

Strategy to promote use and implementation of the CFS recommendations on ‘Connecting Smallholders to Markets’ - revised on the basis of discussions in the CSM in connection with the CFS 43rd Plenary session (October 2016)

Introduction

- The CSM is quite satisfied with the outcome of the negotiations, although there were a few losses. Now that the policy recommendations have been adopted by the CFS Plenary, it is up to the individual members of the CSM to take action to promote their use. The CSM is responsible for monitoring their implementation. This overall strategy is intended to support the action of CSM members and to provide a base line for future monitoring.
- The ‘smallholders to markets’ recommendations should not be treated in isolation. They should be set in a holistic vision of people-centered food systems and rural regeneration. Links need to be made with other CFS guidelines, like the HLPE report and the plenary recommendations on ‘investing in smallholder agriculture’ (2013) and the VGGTs (access to resources), and with civil society advocacy on agroecology (models of production).
- The CFS work on smallholders and markets has given us an occasion to start exchanging experience and analysis in this important area, but much more needs to be done. There are key points that need to be further clarified among us, for example how we see ‘value chains’ in the context of territorial markets, or how to push for more public policy attention to territorial markets while ensuring that small-scale producers are not penalized by market formalization.

Components of a strategy

1. Dissemination/communication

- The analytic guide publication is an important communication tool. Hard copies of the publication and the policy recommendations are needed for use at local/national levels. If possible they should be translated into local languages.
- POs/CSOs should diffuse the recommendations and the publication broadly through their networks/list serves/bulletins.
- People who are well-informed about the CFS process and the recommendations should take the initiative to brief their organizations/networks, taking advantage of scheduled meetings or organizing specific workshops.
- POs/CSOs should also target the governmental and parliamentary authorities in their countries/regions.

2. Implementation at local/country/regional level: advocacy and monitoring

- Our objective is to integrate the recommendations into local/national/regional policy. It is fundamental to make governments understand that they have to link their policies and programmes regarding “markets” to the objective of food security by giving priority to territorial markets rather than agribusiness-led value chains.
- It is useful to situate our advocacy efforts in the context of relevant on-going policy processes (like the current formulation of regional and national agricultural investment programmes in West Africa.)

- We should take advantage of existing platforms like those established around the VGGTs/land tenure issues in order to promote collaboration among different civil society actors and dialogue with the authorities. New platforms can be set up if necessary. The forms of these dialogue mechanisms will vary. It is preferable for POs to take the lead.
- Good experience in some countries/regions should be shared with others. The annotated bibliography that we prepared during the preparations for the negotiation will continue to be updated in order to include new material.
- Market issues and the CFS recommendations should be proposed for the agendas of regional meetings organized by CFS participants, like the regional IFAD Farmers Forums and the FAO Regional Conferences, as well as by regional/continental authorities (AU, MERCOSUR, ASEAN, EU etc.).

3. Global level

- All CFS participants (international agencies, NGOs, etc.) should be urged to apply the recommendations to their own programmes. POs and CSOs can check to see that this is happening.
- Some agencies (FAO, SCN) have indicated their willingness to consider doing relevant normative work in areas like data collection, public procurement, food safety regulations and/or to support the work of PO networks in these areas. They should be encouraged to do so.
- The recommendations should be brought to bear on relevant international cooperation programmes like the GAFSP.
- WTO and other international trade agreements should be targeted to advocate primacy of the right to food. We should keep an eye on cases in which government authorities are trying to defend food security against WTO regulations.

4. CFS

- Maintain continuity/links with other relevant CFS workstreams (urbanization and rural transformation, nutrition, SDGs, climate change, etc.)
- Ensure that the CFS returns to this topic with a stock-taking event, as suggested in the decision box. In preparation for this assessment we should undertake an autonomous monitoring exercise, as we did for the Tenure Guidelines. In this context we should collect case studies and evidence concerning the impacts of international trade on territorial markets and smallholders and also regarding the effects of corporate concentration.