

Project highlights

Scoping phase

During the first project year, we review the experiences of Germany's **One World, No Hunger** special initiative (SEWOH). Undertaken in close consultation with development cooperation actors and SEWOH implementing organizations, the aim is to create a common understanding of food systems transformation (FST) and how these processes can best be governed.

Analysis of transformation processes

The United Nations Food Systems Summit in 2021 gave important impetus to FST as a new political goal. However, it remains unclear how this global aspiration can be translated into concrete actions. Building on in-depth case studies, the second phase of the project aims to better understand, and document, processes towards FST. This analysis will further explore political structures and steering instruments for effective food systems governance, with a focus on: "who needs to be at the table"; and the role of external support.

Food Systems Transformation Academy

Knowledge gathered over the three-year project will be further consolidated and shared through a proposed Food Systems Transformation Academy. The Academy will serve as a platform to develop a common understanding of food systems transformation, promote knowledge exchange, and contribute to the implementation of more inclusive and sustainable food systems.

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Governance of food systems transformation

A TMG Research project

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“The world now produces enough food to feed its population. The problem is not simply technical. It is a political and social problem. It is a problem of access to food supplies, of distribution, and of entitlement. Above all it is a problem of political will.”

Boutros-Ghali,
6th United Nations
Secretary General,
November 1993

The world faces systemic food security challenges

Our food systems face the **“most catastrophic crisis in 50 years.”**

Despite an abundance of food, around 838 million people, or just under 10% of the global population, suffer from hunger. And the numbers keep rising. Our unsustainable agri-food systems are at the heart of this paradox.

According to some estimates, **the agricultural sector is the primary driver of biodiversity loss**, threatening about 86% of species at risk of extinction. The ongoing global food crisis — exacerbated by intersecting crises linked to the war on Ukraine, rising energy costs and accelerated climate change — underscores the dire need for radical transformation of how we produce, distribute and consume our food.

This calls for a “whole-of-food-system” solution

Hunger is not the only consequence of failed food systems. The impacts extend to the overall health and wellbeing of both people and planet. With **growing awareness of these inextricable links**, calls for a food systems approach – instead of focusing on different agri-food sectors – have grown louder. The central role of food systems in reconciling social, economic, and ecological dimensions is even more apparent in the face of escalating food, climate, ecological, and energy crises. However, **there is still insufficient understanding** on how to steer highly complex and multi-dimensional food systems towards transformation.

Our contribution to a deeper understanding

Berlin-based think tank TMG Research is undertaking a **three-year research project that aims to better understand and document governance approaches** for food systems transformation in selected partner countries and is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The resulting analysis will help inform international cooperation and partnerships to support and strengthen food systems transformation. The project takes a **transdisciplinary approach by co-creating knowledge with diverse actors** from government, civil society, research, and the private sector.

Food systems governance

Food systems governance can be understood as:

“the ability of actors to steer the food systems to achieve food security, enhance resilience, facilitate adaptation, or to instigate transformation and involves not only the actors and activities of the food system itself but also the actors and activities of related domains such as land use, conservation, energy and water resource management, poverty, and human development.”

Delaney, A. et al, 2018

Governance of food systems across scales in times of social-ecological change: a review of indicators. Food Secur. 10, 287–310. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-018-0770-y>

Food systems encompass the entire spectrum of food-related actions including:

Production

Processing

Distribution

Consumption

Disposal