

BUILD COHERENT PORTFOLIOS OF POLICIES AND INVESTMENTS

A key challenge that restricts successful transformation of food systems is that existing national, regional, and global policies, strategies, legislation, and investments are compartmentalized into distinct dialogues. These challenges can be overcome through the formulation and implementation of cross-sectoral portfolios of policies, investments, and legislation that comprehensively address the negative effects of multiple drivers on food security and nutrition.

These portfolios need to be well-targeted and provide incentives for all actors to engage constructively in innovative and systemic changes that will lead to transformed food systems. A context-specific situation analysis will enable countries to assess which combination of pathways towards the transformation of food systems is most relevant, given the way in which the major drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition have affected them, and which policy measures and investments are most appropriate to form part of the portfolio (Figure 1, left-hand side).

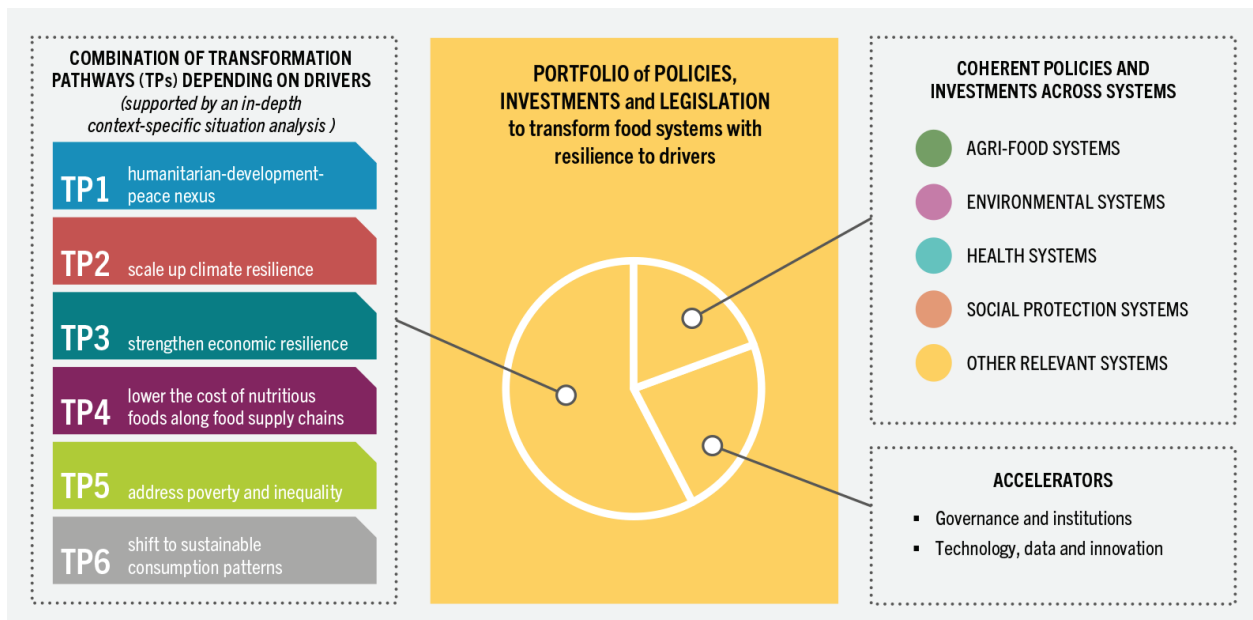
The performance of food systems depends on their coherence and interaction with several other systems, including the wider agri-food systems, in addition to environmental, health, and social protection systems (Figure 1, right-hand side). Other systems, such as education systems, play a critical role in providing nutritious school meals, the necessary knowledge and skills in food production to nutrition education for school-aged children, and raising consumer awareness towards minimizing the negative impacts of food consumption on human health and the environment.

Health systems and their services are vital in ensuring that people are able to consume foods and utilize the necessary nutrients for their health and well-being. Food systems may exert both positive and negative impacts on human health through multiple interrelated pathways, which are influenced by factors arising from within and outside food systems, including social, economic, and environmental determinants of health.

Investments in social protection systems have served as powerful instruments for strengthening people's access to nutritious food, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, social protection is more than a short-term response to acute situations of food insecurity and malnutrition. When predictable and well-targeted, social protection can support households to engage in new economic activities and to capitalize on opportunities created by the continued economic dynamism of food systems, thereby bringing about longer-term improvements in access to healthy diets.

The effective and efficient implementation of portfolios of policies and investments require an enabling environment of governance mechanisms and institutions that facilitate consultation across sectors and key stakeholders (Figure 1). Scaling up the availability of technologies, data, and innovative solutions is key to accelerating the transformation of food systems while ensuring that possible trade-offs are minimized as a consequence of the transformative process.

Figure 1. Key elements of a portfolio of policies and investments



Source: FAO.

The successful transformation of food systems towards greater affordability of healthy diets for all, that are sustainably produced and with improved resilience to identified drivers, calls for win-win solutions to be fully exploited. As with all systemic changes, there will be winners and losers while the introduction of new technologies, improved access to data and innovations, and the subsequent changes in food systems performance will produce both positive and negative spillover effects. Coherence among systems, as well as the cross-cutting accelerators, play a key role in maximizing the benefits and minimizing negative consequences of transformation.

Source:

FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. Chapter 4: What needs to be done to transform food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets? The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021. Transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb5409en>