



Metrics, Models and Foresight for European Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security (SUSFANS)

Executive summary of the 1st Stakeholder Core Group Workshop 30 October 2015 Prague, Czech Republic



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1 Project overview

The research project SUSFANS addresses 'Metrics, Models and Foresight for European Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security'. Funded by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme for four years and started in April 2015, the project aims to make a leading scientific contribution to a balanced and encompassing view on improving food and nutrition security outcomes and making food in the European Union (EU) more sustainable. In short: to achieve sustainable food and nutrition security (FNS) in the EU. The research is led by the notion that improvements in the diets of the European consumer must come from, and be supportive of, food systems that contribute to public health, environmental protection and thriving enterprise in the long term. The group of 16 organisations in the SUSFANS consortium will cross barriers between the nutrition, agricultural and other food-related disciplines, and will engage intensively with stakeholders in the European food system. In doing so, SUSFANS builds bridges between the worlds of agriculture and food on one hand, and public health and nutrition on the other.

The specific objective of SUSFANS is to build a conceptual framework, an evidence base and analytical tools for underpinning EU-wide food policies – with respect to their impact on consumers' diets, on nutrition and public health, on the environment, on the competitiveness of the EU agricultural-food sector, as well as on global food and nutrition security. With the integration of metrics, models and foresight, SUSFANS aims to set a scientific standard for assessing sustainable food and nutrition security in the EU. The project will inform policy reforms and innovations that contribute to better alignment of healthy consumption and food production in the EU. The exchange with stakeholders is an essential aspect of the research agenda and its impact towards a European food system.

2 Objectives of the workshop

An important part of the SUSFANS project is to collect input from stakeholders involved in food systems at all levels. Therefore, a Stakeholder Core Group (SCG) which consists of about 30 selected experts and decision makers representing a wide range of stakeholder communities and hence 'worldviews' (e.g. primary producers, food industry, retail, consumer groups, investors, regulators, policymakers and academics) was created. This SCG will advise the SUSFANS consortium on key topics during 4 workshops (e.g. October 2015, end 2016, mid 2017 and mid 2018).

This first workshop of the SCG introduced the SUSFANS project to the stakeholders with a special focus on the Work Package 1 'Conceptual framework and food and nutrition security (FNS) sustainability metrics' and the Work Package 6 'Stakeholder interaction and scenario review'.

During 4 parallel working groups, experts reviewed, helped refine and provided feedback on:

- i. the SUSFANS Conceptual Framework that serves as an overall project guide;
- ii. a set of metrics to assess the overall sustainability of the food system, balanced across the range of world views on the assessment of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable food;
- iii. case studies that will include:
 - a) proteins from livestock-fish supply chains and
 - b) micronutrients from fruits and vegetables supply chains;
- iv. existing explorative scenarios, so as to identify their most salient features for exploring sustainable diets and food systems in the EU, within a global context of food security and climate change.

3 Summary of the meeting and stakeholder recommendations

The first SUSFANS stakeholder workshop brought representatives of different stakeholder groups and the researchers from the various research teams involved in the project together. The stakeholder group was constituted of about a quarter of food system actors, such as primary producer and the food processing industry. The largest group of stakeholders present were so-called food system influencers such as civil society organization and advocacy groups working on food issues. In addition, a small number of EU policy makers (DG Research, DG Agri) joined the workshop.

After a set of introductory presentations to familiarize participants with the objectives and work packages of the SUSFANS project the meeting was set up to provide ample room for discussion, input and feedback. Stakeholders endorsed the basic ideas of the SUSFANS project of bringing together the agriculture with the nutrition community to think about how to achieve food and nutrition security in a coherent manner at an EU and country level. In addition they endorsed the need to add the notion of sustainability to FNS, taking into account achieving FNS and reducing health burdens related to food consumption with less environmental costs by a thriving agri-business sector and without neglecting the EU food system impacts on the globe. Stakeholders acknowledged that bringing together these various goals required a clear set of metrics and analytical tools to assess progress toward these goals. This would also allow to better unearth options and leverage points to deal with possible trade-offs, and to systematically monitor progress towards sustainable FNS.

Stakeholders saw factors currently blocking the EU food system in moving towards sustainable FNS in three areas: on the consumer side, within the food system and with respect to public policies.

Stakeholders approved the basic ideas, elements and layout of the SUSFANS conceptual framework (CF) and recommended a number of additions. They felt strongly that a recognition of the social outcomes of the food system (such as labour conditions or socio-cultural wellbeing) need to be added to the framework, maybe also as a policy goal for the EU. A number of specific additions were suggested to the different elements of the framework (drivers, food systems activities, linkages in the system/arrows) and the stakeholders also recommended considering how the dynamics of the

food system could be captured while also showing a theory of change for where the food system should be heading.

Stakeholders also recommended keeping check of important upcoming policy milestones or cycles (e.g. reviews of policies), so become “policy watchers”, in order to feed in impact at very timely moments and make sure that the project pro-actively seeks policy buy-in and channels for uptake of its scientific results in public or private information systems and monitoring cycles.

Stakeholders approved the proposed hierarchical approach to metrics to assess sustainable FNS and food system activity outcomes, and stressed the need for finding a set of metrics that is technically sound but then also choosing a sub-set of metrics that are easy to communicate to decision-makers. They also suggested additions and changes to indicators proposed on the four policy goals and made recommendations regarding the (geographical) resolution of the indicators. Conducting country level modelling would allow to cover black spots while it might also be good to have some metrics at the household level where possible and appropriate. They also suggested producing a few, clear metrics at the EU, aggregating up from country level data, that can be easily communicated.

Stakeholders explored various issues specific to each value chain case studies that SUSFANS is currently preparing (innovations in fruit and vegetable chains and in livestock and fish supply towards sustainable protein intake), such as environmental impacts of livestock and crop production system or their health outcomes. They also discussed innovation pathways that each case study should explore, for example on bringing in consumer perceptions and behaviours for guiding the food chain actors’ work and how to change consumer behaviours with respect to new sources of protein.

Stakeholders discussed a wide range of drivers for exploring scenarios of sustainable food systems for the EU that will be important in changing the EU food system and their importance in the next 30 years. They also formulated a number of policy questions that the scenarios could help answer. These questions varied in detail and level, some addressed the whole food system while others focus on a particular food system actor or activity, such as consumers or agricultural production. The majority of the questions though focused on policies that could move the EU food system towards achieving sustainable FNS.

The SUSFANS project very much looks forward to strengthening the relationship with the SCG initiated with this inaugural meeting over the coming workshops.



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