

HARNESSING THE POWER OF DATA:

The Nigeria Food Systems Dashboard as a Strategic Tool for Evidence-Based Decision Making and Coordinated Policy Actions

KEY MESSAGES

Food systems have the potential to drive inclusive growth, prosperity, nutrition, and health, or, if poorly managed, they can deepen inequalities and exacerbate poverty, malnutrition, and other poor outcomes. Data plays a crucial role in building food systems that drive positive development outcomes by providing the foundation for informed decision-making, effective policy formulation, targeted interventions, and stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The Nigeria Food Systems Dashboard is an online platform that brings together state-level data about food systems components and drivers, and supports the description, diagnosis, and decision-making related to local food systems by providing comprehensive contextual information. The Dashboard therefore facilitates successful food systems transformation and governance and is a powerful tool for multisector and national food systems stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

Food systems encompass the network of people and processes involved in getting food to people's tables and play a crucial role in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs). Food systems provide employment and income, thereby influencing zero poverty, hunger, and inequalities. Through production, processing, storage, distribution, and marketing, food systems impact food availability, safety, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability, and consequently nutrition, health, and wellbeing. Moreover, food systems influence environmental sustainability, education, gender equality, industry, innovation, infrastructure, peace, and justice, further emphasizing their role in achieving development outcomes.



The significant development challenges Nigeria faces today – including poverty, unemployment, widespread food insecurity, malnutrition, diet-related noncommunicable diseases, and certain security issues – highlight the weaknesses and inefficiencies within the country’s food systems. In response, the Government of Nigeria has actively supported and ratified efforts for national food systems transformation, showing increased commitment since the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit.

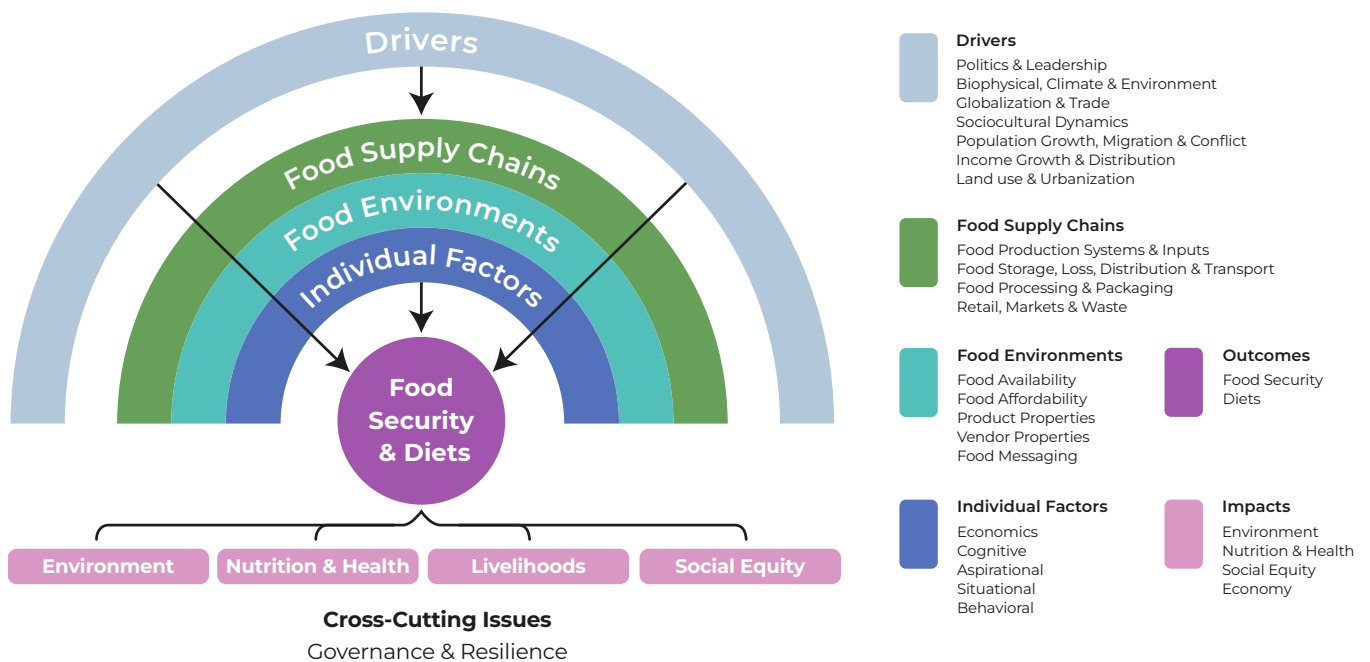
To effectively transform food systems, interventions must be context-specific, requiring timely, accurate, and relevant data that reflect the diversity and complexity across Nigeria’s states. Recognizing this, the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, and the National Bureau of Statistics collaborated with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and USAID Advancing Nutrition to develop the Nigeria Food Systems Dashboard (Nigeria FSD). This tool provides state-specific data to guide policy and programme decisions at national and sub-national levels.

OVERVIEW OF THE NIGERIA FOOD SYSTEMS DASHBOARD

Designed after the global Food Systems Dashboard and launched in September 2023, the Nigeria FSD is an online platform covering all 36 states of Nigeria as well as the Federal Capital Territory. Only data that are representative at this level are used, primarily sourced from publicly available sources. Key sources include the Nigeria Living Standards Survey, Agricultural Performance Survey, Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, Nigeria Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, National Agricultural Sample Census, Food Security Survey and other data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics.

The data covers all components and many subcomponents of food systems, facilitating data triangulation to provide evidence-based insights for each state. Therefore, the Nigeria FSD supports the development of contextually relevant and effectively targeted interventions, enhancing the overall impact of food systems policies and programmes.

A Food Systems Framework: Food Systems Drivers, Components, Outcomes and Cross-Cutting Issues Addressed by the Dashboard



Source: The Food Systems Dashboard. The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). 2023. Geneva, Switzerland.

<https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org/information/about-food-systems>

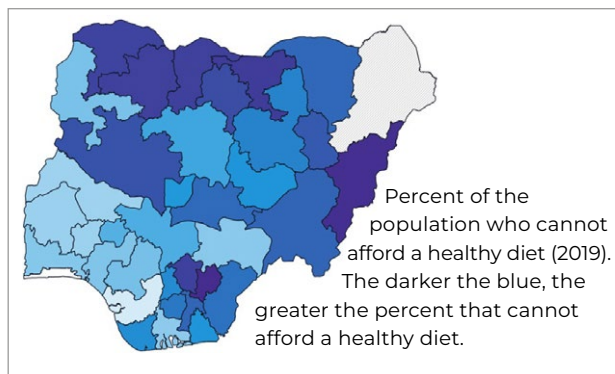
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36072/db>

GOALS OF THE DASHBOARD

Overall, the Nigeria FSD was developed to achieve three primary goals:

- 1. Describe:** Provide a clear picture of state-level food systems, increasing stakeholders' understanding of the current state of food systems across Nigeria's diverse states.

For example, the affordability of healthy diets is one aspect of food systems described on the Nigeria FSD. The data shows that unaffordability of a healthy diet is high in several states in northern as well as southern Nigeria.



- 2. Diagnose:** Enable stakeholders to identify and address contextual challenges in food systems by highlighting key indicators and trends that signify areas of concern or opportunity.

One of the ways in which the Nigeria FSD supports diagnosis of food systems is by displaying a traffic light visualization of key data for each state, like the case of Ebonyi State shown here.

- 3. Decide:** Suggest priority areas for action and identify the necessary actors to improve food systems and the contributions of food systems to sustainable diets and nutrition.

A list of 42 actions is provided on the food systems dashboard that can be explored vis-à-vis food systems diagnoses, to identify priority actions for transforming the food system in each state.



THE DASHBOARD AS A TOOL FOR FOOD SYSTEMS GOVERNANCE

The Nigeria FSD is not just a data repository; it is a strategic tool that enhances food system governance through various mechanisms:

- **Policy Frameworks and Regulation:** Policymakers can use the Nigeria FSD to inform coherent and coordinated decisions, policies, and regulations around food systems transformation, income and wages, trade, social protection, and interventions addressing food insecurity and malnutrition.
- **Multisectoral Coordination:** The Nigeria FSD includes data across the multisectoral components of food systems, allowing stakeholders to visualize the interconnectedness of various sectors, and may highlight areas that require cooperation amongst different sectors and actors; and entry points for multisectoral coordination to address the complexities of food systems.

- **Vertical Coordination and Resource Allocation:** The Nigeria FSD capturing of state-level data enables decision makers to identify and target geographies most affected by specific food systems challenges. This vertical coordination is crucial for designing interventions that are tailored to the needs of different states, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively.
- **Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms:** The Nigeria FSD enables progress-tracking of interventions and can be used to hold stakeholders accountable for their contributions to food systems transformation. This accountability mechanism is essential for driving continuous improvement and achieving desired outcomes.
- **Private Sector Actions:** The Nigeria FSD reveals gaps in the food system that the private sector can address through innovative solutions. By providing insights into demand and supply dynamics, the Nigeria FSD helps businesses identify opportunities to contribute to food security and nutrition while also driving economic growth.
- **Civil Society Involvement:** Through the indicators included in the Nigeria FSD and the associated data, civil society organizations are better able to determine target populations for social protection programs, livelihood assistance, and social and behaviour change communication. The Nigeria FSD also aids in identifying advocacy topics and target audiences, enabling civil society to play a more effective role in food systems transformation.
- **Knowledge Generation and Sharing:** Researchers can use the Nigeria FSD to analyse food systems challenges, explore relationships among drivers, components, and outcomes of food systems, and evaluate the effects of policies and programmes; and thereby strengthen the evidence base for future decisions.

CONCLUSION

The Nigeria Food Systems Dashboard is a powerful tool that holds the potential to transform the way stakeholders approach food systems in Nigeria. It addresses the need for localized, high-quality data to inform coherent and coordinated policy and programming decisions, thereby facilitating targeted, efficient, and effective food systems' interventions.

As Nigeria continues to work towards its national food systems transformation goals, the Nigeria FSD will play a crucial role in guiding these efforts and ensuring that they are data-driven and supported by multistakeholder collaboration. The success of the Nigeria FSD will depend on continued investments in stakeholder engagement, data collection, and capacity building, making it a cornerstone of Nigeria's food systems governance.



For more information, please visit:

<https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org/countries/nga/subnational-data>

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