



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE
FOR SUSTAINABLE
TRANSFORMATION

FAST

Partnership

Members meeting report

22-23 April 2024 - FAO HQ Rome

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1. Background

Agrifood systems can accelerate climate action providing solutions to food insecurity, poverty and biodiversity loss. Climate finance is key to unlocking this potential, but the current share of climate finance to agrifood systems is inadequate to support the necessary transformation. The Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation (FAST) Partnership aims to improve the quantity and quality of climate finance contributions towards the transformation of agriculture and food systems with a special focus on vulnerable groups. The Partnership offers a unique space to discuss challenges, opportunities, and solutions, with a view to accelerate and catalyze existing actions and at the same time develop and disseminate state-of-the-art analysis and documents that can support evidence-based decision-making. Current Members include governments, intergovernmental organizations, multilateral development banks, civil society organizations, youth and farmers' organizations, and global and regional networks.

2. Objectives of the workshop

During the first FAST Partnership Members meeting, Members defined and agreed on priority actions reflected in the work plan for the year 2024-2025. The meeting was held at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Headquarters in Rome, Italy, from the 22 to 23 April 2024 (see meeting agenda in [Annex 1](#)). Participants also had the opportunity to join the meeting online. The two-day meeting was attended by over 80 participants, including representatives from 20 Members and six Observers of the Partnership (see [Annex 2](#)). The Members meeting was followed by the first meeting of the FAST Board on 24 April where Board Members discussed how to move discussions towards implementation.

The FAST Members meeting gave Members the opportunity to:

- Get to know each other and share their motivations for joining the Partnership and hopes for its implementation.
- Learn about key foundational documents (work plan, operational guidelines and working groups) and key achievements to date.
- Discuss priority actions of the work plan and modalities of collaboration.





3. Summary of the discussions

3.1 Setting the stage and visions for the FAST Partnership

The FAST Partnership Members meeting was opened by Kaveh Zahedi, Director of FAO's Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB). Mr. Zahedi highlighted the importance of unlocking the potential of agrifood systems through improved climate finance (quantity and quality). He stressed the role that the FAST Partnership can play in shaping a new narrative, placing agrifood systems at the core of climate action, with valid solutions that deserve adequate investments.

Members were invited to share their motivation for joining the FAST Partnership in small groups and the results were captured through a Mentimeter survey (see [Annex 3](#)). The most common theme to emerge from discussions was the need to improve climate finance for agrifood systems, with many highlighting the importance of reaching actors on the ground, particularly the most vulnerable. Members expressed their hope that the FAST Partnership could act as a catalyst to build cooperation with existing initiatives and other partners. They also stressed how the FAST Partnership could provide an opportunity to shape the global narrative, offer capacity development, help build the evidence base, and ultimately lead to more implementation of climate action in agrifood systems. Azerbaijan put forward the opportunities it sees in engaging on a global level, ensuring that COP29¹ can build on the momentum of COP27 and COP28, and stressed the importance of ongoing dialogue now that agriculture has gained prominence in the international climate arena. Germany highlighted how the FAST Partnership can enable COP-to-COP collaboration and the need to present activities at COP29. It also emphasized the importance of the FAST Partnership pillar on policy dialogue.

¹ 29th Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, taking place in November 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

3.2 First achievements of the FAST Partnership

After the launch of FAST as a COP27 Egyptian Presidency Initiative, FAO was tasked with its operationalization into a multistakeholder partnership to translate the ambition of the Initiative into action. In 2023, FAO set up a FAST Partnership Task Force hosted in FAO's Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB). The Task Force started to develop the Partnership's key foundational documents and launched an online application form for potential Members to join the Partnership. At COP28, a High-Level Inception Meeting of the FAST Partnership was held, which strengthened the joint commitment to maintain climate finance for agrifood systems high in the international agenda. Since the beginning of 2024, FAO has been facilitating consultations with Members and interested entities to better understand the needs and visions for FAST Partnership, and to develop a work plan and a structure for working groups. The Task Force also presented preliminary results of an initiatives mapping to gain a clearer picture of the landscape of initiatives and organizations related to the FAST Partnership. The mapping identifies opportunities for synergies and collaborations, highlighting the gaps that the FAST Partnership can fill. Members were invited to add additional initiatives for consideration and inclusion in the final assessment.

3.3 COP-to-COP and regional collaboration

The effectiveness and sustainability of the work of the FAST Partnership relies on strong COP-to-COP collaboration and on leveraging regional mechanisms. Egypt stressed the importance of making sure that the FAST Partnership continues to foster collective efforts to implement its mandate and activities from COP-to-COP. Egypt also highlighted the example of I-CAN, a multistakeholder, multisectoral global flagship initiative, launched at COP27 in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), FAO and other partners, working on the critical nexus between climate change and nutrition. Furthermore, it was mentioned that the FAST Partnership is among the implementers of the COP28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action.

Members noted that ensuring coherence and coordination with regional mechanisms is critical to strengthen synergies and catalyze collective efforts for greater impact. Representatives from PLACA (The Platform of Latin America and the Caribbean for Climate Action on Agriculture), a regional mechanism for voluntary collaboration among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) on agriculture and climate change, launched at COP25, shared their experiences on mobilizing regional efforts to generate a common space for the exchange of knowledge, technologies and collaborative practices in agriculture to support the implementation of domestic climate change policies. The League of Arab States, bringing together 22 Arab countries from Middle East and North Africa, noted the need to create synergies also among different Rio Conventions, highlighting the issues of land degradation, water resources and biodiversity as key priority areas in the region, with the possibility to collaborate with ongoing initiatives related to nature-based solutions and natural systems restoration. The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) also shared insights on their work on climate change which encompasses promoting policy dialogues and capacity building as well as assisting countries in accessing finance. IICA also stressed the role that science and research can play in enabling the innovation needed for the transformation of agriculture. According to IICA, a good contribution of the FAST Partnership would be to act as a catalyst and create an ecosystem of different initiatives. The Asia and Pacific region was mentioned as a good example, where the FAST Partnership supported the regional workshop "Making Climate Finance Work for Agrifood Systems in Asia and the Pacific" to identify the needs in the region for better matchmaking with existing initiatives and funding opportunities.

3.4 Governance structure, work plan and working groups

Members were presented with the governance structure of the FAST Partnership which consists of 1) a Board led by Co-Chairs representing past, current and future COP Presidencies; 2) Members organized in three working groups each coordinated by a rapporteur; 3) a Task Force for coordination and support, and 4) Observers who are welcome for broader engagement. A draft version of the Partnership's Terms of Reference (ToR) and of the operational guidelines were presented, and Members had the chance to provide feedback.

Members further discussed arrangements on the implementation of the three working groups, including their collaboration and interconnection, priorities and scope.

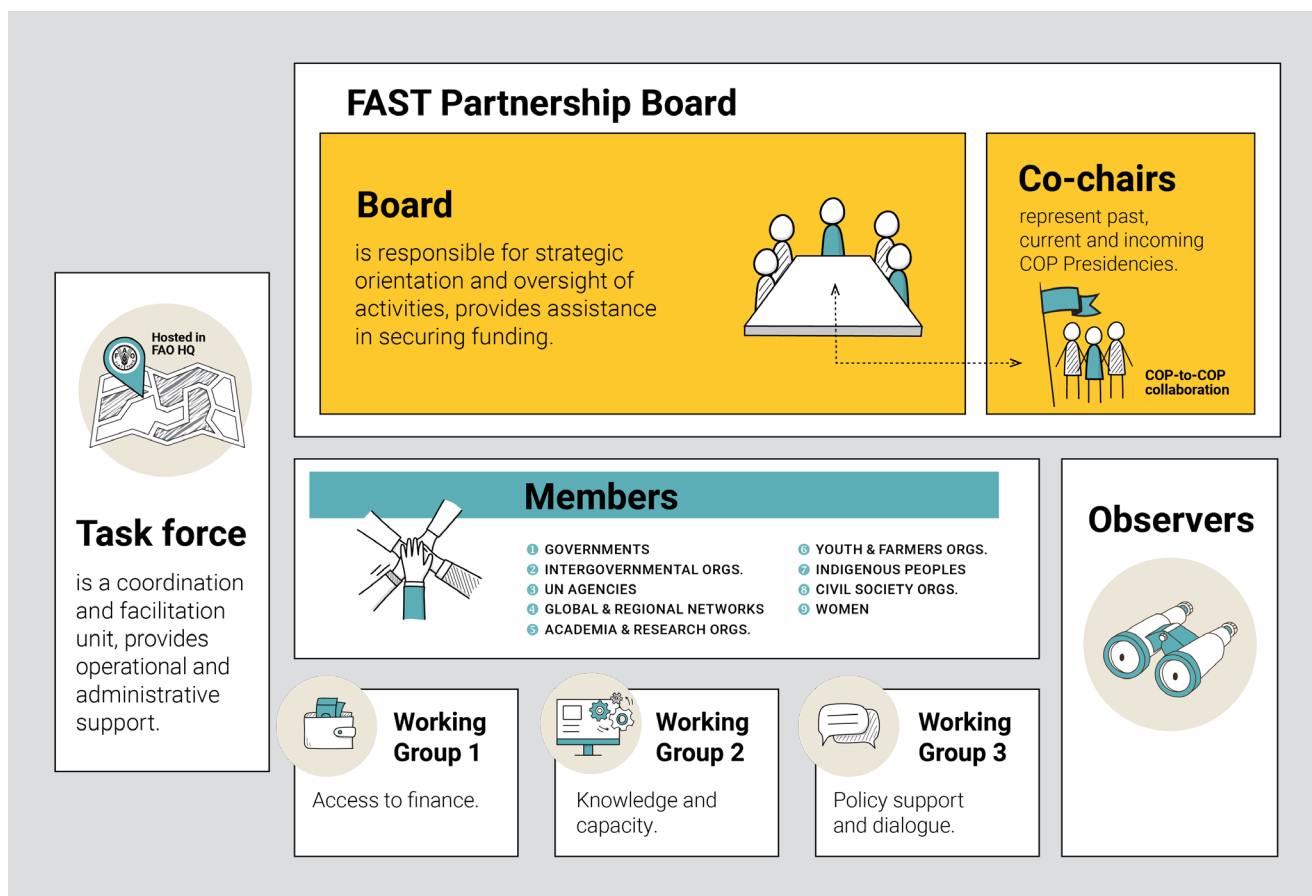
WORKING GROUP 1 ON ACCESS TO FINANCE, highlighted the importance of aligning short-term and long-term activities to concretely support countries in accessing climate finance opportunities. Such activities should consider demand-side requests on specific technical topics but also a global approach to support the change of narrative on improving access to finance for agrifood systems.

For **WORKING GROUP 2 ON KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY**, the discussion focused on how to make use of and effectively disseminate available resources and existing platforms. The suggestion was made that some topics could have a regional working group (e.g., through PLACA) to overcome language barriers. The opportunity for peer-learning between Members was also mentioned as well as specific topics of interest including soil, water harvesting and available context-specific technologies.

WORKING GROUP 3 ON POLICY SUPPORT AND DIALOGUE, saw great interest from Members. Based on the work plan, developed by the FAST Task force upon consultation, the working group proposed to develop several policy briefs building on previous studies. Advocacy and outreach strategy plans were also mentioned as a priority area of work to deliver clear messages and inform policy discussions. The working group agreed that there should be close coordination and timely information sharing with other working groups.

FAST Members agreed to meet at least once a year.

Figure 1 - Structure



Source: FAO



4. Open space sessions

The topics of the open space sessions were proposed by Members and took place in two rounds with four topics each. The following list provides a short overview of the topics discussed and potential activities that could be undertaken by the FAST Partnership:

➤ **Coordinating efforts to catalyze integrated actions for healthy people and a healthy planet: co-facilitated by Jenny Reid (New Zealand) and Nancy Aburto (FAO).**

To catalyze coordinated and integrated actions for healthy people and a healthy planet, we need to direct financing to holistic, systems-based efforts that can generate the multi-benefits desired. The FAST Partnership could seize the opportunity to advocate for the financing of a holistic and system approach combining traditional, local (including Indigenous Peoples) knowledge and experience. The group also discussed the need to improve the measurement of investments for dual impact in both innovative and traditional efforts, especially within the adaptation sectors.

➤ **Enhancing climate and biodiversity finance by leveraging public finance through the repurposing of (harmful) subsidies: co-facilitated by Martina Fleckenstein (WWF) and Robbie McCrea (New Zealand).**

The FAST Partnership could add value by providing a forum for Members that are interested in looking at repurposing opportunities where they could access the resources they need – e.g. by collating existing research and resources, bringing in external stakeholders, lending expertise from Members, and providing a space to test ideas.

➤ **How can we work through the FAST Partnership to support countries in drawing down climate finance to deliver social protection for small-scale farmers? facilitated by Marco Knowles (FAO) and Matthew Walsham (FAO).**

The FAST Partnership could facilitate structured conversations and provide knowledge on the importance of social protection and analysis of current finance flows, as well as act as a knowledge partner for the climate results framework for multilateral development banks.

➤ **Increasing collaboration with the work of the two other Rio conventions, CBD and UNCCD: facilitated by Sol Ortiz Garcia (PLACA) and Fernando Santillan (Mexico).**

The FAST Partnership can contribute to identifying synergies and avoiding competition in funding, e.g., between climate and biodiversity and instead focus on bringing funding for integrated initiatives.

➤ **FAST Dictionary: facilitated by Paul Luu (4 per 1000 initiative).**

The FAST Partnership could compile a list of concepts and expressions to create a shared understanding of common themes/definitions.

➤ **How to mobilize funds related to loss and damages in agriculture: facilitated by Sol Ortiz Garcia (PLACA) and Fernando Santillan (Mexico).**

The FAST Partnership could identify ways in which the agriculture sectors could be supported and identify financial mechanisms for loss and damage that are adapted to the demand of agriculture and ensure it is channeled to the sector.

➤ **Methane Emissions: facilitated by Buddhi Marambe (Sri Lanka).**

While adaptation is the priority for the agrifood sector in developing countries, there is a need to estimate the regional (across and within countries) methane emissions factors to undertake more precise estimations of current GHG emissions, mainly from paddy fields and livestock. This open session looked at pragmatic approaches to revise the NDC targets as needed, adopting NDC implementation plans, thus making more effective use of climate finance to meet targets by 2030.

➤ **Supporting UNFCCC negotiations: facilitated by Claudia Schepp (Germany).**

Participants agreed that the FAST Partnership should support UNFCCC negotiations through advocacy and capacity building, while making sure that activities operating under FAST run as a parallel process. In this way, the FAST Partnership can help to support advances on certain topics, e.g. a clearer definition of what implementation entails, even when negotiations are not moving forward. The group further stressed the potential of the FAST Partnership to keep agriculture as a topic high on the agenda of UNFCCC negotiations beyond the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security (SSJWA).

Annexes

Annex 1. Meeting Agenda

Day 1 - Monday 22 April 2024

TIME	SESSION
09:00 – 10:30	WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening remarks• Framing of the FAST Partnership Members meeting• Presentation of the FAST Partnership Task Force• Introductions by participants
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 – 12:30	THE FAST PARTNERSHIP – WHERE ARE WE NOW? Lighting talks on synergies with other initiatives, mechanisms and international processes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiatives mapping presentation• COP to COP collaboration• Cooperation with regional mechanisms Plenary discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where can we strengthen our impact through synergies with other initiatives, processes and regional mechanisms?
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch & group photo
14:00 – 14:30	Introduction of the FAST Partnership Board Hearing Board Members' different perspectives
14:30 – 15:30	DIVING INTO THE FAST WORK PLAN <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of work plan consultative process and ongoing activities• Exploring requests and activities under each pillar and opportunity to discuss proposals in small groups• Access to finance
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee Break
15:45 – 16:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy support and dialogue• Knowledge and capacity
16:30 – 17:00	End of day reflections
17:00	Close of day

Day 2 - Tuesday 23 April 2024

TIME	SESSION
09:00 – 09:30	WELCOME BACK AND OVERNIGHT REFLECTIONS
09:30 – 11:00	Open Space Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore topics and questions proposed by FAST members
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	Operational guidelines and working groups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of the operational guidelines and moderated discussion• Presentation of the working groups and function
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	Exploring working groups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• World Café session for working groups to meet and explore potential work programmes and priorities, focus and ways of working
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 – 16:45	Next steps and action planning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree next steps and ways of working between Members at Partnership and working group level
16:45 – 17:00	End of day reflections
17:00	Close of day

Annex 2. List of participants (in person and virtual*)

MEMBER	ROLE
Germany	Board Member
Egypt	Board Member
Uruguay	Board Member
Senegal	Board Member
Fiji	Board Member
Dominican Republic*	Board Member
World Rural Forum (WRF)	Board Member
World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	Board Member
Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD)	Board Member
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)	Board Member
World Farmers' Organization (WFO)	Board Member
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)*	Board Member
New Zealand	Board Member
Mexico	Member
Sri Lanka	Member
Chile	Member
Somalia	Member
League of Arab States	Member
African Development Bank*	Member
Global Methane Hub*	Member
Inter American Institute on Agriculture	Member
Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases*	Member
Platform of Latin America and the Caribbean for Climate Action on Agriculture (PLACA)	Member
Philippines	Member
4 x 1000 Initiative	Member
Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens*	Member
United States of America	Observer
EU	Observer
UNFCCC*	Observer

World Bank*	Observer
UNDP*	Observer
Canada	Observer
UK*	Observer
Brazil	Observer
Azerbaijan	Observer
Australia	Observer
The Bahamas*	Observer
Buthan*	Observer
Ecuador*	Observer

Annex 3. Mentimeter survey

What are your biggest hopes for the FAST Partnership?

Narrative change on the role of farmers in food systems from being target of decision-making to be seen as co-creator of solutions

Unlock finance

Bring together all different initiatives /conversations on finance for agrifood systems, make them more accessible + actionable

I'd like to see additional funding materialize and reaching grassroots

Catalytic effect, not part of the proliferation of empty initiatives

implement financing for regional mechanisms

To Improve acces, capacities and knowledge on climate financie with special focus on Family Farming , Women and Youth

Increase visibility of climate solutions from agri-food systems (including fisheries and aquaculture), thereby fostering access to climate finance

Qualitative investment in agriculture, matching the purpose

Mobilise finance for social protection of farmers

Deeper understanding of priorities for the next 6 months

Coherence, convergence and scale on climate action.

Catalyzing action implementation

Que nos apoye para implementar acción climática en Chile en agricultura

Los procesos que permitan obtener financiamiento a los sectores más vulnerables en la agricultura

Stronger evidence base for agrifood systems climate solutions for healthy people and a healthy planet

To accelerate means of implementation (finance, technologies and capacities) for agri-food systems, including private sector

Farmers and Farmers organization should be engaged at national, regional and global level to shape climate finance measures that are farmer centred and evidence bases

Addressing effectively climate change issues related agriculture

Contribute to accelerate finance access for agriculture.

Identify sources for financing Understanding mechanisms, criteria and the evaluation of applications for climate financing on agriculture

increase awareness for climate finance for agriculture

Increased recognition of power of food system transformation as a climate solution

Youth disaggregated data

Connect dots from funding to farms

Different roles between Members and Observers

Impact for farmers on the ground

Finance for youth, support entrepreneurship

Working with a diverse range of partners

*BTRs capacity building
MRV tools inventory at global level*

Meaningful alignment of efforts with other donors (GEF/GCF)

Access to no-regret options to improve soil health and water management

Provide overview of funding opportunities and advice on the best entry points for different countries and actors

Coordination of climate smart activities

*Balancing impact of finance on climate biodiversity and food security.
Such as subsidies*

Capacity building access to finance..

For FAST initiatives to be felt on the ground

To catalyze climate adaptation action

Soil health is more appropriate than soil fertility

Support to redirect current finance that is environmentally harmful

Inventory of best practices that can be tailored to local contexts

Recognition and building Cop-CoP legacy: I would like to see that COP29 and COP30 Presidencies build on FAST Partnership, instead of launching number of new initiatives., that disappear after

Supporting MRV systems able to show real progress on targets (dynamic Tier 2 EF and updated AD

Bring together ministries of agriculture and environment

Microfinance for grassroots action

Bring food and agriculture strongly in the agenda of climate donors



Annex 4. Photos

The photos taking during the FAST Partnership Members meeting as well as the Board meeting can be accessed using the following link:



[FAST Partnership Members meeting 2024 | Flickr](#)



*For people, for climate,
for nature.*

#FASTPartnership

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