



Sustainable Food
Systems *Ireland*
A partnership of Irish Government agencies

Statement of Strategy 2024-2027

Minister's Foreword



Charlie McConalogue T.D.
Minister for Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

- ▶▶ The world faces twin challenges in agriculture and food – to feed more than 9 billion people and to slow global warming to 1.5 degrees above the pre-industrial period by 2050. Ireland believes in the power of a sustainable food systems approach, and our commitment is to be a global leader by 2030. Transformation of our food systems can deliver positive environmental, economic, and social outcomes which are critically important in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, our 2050 targets and other environmental and biodiversity goals.
- ▶▶ Lessons and experience from Ireland's economic and social transformation over the last 60 years may be helpful to other countries as they develop and implement strategies towards these shared goals. Ireland's partnership approach involving Government and stakeholders to develop and implement a national agri-food strategy - *Food Vision 2030* - is an example of where Ireland has taken a good practice approach and improved it over time.
- ▶▶ Other experiences from Ireland include consistency in public policy over generations. For example, our investment in education has helped to develop a flexible and skilled labour force. We are committed to supporting innovation and research, especially in agri-food, to address a range of societal and sectoral challenges. Ireland is among world leaders in implementing risk-based food safety, quality and traceability systems, vital in ensuring public health and maintaining the trust of consumers.
- ▶▶ Ireland established **Sustainable Food Systems Ireland** to use these principles and experience to support other countries - our trade and development partners - in strengthening their own food systems. The experience and skills we have learned, and are still learning, on our own journey can be interpreted and used in many different contexts. Through SFSI, we can build peer-to-peer relationships and address common problems, helping to deliver benefits in both directions.
- ▶▶ I welcome the new SFSI Statement of Strategy for 2024 to 2027, which promises to build on its achievements to date and sets out its ambition to contribute to the sustainability of Ireland's and our global partners' food systems.

Introduction



Forage production trials and demonstration for small scale dairy farmers on the Dairy Kenya Ireland project (Photos: KALRO)



- ▶ **Sustainable Food Systems Ireland (SFSI)** is a Government of Ireland initiative to offer to partner countries Ireland’s experience and expertise in transforming food and agriculture systems. It is an innovative, efficient and cost-effective response to demand to help them improve the safety, security and sustainability of their own food systems. SFSI provides capability building, knowledge exchange and other implementation supports through funded projects.
- ▶ SFSI is a collaboration between the **Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)** and four agri-food State organisations **Bord Bia – The Irish Food Board, Enterprise Ireland, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, Teagasc – The Agriculture and Food Development Authority**, established permanently in 2021 after a pilot period.
- ▶ SFSI’s creation is a recognition that knowledge and skills sharing are important contributors to foreign and economic policy, and that engagement in global sharing of good practice brings benefits to Ireland as well as to our partners.
- ▶ In the period 2024-2027, SFSI will be a strategic asset for the sector - contributing to Ireland’s leadership position in sustainable food systems and enhancing coherence of Ireland’s policy approaches and implementation, through a robust evidence base generated from its work with a range of national and domestic partners.

Ireland's Priorities



- ▶ Ireland has been a prominent advocate of the food systems approach and in the national sectoral strategy *Food Vision 2030* adopted an ambition to be “a global leader in sustainable food systems” by 2030, including a goal of aligning domestic and foreign policy.
- ▶ Considering other commitments and priorities – principally in climate action, environment, and health – this means an ever-increasing need for proactivity and collaboration domestically and internationally.
- ▶ Engaging with and supporting partner countries via practical expertise and technical skills delivers direct benefit for Ireland - it strengthens our understanding of transformation in agri-food and builds a community of practice; it opens new commercial opportunities for Irish organisations, firms and educational institutions; and builds reputation and bilateral relationships that will lead to increased trade and investment.

Food systems thinking encourages us to see food in its totality – a **chain of activities** from farm (food production and inputs) to fork (food consumption) and beyond (disposal and waste) as well as the **interconnections** within and beyond the chain – the elements, institutions and people, and the economic, political, environmental, health, and social **outcomes** (FAO 2018).

Over 100 countries have adopted commitments to engaging in food systems transformation work since the UN's Food System Summit in 2021. This recognises the important role that food systems around the world play in delivering progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

SFSI's Vision, Mission and Objectives

- ▶ SFSI's **vision** is that Irish expertise can support a just transition towards sustainable food systems internationally and domestically; and that providing these skills will contribute to global efforts to transform food systems towards sustainability, create new export opportunities and enhance Ireland's reputation as a global leader in sustainable food systems.

- ▶ SFSI's **mission** is to be a unique source of Irish Government expertise in agri-food, capable of delivering this expertise across the world in support of **Food Vision 2030**.

- ▶ SFSI's **objectives** are:
 1. To respond to international demand for Irish agri-food expertise on a commercial basis, underpinned by principles of economic, environmental, and social sustainability;
 2. To enhance Ireland's global image as a leader in sustainable food systems and as a source of high-quality food produce and technology, underpinned by world-class science, knowledge-transfer, research, and food safety standards;
 3. To support Irish Government partners in delivering Ireland's international development priorities related to agri-food as given in *A Better World*;
 4. To support other Irish organisations in generating and maintaining new export opportunities in agri-food.



Food Systems Policy and Governance workshops for the Institute of Food Security, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (Photo: S Mowlds)


Ambitions for 2024-2027

<p>01</p> <p>Build on progress in designing and implementing programmes of change and transformation with global clients to strengthen sustainable food systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFSI has a mandate to share Ireland’s core agri-food expertise with partner countries in response to demand. End goals tend to cohere around food security, economic performance of the sector, climate resilience and inclusivity. Projects involve primary and value chain development, food safety, innovation systems, knowledge transfer systems, animal and crop health, agri-entrepreneurship, applied research and strategic planning processes. SFSI will use and develop sustainable food systems approaches on all project engagements and continue to offer Ireland’s core strategic and technical skills and experience internationally. By acting as a good practice peer, Ireland benefits while also potentially generating valuable new lessons about food systems change. Direct and indirect benefits include improved market access, exports, educational and research collaborations, as well as strengthening Ireland’s claim of leadership in sustainable food systems.
<p>02</p> <p>Play a role in delivering <i>Food Vision 2030</i> by enabling coherence between Ireland’s domestic policy and its development cooperation and foreign policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFSI is in a unique position to support <i>Food Vision 2030</i> goals of coherence between Ireland’s domestic policy and its development cooperation and foreign policies. SFSI’s current activities across Africa, South-East Asia, Middle East and EU neighbourhood deliver part of this alignment by involving our leading agri-food institutions in change projects at both policy development and implementation levels. SFSI will work with Irish and international researchers to strengthen the evidence base relating to food system processes and collate and disseminate examples and case studies gained from the processes used. In support of Irish foreign and economic policy, SFSI will continue to align with the priorities and activities of Government partners – including DAFM, Bord Bia, Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Foreign Affairs. In addition to developing core SFSI business, we have identified and opened opportunities for other Irish organisations, including exporters of food and agritech, universities and institutions. SFSI will continue to proactively link Irish organisations with new opportunities for commercial relationships, collaborative research and education.
<p>03</p> <p>Create a structure and resource base for delivery of Irish expertise globally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFSI operates through a hybrid resourcing model comprised of a team of full-time executives, supported by technical resources from SFSI partner organisations and associates with deep practical expertise. This hybrid resourcing model allows for growth in the scale of SFSI initiatives. To complement our project delivery capability, SFSI will initiate a Graduate Programme in 2024, giving access to additional research skills relevant to food systems, food security and climate resilience.



Current and Recent Projects



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|--------------|---|---|
| 01 |  | Albania:
EU Food Safety, Veterinary & Phytosanitary Standards 2019-2023 |
| 02 |  | KSA:
Food Safety Training, Saudi Food & Drug Authority 2015-19
Innovation Systems Consultancy 2021-22 |
| 03 |  | Turkish Cypriot Community:
Residue Monitoring for Food Safety 2024-25
Strengthened High Potential Value Chains in the TCc (Eunite) 2024-28 |
| 04 |  | Tatarstan:
Dairy Genomics Pilot Projects, 2018-20 |
| 05 |  | Vietnam:
Ireland Vietnam Agrifood Partnership 2023-28 |
| 06 |  | Uganda:
Livestock Design Assignment 2021 |
| 07 |  | Kenya:
Dairy Kenya Ireland 2019-24
Potato Capability Building 2018-21 |
| 08 |  | Tanzania:
Maziwa Faida – Greening the Dairy Value Chain 2021-26 |
| 09 |  | Zambia:
Zambia Ireland Sustainable Food Systems Programme 2023-27 |
| 10 |  | Malawi:
Agri-food Systems & Value Chains Development Design & Inception 2023-24 |
| Multicountry |  | FAO & African Union:
Preparation of an agri-entrepreneurship support programme (5 countries) 2022 |
| Multicountry |  | Institute of Food Security (OIC):
Workshop delivery (3) on food security & food systems 2022-23 |

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