

POLICY BRIEF

A global mapping of multisectoral food system governance institutions

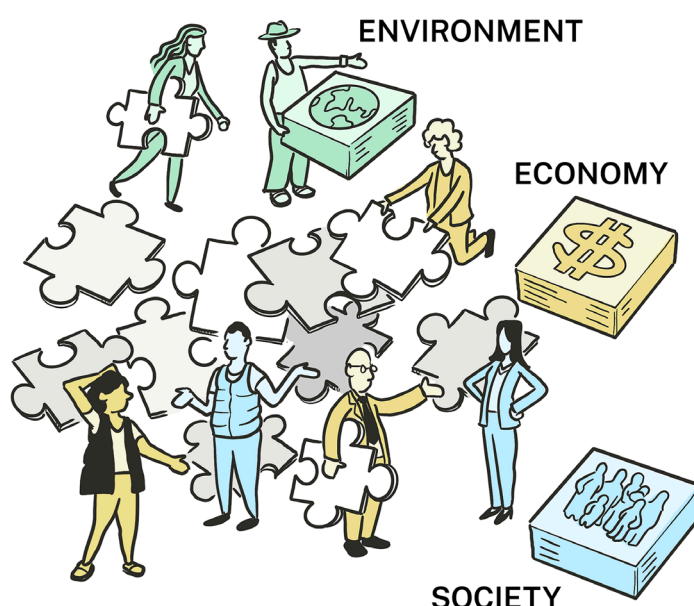
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Background

Greater coherence between key actors and policy sectors involved in the food system, from food production, processing, distribution, and trade to consumption, is key to achieving better social, environmental, and economic outcomes.^{1,2} The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) called for the strengthening of multisectoral food system governance, and countries globally have begun establishing new national food system governance institutions.³⁻⁷

This study mapped countries worldwide that have established **multisectoral food system governance institutions**, to simultaneously advance social, environmental, and economic food system outcomes. Our aim was to showcase the range of options that governments have when establishing a new multisectoral food system governance institution or strengthening existing ones.



We undertook a **policy review of 197 countries**, including validation by in-country experts. Institutions were excluded if they only focused solely on one major food system component or outcome (e.g., food waste, product reformulation); objectives across all three dimensions (environmental, social, economic) were not explicitly stated; or they did not include government agencies with primary mandates around food production, environment, or health.

Results

We identified 34 countries (17% of the countries reviewed) as having an institution that met the inclusion criteria. Four countries established a dedicated **ministry** (or government unit) that served as stand-alone organisation for food system governance, such as a Ministry of Food. Thirty countries created governance **mechanisms**, such as committees, councils or forums, providing a platform for formalised interaction and coordination between ministries and other actors. We found ten multisectoral, whole-of-government

mechanisms that facilitated engagement between government agencies only. Twenty countries had a mixed multisectoral and participatory governance mechanisms in place as a platform for formal interaction between a range of government agencies and non-state stakeholders (see Table 1). Seventeen of the 34 institutions were established since the 2021 UNFSS, suggesting a surge of multisectoral governing bodies since the first Food System Summit.

Building on existing structures or establishing new ones?

At least 19 of the institutions relied on pre-existing governance arrangements. In some cases, the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Food adopted broader food system coordination roles, such as in Bangladesh. In other cases, multisectoral food security initiatives expanded to encompass a wider range of stakeholders and food system objectives, like in Sierra Leone, where the Scaling Up Nutrition Unit was renamed to Scaling Up Nutrition & Food Systems Coordination Unit. In 11 countries, for example, Chad, new institutions were established to prepare for the UNFSS were retained. The establishment of new structures was the preferred option in at least 11 of the countries since the UNFSS 2021.

Ministries of Food and Food System Coordination Units

Four countries chose to establish a new ministry or government unit, or expanded the role of an already existing ministry or agency, to cover multisectoral governance or coordination across food system matters. For example, in Bangladesh, a pre-existing ministry was assigned the role of coordinating food system-relevant work across other agencies. Here, food system

governance/coordination may be just one of many tasks that the ministry carries out alongside its established role. In Austria, a dedicated unit was created within the Agency for Health and Food Safety. A different approach is demonstrated by Indonesia, where a new supra-sectoral ministry, the Coordinating Ministry of Food Affairs, was established with the sole task of coordinating food system-relevant work in government agencies, without shared oversight with other government agencies.

Mechanisms: Food System Committees, Councils, Forums

Thirty countries established multisectoral food system governance mechanisms, such as committees, councils, forums, or working groups. While all identified mechanisms involve a breadth of ministries working across food system-relevant policy areas, different structures are in place for connecting and coordinating them. The role of the individual structures within each mechanism varies between having a consultative or an executive role, and ministries retain the final executive decision making authority. Furthermore, there is a wide range in the type of non-state actors involved and the extent of their involvement (Figure 1).

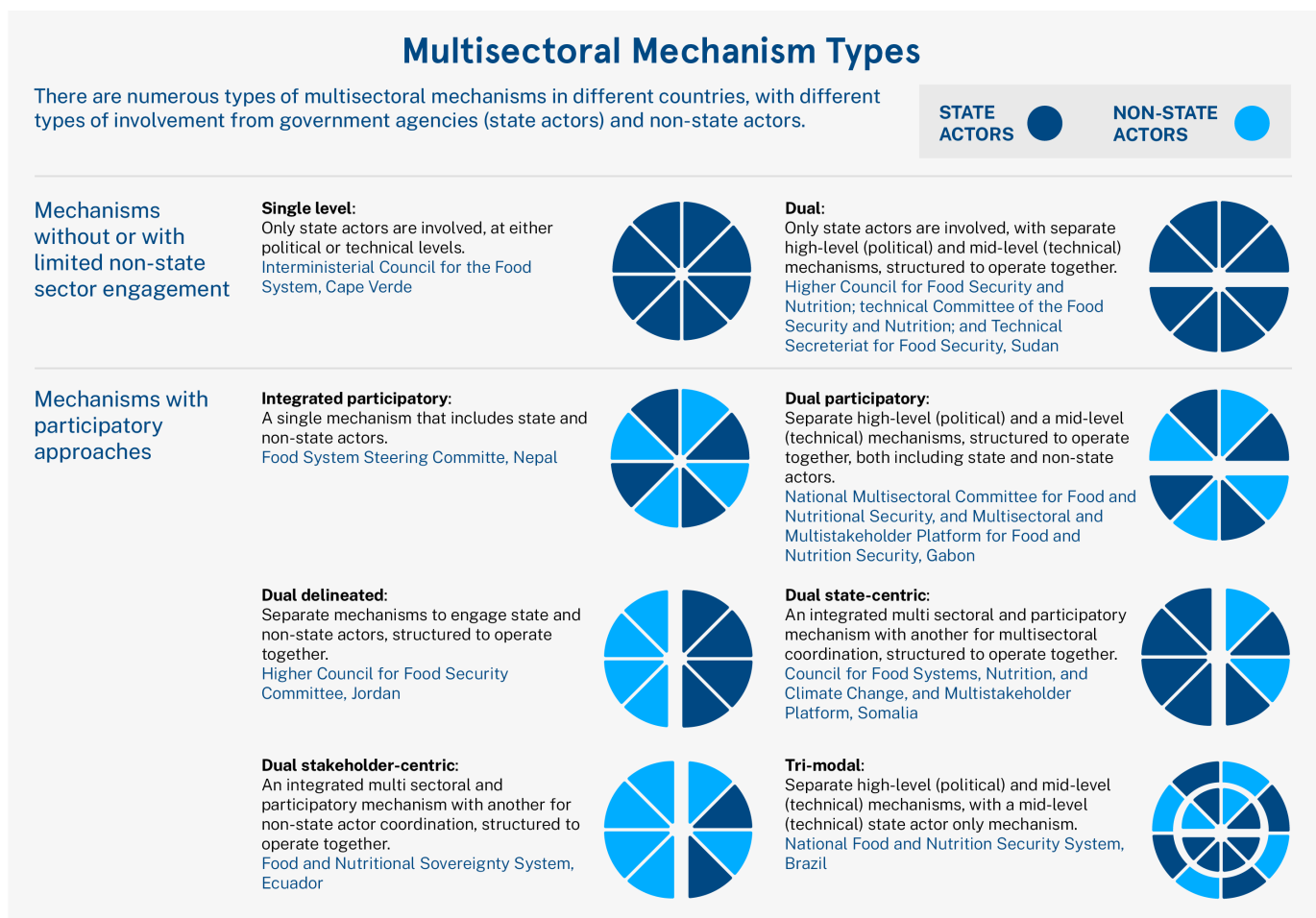


Figure 1: The types of multisectoral food system governance mechanisms

What is the best approach?

The wide variety of multisectoral food system governance institutions adopted worldwide demonstrates that there is no 'one size fits all' solution when strengthening the governance of food system transition pathways. Local political, social, and economic contexts shape the decisions that governments make in establishing new food system governance institutions or modifying old structures. Thus, instead of trying to showcase the perfect combination, this policy brief can help identify the building blocks governments may consider to 'custom-fit' their food system governance institutions to their specific needs. We identified nine building blocks that define the functions that the institutions are designed to fulfil, from tasks related to agenda setting, policy making, decision making over those policies,

implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (Figure 2). These building blocks can be used to modify and adapt food system governance structures in the future, and also to monitor and evaluate the outcomes and impact of these institutions. It is important to emphasise that none of the identified institutions contained all nine building blocks, and a multisectoral food system governance institution is not necessarily better or worse by containing fewer or more of these blocks, or in specific combinations. A higher number of building blocks increases complexity, and thus, it might potentially lead to higher administrative costs and a greater need for a strong convening authority to ensure effective implementation. Hence, some governments may strategically opt for more streamlined approaches with fewer functions.

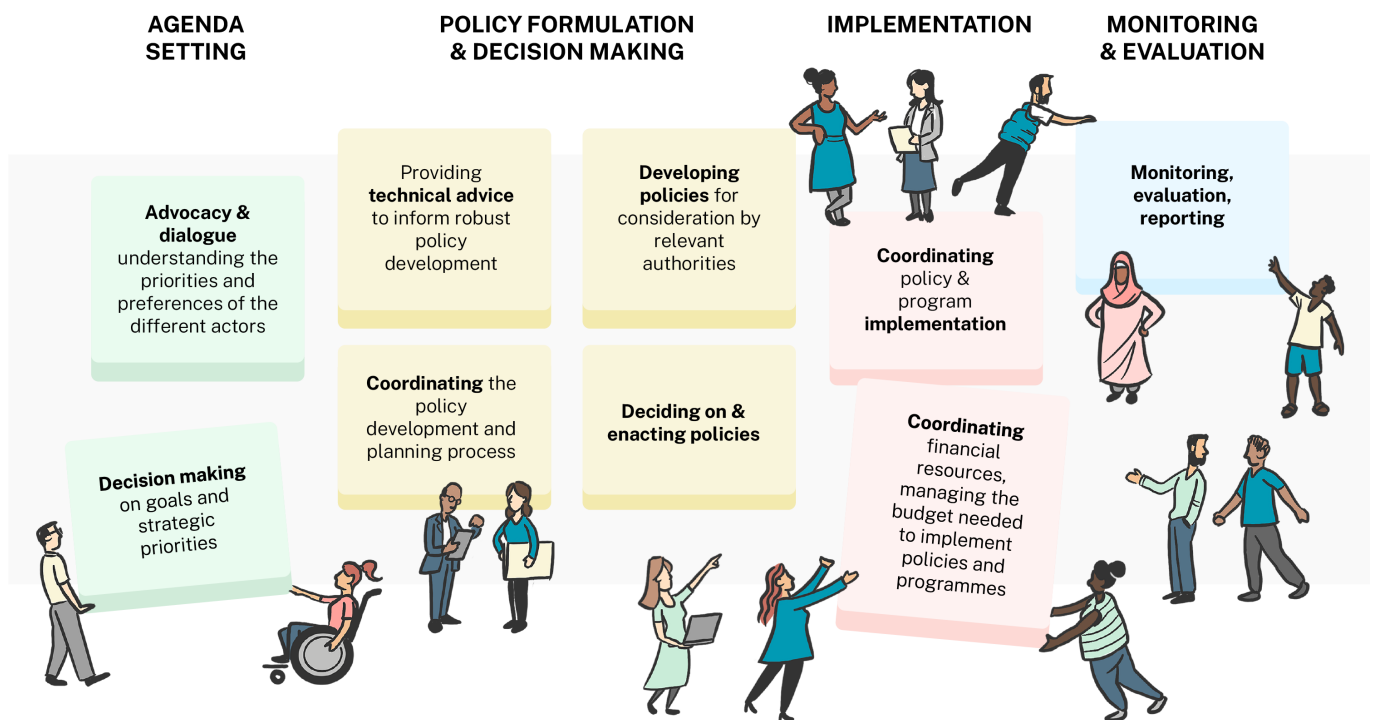


Figure 2: The building blocks governments may consider to 'custom fit' their food system governance approach

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Table 1: Countries and their multisectoral institutions

Type of institution	Countries
Ministries of Food or Food System Coordination Units	Austria: Coordination Center for Sustainable Food Systems (2022) Bangladesh: Ministry of Food (1971) Indonesia: Coordinating Ministry for Food Affairs (2025) Israel: Food Security Administration (within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security) (2024)
Single-level multisectoral mechanism	Cambodia: Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (1994) Cape Verde: Interministerial Council for the Sustainable Food System (2024) Chad: Technical Committee for National Coordination for the preparations for the UNFSS (2021, continues to operate) Colombia: Intersectoral Commission on Food and Nutrition Security within the National System for the Progressive Guarantee of the Right to Food (2008) Japan: Headquarters for Strengthening the Foundations of Stable Food Supply and the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Industry (2015) Morocco: National Steering Committee for Food Systems Transformation (2024) Qatar: Food Security Committee (2017) Thailand: National Food Committee (2008) United Arab Emirates: Emirates Council for Food Security (2019)
Dual multisectoral mechanism with supporting unit	Sudan: Higher Council for Food Security and Nutrition; Technical Committee of the Food Security and Nutrition; Technical Secretariat for Food Security (2015)
Integrated multisectoral and participatory mechanism	Ethiopia: Food System Multisectoral Technical Core Team; Food Systems Secretariat (2023) Ghana: Cross-Sectoral Planning Group on Food Systems and Nutrition (2025) Iraq: National Food Security Committee; Food Systems Coordination Unit (2017) Mexico: National Intersectoral Council within National Intersectoral System of Health, Food, Environment and Competitiveness (SINSAMAC, 2024) Nepal: Food System Steering Committee (2021) Peru: Multisectoral Commission on Food Security and Nutrition (2002) Sweden: Coordination Committee for the effective implementation of the food strategy (2024) Uganda: National Food Systems Coordination Committee (2022) Zambia: Food Systems Transformation Technical Working Group (2021)
Dual delineated mechanism	Jordan: Higher Council for Food Security ; National Food Security Committee (2023)
Dual participatory mechanism	Gabon: National Multisectoral Committee for Food and Nutritional Security; Multisectoral and multistakeholder platform for Food and Nutrition Security (2017)
Dual state-centric mechanism with supporting unit	Dominican Republic: National Council for Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security; Technical Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Sovereignty; National Network for Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security (2016) Somalia: Council for Food Systems, Nutrition, and Climate Change; Food Security and Climate Change Unit; Multistakeholder platform (2023) Yemen: National Food Security Committee/ Food Security Steering Committee; Supreme Council for Food Security and Nutrition; Food Security Technical Secretariat (2019)
Dual stakeholder-centric mechanism	Ecuador: Food and Nutritional Sovereignty System; Conferencia Plurinacional e Intercultural de Soberanía Alimentaria (2009) Sierra Leone: Scaling Up Nutrition & Food Systems Coordination Unit; Ministerial Steering Committee; Multistakeholder platform (2017 / 2024)
Tri-modal mechanism (part of a multi-level governance structure)	Brazil: National Food and Nutrition Security System (2006); National Council for Food and Nutrition Security; National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security; Interministerial Chamber on Food and Nutrition Security Timor-Leste: National Council for Food Security, Sovereignty and Nutrition in Timor-Lest; Permanent Technical Secretariat; Inter-Ministerial Food and Nutrition Security Working Group with support unit (2010)