



Diagnosing Policy Coherence for Food Systems

Results from Nigeria





Food systems policy coherence is the alignment of policies that affect the food system with the aim of achieving health, environmental, social, and economic goals, to ensure that policies designed to improve one food system outcome do not undermine others and, where possible, take advantage of synergies across policy areas to achieve better outcomes for all¹.

The Food Systems Policy Coherence Diagnostic Tool offers a practical methodology to assess food systems policy coherence and provide actionable recommendations for enhancing it. It was applied to Nigeria in 2024 via an extensive document review and expert consultations.

Structures & Mechanisms

The first module of the tool examines whether there are structures and mechanisms in place that would increase

the likelihood of achieving policy coherence. The results for Nigeria, shown below, indicate that Nigeria's food system policy landscape is strong in providing the framework documents to guide food system transformation and that these are backed up by political commitment and coordination structures, but that there are areas to strengthen in terms of capacity, implementation, and inclusive stakeholder engagement.

1. Adapted from Parsons & Hawkes. 2019. Policy Coherence in Food Systems.

Nigeria's Structures and Mechanisms in Support of Food System Policy Coherence

Domain	Analysis and Recommendations
Framework Documents	Nigeria's food system pathway document was developed through the involvement of stakeholders from multiple sectors and provides a foundation for food systems transformation including a vision for the future that cuts across multiple domains of the food system, priorities for action, and specific interventions to address them.
Political Commitment	Nigeria's senior leadership has publicly supported this vision, including through a statement by the President at UNFSS 2021, demonstrating high-level political commitment.
Capacity & Implementation	Nigeria has taken key steps to pathway implementation by formally adopting the pathway, developing an associated action plan , and initiating the process of incorporating its priorities into other national policies and plans . It could go further by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking strong, wide-ranging capacity building of government staff across sectors on key topics related to 'food systems' and integrated food systems approaches. • Creating a comprehensive investment plan or budget to ensure all aspects of the pathway are funded.
Coordination Structures	Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning is the lead institution with responsibility for coordinating food systems transformation. It has platforms for cross-sectoral coordination on both broad food systems topics and specific ones, such as the Agriculture Technical Working Group on Food Systems Transformation, and structures for engaging state-level governments in food system transformation, as well. However, stakeholders might consider designating champions or advocates for a coherent food systems approach who are embedded within different government departments/agencies.
Inclusivity, Stakeholder Engagement & Voice	While Nigeria had inclusive dialogues to develop its pathway, stakeholders might consider putting in place mechanisms for consulting technical/scientific experts as well as non-scientific stakeholders (such as citizens and the private sector) on food system policy issues that cut across different sectors.
Monitoring & Accountability	Nigeria's national pathway is subject to regular review and includes key performance indicators, along with reporting milestones, mechanisms , and responsibilities . However, limited data on progress has been reported to date. Stakeholders could consider also putting in place approaches for assessing potential impacts of policies on different parts of the food system (i.e., synergies and trade-offs) as well as investing in public service capacity to collect and analyse evidence about these types of impacts.
Note: Green shading indicates domains where systems are highly supportive of coherence; yellow where they are moderately highly supportive; orange where they are only somewhat supportive, and red where they are generally not supportive	

Policy Conflicts & Synergies

Module 2 considers the conflicts and synergies between existing policies across six sectors (shown in the columns of the table below) and the achievement of key goals of food system transformation, drawn from the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) process and shown in the rows of the table below.

Results for Nigeria are shown in the shading of each cell in the table, following the legend shown below the table. For example, the dark green shading in the first cell indicates that agriculture policies reviewed are highly coherent with (supportive of) the goal of increasing the supply of main staple crops, which contributes to achieving zero hunger. In contrast, trade policies are shown to be neither coherent nor incoherent with the goal of climate change mitigation through food systems.

Coherence between Nigeria's Policies and Key Food System Goals

		Agriculture	Health	Environment	Trade	Social	Industrial, Economic & Monetary
Zero Hunger	Increased supply of main staples						
	Affordable prices for main staples						
Climate Resilience	Adaptation						
	Climate change mitigation						
Healthy Diets	More nutritious food consumption						
	Less unhealthy food consumption						
	Reduction of Food Loss & Waste						
Decent Work	Adequate wages for food system workers						
	Effective nutrition-sensitive social protection						
	Empowerment of Women & Girls						
LEGEND		Highly Coherent	Somewhat coherent	Neither coherent nor incoherent	Somewhat incoherent	Highly incoherent	Not assessed
Policies reviewed in this sector were very much in line with achieving this goal				Policies reviewed in this sector were generally not in line with achieving this goal			



Encouragingly, many policy areas were found to be somewhat or highly coherent with most food systems goals. This was particularly true for social and health policies. For example, areas of strength included:



Social policies help reduce hunger through social protection targeting poor rural households, official recognition of the Right

to Food, and food subsidies or transfers for the most vulnerable households. They support climate change adaptation by providing subsidised drought-tolerant seeds and temporary assistance in climate emergencies.



Health policies support healthy diets through awareness campaigns, including nutrient lists on packaged foods, and mandatory fortification of staples. They

support women's empowerment through family planning support and subsidised maternal and child healthcare.



More incoherence was found when it came to **agricultural policies**, particularly with achieving goals of climate

change mitigation and less unhealthy food consumption. For example, supporting increases in ruminant livestock production could result in increases in greenhouse gas emissions, particularly if not connected with support for practices that reduce livestock-related emissions, and backing the expansion of agricultural production areas could result in the conversion of ecosystems that help store greenhouse gases and provide other environmental services. In contrast, agriculture policies were highly coherent with increasing the supply of staple crops and reducing their prices, such as through research and development and extension services focused on staples. They were also largely coherent with increasing consumption of nutritious foods, such as through support for biofortification, livestock and fisheries, and cold chain infrastructure.



Environmental policies also showed some areas of incoherence, such as by placing limits on fishing – while often motivated

by important environmental goals and supporting of maintaining fish stocks for the future, these can have short term conflicts with achieving more nutritious food consumption if they make fish (a highly nutritious food) more expensive or less available. They should thus be accompanied by mitigating measures to ensure access to comparably nutritious foods. Environmental policies were highly coherent with climate change adaptation, such as by promoting reforestation and early warning systems, but could further increase coherence with climate change mitigation, such as through more support to circular production systems.



Industrial, economic, and monetary policies support

access to nutritious foods through supporting last-mile rural infrastructure (which can also help reduce food loss and waste) and incentives for firms in

nutritious foods value chains. But they could do more to support adequate wages for food system workers through stronger minimum wage policies and to support women's empowerment by requiring equal pay for equal work and prohibiting gender discrimination in access to credit.



Trade policies also showed areas of incoherence. For example, tariffs and non-tariff barriers to inputs of staple crops could raise prices

or limit availability of these foods, hindering efforts to achieve Zero Hunger, and a lack of taxes on exports of products associated with high greenhouse gas emissions is a missed opportunity for achieving synergies between supporting trade and climate change mitigation. In contrast, the inclusion of clauses related to worker protections in trade agreements may improve job quality for food systems workers, and having in place strong trade facilitation measures can make value chains more efficient and thus reduce loss and waste of traded foods.



Conclusion

There are some caveats to this analysis. First, although this analysis was conducted at the national level, Nigeria's federal system features significant decentralisation of policy responsibilities. National policies often serve to initiate agendas and mobilise political will, but state-level actions play a critical role in implementation. As this analysis does not capture relevant state-level policies and initiatives, it may under- or overestimate the actual level of policy coherence across the country. Second, policy is complex and dynamic, and the goals of food system transformation are numerous; this analysis considers only a limited number of food systems goals and policies at one point in time. In addition, it is not necessarily the

case that areas of incoherence in policies should be seen as 'bad'; there are some cases where incoherence may make sense, such as due to prioritisation across goals or political economy necessities.

Still, policy incoherence can sometimes lead to inefficiency and lower the likelihood of achieving policy goals, as well as missed opportunities for leveraging synergies across policy areas where they exist. While achieving perfect coherence among all food-related policies across all outcomes is unlikely—and potentially undesirable, given the costs associated with coordination and alignment—by identifying and managing critical synergies and trade-offs, Nigeria's government and the stakeholders who support it can better align efforts towards achieving key goals.





You can access the
tool and supporting
resources here:



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