

POLITICAL ECONOMY FOR FOOD SYSTEM PATHWAYS: A NEW DECISION TOOLKIT



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ACRONYMS

CAISAN	Interministerial Food and Nutritional Security Chamber, Brazil
CONASAN	National Council for Food and Nutrition Security, Guatemala
CONSAN	National Council for Food Security and Nutrition, Mozambique
CONSEA	Council for Food and Nutritional Security, Brazil
COPSAN	Provincial Councils for Food Security and Nutrition, Mozambique
COSDAN	District Councils for Food Security and Nutrition, Mozambique
CPIA	Country, policy and institutional assessment
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ESAN	National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy, Mozambique
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCA	Municipal compensation fund, Mozambique
FIIL	Local initiative investment fund, Mozambique
FRELIMO	Mozambique Liberation Front
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
GoM	Government of Mozambique
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MADER	Mozambique's Ministry of Agriculture
MEF	Ministry of the Economy and Finance
MISAU	Mozambique's Ministry of Health
NNCB	National Nutrition Coordinating Body
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPI	Open Budget Index
PES	Annual Social and Economic Plan
PESAN	Plan of action for the ESAN III, Mozambique
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys
RENAMO	Mozambique National Resistance
SETSAN	Mozambique's Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition
SPRING	Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UNFSS	United Nations Food Systems Summit
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
V-Dem	Varieties of Democracy

SUMMARY

Political economy dynamics—that is, conflicts and trade-offs across different interest groups that play an important role in the food system—permeate many decisions about food systems policy and implementation. Development practitioners working in the food systems space—inclusive of agriculture, nutrition, and environmental policies—need to be aware of these dynamics to be able to support policy advocacy, development, and implementation.

To assist in this process, a toolkit was developed to identify potential political economy bottlenecks in six main domains within the national policy systems where they are operating. These six domains include policy stability and inclusionary decision-making, stakeholder preferences, multi-sectoral coordination, multi-level coordination, financing, and administrative capacities. After identifying why these are critical components for effective food systems policies, the toolkit describes subcomponents of each domain and offers metrics for assessing them. In turn, examples of how to aggregate the metrics are provided, with an application to Mozambique.

Throughout this document, examples of best practices for tackling political economy constraints are highlighted so that practitioners can proactively address some of the bottlenecks that they uncover with the toolkit. The toolkit should offer users with a practical way to understand and grapple with political economy dynamics as they work to further food systems transformation.

KEY MESSAGES

- Political economy dynamics can derail the implementation of food systems pathways.
- Six domains characterising national policy making systems are identified.
- The significance of political economy bottlenecks identified under these domains varies widely across contexts.
- This toolkit helps practitioners to identify constraints ex-ante and to prioritise interventions for overcoming them.

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, 127 countries plus the European Union submitted food system pathway documents to the United Nations in anticipation of the June 2021 UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS).¹ Many of these submissions reflected the spirit of the UNFSS, which was to identify opportunities for transforming national food systems in sustainable ways and in line with meeting the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Such global convenings can offer a focal point for elevating the importance and need for food system transformation, but substantive progress ultimately depends on sustaining momentum for commitments as governments change, new priorities emerge, and the realities of implementation begin to surface (1).

Advancing food system transformation pathways therefore requires strategic attention to underlying political economy dynamics that can derail progress towards a common policy agenda. These political economy dynamics refer to conflicts and trade-offs across different interest groups who play an important role in the food system, inclusive of different sectoral ministries, levels of government, donors, the private sector, and civil society (2,3). Yet, which political economy factors pose the most binding constraint varies substantially across country contexts and vis-à-vis the specific food system policies and programmes that governments want to pursue.

To help practitioners, particularly those working to influence national governments in low- and middle-income countries, this paper presents a novel political economy assessment and decision-making toolkit. The toolkit aims to help country partners recognise these constraints ex-ante, prioritise required interventions to overcome these constraints, and thereby increase the likelihood of successful food system policy implementation.

The next section gives an overview of the toolkit, which is organised into six domains. The subsequent six sections elaborate on each of these different domains in more detail and discuss data sources and methodologies for operationalising them. This is then followed by a discussion about how to aggregate the data to gain a holistic understanding of the political economy issues in a particular country or across countries, and the need for nuanced actions to anticipate and respond accordingly. An application is provided with respect to Mozambique and its current food and nutrition security strategy (ESAN III). Throughout, a synthesis of lessons for dealing with political economy (dis)enablers is integrated into relevant sections.

DESIGN OF THE TOOLKIT & USE CONSIDERATIONS

The toolkit is structured along six domains that prior research identifies as important for sustained policy change in general and for complex, multi-sectoral interventions, such as those in food systems, in particular.² These domains provide a useful assessment of the political context, stakeholder incentives, and implementing capacities for food system policy change.

¹ See FAO Food Systems Coordination Hub website: <https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/member-state-dialogue/dialogues-and-pathways/en>

² These six domains were also identified as critical through interviews conducted in mid-2023 with GAIN policy advisors and country directors across nine countries.

The first domain examines whether there is a *stable and inclusive policy landscape*. Stability ensures a sufficient time horizon to allow stakeholders to engage in prospective planning and have confidence that their programmes and projects will retain momentum. Inclusivity increases the likelihood of broad-scale buy-in and trust for needed policy reforms. A second domain focuses on *stakeholder preferences* and particularly whether there are powerful interest groups—in terms of economic resources, political leverage, or organisational capabilities—that are supportive of needed policy reforms in the food system.

Effective and functioning *multi-sectoral coordination* mechanisms represent a third key domain since food system transformation pathways typically touch on policy issues that are the mandates of several different ministries and agencies. Relatedly, *multi-level coordinating bodies* are equally important, especially in more decentralised settings or those where certain segments of food system responsibilities have been devolved to lower tier governments. The fifth and sixth domains are pivotal for policy implementation: *sufficient fiscal resources* and *administrative capacities*. Often, rhetoric about policy priorities for food systems transformation is divorced from these fundamental considerations, derailing progress and undermining citizen trust in government commitment.

Two key considerations are important for utilising this toolkit. First, the food system policy under consideration for political economy analysis might vary. In some cases, it is a very narrow policy issue, such as adopting large-scale food fortification or expanding school feeding programmes. In others, it may be more complex, including a multi-sectoral nutrition strategy or a food system strategy. The more comprehensive the policy domain, the more likely political economy issues are to be a challenge. For the purposes of brevity, the term ‘food systems policy’ is used throughout the toolkit with the assumption that users will adapt to fit their specific area of policy interest.

Secondly, the dimensions of the toolkit can be examined collectively or in a modular fashion. Specifically, if practitioners are unsure of the main political economy challenges, the toolkit can allow for a comprehensive stocktaking to uncover the main binding constraints. However, if one component of the toolkit is already known to be a potential concern, then a more concerted focus can be given to that component with the toolkit. For example, if better multi-sectoral coordination has long been a challenge for improved food system implementation in the context examined, then it is possible to focus on the political economy dynamics of that component alone.

THE SIX DOMAINS OF THE TOOLKIT

STABLE AND INCLUSIVE POLICY LANDSCAPE

Policy stability

In many cases, food system strategies require long-term commitment to demonstrate visibility and sizeable impacts. Policy volatility—evidenced by shifts in budget spending, the elevation of new priorities, or unexpected policy reversals—can therefore undermine the achievement of food system pathway roadmaps. Policy volatility is largely seen as detrimental to different economic development outcomes (4–6) because it can undermine government credibility and therefore deter needed investments, hinder long-term planning, and undermine citizen trust. By contrast, policy stability can result in incremental changes, building on existing achievements, and corrections in response to economic circumstances or policy failure rather than political prerogative (7,8).

Political institutions can affect policy volatility in distinct ways since such institutions shape intertemporal calculations by decisionmakers (8,9). In other words, institutions that can compel decisionmakers to consider policy with the perspective of a longer time horizon are more likely to mitigate policy volatility. These institutions can include institutionalised constraints by the legislative or judicial branches of government over the potential for discretionary decision-making by the executive branch (9). Policy volatility tends to be much more pronounced, and government expenditures are more unstable, when legislative institutions are weak (10–12). In addition, parliamentary political systems and proportional electoral systems are more likely to mitigate volatility than presidential systems or majoritarian electoral systems (4,13).

As discussed in Box 1, leadership turnover is another dimension that affects policy volatility or stability (14). The average executive tenure lasts just over four years (15), and these turnovers often involve changes in the domestic constituency bases from which leaders derive their support (16). Volatility in various policy outcomes has been linked to leadership turnovers (17). Such turnovers are more frequent in democratic regimes with multi-party competition, in which periodic elections may bring a new individual, and sometimes a new political party, into leadership. Dominant-party regimes, where the same political party has ruled for a substantial number of years, are less likely to have dramatic leadership changes. Yet, there are other ways in which such leadership turnover can occur. One is through cabinet-level turnover that shifts ministerial prerogatives and expertise. This can be most problematic in policy areas that require high levels of specialisation and technical knowledge (18) and affect continuity of focal points at multi-sectoral coordinating meetings (19).³ Similarly, the merging and dividing of ministries, which causes new portfolios to be included or others to be orphaned, can also be destabilising for policy.

Another and more dramatic shift occurs when military leaders seize power in a coup and try to entrench their own rule by shifting budgetary allocations to defence spending rather than on the set of goods and services the previous civilian regime targeted (21). Overall, though, leadership turnovers have the most dramatic impacts on policy volatility in authoritarian regimes since such changes often involve unconstitutional or violent change and dramatically reconfigure coalitions that might have been long entrenched (21,22).

Inclusivity

Inclusivity can refer to both processes (i.e. about who is involved in the decision-making process) and outcomes (i.e. the equitable distribution of prosperity and well-being) (23). While political stability is key for policy stability, inclusivity is important for empowerment, learning, and ensuring large-scale buy-in and legitimacy of policy options because it enhances congruence with the perspectives of the general public (24–27). It can also create the basis for improved trust, forge a network for future problem solving, and broaden knowledge about policy issues and processes (28). The principle of inclusivity is embedded within the 2030 Agenda goal to ‘Leave no one behind’ and Sustainable Development Goal 16, which aims to build more ‘effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.’

³ Ministerial posts can also be allocated based on political loyalty rather than technical skills or domain knowledge (20), a factor that can be more likely in countries with weakly institutionalized political parties.

However, inclusion involves trade-offs that must be acknowledged. More stakeholders can lead to greater inertia and less efficacy in implementation (13). Moreover, the evidence that inclusive processes lead to better outcomes is empirically mixed (23). Some participatory approaches can also seem like ‘window dressing’ and therefore undermine public support for policy outcomes (29,30). Several scholars have differentiated among different types of modalities of inclusivity and participation that might affect these perceptions and outcomes, including whether participants are selectively recruited, represent lay stakeholders, or involve expert administrators with technical skills (24,25,31).

Beyond these design features of participatory fora, several underlying policy system features are more likely to enhance the ability to engage in meaningful inclusive dialogue. First and foremost, this includes a lack of restrictions on freedom of expression. Where such restrictions exist, there is likely to be much more selective engagement of participants and the exclusion of key perspectives. Such restrictions tend to be more prominent in more autocratic settings where participation can be much more controlled and limited. Second and relatedly, inclusion is more likely where there are fewer legal restrictions on freedom of association, including by civil-society groups and advocacy organisations. This is particularly critical considering that restrictions on civil-society activities have become much more common across the globe over the last decade (32,33).

Participatory modalities for food systems

The UNFSS elevated the importance of inclusion by supporting a platform of dialogues to integrate different voices into thinking about the food system.⁴ There are a growing number of modalities to support participatory and inclusive food system policy discussions, including multi-stakeholder platforms and food policy committees. Some of these are located at the national level while others are at the subnational level; similarly, some are convened by government authorities while others are autonomous. They may also have different intentions, including policy input, advocacy, networking, and oversight. Despite variations in governance structures and goals, assessments of such modalities reveal that those that are more impactful have political support from a government champion, have sufficient funding streams, are institutionalised into the policy landscape, and elevate their impact by working with regional or transnational networks (34–36).

Following the above discussion, Table 1 introduces seven potential metrics to diagnose the degree of stability and inclusion in a particular country. The operationalisation column indicates the data sources that can be used to address the corresponding diagnostic questions. The coding column indicates how the data can be translated into a three-part coding approach to facilitate comparisons across metrics and countries.

⁴ See <https://summitdialogues.org/> (Accessed April 5, 2024).

Table 1. Metrics for Stability and Inclusion

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Operationalisation	Expectation	Coding
1A	Are there institutionalised constraints on the executive's decision-making powers?	Determine the degree to which the political system limits concentrated decision-making Secondary sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varieties of Democracy database • Variable: <i>v2xnp_pres</i> ('To what extent is the regime characterised by presidentialism?') • Captures respect for constitution, legislative controls, and judicial constraints. Index runs from 0 (best) to 1 (worst). 	The more constraints, the less likely policy volatility is expected	1: Index is greater than 0.6 2: Index is between 0.3 and 0.6 3: Index is 0.3 or lower
1B	What is the likelihood that the government will be destabilised?	Analyse likelihood that the government in power will be destabilised or overthrown by unconstitutional and/or violent means Secondary sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators • Variable: Political Stability metric. • Country scores run from -2.5 (worst) to 2.5 (best) 	Greater likelihood of destabilisation leads to greater probability of policy disruption	1: Index is less than -1 2: Index is between -1 to 1 3: Index is 1 or greater
1C	How frequently have ministers in the relevant food system policy domain changed, on average, in the last 5 years?	Determine which ministries are relevant for the food system and how often they have collectively changed on average in previous 5 years Secondary sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhoGovs dataset on worldwide cabinet ministers since 1966 	More turnovers lead to less continuity in policy decisions and uptake	1: Average of 3 or higher ministers 2: Average between 2-3 ministers 3: Average less than 2 ministers
1D	What is the likelihood of upcoming electoral turnover?	Calculate how many years until the next elections by examining electoral calendar Secondary sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFES Election Guide 	Upcoming elections might lead to a change in leadership or administration that requires prospective thinking to maintain policy momentum	1: Elections in the next 24 months 2: Elections between 2 and 4 years 3: Elections in 4 or more years
1E	Are there restrictions on associational and	Determine the extent to which parties and civil-society organisations can form and operate freely	More restrictions imply less inclusive dialogues on food system policies	1: Scores of 0-4

	organisational rights?	<p>Secondary sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom House, Freedom in the World database Variable: Associational and organisational rights (Category E) Country scores run from 0 (worst) to 12 (best) 		<p>2: Scores of 5-8</p> <p>3: Scores from 9-12</p>
1F	Are there restrictions on freedom of expression and belief?	<p>Assess the extent of respect for press and media freedom, academic and cultural expression, and freedom of ordinary people to discuss political matters at home and in the public sphere</p> <p>Secondary sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom House Freedom in the World database Variable Freedom of expression and belief (Category D) Country scores run from 0 (worst) to 16 (best) 	More restrictions imply less inclusive dialogues on food system policies	<p>1: Scores of 0-5</p> <p>2: Scores of 6-10</p> <p>3: Scores of 11-16</p>
1G	Are there modalities for public participation in food system-related policies?	<p>Identify whether there are formal modalities for continuous public engagement on food system related policies</p> <p>Primary sources: Landscape assessment based on expert knowledge/interviews</p> <p>Secondary sources: Scaling Up Nutrition Country profiles on existence of Multi-Stakeholder Platform</p>	More opportunities signify greater inclusive environment for food system policies	<p>1: None at all</p> <p>2: There are workshops and meetings but no formal multi-stakeholder platform</p> <p>3: There is at least one multi-stakeholder platform that incorporates public views on the relevant food system policy</p>

Box 1. Invest in Diversification to Sustain Transformation

For food system policies at both national and subnational levels, retaining momentum across electoral cycles is a major concern. The loss of momentum can occur in multiple ways. For instance, the run-up to an election often entails a concerted focus on campaigning by high-level political decisionmakers that detracts attention from activities related to policy and strategic agendas. Alternatively, if innovative reforms were tied to a particular leader or party, they can lose credibility and buy-in when political administrations change. New leaders want to create their own legacy or may subscribe to certain ideologies that affect their approach to food and nutrition policy (37,38). According to one study, policy progress can be derailed by more than two years in the lead-up and aftermath of presidential or mayoral transitions (39).

Several strategies have emerged to deal with the potentially destabilising impacts of political transitions. First, practitioners should anticipate these in advance and incorporate risk scenario plans into their partnerships and engagement. Second, food and nutrition technical teams should be complemented with those who understand politics and those with political diplomacy skills. Third, civil-society groups can bring together diverse electoral candidates to seek a multi-partisan, multi-actor commitment to the country's food and nutrition policy in advance of an upcoming political transition (40). Fourth, the establishment of multi-sectoral bodies overseeing food system issues creates an institutionalised mechanism for policy advocacy that is difficult to eliminate the longer it is in place (41). For instance, although at the outset of his presidential tenure Jair Bolsonaro disbanded Brazil's very influential National Council for Food and Nutritional Security (CONSEA), which was established in 2003, the body was immediately re-constituted as soon as his successor, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, returned to office (42). Fifth, expanding efforts to engage with legislators from different parties, some of whom are likely to stay in office after elections, can facilitate continuity. One effort towards this end are the Parliamentary Summits against Hunger and Malnutrition that have been convened twice by the FAO in recent years to build relationships between parliamentarians (43).

Overall, these examples suggest that by investing in diverse tactics and coalitions that span different stakeholder groups and political divides, policies have a greater likelihood of surviving even in the face of government volatility.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP PREFERENCES

The constellation of stakeholder groups relevant to food systems policy decisions, and their corresponding sets of preferences for or against policy change, are a pivotal component of political economy analysis. Indeed, it is well-known that powerful champions can be fundamental for achieving policy reform (44,45). At the same time, well-organised and financed actors in the food system may have strong incentives to stymie reform efforts (46–48).

Constellation of relevant stakeholders

Given the food system policy or strategy that a country has adopted, the first step is to identify the constellation of relevant stakeholders whose preferences need to be considered. Narrower strategies or policy programmes, such as expanding large-scale food fortification or implementing subsidies to incentivise conservation farming, typically will require integrating a smaller group of stakeholder preferences than more expansive ones, such as a multi-sectoral nutrition strategy or a food systems pathway. Such stakeholders will include both those with a formal role in policy uptake and

implementation, as well as those who can indirectly influence the direction of such implementation or block it entirely.

Several categories of stakeholders are typically important in the food policy arena. These include government actors (e.g., presidents, prime ministers, ministries, agencies), private-sector entities (e.g., input suppliers, food processors, farmers), civil-society organisations and networks, and donors. Each of these broad categories can be further disaggregated as needed to gain further precision depending on the policy/issue area. Such stakeholders can be identified through multiple techniques, including by examining defined roles for actors in current policy or strategy documents, interviews with those operating in the policy domain, media resources, and secondary research.⁵

Decision-making and influential power

Stakeholder groups do not necessarily shape policy decisions unless they hold some form of power to either directly make decisions or to influence those who do. Decision-making power typically refers to those who have either agenda-setting or veto power in a particular policy domain, and this often refers to government stakeholders (49). Such actors can usually be determined by the formal institutions, authorities, and procedures of decision-making in a particular country and in the relevant domain. Influential power captures the role played by other stakeholders who may be able to push for their preferences through different levers (49). For instance, the private sector may be able to use campaign contributions and lobbying resources to obtain their first-choice policy. Donors may allocate more financing or technical assistance if the government adopts their favoured policy. Civil-society actors may be able to use the media, protests, and advocacy campaigns to achieve their preferred policy. Tools such as net-mapping can help uncover inter-subjective understandings of power and networks among salient communities, and can be especially useful for identifying influential power (50,51).

Stakeholder preferences

The preferences of stakeholders vis-à-vis a policy issue often determine whether they are proponents, opponents, or neutral participants. Knowing this is critical to ensuring that opposition can be mitigated or potential champions can be elevated. Uncovering preferences requires disentangling stakeholders' interests and ideas.

Interests can be motivated by both materialist concerns, such as corporate profits, political votes, job opportunities, household incomes, or government budgets (52,53), as well as social welfare ones, such as enhanced biodiversity and better public health. In turn, an actor's policy preference will be one that allows her/him to maximise attainment of those interests, or at least does not worsen the status quo. Ideas reflect inter-subjective understandings, norms, and beliefs of the 'right' model for achieving those interests (54–56). For instance, some stakeholders may prefer greater government intervention in the economy while others believe the market should play a stronger role. Some may support protectionism while others support globalisation. Policy ideas can come from various sources, including political ideology, psychology, familial upbringing, political entrepreneurs, and diffusion from other settings (57,58). In other cases, ideas enable problems to be re-defined to reflect the interests

⁵ There are many stakeholder mapping software options, including free ones like Kumu.

actors want to maximise and can shape narratives around gains and losses as well as blame and responsibility (59).

Circle of influence graphics (see Figure 1) are useful not only for helping to orient stakeholder preferences on a spectrum of support or opposition but also for combining who has decision-making and influential power (60). As discussed in Box 2, these approaches can reveal where coalitions that enable (or inhibit) change might exist, thereby allowing practitioners to prioritise their activities to (de)mobilise these coalitions accordingly to achieve the goals of food system strategies. Table 2 introduces three potential metrics to examine stakeholder groups, their preferences, and their power.

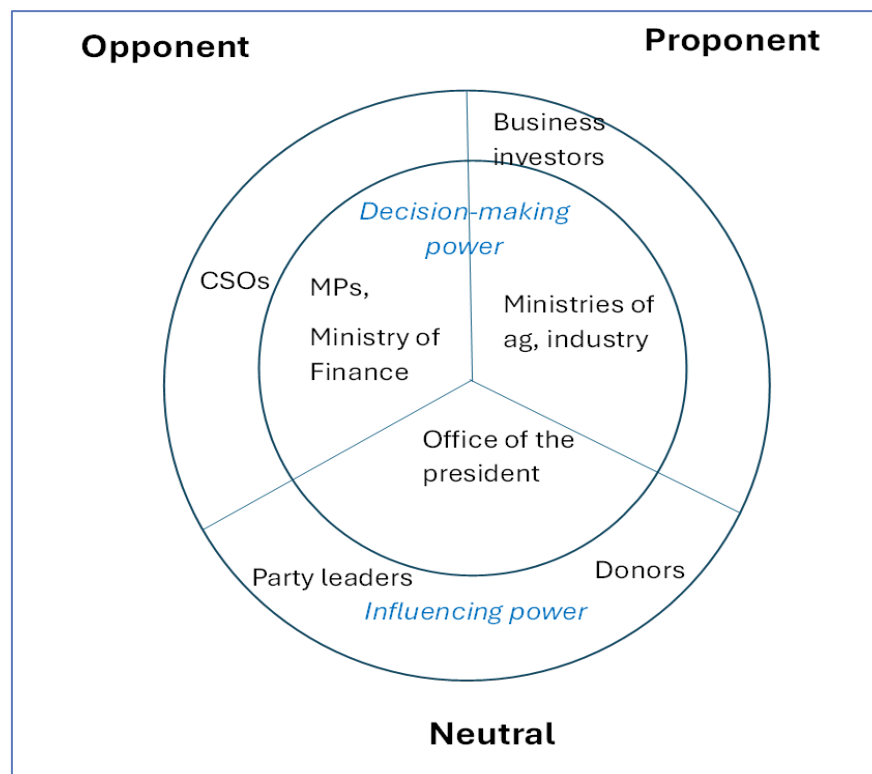


Figure 1. Example of a Circle of Influence Graphic

Notes: CSOs = civil society organisations, MPs = members of parliament

Table 2. Metrics for Stakeholder Preferences

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Operationalisation	Expectation	Coding
2A	Who has decision-making power with respect to the relevant food systems policy?	Analyse which stakeholders hold agenda-setting and/or veto powers based on stakeholder mapping Primary sources: Expert interviews Secondary sources: Formal delineation of roles and responsibilities in food system policy documents	More decision-making actors create more entry points for change	1: There are 1-2 main decision-making actors 2: There are 3-5 main decision-making actors 3: There are more than 5 decision making actors
2B	Who has influential power with respect to the relevant food systems policy?	Utilise net-mapping tools to identify which stakeholders hold the most power in terms of resources or disruptive potential (e.g. hold protests, release media campaigns, etc.) Primary sources: Focus groups and expert interviews	More influential actors create more entry points for change	1: There are 1-2 main influential actors 2: There are 3-5 main influential actors 3: There are more than 5 influential actors
2C	What are the preferences of the stakeholders with decision making and influential powers?	Utilise circle of influence mapping to identify which stakeholder groups support or oppose the relevant food system policy and why Primary sources: Interviews with identified stakeholders from 2A	The more opposition from powerful stakeholders, the more likely to face resistance to change	1: Powerful stakeholders are mostly opposed 2: Some powerful stakeholders are opposed while others support 3: Powerful stakeholders are mostly supportive

Box 2: How Can Opponents become Supporters?

The advantage of systematically tracking opponents to food system policy reforms, and analysing the underlying reasons for their opposition, is to inform approaches for either shifting their positions or finding ways to bypass their influence.

The former approach—co-optation—can be achieved by reframing a policy’s impact in a way that resonates with a stakeholder’s interests. For instance, Baker et al. (61) examine how trade policymaking is often divorced from concerns about nutrition. To increase the willingness of trade professionals to shift their perspective, the authors argue that nutrition advocates need to change their narratives and highlight the economic, rather than just the health, benefits of adopting nutrition-sensitive trade policies. Similarly, Resnick et al. (60) argue that reforming costly input subsidy programmes requires showing politicians the possible electoral benefits they can gain from better-managed or more transparent programme designs. Co-optation through reframing is most effective when it is targeted at those with substantive influence rather than necessarily all opponents (62) and when those opponents are more motivated by interests rather than deep-seated, normative ideas (57).

Alternatively, if a reframing is not feasible or successful, bypassing opposition is another approach. Through the stakeholder assessment, analysts can identify other reform supporters and neutral actors who can be integrated into a larger and more formidable reform coalition. By building broader coalitions, stakeholders can leverage their distinct financial and human resources for more impactful food system policy reform advocacy.

MULTISECTORAL COORDINATION

Implementing food systems pathways ultimately requires attention to public-sector governance configurations and innovations that can manage multi-sectoral policy actions. At the most extreme, food system transformation touches on not only agriculture, health, and environment, but also trade, finance, social protection, and social equity. Yet, there are very few countries in the world with ministries of food systems and, as highlighted in Figure 2 below, the Ministry of Agriculture was the national convenor for the UNFSS dialogues in 101 (or 65%) of the countries that participated.

In many different policy arenas, there are laments that policy is too fragmented and contributes to policy incoherence (63). In turn, multi-sectoral coordination is viewed as essential to the achievement of many complex development goals (64) and as the only way to approach ‘functional dilemmas,’ or issues that are highly interconnected and require integrated solutions (65). As noted by Bennett et al. (64: 2), ‘At its core, multisectoral action requires the mediation of relationships and alignment of goals between multiple diverse actors who may share some common interests but have distinct mandates, values and resources.’ Such coordination has been viewed as a way of ensuring that policy actions are not limited to ministerial siloes, improving cost sharing, and enhancing policy coherence (66).

While one dimension of coordination refers to policy integration, or instruments and frameworks that ensure a more coherent perspective on a complex issue, we focus here on administrative coordination, which encompasses changes in administrative structures and procedures between

ministers or agencies (63). Despite the absence of many holistic coordination structures for food systems *per se*, there have been many attempts to improve multi-sectoral coordination for nutrition, for One Health, and in the environmental sphere. Lessons from these attempts are instrumental for considering broader coordinating structures for food systems.

These structures have mainly been associated with three different approaches regarding where a coordinating body for multi-sectoral policy implementation is housed: within a sectoral ministry with technical expertise, within a finance or planning ministry, or within an executive office, such as the office of a president or prime minister. For instance, in Brazil, the Interministerial Food and Nutritional Security Chamber (CAISAN) is presided over by the Ministry of Social Development and includes representatives from more than 20 federal ministries and special secretariats responsible for monitoring public policies related to food and nutritional security (67). In Mozambique, the Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN) is anchored within the Ministry of Agriculture (68). By contrast, in Nigeria, the National Committee on Food and Nutrition is now overseen by the Federal Ministry of Budget and Planning. In Guatemala, the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONASAN) falls under the aegis of the Office of the Vice President and encompasses multiple ministries and congress (69). The efficacy of these types of coordinating bodies depends on clearly specifying functions, addressing common barriers to coordination, and reconciling political economy conflicts around authority, interests, institutional practices, and ideas.

Generally, however, sectoral ministries for multi-sectoral issues can be impeded by both a lack of sufficient authority vis-à-vis other sectoral ministries and insufficient financing for their activities. A finance or planning ministry that leads multi-sectoral activities is more likely to allocate sufficient resources to a multi-sectoral initiative and to ensure its visibility in broader development planning for a country. An executive office often has the most convening authority among ministries and therefore is likely to provide both a high-level political champion for the initiative/policy/strategy and to ensure greater compliance and accountability for outcomes.

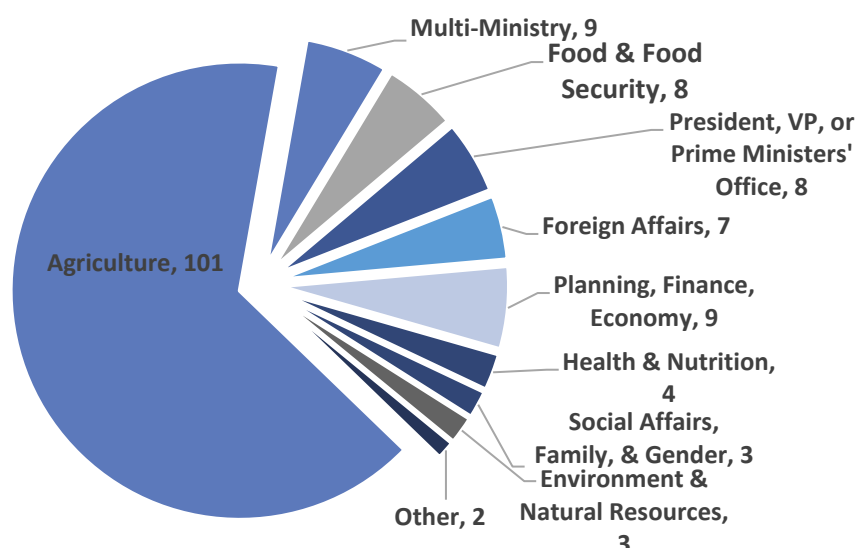


Figure 2: Lead Ministerial Convener for UNFSS Pathways

Source: Calculated from the UNFSS member state dialogue convenors and pathways (<https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/member-state-dialogue/dialogues-and-pathways/en>)

Notes: Numbers indicate the number of countries where that ministry was the lead convener

Delineation of authority

Coordination can have many different intentions, including knowledge sharing, goal setting and advocacy, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, and this needs to be specified among all participating entities at the outset of creating a coordinating mechanism to avoid confusion (68). Instruments for coordination involve clear delineation of authority and accountability through terms of reference, financial structures that facilitate joint reporting, costing of interventions, budget disbursements, and modalities of information exchange (e.g., working groups, technical committees) (70). In some cases, legal instruments might be used to enshrine a body's responsibilities and specify its level of autonomy.

Availability of resources for coordinating modalities

Coordination entails transaction costs. Diagnosing those potential costs, and identifying how they will be mitigated, increases the success of sustainability. Such costs include the outlay of time to maintain coordination processes and information sharing; the outlay of resources for meetings, a possible secretariat, and commissioned studies; and costs of monitoring and enforcing members' commitments (65). The example of Ethiopia is instructive. In the late 2000s, the National Nutrition Coordinating Body (NNCB) was established and jointly chaired by the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, with many other ministries, development partners, and CSOs involved. However, key challenges for the NNCB were a lack of accountability and cross-ministerial reporting structures, as well as insufficient resources for the NNCB to convene necessary meetings (71,72).

Bureaucratic tensions: Hierarchies, resources, and policy territories

Political economy factors, including authority, interests, institutions, and ideas, have been found to be major contributors to the success, or lack thereof, of coordinating bodies (20,73). Specifically, due to historical factors and the nature of public-sector governance in a particular country, certain ministries or agencies appear to have more authority than others. Such authority may be due to specialised knowledge, a reputation for delivering results, or holding a position of influence (74). Moreover, there can be implicit hierarchies between agencies or between the disciplinary professions of those that staff them (64,75). This can inhibit information sharing across different levels of staff or other ministries (64). Concretely, this has manifested in several country studies. For instance, Michaud-Létourneau and Pelletier (68) found that SETSAN's anchoring in the Ministry of Agriculture has undermined its convening power with other ministries. In Ethiopia, several studies showed that stakeholders in that country felt more visibility and more effective coordination would emerge if the NNCB was housed within the Office of the Prime Minister (71,72).

Relatedly, a common concern about coordination is that sectoral interests will still prevail even when addressing an integrated policy system, such as food systems. Patay et al. (20) highlight the conflicts that have emerged between ministries of health, commerce, and trade when dealing with corporations that produce and trade unhealthy foods that nonetheless generate jobs and revenue in low- and middle-income countries. Besides a conflict in interests over policy objectives, there are also conflicts over resource distributions and 'turf battles.' Indeed, as Benson (76) concluded in a multi-country study of multi-sectoral nutrition bodies, if funding mechanisms still align with sectoral distributions, ministries can be forced to act as competitors rather than partners in achieving their objectives (see also 75).

As with stakeholder groups, ideas can strongly influence ministerial interests. For instance, sectoral priorities (e.g., health versus jobs) may reflect causal beliefs about the best route to improved national welfare. Patay (20), for instance, points to how some ministries might see the rise of non-communicable diseases as a matter of individual responsibility while others see it as a failure of government regulation. Relatedly, coordination can be undermined if sectoral professionals are more interested in their own viewpoint being integrated across sectors rather than embracing a more holistic policy vision (77).⁶ Table 3 draws on the above insights to derive eight metrics that can be considered for identifying prospects for multi-sectoral collaboration.

Table 3. Metrics for multi-sectoral collaboration

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Operationalisation	Expectation	Coding
3A	Is there a coordinating body that has been established for the relevant food system policy?	Primary sources: Expert assessments of the policy landscape Secondary sources: Analysis of relevant documents for the food system policy	An established coordinating body will facilitate policy implementation	1: No, this has not been considered 2: Documented but not yet established 3: Yes, this has been established
3B	Where is the coordinating body for implementation housed?	Secondary sources: Analysis of relevant documents for the food system policy	Joint leadership by sectoral and planning/budgeting ministry will have the most impact	1: Within a sectoral ministry 2: Within a finance/planning/economy ministry 3: Within an executive office
3C	How many agencies or ministries belong to the coordinating body?	Secondary sources: Analysis of relevant documents for the food system policy	More agencies or ministries that oversee coordination can lead to more friction	1: Whole of government approach 2: At least one-third of ministries 3: Fewer than one-third of ministries
3D	Have clear functions been delineated among coordinating members for information exchange and reporting with regards to the relevant food system policy?	Primary sources: Interviews with coordinating body members Secondary sources: Analysis of relevant documents for the food system policy	Opaque reporting functions will lead to confusion and inertia	1: Not delineated 2: Delineated in documents but not operationalised 3: Fully operationalised
3E	Have clear functions been delineated among coordinating	Primary sources: Interviews with coordinating body	Lack of accountability will undermine performance	1: Not delineated

⁶ By the same token, an institutional disjuncture between functions and interests can be problematic. For instance, Thow et al. (78) note that often, the health sector is interested in regulation of marketing but it is not within their legislative remit while the reverse may be true for an economic sector, such as commerce.

	members for accountability for performance, with regards to the relevant food system policy?	members Secondary sources: Analysis of relevant documents for the food system policy		2: Delineated in documents but not operationalised 3: Fully operationalised
3F	Is the body sufficiently financed and staffed?	Primary sources: Interviews with coordinating body members	Momentum will stall without sufficient resources	1: No funding and staff 2: Funding or staff 3: Funding and staff
3G	Are there well-recognised institutional hierarchies or conflicts across key agencies/ ministries?	Primary sources: Interviews with relevant ministries and public-sector experts	Hierarchies impede information flow	1: Yes, and these often undermine policy cooperation 2: Yes, but they only rarely affect cooperation 3: No
3H	Are there divergent policy mandates/goals across key ministries/agencies that impede coordination?	Primary sources: Interviews with relevant ministries Secondary sources: Reviews of ministerial policy documents	Differences in policy goals will impede implementation	1: Yes, ministries have clearly defined mandates that they adhere to strongly 2: Yes, but diverse policy goals are often unintentional rather than deliberate 3: No

MULTILEVEL COORDINATION

Food systems policies, programmes, and projects need to be increasingly attuned to multilevel coordination as well. This refers to coordination between national governments and subnational tiers over responsibilities and objectives. The scale of coordination will vary significantly across tiers depending on underlying political institutions and distribution of functional mandates, existing coordinating mechanisms that can be leveraged, partisan (dis)incentives across government levels, and other ongoing efforts in the food system space and related domains at the subnational level.

Political institutions and functional mandates

The most significant degree of coordination occurs in federal countries, such as Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan.⁷ Federations are characterised by at least two territorial levels of government—usually national and state (or region, province, or canton)—having shared law-making powers and shared sovereignty constitutional authority. Typically, each level of government has constitutionally defined exclusive areas of authority; units at each level of government need to have final authority in at least one policy domain but there are often other domains where there are concurrent responsibilities (80). Federalism often entails bicameral legislatures with one chamber containing representatives in proportion to the population while another chamber ensures that the small

⁷ India is sometimes questioned as a federal country since the prime minister can constitutionally remove a state's elected leader and rule directly through an appointed governor (79).

subnational entity is overrepresented (79). The consent of both chambers is required for making and changing laws.

Many unitary (non-federal) countries have moved toward greater decentralisation over the past few decades whereby administrative, fiscal, and political responsibilities are transferred to subnational tiers (e.g., counties, cities, districts) but are not constitutionally guaranteed. Within decentralisation processes, there are also important nuances. Specifically, devolution represents the strongest form of decentralisation and involves transferring certain powers to subnational units with elected political leaders; however, those powers can be recalled or reshaped by the national government at any time (81). Deconcentration is the mildest form of decentralisation whereby responsibilities are transferred to subnational units of the central government and therefore, local administrators are still accountable to the national line ministry rather than to the local government authority. In reality, these systems can be mixed in the same country. Some functions (e.g., agriculture, health) can be devolved to local authorities while others (e.g., environment, public works) can be deconcentrated or delegated (82).

Clear delineation of responsibilities across tiers is essential for effective policy implementation. Several case studies demonstrate that where these functions are not clearly delineated, essential services are underprovided (83) and blame avoidance prevails, especially in crisis periods (84).

Extant coordination structures

The potential for enhancing multi-level coordination is enhanced by embedding food system-related processes within extant structures that were established to facilitate inter-governmental collaboration. For instance, in South Africa, the Intergovernmental Relations Act helps guide vertical policy alignment and the South African Local Government Association serves as a useful modality for integrating subnational concerns into the policy process (85). Similarly, in the wake of its devolution reforms, Kenya also established an Intergovernmental Relations Act with a Council of Governors representing all 47 counties. The planning process structure, including five-year County Integrated Development Plans, provides the venue for aligning county strategies with national ones (86). A similar set-up also exists in Nepal where, under the 2017 Local Government Operations Act, a seven-step local planning process was established that allows for priorities at the local level to be gradually integrated at each successively higher administrative level (87).

By contrast, efforts to create new coordinating bodies at the subnational level for specific policy arenas have not always succeeded. Bach et al. (71), for instance, found that Regional Nutrition Coordination Bodies in Ethiopia were not always effective because they were not properly resourced and there were no formal mechanisms for accountability to the National Nutrition Coordinating Body. Incentive systems are key in this regard; as noted by Eaton et al. (88), national-level sectoral agencies are more interested in delivering services, like health, education, and infrastructure, through local communities rather than investing in subnational governance processes and institutions. In the absence of extant multi-level bodies, the creation of new ones to foster food systems reforms can benefit from adherence to key principles. Collaborative governance studies emphasise that these bodies should include clear allocation of roles, decision-making rules, and guidelines; a co-created vision to build trust; and fair, transparent processes for achieving agreed-upon milestones (89–91).

Partisan competition

Partisan competition is a genuine concern for multi-level coordination. Vertically-divided authority—whereby control of a subnational entity is by a different party than that which governs at the centre—generates unique political economy dynamics. This is particularly the case because opposition parties often use their experience in governing cities or regions as a springboard for national office; therefore, there is an incentive for nationally governing parties to inhibit, rather than cooperate, with certain subnational entities. For instance, national governments can withhold intergovernmental transfers to certain regions or cities, rescind and recentralise certain powers, or overload local governments with new responsibilities without equivalent financing to purposely undermine efficacy (88,92–94).

Overlapping subnational initiatives

For food systems, this implies that the prospect and need for coordination mechanisms should be assessed according to whether a country is federal or unitary and the degree to which unitary countries have devolved responsibilities over areas that are essential for food systems. However, there is a need to consider not just formal delineation of responsibilities but also the existence of competing or overlapping sub-national initiatives with national food system strategies. For instance, networks of subnational entities and donors, inclusive of philanthropic foundations, have become more prominent and engage in their own direct initiatives with regions and city governments. Moreover, while some of these initiatives are focused on food, such as the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, others are more directly focused on topics like climate change, such as efforts by the C40 project or the Global Covenant of Mayor's efforts to enhance vertical alignment with Nationally Determined Contributions (95). While climate concerns are a key component of food systems transformation, they are not the only ones (and they extend beyond food systems). These networks have given mayors a platform to proceed with their own goals that may reinforce, bypass, or undermine national level food system strategies (96).

Based on the above discussion, Table 4 presents six different metrics to help consider whether the enabling conditions exist for multi-level collaboration.

Table 4. Metrics for multi-level collaboration

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Operationalisation	Expectation	Coding
4A	Are mandates clearly defined by tier for relevant food system responsibilities?	Analysis of legal documents specifying concurrent and exclusive responsibilities Secondary sources: Local Government Acts, Constitutions, OECD/UCLG Database on Subnational Government	Areas where there are more concurrent responsibilities pose greater coordination challenges	1: No 2: Mandates defined, but most are concurrent 3: Mandates are defined, and few are concurrent
4B	Are there existing inter-governmental coordinating mechanisms?	Landscape mapping based on local government information Secondary sources: Local Government Acts, OECD/UCLG Database on Subnational Government	Existing inter-governmental mechanisms can ensure procedures are in place for information sharing and problem solving	1: No 2: Yes on paper but not fully functional 3: Yes and functional
4C	Are there existing inter-governmental coordinating mechanisms related to the relevant food system policy?	Landscape mapping Primary sources: Expert interviews Secondary sources: Existing food system policy documents	Existing mechanisms can be reinforced and adapted for new food systems policies more easily than establishing new mechanisms	1: No 2: Yes on paper but not fully functional 3: Yes and functional
4D	If federal, how pronounced is vertically divided authority at the state/provincial level? If unitary, how pronounced is vertically divided authority at city level?	If federal, calculate the number of states/provinces under control of the opposition party. If unitary, calculate share of cities over population of 1 million under control of opposition party Secondary sources: Data from national electoral commissions	Greater vertically divided authority implies a greater likelihood of non-cooperation between the sub-tier and the central government	1: More than 75% of states, provinces, cities 2: Between 25-75% of states, provinces, cities 3: Less than 25% of states, provinces, cities
4E	Are there other related food system policies at the subnational tier?	Identify number of other food system-related initiatives launched by subnational governments Primary sources: Landscape mapping based on interviews with donor partners and relevant local authorities	More initiatives imply greater challenge for vertical policy alignment	1: Yes, multiple states/cities have such policies 2: Yes, at least one other state/city has such policies 3: No

FINANCING

Macroeconomic stability

The implementation of any food system policy ultimately requires financial resources. A first consideration is whether governments have the necessary funding for implementation. This is particularly salient given that more than half of the world's population currently lives in countries where governments are allocating more resources to debt servicing than to health or education expenditures (97). Policy documents without corresponding funding can, over time, undermine citizen trust in a government's rhetorical commitments. Macroeconomic deterioration or instability can also affect food system investments if creditors have imposed conditionalities that limit the space for manoeuvre.

Donor coherence

Where financing is available, the source and proportions of such financing are equally important. Financing that is predominantly from donor, technical, or private-sector partners can potentially bias a policy's activities towards those actors' preferences. Despite commitments to country ownership, donors favour certain policy thrusts or issue areas that can distort governments' policy discretion or lead to fragmentation across multiple areas rather than strategic prioritisation.

Finance and budget transparency

Regardless of whether financing is predominantly from external sources or from own-source revenue, budget transparency instruments are essential to mitigate corruption and increase citizen trust in whether and how finances are invested in food system policies. The existence of appropriate mechanisms of horizontal accountability can facilitate such transparency, including national audit offices, budget accountability offices, and appropriate legislative oversight (98). To this end, such institutions should be made aware of what food systems are and how financing them might vary from traditional agricultural or health policies alone. One example is the FAO's *Food Systems and Nutrition Handbook for Parliamentarians* (99). Another is a training toolkit for parliamentarians about how to assess whether financing (and other elements of the policy process) considers the SDG 2030 agenda (100). Box 3 refers to other sets of initiatives that are aimed at enhancing budget transparency.

Box 3. Promoting Budget Transparency for Food Systems: Opportunities and Challenges

The importance of tracking financing has gained increased attention in recent years, with many different initiatives emerging from civil society and international organisations in countries where such information is difficult to obtain. Since 2006, the Open Budget Survey of the International Budget Partnership began providing an assessment of budget transparency across the globe based on three pillars: timeliness and availability of budget documents that meet internationally accepted good practice for public financial management, opportunities for civil-society engagement in the budget process, and the degree to which formal institutions monitor and influence how public resources are mobilised and spent (101). At the national level as well, civil-society actors are helping to improve budget accessibility. For instance, since 2011, the civil-society organisation BudgetIT has aggregated all state-level budgets in Nigeria and uses its open data platform to facilitate public input about implementation of government projects in citizens' communities (102). This enhances citizen participation and oversight in a country traditionally characterised by its opaque budget processes (103).

Within the food policy arena, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement developed a framework to examine the degree to which different ministries, departments, and agencies contributed budgets to nutrition goals in a particular country (104). USAID's SPRING programme similarly looked at nutrition budgeting and financial analysis across 11 countries (105). Neither effort, however, has been sustained due to donor programming cycles and the challenges of such integrated budget analysis. Other efforts to enhance transparency, such as the World Bank's Public Expenditure Tracking (PETS) surveys, have remained strongly sector-oriented and typically report results by health or education sector (106). Shifting budgeting processes is one of the main challenges facing governments that want to ensure a more holistic approach to food systems investments.

Budgeting rules and processes

Any policy or strategy needs to be properly costed so that resources are allocated accordingly for implementation. Yet, even where such costing does exist, there is often a mismatch with a country's overarching financial architecture. In particular, many countries' budgeting allocation processes are strongly sectoral, therefore increasing the difficulty of making disbursements that are targeted at multi-sectoral programs. This has been found to be problematic in complex areas such as climate change (86) and is likely to be equally challenging for food system policies. Even in the area of multi-sectoral health and nutrition strategies, which have been in existence for longer, single-sector financing remains a major challenge (107).

Where food system strategies and policies entail a significant role for subnational entities, intergovernmental political economy relations become more salient. This is particularly so in contexts of vertically divided authority (see above) where national governments may purposely withhold financial resources to thwart the success of opposition parties in a particular subnational territory or disproportionately allocate to co-partisans (108–110). Such incentives tend to be more likely to exist where there are ad-hoc, discretionary rules about inter-governmental fiscal transfers; they are more mitigated when there are institutionalised rules and clear allocation formulas for such distributions (111,112). They also are more likely when subnational entities have less fiscal autonomy such that

they are limited in their ability to set local taxes, raise user charges and fees, and/or access external funding.⁸

Based on the above considerations, Table 5 offers some approaches to operationalising whether countries have sufficiently considered financing constraints and structures to support food system policy investments.

Table 5. Metrics on Financing

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Operationalisation	Expectation	Coding
5A	To what degree is the macroeconomic environment a concern for implementing the food systems policy?	Analyse the robustness of the macroeconomic setting Secondary sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank CPIA ratings • Variables: Average of economic management and debt policy rating indices • Country scores run from 1 (worst) to 6 (best) 	A worse macroeconomic environment limits the opportunity for investments and increases countries' vulnerability to donor conditionalities	1: Average rating of 2 or less 2: Average rating between 2 and 4 3: Average rating above 4
5B	Are there diverging donor initiatives in the food system?	Mapping of donor initiatives in agriculture, nutrition, and the environment Primary sources: Expert knowledge and focused interviews with donors	More donor efforts in diffuse areas increases policy incoherence for the government	1: Donors are supporting different goals and ministries, with little coordination 2: Most, but not all, major donors are supporting relevant food system policy 3: Concentrated efforts by a plurality of key donors for the relevant food system policy
5C	To what degree is there transparency over the budget?	Assess degree to which public information on financing and budgets is made available to oversight bodies and the general public and opportunities for public participation in the national budget process Secondary sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Budget Index (OBI) from the International Budget Partnership • Country scores run from 0 (worst) to 100 (best) 	More transparency and oversight ensure accountability for financial commitments to food system policy priorities	1: Less than 40 on OBI 2: Between 40 and 60 on OBI 3: More than 60 on the OBI
5D	Is the relevant food system	Primary sources:	A policy that is costed with a	1: No, it is not costed

⁸ Another important observation is that both national and subnational governments may have different incentives for how they spend their resources according to whether the money comes from transfers or residents' taxes (113).

	policy costed with a clear plan for resource mobilisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert knowledge interviews with finance experts/ ministries 	clear revenue mobilisation strategy is more likely to be realistically implemented	<p>2: Costed but no clear resource mobilisation strategy</p> <p>3: Costed with a resource mobilisation strategy</p>
5E	Is there a multi-sectoral budgeting mechanism in place?	<p>Analyse whether the government's financing framework incorporate multi-sectoral mechanisms</p> <p>Primary sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with finance experts/ministries <p>Secondary sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SUN Nutrition Investment Snapshots offer useful details on budget structures 	The existence of a multi-sectoral budget mechanism facilitates opportunities for investment in integrate food system policies	<p>1: There is no multi-sectoral budgeting mechanism</p> <p>2: There is a multi-sectoral mechanism but not for the relevant food system policy</p> <p>3: There is a multi-sectoral mechanism for the relevant food system policy</p>
5F	Are there formula-based inter-governmental transfer rules?	<p>Analyse inter-governmental financing rules</p> <p>Primary sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with finance experts/ministries <p>Secondary sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local government laws documents OECD/UCLG Database on Subnational Government 	Formula-based transfer rules create higher likelihood of predictability and more insulation from biased allocations	<p>1: Ad-hoc distribution rules</p> <p>2: Formula based rules exist and transfers are predominantly conditional</p> <p>3: Formula based rules exist and proportion of transfers are unconditional</p>

ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITIES

The final domain assessed in this toolkit refers to the administrative organisation of the public sector to implement its food system transformation strategy. Specifically, this section focuses on the degree to which the public sector's ability to realise its policy objectives is undermined by administrative capacity constraints and political interference that weakens bureaucratic autonomy.

Capacity constraints

Capacity constraints relate specifically to the lack of sufficient human resources to help oversee and implement food system transformation strategies. To determine whether this is a challenge in a particular country, the relevant types of administrative capacities need to be mapped to the food system strategy under consideration and the potential constraints identified. Several constraints may be possible. One is simply a lack of sufficient personnel available for the needed implementation tasks, which is likely to be a larger challenge for policies requiring more on-the-ground expertise that is geographically dispersed. Insufficient personnel can be tied to many causes, including turnover among civil servants and frontline service providers due to poor career development opportunities, low pay, and lack of mission commitment (114). Bach et al. (2020) uncovered this as a major constraint for the implementation of multi-sectoral nutrition strategies in low-income countries. Another major issue is

that for complex, inter-sectoral issues, appropriate technical expertise may be lacking among frontline service providers. In an analysis of civil servants working at the intersection of urbanisation and climate change, Fox and Resnick (115) found that sectoral expertise prevails over more holistic training on integrated development issues. Box 4 provides some options for enhancing the capacities of civil servants to address and implement food system policies.

Political interference

Political interference in the bureaucracy is a vulnerability identified in the literature on principal-agent relationships where bureaucratic agencies provide services under the watchful eye of elected, political principals (116). On the one hand, politicians may interfere in the bureaucracy to ensure policies are implemented as intended (117). If bureaucrats are given too much discretion or autonomy, they may pursue their own private goals, including leisure, budget maximisation, or shirking, and thereby undermine policy effectiveness on the ground (118–120). Since politicians are elected while bureaucrats are not, the latter cannot be held accountable for unpopular policies, thereby justifying political oversight of bureaucrats' actions.

On the other hand, bureaucrats need autonomy to perform the functions that were delegated to them. Political interference in bureaucratic autonomy can cause public expenditures to be targeted to narrow constituencies rather than to the broader community (121) or result in local politicians using state resources for private gain (122). Using data from India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Gulzar and Pasquale (123) find that locations in which bureaucrats are accountable to more than one principal perform worse. In Nigeria, Rasul and Rogger (124) find that higher autonomy can provide bureaucrats with a greater sense of motivation and the flexibility to respond to service delivery implementation challenges. More broadly, bureaucratic autonomy is associated with better development outcomes in several areas, including poverty reduction (125), health outcomes (126), and overall corruption (127,128). Meritocratic recruitment processes are viewed as a key aspect of enhancing bureaucratic autonomy (129).

There are several types of ministries with a mandate that touches on the food system, such as agriculture, health, and land, that can be especially prone to political interference and corruption (133–136). This is because these ministries are involved in financially valuable procurement contracts and in the distribution of goods, such as subsidies, land plots, and medical equipment, that can be allocated to political loyalists.

Several databases can facilitate assessments of political interference. These include the Quality of Governance dataset, which uses survey vignettes to identify interference based on the frequency of unethical, unconstitutional, or illegal actions by politicians—either directly or through their staff—to influence bureaucratic decisions (130). The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project considers the 'extent to which appointment decisions in the state administration are based on personal and political connections, as opposed to skills and merit' (131). The Global Survey of Public Servants Indicators, which directly surveys public servants across 1,300 institutions in more than 30 countries, is another useful resource (132).⁹

⁹ See <https://www.globalsurveyofpublicservants.org/>

Box 4. Options for Strengthening Administrative Capacities

With multi-sectoral food policy interventions, there is a need to ensure frontline civil servants who oversee implementation possess a broad range of competencies. The development of more integrative curricula for such professionals—whereby the intersections between agriculture, nutrition, and environment become increasingly taught in public administration programmes and are more central in recruitment exams—is one approach to mainstreaming food systems thinking. Another is to work with a country’s associations of local governments to help with training local bureaucrats to better understand the trade-offs and synergies across sectors related to the food system. To this end, transnational networks of local governments that might originally start as modalities for information sharing can be scaled up to become learning networks and partnerships that help local governments understand how to confront complex challenges, particularly around climate change (137). Organisations such as ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability, with networks of more than 2,500 local and regional governments around the world, could facilitate such a learning agenda.

Given the above discussion, Table 6 proposes three key metrics to examine administrative capacities.

Table 6. Metrics for Administrative Capacities

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Operationalisation	Expectation	Coding
6A	What is the overall level of skill and competency in the public sector?	Examine the quality of the bureaucracy and credibility of government to policy implementation Secondary sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators Variable: Government effectiveness index Country scores run from -2.5 (worst) to 2.5 (best) 	Better overall competency and quality increases the likelihood of food system policies being implemented as intended	1: Index is less than -1 2: Index is between -1 to 1 3: Index is 1 or greater
6B	Are there enough existing staff, sufficiently trained in the appropriate skills, for implementation of the relevant food system policy?	Census on public sector capacities in the relevant ministries/agencies Primary sources: Interviews with relevant ministries and local government agencies, where applicable	More staff with appropriate skills leads to higher likelihood of policy implementation	1: Insufficient number of staff and lack of requisite skills 2: Sufficient staff numbers but lacking requisite skills 3: Sufficient staff with requisite skills
6C	To what degree are staff insulated from political interference while performing their jobs?	Identify the extent to which appointment decisions in the state administration are based on personal and political connections, as opposed to skills and merit Secondary sources:	More political interference in bureaucracy increases likelihood that policies are diverted from original intentions	1: All or most of appointment decisions in state administration are based on personal or political connections (scores between 0 to 0.33)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varieties of Democracy dataset • Variable: Criteria for appointment decisions in the state administration (<i>v2stcritrecadm</i>) • Country scores go from 0 (worst) to 1 (best) 		<p>2: About half are based on personal and political connections (scores between 0.33 and 0.66)</p> <p>3: Only few or none of appointments are based on personal or political connections (scores between 0.66 and 1)</p>
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AGGREGATION ACROSS MODULES

As noted above, the six different modules and corresponding metrics can be used in combination to uncover the largest political economy constraints, or they can be used on their own if practitioners prefer to focus on a particular challenge (e.g., multilevel coordination or administrative capacities). The coding guidelines in the last column of each metric table are based on a consistent 1 to 3 scale whereby a score of 1 indicates a less enabling environment for the food systems policy and a 3 indicates a more enabling environment. Collectively then, the lowest performance across all modules would be a score of 32 and the highest possible score is 96. Table 7 summarises the disaggregation of the metric scores by each of the domains. One advantage of this scoring approach is that it can highlight not only where bottlenecks are most pronounced across the six domains but also among the metrics within each domain.

Table 7. Summary of Domains and Corresponding Score Ranges

Domains	Minimum score	Maximum score
Stable and inclusive political landscape	7	21
Interest groups supportive of policy change	3	9
Multi-sectoral coordination	8	24
Multi-level coordination	5	15
Fiscal capacities	6	18
Administrative capacities	3	9
Total possible	32	96

Another advantage of the toolkit overall is that, for some of the metrics, the domains cannot be scored before a particular analytical component is completed, such as a circle of influence graphic of stakeholder preferences (2C) or a landscape mapping of relevant donor initiatives (5B). As such, this leads to the production of additional outputs that can be used for policy planning and engagement as well as for identifying valuable partnerships to advance food systems policy implementation.

APPLICATION: THE CASE OF MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique offers a useful case study for providing a concrete application of how the different domains can be assessed. In the wake of UNFSS, there is more acceptance by the Government of Mozambique (GoM) of the need for a more integrated approach around the government's three main food system priorities: sustainable food and nutrition security for all, improved value chains, and resilience to shocks and climate change. These priorities are addressed in different policies and programmes currently underway, including the third version of the National Strategy for Food and

Nutrition Security (*Estratégia de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*, ESAN, 2023-2030). The ESAN III was the focus for the applied analysis of the political economy diagnostic. The below sections summarise the results of this application; the detailed data on which the analysis relies are available in the Appendix.

Policy Stability and Inclusion

Table 8 presents Mozambique's scoring on the seven policy stability and inclusion metrics. Overall, the analysis shows that political stability and electoral turnover represent the biggest current concerns for policy stability. The next elections will take place in October 2024 and the current president is constitutionally barred from running again. Historically, the ruling party, Frelimo, has retained a strong hold on the presidency but, the opposition has made important grounds in recent years, including inroads into the capital of Maputo during the 2023 local elections (138). Even if Frelimo retains strong majorities, new presidents have tended to abandon their predecessors' policies (139). Due to Frelimo's parliamentary dominance, institutionalised constraints on executive decision-making by the legislature are relatively weak.

Table 8. Policy Stability and Inclusion

Metric number	Domain	Score for Mozambique
1A	Executive restraints	2
1B	Likelihood of destabilisation	1
1C	Ministerial change	2
1D	Electoral turnover	1
1E	Freedom of association	2
1F	Freedom of expression	2
1G	Modalities for food system participation	3
Total		13
Maximum total possible		21

With respect to inclusion, there is some progress in terms of constitutional guarantees for freedom of association and expression. In practice, there are several concerns about the independence of the media and restrictions on protest activities (as elaborated in the Appendix). However, with regards to the food system, there is a national multi-stakeholder platform for nutrition, known as the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONSAN), which was established in 2013. In addition to integrating multiple ministries, CONSAN also involves members from civil society and the private sector.

Stakeholder preferences

While at least nine ministries are identified by the main coordinating body, SETSAN, for the implementation of ESANIII (140), three are the main decisionmakers. Specifically, without the concurrence of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADER), Ministry of Health (MISAU), or the Ministry of the Economy and Finance (MEF), implementation of ESANIII as intended would not be feasible. In terms of influential power, the donor community holds a high degree of leverage. While net overseas development assistance as a share of gross national income has fallen substantially since the 1990s, it still hovers at 15.1%, which is three times higher than the average for sub-Saharan Africa (141). Along with UN agencies, the World Bank, International Finance Corporation,

JICA, USAID, and GAIN are the main technical and financial partners directly supporting ESANIII or indirectly supporting food and nutrition security through their support for the country's SUN movement. Among these different decision-making and influential actors, there are no actors that are perceived to be oppositional to the goals or policy orientations of the ESANIII (see Table 9).

Table 9: Stakeholder Preferences

Metric number	Domain	Score for Mozambique
2A	High number of decision-making actors	2
2B	High number of influential actors	3
2C	Minimal policy conflict among decision-making and influential actors	3
Total		8
Maximum total possible		9

Multisectoral coordination

Multisectoral coordination on ESANIII is facilitated by SETSAN, which was established in 1998 (68). SETSAN also serves as the focal point for the SUN movement in the country. The body helps coordinate across seven different ministries but is housed in MADER (142). While SETSAN has developed a plan of action for the ESAN III, known as the PESAN, that delineates responsibilities for action (140), these actions have not yet been operationalised by the responsible ministries. Similarly, while SETSAN has noted that CONSAN and several of its subnational entities, the Provincial and District Councils for Food Security and Nutrition (COPSAN and COSDAN), will monitor progress towards implementation of ESANIII (140), substantive monitoring has not yet commenced.

One of the oft-repeated concerns about SETSAN is the volatile funding and insufficiently capacitated staff to effectively coordinate and monitor programmes and policies (68,142–144). Because SETSAN is overseen by MADER (but not integrated as an entity within MADER), it depends on that ministry or donors for most of its budgetary resources, which tend to disproportionately cover operational costs rather than programming needs. Inter-ministerial conflicts also impede SETSAN's efficacy; namely there is concern about the entity being under MADER rather than MISAU, which traditionally has focused on nutrition (145). Consequently, MISAU has sometimes undermined SETSAN's implementation efforts by failing to provide needed information or engaging in designated actions to pursue policy programming. Since SETSAN lacks budgetary autonomy to invest in such actions, there is little consequence for MISAU or other ministries that do not contribute to ESAN or other initiatives under SETSAN. Nevertheless, there are no explicit ideological divergences across ministries that could impede coordination on ESANIII. This may again reflect the high level of donor dependence for development programming, which limits policy autonomy (see Table 10).

Table 10. Multisectoral Coordination

Metric number	Domain	Score for Mozambique
3A	Functioning coordinating body	3
3B	Housing of coordinating body	1
3C	Composition of coordinating body	2
3D	Clear functions of coordinating body	2
3E	Clear accountability of coordinating body	2

3F	Sufficiently financed coordinating body	2
3G	Lack of hierarchy/conflicts across ministries	1
3H	Convergent policy goals across ministries	3
Total		16
Maximum total possible		24

Multilevel coordination

Table 11 focuses on multi-level coordination. Functional mandates for subnational governments are defined in the 2018 amendment to the constitution, but there are many areas of concurrent responsibilities across levels of government that create challenges for accountability. Similarly, at the local level, there are shared mandates between appointed representatives on the executive council and elected local authorities.¹⁰ There are functional inter-governmental coordinating mechanisms, such as the National Coordination Council, which enhances cooperation between the executive bodies of the provinces and sectors at the centre, and the Provincial Coordination Council that coordinates across the provinces (142).

In theory, SETSAN is supposed to establish decentralised offices to help with inter-governmental coordinating mechanisms for implementing ESANIII and other policies and programmes. In practice, SETSAN only exists in some provinces and remains embedded within the provincial directorate for agriculture without any real authority over provincial policy coordination (142). While the COPSANs and CODESANs are more prevalent, they are uneven with their convening and again limited by a lack of financial resources.

With respect to vertically divided authority, the main opposition party, RENAMO, has traditional strongholds in several of the country's provinces, especially Zambezia and Sofala. Yet, in the recount of the October 2023 local elections, the opposition—inclusive of RENAMO and the Movement for Multiparty Democracy—won seven of the country's municipalities or only about 12% of total municipalities. This indicates that while vertically divided authority exists, it is currently a minimal factor for policy coherence. Based on expert opinion, there currently are no other food system policies at the subnational (municipal) level.

Table 11. Multilevel Coordination

Metric number	Domain	Score for Mozambique
4A	Clearly defined subnational food system mandates	2
4B	Extant inter-governmental coordinating mechanisms	3
4C	Extant inter-governmental coordinating mechanisms for food system policy	2
4D	Absence of vertically divided authority	3
4E	Absence of subnational food system policies	3
Total		13
Maximum total possible		15

¹⁰ See <https://www.sng-wofi.org/country-profiles/>.

Financing

Mozambique’s macroeconomic environment is of moderate concern for ESANIII implementation (Table 12). Based on the World Bank’s CPIA, it receives a score of 3.2 (of 6). While there have been improvements in exchange rate policy and debt policy due to regulatory reforms, and improved management of state-owned enterprises, the most pressing concern according to CPIA is insufficient transparency and accountability in financing and budgetary practices.¹¹ This is also reflected in Mozambique’s position on the Open Budget Index (47 of 100), which indicates only moderate budget transparency.

Experts report no apparent divergences among the donor initiatives related to the food system. This may reflect that ESAN is now in its third iteration—with the first version initiated in 1998—and widely viewed as the main mechanism for supporting food and nutrition policy in the country. Mozambique has a multi-sectoral budget mechanism in place, the Annual Social and Economic Plan (PES); any activity to be funded by the government budget must be included in the PES. However, while there is a budget for SETSAN in the PES, it is for operating expenditures rather than programme activities. Consequently, while SETSAN has costed the ESANIII, there is no clear resource-mobilisation strategy for raising the relevant finances, except from donors, and no clear operationalisation of the funding for the programme in the government budget. In terms of intergovernmental financial transfers, there are three main sources: the municipal compensation fund, sectoral funds, and the local initiative investment fund (FIIL). Formula-based rules are published in the annual budget, and the FCA transfers remain unconditional while the FIIL are earmarked for investment.¹²

Table 12. Financing

Metric number	Domain	Score for Mozambique
5A	Enabling macroeconomic environment	2
5B	Convergence in donor initiatives in the food system	3
5C	Budget transparency	2
5D	Food system policy costed with plan for resource mobilisation	2
5E	Multi-sectoral budgeting mechanism exists	2
5F	Inter-governmental fiscal transfer rules	3
Total		14
Maximum total possible		18

Administrative capacities

Overall, the quality of Mozambique’s public-sector bureaucracy exhibits strengths and weaknesses (Table 13). Based on the World Bank’s Government Effectiveness Index, the quality of the country’s civil service, degree of credible commitment to policies, and quality of policy formulation and implementation are estimated at a -0.7 (possible range: -2.5 to 2.5). The country is ranked in the lowest quartile globally (25 of 100). There is a perception of a high degree of political interference in appointment decisions within the bureaucracy, which can inhibit unbiased and technically informed decision-making. With respect to food and nutrition security policy, SETSAN’s resource constraints

¹¹ See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/data/datatopics/cpia/country/mozambique>.

¹² See <https://www.sng-wofi.org/country-profiles/>.

hinder hiring sufficient technical leadership and civil servants who can navigate strategically within MADER's divisions and across other ministries (142,143). As noted in one report, 'Since its creation SETSAN has not completed its human resources development plans, and has been losing its most skilled production due to various factors such as low wages, personal development expectations, lack of working resources and development, which means less capacity for technical leadership' (142: 89).

Table 13. Administrative capacities

Metric number	Domain	Score for Mozambique
6A	Skilled, competent public sector	2
6B	Sufficient trained staff for relevant food system policy	1
6C	Insulation from political interference	2
Total		5
Maximum total possible		9

Overall assessment

By combining the metrics in the six domains, Figure 3 highlights where technical partners supporting Mozambique's ESANIII, as well as other food policy initiatives, may encounter different types of political constraints and opportunities. The larger the gap between the blue and yellow bars, the more that domain poses a binding constraint for ESANIII. For instance, stakeholder interests and multi-level coordination are the least problematic; the latter is likely because Mozambique remains relatively deconcentrated, so subnational entities have minimal policy autonomy to forge their own food and nutrition security approaches. By contrast, concerns about policy stability, especially in an election year, multi-sectoral coordination via SETSAN (which is embedded in the agricultural ministry and lacks authority), and insufficient administrative capacities represent the most binding constraints. In some cases, such as regarding policy stability, technical partners may not be able to directly influence the domain but can at least strategize to anticipate its impact on programming. In other cases, such as multi-sectoral coordination, technical partners could identify what types of other institutional modalities might be more effective to address SETSAN's current weaknesses.

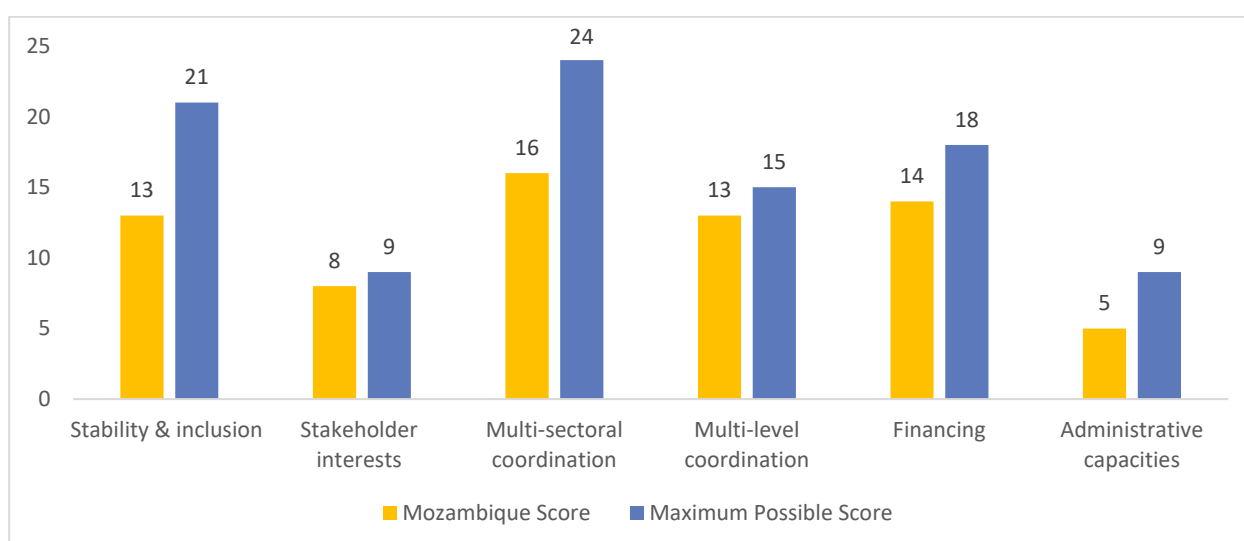


Figure 3. Assessment of Mozambique across Domains, Compared to Maximum Possible Scores

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Political economy dynamics play a central role in many policy processes, and this is especially pronounced in complex policy arenas, such as food systems, where many different interests, institutions, and goals are at stake.

This toolkit has elaborated on six key domains where political economy factors are most likely to arise and has offered suggestions for how to identify political economy bottlenecks and assess which are most problematic for a specific country or set of countries. In addition, it has highlighted lessons learned about how to tackle some of these bottlenecks. The application of the toolkit was illustrated through an application to Mozambique.

The toolkit considers a country's underlying policy system factors (e.g., volatility, macroeconomic conditions, inter-governmental tensions), which can indirectly affect the uptake and implementation of food system policies. It also integrates measures that are more specific to the food system policy or policies under consideration. In doing so, the toolkit elucidates priority binding constraints in a country and domain, thereby offering practitioners guidance on where and how to target their 'politically smart' engagement strategies with country partners.

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APPENDIX: SCORING APPROACH FOR MOZAMBIQUE APPLICATION

Policy Stability and Inclusion

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Score	Rationale for scoring	Source
1A	Are there institutionalised constraints on the executive's decision-making powers?	2	v2xnp_pres = 0.471	V-Dem database
1B	What is the likelihood that the government will be destabilised?	1	Political Stability metric = -1.29	World Bank
1C	How frequently have ministers in the relevant food system policy domain changed, on average, in the last 5 years?	2	Average change of FS ministries = 2.2	WhoGovs dataset
1D	What is the likelihood of upcoming political turnover?	1	Elections planned for October 2024	IFES database
1E	Are there restrictions on freedom of association?	2	Freedom House score is 5 due to police repression of protests, restrictions on trade unions, and restrictions on NGOs engaged in human rights and governance work	Freedom House
1F	Are there restrictions on freedom of expression?	2	Freedom House score is 9 due to restrictions on independent media, concerns about free expression without fear of surveillance or retribution	Freedom House
1G	Are there modalities for public participation in food system-related policies?	3	There is at least one multi-stakeholder platform that incorporates public views on the relevant food system policy	SUN country profile

Stakeholder Preferences

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Score	Rationale for scoring	Sources
2A	Who has decision making power with respect to the relevant food systems policy?	2	While there are many ministries involved in SETSAN and implication in the implementation of ESANIII, it would not be possible to implement the strategy without the concurrence of MADER, MEF, and MISAU	Interviews
2B	Who has influential power with respect to the relevant food systems policy?	3	ESANIII is being majorly supported by WFP/UNICEF/GAIN/JICA/USAID /World Bank/IFC	Interviews

2C	What are the preferences of the stakeholders with decision making and influential powers?	3	There is no obvious perception of policy conflict among stakeholders with decision-making or influential power vis-à-vis ESANIII	Interviews
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Multisectoral Coordination

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Score	Rationale for scoring	Source
3A	Is there a coordinating body that has been established for the relevant food system policy?	3	There is the National Food and Nutrition Council (CONSAN), which coordinates and oversees the National Multisectoral Plan for Food and Nutrition	EY & GAIN. 2022. Landscape analysis study and ASF Advocacy Roadmap.
3B	Where is the coordinating body for implementation housed?	1	SETSAN housed within MADER	EY & GAIN. 2022. Landscape analysis study and ASF Advocacy Roadmap.
3C	How many agencies or ministries belong to the coordinating body?	2	There are 19 cabinet ministries in the Govt of Mozambique according to CIA world leaders factbook. There are 7 members of CONSAN (MADER, MIMAIP, MOPHRH, MTA, MISAU, MIC, MINEDH). So this is 36% of ministries.	EY & GAIN. 2022. Landscape analysis study and ASF Advocacy Roadmap.
3D	Have clear functions been delineated among coordinating members for information exchange and reporting with regards to the relevant food system policy?	2	A plan of action has been developed, giving responsibility for each ministry in charge of actions under the ESANIII (PESAN)	SETSAN PowerPoint on the PESAN, 2023-2030
3E	Have clear functions been delineated among coordinating members for accountability for performance with regards to the relevant food system policy?	2	SETSAN has noted that CONSAN, COPSAN and CODSAN will be monitoring progress towards implementation and elaborates on the types of information that will be collected for this purpose	SETSAN PowerPoint on the PESAN, 2023-2030
3F	Is the body sufficiently financed and staffed?	2	EY & GAIN report note that there are insufficient resources from the national budget or from cooperation partners to CONSAN/SETSAN and insufficient technical leadership. SETSAN has been losing skilled staff due to low wages and lack of working resources. Traditional meetings that were held twice a year have had to be abandoned.	EY & GAIN. 2022. Landscape analysis study and ASF Advocacy Roadmap.

3G	Are there well-recognised institutional hierarchies/ conflicts across key agencies/ministries?	1	It has been observed that neither CONSAN nor SETSAN have the capacity to coordinate institutions with the same hierarchy in the government. Intersectoral platforms to facilitate strategy planning have been weakened.	EY & GAIN. 2022. Landscape analysis study and ASF Advocacy Roadmap.
3H	Are there divergent policy mandates/goals across key ministries/agencies that impede coordination?	3	There are no apparent divergences in policy direction of the two main ministries, MADER and MISAU, overseeing ESANIII	Expert interviews

Multilevel Coordination

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Score	Rationale for scoring	Source
4A	Are mandates clearly defined by tier for relevant food system responsibilities?	2	Mandates are defined in the 2018 amendment of the constitution but there are a lot of concurrent responsibilities. In addition, there are shared mandates between the appointed representatives on the executive council and the elected local authorities	GAIN background report and Mozambique country provide from OECD SNG website https://www.sng-wofi.org/country-profiles/
4B	Are there existing inter-governmental coordinating mechanisms?	3	There is the National Coordination Council between (between executive bodies of provinces and sectors at the centre) and the Provincial Coordination Council (links decentralised governance bodies and State representation bodies and services)	GAIN background report, which cites Articles 2, 11 and 19 of Decree No. 4/2020 of February 4th.
4C	Are there existing inter-governmental coordinating mechanisms related to the relevant food system policy?	2	There is COPSAN at province level and CODESAN at the district level, which are extensions of COSAN. However, these are seen as not fully functional: "SETSAN has not been decentralised, and still function as an ad hoc institution based at the Agriculture facilities with a focal point, agrarian production, and with a variety of structures from province to province"	EY & GAIN. (2022). Landscape analysis study and ASF advocacy roadmap

4D	If federal, how pronounced is vertically divided authority at the state/provincial level? If unitary, how pronounced is vertically divided authority at city level?	3	There were elections in 65 municipalities in Oct. 2023. After a recount, the constitutional court said that Renamo won 4 municipalities, Movement for Multiparty Democracy won one, and Frelimo won the rest. Even if parallel vote count is correct that Renamo actually won 7, that means only 8 of 65 municipalities are under the opposition (about 12%).	https://www5.open.ac.uk/technology/mozambique/sites/www.open.ac.uk.technology.mozambique/files/files/Election-Bulletin-221_15Mar24_Resultados.pdf
4E	Are there other related food system policies at the subnational tier?	3	Municipalities cannot come up with their own food policy without national government consent. Instead, subnational governments are expected to implement national policies.	Interviews

Financing

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Score	Rationale for scoring	Source
5A	To what degree is the macroeconomic environment a concern for implementing the food systems policy?	2	World Bank CPIA rating on economic management is 3.2	World Bank CPIA rating
5B	Are there diverging donor initiatives in the food system?	3	While donors operate in their own clusters, there is a clear alignment on policy goals among the donors on food and nutrition security.	Interviews
5C	To what degree is there transparency over the budget?	2	Score of 47 of the OBI	Open Budget Index produced by the International Budget Partnership: https://internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/download#completedatasets
5D	Is the relevant food system policy costed with clear plan for resource mobilization?	2	The SETSAN PowerPoint provided line-item budgets for different ministries but no discussion of resource mobilization	SETSAN ppt on the ESAN III

5E	Is there a multi-sectoral budgeting mechanism in place?	2	There is the Annual Social and Economic Plan (PES), which the planning and budgeting instrument of the GoM and coordinated by MEF and approved by the Parliament. It provides the political and legal authority to all public sector entities to carry out activities and spend public funds in pursuit of defined objectives. It determines the levels of investment and recurrent spending by different levels of govt and by sector. Any activity or expenditure in the health sector must be included in the PES and budget to be considered eligible for funding by the State Budget.	EY & GAIN 2022; More details from the PES from World Bank doc: https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/443651513005902836/pdf/MOZ-AMBIQUE-HEALTH-PAD-12012017.pdf
5F	Are there formula-based inter-governmental transfer rules?	3	Direct transfers from central government to municipalities come from (i) the municipal compensation fund (FCA); (ii) sectoral funds and (iii) the FIIL. The transfers from FCA and FIIL are established in the annual budget of national government and take the form of recurrent and capital grants based on a formula. The formula is published in the annual budget and takes into account (i) the surface area of the local government, (ii) the population, (iii) the level of development and (iv) the performance in collecting taxes. Provincial capital cities also receive the urban poverty reduction fund (PERPU). The FCA transfers are unconditional while the FIIL are earmarked for investment projects.	OECD SNG database: https://www.sng-wofi.org/country-profiles/

Administrative Capacities

Metric number	Diagnostic questions	Scoring	Rationale for scoring	Source
6A	What is the overall level of skill and competency in the public sector?	2	World Bank Government Effectiveness Estimate is -0.7	World Bank Governance Indicators
6B	Are there enough existing staff, sufficiently trained in the appropriate skills, for implementation of the relevant food system policy?	1	SETSAN operates with limited financial and human resources, which can constrain its ability to coordinate and monitor policies and programs effectively. This can also limit the council's ability to collect and analyse food security and nutrition data. 'Since its creation SETSAN has not completed its human resources development plans and has been losing its most skilled production due to various factors such as low wages, personal development expectations, lack of working resources and development, which means less capacity for technical leadership' (EY & GAIN 2022: 89).	EY & GAIN (2022); CASCADE report
6C	To what degree are staff insulated from political interference while performing their jobs?	2	Value for v2stcritrecadm is 0.37	V-Dem database