

Outcomes of the roundtable: “Food systems finance and climate and food nexus: An action-oriented dialogue for a stronger engagement of the Dutch food network at the Rome-based agencies”¹

Event report of the [ECDPM-NFP informal roundtable discussion, Rome, 20 October 2023](#)

Main conclusions

Dutch knowledge institutes, civil society and businesses can be of added value for the work of the UN Rome-based agencies (RBAs), especially in Africa.

Greater engagement and impact can be achieved through:

- Working together at COP28 towards a coherent food system and agriculture agenda
- Supporting the development of climate-resilient food system pathways at the country level
- Strengthening the inclusivity of country-level planning and implementation
- Facilitating youth engagement
- Sharing lessons learned on successful investment programmes in agri-food systems
- Improving the policy and regulatory environment for agri-food system investments to flow
- Leveraging the work of the RBAs to improve the economic, social and environmental impacts of investments in agri-food systems
- Better monitoring of the progress of food systems transformation efforts

Introduction

On 20 October 2023, ECDPM and the Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP) hosted an informal roundtable discussion at the CGIAR premises in Rome titled '*Food systems finance and climate and food nexus: An action-oriented dialogue for a stronger engagement of the Dutch food network at the Rome-based agencies*'. The event aimed to bridge connections and strengthen Dutch food network actors' engagement with the work of the Rome-based agencies.

This roundtable discussion gathered a diverse group of around 35 experts from FAO, IFAD, CGIAR, and the Dutch network of knowledge institutes, civil society, youth movements, the financial and private sectors, and African and European delegations. They **shared recent insights from policy and programmes** in an informal and dynamic setting. The discussion focused on two crucial policy areas: *Urgent and transformative action at the food and climate policy nexus: towards a stronger focus on food systems at COP28* (Session 1); *Financing the food systems transformation: improved*

¹ The United Nations Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) comprise the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP). Together with the CGIAR (the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research), these institutions are key to driving progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 'Zero Hunger' and the transformation towards sustainable food systems.

mechanisms for public and private finances to work in synergy for greater impact (Session 2).

The meeting also served to **identify options for joint activities** by the Dutch network in support of/in partnership with the Rome-based agencies (RBAs) in the two domains.

The Dutch non-state actors see their role as complementary to that of the Netherlands' and European permanent representations to the RBAs and work in alignment with them. They are open to engaging with delegations of other countries, some of which were present during this meeting.

Session 1: Urgent and transformative action at the food and climate policy nexus: towards a stronger focus on food systems at COP28 and beyond

Options for joint activities by the Dutch network in support of/in partnership with the UN Rome-based agencies

In the short-term

Working together at COP28

Several Dutch actors (such as De Jonge Klimaatbeweging, SNV, and Wageningen University and Research, WUR) actively contribute to **shaping the food systems and agriculture agenda** at COP28.² By working together with other champions, including Rome-based players, they can contribute to pushing food systems higher on the agenda of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):

- A concrete way could be that both the Rome-based agencies and Dutch actors (formally or informally) **endorse existing statements or open letters to the Parties to the UNFCCC**. Two examples of this are: (1) an [open letter from 80+ organisations calling to accelerate food systems transformation within the UNFCCC](#); the letter was co-signed, among others, by CGIAR and several Dutch actors such as SNV, Clim-Eat, and NFP; and (2) the [non-state-actor call to action from the UN Climate Change High-Level Champions](#).
- Dutch actors could also **endorse and support the implementation of the [FAO's Roadmap to achieving 1.5°C and SDG2 Zero Hunger](#)** that will be launched at COP28;
- Dutch actors and RBAs can **jointly push for a higher share of climate finance** to be devoted to the **adaptation** of agrifood systems in Africa;
- Dutch network actors can engage more strongly, together with the RBAs, in the **loss and damage debate** in the context of the UNFCCC, and support a stronger integration of the climate, **biodiversity** and food systems debates more broadly;
- The **Dutch youth** chapter, with a sizable representation at COP28, also expressed the wish to **engage more with the RBAs** to play their role effectively.

Harnessing the UN Food System Summit Coalitions

- Dutch actors can play a role in accelerating the impact at the country level of several **global coalitions of action that started at the UN Food System Summit** (UNFSS) in 2021 and seek opportunities to collaborate with RBAs.³

² For example, SNV and Clim-Eat co-host the [Food Systems Pavilion at COP28](#), in collaboration with CGIAR and others.

³ For example, Dutch actors are strongly engaged in the [Coalition on Action for Soil Health](#) and the [True Value of Food Initiative](#).

In the medium- and long-term

At the country level (in Africa, and beyond)

Dutch actors and the RBAs can strengthen their engagement and impact and pursue a more strategic and coherent approach to the climate and food agendas at the country level, by:

- Supporting the national conveners in a number of ‘catalytic countries’ (or champions) to **develop climate-resilient food system pathways and commit to scaling progress by 2025**. Such pathways should combine the indicators and objectives contained in the UNFSS national pathways for food systems transformation with the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and the national adaptation plans (NAPs). In addition, in Africa, synergies could be identified with the formulation of the second generation of Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) investment plans;
- **Strengthening the inclusivity of country-level planning and implementation**. Dutch actors can contribute to this by sharing their experience in **engaging multiple stakeholders** in policy-making and monitoring, with a focus on power imbalances and the inclusion of marginalised groups;
- Fostering the collaboration between World Food Forum (WFF) youth chapters, Rome-based Agencies and other food systems actors, to **strengthen and facilitate youth engagement in country-level dialogues**. The Dutch chapter is well placed to proactively engage both with the RBAs and with WFF youth chapters in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
- Two **examples of ongoing country-level support programmes by RBAs and Dutch actors** where collaboration and linkages could be pursued and strengthened include:
 - The [Scaling up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture through Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans \(SCALA\) programme](#), implemented by FAO and UNDP in 12 countries;
 - The [Foresight for Food Systems Transformation \(FoStr\) programme](#), implemented by the Wageningen University and Research (WUR) and the University of Oxford.

At the regional and global levels

Dutch actors and the RBAs can strengthen their engagement and impact and pursue a more strategic and coherent approach to the climate and food agendas at the regional and global levels, by:

- Creating space for **regional conversations with climate negotiators** on the food systems agenda and the food and climate nexus, that include the voice of the youth;
- Supporting the [Food system countdown initiative](#), and other collaborative efforts to monitor the progress of food systems transformation efforts, following up on the UNFSS Stock Take, while harnessing synergies with the UNFCCC Global Stock Take.

Session 2: Financing the food systems transformation: improved mechanisms for public and private finances to work in synergy for greater impact

Options for joint activities by the Dutch network in support of/in partnership with the UN Rome-based agencies

In the short-term

Deepening knowledge exchange

- Through dedicated follow-up meetings and sessions, Dutch finance sector actors (such as FMO, Rabobank and IDH Trade) and RBA experts can mutually **share lessons learned on successful (blended) finance and investment programmes in agri-food systems. Examples of programmes from which to draw relevant lessons include:**
 - The [Dutch consortium leading the implementation of the Dutch Fund for Climate and Development \(DFCD\)](#), comprising SNV and FMO, that mobilises private investment for climate change adaptation;
 - The Dutch entrepreneurial development bank FMO's [NASIRA guarantees](#), supporting the financing of underserved entrepreneurs;
 - The [IDH's public-private impact fund for smallholder farmers 'Farmfit Fund'](#);
 - The [Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program \(AAP\)](#), led by the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) mainstreaming adaptation solutions in investment projects;
 - IFAD's [Private Sector Financing Programme](#).
- RBAs and Dutch finance sector actors can also promote a research and dialogue agenda on how to improve access to finance for actors involved in **informal markets**.

In the medium- and long-term

Improving the policy and regulatory environment

- The RBAs can promote a dialogue to identify possible **improvements in the regulatory environment** (at the global level and in LMICs) that could help financial institutions, including Dutch actors, to take up more risks and scale up their investments in agri-food systems;
- RBAs and Dutch actors can jointly call for the [Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action](#), co-chaired by the Netherlands, to work not only on energy transition but also on food systems transformation;
- RBAs and Dutch actors can also jointly advocate for the [rechannelling of part of the USD 650 billion worth of Special Drawing Rights \(SDRs\) issued in 2021](#) to African countries to unlock more public and private finance for food security and climate-resilient food system systems.

Enhancing impact by collaborating at the country level

- Dutch actors and their partners can leverage collaboration with the RBAs at the country level to improve the economic, social and environmental impacts of their investments, through:
 - The mutual sharing of **context-specific knowledge** of the local food system and **in-depth analysis** of agri-food value chains, to support the identification of commercially-viable options for investment;
 - **Standard-setting** by the RBAs to guide the action of private sector actors working on food systems transitions;
 - **Inclusive policy dialogue to create a conducive environment for investments** to flow (e.g. domestic incentives for investments in sustainable agri-food systems);

investments in infrastructure; aggregation through farmers' organisation, better interministerial coordination etc.); for that, the meaningful **inclusion of smallholder farmers' voices is key** to ensure increased financial flows benefit them;

- **Capacity strengthening** of local actors to formulate profitable business plan proposals.
- Concretely, collaboration could be fostered by **mapping**, in a first set of pilot countries, the programmes and projects led by Dutch actors and their partners and **identifying synergies and entry points for more collaboration with RBAs' initiatives** (for example, breaking them down by specific value chain solutions, in line with national food system pathway priorities).

Measuring impact and promoting accountability

- RBAs and Dutch actors (particularly finance and knowledge institutions) can improve the measurement of the economic, social and environmental impacts of investments and improve accountability by:
 - Identifying ways to **reduce the cost of ex-post impact assessments** and improve the reliability of the data collected (e.g. through the use of satellite imagery or GIS), and by promoting the harmonisation of monitoring and reporting systems;
 - **Improving ex-ante impact assessments** by integrating financial and non-financial data and translating it into information easily accessible by investors to support investment decisions. By 'redefining impact' and providing real insights into current and future financial and non-financial risks, such efforts would help rebalance the risk-return-impact assessment of agrifood investment opportunities and ensure financial flows reach currently marginalised players.

To find out more about the project and get future updates, please visit the [project page](#) or get in touch with Nicole Metz, Senior Knowledge Broker at the Netherlands Food Partnership at nmetz@nlfoodpartnership.com

Annex : Agenda of the roundtable discussion

10:30 - 12: 30 Session 1: Urgent and transformative action on the food and climate policy nexus: towards a stronger focus on food systems at COP28

Time	What	Who: kick-off interventions (tbc)
10:30 - 10: 35	Welcome remarks	Javier Mateo Vega, Global Director Partnerships, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT
10:35 - 11:15	A. Lessons from the Dutch network to accelerate action for food & climate	Oluyede Ajayi, Program Lead, Food Security, Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program, Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) John Belt, Global Technical Advisor – Inclusive Value Chains, SNV (<i>online</i>) Ida Simonsen, UN Youth Representative on Biodiversity and Food for the Netherlands Moderated, interactive discussion
11:15-12:00	B. Role of the RBAs and African Delegations in the food-climate agenda	Julia Wolf, Global Manager- SCALA Programme, FAO James Stapleton, Senior Strategic Advisor, Advocacy for Impact CGIAR Anthony Muriithi Gikandi, Alternate Permanent Representative Moderated, interactive discussion
12:00-12:30	C. Options for joint activities by the Dutch network in support of/in partnership with the RBAs	All Moderated, interactive discussion

12:30 - 13: 30 Networking Lunch

13:30 - 15:30 Session 2: Financing the food systems transformation: improved mechanisms for public and private finances to work in synergy for greater impact

Time	What	Who: kick-off interventions (tbc)
13:30 - 14:15	A. Lessons from the Dutch network actors: key success factors for public/private resources to effectively work together	<p>Suzanne van Tilburg, Global Head of Food & Agri Networks, Rabobank (<i>online</i>)</p> <p>Pieterneel Boogaard, Global Head Agribusiness, Food & Water, FMO</p> <p>Roel Messie, CEO of the IDH Farmfit Fund</p> <p>Moderated, interactive discussion</p>
14:15 - 15:00	B. Role of the RBAs, African and European Delegations in supporting a rethinking of the food financing architecture	<p>Thouraya Triki, Director of Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division, IFAD</p> <p>Alexandra Valkenburg, EU Delegation to Rome</p> <p>Elizabeth Nsimadala, President, Eastern Africa Farmers Federation</p> <p>Moderated, interactive discussion</p>
15:00-15:30	C. Options for joint activities by the Dutch network in support of/in partnership with the RBAs	<p>All</p> <p>Moderated, interactive discussion</p>