



## Territorial development

# Using a participatory analysis to strengthen multi-level territorial governance for sustainable food systems and healthy diets

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)<sup>1</sup> boosts the capacities of multiple stakeholders involved in national and supranational food systems governance frameworks to foster participatory food systems territorial analysis in Cabo Verde and Sao Tome and Principe.<sup>2</sup>

The Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) has established a government-led multi-level food systems governance framework with the participation of relevant stakeholders, including representatives from different sectors of government, civil society, academia and the private sector. While the framework is more consolidated at supranational and national levels, the aim of the CPLP is to strengthen it at the local level.

The Second Ordinary Meeting of the CPLP Food Security and Nutrition Council (CONSAN-CPLP), held in Cabo Verde in July 2018, unanimously approved an initiative for the “Promotion of Sustainable Territorial Food Systems in the CPLP”.

FAO supported the CONSAN-CPLP by carrying out two bottom-up pilot initiatives in selected territories of Cabo Verde and Sao Tome and Principe. The pilot initiatives developed a multi-stakeholder participatory food systems assessment and issued related policy and programme recommendations


to promote sustainable territorial food systems for healthy diets.

The participatory diagnosis was led by the Executive Secretariat of the CPLP in 2019 and involved a national and local multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral team composed of ten relevant directors from different departments, as well as civil society and private sector representatives from the National Food Security and Nutrition Councils of each country.

A methodology was designed by CPLP’s Executive Secretariat and CONSAN’s Civil Society Facilitation

<sup>1</sup> A partnership between the Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP) and Food and Nutrition Division (ESN).

<sup>2</sup> Discussions were held respectively at the National Food Security and Nutrition Council of each country and at the third Ordinary Meeting of the CONSAN-CPLP.



Mechanism with FAO's support to strengthen stakeholders' capacities to identify food systems bottlenecks at the local and national levels.

Participants were also empowered to discuss, negotiate and agree on common policy and programme proposals that were approved at local, national and supranational levels. The bottom-up approach underscored the importance of considering territoriality and subsidiarity<sup>3</sup> as important aspects for food systems governance.

The initiative allowed the development of participatory tools and training for each local context, and built capacities at local and national levels for the dissemination of territorial approaches applied to food systems. Furthermore, the results were discussed by the CONSAN-CPLP, thus contributing to the consolidation of the existing multi-level territorial food systems governance framework involving all member countries.

The pilot initiative was implemented in two phases:

**Phase I:** Participatory assessment of local food systems, including a rapid landscape analysis, historical analysis, targeting of the most vulnerable farmers, nutritional status and dietary profiles, and elaboration of recommendations to improve policies and programmes, taking into consideration the interdependence with other governance levels (national and supranational levels);

**Phase II:** Discussion and validation of the recommendations elaborated in the Phase I in each country's National Food Security and Nutrition Council and at the CONSAN-CPLP.

### **The selected territory in each country**

Two territories were selected by national governments based on their importance for national and local food security and nutrition.

The selected territory in Sao Tome and Principe is in the Mé-Zóchi district on the island of Sao Tome, at an altitude of between 900 and 1 250 metres,

at the edge of the Obô Natural Park. This district is responsible for most of the country's horticultural production, and is home to 25 percent of the national population.

The selected territory in Cabo Verde is in Santo Antão, the second largest island in the archipelago, covering an area of 779 km<sup>2</sup> in the municipalities of Paul and Ribeira Grande, close to the Cova-Paul-Ribeira da Torre Natural Park. Santo Antão is Cabo Verde's agricultural stronghold (the sector generates 30 percent of the island's gross domestic product (GDP), compared with a 9 percent average for the country as a whole); and the municipalities of Paul and Ribeira Grande are those most suited to farming.

## **PHASE I: MAIN FINDINGS OF THE PARTICIPATORY DIAGNOSIS OF THE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM**

### **Rapid landscape analysis**

In both territories, topography is one of the dominant factors in land occupation. Other factors include proximity to local settlements and to infrastructure – irrigation in the case of Cabo Verde and old coffee plantations in Sao Tome and Principe. In both territories, the land is worked manually; in Sao Tome and Principe, vegetable producers are starting to use greenhouses. In both cases, the lowlands are more urbanized and have a wider diversity of agricultural production. In the highlands, the forests are important for firewood, and agriculture is less widespread – albeit economically important for local populations. Farmers in the highlands (closer to natural parks in both territories) are more vulnerable.

### **Historical analysis**

The history of both territories can be divided into three periods: the colonial era (until 1975), the post-independence period (until 1990) and the liberal democratic period (up to the present). The colonial era and strong state interventions in the post-independence period have left their mark in both cases: in Santo Antão for the (re)construction of irrigation infrastructures and the creation of public jobs; in Mé-Zóchi for the breakup of the

<sup>3</sup> The principle of subsidiarity can be included in territorial governance when territorial units are unable to overcome their constraints on their own and need support from the aggregated territorial levels. The CPLP has a multi-level food security governance architecture involving all stakeholders.

large colonial plantations and agrarian reform. In both cases, these past state interventions largely explain each territory's greater or lesser resilience and current poverty levels. Severe food insecurity and malnutrition, and the start of support from the World Food Programme (WFP) with the gradual introduction of new food products into the local diet, such as rice, marked the post-independence period. In both territories, the liberal democratic period that began in the 1990s brought greater access to imported seeds and chemical fertilizers, enabling the first established farmers to increase their production and productivity. But it also brought changes in production systems that increased ecosystem degradation, greater pressure from pests and diseases, and decoupling of local production from present day food consumption.

In both territories, young and/or landless farmers have migrated, either abroad (particularly in the case of Santo Antão) or to the country's capital (in the case of Mé-Zóchi). In the latter, these farmers started to

occupy lands near the Natural Park in order to engage in vegetable production. It should also be noted that intensive horticulture became consolidated in both territories from the late 1990s, alongside growing urbanization. Tourism also emerged in this period as an activity with the potential to better exploit the country's landscape and food heritage. In both cases local produce is sold to the closest cities (Sao Tome and Santo Antao) directly by the farmers or in most cases by local intermediaries.

**Identification of typologies of the most vulnerable farmers**

In both territories, the most vulnerable farmers are young people and women without land or access to non-agricultural incomes. The lesser vulnerability of older farmers is associated with previous public policies they benefited from (agrarian reform in Sao Tome or public employment schemes/access to irrigation in Cabo Verde). The typologies of the most vulnerable farmers are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 below.

**TABLE 1 – Most vulnerable farmers – Santo Antão (Cabo Verde)**

Typology	Family farms - highlands	Family farms - lowlands
Types of production	Produce more vulnerable to drought. Maize, sweet potatoes, potatoes, beans	More diverse production (yams, sugar cane, fruits including banana and papaya and vegetables)
Employment opportunities	Increased reliance on public employment and remittances	Greater availability of agricultural jobs (sugar cane, banana trees, vegetables, etc.)  Increased access to off-farm employment/revenues
Poverty	Greater	Lesser

**TABLE 2 – Most vulnerable farmers – Mé-Zóchi ( Sao Tome and Principe)**

Family farms with occupied land	Family farms with own land
Live in the lowlands but produce in the highlands	Live and produce in the lowlands
Did not benefit from land distribution. Occupied land near and in the Natural Park area	Gained access to land through the distribution of plantation estates (fazendas) to former workers
Younger	Older
Always worked in horticulture	Can work in horticulture or coffee or both. Have been involved in coffee production at some point



## **Nutritional status at national level and household access to a variety of foods at territorial level**

In Cabo Verde, nationally, 18.5 percent of the population are undernourished, while, at the same time, 16.3 percent of women and 6.9 percent of men are obese. 30.5 percent of men and 28.1 percent of women suffer from hypertension, and 9.1 percent of men and 8 percent of women have diabetes (Global Nutrition Report, 2020). In Sao Tome and Principe, 12 percent of the population are undernourished (FAO *et al.*, 2020), while 16.9 percent of women and 7.2 percent of men suffer from obesity (Global Nutrition Report, 2020) and iron deficiency is a serious public health problem (FAO *et al.*, 2020).

In Cabo Verde there is inadequate prevalence data to show the proportion of children under five years of age who are stunted. In Sao Tome and Principe, 11.7 percent of children under five years of age are stunted (Global Nutrition Report, 2020; FAO *et al.*, 2020).

The two countries do not have information on food consumption at territorial level. Therefore a rapid assessment was carried out among the local population using the Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) as a population-level indicator of household food access to a variety of foods (FAO, 2010b).

In Mé-Zóchi, the score was classified as medium (seven points) and in Santo Antão, this indicator showed that households had more access to a variety of foods (ten points). However, vitamin-rich fruits and vegetables and dark green leafy vegetables did not appear in the food groups consumed.

In Santo Antão, “cachupa” (a meal composed of meat or fish with stewed beans and corn) remains the most important meal of the day, although it is no longer ubiquitous in all households. Some families have replaced cachupa with rice dishes and with new ingredients. Locally raised pork has been replaced by imported sausages from Portugal or Brazil. Very few households interviewed consume eggs and meat, with chicken being the only source of animal protein mentioned and, even then, only among less vulnerable families.

In addition, it was observed that both territories have experienced important changes in traditional cooking preparations and diets, such as the introduction of ultra-processed seasoning cubes and of imported foods, e.g. rice, smoked sausages, soybean oil and pasta, in many households' cooking preparations. Beans were found to be the only pulses consumed.


## **Main conclusion from the participatory diagnosis**

This participatory diagnosis revealed an apparent disconnect between eating habits, which are increasingly dependent on globalized food chains, and local production. The historical analysis revealed that food aid programmes have enabled the local population to confront previous crises. However, these options have generated eating habits that are now having an adverse impact on local agriculture, since the most vulnerable producers are intensifying their farming and/or occupying new lands (as in the case of Mé-Zóchi) in order to raise their income to also buy industrialized food products.

Furthermore, despite the growing use of pesticides, agricultural pests are increasingly eroding agricultural incomes, and farmers do not have the capacities for and knowledge of agroecological practices for plant protection. In addition, farmers are not consuming their own produce regularly, and it is easier and often cheaper for them to sell their produce and buy imported/industrialized food products (rice for example). In both territories, diet quality is influenced by low purchasing power and the availability of cheaper imported products.

Other relevant factors that contribute to the current diets include logistical difficulties in storing and processing seasonal products, and lack of awareness of healthy diets. Moreover, the quality of the food being produced under the new intensive local production systems reinforces the changes brought about by the globalized market, thereby contributing to malnutrition and other diet-related chronic diseases caused by overweight and obesity.

Participants in the assessment acknowledged the need to strengthen the participation of local stakeholders in the National Food Security and Nutrition Councils in order to strengthen the



existing food systems governance framework. They also acknowledged the need for the decentralization of existing school feeding programs in order to stimulate local food procurement for agroecological products and the need to design new national inter-sectoral policies in order to strengthen small-scale farmers' livelihoods and promote more sustainable food systems. The main policy and programme recommendations agreed by all stakeholders are presented below.

## PHASE II RECOMMENDATIONS VALIDATED

The recommendations below were elaborated based on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analyses prepared during Phase I of the pilot initiative, discussed and validated by the National Food Security and Nutrition Council in each Country, and by the CONSAN-CPLP.

### Recommendations at the community and local level

- Promote a local food security governance structure in connection with the National Food Security and Nutrition Council;
- Strengthen and decentralize food procurement for the School Health and Nutrition Food Programme, by establishing affirmative action criteria for local farmers who produce with sustainable methods;
- Strengthen nutritional education in schools for parents, students and canteen staff, and increase awareness of food contents;
- Foster technical innovation and entrepreneurship for young people and women, through: (a) promotion of processing units for native foods to reduce household cooking times; (b) promotion of sustainable farming methods, agroecological innovation and diversification with traditional native foods.

### Recommendations at the national level

- Strengthen networking and the participation of local authorities in the National Food Security and Nutrition Council;

- Develop a national programme to promote sustainable territorial food systems and healthy diets with a territorial approach involving the Ministries of Education, Health, Agriculture, Finance, Tourism and Environment;
- Strengthen capacities in the Ministry of Agriculture to develop and disseminate agroecological practices and encourage sustainable agricultural production chains (in particular for horticulture), including the dynamic preservation of seeds from native plants with significant nutritional value.

### Recommendations at the supranational level

- Develop efforts to implement CPLP's food systems governance at local level and/or increase local authorities' participation in the National Food Security and Nutrition Councils;
- Upscale the initiative for the "Promotion of Sustainable Territorial Food Systems in the CPLP" to all CPLP member countries.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The pilot project in the two territories allowed numerous state and non-state actors that participate in national food systems governance to better understand the importance of territorial approaches for the promotion of more sustainable food systems and healthy diets.

It also paved the way for building an environment of trust, transparency and accountability, which are all necessary for fostering long-term food systems policies, programmes and investments, thus reinforcing overall food systems governance in the CPLP.

Recommendations validated at national level in Sao Tome and Principe contributed to the approval and announcement of the "100% Bio strategy" by the government.<sup>4</sup>

At the CPLP level, the third Ordinary Meeting of the CONSAN-CPLP approved the upscaling of the initiative to all member countries, and contributed

---

<sup>4</sup> 100% Bio can be a national food systems strategy with a territorial approach and based on the promotion of sustainable food production.

to specific recommendations to the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), including the possible establishment of an international coalition to promote territorial food systems governance (360 Mozambique, 2021; CPLP, 2021).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 360 Mozambique.** 2021. *CPLP: Proposal to UN for coalition to promote sustainable food systems*. Maputo. Cited 9 February 2022. <https://360mozambique.com/world/cplp/cplp-proposal-to-un-for-coalition-to-promote-sustainable-food-systems/>
- Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP).** 2021. *Declaração Final da III Reunião do CONSAN-CPLP*. Lisbon. Cited 9 February 2022. <https://www.cplp.org/id-4691.aspx?NewsId=9204&PID=11652>
- FAO.** 1999. *Guidelines for Agrarian Systems Diagnosis*. Rome.
- FAO.** 2005. *Desenvolvimento territorial participativo e negociado (DTPN)*. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/3/ak228o/ak228o.pdf>
- FAO.** 2010a. *Nutrition Country Profiles: Cabo Verde*. Rome. Cited 9 February 2022. [http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/nutrition/cpv\\_en.stm](http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/nutrition/cpv_en.stm)
- FAO.** 2010b. *Guidelines for Measuring Household and Individual Dietary Diversity*. Rome. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i1983e.pdf>
- FAO.** 2012. *Sustainable nutrition security. Restoring the bridge between agriculture and health*. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/3/me785e/me785e.pdf>
- FAO.** 2014. *Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture*. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/3/as601e/as601e.pdf>
- FAO.** 2018a. *Dietary Assessment: A resource guide to method selection and application in low resource settings*. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/3/i9940en/i9940EN.pdf>
- FAO.** 2018b. *Sustainable food systems: Concept and framework*. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/3/ca2079en/CA2079EN.pdf>
- FAO.** 2020. *eLearning Academy: Sustainable Food Value Chains for Nutrition*. Rome. Cited 9 February 2022. <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=566>
- FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) & World Health Organization (WHO).** 2020. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020*. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca9692en>
- Global Nutrition Report.** 2020. *Cabo Verde Nutrition Profile*. Bristol, UK. Cited 9 February 2022. <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/africa/western-africa/cabo-verde/>
- High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).** 2017. *Nutrition and food systems. A report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition*. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/3/i7846e/i7846e.pdf>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), FAO & UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).** 2016. *Adopting a Territorial Approach to Food Security and Nutrition Policy*. Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264257108-en>
- Ostrom, E. & Hess, C.** 2007. *Understanding Knowledge as a Commons: From Theory to Practice*. Cambridge, USA, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Some rights reserved. This work is available under a CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence

**RISE** Rural institutions, services and empowerment

RISE works to strengthen rural institutions and organizations, facilitating the socioeconomic inclusion and empowerment of people, leaving no one behind.

Contact:

Rural Institutions, Services and Empowerment

[RISE-Team@fao.org](mailto:RISE-Team@fao.org)

<https://www.fao.org/rural-institutions/en/>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations