

Concept Note

**Regional Conference on Food Systems Sustainability
Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization Regional Cooperation Centre for
Sustainable Food Systems (BSEC-CSFS)
07-08 March 2023
Istanbul, Türkiye**

1. Background

Food systems are undergoing dramatic changes worldwide, becoming increasingly globalized, concentrated, industrialized, and science and capital-intensive. Consumer preferences are also changing as a result of various factors, especially rapid urbanization and increases in income levels. Although these developments provide immense opportunities, they can also give rise to challenges such as unbalanced diets, increased incidence of food safety issues, transboundary animal and plant disease outbreaks, and significant levels of food loss and waste. The thirteen member states of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) also face these challenges. The BSEC member states aim to address them through a regional approach focusing on the development of sustainable food systems.

The BSEC member states established a Regional Cooperation Centre for Sustainable Food Systems (BSEC-CSFS) in November 2020 in Ankara, Türkiye under the project GCP/SEC/019/TUR, implemented by FAO under the FAO-Türkiye Partnership Program (FTPP).

BSEC-CSFS has coordinated the preparation of national Food Systems Assessments of the thirteen BSEC member states, as well as a regional review report on the current state of food systems in the BSEC Region.

These BSEC-CSFS studies are unique in that they are the first set of systematic and in-depth food system assessments at national and regional levels. They represent therefore the logical next step after the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in 2021. The time is therefore right to present this unique body of work to the attention of the international community and decide on the next steps.

In this context, BSEC-CSFS is organizing a regional conference dedicated to food systems sustainability in the BSEC region in Istanbul, Türkiye on 07-08 March 2023.

2. Objectives

The regional conference aims to review the current state of food systems in the BSEC member states, deliberate on the key findings and lessons from the national studies, deliberate on policy interventions and next steps required to move food systems towards sustainability, and agree on the establishment of a regional network for key actors operating in the field of sustainable food systems.

3. Outputs

- Awareness of the current state of food systems in the BSEC region enhanced;
- Key findings and lessons of country and regional studies discussed;
- Policy interventions at country and regional levels to move food systems towards sustainability identified and shared;
- Agreement reached on the establishment of a regional network for key actors in the field of sustainable food systems;
- A technical document including conference proceedings produced.

4. Participants

Participants include policymakers from and representatives of BSEC member states, representatives of international organizations, technical experts, as well as representatives of Civil Society, including stakeholders from the private sector.

5. Venue & Working language

The regional conference will take place in person at [Radisson Blu Hotel in Sisli, Istanbul, Türkiye](#) with a possibility of online connection depending on the number of expressions of interest for virtual attendance. The working language of the conference will be English with simultaneous translation into Russian and Turkish.

Contact

Mr Burak Oz, Burak.oz@fao.org

Ms Gonca Savas-Dogan, Gonca.savas@fao.org

Ms Marziya Davlyatova Sariaslan, Marziya.DavlyatovaSariaslan@fao.org