

## Food Systems Dashboard - Frequently Asked Questions

In the run-up to the official launch of the Food Systems Dashboard on June 1st, 2020, we are happy to share with you this document that briefly describes how the new Food Systems Dashboard tool can inform better food policy. With the UN Food Systems Summit planned in September 2021, this one-of-a-kind tool comes at a good time and will help decision makers improve their food systems in the areas of food security, nutrition, and the environment.

- **What is the Dashboard?**

The Food Systems Dashboard is an easy-to-navigate tool that, for the first time, brings together relevant data from public and private sources to help decision makers understand their food systems, identify their levers of change, and decide which ones to pull.

- **Who is it for?**

This unique, holistic tool is intended for policymakers, non-governmental organisations, businesses, civil society leaders, and other actors to enable timely visualisation of national food systems, understand the interconnections across multiple sectors, perform comparisons with other countries, identify key challenges, and prioritise actions.

- **Why is it needed?**

The lack of accessible, organised, quality-checked information significantly hinders evidence-based action to improve food systems. Given the level of complexity and interconnections inherent to food systems, the data that describe these systems and their linkages to sustainable diets and nutrition need to be presented in a way that is easily usable.

- **How does it work?**

The viewer can easily grasp the three Ds: **describe** national food systems, **diagnose** them to prioritise areas for action, and then **decide** on the action to take based on plausible options that have been tried in other countries.

Describing food systems. The Dashboard describes food systems of more than 230 countries by bringing together data for over 170 indicators from more than 35 sources.

Diagnosing food systems. The Dashboard enables stakeholders to compare their food system with those of other countries.

Deciding on actions. The Dashboard will provide guidance on potential priority actions to improve food systems' impacts on diets and nutrition.

For each country, the Dashboard provides data on, for example, food supply chains, food environments, and individual factors, such as a person's economic status, thought process, dreams and aspirations, and overall life situation including income, remittances, credit card ownership, and ownership of or access to a vehicle, consumer behaviour, diets and nutrition, and environmental, social, political and economic drivers — all of which are factors that push or pull the food system.

Thus, the Dashboard provides country profile snapshots that capture these components in an 'infographic' type visual that is easy to understand, shows the connections, and can be downloaded for dissemination purposes. The country profiles are meant to tell a story about a country's food system.

- **Can you give us an example of how the dashboard could be used?**

A policymaker in the Ministry of Health can look at country-level data about people's intake of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, as well as nutrition and health outcomes such as high blood pressure, which may indicate a correlation between lower intakes of these nutritious foods and a

higher prevalence of high blood pressure. The data can be compared across countries by region, food systems type, or income classification to inform public health policies to promote increased intake of these foods.

Policymakers would also be able to look at long-term average annual precipitation in their country and how this is changing over time in the face of climate change. This, paired with data on the percent of cultivated land equipped for irrigation, can help inform decisions how to best utilize their agricultural water sources to increase yields of key crops.

- **Who is behind it?**

The need for this tool was identified by Lawrence Haddad at the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and Jessica Fanzo at Johns Hopkins University in 2017 when working on the team, led by Fanzo, that wrote the UN High Level Panel of Experts on Food Systems and Nutrition report. Work on the Dashboard started in 2018, bringing together a team from Johns Hopkins University, GAIN, Harvard University, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and the FAO. The firm iTech Mission came on board in 2019 to create the website and to continually improve its design and usability.

A key set of founding backers came together to provide seed funding for the development of the Dashboard under GAIN's Making Markets Work for Nutrition programme: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Irish Aid, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, IDRC, Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. FAO, Johns Hopkins University, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation and USAID provided additional support. We greatly appreciate all of this support: past, present, and future.

- **When will the Dashboard go live?**

The Dashboard will be launched on June 1st, 2020.

- **How can policymakers learn more about it?**

There will be a [webinar](#) on June 5 to show policymakers how to use the Dashboard.

### **Resources for media:**

Link: <http://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org>

More info about the dashboard as per article in the journal *Nature*: <https://go.nature.com/3bvO8hQ>

### **Contacts:**

For reporters interested in digging deeper into this story or wishing to interview the key movers that made the Dashboard possible, contacts are as follows:

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