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# COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK

### Second Session

16 - 18 July 2024

### Sustainable Livestock Transformation Framework

#### Executive Summary

The document introduces the Sustainable Livestock Transformation Framework, which FAO elaborated to strengthen its capacity to provide technical and policy assistance to Members. The framework is structured around five pillars that address gathering and dissemination of knowledge, supporting application of good practices, promoting policies and responsible investment in the livestock sector and accelerating impacts through innovation and strategic partnerships, while taking a holistic approach that addresses all dimensions of sustainability throughout the value chain.

The document also highlights the need to align the implementation process of this framework with the process of the “Global assessment of the contribution of livestock to food security, sustainable agrifood systems, nutrition and healthy diets” described in discussion document COAG:LI/2024/2.<sup>1</sup> This alignment could lead to the development of a Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Livestock Transformation to accelerate the contribution of all stakeholders in the livestock sector to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A participatory process for developing the Global Plan of Action is proposed.

<sup>1</sup> COAG:LI/2024/2, <https://www.fao.org/coag/sub-committee-on-livestock/second-session/discussion-documents/en/>  
Documents can be consulted at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

### **Suggested action by the Sub-Committee**

The Sub-Committee is invited to recommend COAG to:

- welcome the Sustainable Livestock Transformation Framework;
- recommend FAO to develop a Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Livestock Transformation that operationalizes the Sustainable Livestock Transformation Framework and builds upon the outcomes of the “Global assessment of the contribution of livestock to food security, sustainable agrifood systems, nutrition and healthy diets”; and
- recommend FAO to continue supporting countries, as appropriate, in the sustainable transformation of their livestock sectors.

Queries on the substantive content of the document may be addressed to:

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The world is off track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. According to a recent FAO report,<sup>2</sup> “most of the food- and agriculture-related SDG targets are still far from being achieved” and “progress made in the past two decades has stagnated, and in some cases even reversed, compounding the challenges in eradicating poverty and hunger, improving health and nutrition, and combating climate change.” The world’s livestock systems convert natural resources into nutritious terrestrial animal source foods, contributing to food security and improved nutrition and supporting the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people.

2. At its 27th Session, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) requested FAO to “strengthen its policy and technical support to Members by collecting appropriate data and knowledge and developing tools to guide countries in formulating institutional mechanisms for the preparation and implementation of livestock policy and investments, including increased resources, in relation to achieving the SDGs.”<sup>3</sup> It also requested FAO to “promote the exchange of information, dissemination of good practices and technical cooperation for sustainable livestock production”.<sup>4</sup>

3. To respond to these requests, FAO restructured its Animal Production and Health Division in 2023.<sup>5</sup> It also formulated the Sustainable Livestock Transformation Framework (SLTF),<sup>6</sup> a five-pillar framework to guide FAO’s work on livestock. The SLTF was introduced at the first-ever Global

<sup>2</sup> FAO. 2023. *Tracking progress on food and agriculture-related SDG indicators 2023*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc7088en>

<sup>3</sup> C/2021/21, para 12 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ne021en>

<sup>4</sup> C/2021/21, para 13 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ne021en>

<sup>5</sup> CL 174/3, para 35 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/nn539en>

<sup>6</sup> FAO. 2023. *Sustainable livestock transformation – A vision for FAO’s work on animal production and health*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc7474en>

Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation,<sup>7</sup> which was held on 25-27 September 2023 at FAO headquarters. During the conference, FAO Members, producers, scientists, development agencies, policymakers, civil society and the private sector engaged in dialogue on innovations and pathways to efficiently produce more nutritious, safe and accessible terrestrial animal source food with a reduced environmental footprint and contribute to vibrant local and diversified livestock systems that are more resilient to shocks and disruptions. The outcomes of the conference were presented, *inter alia*, to the 137th Session of the Programme Committee,<sup>8</sup> and the 13th Multi-Stakeholder Partnership meeting of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock.<sup>9</sup>

## II. Sustainable livestock transformation

4. The 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report<sup>10</sup> identified food systems and nutrition patterns as key entry points for transformation pathways across the SDGs. The UN Food Systems Summit,<sup>11</sup> which took place in 2021, marked a significant milestone for the global community, in accelerating actions towards more sustainable, inclusive, equitable and nutritious food systems. The FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 seeks to support the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems. It has been built around four main aspirations – better production; better nutrition; a better environment; and a better life, leaving no one behind.<sup>12</sup> The Multi-Year Programme of Work<sup>13</sup> of the COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock translates the four betters and the SDGs into three thematic areas of action to sustainably transform the livestock sector: i) sustainable livestock systems for food security, nutrition and inclusive economic growth; ii) animal, public and environmental health through the One Health approach; and iii) natural resource use, climate change and biodiversity.

5. The 2022 report on FAO and the SDGs highlights that to “credibly and efficiently” transform the agrifood systems “we must start from the ground up”.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, a sustainable transformation of the livestock sector is only achieved when stakeholders adopt good practices at all nodes of the value chain, from production, through processing and transport, to consumption. In this regard, science, policies, investments and other complements should be seen as means to create an enabling environment for stakeholders to adopt good practices, and hence sustainably transform the livestock sector.

6. The sustainable transformation of the livestock sector will not be a static process, as good practices must be continually adapted to accommodate and exploit advances in science and technology and changes in external conditions, including environmental and socioeconomic dimensions. Therefore, sustainable livestock transformation does not have an end point but is a continuous process of improvement.

## III. The Sustainable Livestock Transformation Framework

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<sup>7</sup> COAG:LI/2024/INF/4, <https://www.fao.org/coag/sub-committee-on-livestock/second-session/information-documents/en/>

<sup>8</sup> PC 137/INF/5, <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/nn084en>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.livestockdialogue.org/events/events/multi-stakeholder-meetings/13-msp-chiang-mai-thailand-30-oct-3-nov-2023/en/>

<sup>10</sup> Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General. 2019. *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*. United Nations. New York. [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR\\_report\\_2019.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit>

<sup>12</sup> FAO. 2021. *FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb7099en>

<sup>13</sup> COAG/2022/21, para 11 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/nj142en>

<sup>14</sup> FAO. 2022. *FAO and the Sustainable Development Goals*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc2063en>

7. The FAO SLTF is structured around five pillars. The first pillar addresses knowledge and is about building science and evidence-based narratives or visions for sustainable livestock transformation.

- Various actors have produced a multitude of reviews and analyses of the livestock sector, which highlight its heterogeneity and multiple contributions to achieving the SDGs.
- These reviews and analyses underpin various narratives or visions on how livestock sector growth and transformation affect society and, as such, they shape and influence policy and investment decisions.
- Any narrative about the growth and transformation of the livestock sector should be tailored to its pertinent geographical region and context, have its foundation in the most recent and sufficiently validated scientific evidence and objectively balance the positive and negative contributions of the livestock sector and subsectors.
- Through the SLTF, FAO aims to gather, analyse and strategically disseminate updated science-based evidence to support its Members in establishing objective visions for the sustainable transformation of the livestock sector.

8. The second pillar is about promoting the adoption of tailored, context-specific good practices.

- A sustainable transformation of the livestock sector requires that stakeholders adopt good practices at different nodes of the livestock value chain. Both commonly used practices and emerging innovations should be documented and systematized, including specifying the contexts in which they have been applied or may be adopted and/or adapted. Ineffective practices should also be identified and documented.
- Less consensus exists on good delivery mechanisms, that is, ways to address the so-called “last mile challenge” and thus ensure that most livestock stakeholders along the value chain adopt the good practices. Documentation of these mechanisms and their context is also critical. Innovation to develop more effective delivery mechanisms is needed for contexts that have proven to be challenging.
- FAO’s work on the SLTF seeks to engage stakeholders in participatory processes that generate consensus on sustainable and scalable good practices at the different nodes of the livestock value chain and co-create and implement scalable delivery mechanisms to address the last mile challenge and ensure their wide adoption. Indeed, one of the aims of the FAO Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation was to allow stakeholders to share information and experiences about good practices.

9. The third pillar is about promoting policies and responsible investments for impact at scale.

- Sustainable livestock transformation can only be achieved through evidence-based policies and responsible investments that create an enabling environment for the maximum number of livestock stakeholders to adopt good practices. Policies and investments should target both the good practices and the delivery mechanisms that enable and facilitate their adoption.
- Public-private dialogue is crucial for the design and implementation of outcome-focused policies and investments. This entails considering good practices, the business models of livestock operators, and the technical, institutional and financial capacity of the public sector to deliver public goods and services.
- Under the SLTF, FAO supports countries and international financial institutions on both the development and implementation of outcome-focused livestock policies and investments, including through resource mobilization.

10. The fourth pillar aims to accelerate sustainable transformation of livestock through greater cooperation, partnership and innovation.

- No single actor in the livestock sector works alone. Partnerships and cooperation are thus needed at all levels, including systematically engaging the private sector,<sup>15</sup> from smallholder to large-scale livestock operators, whose attitudes and behaviours will ultimately shape the transformation of the livestock sector. Through the SLTF, FAO leverages its trusted role as a neutral broker and its convening power to facilitate and support partnerships and cooperation between the many different stakeholders involved in the livestock sector.
- FAO defines innovation as “the process whereby individuals or organizations bring new or existing products, processes or ways of organization into use for the first time in a specific context in order to increase effectiveness, competitiveness, resilience to shocks or environmental sustainability and thereby contribute to food security and nutrition, economic development or sustainable natural resource management.”<sup>16</sup> Innovation must be facilitated and accelerated to sustainably transform the livestock sector. Through the SLTF, FAO disseminates information and facilitates knowledge sharing among its Members regarding both existing and emerging innovations. It also offers support and implements projects and programmes for innovative practices and approaches that can subsequently be scaled up through the implementation of appropriate policies and investments.

11. The fifth pillar is about taking a holistic approach that considers the multiple sustainability dimensions of livestock systems throughout the entire value chain.

- Sustainable livestock transformation requires simultaneously considering the socioeconomic, environmental and public health consequences of any practice, policy or investment, to fully understand and optimize benefits and trade-offs.
- Supporting sustainable livestock transformation requires considering the relationships and connections among all nodes of the value chain, from production to processing, transportation and consumption.
- Within the SLTF, FAO takes a multidisciplinary approach by engaging stakeholders with different backgrounds and perspectives to break down silos and ensure livestock sector practices, policies and investments support a truly sustainable transformation of the livestock sector.

12. The SLTF represents an overarching umbrella framework to facilitate coordination, complementarity and linkages among existing programmes and activities targeting multiple livestock dimensions, from enhancing productivity while implementing a One Health approach and using natural resources efficiently and equitably, to improving the livelihoods of both male and female stakeholders of different ages, to providing safe and nutritious animal source foods.

13. There is also a need to build on the SLTF to develop an action-oriented global instrument that will guide livestock policies and investments and accelerate sustainable livestock transformation to achieve the SDGs.

#### **IV. The way forward – the need for action to accelerate the sustainable transformation of livestock**

14. At its 27th Session, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) requested FAO to “produce a comprehensive, science and evidence-based global assessment of the contribution of livestock to food

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<sup>15</sup> FAO. 2021. *FAO strategy for private sector engagement 2021-2025*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb3352en>

<sup>16</sup> FAO. 2022. *FAO Science and Innovation Strategy*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc2273en>

security, sustainable food systems, nutrition and healthy diets”<sup>17</sup> (referred to as the Assessment). It was envisaged that the Assessment would be developed based on four component documents.

15. The discussion document *Global assessment of the contribution of livestock to food security, sustainable agrifood systems, nutrition and healthy diets*<sup>18</sup> details the status of FAO’s work on the Assessment. In 2023, FAO published the first component document on the *Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition and health outcomes*.<sup>19</sup> Draft component document 2, on the *Drivers of supply and demand of terrestrial animal source food*, and draft component document 3, on the *Contribution of the livestock sector to food security and sustainable agrifood systems*, will be made available on the Sub-Committee website as background documents for Members’ comments, before the Second Session of the COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock.<sup>20</sup>

16. Work has not begun on the fourth and final component document, envisaged to be entitled “*Options to sustainably change the livestock sector to better contribute to food security, healthy diets and nutrition*”. At its 28th Session, the COAG approved the revised draft Multi-Year Programme of Work of the COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock (2022–25).<sup>21</sup> This foresaw that, subject to the availability of funding, the fourth component document would be prepared and subsequently a synthesis document of the four component documents would be presented at the Third Session of the COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock in 2026.

17. Policies, investments and actions are expected to be more coherent and to have far greater impact if guided by a global action-oriented instrument. In turn, such an instrument will be more widely welcomed and owned by all stakeholders within the livestock sector if it is inclusive, comprehensive and science-based and if it has been negotiated by Members.

18. To accelerate the process of sustainable livestock transformation, rather than preparing component document 4 and discussing it at the Third Session of the COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock in 2026, as originally foreseen, it is proposed to develop a negotiated “Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Livestock Transformation” (referred to as the Global Plan of Action) for potential adoption at the same session.

19. The Global Plan of Action would have its foundation in the results and findings of the three component documents of the Assessment.<sup>22</sup> National, regional and global priorities and actions will be defined that can be undertaken by Members, FAO and other stakeholders to accelerate sustainable transformation of the livestock sector and its contribution to achievement of the SDGs. The Global Plan of Action will also operationalize the STLF, thus ensuring synergy between the work of FAO and actions undertaken by other stakeholders in the livestock sector. FAO already has experience in developing a negotiated global plan of action in the livestock sector, as the Global Plan of Action on Animal Genetic Resources<sup>23</sup> was previously developed and negotiated by FAO Members and adopted in 2007.

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<sup>17</sup> C/2021/21, para 14 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ne021en>

<sup>18</sup> COAG:LI/2024/2, <https://www.fao.org/coag/sub-committee-on-livestock/second-session/discussion-documents/en/>

<sup>19</sup> FAO. 2023. *Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition and health outcomes – An evidence and policy overview on the state of knowledge and gaps*. Rome, FAO.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc3912en>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.fao.org/coag/sub-committee-on-livestock/second-session/en/>

<sup>21</sup> COAG/2022/21 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/nj142en>

<sup>22</sup> COAG:LI/2024/2, <https://www.fao.org/coag/sub-committee-on-livestock/second-session/discussion-documents/en/>

<sup>23</sup> FAO. 2007. *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/a1404e>

20. The Global Plan of Action would be voluntary and complementary to existing FAO strategies and plans of action, including the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy,<sup>24</sup> the FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement,<sup>25</sup> the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031,<sup>26</sup> the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors<sup>27</sup> and the Vision and Strategy for FAO's Work in Nutrition.<sup>28</sup>

21. If Members support the development of the Global Plan of Action, it is proposed that the Global Plan of Action might be developed through the following participatory approach and with the following tentative timeline:

- The Secretariat of the COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock would prepare a draft collection of priorities and actions, based on a synthesis of the results from the three component documents of the Assessment, to be completed by the end of 2024.
- From January to June 2025, regional consultations would be held for all the FAO regions. These might be physical or virtual consultations, depending on the availability of funding. In addition to Members, consultations would also involve relevant stakeholders in the livestock sector.
- The revised Global Plan of Action would then be discussed at an ad hoc extraordinary session of the COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock to be convened in October 2025.
- The Global Plan of Action would be revised again after the ad hoc extraordinary session and shared with Members and stakeholders for comments and suggestions, with a deadline of the end of January 2026.
- The Global Plan of Action would then be revised again, based on the comments and suggestions received, and discussed at the Third Session of the COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock in June/July 2026. Members could recommend COAG to adopt the Global Plan of Action at this session. Members could then use the Global Plan of Action to develop their own national plans of action.

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<sup>24</sup> FAO. 2022. *FAO Science and Innovation Strategy*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc2273en>

<sup>25</sup> FAO. 2021. *FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement, 2021-2025*.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb3352en>

<sup>26</sup> FAO. 2022. *FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022–2031*. Rome.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc2274en>

<sup>27</sup> FAO. 2020. *FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors*. Rome.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ca7722en>

<sup>28</sup> PC 130/5 Rev.1 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ne853en>