1.pdf>

⁴⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview>

⁴⁵ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ethiopia/#economy> (figures are for 2017)

⁴⁶ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ethiopia/#people-and-society>

⁴⁷ <https://www.ifpri.org/publication/evolving-livestock-sector-ethiopia-growth-heads-not-productivity>

⁴⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/12/tigray-says-ethiopia-has-launched-major-attack-on-several-fronts>

⁴⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-58319977>

⁵⁰ <https://www.wfp.org/countries/ethiopia>

⁵¹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ethiopia/#people-and-society>

⁵² <https://www.climatelinks.org/countries/ethiopia>

⁵³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview>

⁵⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-58319977>

⁵⁵ <https://www.pmo.gov.et/initiatives/>

establishing linkages between producers, commodity markets and commercial value chains; (v) encouraging private sector investment in agricultural R&D and exploring PPPs to expand irrigation infrastructure; and (vi) developing a legal framework for agricultural financial services.

The Agricultural Growth Programme II (AGP II) 2015-2022 has the objective “to increase agricultural productivity and commercialization of smallholder farmers”.⁵⁶ AGP II is funded by USD 350 million IDA credit.⁵⁷ The AGP-II has five major components: (i) agricultural public services; (ii) agricultural research; (iii) small-scale irrigation; (iv) agricultural marketing and value chains and (v) programme management, capacity building and monitoring and evaluation.

The Productive Safety Nets Programme (PSNP) has been in existence since 2005. It is now in its fifth iteration as the core initiative to respond to chronic vulnerability. Positioned in the Ministry of Agriculture, the programme provides regular cash and/or food transfers to roughly eight million people in more than 318 food insecure districts. Under PSNP able-bodied individuals earn wages for working on public works projects six months out of the year, those who are unable to work are given direct grants throughout the year.

The Food and Nutrition Policy (2018)⁵⁸ identifies seven priority intervention areas as policy directions. These are ensuring (i) availability, accessibility and utilization of diversified, safe and nutritious food; (ii) the safety and quality of foods; (iii) post-harvest management; (iv) optimum nutrition at all stages of life; (v) system for food and nutrition emergency response; (vi) nutrition communication and (vii) effective food and nutrition governance.

Key Agencies Working on Food Systems

The Ministry of Agriculture is the central government agency working on crops and livestock.⁵⁹ Key donors to agriculture are the European Union (EU), Global Affairs Canada, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which have provided USD 103 million to a Multi-donor Trust Fund (MDTF) supporting AGP II.⁶⁰

The Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) is a Secretariat of an Agricultural Transformation Council chaired by the Prime Minister.⁶¹ This vision of this organisation is that by 2025, ATA will support the transformation of Ethiopia’s smallholder farmers into commercialized actors with greater incomes, inclusiveness, resilience, and sustainability, contributing to Ethiopia’s achievement of middle-income country status. ATAs mission statement is to catalyse the transformation of the agriculture sector by addressing system constraints and developing sustainable value chains.⁶²

NICFI funded Food and Land Use (FOLU)⁶³, which supports a food systems approach and is collaborating with ATA to pilot models that encourage sustainable agricultural commodity production through innovative value chain alliances, and incentives that encourage sustainable resource management within agricultural landscapes. While NICFI has a key focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, “co-benefits” are often of high relevance to the food systems agenda (see chapter 3.3.4 of the main report for more on NICFI).

Key Challenges to Ensure Sustainable Food Systems

The overarching Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda (2019) highlights key challenges in production yield growth due to inefficient provision of inputs and services, governance issues with

⁵⁶ Agricultural Growth Programme (AGP- II) Additional Financing Revised Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) June 2020 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

⁵⁷ Ministry Of Agriculture Agricultural Growth Programme II (AGP-II) Programme Design Document January 2015 Addis Ababa

⁵⁸ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia National Food and Nutrition Strategy Draft 7 December 2019

⁵⁹ <http://www.moa.gov.et/web/guest/home>

⁶⁰ Ministry Of Agriculture Agricultural Growth Programme II (AGP-II) Programme Design Document January 2015 Addis Ababa

⁶¹ <http://www.ata.gov.et/about-ata/origin-history-2/>

⁶² <http://www.ata.gov.et/about-ata/atas-role/>

⁶³ https://www.foodandlandusecoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Ethiopia-Food_and_Land_Use.pdf

respect to land lease rights, limited investment on R&D and irrigation, value chain-related marketing and logistics-related problems, and the lack of agriculture-specific financial services.⁶⁴

The Food Systems Pathway Commitment and Position Statement (2021)⁶⁵ sees increasing demand for nutritious foods, placing more strain on finite arable land. Increasing soil erosion and land degradation are emphasised with the need for increased use of regenerative farming practises which support soil fertility and reduce reliance on chemicals. The 2021 statement points to production needing to be diversified to increase food choice and the availability of affordable nutrient-dense foods. Livestock production is reported as needing to expand without leading to significant increases in greenhouse gas emissions. In relation to markets, the Position Statement highlights the agro-processing sector as needing support to drive job creation and increase access nutritious foods.

Action Plan understanding and implementation at country level by the Embassy and Norad

Embassy staff interviewed understand the Action Plan as situating food security- and agriculture-related interventions within a framework moving from production to consumption. Key informants report that most projects run by the embassy started before the Norwegian Action Plan was introduced and that Action Plan builds on what has been done in previous years. As projects are now renewed or replaced, Action Plan objectives are being increasingly incorporated into design.

The phrase 'food systems' is viewed as new terminology in the Ethiopian context, despite the fact that many components of the food systems approach were already being implemented in the country prior to the launch of the Action Plan. Representatives report that the Action Plan has aided discussions on the way partners are working and on the organisation of portfolios. Action Plan implementation began with encouragement from Norad to consider sustainable food systems in existing ongoing projects, e.g. RLLP. Key informants further report that since the main actors in the Ethiopian food system are government, it takes time for partners to fully take the plan onboard.

Overview of Norwegian-funded projects and programmes implemented under the Action Plan

Norwegian food security and agriculture projects and programmes include:⁶⁶

- ✓ **Resilient Landscape and Livelihood Project (RLLP)**⁶⁷ aiming to improve climate resilience, land productivity, land carbon storage and increase access to diversified livelihood activities. The RLLP is the third phase of the Sustainable Land Management Project (SLMP)⁶⁸
- ✓ **Greening the Agricultural Commercialization Clusters (ACC)** (2020-2022) aiming to transform agriculture from subsistence to commercial orientation through market-driven value chain development.
- ✓ **Sustainable Food System through Education and Research** (2021-2026) designed to enhance the capacity of two universities and relevant stakeholders in the food system through education and research.

Norwegian Development Fund's programmes 2021 include:

- ✓ **Climate Resilient Rural Livelihoods Programme (CARD II)** (2021-2025) covering food and nutrition security, climate adaptive agriculture, seed systems, livestock, natural resource management, access to water, income generating activities, strengthening farmers' organisations, social inclusion and gender. This project has been suspended due to conflict in the Tigray region.
- ✓ **REDD+ Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in South West Ethiopia** (2021-2025) uses PFM to reduce deforestation, strengthen forest-dependent communities' rights, improve livelihoods and develop advocacy.

⁶⁴ <https://www.pmo.gov.et/initiatives/>

⁶⁵ Vision 2030 Transforming Ethiopian Food Systems, Food Systems Pathway Commitment and Technical Synthesis Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2021

⁶⁶ Norway also supports an Institutional Cooperation Programme within its food security and agriculture portfolio. This project provides capacity building support that is less clearly linked to food systems.

⁶⁷ <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P163383>

⁶⁸ <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P133133>

- ✓ **Sustainable Vegetable Value Chain Agriculture** (2018-2022) works in value chains and business development. This project has been suspended due to conflict in the Tigray region.
- ✓ **Honey Value Chain** (2018-2021) supports smallholders to improve honey production and access markets (linked with REDD+).
- ✓ **Food security and livelihoods** (2021-2022) supports sustainable agriculture, rehabilitation of land and natural resources in war-affected rural communities in Tigray.
- ✓ **Scaling Ethiopia's Regenerative Export-sector with Outgrowers** (2021-2024) aims to catalyse the growth of Ethiopia's export sector through efficient, inclusive and regenerative market systems with Ethiopian small-scale farmers.

5.1.2 Assessment

Relevance and Alignment to National Policies

The eight subsidiary objectives of the Norwegian Action Plan are highly relevant to Ethiopian national policies addressing agriculture, food, nutrition and economic reform. Ethiopia faces chronic food security issues (see Section 5.1.1) which clearly require improvements in food production, value chains and markets, nutrition and diet, and policy and governance as emphasised in the Action Plan.

Alignment of the Norwegian Action Plan with Ethiopian national policies varies. Data presented in Table 1 compares the eight Action Plan objectives to current Ethiopian policies on economics, agriculture and food security, and nutrition. This analysis shows that the 2018 Food and Nutrition Policy is mostly closely aligned with the Plan. This policy emphasises six of the eight Action Plan objectives, with slightly less attention given to the two objectives related to (i) food safety and (ii) Global and regional frameworks. The current AGP II formulated in 2014/2015 is aligned in the areas of knowledge and technology for sustainable and climate resilient food production, climate smart food production, natural disasters, and sustainable value chains. The more recent and overarching Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda (2019) and Ethiopia's central programme addressing poverty and vulnerability, the Productive Safety Net Programme V (2021-2025), exhibit lower levels of alignment.

Table 1: Alignment of Action Plan Objectives with Key National Policies (source: author)

	Objectives of the Action Plan	Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda (2019)	AGP II (2015 to 2022)	PSNP V	Food and Nutrition Policy (2018)
1	Knowledge and technology needed for sustainable and climate resilient food production has been developed, made accessible and scaled up.	Low	High	No	High
2	Biodiversity in food production has increased.	No	No	No	High
3	Food production has become more sustainable and climate smart.	No	High	No	High
4	Food producers and their local communities are better equipped to deal with natural disasters and other adverse impacts of climate change.	No	High	Medium	High
5	Sustainable value chains from source to market have been developed and strengthened	High	High	No	High
6	Food safety and animal and plant health in partner countries have been improved	Medium	Low	No	Medium
7	Information and guidance on maternal and child health have been enhanced and measures to improve nutrition for school children, young people and adults have been implemented.	No	Low	Low	High

8 Global and regional frameworks for sustainable food systems, as well as national policies and governance structures for these systems, have been developed and strengthened.	No	No	No	Medium
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There is little evidence to suggest that these levels of alignment are connected to the Norwegian Action Plan, as e.g. the AGP II and 2018 Food and Nutrition policy preceded the Plan. Indeed, key informants even noted that operationalisation in Ethiopia of the Action Plan only truly began in 2020/2021. Norwegian Embassy representatives in Ethiopia point to initial efforts to implement the Action Plan by aligning recent projects and programmes during their design. Initial efforts were also made to influence Ethiopian policies which might align with the Action Plan.

In July 2021, the Government of Ethiopia presented their *Vision 2030: Transforming Ethiopian Food Systems (EFS)* in a Food Systems Pathway Commitment and Position Statement. This position paper states Ethiopia's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and participation in the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS). The 2030 Vision also articulates Ethiopia's commitment to implementing the EFS vision to enhance agricultural production and productivity, ensure food security, healthy and equitable incomes, and prosperity for all Ethiopians.⁶⁹ This commitment is consistent with the Norwegian Action Plan.

The term 'food systems' is a relatively new term in Ethiopia, although as seen in Table 1, many of the components are already used. The main policy actors are the government and it will take some time for them to review and assess what food systems means. It will also take time for the Ethiopian Government to ensure the food systems approach is consistent with country priorities before it is built consistently into their policies and alignment comes closer.

Early Results from Projects and Programmes

Results from projects and programmes linked to the Norwegian Action Plan are yet to emerge. This finding is consistent with operationalisation of the Action Plan only commencing fully in 2020/2021. Fieldwork conducted for this MTR did not yield examples of results clearly attributable to the Action Plan. While projects and programmes are delivering results, Embassy representatives report that most initiatives commenced prior to the Action Plan launch. Stakeholders noted that project results are delayed due to the Tigray conflict causing a focus on humanitarian aid (impacting projects such as the Climate Resilient Rural Livelihoods Programme (CARD II) and the Sustainable Vegetable Value Chain project). Initiatives are also delayed due to restrictions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action Plan areas not sufficiently covered by the Embassy and Norad

Action Plan areas receiving lower levels of coverage are (1) better equipping producers to deal with natural disasters; (2) food safety, animal and plant health and (3) contributing to global and regional frameworks for sustainable food systems.

To identify coverage levels, the review team compared available project and programme documentation to the eight Action Plan objectives. Covered areas were identified and are presented in summary by Action Plan objective in Table 2 below. This illustrative analysis suggests objectives related to knowledge and technology, biodiversity, climate smart and sustainable food production, and value chains are reasonably covered in terms of support from the Embassy and Norad. The analysis also found activities addressing nutrition, policy and governance. Lower coverage is found related to ensuring that producers are better equipped to deal with natural disasters, as well as to food safety and animal and plant health. Additionally, support to policy and governance tends to focus within Ethiopia, rather than to global and regional frameworks for sustainable food systems.

Coverage of the eight Action Plan objectives is improving in Ethiopia. Embassy staff and implementing partners have been following guidance to incorporate Action Plan objectives into initiatives. This can

⁶⁹ Vision 2030 Transforming Ethiopian Food Systems, Food Systems Pathway Commitment and Position Statement Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2021

clearly be seen in the most recent phase of the Sustainable Food System through Education and Research project (2021-2025) which covers, at least partially, all eight Action Plan objectives.

Embassies' close collaboration with implementing partners is crucial to coordinated, complementary effort and investment. An MTR field visit to the CARD II project found that Development Fund implementers are using the Norwegian Action Plan (See section 5.1.3). When designing the project extension (2021-2025), the Development Fund took the initiative to add an additional outcome to ensure better coverage of the Action Plan. This was done without Embassy inputs. However, partner stakeholders note that embassy staff have since commenced closer follow-up of the Action Plan in some projects. Such follow-up needs to consistently cover the entire intervention portfolio, with the Embassy ensuring clear linkages to the Action Plan in project documents.

Achieving effective coverage of Action Plan objectives at a field level is challenging. Key informants and MTR field visit observations show that projects rarely cover all relevant Action Plan objectives in one geographical area. An exception is a village-based development model that aims to support a holistic approach in one or a few locations. Projects more commonly have an activity or subgroup of activities implemented in one area while other activities are performed somewhere else. For example, nutrition support maybe covered in one area while agricultural production is supported elsewhere.

As discussed above, coverage of Action Plan objectives is improving at an individual project level. As new projects are formulated, they are being tailored to Action Plan objectives. However, this approach is currently fragmented as it is performed on a project-by-project basis with unclear coordination and uncertain synergies. It is also unclear if relevant projects and Norwegian funding streams speak to each other to ensure optimum coverage and best deliver the desired coordinated strategic approach.

5.1.3 Case Study: CARD Project

Almaz Bekele is a 38-year old female farmer living in Aleletu woreda, Chole Kebele, with her two daughters. She owns 4 ha of land where she grows wheat on half a hectare and uses the remaining land to grow Alfalfa plants and grass for her cows. She has four cows and milks 22 litres of milk per day. Almaz, along with her peers in the community, aggregates, and supplies milk to Lamme dairy PLC (Shola milk products) using a market linkage facilitated by IDE. Almaz also gets improved wheat seeds from IDE and harvests 20 quintal/ha. In her own words, Almaz testifies, *"You see many changes in my life, I built my own house, I have a TV and all other furniture. I also do not worry about the expenses of my daughter, who is in college now."*



Almaz looking after her cows. Photo: Selam Ayalew

Like Almaz, 6,500 more farming households benefited from the Climate Adaptation & Rural Development (CARD-I) project funded by Norad and implemented by the Development Fund and International Development Enterprise (IDE). The project ran from 2017-2020, creating income and livelihood opportunities in four woreda of North Showa Zone by increasing food and nutrition security, adaptation capacity to climate change, business and entrepreneurship development, and social inclusion and gender equity.

The project is also providing and creating the link where farmers and the local government can access improved seed varieties. It established a system for farmers to access improved seeds on credit from their cooperatives. It supports some progressive farmers engaging them in seed production to fill the seed demand gap and generate income for their families. Fiqadu Warquu is one of the beneficiaries of the project who accessed improved wheat seed in 2020.

“Taking credits without collateral or guarantor was impossible, but now enrolling in IDE project, I was able to take seeds and fertilizers. I would have been expected to sell my sheep to buy the inputs in cash. Since I was able to take the credit then, I still have my sheep rearing and being an additional source of income.” Fiqadu Warquu, 26, farmer.



Fiqadu in his wheat farm, Sede Seged. Photo: Selam Ayalew

Despite the progress made with both an increase in demand and supply of improved seed in the project woreda, it is still not enough. As the Kimbibit Woreda Agriculture and Natural Resources administrator reports: *“Even though the supply of improved seed in the woreda increased from 60 to 550 quintals, the farmers are still complaining of not getting enough.”*



The project also supported local seed multipliers to facilitate the farmer-to-farmer seed exchange and create alternative livelihoods for the seed producers. In Ethiopia, the bulk of seed supply is provided through the informal system showing its importance to national seed security. The most significant players of the formal seed system, on the other hand, are the regional state seed enterprises working closely with national agricultural research institutes that are responsible for variety development and supply of basic seed.

As raised by the officials of Kimbibit woreda and the IDE project lead the biggest challenges are *“the lack of proper linkage between different actors in the seed system, inadequate supply of seeds and the low level of private sector involvement.”* Having few crop types is also a gap in the seed supply system. *“We get wheat and maize seeds, and it will be good if we can also get teff seeds”* said interviewee Yeshi.

In addition to the seed production, legal issues such as seed standard authorization and contract law enforcement are weak at the local level, being a bottleneck for local seed producers to scale up. Also, the activities at the local level lack coordination in linking seed producers with key actors within the system, such as the seed enterprise, facility, and infrastructure providers. *“The formal seed system in Ethiopia is still inefficient; thus, developing the informal and integrated system is very important for seed security.”* Girma Eshetu, IDE Project lead

Now moving to its second phase running from 2021-2025, CARD II is introducing a new holistic community-focused approach known as Climate Adaptive villages (CAV). In CARD-I, efforts were scattered, making it difficult to see the full extent of project impacts. The more holistic CAV approach intends to implement clustered projects in a community in line with government policies and services linking to the communities needs and priorities. The new approach is also consistent with one of the game-changing propositions presented under “Solution Cluster 1.1.2b” during the Food Systems Summit 2021, “Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all,” that stresses strengthening farmers’ seed systems calling for a bottom-up demand-driven approach to seed security.

Table 2: Project and Programme Coverage

	Objectives of the Action Plan	Resilient Landscape and Livelihood Project (RLLP)	Greening the Agricultural Commercialization Clusters (ACC)	Sustainable Food System through Education and Research	Climate Resilient Rural Livelihoods Programme (CARD II)	REDD+ Participatory Forest Management in South West Ethiopia	Sustainable Vegetable Value Chain Agriculture	Honey Value Chain
1	The knowledge and technology needed for sustainable and climate resilient food production has been developed, made accessible and scaled up.	Food production	Food production	Climate-smart food and fodder production	Climate Adaptive Agriculture	Participatory Forest Management		
2	Biodiversity in food production has increased.	Food production	Food production	Climate-smart food and fodder production				
3	Food production has become more sustainable and climate smart.	Food production	Food production	Food production	Climate Adaptive Agriculture			
4	Food producers and their local communities are better equipped to deal with natural disasters and other adverse impacts of climate change.	Aims to build resilience to climate change		NRM & landscape management	Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change	Participatory Forest Management		
5	Sustainable value chains from source to market have been developed and strengthened	Value chains and markets	Value chains and markets	Sustainable food value chains	Value chains and markets		Value chains	Value chains
6	Food safety and animal and plant health in partner countries have been improved			Animal and plant health for food safety and quality				
7	Information and guidance on maternal and child health have been enhanced and measures to improve nutrition for school children, young people and adults have been implemented.		Improving female health mentioned in relation to cook stoves	Food and nutrition sensitive agriculture	Food and nutrition security			
8	Global and regional frameworks for sustainable food systems, as well as national policies and governance structures for these systems, have been developed and strengthened.		Policy and governance	Dialogue and Policy influencing		Advocacy		

Note: the table considers development projects and does not include the Food security and livelihoods (Tigray relief project)

5.1.4 Conclusions

Good practices and challenges in collaborative arrangements between policy makers and implementing partners

Good practices

1. **Formulating a high level, multi stakeholder publicly affirmed position paper linked to an overarching reform agenda:**

Formulation of the Vision 2030 Transforming Ethiopian Food Systems position statement has begun a valuable process for dialogue and collaboration between policy makers and implementing partners. The EFS multi-sectoral process has brought together public institutions, multilateral and bilateral organisations, the private sector, civil society organisations, and universities and research institutes to jointly build a course for food systems transformation. High-level national dialogue has identified and prioritised key challenges and solutions. Importantly, it has also publicly affirmed Ethiopia's commitment to create a strong and equitable food system that can deliver on the Ethiopian Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda.⁷⁰

2. **Use of a recognised and respected 'champion' to support, facilitate and coordinate a holistic approach:**

The Food and Land Use (FOLU) coalition part funded by NICFI at a global level and closely supported by the World Resources Institute (WRI) represent a valuable partner and facilitator to move the food systems Action Plan forward. The FOLU presents an important vision and supporting agenda for how existing policies and programmes can reinforce each other for more impact and relevance.⁷¹ Ethiopia is one of four priority 'deep dive' countries for FOLU. FOLU representatives report working to 'break down the silos' in current support to farmers by stimulating linkages in food clusters with the MoA and ATA. The combination of the FOLU with the Norwegian food systems approach is a promising framework that combines some of the key thematic pillars of Norwegian support to Ethiopia, including effects on education, health, natural resources and energy.⁷²

3. **Building long term relationships:**

Norway has built a reputation for long term support that will assist the policy dialogue necessary in forwarding the Action Plan. An example is Norwegian support to the university cooperation programme that has been implemented for over ten years and its support to the Ethiopian forestry sector.

4. **Norway has successfully developed models for change and supported scaling up:**

Norway has worked successfully with the Government of Ethiopia and NGOs to develop models for change and then scale them up. Work with Farm Africa first piloted models for Participatory Forest Management (PFM) with Government. Models were jointly developed, enhanced, and proven to work over a ten-to-fifteen-year time frame. Government then took these models and used them widely across the forestry sector in the country. Similar approaches should be considered when taking forward the food systems approach.

Challenges

1. **Conflict in Tigray:**

The conflict in Tigray challenges international donor to Ethiopian government relations. Norway paused some projects or project components and USAID suspended all development operations in mid-2021 due to the conflict. The senior leadership in many UN organisations was asked to leave the country in October 2021 as relations deteriorated. 2021 has seen an increasing humanitarian need in

⁷⁰ Vision 2030 Transforming Ethiopian Food Systems, Food Systems Pathway Commitment and Position Statement Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2021

⁷¹ Arnesen, O. E., and Fikke, M., Mapping of ongoing activities in the fields of Natural Resource Management, Food Security and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, August 2020

⁷² Arnesen, O. E., and Fikke, M., Mapping of ongoing activities in the fields of Natural Resource Management, Food Security and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, August 2020

the country that is likely to continue into 2022. This situation will challenge the dialogue related to food systems between international partners and the Government of Ethiopia.

2. Coordination:

There is a lack of coordination and collaboration between key institutes involved in the food systems agenda in Ethiopia. While there is progress promoting the food systems approach as shown by the EFS, key informants report that only a limited number of Ministries are meaningfully involved. Engagement of Ministries involved in planning, innovation, trade and industry are lower than desired in the multi stakeholder approach. Observers also point to challenges in achieving genuine coordination and collaboration between two of the key engaged Ministries.

Development partners often have different priorities when providing support. Some actors (e.g., large bilateral donors) are likely to favour their own approaches to food. Key informant interviews show not all partners to a food systems approach are aware of the Norwegian Action Plan or the EFS. Communicating the approach to a critical mass of actors, gaining their 'buy-in' and then coordinating their plans and actions will be a significant challenge for the Norwegian Action Plan.

The Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa is now ensuring projects consider the eight Action Plan objectives. This is being performed as projects are renewed, extended or revised. Strategic coordination between projects is not always clear. This approach may lead to support becoming a series of fragmented pilots where learning and scaling up becomes more difficult and less effective.

3. Policy Implementation:

The EFS publicly states the Government of Ethiopia's commitment to the food systems approach. Ethiopia has many policies that are well formulated and recognised as valuable (e.g., Climate Resilient Green Economy). However, implementation of policy is a perennial challenge. Funding is often difficult and governments priorities can change quickly. Implementation is essential to get desired transformation.

4. Private Sector Capacity:

The private sector in Ethiopia has limited capacity to effectively engage in the dialogue involved in moving the food systems approach forward. It is also questionable whether the Ethiopian private sector are able to fulfil their role as seen vital in the Norwegian Action Plan to increase food production and build effective value chains and markets. The international community has consistently tried to support the private sector in Ethiopia for more than ten years. More research and evidence is required regarding what can realistically be expected from the private sector in Ethiopia within food systems over the next ten years to inform decision makers and ensure expectations are realistic.

5. Norwegian Value Chain Support:

Norwegian support does not tend to emphasise the value chain approach moving from assessing the chain, to gap identification and then the design of interventions. A private sector perspective, such as through developing credit schemes and business incubators tends to be missing. The Norwegian Development Fund does work on credit schemes however uncertainty is reported in terms of whether there are Micro Finance Institutions in Ethiopia that can be scaled up and knowledge of what other donors have been supporting (e.g., USAID) and the subsequent lessons learnt.

6. Funding Capacity and the Need to Focus Investment:

It will take substantial resources in Ethiopia to continue facilitating a national food systems policy dialogue, that might be beyond the current capacity of the Norwegian Embassy.⁷³ Partnerships with UN institutions (e.g., FAO, IFAD) already funded by Norway may assist the Embassy in this process if working relations can be maintained or regained given recent leadership changes.

Holistic food systems interventions will also require funding and it is unlikely the Government of Ethiopia will be able to do this at scale over a significant geographical area. Limited resources will lead to calls for

⁷³ Arnesen, O. E., and Fikke, M., Mapping of ongoing activities in the fields of Natural Resource Management, Food Security and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, August 2020

some form of prioritisation and/or choice. These choices are likely to come at national policy and project levels. For example, recent CARD project experience shows that focusing on promoting seed resulted in the expression of other input (fertilisers, chemicals) support requirements.

7. Following the Internal Requirements of different Norwegian Funding Streams:

While there are opportunities to exploit comparative advantages from respective funding institutions' there are also challenges such as different grant management rules and competitive bidding processes that reduce the flexibility for alignment. All supported interventions must be within the mandate and objectives of the applicable grant scheme.⁷⁴

8. Consistent Communication:

Consistent communication is a challenge at many levels. Different international donors can give different emphasis to areas of support at a national level. Projects can also provide different messages at a field level. Government extension services that are usually under capacity may promote different practices and NGOs support different ideas. This leads to farmers receiving conflicting advice and confusion over who they should listen to.

Key lessons learned

1. Creating new thinking and approaches among implementing partners that will sustain after the Action Plan period is over.

The EFC commitment and position statement process has created new thinking among implementing partners using a relatively intensive process engaging a wide range of partners at a senior level. Implementors of Norwegian supported projects and programmes are also adopting Action Plan objectives into the design of new initiatives. The next step is to building Action Plan thinking and approaches into policy. Policies will then require implementation. The on-going conflict in the country will make achieving these next two steps very challenging.

High level dialogue supported by project-based evidence and use of a long-term participatory approach has potential to help sustain food system Action Plan thinking. The Tigray conflict challenges this approach as leaders change, as recently happened in UN organisations, and projects and processes are disrupted. Norway will need to monitor the national situation closely to ensure any opportunities are not missed. Lessons also show that creating and sustaining change will require close monitoring as implementation is rolled out to best inform any adaptations to implementation and ensure meaningful transformational change is achieved.

2. Whether projects and programmes launched under the Action Plan as well as the food systems approach is likely to create sustainable national policies in the countries investigated.

Projects and programmes launched under the Action Plan as well as the food systems approach will need time to create sustainable national policies in Ethiopia. Lessons (e.g., those from developing a PFM methodology) show that a long term ten-to-twenty-year perspective is necessary when supporting Ethiopian policy. Lessons also show that the Government of Ethiopia will undertake its own careful analysis of new ideas and assess their impact before adopting them into national policy. Once policies have been enhanced the challenge of sustainable implementation will also remain. Policies are likely to need long term funding (as in the forestry sector REDD+ Investment Programme (RIP) example) and Norway is likely to have to support this, again over the long term.

⁷⁴ Arnesen, O. E., and Fikke, M., Mapping of ongoing activities in the fields of Natural Resource Management, Food Security and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, August 2020

Key recommendations

The following measures are proposed to increase the effectiveness of Action Plan implementation.

1. Reflect on the Tigrayan Conflict

Norway should reflect and consider what is possible with regard to food systems in Ethiopia with the conflict in Tigray and COVID-19 pandemic. Timing will be important. While the future is always uncertain possible opportunities for progress are more likely as parties reduce conflict and negotiations take greater priority. With regard to COVID-19, Norway remains able to contribute to the international *building back better* (and greener) *agenda* in a concrete manner.

2. Coordination is required at many levels.

a. Norway should review FOLU as a potential national facilitator and coordinator at the national level

At a national level the different branches of Government (e.g., Ministries and Bureaus) and Development Partners (donors, UN organisations, Private Sector and NGOs) require coordination. This is likely to require a structure containing various platforms and groupings with regular meaningful meeting also needed as seen with the CRGE. Capacity, leadership, and some form of coordinating body will be required to take this forward.

Norway should perform an institutional assessment of FOLU to determine if they are the most appropriate organisation to fulfil the coordinating role and if they have the capacity to perform what is needed.

Outside of this assessment, FOLU should bring the food systems perspective and aspire to be a thought leader by developing lessons and presenting new thinking to enhance policy. It will be critical to grow Ethiopian political input and commitment towards the food systems approach. Government perceptions are important, and they may see FOLU as another 'fashionable' project or document that fades after a relatively short period of time. FOLU needs to clearly prove it can work effectively with the government to bring transformational policy change, resultant implementation, and clear impact.

b. The Norwegian Embassy should develop a Food Systems Strategy Document at the country level

Within Norwegian support structures there is scope for promoting coordination and synergies among existing programmes and institutions to align under a coherent and strategic approach. Having a combination of policy dialogue and programmes that complement each other should augment results. This will involve integrating support in agriculture, nutrition, sustainable land use, REDD+/forestry and value chains together at national, regional, and global levels.

The Norwegian Embassy should develop an overall strategy for taking the Action Plan forward that shows how its dialogues and programmes are coordinated and complement each other to meet food system strategic goals.

This document should provide the overall strategic approach for Ethiopia. The strategy should have clear goals and targets that can be easily monitored to support operationalisation. It should (i) detail responsibilities for who will do what and (ii) show how all support will be brought together in an efficient and effective manner.

c. At a field level new thinking and approaches should be piloted using project-based support working with Government

At a project level the new thinking and approaches introduced by the Action Plan should be piloted to learn what works. Piloting should be performed with close Government collaboration at local, regional, and national levels. The objective should be to develop new approaches that Government can adopt into policy and sustain itself. This will require a ten-to-twenty-year time frame. The Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa should be responsible for coordinating these pilots. Learning should inform policy that becomes increasingly aligned as knowledge increases.

Pilots should explore local level models that adopt the holistic food systems approach and make economic, agricultural, and environmental sense. To allow a holistic approach models should focus on geographical areas (woreda / kebele level) that are consistent with levels of funding available.

3. The Role of Norwegian Embassy is to ensure consistent coordinated Implementation

The Embassy and Norad should fully engage at a management level to ensure that the substantial project portfolio aligns with the Norwegian food systems Action Plan objectives in Ethiopia. Close monitoring is required to ensure changes under a food systems banner are not just adjustments to vocabulary but do lead to improvements in food production, incomes, health, and beneficial adjustments to climate change.

The Embassy will also have to get the full Ethiopian Government behind support. This will require follow up on a regular almost daily basis to make sure the different Ministries and agencies do work together.

5.2 Annex 2: Case study Malawi

5.2.1 Context

Country Background

Malawi is a small landlocked country in Southeast Africa bordered by Zambia, Tanzania, and Mozambique; covering an area of 118,480 km². It is the fourth poorest country in the world, with a population of 18 million people. Additionally, the country is currently experiencing a rapid increase in overall population growth and the number of young people in the country (where 73 percent of the population are under 30 years of age and 51 percent of this population under the age of 18 years⁷⁵). Furthermore, an overwhelming share of Malawi's population (nearly 85 percent) lives in rural areas and agriculture is largely considered to be the 'backbone' of the country's economy.^{76,77} Agriculture, accounts for 80 percent of the total workforce, 39 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 80 percent of export earnings (mainly tobacco), with 90 percent of food supply in the country coming directly from the agricultural sector⁷⁸. However, agricultural productivity still remains low due to 1) declining soil fertility, changing rainfall patterns, extended drought seasons due in large part to climate change and extreme weather patterns; 2) poor health of the farming community; and 3) limited access to farm inputs such as improved seeds, fertilisers, and other resources (e.g. credit, market information, and improved agronomic practices).^{79, 80, 81, 82} Furthermore, to sustain this growing population, agriculture continues to demand more from forest land and statistics show that forest cover has reduced from 47 percent in 1975 to 25 percent in 2018, making it the highest deforestation rate in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Region.⁸³ This has left the agriculture sector vulnerable to effects of climate change.⁸⁴

Although the agriculture sector is a mainstay of the Malawian economy, Malawi is still one of the most food-insecure countries in the world since the agriculture sector is often characterised as a monoculture with a heavy emphasis on maize production.⁸⁵ Therefore, local diets are dominated by this single staple crop, accounting for more than 70% of daily energy intake in Malawi and thus contributing to poor nutrition indicators for the Malawian population⁸⁶. FAO estimates that just under 19 percent of Malawi's population were classified as undernourished in the period 2017–2019⁸⁷ with 2015

⁷⁵ Government of Malawi (GOM). (2018). 2018 Malawi population and housing census preliminary report. Zomba, National Statistical Office, Zomba. Retrieved from: http://www.nsomalawi.mw/images/stories/data_on_line/demography/census_2018/2018%20Population%20and%20Housing%20Census%20Preliminary%20Report.pdf

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Malawi Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development. 2016. National Agriculture Policy.

⁷⁸ IMF. 2017. Malawi economic development document: IMF country report 17/184. Retrieved from: <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/CR/2017/cr17184.aspx>

⁷⁹ Ajayi, O.C., F.K. Akinnifesi, G. Sileshi, and S. Chakeredza. 2015. Adoption of renewable soil fertility replenishment technologies in the southern African region: Lessons learnt and the way forward. *Natural Resources Forum* 31: 306–17

⁸⁰ Denning, G., P. Kabambe, P. Sanchez, A. Malik, R. Flor, R. Harawa, P. Nkhoma, et al. 2009. Input subsidies to improve smallholder maize productivity in Malawi: Toward an African green revolution. *PLoS Biology* 7: 1–10.

⁸¹ Mubichi, F.M. 2017. A comparative study between Mozambique and Malawi soybean adoption among smallholder farmers. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences* 32, no. 1: 21–39

⁸² Tufa AH, Alene AD, Manda J, Feleke S, Wossen T, Akinwale MG, Chikoye D, Manyong V. The poverty impacts of improved soybean technologies in Malawi. *Agrekon*. 2021 Jul 3;60(3):297-316.

⁸³ Skole DL, Samek JH, Mbow C, Chirwa M, Ndalowa D, Tumeo T, Kachamba D, Kamoto J, Chioza A, Kamangadazi F. Direct Measurement of Forest Degradation Rates in Malawi: Toward a National Forest Monitoring System to Support REDD+. *Forests*. 2021 Apr;12(4):426.

⁸⁴ Hounarable Robin Lowe, Minister of Agriculture, July, 2021 United Nations Food Systems Pre-Summit Speech

⁸⁵ Sahley, C., Groelsema, B., Marchione, T., & Nelson, D. 2005. The governance dimensions of food security in Malawi. Southern African Regional Policy Network. Retrieved from: https://sarpn.org/documents/d0001649/P1998-USAID_Malawi_Sept2005.pdf.

⁸⁶ Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee. 2014. Market Assessment Report. Lilongwe: Government of Malawi

⁸⁷ FAOSTAT. 2020. FAO Statistical Database – FAOSTAT. Retrieved from: <http://faostat.fao.org/>.

- 2016 Malawi Demographic Health Survey (MDHS) reporting that 37 percent of children under the age of 5 are malnourished and stunted.⁸⁸

Key National Policies on Food Security/Systems and Agriculture

Malawi as a country has a number of well-aligned long- and short-term policy and strategic documents that align with the Norwegian Action Plan on Sustainable Food Systems. One of the long-term policy documents is Malawi's Agenda 2063, which was developed to operationalise the African Framework Document called the Agenda 2063: *The Africa We Want*.⁸⁹ The Malawi Agenda 2063 aims at making Malawi an inclusive, wealthy, and self-reliant industrialised upper-middle-income country by the year 2063.⁹⁰ Outcome number ten of the Malawi Agenda 2063 includes an environmentally sustained economy, thus placing a sustainable environment as a long-term priority area, and demonstrating the country's commitment towards environment and natural resource conservation. In addition to Malawi's Agenda 2063, there are several other short-term policy documents like the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) 3 which was developed to improve productivity, turn the country into a competitive nation, and develop resilience to shocks and hazards⁹¹.

The National Agriculture Policy (NAP) is one of the sector's short-term policies developed to implement the MGDS 3. The NAP is a policy framework that aims at achieving a sustainable agricultural transformation that will result in significant growth of the agricultural sector, expanding incomes for farm households, improved food and nutrition security for all Malawians, and increasing agricultural exports. The policy has eight priority areas with an emphasis on 1) sustainable agricultural production; 2) sustainable irrigation development; 3) mechanization of agriculture; and 4) agricultural marketing, agro-processing, and value addition.⁹² The NAP is being operationalised by the National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) which will be implemented from 2018 to 2023.⁹³ It is characterised as an implementation vehicle for the NAP and the Malabo Declaration in which Malawi is a signatory. Both the NAP and the NAIP aim to achieve a sustainable agricultural transformation that will result in the growth of the agricultural sector in Malawi. Therefore, expanding incomes for farm households, improved food and nutrition security for all Malawians. The NAIP has sixteen intervention areas including Food Safety and Quality as priority area number five; Disaster Risk Reduction Systems as priority area number seven; and Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Irrigation Development as priority area number eleven and twelve respectively. In addition to these two policy documents, The Ministry of Agriculture developed the National Agriculture Extension and Advisory Service Strategy. The aforementioned policy documents are closely related to the objectives highlighted in the Norwegian Action Plan.

Key Agencies working on food systems/security

In Malawi, agricultural-related interventions can only be implemented if they are aligned to the NAP and the NAIP. To ensure that these policy documents are adhered to, the Government came up with several collaborative structures. At the National level, the country has a Donor Committee on Agriculture and Food Security (DCAFS) which aims at deepening dialogue, coordination, and cooperation among development partners, and between these partners and the government in respect to agriculture and food security. In addition to DCAFS, the government established the Agriculture Technical Working Group (TWGs) which has a coordinating structure for agricultural interventions.

The Government of Malawi (through the Ministry of Agriculture) also rolled out the District Agricultural Extension Service System (DAESS) which is a mechanism for enabling farmers to identify and organise their agricultural felt needs for appropriate action by relevant stakeholders. The DAESS structure is a collaborative and coordinating framework at the district and community level. Coordination of agricultural

⁸⁸ National Statistical Office (NSO), Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2015-16. Zomba, Malawi, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: 2017. Retrieved from: <http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR319/FR319.pdf>.

⁸⁹ Agenda 2063: *The Africa We Want*. 2013. Retrieved from: https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-06_the_vision.pdf

⁹⁰ National Planning Commission. 2020. Malawi Agenda 2063: Malawi's Vision: An Inclusively Wealthy and Self-reliant Nation.

⁹¹ Government of Malawi. 2000. The National Extension Policy of Malawi.

⁹² Malawi Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development. 2016. National Agriculture Policy.

⁹³ Government of Malawi. 2018. National Agriculture Development Plan: Prioritised and Coordinated Agricultural Transformation Plan for Malawi: FY 2017/18-2022/23

interventions at the district level is done by the District Agriculture Extension Coordinating Committee (DAECC,) while Agriculture Stakeholder Panel and Village Stakeholder Panel are coordinating at the community level.⁹⁴

Key challenges to ensure sustainable food systems

- ✓ COVID-19 has negatively affected lives of many Malawians. As of 28 September 2021, the country had 61,528 confirmed cases and 2,279 deaths.⁹⁵ Apart from the trauma that comes with COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths, the pandemic has also affected the socio-economic status of Malawians. The agricultural production and marketing season has also been affected by COVID-19 restrictions, fears, and misconceptions resulting in some farmers harvesting their produce early, thus causing postharvest losses. Additionally, businesses associated with tourism, sports, entertainment, and others were totally closed and thereby reducing people's purchasing power.⁹⁶
- ✓ The government of Malawi developed the NAIP document to operationalise the Malabo declaration and the NAP. The framework requires \$3,216,228 to be implemented.⁹⁷ However, the government does not have the resources to implement the interventions in the NAIP and three years have passed since the document was launched.
- ✓ Malawi used to have Agriculture Development and Marketing Cooperation (ADMARC) which was formed to promote the Malawian economy by increasing the volume of exportable economic crops thereby providing a local market for Malawian food crops. However, this ADMARC is currently non-functional, thereby exposing farmers to mobile non-formal private traders who are buying goods at exceptionally low prices. Additionally, the situation is worsened by a lack of value addition.⁹⁸ Other challenges influencing the farm goods pricing is the limited cash crops production by farmers. Most farmers rely on selling food crops to earn a living thereby increasing the supply of food crops during harvesting and shortages during the lean period.⁹⁹
- ✓ Low yield against potential yield is another challenge faced by Malawian farmers. Low yields are a result of continuous effects of climate change, dry spells, drought, flood, poor agricultural practices, and insufficient pests and disease management.¹⁰⁰ There are high post-harvest losses during food transportation, storage, processing, and preparation. These post-harvest losses result in reduced food availability and high aflatoxin levels in key food items like groundnuts and maize.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, despite being an agro-based economy, the country mostly depends on rain-fed agriculture which is could be negatively impacted by climate change.
- ✓ Food prices in Malawi can be unstable with significant differences between the harvesting and lean periods. Because farm crops are bought by mobile private traders who are profit-oriented, food prices are impacted. Additionally, poor road infrastructure reduces food distribution especially during the rainy season thereby reducing food accessibility and increasing food prices.¹⁰²

Action Plan understanding and implementation at country level by the Embassy and Norad

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Lilongwe and Norad's former section for Development Policy, put in an effort to adapt the Norwegian Action Plan to the Malawian national context by developing the framework for Norwegian support for food security and agriculture 2020-2023 document in September 2019.¹⁰³ This document was developed as a response to Prop. 1 S (2018-2019), where it was

⁹⁴ Government of Malawi. 2000. The National Extension Policy of Malawi.

⁹⁵ Malawi Ministry of Health. Daily updates. Retrieved from: <https://covid19.health.gov.mw/>

⁹⁶ Baulch B, Botha R, Pauw K. The short-term impacts of COVID-19 on the Malawian economy 2020-2021: A SAM multiplier modeling analysis. Intl Food Policy Res Inst; 2020 Dec 21.

⁹⁷ Government of Malawi. 2018. National Agriculture Development Plan: Prioritised and Coordinated Agricultural Transformation Plan for Malawi: FY 2017/18-2022/23

⁹⁸ Hounarable Robin Lowe, Minister of Agriculture, July, 2021 United Nations Food Systems Pre-Summit Speech

⁹⁹ IPC. 2021. Malawi: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis July 2021-March 2022. Retrieved from: http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IIPC_Malawi_Acute_Food_Insecurity_2021July2022Mar_Report.pdf

¹⁰⁰ Hounarable Robin Lowe, Minister of Agriculture, July, 2021 United Nations Food Systems Pre-Summit Speech

¹⁰¹ International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). 2021. 2021 Global food policy report: Transforming food systems after COVID-19. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). <https://doi.org/10.2499/9780896293991>.

¹⁰² IPC. 2021. Malawi: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis July 2021-March 2022. Retrieved from: http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IIPC_Malawi_Acute_Food_Insecurity_2021July2022Mar_Report.pdf

¹⁰³ Norwegian Royal Embassy in Lilongwe. 2019. Malawi - rammeverk for støtte til matsikkerhet og landbruk 2020-2023

suggested that the bilateral agricultural investment in Malawi will be restructured for the 2020-23 period, based on the Government's Action Plan for Sustainability Food Systems (2019-23); Malawi's NAIP, and the Malawian National Resilience Strategy (2018-2030). According to this document, this framework was also informed by an external review of ongoing collaboration in the agricultural sector which provided a comprehensive overview of how to improve collaboration and align the agricultural portfolio to the Action Plan for Sustainable Food Systems by continued support for sustainable land management and climate-adapted agriculture; building climate-resilient communities; and further involvement of civil society organizations in value chains among others.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, this document promoted the linkages between Norwegian support for the agricultural sector in Malawi, Malawi's national guiding policies and frameworks (e.g. NAP and NAIP) with the Norwegian Action Plan for sustainable foods systems to cultivate a comprehensive portfolio for Norwegian support for food security and agriculture in Malawi with the Action Plan serving as a foundational reference.¹⁰⁵

Overview of Norwegian funded projects and programmes implemented under the Action Plan

In Malawi, there are five main projects that are implemented under the Action Plan. The following section provides an overview of these Norwegian funded projects and programmes and a summary of their alignment with the eight subsidiary objectives of the Action Plan.

Project name: The National Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM): MWI-19/0019 NASFAM

"Enhancing Member Livelihoods through an Aligned, Self-Sustaining Enterprise" project from October 2021 to September 2025.

The overall objective of this project is, "to transition the NASFAM systems into an aligned, sustainable enterprise that delivers measurable value in livelihood improvement to members and their households, will enhance financial sustainability at both the farmer member as well as institutional levels"¹⁰⁶ by taking on a value chain approach thus focusing efforts on the commercialisation of smallholder farmers.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, the proposed project builds upon previous cooperation and projects supported by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Lilongwe. In the proposal document, the Norwegian Action Plan for sustainable food systems is explicitly referenced, demonstrating the relevance of the Action Plan in the Malawian context.¹⁰⁸ Our assessment concludes that the proposed project aligns with six of the eight objectives of the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems with a distinct focus on increasing sustainable food production, improving nutrition, enhancing job and value creation, and promoting capacity building and good governance (Norway's Action Plan for sustainable food systems 2019–2023).¹⁰⁹

Project name: Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)(TRANSFORM): MWI-19/0004 TRANSFORM, MWI-20/0002 TRANSFORM

The Sustainable Food Systems for Rural Resilience and Transformation (TRANSFORM) programme is a four-year programme with the overall objective being, "is to strengthen local food systems and demonstrate a sustainable improvement of food and nutrition security, income, and resilience to climate change among 180,000 agriculture dependent rural households within selected EPAs in 5 districts of Malawi by 2023"¹¹⁰ by integrating innovative participatory approaches with evidence-based interventions to build and strengthen the economic, social, and environmental foundation needed to ensure food and nutrition security in Malawi.¹¹¹ The project is coordinated by the three main partners: Norwegian Church Aid, the Development Fund of Norway , and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences and financial

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM). 2021. NASFAM Results Framework 2021-2025.

¹⁰⁷ National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM). 2021. Project Proposal Submitted to the Royal Norwegian Embassy and Irish Aid: "Enhancing Member Livelihoods through an Aligned, Self-Sustaining Enterprise". NASFAM Proposal 13 MAY

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Norwegian Church Aid, NMBU, and the Development Fund. 2021. Sustainable Food Systems for Rural Resilience and Transformation (TRANSFORM) Program. TRANSFORM Proposal document- Implementation Phase- Draft Version 01072021

¹¹¹ Ibid

support is provided by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Lilongwe.^{112, 113} The proposal document for the TRANSFORM-Programme also describes how it is aligned with crucial policies and strategies of the Malawi Government (e.g. Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III; National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP); Agriculture Sector Food and Nutrition Strategy (2020-2024) among others) in addition to the Norwegian Action Plan for sustainable food systems.¹¹⁴ It is further reported in the proposal document, that the TRANSFORM programme will contribute directly to the Norwegian Government's Action Plan on *Sustainable Food Systems* by promoting climate resilient, biodiversity and robust food production systems to ensure sustainable food production, food safety and nutrition, development of sustainable local value chains with high involvement of smallholder farmers and their organizations and access to markets and links with the consumers.^{115, 116, 117} In particular, the programme will contribute to all eight objectives in the Action Plan.

Project name: WFP: MWI-19/0021 Joint Programme for Girls Education

The overall purpose of the Joint Programme for Girls Education (JPGE) III is to build upon gains made in previous programme phases to address barriers for girls' access to quality education with the overall goal of ensuring that school aged girls, boys and adolescents (especially the most vulnerable) in Malawi benefit from quality education thus improving their learning outcomes and life opportunities.¹¹⁸ One important component of this programme focuses on improving food security and nutrition among the target population, school aged children and adolescents. In order to address food security and nutrition through the home-grown model, JPGE will work to strengthen the capacity of schools in managing school feeding and promotion of measures for the safe preparation of school meals and has also linked the Home Grown School Meals (HGSM) and the farmers supported through TRANSFORM thereby providing downstream support to improving sustainable food systems and rural resilience and thus reflecting the multi-sectoral approach.¹¹⁹ Additionally, JPGE will support the government in the development of a national school meals operational plan and roadmap which will identify a strategy for full transition of school meals to the government, with key handover milestones.¹²⁰ Furthermore, the programme addresses several priorities outlined in the Norwegian Action Plan for sustainable food systems, including pillar 3: nutrition and diets.¹²¹ The school meals component is partly financed from the agriculture/food security budget line both because HGSF gives access to a secure market for small scale farmers. And because of the food security element.

Project name: Sustainable food systems in Malawi (FoodMa) MWI-19/0018 LUANAR

Sustainable food systems in Malawi is better known as FoodMa and will work toward contributing to resilient and sustainable food systems for better income and improved food and nutrition security in Malawi (cite project document). FoodMa aims to 1) strengthen local food systems in selected Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) in five of Malawi's districts and 2) to demonstrate a sustainable improvement of food and nutrition security, resilience to climate change, and income among agriculture-dependent rural households. Additionally, by strengthening the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), whose mission is to shape the future Malawi's agriculture and natural resources through transformative education, innovative research and responsive outreach, FoodMa will 3) build skills and competencies and 4) generate research evidence necessary to achieving, wider agriculture intensification, effective policies, and supportive institutions that will create a conducive environment for sustainable food systems amongst small-scale farmers. LUANAR will implement the FoodMa Programme in collaboration with the Norwegian University of Life

¹¹² Studsrød, Banda, Tolani, Aannerud. 2020. The Sustainable Food Systems for Rural Agriculture Transformation and Resilience (Transform) Programme: APPRAISAL. FINAL REPORT Transform Programme Appraisal 13th May 2020

¹¹³ Retrieved from: TRANSFORM Final budget submitted to RNE 5 June 2020_ revised 18 June

¹¹⁴ Norwegian Church Aid, NMBU, and the Development Fund. 2021. Sustainable Food Systems for Rural Resilience and Transformation (TRANSFORM) Program. TRANSFORM Proposal document- Implementation Phase- Draft Version 01072021

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ Retrieved from: Annex 4- M&E Plan Transform- Implementation Phase- Draft 01072021

¹¹⁷ Retrieved from: 20.07.2021_Transform ECD Programme Narrative Report _Feb-June_ final

¹¹⁸ Government of Malawi, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, and Royal Norwegian Government. 2020. UN Joint Programme on Girls' Education III: Learning for All in Malawi – Ensuring the realization of girls' and boys' rights to quality, inclusive and equitable education and life skills. JPGE III_Proposal Document_Final Draft_20 Nov 2020

¹¹⁹ Ibid

¹²⁰ Ibid

¹²¹ Norwegian Ministries. 2019. Action Plan: Food, People and the Environment.

Sciences (NMBU). The two Universities have jointly implemented several research and capacity building programmes in the past, thus building off previous collaborations and partnerships. FoodMa was also referred to as a sister programme to TRANSFORM in which they both target small-scale farmers where as LUANAR and NMBU's competencies in research and education complement TRANSFORM consortium partners strong competencies regarding outreach, ensuring that research outputs are disseminated to the target population in need. The proposal document also describes how FoodMa is well aligned with several relevant policy frameworks and strategies including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Malabo declaration and the Malawi Growth Development Strategy III (MGDS), the National Agricultural Policy (NAP), and the National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP), and the Norwegian Government's Action Plan on Sustainable Food Systems. FoodMa was reported designed in response to the Action Plan working to address SO 1-5, and 8.

The Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED) aims to strengthen the capacity of higher education institutions in developing countries ('Least Developed Countries' and 'Lower Middle Income Countries') to produce higher-quality graduates, more and higher-quality research, and more inclusive higher education.¹²² The overall goal of the NORHED II programme is to contribute to sustainable development and Leaving no one behind which is a core principle of the 2030 Agenda through North-South-South university partnerships. The programme is divided into six sub-programmes.¹²³ Although there may be relevant projects in some of the other sub-programmes, reference is made to "food systems" in sub programme 3: Climate Change and Natural Resources.¹²⁴ Of particular relevance is the Norhed II Food systems portfolio in Malawi which includes:

- ✓ 'Experiments for Development of Climate Smart Agriculture (SMARTEX)', Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), Holden, Stein Terje¹²⁵

The Norglobal2 programme is committed to contributing towards the SDGs and the Leave No one Behind agenda through the promotion, funding, and dissemination of high-quality evidence-based and policy-relevant research on poverty reduction and sustainable development within the field of international development to inform development policies, development programmes, private sector investments and further research in the following priority areas: education; business development, job creation and taxation; humanitarian efforts; conflict, security and fragile states; and environment, climate, oceans and renewable energy.^{126,127} In the Norglobal 2 programme references the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems, under the Environment, climate, oceans and renewable energy priority area.¹²⁸ Among the current Norglobal2 Portfolio, projects that were relevant to food systems implemented in Malawi included:

- ✓ Access to seeds: from Emergencies to Seed System development (ACCESS), Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), Ola Westengen
- ✓ Pathways to food security, poverty alleviation and livelihoods through the implementation of farmers' rights to crop genetic diversity, Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Regine Anderson

¹²² Norad. The Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development Programme Document. Retrieved from: [norhed-ii-programme-document](#)

¹²³ Retrieved from: [norhed-ii---sub-programmes---annex-1-to-programme-document](#)

¹²⁴¹²⁴ Ibid

¹²⁵ Retrieved from: [Beslutningsdokumenter NORHED II_midtveisgjennomgang mat](#)

¹²⁶ Retrieved from: <https://www.forskningsradet.no/contentassets/ba684e2bd8ec495bb079b96d7d102271/work-programme---norglobal2.pdf>

¹²⁷ Retrieved from: [presentation-norglobal-ii---info-meeting-on-tax-feb-3](#)

¹²⁸ Retrieved from: [work-programme---norglobal2](#)

Table of alignment of projects and programmes with the Action Plan.

Table 1: Project and Programme Coverage

	Objectives of the Action Plan	NASFAM	TRANSFORM	FOODMA	Joint Programme for Girls Education	NORHEDII	NorGLOBAL 2
1	<i>The knowledge and technology needed for sustainable and climate resilient food production has been developed, made accessible and scaled up.</i>	Objective 2: To Increase smallholder farmer member yields in an environmentally sustainable manner	Outcome 1: Increased productivity, production, diversification, and resilience to climate change at household and community levels.	Work Package III: Climate change and, Sustainable Agriculture Intensification (SAI)	-	SMARTEX	ACCESS DIVERSIFARM
2	<i>Biodiversity in food production has increased.</i>	-	Outcome 1: Increased productivity, production, diversification, and resilience to climate change at household and community levels.	Work Package II: Agricultural biodiversity, farming systems, and seed security	Strengthen capacity of small-holder farmers to supply diversified commodities to schools and promote consumption of diversified foods	-	ACCESS DIVERSIFARM
3	<i>Food production has become more sustainable and climate smart.</i>	Objective 2: To Increase smallholder farmer member yields in an environmentally sustainable manner	Outcome 1: Increased productivity, production, diversification, and resilience to climate change at household and community levels.	Work Package III: Climate change and, Sustainable Agriculture Intensification (SAI)	-	SMARTEX	DIVERSIFARM
4	<i>Food producers and their local communities are better equipped to deal with natural disasters and other adverse impacts of climate change.</i>	Objective 3: To build a committed, engaged and socio-economically empowered membership	Outcome 1: Increased productivity, production, diversification, and resilience to climate change at household and community levels.	Strengthening capacity of LUANAR to respond to Food Systems emerging issues	-	SMARTEX	DIVERSIFARM
5	<i>Sustainable value chains from source to market have been developed and strengthened</i>	Strategic Objective 1: To enhance market led production among smallholder farmers by providing market-aligned services	Outcome 3: Improved profitable market access and entrepreneurship.	Work Package IV: innovation, value chains and partnership	HGSF gives access to a secure market for small scale farmers	-	ACCESS DIVERSIFARM
6	<i>Food safety and animal and plant health in partner countries have been improved</i>	-	Outcome 2: Increased consumption of safe, nutritious, and diverse food	-	-	-	

7	<i>Information and guidance on maternal and child health have been enhanced and measures to improve nutrition for school children, young people and adults have been implemented.</i>	KRA 3.4 Promotion of food security amongst the membership	Outcome 2: Increased consumption of safe, nutritious, and diverse food	-	Outcome 3: Communities, parents and education stakeholders demonstrate increased investment and support for education, life skills, health and nutrition of children and adolescents in and out-of-school	-	ACCESS DIVERSIFARM
8	<i>Global and regional frameworks for sustainable food systems, as well as national policies and governance structures for these systems, have been developed and strengthened.</i>	Strategic Objective 4: To build a robust and effective system that supports the NASFAM business model	Outcome 4: Improved research, policy and regulatory environment for agriculture transformation and climate resilience.	Work Package I: Food system governance, policies, and institutions	Outcome 3: Communities, parents and education stakeholders demonstrate increased investment and support for education, life skills, health and nutrition of children and adolescents in and out-of-school	SMARTEX	

5.2.2 Assessment

Relevance and Alignment to National Policies

According to our key informant interviews with stakeholders in Malawi, two main policy documents are relevant to food systems in the Malawian context, which includes the National Agriculture Policy (NAP) and the National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP). The Malawian Government's NAP acknowledges that agriculture is an 'anchor' or 'mainstay' of the Malawian economy with a policy goal of "achieving sustainable agricultural transformation that will result in significant growth of the agricultural sector, expanding incomes for farm households, improved food and nutrition security for all Malawians, and increased agricultural exports" in the period of 2016-2021.¹²⁹ The document describes eight policy priority areas which include: 1) Sustainable Agricultural Production and Productivity; 2) Sustainable Irrigation Development; 3) Mechanisation of Agriculture; 4) Agricultural Market Development, Agro processing and Value Addition; 5) Food and Nutrition Security; 6) Agricultural Risk Management; 7) Empowerment of Youth, Women and Vulnerable Groups in Agriculture; and 8) Institutional Development, Coordination and Capacity Strengthening.¹³⁰ The Malawian Government's NAIP is a medium-term investment framework for the agricultural sector that was developed in order to operationalise the NAP and to be implemented over a five year period (2017/18- 2022/23).¹³¹ The NAIP operationalises the NAP, by guiding investment focus in the sector to accelerate agriculture transformation, economic growth, and poverty reduction under four programmes and 16 intervention areas.¹³² Programme areas include, 1) Policies, institutions and coordination; 2) Resilient livelihoods and agricultural systems; 3) Production and productivity; and 4) Markets, value addition, trade and finance. It is the second NAIP to be developed which was built off the achievements and lessons from its predecessor, the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp).¹³³

These two documents (Government of Malawi's NAP and NAIP) were finalised in 2016 and 2018 respectively and therefore developed prior to the finalization of the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems in 2019. Although food systems are not referenced explicitly in the NAP, our review suggests that other commonalities indicate a general alignment with the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems. Key informants also indicated that despite the action plan being developed in Norway, it addresses some of the same issues that are highlighted in Malawi's National Agriculture Policy (NAP) and the Malawi Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP).

Given that in 2015, all UN Member states (including Norway and Malawi) adopted the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, it is no surprise that the Sustainable Development Agenda is referenced in all three documents, framing that is formed on the basis of the UN's 2030 agenda, however, does help in terms of establishing relevance and alignment. The SDGs (in specific SDG 2: Zero hunger) help to align the Norwegian Action Plan for sustainable food systems with both the NAP and NAIP documents. The Norwegian Action Plan suggests that This Action Plan will be a useful tool to achieve SDG 2 on ending hunger, while also supporting efforts to reach the other 16 SDGs.¹³⁴ While the NAP indicates that it subscribes to and is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Finally, the NAIP also reports to be aligned to the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a global agenda for inclusive and equitable growth, and several other International and Regional Policy Frameworks.

Food systems are also referenced indirectly in the NAIP through the Agriculture Sector Food and Nutrition Strategy which is reportedly based on the guiding principles that acknowledge that food systems are foundational to the nutritional needs of all people in addition to contributing to economic growth in Malawi. The NAIP indicates that the goal of this strategy is to "achieve a sustainable and diverse food system and nutrition education that contributes to a well-nourished nation and economic growth through nine strategic objectives". Moreover, gender and climate resiliency are mentioned in all three documents. For example, the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems acknowledges

¹²⁹ Malawi Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development. 2016. National Agriculture Policy.

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Government of Malawi. 2018. National Agriculture Development Plan: Prioritised and Coordinated Agricultural Transformation Plan for Malawi: FY 2017/18-2022/23

¹³² Ibid

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ Norwegian Ministries. 2019. Action Plan: Food, People and the Environment.

how women play a vital role in food production and food systems and that women's rights and gender equality are a cross-cutting issue in Norwegian development policy.¹³⁵ The NAP also references the National Gender Policy (2015), has a policy outcome of increased engagement by women, youth and vulnerable groups in agriculture policy processes and programs; and includes further elaboration on cross-cutting issues in Malawi such as climate change, gender, youth, vulnerable groups including people living with disabilities, and HIV/AIDS.¹³⁶ The NAIP mentions that ensuring that sectoral growth is inclusive, environmentally sustainable and climate-smart requires close coordination across related policy areas, such as social protection, gender, youth, environment, climate change, nutrition, and health to maximise synergies. The NAIP will, therefore, supports well-coordinated investments at the boundaries between agriculture and other sectors, where this is necessary to achieve its objectives.¹³⁷

The relevance and alignment of the eight objectives of the Norwegian Action Plan are further reflected upon below in view of the MDGS3, NAP, NAIP, and Agriculture Sector Food and Nutrition Strategy.

Table 2: Alignment of Action Plan Objectives with Key National Policies

	Objectives of the Action Plan	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MDGS) 3	National Agriculture Policy (NAP)	National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP)	Agriculture Sector Food and Nutrition Strategy
1	<i>The knowledge and technology needed for sustainable and climate resilient food production has been developed, made accessible and scaled up.</i>	No	High	High	Medium
2	<i>Biodiversity in food production has increased.</i>	High	High	No	No
3	<i>Food production has become more sustainable and climate smart.</i>	No	High	High	Medium
4	<i>Food producers and their local communities are better equipped to deal with natural disasters and other adverse impacts of climate change.</i>	Medium ¹³⁸	Medium	Medium	Low
5	<i>Sustainable value chains from source to market have been developed and strengthened</i>	High	High	High	Medium
6	<i>Food safety and animal and plant health in partner countries have been improved</i>	Low	High	High	High
7	<i>Information and guidance on maternal and child health have been enhanced and measures to improve nutrition for school children, young people and adults have been implemented.</i>	Medium	High	High	High
8	<i>Global and regional frameworks for sustainable food systems, as well as national policies and governance structures for these systems, have been developed and strengthened.</i>	High	High	High	High

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ Malawi Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development. 2016. National Agriculture Policy.

¹³⁷ Government of Malawi. 2018. National Agriculture Development Plan: Prioritised and Coordinated Agricultural Transformation Plan for Malawi: FY 2017/18-2022/23

¹³⁸ Although natural disasters and climate change are referenced in length it does not reference food production explicitly

Early results from projects and programmes

Although the COVID-19 pandemic introduced disruptions at varying levels to many of the projects and programmes implemented under the plan, key-informants shared some indications of progress. For example, the TRANSFORM project pointed to several preliminary results that demonstrate progress in implementation. According to key informants and project-related documentation that was shared, TRANSFORM has recently wrapped up its inception phase. In the second progress report, it was reported that progress has been made toward several project outputs namely:

- ✓ Local implementing partners are working with 27,742 smallholder farmers from 22 Extension Planning Areas of Rumphi, Mzimba, Kasungu, Dowa, and Mchinji.
- ✓ 11 villages have adopted the Climate Adapted Village approach for collective management of community resources (e.g. forests, water, energy, soils, and plant diversity), thus an indication of progress toward increased resilience against climate change at community level.
- ✓ Up to 3 tons of vegetables and 1178 goats valued at about NOK 537,000 have been sold through formal markets following the implementation of interventions aimed at improving smallholder farmers' access to profitable markets and entrepreneurship.
- ✓ There has been increased participation of vulnerable target groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, and people living with HIV and AIDS.
- ✓ Smallholder farmers are implementing interventions towards increased productivity, production, and diversification of their crops and livestock like improved farmers' access to seeds, knowledge of climate resilience agriculture, and husbandry practices.
- ✓ 3516 farmers have adopted a newly introduced micro-investment methodology for climate-adapted farming which contributes to increased consumption of nutritious and diverse foods for the targeted households.¹³⁹

Furthermore, although COVID-19 has disrupted their work, it also allowed including a water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) component into the project. Overall, regarding Pillar 1, the TRANSFORM programme has increased food production through the introduction of simple and affordable irrigation technologies enabling farmers to harvest three times a year as opposed to previously when increased production was achieved by cutting down trees. Currently, 7800 farmers are producing three times a year. On the second pillar, the project is promoting simple value addition like cleaning, sorting, grading, and packaging their products before marketing. Additionally, farmers are now producing for a market and not for food only. Currently, some farmers are getting around \$3000 per year from the sale of their produce which is considered high in the Malawian setting. In addition, the project is increasing access to market for farmers by sharing prices for different products. Other projects like NASFAM are currently involved in training farmers on how to increase food production and linking them to markets. Additionally, FoodMa has also made progress forward. Key informants shared that the contract for the Food Ma project was signed in January 2021 and the project implementation commenced in May 2021. The project is currently in its inception period. However, there has been some progress which is outlined below:

- ✓ Both fully funded and partially funded students to take part in the research have been identified and letters have been issued.
- ✓ A consultant was identified to complete a baseline study which is currently wrapping up.

Areas of the Action Plan not sufficiently cover by the Embassy and Norad

As exemplified by the overview of projects and programmes supported by the embassy in Table 1, we can see that many areas of the Action Plan are covered through the work of the Embassy and Norad. However, our assessment reveals that more work could be done to strengthen the following objectives:

- ✓ Food safety and animal and plant health in partner countries have been improved. Although KIIs from TRANSFORM; NASFAM; and FoodMA are working to address this, given the relevance to the Malawian context it is recommended that these efforts be scaled up.

¹³⁹ Norwegian Church Air, NMBU, and the Development Fund. Transform Inception Report: Second Progress Report

- ✓ Information and guidance on maternal and child health have been enhanced and measures to improve nutrition for school children, young people and adults have been implemented. Although the Action Plan discusses how breastfeeding should be promoted, the current portfolio does not seem to have sufficient coverage of breastfeeding, nutrition, and diet.
- ✓ Sustainable value chains from source to market have been developed and strengthened. Although this area is covered in both TRANSFORM and NASFAM, sustainable value chains were continuously referred to by stakeholders as one of the greatest challenges in the agriculture sector in Malawi, therefore we recommend further investment and support to improve market access for smallholder farmers.

Good practices

KII interviews with the Royal Norwegian Embassy revealed that embassy staff put in a great deal of effort to translate the Norwegian Action Plan on Sustainable Food Systems into a framework that responds to the Malawian context. These efforts and initiative were demonstrated in the framework for Norwegian support for food security and agriculture 2020-2023 document (2019). It was shared that the inspiration and intention behind this document were to relate and tailor the global framework to Malawi to ensure the implementation of the Action Plan in Malawi. There were also indications that the embassy worked on developing an overview of how existing projects contributed to the different focus areas, thought about ways they could follow up on the plan, and how they could reorganise their existing portfolio to align with the plan.

All projects supported by the embassy have worked to incorporate the Norwegian Action Plan for sustainable food systems. As mentioned previously, this entails that a majority of projects have explicitly indicated that the project design was influenced by the Action Plan, indicating that the Norwegian Action Plan for Sustainable Food Systems is an important reference document for this work.

Key informants also suggested that the implementation of the Action Plan buttressed a general shift toward food systems thinking. This shift in thinking may also shed light on how elements of the Action Plan are incorporated into practice. When the Action Plan came in, they started to shift their focus. Many of the projects are built upon collaboration/relationships that predate the Action Plan, however, it was explained that how these projects are grouped and organised has undergone some changes. For example, instead of having several smaller projects, they have now organised for several smaller projects to cooperate and to deliver as one thus changing how to organise the portfolio not necessarily changing what type of work on the ground. Other participants shared that the Action Plan provided a nice framework to guide their work, therefore the entire project is aligned with the Action Plan. Interventions that are supported now, are talking to the Action Plan now. Same partners but research is now more related to what the Action Plan is talking about. The interventions are speaking to the Action Plan.

Interviewees agreed that building on collaborative long-term relationships has had a positive effect on their ability to implement the Action Plan. Not only do these long-term collaborative relationships foster equitable and genuine partnerships, but establishing long-term relationships with partners demonstrates how the development of collaborative partnerships long exceeds the time constraints of the Action Plan (e.g. three years) which support the continuation of existing projects that may further contribute to effectiveness and sustainability. Our interpretation of key informant responses is that these long-term partnerships also fostered an enabling environment for consistent and effective communication surrounding the plan (especially during COVID-19).

5.2.3 Case Study: TRANSFORM

From June 2020 to date, the TRANSFORM programme has supported 1800 smallholder farmers with simple irrigation systems and expertise in irrigation farming. With this support, the 1800 farmers are now migrating from relying on rain-fed agriculture to irrigation farming and are able to harvest three times a year. They are into vegetables growing as a business.

Alinafe Mbewe, a single mother of three is one of the TRANSFORM programme Irrigation beneficiaries from Kadekela Village in TA Chiwosha, Mchinji District. All along Alinafe has been relying on rain-fed farming. She has been harvesting between 200 and 250 kg of maize and about 10kg of soya beans. She has been selling all the soya beans and about 100 to 150 kg of maize. The remaining maize would sustain her for about four to five months (from April to October). Thereafter she would start selling firewood and charcoal to sustain herself and her children from October to the next harvesting period (April). Since the coming in of TRANSFORM programme , Alinafe is now into irrigation farming, harvesting three times a year. Last year, she earned \$450 from irrigation farming and she is planning to double the income this production year. "This is the only time I had ever have a substantial amount of money after selling my winter tomatoes. Thanks to TRANSFORM programme ," said Alinafe while dancing. Apart from Alinafe, there are 1800 other small-scale farmers with similar success stories on

how the TRANSFORM programme has changed their lives. These farmers are no longer in the firewood and charcoal selling business for a living.

In Malawi, more than 50 percent of the population is living below the poverty level. This is driven by low productivity in the agriculture sector, limited opportunities in non-farm activities, and rapid population growth. In an attempt to improve beneficiaries' economic status, the TRANSFORM programme initiated the village savings and loan programmes. In this intervention, beneficiaries are organised in groups and contribute a small amount of money (\$0.5) on a weekly basis which is thereafter borrowed within the group members at an interest. After twelve months, the group members share their dividends.

Salome Kafanikhale is one of the beneficiaries of Lusa village savings and loans women's group. She expressed her gratitude for the programme by explaining that before the coming in of TRANSFORM programme, she was living in poverty and relied on casual labour and selling of firewood for a living. After joining the village savings group, she had an opportunity to borrow \$50 and she is now into a food business. Salome explained that she is now able to send her son to a boarding secondary school without engaging in stressful income-generating activities. In addition, she is expecting to get about \$200 after sharing out the dividends in December which will be used to purchase farm inputs. Part of these dividends will be used to boost her food business. "As you know it's not easy to access a loan from the money lending institutions because we do not have collateral. But with the coming in of the village savings group, I

can now access a loan on a weekly basis. Supporting my son at a boarding school has now been very easy" said Salome. There are 104 other farmers within TA Kalulu with similar success stories.

The TRANSFORM programme is also promoting nursery tree production to replace the vegetation which has been destroyed by deforestation. So far six groups in TA Kalulu have been trained in

nursery establishment and wood lot management. The project is also promoting conservation agriculture and manure making. In the 2020 / 2021 growing season, 89 hectares of land were put under conservation agriculture and the target for 2021 / 2022 is 200 hectares. In addition, 28 farmers were given orange-fleshed sweet potato veins (bio-fortified sweet potatoes) and NUA 45 bean seed (bio-fortified beans).

The TRANSFORM programme is in its inception stage and has been on the ground for less than a year. The inception period started in June 2020 to September 2021 and the implementation period will run from October 2021 to April 2025. Most of the interventions will be scaled up during the main implementation period.

5.2.4 Conclusions

Key lessons learned:

The country case study in Malawi revealed that the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Lilongwe has put forth a significant effort to implement the Action Plan and has developed a quite comprehensive food systems portfolio. This work is in large a continuation of previous projects and built on the collaborative relationships between the embassy, university partners, and NGOs. The action plan is well aligned with several policy documents developed by the Malawian government, demonstrating the relevance of the Norwegian Action Plan for Sustainable Food Systems for the Malawian context. This overlap or alignment was helpful in continuing partnerships and ensuring that projects were well aligned and make explicit reference to the Action Plan. Given that the Malawian documents demonstrate a close overlap with the action plan, projects and programmes launched under the action plan are likely to maintain this holistic approach. However, it is unlikely that the Action Plan alone has contributed to the shift in discourse in Malawi. Rather, our assessment reveals that the projects and programmes implemented under the action plan have taken a holistic approach to address several contextual challenges related to food systems in the Malawian context.

Although key informants emphasize that it may be too early in implementation to tell whether these projects will cultivate new thinking and approaches after the action plan period is over, given that several of these projects are built on lasting partnerships, there is a strong possibility of continued collaboration.

Recommendations:

With this, it is also further acknowledged that progress will take time, therefore support for capacity development at the local level and long-term collaborative arrangements should be continued. It appears that progress is being made at the country level to implement the plan, however, it is too early in implementation to provide meaningful key recommendations. Rather, the review team recommends that Norad and the embassy continue to work on capacity development to fill sector gaps in Malawi, further their collaboration and long-term engagement through existing partnerships; continue to work on the contextualization and community-identified needs. It is also recommended that fora are created where the Embassy and project partnerships can share their knowledge and lessons learned so that other partner countries can engage in exercises for mutual sharing.

5.3 Annex 3: References

Document category	Date	Document name/title	Author / origin
<i>Call for proposals</i>	ND	Call text Enterprise development 2020 (1)	Norad, Department for Civil Society and Private Sector, Section for Private Sector Development
	07.04.2020	Call text strategic partnership 2020 (1)	Norad, Department for Civil Society and Private Sector, Section for Private Sector Development
	2019	Work-programme Norglobal2	Research Council of Norway
<i>Project documents</i>	21.10.2019	QZA 180269 Addendum no 1	Norad/UNOPS
	8.12.2020	QZA 180269 Addendum no 2	Norad/UNOPS

	ND	QZA 180269 Agreement	Norad/UNOPS
	2019	QZA 180269 DD Addendum 1	Norad/UNOPS
	8.2016	QZA 180269 DD	Norad/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	09.12.2019	QZA 190183 Agreement	Norad
	23.03.2021	QZA 190183 Amendment no 1	Norad/IFAD
	7.12.2019	QZA 190183 DD	Norad/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	16.12.2020	QZA 200046 Addendum no 1	Norad/IBRD
	13.12.2019	QZA 200046 Agreement	Norad/IBRD
	10.2019	QZA 200046 DD	Norad/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	02.12.2020	QZA 200046 DD2	Norad/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	12.2019	RAF 190042 Agreement	Norad/WFP
	9.12.2019	RAF 190042 DD	Norad/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	02.11.2019	QZA 180352 Addendum no 2	Norad/UNEP
	04.12.20	QZA 180352 DD Addendum	Norad/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	10.12.2020	QZA 200054 Agreement	Norad/GCA
	02.12.2020	QZA 200054 DD	Norad/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	12.04.2021	2001299 Beslutningsdokument - Yara Ghana	Norad/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	26.04.2021	2001299 Signed Agreement - Yara Ghana	Norad/Yara Ghana Limited
	05.05.2021	2001651 - Signert avtale - Oxyvision	Norad/Oxyvision AS
	08.04.2021	2001651 Beslutningsdokument - Oxyvision	Norad/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	23.03.2021	2001740 Beslutningsdokument - Farmforce	Norad/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	26.03.2021	2001740 Signed Agreement - Farmforce	Norad/Farmforce AS
	ND	Norway's Action Plan for sustainable food systems 2019–2023: Food, People and the - Environment	Norwegian Ministries
<i>Annual Foreign and Development budgets</i>	21.09.2018	prp201820190001_udd ddpdfs	https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop.-1-s-20182019/id2613694/
	20.09.2019	prp201920200001_udd ddpdfs	https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop.-1-s-20192020/id2671222/
	21.09.2020	prp202020210001_udd ddpdfs	https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop.-1-s-20202021/id2768027/
<i>Tildelingsbrev for 2021 fra UD</i>	2021	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad - nr. 1 2021	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2021/tildelingsbrev-2021-fra-ud-til-norad.pdf

	22.02.2021	Supplerende tildelingsbrev fra UD - nr. 1 for 2021	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2021/supplerende-tildelingsbrev-nr.-1-for-2021-fra-ud-til-norad.pdf
	15.04.2021	Supplerende tildelingsbrev fra UD - nr. 2 for 2021	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2021/supplerende-tildelingsbrev-nr.-2-for-2021-til-norad.pdf
	01.07.2021	Supplerende tildelingsbrev fra UD - nr. 3 for 2021	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2021/supplerende-tildelingsbrev-nr.-3-for-2021-fra-ud-til-norad.pdf
<i>Tildelingsbrev for 2021 fra KLD</i>	2021	Tildelingsbrev fra KLD til Norad - nr. 1 2021	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2021/tildelingsbrev-for-2021-for-norad-fra-kld.pdf
	1.1.2021	Vedlegg 1 - Avtaleportefølje for KLD og Norad	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2021/tildelingsbrev-fra-kld-2021---vedlegg-1-avtaleportefolje.pdf
	04.12.19	Vedlegg 2 - Strategisk rammeverk for KOS	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2021/tildelingsbrev-fra-kld-2021---vedlegg-2-strategisk-rammeverk-post-2020.pdf
	2021	Vedlegg 3 - Kalender for 2021	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2021/tildelingsbrev-fra-kld-2021---vedlegg-3-kalender.pdf
<i>Tildelingsbrev for 2020 fra UD</i>	24.02.2020	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad - nr. 1 2020	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2020/ud-norad.-tildelingsbrev-nr.-1-2020-.pdf
	17.04.2020	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad - nr. 2 2020	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2020/tildelingsbrev-ud-norad-nr.-2-2020.pdf
	28.05.2020	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad - nr. 3 2020	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer/filer-2020/styringsdokumenter/tildelingsbrev-ud-norad-nr.-3-2020-.pdf
	17.07.2020	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad - nr. 4 2020	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer/filer-2020/styringsdokumenter/tildelingsbrev-ud-norad-nr.-4-2020-.pdf
	08.10.2020	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad - nr. 5 2020	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer/filer-2020/styringsdokumenter/tildelingsbrev-ud-norad-nr.-5-2020.pdf
	26.10.2020	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad - nr. 6-2020	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer/filer-2020/styringsdokumenter/tildelingsbrev-ud-norad-nr.-6-2020.pdf
	17.12.2020	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad - nr. 7-2020	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2020/tildelingsbrev-nr.-7-2020-ud-norad-.pdf
<i>Tildelingsbrev for 2020 fra KLD</i>	2020	Tildelingsbrev for KLD til Norad 2020	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer/filer-2020/styringsdokumenter/norad-tildelingsbrev_kld-2020-.pdf
	19.03.2020	Supplerende tildelingsbrev fra KLD - nr. 1 2020	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2020/supplerende-tildelingsbrev-kld-nr-1-2020.pdf
	15.12.2020	Tildelingsbrev fra KLD 2020 - tillegg 1	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2020/tildelingsbrev-fra-kld-2020---tillegg-1.pdf
<i>Tildelingsbrev for 2019 fra UD</i>	18.03.2019	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad 2019 (Nr. 1)	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2019/190318-ud-norad.-tildelingsbrev-nr.-1-2019.pdf
	28.06.2019	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad 2019 (Nr. 2)	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2019/ud-norad.-tildelingsbrev-nr.-2-2019.pdf

	22.10.2019	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad 2019 (Nr. 3 - med addendum)	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2019/tildelingsbrev-fra-ud-til-norad-2019-nr.-3---med-addendum.pdf	
	09.12.2019	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad 2019 (Nr. 4)	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2019/ud-norad.-tildelingsbrev-nr.-4-2019.pdf	
<i>Tildelingsbrev for 2019 fra KLD</i>	2019	Tildelingsbrev fra KLD til Norad 2019	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2019/norad---endelig-tildelingsbrev-20191.pdf	
	21.12.2018	Følgerebrev fra KLD - Tildelingsbrev 2019	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2019/endelig-tildelingsbrev-og-instruks-20191.pdf	
	1.1.2019	Vedlegg 1 - Avtaleportefølje for KLD og Norad 2019	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2019/norad-vedlegg-1-avtaleportefolje1.pdf	
	14.12.2016	Vedlegg 2 - Strategisk rammeverk for KOS	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2019/norad-vedlegg-2-strategisk-rammeverk-kos.pdf	
	2019	Vedlegg 3 - Kalender 2019	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2019/norad-vedlegg-3-kalender-20191.pdf	
	20.12.2016	Vedlegg 4 - Instruks for Norad	https://www.norad.no/contentassets/e63890abf19748a0bb4b3dbba6060406/2017/instruks-fra-kld-til-norad---1.1.2017.pdf	
	3.4.2019	Supplerende tildelingsbrev nr. 1 - 2019	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2019/supplerende-tildelingsbrev-nr.-1---2019---fra-kld-til-norad.pdf	
		29.01.2018	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad - nr. 1	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2018/tildelingsbrev-2018---nr-1---fra-ud-til-norad.pdf
<i>Tildelingsbrev for 2018 fra UD</i>		02.07.2018	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad - nr. 2	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2018/tildelingsbrev-2018---nr-2---fra-ud-til-norad.pdf
		24.10.2018	Tildelingsbrev fra UD til Norad - nr. 3	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2018/tildelingsbrev-2018---nr-3.pdf
		2018	Tildelingsbrev fra KLD til Norad 2018	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2018/tildelingsbrev-fra-kld-til-norad-2018.pdf
<i>Tildelingsbrev for 2018 fra KLD</i>		21.12.2017	Følgerebrev fra KLD Tildelingsbrev 2018	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2018/folgebrev-fra-kld-tildelingsbrev-2018.pdf
		2018	Vedlegg 1 om avtaleportefølje for KLD og Norad 2018	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2018/vedlegg-1-om-avtaleportefolje-for-kld-og-norad-2018-tildelingsbrev-2018-fra-kld.pdf
		14.12.2016	Vedlegg 2 Strategisk rammeverk for KOS	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2018/vedlegg-2-strategisk-rammeverk-for-kos-tildelingsbrev-2018-fra-kld.pdf
		2018	Vedlegg 3 Milepæler 2018	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2018/vedlegg-3-milepaler-2018-tildelingsbrev-2018-fra-kld.pdf
		18.04.2018	Supplerende tildelingsbrev nr. 1 fra KLD (2018)	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2018/tildelingsbrev-nr-2-2018-fra-kld---supplerende-tildelingsbrev.pdf

	8.06.2018	Supplerende tildelingsbrev nr. 2 fra KLD (2018)	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2018/tildelingsbrev-2018-fra-kld---supplerende-tildelingsbrev-nr-2.pdf
	26.06.2018	Supplerende tildelingsbrev nr. 3 fra KLD (2018)	https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer-2015/tildelingsbrev/2018/tildelingsbrev-2018-fra-kld---supplerende-tildelingsbrev-nr-3.pdf
NORHED II 2021-2026	ND	norhed-ii-portfolio-for-2021-2026	Norad
	Mar-20	norhed-ii-programme-document	Norad
	ND	norhed-ii-programme-document-annex-2-indicator-menu-and-guidelines	Norad
	ND	norhed-ii---sub-programmes---annex-1-to-programme-document	https://www.norad.no/en/front/funding/norhed/
<i>Programme documents and other relevant information</i>	26.10.2020	Webpage: NORHED II 2021-2026	https://www.norad.no/en/front/funding/norhed/projects/#&sort=date
NORHED I projects	ND	NORHED I projects	https://www.norad.no/en/front/funding/norhed/projects/#&sort=date
NORHED II 2021-2026	ND	Beslutningsdokumenter NORHED II_midtveisgjennomgang mat	https://www.norad.no/contentassets/355b5b2ea2249af940b9e3f85244603/presentation-norglobal-ii---info-meeting-on-tax-feb-3.pdf
NORGLOBA L2	3.2.2020	presentation-norglobal-ii---info-meeting-on-tax-feb-3	The Research Council of Norway
	2019	work-programme---norglobal2	https://prosjektbanken.forskningsradet.no/projekt/FORISS/288737?Kilde=FORISS&distribution=Ar&chart=bar&calcType=funding&Sprak=no&sortBy=score&sortOrder=desc&resultCount=30&offset=0&Fritekst=Co-producing+Gender-responsive+Climate+Services+for+Enhanced+Food+and+Nutrition+Security+and+Health+in+Ethiopia+and+Tanzania
NORGLOBA L2 Research Projects	ND	Prog no 2: Co-producing Gender-responsive Climate Services for Enhanced Food and Nutrition Security and Health in Ethiopia and Tanzania	https://prosjektbanken.forskningsradet.no/projekt/FORISS/288493?Kilde=FORISS&distribution=Ar&chart=bar&calcType=funding&Sprak=no&sortBy=score&sortOrder=desc&resultCount=30&offset=0&Fritekst=Access+to+seeds%3A+from+Emergencies+to+Seed+System+development+%28ACCESS%29
	ND	Prog no 3: Access to seeds: from Emergencies to Seed System development (ACCESS)	https://prosjektbanken.forskningsradet.no/projekt/FORISS/302713?Kilde=FORISS&distribution=Ar&chart=bar&calcType=funding&Sprak=no&sortBy=score&sortOrder=desc&resultCount=30&offset=0&Fritekst=Climate+smart+innovations+in+agriculture+in+Uganda%3A+Improved+food+security%2C+livelihoods+and+soil+carbon
	ND	Prog no 4: Climate smart innovations in agriculture in Uganda:	https://prosjektbanken.forskningsradet.no/projekt/FORISS/302288?Kilde=FORISS&distribution=Ar&chart=bar&calcType=funding&Sprak=no&so

		Improved food security, livelihoods and soil carbon	rtBy=score&sortOrder=desc&resultCount=30&of fset=0&Fritekst=SEGURA+-+Food+for+Security%3A+Evidence+from+Cauca%2C+Colombia
	ND	Prog no 5: SEGURA - Food for Security: Evidence from Cauca, Colombia	https://prosjektbanken.forskningsradet.no/projekt/FORISS/302631?Kilde=FORISS&distribution=Ar&chart=bar&calcType=funding&Sprak=no&sortBy=score&sortOrder=desc&resultCount=30&of fset=0&Fritekst=Pathways+to+food+security%2C+poverty+alleviation+and+livelihoods+through+the+implementation+of+farmers%27+rights+to+crop+genetic+diversity
	ND	Prog no 6: Pathways to food security, poverty alleviation and livelihoods through the implementation of farmers rights to crop genetic diversity	https://prosjektbanken.forskningsradet.no/projekt/FORISS/314916?Kilde=FORISS&distribution=Ar&chart=bar&calcType=projects&Sprak=no&sortBy=score&sortOrder=desc&resultCount=30&of fset=0&Fritekst=Perennial+grassland+mixtures
	ND	Prog no 7: Perennial grassland mixtures: a novel approach to forage and food production, land restoration and climate resilience in Ethiopia	: Rammevilkår (norad.no)
<i>Business development and trade</i>	09.04.2020	Webpage: Rammevilkår	Støtte til næringsutvikling (norad.no)
	08.07.2020	Webpage: Støtte til næringsutvikling	https://www.norad.no/en/front/funding/private-sector-development/enterprise-development-for-jobs/
	ND	Webpage: Enterprise Development for Jobs	Norad
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5.4 Annex 4: People Interviewed

Entity	Name	Position
Ministries		
NFD	Anita Utheim Iversen	Technical Director
HOD	Arnhild B. Haga Rimestad	Senior Adviser
MFA	Lise Albrechtsen	Special Representative
MFA	Øyvind Udland Johansen	Senior Adviser
KLD	Øyvind Dahl	Senior Adviser
KLD	Siri Hals Butenschøn	Senior Adviser
LMD	Svanhild-Isabelle Batta Torheim	Senior Adviser
LMD	Yngvild Våge Steihaug	Senior Adviser
Norad		
MIMA	Anne Wetlesen	Senior Adviser
MIMA	Astrid Tveteraas	Deputy director
MIMA	Daniel van Gilst	Senior Adviser
FORSK	Grete Benjaminsen	Senior Adviser
Skog	Hilde Dahl	Senior Adviser
Statistics	Katrine Andrea Heggedal	Head of Section
Kunnskapsbanken/SKP	Nina Snyder	Senior Adviser
Tanzania	Odd Arnesen	First Secretary
Embassies		
Malawi	Augustin Charles Chikuni	Programme Adviser
Malawi	Ørnulf Strøm	Head of Cooperation
Rome (UN delegation)	Bjørn Skotnes	First Secretary
Indonesia	Bjørnar Dahl Hotvedt	Minister Councillor
Malawi	Helle Biseth	First Secretary
Ethiopia	Fikirte Regassa Beyene	
Multilateral Organisations		
CERF - Central Emergency Response Fund	Bruna Bambini	Humanitarian Affairs Officer
UNFPA - UN Population Fund	Dennia Gayle	Country Representative
WFP	Giacomo Re	Programme Policy Officer
WFP	Volli Carucci	Head, Resilience and Livelihoods Unit
WFP	Jesse Mason	Global Coordinator Forecast-based Financing
FAO	MollyBrynne Ahern	Food Security and Nutrition (Fisheries)
FAO	Audun Lem	Deputy Director
WFP	Badre BAHAJI	Head of Partnerships, Reports and Communication
SUN Movement Secretariat	Barbara Reh binder	Comms and Advocacy Officer
IFAD	Joyce Njoro	Nutrition Specialist
FAO	Manuel Barange	Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division
World Bank	Mr. Ross Hughes	Senior Climate Change Specialist
World Bank	Natasha Hayward	Programme Head
World Bank	Kathryn Hollifield	Programme Manager
FAO	Nicole Franz	Equitable Livelihoods Team Leader

FAO	Lena Westlund	NFIFL
Bilateral Organisations		
Development Fund	Ulf Flink	Country Director
Norwegian Church aid - Ethiopia	Eivind Aalborg	Country Representative
ICRAF - World Agroforestry Centre	Niguse Hagazi	National Agroforestry Project Coordinator.
NFG - Norwegian Forestry Group	Terje Hoel	CEO
National Governments		
Ethiopian Forest and Climate Change Commission	Yitebitu Moges	Country Coordinator- REDD+ Investments
Ethiopia Ministry of Agriculture	Mr. Habtamu Hailu	National Programme Coordinator
Malawi Ministry of Agriculture	Mr. Mawuwa	Deputy director
NGOs		
IDH	Fitrian Adriansyah	Executive Chairman & CEO
Norwegian Church Aid	Håvard Hovdhaugen	Country Director- Malawi
Norwegian Church Aid	Chipo Kachiwala	Project Coordinator
Development Fond	Jan Thomas Ødegaard	Leader
Norges Vel	Reinaart Pretorius	International Development Director
Caritas	Knut Andreas Lid	Programme Director
WRI Indonesia	Nirarta Samadhi	Country Director
Private sector		
Qxyvision	Martin Gauser	-
Technoserve	Mefthe Tadesse	Regional Director - East Africa
Yara	Øystein Botillen	Stakeholder Relations and Business Development Manager
Academia		
UiB	Anne Hatløy	Associate Professor
Oslo Met	Arne Dulsrud	Head of Research
NMBU	Bal Ram Singh	Professor emeritus
Hawassa University	Dr. Andargachew Gedebo	Associate Professor
LUANAR (Malawi)	Dr. Liveness Banda	Coordinator FoodMa
LUANAR (Malawi)	Dr. Moses Limuwa	Researcher
Haramaya University- Ethiopia	Dr. Sintayehu Workneh	Principal Investigator
Christian Michelsens Institutt (CMI)	Jon Einar Flåtnes	Senior Researcher
NMBU	Lars Olav Eik	Professor
NIBIO	Marit Jørgensen	Research Scientist
Frithjof Nansens Instiutt (FNI)	Regine Andersen	Research Director, Biodiversity and Natural Resources
NMBU	Ruth Haug	Professor
NTNU	Stephen Wolthusen	Professor
Other		
The National Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM)	Betty Chinyamunyamu	Chief Executive Officer
Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA)	Ms. Mahlet Israel	Director Partnership and Resource Mobilization
FOLU/World Resources Institute	Aklilu Fikresilassie	Director, Thriving Resilient Cities, WRI Africa; & Representative of WRI in Ethiopia

5.5 Annex 5: Survey responses

5.5.1 Respondents

Out of 34 embassies surveyed, 17 responses representing 15 embassies were received, producing an approximate 50% response rate.

Embassies surveyed	Response received
Egypt	
Angola	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	
China	
Cuba	
Ethiopia	X
France	
Georgia	
Ghana	
India	X
Indonesia	X
Israel	
Italy	
Kenya	
Kosovo	
Madagascar	X
Malawi	X
Mali	
Morocco	
Mozambique	X
Myanmar	
Nepal	X 2
Nigeria	X
Pakistan	X
Serbia	X
South Africa	X 2
South Sudan	X
Sudan	
Tanzania	X
Thailand	
Uganda	
United States of America	X
Vietnam	X

5.5.2 Results

How familiar are you with the contents of the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems? N = 16				
Very familiar	Familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not very familiar	Not at all
12.5%	37.5%	31.3%	12.5%	6.3%
To what extent are the objectives of the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems relevant and aligned with policies/initiatives in the country in which you work? N = 15				
To a great extent	To some extent	Very little	Not at all	
26.7%	60.0%	6.7%	6.7%	
Are you working with any of the four pillars of the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems? (Please tick all that apply) N = 11				

Food production	Value chains and markets	Nutrition and diet	Policy and governance
81.8%	72.7%	45.5%	100.0%

Please tick the subsidiary objectives from the Norwegian Action Plan on sustainable food systems where you feel your embassy is contributing the most:

No contribution	Limited contribution	Substantial contribution	Large contribution
The knowledge and technology needed for sustainable and climate resilient food production has been developed, made accessible and scaled up. N = 17			
41.2%	35.3%	17.6%	11.8%
Biodiversity in food production has increased. N = 16			
43.8%	18.8%	31.3%	6.3%
Food production has become more sustainable and climate smart. N = 17			
35.3%	29.4%	29.4%	5.9%
Sustainable value chains from source to market have been developed and strengthened. N = 15			
53.3%	13.3%	26.7%	6.7%
Food producers and their local communities are better equipped to deal with natural disasters and other adverse impacts of climate change. N = 17			
35.3%	41.2%	17.6%	5.9%
Food safety and animal and plant health in partner countries have been improved. N = 16			
62.5%	18.8%	18.8%	0.0%
Information and guidance on maternal and child health have been enhanced and measures to improve nutrition for school children, young people and adults have been implemented. N = 16			
37.5%	43.8%	18.8%	0.0%
Global and regional frameworks for sustainable food systems, as well as national policies and governance structures for these systems, have been developed and strengthened). N = 16			
52.9%	29.4%	11.8%	5.9%

Objective 1: The knowledge and technology needed for sustainable and climate resilient food production has been developed, made accessible and scaled up.

Please tick all the action points where you feel your embassy is contributing to objective 1 of the Action Plan. (Tick all that apply) N = 10

Promote the development and use of technology that can enhance sustainable food production and increase productivity in the food producing sectors. This must be done in cooperation with small-scale farmers and fishermen and local partners. Measures must be designed to meet the needs of small-scale food producers, including women producers and producers from marginalised groups.	100.0%
Strengthen the knowledge and skills needed for sustainable food production at local, national and global level. This will include improving extension services and vocational training in areas related to food systems, and strengthening knowledge in the fields of agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture.	70.0%
Increase access to the necessary inputs for food production and to information about the correct use of these inputs. Integrated pest management is important in this context, as is the development and use of alternatives to chemical pesticides.	70.0%
Promote the creation of jobs relating to food systems, including the development of attractive opportunities for the increasing proportion of young people in Africa.	60.0%
Facilitate the use of digital solutions and other appropriate technology to support food systems.	40.0%

Objective 2: Biodiversity in food production has increased.

Please tick all the action points where you feel your embassy is contributing to objective 2 of the Action Plan. (Tick all that apply) N = 7

Strengthen the management of genetic diversity of crops, livestock and fish at local, national and global level.	28.6%
Increase small-scale producers' knowledge about plant varieties and animal breeds, and provide access to a greater variety of both.	100.0%
Strengthen plant and animal breeding at both local and national level.	42.9%

Objective 3: Food production has become more sustainable and climate smart.

Please tick all the action points where you feel your embassy is contributing to objective 3 of the Action Plan. (Tick all that apply) N = 11

Reduce pollution levels and releases of pollutants to air, soil and water through better agronomy and sustainable use of inputs.	45.5%
Conserve biodiversity through sustainable management of agricultural land and areas used for aquaculture.	81.8%
Contribute to prevent the deterioration of ecosystem services and an increase in food insecurity as a result of loss of biodiversity, climate change and land degradation.	100.0%
Contribute to reduce deforestation caused by food production supply chains, particularly in tropical areas.	45.5%
Objective 4: Sustainable value chains from source to market have been developed and strengthened.	
Please tick all the action points where you feel your embassy is contributing to objective 4 of the Action Plan. (Tick all that apply) N = 7	
Support the development of social security systems, forecast-based financing for risk reduction measures, and insurance schemes for vulnerable food producers and other vulnerable groups.	71.4%
Strengthen the development of weather and climate services for farmers, pastoralists and fishermen, and help to ensure increased access to, and use of, these services.	57.1%
Increase knowledge about climate change, natural disasters, and disaster risk reduction among food producers.	100.0%
Objective 5: Food producers and their local communities are better equipped to deal with natural disasters and other adverse impacts of climate change.	
Please tick all the action points where you feel your embassy is contributing to objective 5 of the Action Plan. (Tick all that apply) N = 9	
Provide support for small- and medium- sized enterprises and entrepreneurs in the areas of business development and access to financing, and help to put in place risk-mitigation instruments for businesses that are starting up.	77.8%
Help to strengthen cooperation between food producers and other stakeholders in food value chains, and to build competence in the field of food processing. It is important that appropriate technology is made available for these actors.	77.8%
Foster partnerships between the private sector, financial institutions, educational and research institutions, civil society organisations and the authorities with a view to developing efficient, sustainable food value chains.	66.7%
Promote corporate social responsibility throughout the supply chain, with a view to ending slavery, forced labour and human trafficking in connection with food systems.	33.3%
Link efforts to promote renewable energy to food value chains.	44.4%
Contribute to reduce food waste and improve the utilisation of resources in food value chains.	44.4%
Contribute to ensure that more women are able to engage in the full range of business activities along food value chains, by providing start-up support to women entrepreneurs, supporting the establishment of women's groups, and promoting women's access to loans and credit.	66.7%
Objective 6: Food safety and animal and plant health in partner countries have been improved.	
Please tick all the action points where you feel your embassy is contributing to objective 6 of the Action Plan. (Tick all that apply) N = 6	
Support national authorities in the development and implementation of policies on food safety and animal and plant health and the fight against antimicrobial resistance.	50.0%
Contribute to strengthen institutions and legislation of relevance to food safety, including legislation on pesticides and animal and plant health, and increase knowledge about this legislation throughout the food value chain. Health and consumer interests must be a primary consideration.	50.0%
Disseminate information about the production, harvesting, storage and preparation of safe food and on the prevention of food- and water-borne diseases.	100.0%
Objective 7: Information and guidance on maternal and child health have been enhanced and measures to improve nutrition for school children, young people and adults have been implemented.	
Please tick all the action points where you feel your embassy is contributing to objective 7 of the Action Plan. (Tick all that apply) N = 9	
Intensify efforts targeting children under the age of five, with a particular focus on the first 1000 days after conception, with the aim of reducing stunting. Efforts to improve nutrition are to be more closely linked to our work in the fields of food production, health	22.2%

and education. This work will include dissemination of information about maternal health, breastfeeding and nutritious diets.

Improve access to safe and healthy food that is affordable for all.	55.6%
Support school feeding programmes, giving priority to varied locally produced food, and help to ensure that schools teach children about good nutrition and healthy diets.	55.6%
Contribute to improve nutritional status, efforts to promote good nutrition and the provision of information about healthy diets through strengthened, comprehensive health services and vocational training related to food systems.	44.4%
Support the development and communication of information about diet-related diseases.	22.2%
Contribute to improve access to technology (such as cooking stoves) that do not cause indoor air pollution.	44.4%
Objective 8: Global and regional frameworks for sustainable food systems, as well as national policies and governance structures for these systems, have been developed and strengthened	
Please tick all the action points where you feel your embassy is contributing to objective 8 of the Action Plan. (Tick all that apply) N = 7	
Play a leading role internationally in the efforts to promote sustainable food systems. This will include taking an active part in multilateral arenas and platforms where policy guidelines and standards for sustainable food systems are developed. Norway will seek to strengthen the focus on marginalised groups, and will champion the right to food.	28.6%
Actively promote free trade; this will include working to ensure a fair global trade regime under the WTO and encouraging more countries to open up their markets to goods from low-income countries.	42.9%
Strengthen national expertise on the development and implementation of policy relating to sustainable food systems, and strengthen relevant institutions, through technical cooperation, South-South cooperation, and exchanges.	42.9%
Cooperate with relevant countries on ensuring compliance with national legislation and international commitments relating to sustainable food systems, including nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement.	28.6%
Help to strengthen women's rights and increase their opportunity to influence decisions relating to sustainable food systems at national and international levels.	71.4%
Contribute to the development of sustainable financing for food systems.	28.6%
Promote sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and seafood in connection with the work to improve food security and nutrition, and intensify the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and other fisheries crime, for example through the Blue Justice initiative.	57.1%
Strengthen national and global efforts to combat environmental crime that undermines food systems, including efforts to stop illegal hunting and illegal land clearing.	42.9%
Continue and further develop existing Norwegian initiatives that support sustainable food systems, for example Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative and the Global Action Network on Sustainable Food from the Oceans and Inland Waters for Food Security and Nutrition.	57.1%
Establish a new Agriculture for Development programme under the Knowledge Bank. Secure the involvement of relevant institutions in projects within their respective areas of expertise. The programme is to be coordinated with the Fish for Development programme and a new Ocean for Development programme.	28.6%
Support national authorities in developing nutrition plans and to strengthen public services so these plans can be implemented.	42.9%

In your opinion, how would you rate the communication (e.g. technical assistance/training/learning and directives) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Oslo and/or Norad to Embassies relating to the Action Plan on sustainable food systems? N = 16

Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
0.0%	12.5%	43.8%	31.3%	12.5%

5.6 Annex 6. Review Matrix

The review matrix includes questions from the ToR and proposed review questions developed by the team, indicated in blue.

OECD/DAC Criteria	Review Questions	Data sources
1. Relevance	Is the intervention doing the right thing?	
1.1	To what extent are the projects and programmes implemented under the action plan relevant to achieve one or more of the eight subsidiary objectives?	Document review Survey
1.2	To what extent are the objectives of the Norwegian Action Plan relevant and aligned with policies/initiatives in Norwegian partner countries, Malawi and Ethiopia (and Ghana, Mali and Indonesia if relevant)?	Document review Survey
1.3	What is the relevance of policies, guidelines and outreach processed by the Norwegian governmental bodies in order to implement the action plan?	Document review
1.4	How are the projects and programmes implemented under the Norwegian action plan informed by or consistent with the eight subsidiary objectives?	Interview
2. Effectiveness	Is the project likely to achieve its objectives?	
2.1	To what extent have the Norwegian action plan's purpose and goals been properly reflected in policy documents, guiding and outreach products, decisions and budgetary allocations made by the five ministries, Norad, and the embassies?	Document review
2.2	To what extent has the Norwegian action plan, including the collaboration and communication between the Norwegian policy makers and the implementing partners have been managed effectively to achieve the plan's objectives?	Interview
2.3	Are there indications of achievement (e.g. early signs of result achievements) as a result of Norwegian action plan-related projects and programmes, with reference to the eight subsidiary objectives?	Interview Survey
2.4	Which of the eight subsidiary objectives of the Norwegian action plan are not sufficiently covered? Which measures will increase the effectiveness of the implementation?	Interview Survey
2.5	What are the good practices, as well as challenges and weaknesses in collaborative arrangements between policy makers and implementing partners? How can these good practices and/or challenges be remedied or adjusted in order to achieve programmatic objectives?	Interview Survey
2.6	What factors, structures, and/or systems have contributed to or inhibited the achievement of positive outcomes or progress toward objective achievement?	Interview Survey
2.7	What progress has been made toward achieving programmatic objectives and what considerations are important for future implementation?	Document review Interview Survey
2.8	How have collaborative arrangements between policy makers and implementing partners been functioning?	Interview Survey
2.9	What resources or support are needed to effectively assist in the Norwegian action plan objective achievement?	Interview Survey
2.10	How can future progress be mapped for each pillar/objective? Do implementing partners have insights regarding the integration of targets that could be used to assess progress in the future to support further implementation?	Document review Interview

3. Sustainability	Will the benefits last?	
3.1	To what extent will the Norwegian action plan (based on how it has been managed so far) be expected to change policies in the thematic areas covered by the definition of a food system in a sustainable way?	Interview Survey
3.2	To what extent is the work with the Norwegian action plan likely to create sustainable change in Norwegian policymaking related to food systems? To what extent are Norwegian ministries, Norad, and the selected embassies likely to work more cross-sectorial after the Norwegian action plan period is over?	Interview Survey
3.3	To what extent is the action plan likely to create new thinking and approaches among implementing partners that will sustain after the action plan period is over?	Interview
3.4	To what extent will the projects and programmes launched under the action plan (as well as the food systems approach) be likely to lead to sustainable change in the national policies in the countries investigated?	Interview Survey
3.5	What has the Norwegian action plan done to lay the basis for sustaining results/benefits at both policy and implementation levels?	Interview

5.7 Annex 7. Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Mid-term Review of

“The Government’s action plan on sustainable food systems in the context of Norwegian foreign- and development policy”

1) BACKGROUND

Seven ministers of the Norwegian Government signed an action plan for sustainable food systems in the context of Norwegian foreign- and development policy in June 2019.

The plan was developed in light of the increasing global challenges to combat under- and malnutrition. According to UN reports, the number of under and malnourished people has increased since 2014, and the world is off track to meet SDG2 on Zero Hunger. This comes in spite of the fact that enough food is produced globally and there is an increasing realization that a holistic focus on food systems is needed. Thus, the Norwegian action plan places itself among several other initiatives like the UN Committee on Food Security and Nutrition’s (CFS) development and endorsement of new voluntary guidelines on sustainable food systems and the Food Systems Summit planned in September 2021.

Food systems is defined by FAO (2018) to be a system that *encompass the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded*¹.

The title of the Norwegian action plan is *Food people and the environment*, and its main goal is **to ensure increased food security through the development of sustainable food systems.**

It is built on the following four pillars:

1: Food production, with the objective of increased sustainable, climate-resilient food production and increased productivity from agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture sectors

2: Value chains and markets, with the objective of increased sustainable value creation and private sector development in the food sector that ensures stable access to healthy and safe food and reduces food waste.

3: Nutrition and diet, with the objective of improved nutrition and sustainable consumption patterns due to improved knowledge and access to healthy and varied diets, safe food and clean drinking water,

4: Policy and governance, with the objective of sustainable food systems are promoted at national, regional and global levels, and strengthened through institution building.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca2079en/CA2079EN.pdf>

The plan expresses explicit focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups under the vision to leave no-one behind.

The four pillars are further concretized in eight subsidiary objectives the Norwegian Government wishes to achieve:

1. The knowledge and technology needed for sustainable and climate resilient food production has been developed, made accessible and scaled up.
2. Biodiversity in food production has increased.
3. Food production has become more sustainable and climate smart.
4. Food producers and their local communities are better equipped to deal with natural disasters and other adverse impacts of climate change.
5. Sustainable value chains from source to market have been developed and strengthened
6. Food safety and animal and plant health in partner countries have been improved
7. Information and guidance on maternal and child health have been enhanced and measures to improve nutrition for school children, young people and adults have been implemented.
8. Global and regional frameworks for sustainable food systems, as well as national policies and governance structures for these systems, have been developed and strengthened.

The subsidiary objectives are further followed by concrete actions points.

Implementation of the action plan is guided by an Interministerial Working Group (IWG) with representatives from all seven signing ministers and a reference group (RG) with representatives from Norwegian NGO's and academia, both administered by the Norwegian MFA.

Due to the definition of food systems, the action plan is crosscutting traditional sectors, and thus, engaged seven ministers in five ministries of the Norwegian government. However, it is being realized under the foreign and development policy and is directed towards Norway's engagement in low- and middle-income countries. The budget is administered by the Ministry for Foreign affairs, The Ministry of Climate and Environment, The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and a number of embassies around the world.

The action plan is considered as a policy document guiding budget allocations and other activities under the Norwegian foreign and development policy. Partners for implementation include global multi-donor organizations, national governments, international and national civil society organizations, private sector entities and academic institutions.

Norway does not fund any partner, project or programme covering an entire food system. Thus, the plan will be implemented through project and programmes of different sizes and through policy dialogues. Result-based management is carried out on a project and programme level. It is an ambition that results achieved can be linked to the SDG framework at the end of the period.

Norway was the first country to launch an action plan on sustainable food systems in its development cooperation. However, the system approach has later become a global policy trend. Norway plays an active role in influencing this global policy, which is reflected in the one of the action points under the subsidiary objective number eight. For example, major efforts are done through development of the UN voluntary guidelines for sustainable food systems and preparations for *The Food Systems Summit* that will be arranged by the UN in September 2021. Norway will also engage actively in preparations for the *Nutrition for Growth Summit* planned for the end of 2021.

Two reviews are planned during the action plan period:

- A mid-term review assessing how the food system's approach has been integrated in Norwegian foreign- and development policy, and whether the efforts and measures taken are appropriately designed to achieve the goals.
- An end review assessing results against the ambitions and as far as possible linked to the SDG's.

This ToR will describe the mid-term review.

1) PURPOSE AND INTENDED USE

The purpose of the review is to assess ***how the food system's approach, as described in the action plan, has been integrated in Norwegian foreign- and development policy, and whether the efforts are properly designed to achieve the intended goals of the plan.***

The findings of the review will inform all the participating ministries, embassies and Norad as well as stakeholders implementing activities under the direction of the action plan about good practices and whether the efforts and measures taken are appropriate and sufficient to reach the goals, or if revisions are advised or needed.

2) OBJECTIVES AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The review has three main objectives:

- 1) To assess whether the action plan has been adopted, coordinated and implemented effectively by the five ministries, Norad and the embassies to achieve the goals set out in the plan.
- 2) To assess how the principles and action points of the plan have been received and addressed by *implementing partners* of Norwegian foreign- and development policy, including multi-donor organizations, national governments, international and national civil society organizations, private sector entities and academic institutions in order to achieve the goals of the plan.
- 3) To identify good practices as well as challenges and provide recommendations and opportunities for the remaining period of the plan. Propose improved modes of work and possible investments in order to achieve better results with reference to the eight subsidiary objectives of the plan.

The mid-term review more specifically shall comprise, but not necessarily be limited to, the following evaluation questions:

Relevance:

The review shall assess whether the projects and programmes implemented under the action plan are relevant to achieve one or more of the eight subsidiary objectives. In addition, the review shall assess to what extent the objectives are relevant and aligned with policies in Norwegian partnercountries.

The review shall assess the relevance of policies, guidelines and outreach processed by the Norwegian governmental bodies in order to implement the action plan.

Effectiveness

The overarching question to be investigated is whether the efforts taken by all groups of stakeholders are optimally designed to reach the goals set out in the action plan. Specific questions are:

- Whether the plan's purpose and goals have been properly reflected in policy documents, guiding and outreach products, decisions and budgetary allocations made by the five ministries, Norad and the embassies.
- Whether the plan, including the collaboration and communication between the Norwegian policy makers and the implementing partners have been managed effectively to achieve the plan's objectives.
- Identify potential early signs of result achievements as a result of projects and programmes, with reference to the eight subsidiary objectives.
- Identify areas of the action plan that is not sufficiently covered and propose measures that will increase effectiveness of the implementation.
- Identify good practices, as well as challenges and weaknesses in collaborative arrangements between policy makers and implementing partners and recommend adjustments.

Sustainability:

The overarching question to be investigated is whether the action plan, based on how it has been managed so far, can be expected to change policies in the thematic areas covered by the definition of a food system, in a sustainable way. Specific questions are:

- Whether the work with the action plan is likely to create sustainable changes in the Norwegian policy making related to food systems. For example, whether Norwegian ministries, Norad and the selected embassies are likely to work more cross-sectorial after the action plan period is over.
- Whether the action plan is likely to create new thinking and approaches among implementing partners that will sustain after the action plan period is over.
- Whether projects and programmes launched under the action plan as well as the food systems approach is likely to create sustainable national policies in the countries investigated.

1) SCOPE

The review shall comply desk studies and interviews including, but not limited to:

- I. Stakeholders in Norway (The five ministries and Norad, NGO's, private entities and academia),
- II. The Norwegian Permanent Mission in Rome
- III. Multilateral partners (FAO, IFAD, WFP, UNOPS/SUN, UNICEF, UNEP and the World bank)
- IV. Royal Norwegian Embassies and implementing partners in Malawi and Ethiopia.
- V. Royal Norwegian Embassies in Ghana, Mali and Indonesia

Norad shall, based on advice from the IWG, propose organizations and sub-organizations among those mentioned above, to be interviewed by the review team

The review shall be undertaken on digital platforms or physical attendance when applicable and possible. Field visits to Malawi and Ethiopia shall be conducted if possible.

1) APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The Team is expected to propose an effective methodology to undertake the assignment, hereunder develop an interview guide. Rationale, strengths and weaknesses behind the chosen methodology shall be expressed in the inception report.

Sources of information

Norad will map relevant projects and programmes and provide the team with the necessary written documentation. Other written sources can be identified by the review team and other stakeholders.

The IWG, Norad and the embassies in the selected countries will assist the consultants in identifying interviewees.

2) QUALITY STANDARDS

The OECD/DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluations shall serve as a reference point for ensuring quality of this review.

All findings and conclusions must be backed by reference to evidence (source) and their magnitude/representativeness commented and prepared to be presented on demand.

Norad shall approve the inception report and all involved Norwegian ministries, Norad, embassies and implementing institutions covered by the review shall be given the possibility to review the draft end report before finalization.

It is expected that ethical standards such as confidentiality of informants, sensitivity and respect to stakeholders, Do-no-harm principles and code of conduct shall be described in the inception report and addressed during the implementation of the review.

3) MANAGEMENT OF THE REVIEW

TEAM COMPOSITION

The review team shall comprise experts with extensive knowledge and experience from assessment of projects and programmes within the thematic areas of food systems as described in the action plan.

The team members should collectively display professional, in-depth knowledge of and experience within the following fields:

- Relevant knowledge and/or experience from project and programme design and management, preferably in relevant thematic areas.
- Good knowledge of society and culture in low-and middle-income countries that are relevant for Norwegian development support, in particular from countries in Sub-Sahara Africa
- Relevant academic background and practical experience in rural and community development, livelihoods, management of natural resources, food security, nutrition, policy development and governance and gender equality.
- Good knowledge of the nature of governmental administrations and organizations, multilateral organizations, civil society organizations, private sector actors and academic institutions.
- Experience from reviews or evaluations of similar projects/programmes, and in monitoring and evaluation.
- Fluent in Norwegian and English language, spoken and written.
- Experience from work in low-and middle-income countries, especially in Sub-Sahara Africa is a requirement.

MANAGEMENT

The review will be managed by Norad, section for environment and food security based on decisions and advice from the IWG. The MFA may also consult the RG for advice.

The inception report will be approved by Norad based on decisions and advice from the IWG. Norad will arrange a startup-meeting with the consultants to discuss and clarify details in the inception report.

Suggested interviewees will be identified by Norad based on decisions and advice from the IWG. The consultants shall be responsible for organizing and conducting the interviews.

Norad will administer input from stakeholders to the draft of the final report and approve the final report.

1) TIME FRAME AND SCHEDULE

Activity	Tentative dates	
Clarification of questions to the assignment	Inception meeting	23.06
Preparatory work and desk study, including a presentation to Norad and the IWG of an <i>Inception report</i> and a tentative plan for interviews and field visits.	Submission of inception report to Norad	20.08.
	Meeting about inception report	26.08
	Approval of inception report	28.08
Interviews including one week in Malawi and one week in Ethiopia.	Finalization of interviews	01.10
Analysis, report writing and submission of draft report	Submission of draft report	15.10
Finalization of report	Comments submitted to consultants	29.10
	Final report submitted to Norad	15.11

1) DELIVERABLES

The following reports constitute the main deliveries of the review (and shall be submitted according to the timeline above):

- I. An inception report, not exceeding 10 pages, for approval by Norad. The report shall include a brief description of the approach and methodology of the review, including an interview guide. In addition, the report shall comprise a budget including number of hours per senior consultant/consultant, hourly rate as well as other costs (e.g.travel).
- II. A draft and final review report not exceeding 30 pages and including an Executive Summary (maximum five pages) with main findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. The reports can be supplemented by annexes, if needed.

All reporting shall be in English.

- The Draft and Final Reports shall be delivered in electronic form.
- The reports shall be addressed to Norad.

2) BUDGET

A budget will be approved as part of the inception report

Annex 1 – Documents for review (proposed)

- 1) The action plan document
- 2) Other relevant policy documents
- 3) Communication and outreach documents
- 4) Decision documents
- 5) Programme documents
- 6) Reports and reviews

Annex 2 – Interviewees (proposed)

- 1) Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 2) Ministry of Climate and Environment
- 3) Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries
- 4) Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- 5) Ministry of Health and Care Services
- 6) Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)
- 7) Royal Norwegian Embassy Ethiopia
- 8) Royal Norwegian Embassy Malawi
- 9) Royal Norwegian embassy in Ghana
- 10) Royal Norwegian Embassy in Indonesia
- 11) Royal Norwegian Embassy in Mali
- 12) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- 13) International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- 14) United Nations for Project Services (UNOPS)/Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)
- 15) UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
- 16) World Bank
- 17) Norwegian development fund
- 18) Norwegian Church Aid
- 19) Other relevant NGOs
- 20) Relevant academic institutions in Norway



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