

# THE STRATEGIC COLLABORATIVE FUND PHASE II

## 2022 CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

### Theme

Climate-resilient practices to promote inclusive and sustainable agricultural systems and value chains

### About the Strategic Collaborative Fund

SEI Asia, with support from the Swedish government (SIDA), launched the Strategic Collaborative Fund Phase 2 (SCF2) programme in 2018 to enhance the current 2030 Agenda efforts in Asia. SCF2 aims to foster regional cooperation and policy dialogue for sustainable development and environmental sustainability through capacity building, knowledge sharing, and increased collaboration.

Human rights and gender equality are central to SCF2, as it champions regional and inter-regional collaboration for transboundary environmental policy development. To this end, the [Guidance Note on Integrating Gender and Human Rights-Based Approaches](#) in SCF2 supports the inclusion of gender equality and human rights into the SCF2 programme. We strongly encourage the potential partner organisations to use the note as a guide for developing the concept notes.

Learn more about the SCF2 programme and details for concept note submissions [here](#).

### Specific Focus and Priority

This call aims to invite organisation(s) that can conduct a series of activities that demonstrate how to transform agricultural systems or value chains to become more climate-friendly, sustainable, resilient, and equitable. The current agricultural policy and practices supporting the global food and agricultural systems are unsustainable and increase the vulnerability of marginalised and disadvantaged groups by contributing to and reinforcing hunger and malnutrition, poverty, adverse environmental impacts, unsustainable land-use change and degradation, biodiversity loss, and social injustice. As most policies aiming to address food security focus on producing more food, more burden is being put on the agricultural systems to 'feed the planet'. Diversifying value-added products and services, reducing postharvest loss, and adopting innovative climate financing schemes for small agricultural producers might offer a means to combine poverty reduction with enhanced environmental stewardship.

### Rationale

Agricultural/food systems include all relevant actors and processes involved in food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change (IPCC) estimated that 37% of global emissions are derived from food systems, of which agriculture and land use and land-use change activities became the largest contributor (71%).<sup>1</sup> Studies have shown that many agricultural systems are inefficient and emissions-intensive in various ways, such as significant energy and water use,<sup>2</sup> lengthy logistical processes,<sup>3</sup> and food waste and loss<sup>4</sup>. Such inefficiency threatens food security and exacerbates the impacts of climate change,<sup>5</sup> affecting marginalised and vulnerable groups the most. Although there have been various efforts to transform agri-food systems<sup>6</sup>, there have been limited efforts to share the lessons learned and create regional collaboration to improve agriculture systems in Asia. Through the SCF2 programme, therefore, we aim to support organization(s) to implement regional-scale activities that will contribute to making agricultural systems in Asia more inclusive, equitable, climate-resilient, and sustainable.

### Who is most affected?

Adopting an agricultural systems perspective allows farmers, business industries, and policymakers to understand the multi-dimensional elements and complexities of the entire agricultural value chain.<sup>7</sup> With the growing impacts of climate change, agricultural systems face greater challenges in terms of production, distribution, consumption, and disposal of foods and agricultural products.

Moreover, current agricultural systems create reproduce vulnerabilities and marginalization of women and other people from less powerful groups such as Indigenous peoples, youth, smallholder farmers and small-scale fishers, people living in poverty, and displaced communities. For instance, although women tend to play critical roles in food processing and bear the primary household burdens of food preparation, they are often marginalised from agricultural and food systems decision-making processes at the household and policy levels. Besides, low participation and engagement of young people in agriculture has also been a major concern due to urbanisation, unprofitable employment opportunities, and limited assets. People with intersected forms of marginalisation and vulnerabilities are especially affected, such as young or

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<sup>1</sup> IPCC. (2019). *IPCC Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems*.

<sup>2</sup> Islam, K. M. N., Kenway, S. J., Renouf, M. A., Lam, K. L., & Wiedmann, T. (2021). A review of the water-related energy consumption of the food system in nexus studies. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 279. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.123414>.

<sup>3</sup> Rasul, G. (2021). A Framework for Addressing the Twin Challenges of COVID-19 and Climate Change for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security in South Asia. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2021.679037>.

<sup>4</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation. (2011). *Global Food Losses and Food Waste: Extent, Causes and Prevention*. <http://www.fao.org/3/mb060e/mb060e.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> IPCC. (2019).

<sup>6</sup> Reisman, E., & Fairbairn, M. (2021). Agri-Food Systems and the Anthropocene. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 111(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2020.1828025>.

<sup>7</sup> Alarcon, P., Dominguez-Salas, P., Fèvre, E. M., & Rushton, J. (2021). The Importance of a Food Systems Approach to Low and Middle Income Countries and Emerging Economies: A Review of Theories and Its Relevance for Disease Control and Malnutrition. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2021.642635>.

elderly women who are also poor and from indigenous groups. These social and gender inequities, in turn, undermine adaptive capacities, food production and nutritional outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

It is noteworthy that climate change and food and agricultural systems transformation affect diverse actors differently in the entire value chain, including:

- Food producers, including women and men, both adult and youth, smallholder and subsistence farmers, small-scale fishers, face growing risks of lower yields due to climate-induced weather anomalies. Risks and hardships are amplified for women and other less powerful actors through challenges of laws and regulations, constraining social and cultural norms, division of labour, land acquisition and forced displacement as well as limited and inequitable access to technology, financing, infrastructure, skills, and available services.
- Intermediary actors, such as cooperatives, food processing businesses, small- and large-scale traders, logistics companies, and retailers face risks including getting enough supplies of raw materials and logistical disruptions. Gender inequalities are often amplified at this level as well, as women are highly active in chains but predominate in lower paid, informal, and less secure work and have less voice in chain governance.
- Consumers with their diets and healthy lifestyle preferences, which are often shaped by culture and national and subnational policies, are increasingly affected by climate change, limiting access to affordable, sustainably produced healthy foods. This occurs as food supplies are disrupted, affecting the nutritional intake, particularly for the underprivileged groups.
- Waste management actors, such as formal and informal waste collectors, waste processing facilities, community recycling, etc., will be highly burdened by the inefficiency in the food systems, especially from the food loss and waste occurring in the entire value chains.

This diversity—and the interconnection of actors—underscores the need for policy, investments and programming that are responsive to these diverse needs and able to equitably and effectively navigate multiple demands.

### **How to address the gaps?**

As illustrated by the UN Food System Summit 2021 and many other civil society-led fora, there is currently an unprecedented push for more robust global commitment and partnerships to ensure that practices in agricultural systems lead to systemic changes that enable biodiversity protection, inclusivity, equity and resilience to climate change, while delivering on food and nutrition security. Moreover, the Covid 19 pandemic offers a multitude of insights and lessons that can inform such a transition.

As a part of green recovery efforts and the sprint of the 2030 SDGs, transformation in agricultural systems has the potential to reduce negative impacts of climate change. It involves policies, investments, programs and efforts by a range of actors, including those that assess and protect

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<sup>8</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation. (2011).

biodiversity, water, soil, land and strengthen local food systems, and re-align production and consumption with the principle of regenerating nature. Examples of initiatives to transform agricultural systems that promote both food security and nutrition for all, focusing on social justice and equitable benefit sharing, and building resilience to climate change include:

- Exploring the applications of climate-smart technology and evidence-based knowledge include recognizing and bridging local and indigenous knowledge and adaptation that focus on building sustainable agricultural systems that cultivate the power and capacity of small-scale farmers and fishers, in particular Indigenous peoples, women and youth, without further exacerbating the negative impact to ecosystems (soil, water, land, etc).
- Analysing the inter-relations among various elements such as funding, market, farming practices, business model, consumer behaviour, regulatory framework and identify innovative pathways and strategic solutions in re-structuring agri-food systems for equity, sustainability and resilience.
- Raising awareness and informing policy and decision-making processes through multi-stakeholder and cross-functional and sectoral collaboration to make agri-food systems more robust, resilient and equitable and advancing its contribution to Sustainable Development Goals.
- Peer learning to tap into the potential of nature-based solutions to improve agri-food systems' resilience which can later be scaled up at the policy level.
- Diversification beyond bulk food production to value-adding products and services, including climate regulating services and carbon removal or soil enhancement.

## The Regional Strategic Collaboration

We seek to support a regional event or a series of events that showcases and promotes inclusive climate resilient practices in the agricultural systems and value chains in Asia.

In the Asia context, 85% of the agriculture sector is at the hands of small-scale female and male farmers. Yet they are often marginalised and vulnerable, leaving them with limited resources and tools to mitigate and adapt to changing climate. Modern and unsustainable approaches to agricultural systems requiring high levels of inputs or capital can threaten Indigenous and traditional knowledge which could lead to loss of resilience, poverty, and environmental degradation. At the same time, inefficient agricultural systems with low productivity and high waste and loss may lead to land degradation and depletion of biomass, water, and nutrients.

According to the Asia and the [Pacific SDG Progress Report 2021](#), the region is regressing on climate action (Goals 13). In addition, the report also identified some other indicators that are regressing, including resources for poverty programmes (1.a), undernourishment and food security (2.1), water-use efficiency (6.4), and sustainable use of natural resources (12.2). Collective actions to accelerate the achievement of the Agenda 2030 are needed with only eight years left. Climate-resilient agricultural systems can be seen as an overarching framework where these goals are interlinked.

To ensure that no one is left behind and to align with the SDGs, this SCF2 call is seeking regional initiatives that discuss and create concrete scalable actions to address, in an integrated way, the

social, economic, environment, governance, and technological challenges that hinder the sustainability of agricultural systems in Asia. The commitment to promoting human rights and gender equality and social equity should be integrated in all activities. We seek agendas that aim to amplify the voice, agency, and capacities, of those disproportionately affected by climate change, including by creating a more level playing field through policies and actions for more equitable access to and benefit from climate adaptation decision-making, financing, information, and technologies. The regional initiatives may include, but are not limited to, events that explore and advance the following issues:

- Innovative practices and technologies that aim to build resilience to climate change e.g., climate smart agriculture, agroecology, regenerative agriculture, etc., particularly those that respond to the needs of and proactively engage the marginalized actors.
- Food circularity and life cycle assessment in agricultural systems and value chain
- Enhance food security through strengthening the capacities of the actors involved in the local food systems, such as Indigenous peoples, young farmers, and women.
- Synergies and trade-offs on water-energy-food nexus in food systems
- Principles and strategies to make agri-value chains inclusive, sustainable, and equitable to address rather than reinforce the marginalization and vulnerability of disadvantaged group
- Circular, inclusive, and viable business models for smallholders and SMEs in agricultural systems
- Reducing dependence on imported inputs or infrastructure in agricultural value chains and greater emphasis on traditional knowledge as well as technological advances that contributes to sustainable food production and consumption.

## Theme-Specific Criteria

1. Contribute to SDGs, especially SDG1, SDG2, SDG5, SDG12, SDG13, and SDG17.
2. Mainstream gender equality and human rights goals throughout the event's rationale, design, implementation, and evaluation.
3. Transformation of agricultural systems in addressing poverty and climate resilience, with the meaningful participation of diverse marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as smallholder farmers, indigenous people, women, youth, gender minorities, etc in decision-making processes.
4. Diverse and innovative approaches in designing their event series and ensures that each of them has clear agenda and objectives to address the mentioned challenges
5. Engage a variety of stakeholders and ensure that can meaningfully participate (e.g., simultaneous translation, breakout groups etc.)
6. Create opportunities to further collaborate and initiate partnerships, networks, or alliances beyond the SCF2 event
7. Identify key strategic policy opportunities to further disseminate the event results
8. Leverage the insights and lessons-learned on sustainable agricultural systems from Asia to the regional or global policy cooperation, e.g., Asia Pacific Sustainable Forum Development (APFSD), G20, People's Food Summit, Stockholm +50, COP 27, etc.

## Expected Results and Outcomes

We expect the proposals to demonstrate how the initiative(s) will promote regional partnerships and collaboration to raise awareness and foster policy commitment in advancing sustainable agricultural systems and value chains in Asia. Ultimately, we envision to see how sustainable agricultural systems contribute to mitigating climate risks.

Theory of change			
Outputs	Output 1	Output 2	Output 3
	Regional scale policy dialogue(s) with multiple and diverse stakeholders (can also include preliminary/side events).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A report outlining key messages of the event and next steps for policy influence.</li> <li>• Collection of case studies on good practices on green and climate practices in agricultural systems</li> <li>• Roadmap/ strategy action plan for each stakeholder based on their roles and capacities to transform current agricultural systems/value chain</li> </ul>	Communications and/or policy products about the events, in various formats to target diverse groups of stakeholders (e.g., local and sign language translation, infographics, podcasts, briefs, blogs, declarations)
<b>Potential Target Participants/ Stakeholders/ Users</b>	Smallholding farmers; migrant communities; young farmers; women; Indigenous peoples; land-less workers; policymakers; intermediaries; extension workers	Policy makers; NGOs; advocacy groups; academia	Policy makers; NGOs; advocacy groups; academia; farming communities; consumers; intermediaries
<b>Outcomes</b>	Built partnership and strengthened regional collaboration to combat climate	Increased understanding and commitment at the policy level to engage in agricultural systems	Raised awareness of the relevant stakeholders, e.g., the public, farmers, and policy makers,

	change through resilient, inclusive, and circular agricultural practices and value chain.	and value chain practices that are climate friendly, equitable, alleviating poverty, conserving biodiversity	on the adverse impacts of climate change on agricultural systems and the potential ways to address them.
<b>Relevant Policy Frameworks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Development Goals</li> <li>• HLFPE Report: Food Security and Nutrition Building a Global Narrative Toward 2030</li> <li>• Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (2016-2025)</li> <li>• The ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (ASEAN RAI)</li> <li>• Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Article 14)</li> </ul>		
<b>Impacts/ Goals</b>	Climate risks are mitigated through sustainable practices in the agricultural systems		