SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS
SNV is a mission-driven global development partner working in more than 20 countries across Africa and Asia. Building on 60 years of experience and together with our team of over 1,600 people, we strengthen capacities and catalyse partnerships that transform the agri-food, energy, and water systems, which enable sustainable and more equitable lives for all.

Grounded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we work on the core themes of gender equality and social inclusion, climate adaptation and mitigation, and strong institutions and effective governance.

Our goal for the agri-food sector – in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 – is to support the equitable transition to a sustainable and resilient agri-food system that delivers food security and adequate nutrition for people in all their diversity in such a way that the economic, social, and environmental bases are safeguarded for future generations.
As many as **811 million** people in the world are facing hunger.
The right to food is a human right, yet, as many as 811 million people in the world were facing hunger in 2021, while three billion people lack access to a healthy diet (FAO).1

Our global food systems are failing to adequately feed or nourish billions of people, exacerbating income inequalities and accelerating climate change.

Sustainable food systems are critical to food security and nutrition, as well as to adapting to the effects of the climate crisis and reducing our impact on the planet. Fragile and flawed food systems can affect food security in a number of ways; driving prices up, making it difficult for people living in poverty to afford nutritious food, and preventing smallholder farmers from making good profits.

Disrupted food systems can be linked to a range of pressures including climate and conflict related shocks, which are challenging our food systems’ ability to provide nutritious food.

According to FAO, food production systems are currently the biggest underlying cause of decline in land and water resources – the food sector consumes 30% of total global energy whilst contributing up to 29% of all greenhouse gas emissions globally.²

Agri-food systems not only have a negative impact on the environment, including contributing to climate change, but also experience significant vulnerability to climate-related shocks and unsustainable use of natural resources.

So, what role can we play in creating more sustainable and resilient agri-food systems?

To tackle these challenges, we adopt a systems-based approach and strive to overcome the systemic barriers that prevent people from leading sustainable, equitable lives with food security and adequate nutrition.

Given our long-term presence in the countries where we work, our aim is to contribute to the transformation of global agri-food systems based on our deep local knowledge and the specific underlying issues that challenge them.

SNV’S AMBITION IN AGRI-FOOD

SNV’s goal for the agri-food sector is to support the equitable transition to a sustainable and resilient agri-food system that delivers food security and adequate nutrition for people in all their diversity. We do so in such a way that the economic, social, and environmental bases are safeguarded for future generations.

Within this overarching goal, we identify three specific impact goals:

Food security and healthy diets
We improve food security and diets by improving the availability, affordability, accessibility, acceptability, and attractiveness of nutritious food. We enhance the nutrition resilience of vulnerable rural and urban populations, and reduce food waste by consumers.

Sustainable agri-food production
We increase the climate-resilient production of nutritious food by farmers, pastoralists, and agri-businesses. We reduce food losses in production, and we contribute to the restoration and sustainable use of natural and productive resources.

Socio-economic participation and empowerment
We build resilient livelihoods with improved incomes and dignity for our priority populations, we contribute to the adoption of inclusive and equitable policies, we increase the practice of equitable norms, and we build equity in access and control over productive resources to foster social cohesion and peace.

In line with SDG2 to ‘end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture’, SNV’s work in agri-food aims to promote a more integrated, coordinated approach to tackling poverty, food security and nutrition, and environmental challenges.

Together, we want to see a world where across every society, all people live with dignity and have equitable opportunities to sustainably thrive.
OUR APPROACH

In sustainable agri-food systems, food should not be produced at the expense of the environment and climate; diets cannot be diversified without improving livelihoods and raising incomes; and improving food and nutrition security for one population group should not add to inequalities for others.

Our work in the agri-food sector addresses the three impact goals in an integrated way across four distinct approaches:

RESILIENT AND PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES

Integrated landscape management is a key component of reaching food security and healthy diets, environmental protection and restoration, and economic participation and social inclusion.

To achieve this will require transformation holistically at a landscape scale to increase the resilience of our food systems. Our focus in this approach lies on sustainable intensification and regenerative agriculture, sustainable pastoralism and climate-positive livestock and dairy, climate adaptation services for small-scale farmers, and landscape management and restoration.

How do we do it?

- Increasing productivity and sustainable agriculture and livestock practices
- Reducing food and animal loss
- Building resilience against climate change, natural, and human-induced disasters
- Halting and reversing land and freshwater degradation and restoring ecosystems
INCLUSIVE MARKETS AND IMPACT INVESTMENTS

This approach focuses on smallholder farmers, youth led enterprises, and pastoralists to provide greater access to knowledge, information, and finance.

Some of the ways in which we achieve this include climate-friendly and nutrition-sensitive market system development, impact driven finance for climate adaptation, Green and Nutrition-Sensitive Entrepreneurship and GESI-responsive, climate-smart agriculture policy development.

How do we do it?

- Increasing the ability of market actors to participate in developing agri-food markets
- Shifting towards climate-smart, nutrition sensitive, and inclusive business models
- Improving collaboration leading to inclusive practices, policies, and regulatory frameworks
- Increasing participation in the design and implementation of policies and practices

HEALTHY DIETS AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Improving consumer diets requires influencing critical aspects within the food environment to facilitate and motivate behaviour change for diversified, sustainable, healthier, nutritious diets. This approach focuses on the dietary and nutrition improvements for low-income rural and urban populations – both the producers and consumers of food.

Our focus lies on demand creation, social and behaviour change communication, and nutrition governance strengthening, among others.

How do we do it?

- Improving diet diversity and the consumption of nutritious foods for all
- Creating an improve, diversified, and equitable agri-food production system
- Improving the development and availability of nutritious food products
- Improving the enabling environment for comprehensive and sustainable nutrition improvements
The global youth unemployment rate is estimated at 13.1%, with young people more likely to be unemployed, underemployed, or working in poverty.\(^2\)

SNV’s cross-sector Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship approach facilitates linkages between the labour market (demand side) and skilled youth (supply side) to stimulate employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Our overarching vision is to catalyse positive change at different intervention levels and ultimately contribute to resilient livelihoods for marginalised young women and men.

Contributing to SDG8, we provide out-of-school, underprivileged, underemployed, and unemployed young women and men with the tools, skills, and networks that will enable them to identify enterprise development and employability opportunities in our sectors of agri-food, energy, and water.

In the agri-food sector, we’re offering opportunities for young men and women to become employees and entrepreneurs with respect to climate-smart agriculture, nature-based solutions, climate adaptation technologies, and the development of nutritious food products.

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OUR CORE THEMES

Within and across all three sectors at SNV, we integrate three core themes:

1. **Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)**
   Embedding GESI-responsive programming so that systems, structures, and markets are inclusive – enabling women, girls, men, boys and gender minorities to have equitable access, agency and voice in their lives. Prioritising inclusion as a core practice and outcome, we take an intersectional approach to understand and address persistent inequalities.

2. **Climate adaptation and mitigation**
   Addressing climate justice, ensuring that our projects, programmes, and influence strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards, while supporting faster transitions to low carbon development.

3. **Strong institutions and effective governance**
   Strengthening institutional capacities to be more accountable, effective, and transparent, and governance systems to be inclusive, responsive, and representative.
The transformation of the agri-food system must address immediate challenges related to the availability and accessibility of nutritious food for vulnerable populations and people living in poverty, particularly in fragile settings. At the same time, it must build resilience to cope with the challenges of a climate-uncertain future. To do so, we are committed to addressing and fully integrating all aspects of GESI, climate adaptation and mitigation, and strengthening governance at the very heart of our work.

Alongside these themes, we are focused on deepening partnerships with financial institutions, governments, and the private sector to expand our impact-driven finance portfolio, to ultimately provide greater access to finance within the agri-food sector. We also aim to intensify our collaboration across sectors wherever relevant, in order to increase our impact.

Our increased emphasis on digitalisation will further enable this, particularly through digital climate adaptation services, which are vital for local food and nutrition security and climate change adaptation by providing reliable, tailored, and timely information to farmers and pastoralists.