



PROGRESS OF THE CRFS ALLIANCE

RETREAT BULLETIN

SUMMARY

On 9 and 10 February 2023, the Climate Resilient Food Systems (CRFS) Alliance brought together members of the Core Group in Bonn for a retreat. The intent of the retreat was to discuss the strategy and workplan for 2023, including the implementation phase of four initial case studies and the start of the diagnostic phase of four additional countries, the workplan for 2023, the prospective engagement in key events, and the prospective sources of funding for the investment case.

With this in mind, the exchange in Bonn was structured as a progress review and brainstorming, gathering a mix of participants from the alliance to bring in a series of content impulses.

The alliance took note of the following critical threads underpinning the alliance work:

- Significant progress has been achieved in setting up the alliance, its coordination and commencement of activities and engagements;
- The country diagnostics have been productive in identifying country's needs in transforming towards climate resilience food systems, thus paving the way for the next phase of the implementation phase to work with the countries on the ground;
- A solid foundation of partnerships has been established and continues to grow, thus positioning the alliance as a strong partner of choice for both countries and providers of support;
- 2023 carries great opportunities to enter into ambitious implementation, considering the stocktake moment of the Food Systems Summit, but also under the UNFCCC.



The retreat brought the realization that the Alliance has an unprecedented opportunity with the backing of several climate change and food systems focused organizations and could logically be the “connector” between food systems actors and countries. The Alliance is also well-positioned to ensure that smart money, high-value policy and climate resilient systems transformation are catalyzed by new ways of thinking about food systems as climate action.

KEY RETREAT DECISIONS AND FOLLOW UP

I. PROGRESS MADE BY THE ALLIANCE IN 2022

The Core Group discussed the concrete deliverables actioned so far and the outstanding items from 2022. These included:

- Creation of the Core Group, a Leadership Group and mobilization of countries;
- Country survey administered through UNFCCC national focal points;
- Country diagnostics for four initial countries (Belize, Ethiopia, Fiji and the Gambia);
- A visual menu of solutions provided by the alliance for countries to choose from;
- Strategic engagement on high-level events and summits, including a dedicated event at COP27 and other related global policy processes;
- Regular communication and information materials to all audiences (CRFS Alliance advocacy framework, presentation, newsletter, factsheet and other products);
- Coordination with both the UN Food Systems Summit Hub and the UN Task Force on Food Systems.

The group also took stock of the outputs of the alliance's working groups (WG) as follows:

- **Data and Analytics working group:** The group took stock of the creation of the *Data and Analytics Repository* and the *Investment Case* for the alliance. The repository contains a wealth of sources from the different core group members on food systems and climate change; the ambition is to include data and analytics also from the leadership group members. The investment case presents a budget plan to support the work of the alliance and ensure the continuity of action towards climate resiliency in food systems.
- **Partnership and Advocacy working group:** This group developed the CRFS Alliance *Advocacy Framework*, the alliance's COP 27 strategy (an engagement strategy inclusive also of key messages and shared narrative to best showcase the work of the alliance) and webpage. A draft outline of the webpage was presented to the Core Group members, and suggestions were made to add links for countries to formally express interest and officially endorse the alliance. On another side, it was brought to the attention of the group that the Climate Ambition Summit, which will be held in September 2023, should also be taken into consideration among within the 2023 engagement strategy.
- **Country diagnostics working group:** conducted four country case studies on Belize, Ethiopia, Fiji and the Gambia, with consequent implementation phase proposals. For each of the countries, diagnostic studies have been completed through desk review and consultations with designated focal points of the countries.

The following items remain outstanding:

- The desk support officer function;
- The overview of climate funds and how to apply to them;
- A brokerage system for countries' activities relating to food systems and climate change;
- Translating the *Data and Analytics* repository into an interactive online platform.

2. COUNTRY CASE STUDIES AND IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

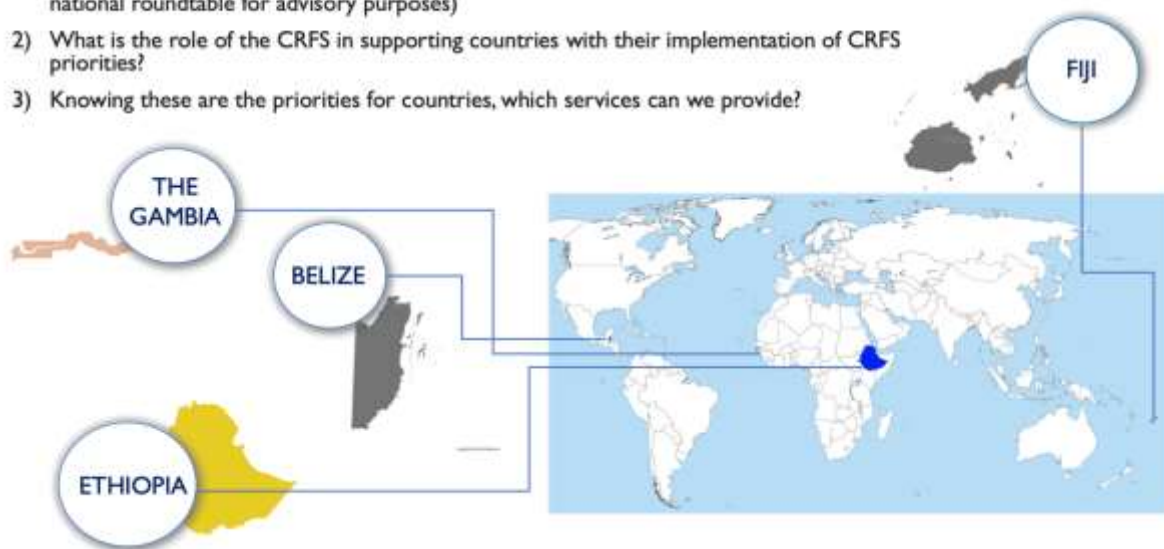
The alliance has concluded the desk review phase of the case studies aimed at evaluating how to best integrate food and climate action in Belize, Ethiopia Fiji and The Gambia. Participants reviewed the development and main findings of the case studies, i.e. how the countries were selected, which stakeholders were consulted and what gaps and priorities were identified. They echoed that this exercise is only an initial step in a longer, more sustained food systems transformation journey in the four countries. Out of the case studies four main areas of work were identified as common priorities: policy support, data, information & learning, access to finance and multi-risk approaches. Entry points for the alliance to support countries were identified. The implementation phase will start in 2023 and will foresee a set of tailored interventions geared towards better integration of food and climate action at the country level.

Country Case Study Session



Opening questions:

- 1) What would implementation of key national priorities look like? (e.g. in country projects or national roundtable for advisory purposes)
- 2) What is the role of the CRFS in supporting countries with their implementation of CRFS priorities?
- 3) Knowing these are the priorities for countries, which services can we provide?



Suggestions were made to rename and reframe the country case studies as a “*Country Diagnostic for food systems*” and the “multi-risk approaches” section in the transversal needs should be renamed as “*Multi-risk impact management approaches*”; as mapping of this work could be helpful to better coordinate with other initiatives in shared areas of work/domain.

KEY ENTRY POINTS FOR CRFS ALLIANCE IN THE COUNTRIES

- **Role of the alliance as a match-maker, building bridges and brokering connections:** Participants highlighted the need for a coordinated matchmaking mechanism, where the alliance could intervene to ensure countries connect with the expertise they need from the right partners for high-quality, long-term facilitation, process support, and capacity building. In this role, the alliance could foster deeper multi-stakeholder collaboration to facilitate partnerships and identify funding opportunities. Early warning systems and an index insurance mechanism are also crucial in effectively supporting countries, so matchmaking with different initiatives could be explored.
- **Supporting countries mainstream the food systems and climate perspective in their policies,** e.g. NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs. Multi-hazards and risk management approaches including with a focus on slow onset events, and ecosystems management and restoration were also identified as priority areas to support.
- **The go-to platform for multi-risk approaches:** Recognising the importance of comprehensive risk management and crisis response in the context building resilience for food systems, the participants concluded that the alliance could be the platform to help countries build risk and crisis governance through a comprehensive risk management (CRM) lens. CRM could eventually close the governance and policy gap, as well as, the multi-risk management space gap. CRM could eventually be launched as a solution in the countries as a follow-up of the country diagnostics.
- **Inventory for knowledge and initiatives:** The alliance will provide an inventory of good and best practices amongst countries to identify the best actions for climate resilient food systems through a comprehensive review of existing initiatives, projects, and programs that have been successful in promoting food systems resilience. For example, in countries like Ethiopia, where rain-fed agriculture is dominant, the alliance will help to support practices and interventions, such as those related to crop management, mulching, irrigation, soil health, and water management, to identify the best solutions that can be suited for the countries' context and scale them. Agencies/programmes that could be relevant in addressing these gaps are the FAO programme, Farmer Field School Programme, and the UNDRR-FAO-UNFCCC proposal, CRM for agrifood systems.
- **Facilitate finance and technology transfer:** The alliance could help facilitate access to finance to countries from various sources, including from the climate funds (e.g. the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund) by assisting countries in developing appropriate project proposals for submission for funding, providing technical assistance to help countries assemble required details and information. This could also include connecting the countries with relevant entities, including private sector investor to implement their food systems pathways in relation to climate resiliency. The alliance could also facilitate the countries' entry point and access support under the Climate Technology Centre Network (CTCN).
- **Policy strengthening:** The alliance through the work on *Country Diagnostic for food systems* can identify the gaps and missing policies pertaining to climate resilient food systems in key policy documents like food systems pathways, NAPs and NDCs by consulting with local stakeholders and coming up with a joint plan of action – either drafting the food systems pathway, or redesigning it (with CRM approach).

Below are indicative actions of what the **implementation phase** would look like for each of the countries:

Ethiopia

- The CRFS Alliance could promote the links between local action and national planning by supporting participatory processes and sharing lessons learned. The lessons learned could be related to risk management approaches through initiatives conducted by Rome-based agencies (RBAs), (e.g. Great Green Wall Initiative, Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) and identify opportunities and barriers that projects and initiatives faced, and inform NAP and other related instruments on the enabling conditions that diverse actors of the food systems need for the effective, long-term, promotion of climate-resilient food systems.
- The alliance could also support the country with the expertise of organisations like FAO, UNDRR, UNEP and UNFCCC to enhance early warning systems efficiency and reliability, taking a comprehensive approach to disaster risk reduction, climate risk management, and responses to crisis. The alliance could also support the capacity building for the implementation of the strategy.
- Targeted multi-stakeholder workshops could be conducted to discuss and consult on the pathways and next steps.

Gambia

- Two workshops are being planned with NAP team of Gambia on climate change and land use. In this workshop, the alliance could bring the water-energy-food nexus approach tailored to agri-food systems and agroforestry to this workshop. One of the workshops is entitled "Policy recommendations for large-scale implementation of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) along the Gambia river".
- CTCN incubator programme could be leveraged for supporting the adaptation technology transfer in Gambia through technology needs assessment. The alliance can call for state and non-state actors to support adaptation technology transfer and help channel the implementation of the technologies through the work of the member organisations that already have projects in implementation that involve climate-resilient agriculture and food systems.
- FAO to check on pipeline programmes on climate resilient livestock

Belize

- The alliance could help Belize with drafting and finalizing the national food systems pathway in an inclusive manner through multi-stakeholder platforms and workshops.
- It could help with enhancing risk-sensitive social protection, strengthening integration between stakeholders on the ground and promoting multi-hazard early warning systems through Comprehensive Risk Management and Early Warnings for All initiative.
- It could also design the idea on local food supply chains and supporting with resource mobilization. Particularly focus on nutrition education, promoting local products and local consumption and supporting community initiatives that are youth and women led.

Fiji

- The alliance would work with the government to identify relevant plans, consulting at country level with regard to risks and synergies, adding an entry point on the modality of how to implement the measures. The possible entry point for the alliance being crops and local food supply chains.
- Next practical steps include:
 - Having a joint call with agencies on the ground (FAO, WFP, IFAD, UNEP, UNFCCC, others);
 - Deciding whether an in-country mission would be needed or if remote support is sufficient;
 - Promote country diagnostics with funds cluster;
 - CRM workshop.
- As the country has started to define the theory of change with outcomes and activities on their national food systems pathway, the alliance could ensure that the activities reflect the thinking on climate resilient food systems.

Following the discussions, the participants were keen to see through the implementation phase for the 4 existing pilots (Belize, Ethiopia, Fiji and The Gambia) and expand the country diagnostics phase to additional four countries, namely Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Lesotho and Pakistan.

3. CRFS ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIPS

The group reviewed the existing partnership for the alliance and evaluated which new partners to include both in the Core Group and the Leadership Group. In particular, gaps in representation have been highlighted, for example, regional representation, gender and science.

The main decisions on this item focused on:

- **Additional countries to consider including in the alliance:** countries chairing G20, G7 and other global processes, UAE (which will host the COP 28), Canada, UK (Scotland), the US, the Nordics, Bangladesh, Australia, SIDS Champions (for example Fiji or the AOSIS Alliance)
- **Additional members for the Leadership Group:** The need to create a science cluster in the Leadership Group; FCDO (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) should be added to the Funds cluster of the Leadership Group; the "Global Gender and Climate Alliance" was suggested as a potential partner to fill the gap relating to gender representation.
- **The need to focus on tangible deliverables for the leadership group clusters:** some of the directions the group decided to take forwards include: (i) creating a portfolio of the services, tools and solutions offered by cluster members, (ii) advocating for the importance of accurate and geo-localized data for food systems resilience, (iii) expand membership with affected countries and local civil society, (iv) implementing coordinated action in the *Country Diagnostic for food systems* with sister coalitions, (v) develop a feedback mechanism to implement and test solutions at a country level, providing also lessons learned, (vi) develop blended finance mechanisms and ways to access climate finance for end-users, governments and the private sector.

4. 2023 EVENTS AND INTERVENTION POINTS FOR THE ALLIANCE

The core group members discussed a list of potential events, summits, and conferences the alliance could feature in during 2023 including building up to COP 28 as well. The NAP Expo in March, the Food for Future Summit in May, the Bonn inter-sessional in June, the FSS Stocktake in July, the APAC Forum in August, the Climate Ambition Summit in September, and COP 28 in December were all identified as events where the CRFS Alliance should be represented.

For COP 28, the members agreed that it was essential to connect the alliance's plans with that of COP 28 Presidency on messaging and advocacy. It is also essential to be aligned with the Marrakech Partnership on Global Climate Action (MPGCA) and the UNFCCC High-level Champions on their work related to climate resilient food systems.

The members also discussed that COP 28 will also feature food systems, where finance, high-value policy, and economy-wide sustainable development outcomes, are all catalyzed by new ways of thinking about food systems as climate action. This could be an opportunity for the alliance to showcase its progress and work at the country-levels.

5. INVESTMENT CASE

The alliance has developed an investment case with a funding plan that will support the work of the CRFS Alliance.

The required annual investments for the CRFS Alliance to assure its operations and produce its deliverables is estimated to USD 1.2 million. This includes the staffing cost for the alliance, different deliverables such as information materials, a dedicated website, strategic engagement in high-level events, a connection network for all members of the alliance, and seed funding for facilitating the implementation phase of the case study.

Participants suggested that the budget could reflect a five-year cost to fund a programme with tangible results and impacts. This programme would be contingent upon alliance's role in the implementation phase. It was agreed that a one-year budget would be practical at this stage to test and trial the alliance's efforts and level of ambition.

For the implementation phase, participants suggested that the deliverable would be the support to countries, so the scenarios need to be framed in alignment to country support. Concerns were also expressed on how fundraising remains difficult for country-level programmes, and thus the implementation phase could be framed as a project that is specific to country-support. Ball-park figure of USD 100 – 200K per country depending tailored to country contexts on implementation phase over 12 months was suggested.

6. WORKPLAN & NEXT STEPS FOR 2023

The fruitful and rich discussions produced plans for 2023, which include a mix of both existing deliverables as well as new deliverables. Key intervention points, particularly SB 58, UNFSS stocktake and COP28 were also identified, along with concrete plans on country-level work following the diagnostics.



Strengthening existing deliverables

The existing deliverables included, among others - updating the Advocacy Framework and the Portfolio of Solutions; event participation and outreach; enhanced coordination between the core group and the leadership group; upkeep of the Data and Analytics platform; review and implementation of the country case studies; outreach to countries through a Country Engagement Strategy and finalizing the Desk Support Officer function.

In addition, members proposed new deliverables including the creation of a leadership group portfolio of solutions; country peer to peer exchange seminars; creation of a funds cluster (involving GEF, GCF, WB, IFAD, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, UNCDF, and others) to help countries with an easy repository for countries.

Kicking off implementation phase on support to countries

Broad deliverables for the implementation phase of the *Country Diagnostic for Food Systems* include:

- Providing support to countries in mainstreaming food systems and climate resiliency in main policy instruments (NDCs, NBSAPs, NAPs, etc. – the lead on this would be UNFCCC through the Iframe solution and UN4NAPs);
- Supporting countries updating their national food systems pathways through provision of technical assistance where requested to develop work plans for climate resilient food systems;
- Packaging and providing support on common priorities including early warning and climate risk insurance (main leads for this would be FAO, WFP, DRR, REAP, InsuResilience); and CRM and DRR (with the leads for this as UNDRR, FAO);
- Provide the overview of solutions to countries both from the core group portfolio of solutions and the leadership group portfolio of solutions;
- Provide resource mobilization support through the funds cluster system outlined above.

The members agreed that the Leadership Group Clusters will be brought to action through their knowledge and contributions towards the *Country Diagnostic for Food Systems* and through the guidance they will provide to countries through the country peer to peer exchange seminars. Additionally, the alliance will conduct a food landscape scoping exercise similar to what was done last year and explore the influence of the alliance with non-state actors negotiations.

Annex I

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