



THE AGROECOLOGY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

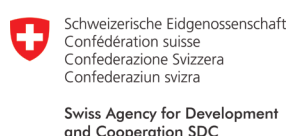




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Acknowledgements

The development of the agroecology assessment framework represents a collaborative work by a community of practice on financing agroecology that includes researchers, civil society organizations (CSOs), international organisations and donors:



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Visit also the Tracking Finance in Agroecology online tool at:

<https://agroecology-coalition.org/agroecology-finance-assessment-tool>

Introducing the framework

The agroecology assessment framework was developed to evaluate individual projects/initiatives, or entire portfolios of projects, for their degree of agroecological integration or, we might say, their “agroecologicalness”. This framework, based on the High-Level Panel of Experts’ (HLPE) 13 Agroecology Principles. It represents collaborative work by a community of practice on financing agroecology that includes a number of researchers, CSOs, international organisations and donors (see above).

The framework evaluates the alignment of a project or initiative with each of the 13 HLPE principles. For each of the principles the framework includes two “value statements” - one describing a strong alignment with the principle, and one describing a lack of alignment, as well as a dynamic list of examples/indicators of what contributes to the implementation of the principle.

While some principles may not be relevant to a particular project or initiative (e.g. “animal health” principle for a project/initiative that does not involve any animals), four principles should always be respected in all agroecological projects/initiatives. These are: co-creation of knowledge, social values and diets, fairness, and participation.

The framework also includes “red flags” for practices that run counter to agroecological values. Projects/initiatives with any “red flags” do not qualify as agroecological no matter what the rest of their work looks like.

While the framework was primarily designed to evaluate individual projects/initiatives for their “agroecologicalness”, the red flags, the value statements and the list of examples/indicators for each principle constitute an excellent guide for project design or for the design of calls for proposals, or even as a pedagogical tool in conversations about what agroecology actually is and aims for.



This document has been designed to adapt the framework to inspire and assist in the development of agroecological project proposals or in the design of calls for proposals for agroecological initiatives.

More information about the development of the framework can be found in the following article: Moeller, N.I., M. Geck, C.R. Anderson, C. Barahona, C. Broudic, R. Cluset, G. Henriques, F. Leippert, D. Mills, A. Minhaj, A. Mueting-van Loon, S. Piers de Raveschoot, E. Frison (2023) Measuring agroecology: Introducing a methodological framework and a community of practice approach. In *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene*, Vol. 11, Issue 1. <https://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.2023.00042>

1. The 13 principles of agroecology defined by the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) are aligned with the 10 Elements of Agroecology adopted by the 197 FAO Members in December 2019.

Framework content

List of Red Flags

RED FLAG	DEFINITION AND JUSTIFICATION
 GMOs	<p>Project focuses on the introduction of GMOs and associated genome-editing technologies.</p> <p>GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms) are generally considered incompatible with the principles of agroecology, both from agronomic and social perspectives (Altieri, 2005). One of the key concerns is that GMOs often rely on monocultures, leading to a reduction in biodiversity within production systems. Additionally, many GMOs are engineered with herbicide resistance genes, which necessitates the use of herbicides associated with environmental toxicity and soil fertility reduction (Tsatsakis et al., 2017). Furthermore, GMO varieties are primarily commercialized by a few large multinational companies that dominate the market. These varieties are protected by intellectual property rights, resulting in increased costs for farmers and creating harmful dependencies on agro-industries, particularly impacting smallholder farmers. Notably, the development of GMOs typically excludes the participation and involvement of farmers in the decision-making processes.</p>
 Synthetics	<p>Project focuses on the promotion of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.</p> <p>The production and utilization of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides have profound adverse effects across multiple dimensions. These effects include the collapse of biodiversity (Alliot et al., 2021; Rigal et al., 2023), pollution of air, water and soil (Benton et al., 2021; Carvalho et al., 2017; Pathak et al., 2022), impacts on human health (Curl et al., 2020; Inserm, 2021), and the escalation of greenhouse gas emissions (Tripathi et al., 2020).</p>
 Monoculture	<p>Project focuses exclusively on promoting large scale single cash crop production at the expense of diversified strategies.</p> <p>Monoculture, monocropping, and industrial-scale feedlots lead to uniformity at the heart of agricultural systems. This uniformity is associated with a dependency on synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and preventive use of antibiotics, which has negative outcomes for the sustainability of food systems (IPES Food, 2016). Genetic uniformity in agricultural systems has systematically generated vulnerability to epidemics and other biotic and abiotic stresses (Scarascia Mugnozza & Perrino, 2002). Monocultures and highly mechanized practices are directly linked to land degradation (Shannon et al., 2015). Large-scale monocultures also entail widespread contamination of soil and water through runoff and erosion (Boardman et al., 2003). They also lead to wild biodiversity reduction (Gallai et al., 2009), economic and health vulnerability of farm workers, food insecurity, and cultural erosion (Bacon et al. 2012; Gliessman, 2014; Owens et al., 2010; Ye et al., 2013).</p>

RED FLAG

DEFINITION AND JUSTIFICATION



Productivity

Project focuses exclusively on productivity resulting in avoidable destruction of vital ecosystems and their functions and services.

The prioritization of productivity at the expense of ecosystem integrity is considered an exclusionary criterion for agroecological projects, as it contradicts the integrated nature of agroecology as defined by the FAO (2018) and the HLPE (2019). The FAO underscores agroecology as a holistic approach that concurrently addresses agronomic, ecological, social, and economic aspects to enhance the sustainability and equity of food systems. The HLPE distinguishes agroecology from other approaches by emphasizing its focus on sociocultural, environmental, and governance dimensions while ensuring productivity is not compromised, rather than solely emphasizing productivity enhancement.



Seed Systems

Project actively promotes regulations and/or actions that hamper and/or destroy local and farmer-managed seed systems.

Seeds, in addition to soil, water, and sunlight, form the foundation of agriculture. Throughout history, farmers have been actively involved in the selection, preservation, storage, sharing, and planting of seeds, which has significantly contributed to agricultural biodiversity (Moeller, 2021). The right of farmers to engage in these practices is recognized and protected under Article 19 of the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, endorsed by the United Nations Human Rights Commission in 2018. The knowledge of seed preservation, exchange, and storage systems plays a critical role in supporting agroecological systems that prioritize the empowerment of producers (Pimbert, 2022). Consequently, initiatives that undermine local and farmer-managed seed systems cannot be regarded as agroecological, as they contribute to the erosion of these essential components. This includes the implementation of restrictive seed laws and regulations which prioritize the adoption of uniform, standardized, and certified seeds while disregarding alternative sources. Similarly, the enforcement of stringent intellectual property rights on plant varieties and traits further exacerbates this erosion (GAFF, 2016).



Factory Farming

Project focuses on large-scale intensification of animal production.

Factory farming (feedlots and other large-scale, intensive animal production) is in conflict with numerous principles of agroecology, particularly those related to animal health and biodiversity. The practices employed in factory farming contribute to the destruction of natural habitats, leading to a reduction in overall biodiversity. This system also drives deforestation and causes pollution of air, water, and land (Turner, 1999). Furthermore, factory farming poses a significant threat to small-scale farmers who rely on livestock for their livelihoods but struggle to compete with the scale and efficiency of industrial operations (D'Silva, 2000).

RED FLAG

DEFINITION AND JUSTIFICATION



Women & marginalised groups

Project excludes or actively discriminates against women and other marginalised groups.

Food systems serve as significant sources of livelihood for women, with global statistics indicating that 36 percent of women are employed in agrifood systems, a percentage that can exceed 70 percent in certain regions (FAO, 2023). Achieving gender equality and promoting women's economic empowerment are therefore crucial for fostering inclusive food systems, as women fulfill critical roles as agricultural producers, farm managers, processors, traders, wage workers, entrepreneurs, and decisionmakers regarding household nutrition. The prevailing food systems contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities, as marginalized social groups experience higher levels of food insecurity and suffer from food-related health impacts. Agroecology embeds at its core the values of fairness, participation, and justice, ensuring that food systems are built with and based on social and gender equity and the culture, identity, tradition of local communities. It encourages a rights-based approach addressing the political, social, economic and cultural rights, including food sovereignty, the right to food, food justice and women's empowerment. Agroecology also draws on the ancestral knowledges of peasants and indigenous peoples (Pimbert et al., 2021) whose practices and food systems help preserve global biodiversity (FAO, 2021).



Processed food

Project focuses exclusively on promoting highly processed, industrially produced foods (with low nutrient value).

The consumption of processed foods, particularly ultra-processed foods (UPFs), has significant implications for both human health and the environment. The production of UPFs involves the use of harmful ingredients, excessive packaging, and large-scale industrial processes, which contribute to environmental waste, resource depletion, and the release of potentially harmful compounds (Seferidi et al., 2020). More-over, highly processed foods heavily rely on and exacerbate the demand for a limited number of high-yielding plant species, thereby undermining the diversity of traditional crops, cuisines, and diets (Leite et al., 2022). These products also have a negative impact on nutrition, as studies have shown that a high consumption of ultra-processed foods is associated with low dietary diversity and inadequate intake of essential micronutrients (Marrón-Ponce et al., 2023). By exclusively promoting highly processed or industrially produced food, the development of agroecological food systems and the promotion of health-supporting nutrition are undermined.

RED FLAG

DEFINITION AND JUSTIFICATION



Extractivism

Project promotes extractive raw material production that depletes local resources over time.

The operations of extractive industries have profound detrimental effects on local ecologies and result in the depletion of value and resources within affected communities. Extractivism encompasses a complex set of practices, mindsets, and power dynamics that justify and enable destructive socio-ecological modes of organising life through domination, violence, depletion, and one-sided relationship (Chagnon et al 2022). Such dynamics are frequently observed in development projects that enable the forceful appropriation of natural resources, such as land and water grabbing, thereby directly undermining the progress of agroecological transformations (Anderson et al., 2021).



Human Rights

Project promotes approaches that violate rights, including customary rights, ignores prior informed consent or results in population displacement and/or land grabbing.

The promotion of human rights is an inherent component of the concept and overarching framework of agroecology, forming the bedrock for the establishment of sustainable food systems (HLPE, 2019). Agroecology strives to alleviate poverty, hunger, and inequalities while safeguarding the right to food, food sovereignty, indigenous rights, and sustainable production and consumption practices that ensure future generations' access to food (De Schutter, 2012; FAO, 2018b; HLPE, 2019; Wezel et al., 2020). It is essential to acknowledge that any project that violates the principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) cannot genuinely contribute to the promotion of healthy food systems and agroecology.

List of 13 principles, value statements and examples / indicators

The value statements describe what should be aimed at in agroecological projects and initiatives and the examples/indicators represent a non-exhaustive, dynamic list of actions that can be included in agroecological projects/initiatives in order to contribute to the implementation of the respective principles.

These value statements represent the two extremes of a continuum and the aim is to strive as much as possible towards the strong alignment.

*The icons below are taken from the representation of the 13 principles of Agroecology on the Agroecology Info pool by Biovision available [here](#).

1. Recycling



HLPE Definition: Preferentially use local renewable resources and close as far as possible resource cycles of nutrients and biomass.

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Relies on natural processes and has mostly closed resource cycles (nutrients, water, biomass, ...) using predominantly local renewable resources, and/or encourages circular economy, especially in waste management, including measures to reduce food waste at consumption level
Lack of alignment	Makes no effort to close resource cycles or contribute to circular economy, and introduces non-recyclable materials
n/a	This principle may be non-applicable if the project cannot address any dimension of recycling



Examples / Indicators

- Closing nutrient cycles through biomass recycling - at farm or landscape level depending on context (e.g. produce and use own compost, manure including humanure, biofertiliser, active use of food waste)
- Wastewater (greywater) & waste recycling
- Rainwater harvesting
- Reusable or recyclable packaging

2. Input reduction



HLPE Definition: Reduce or eliminate dependency on purchased inputs and increase self-sufficiency.

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Increases self-sufficiency on farm, community or territorial levels and eliminates harmful inputs, particularly synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and preventive antibiotics
Lack of alignment	Neutral regarding external inputs or increases dependency of producers on external inputs
n/a	This principle may be non-applicable if the project does not address production system



Examples / Indicators

- Reduce before recycle ought to be a guiding principle
- Use preventative methods (e.g. nitrogen fixing plants, biological pest management, production of natural remedies)
- Water harvesting, storage and efficient water management (e.g. drip irrigation, rainwater harvesting, harvester ponds)
- Eliminate or actively reduce use of plastic (e.g. packaging, mulch)
- Reduce energy consumption and/or produce renewable energy for domestic use on farm (i.e. not for export), including producing wood and other for fuel, reducing vehicle use, reducing digital implements & use of renewable energies (e.g. solar electricity, biogas from animal manure)
- Eliminate or actively /significantly reduce synthetic fertilisers
- Eliminate or actively/significantly reduce synthetic pesticides and veterinary drugs
- Eliminate or actively/significantly reduce industrial/imported feed (e.g. from outside the territory, highly processed, with additives)
- Use farm-saved seeds or community seed banks or seed saver networks

- Deliberatively use preventative methods (e.g. nitrogen fixing plants, biological pest management, production of natural remedies)
- Produce fibre and building materials on-farm for own use
- Elimination of heavy, soil (structure) damaging machinery

3. Soil health



HLPE Definition: Secure and enhance soil health and functioning for improved plant growth, particularly by managing organic matter and enhancing soil biological activity.

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Deliberately and actively preserves and enhances soil health through explicit design for improving soil biological activity and structure and preserving soil erosion
Lack of alignment	Does not focus on soil health and may use practices undermining soil health
n/a	This principle may be non-applicable if the project does not address agricultural production system

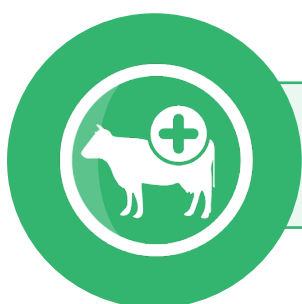


Examples / Indicators

- Monitor/assess soil health and biological activity to evaluate practices
- Holistic approach using multiple practices to deliberately enhance soil health including carbon sequestration
 - e.g. vermicomposting, permaculture, natural farming, integrated diversified farming, organic agriculture
 - mulching, organic matter addition, cover crops

- minimum tillage
- deliberate fallow periods
- Animal integration for manure
- Land use management & prevention of soil erosion (terracing, zai pits,...)

4. Animal health



HLPE Definition: Ensure animal health and welfare.

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Ensures highest standard of animal health and welfare, during entire life cycle with a focus on species-appropriate environment and locally adapted and resilient breeds
Lack of alignment	Neutral regarding animal health and welfare or meets required animal health and welfare standards in intensive production
n/a	This principle may be non-applicable if the project does not involve animals



Examples / Indicators

- Work with resilient, locally adapted and naturally healthful breeds & promote responsible research on these
- No breeding-related handicaps (e.g. brittle bones, hip problems, inability to birth naturally, or proclivities to particular diseases)
- Align number of animals to carrying capacity of the land/water

- Species-appropriate environment (free range, grass-fed ruminants, foraging fowl, outdoors ideally all year round)
- High standards of animal welfare: free from stress, hunger, thirst
- Ethical killing, including in fishing
- Preventative approach to disease, preferably with natural remedies/approaches; castration or other medical interventions only when necessary (not routine)
- Integrated pollinator management
- Eliminate/ reduce actively/significantly use of synthetic feeds and hormones - increase use of organic feeds
- No separation of mother from young; no routine slaughter of baby males

5. Biodiversity



HLPE Definition: Maintain and enhance diversity of species, functional diversity and genetic resources and thereby maintain overall agroecosystem biodiversity in time and space at field, farm and landscape scales.

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Deliberately and actively protects and enhances biological diversity within production systems – from domesticated diversity (crops and animal races, ...) and ‘wild’ diversity (soil microorganisms, plants, insects, birds, fish, ...) to multi-habitat approaches (land use diversity at landscape level)
Lack of alignment	Neutral with respect to biodiversity or actively manages production system to limit diversity (e.g. monocultures for ease of mechanical harvesting)
n/a	This principle may be non-applicable if the project does not address production system



Examples / Indicators

- Use a diversity of nutrient-rich crops, species and varieties including of local, traditional, indigenous or 'orphan' crops, locally adapted breeds and varieties (animals, trees, crops, fish)
- Encouraging of particular species (e.g. pollinators, pest predators, wild companion plants) through habitat management
- Conservation of forest fragments around farms, conversion of field edges into woodlands
- Multi-year crop rotation
- Multi-habitat approaches (land use diversity at landscape level)
- Biological soil fertility/health measures
- Measures to enhance local and natural pollinators

6. Synergy



HLPE Definition: Enhance positive ecological interaction, synergy, integration and complementarity among the elements of agroecosystems (animals, crops, trees, soil and water).

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Enhances positive ecological interaction, integration and complementarity among the elements of agroecosystems (animals, crops, trees, soil and water), as well as between production and environmental objectives across field, farm and landscape scales (e.g. land sharing).
Lack of alignment	Neutral with respect to integrating or segregating components within production systems or actively segregates components within production systems, including intensification of production on higher potential land, leaving other land for meeting conservation objectives (land sparing)
n/a	This principle may be non-applicable if the project does not work on biophysical aspects of landscape



Examples / Indicators

- Agroecological redesign & diversification increasing synergies
- Companion planting
 - ◆ non-crop plants for ecological functions
 - ◆ polycultures and mixed farming, cover cropping, green manures or permanent ground cover
 - ◆ intercropping, agroforestry, silvopasture,
 - ◆ crop-tree-livestock-fish integration;
 - ◆ legumes for nitrogen fixation
 - ◆ fodder trees and crops (mangroves for fisheries?)
 - ◆ soil-plants management system
- Connectivity between elements of the agroecosystem and the landscape
- Symbiotic and complementary role of plant and animal agriculture i.e. rotational / regenerative grazing; manure-based composts and fertilizers
- Integrated pest management by habitat management (planting flowers to attract bees,...)
- Integrated landscape planning/territorial approach leading to improved ecosystem services
- Tackle climate change, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition through redesigned system

7. Economic diversification



HLPE Definition: Diversify on-farm incomes by ensuring that small-scale farmers have greater financial independence and value addition opportunities while enabling them to respond to demand from consumers.

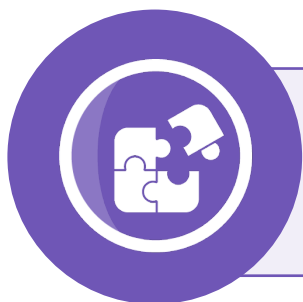
DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Actively strives for greater economic diversity of local and regional production and consumption systems, including to diversify livelihoods and enable financial independence and autonomy
Lack of alignment	Neutral with respect to diversification or actively emphasises specialization in production systems
n/a	This principle may be non-applicable if the project does not address livelihoods



Examples / Indicators

- Diversification of production – e.g. honey, wild/foraged foods and herbs, non-timber forest products, native local fish species
- Safe, nutrient-preserving on-farm or cooperative-based storage agroprocessing/transformation
- Farm-based or local input production for distribution (seed, seedlings, trees, biofertilisers, biopesticides)
- Small enterprise development and support in agro-food value chains
- Support short/regional/diversified value chains/circuits, local food system
- Supporting youth and women entrepreneurship
- Farm-based non-agricultural activities (e.g. crafts, agri-tourism, eco-tourism, services, cooking-classes, school visits)

8. Co-creation of knowledge



HLPE Definition: Enhance co-creation and horizontal sharing of knowledge including local and scientific innovation, especially through farmer-to-farmer exchange.

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Actively supports and emphasizes the importance of indigenous/traditional knowledge, local innovation, farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange, and other horizontal knowledge exchanges within the food system
Lack of alignment	Does not promote co-creation of knowledge and emphasizes dissemination of innovation from state and privately-funded formal research
n/a	This principle is always applicable



Examples / Indicators

- Platform for the horizontal creation and transfer of knowledge and good practices:
 - ♦ farmer to farmer learning and exchanges including farmer field schools, farmers' climate field schools
 - ♦ community of practices on agroecology
- Farmer research and experimentation groups
- recovery, valorisation and dissemination of traditional and indigenous knowledge
- co innovation between farmers and researchers/participatory research
- transdisciplinary research (design, implementation, analysis, evaluation).
- Improve access to agroecological knowledge:
 - ♦ capacity building/strengthen agroecological extension
 - ♦ improvement and development of agroecology curriculum
 - ♦ consumer food and nutrition education
- Engagement and participation of producers and consumers in local community and grassroots organizations

9. Social values & diets



HLPE Definition: Build food systems based on the culture, identity, tradition, social and gender equity of local communities that provide healthy, diversified, seasonally and culturally appropriate diets.

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Build food systems based on equity and the cultural identity and tradition of local communities that provide healthy, diversified, culturally appropriate diets
Lack of alignment	Does not address social inequalities and disregards cultural identities and values related to food and diets
n/a	This principle is always applicable



Examples / Indicators

Social values:

- Cultural identity and tradition
- Gender equity
- Youth and women empowerment
- Inclusion (IPLC's, PWD and other marginalised groups)
- Agriculture based on family farmers which have full access to capital and decision making processes

Diets:

- Healthy and diversified diets
- Access to culturally and seasonally appropriate food
- Promotion of diversified locally produced healthy diets through a diversified food production system

10. Fairness



HLPE Definition: Support dignified and robust livelihoods for all actors engaged in food systems, especially small-scale food producers, based on fair trade, fair employment and fair treatment of intellectual property rights.

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Emphasizes fairness as well as decent work, and actively supports dignified and robust livelihoods for all actors engaged in food systems, especially small-scale food producers
Lack of alignment	Neutral to or disregarding labour conditions as well as injustices in trade and legal arrangements
n/a	This principle is always applicable



Examples / Indicators

- Fair trade and fair prices in local, regional and international markets
- Decent jobs and working conditions for all actors in agri-food system
- social mechanisms to reduce vulnerability
- Producers and consumers organisations
- Dignified livelihoods especially for smallholders
- Protection of traditional knowledge and promotion of fair intellectual property rights, e.g. Open Source Seeds
- Equitable and collective ownership models

11. Connectivity



HLPE Definition: Ensure proximity and confidence between producers and consumers through promotion of fair and short distribution networks and by re-embedding food systems into local economies.

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Emphasizes proximity and relationships between producers, consumers and other food system actors through promotion of fair, short and local distribution networks, circular economy, workers' cooperatives and solidarity networks
Lack of alignment	Project does not promote connectivity between food system actors and/or emphasizes global value chains
n/a	This principle may be non-applicable if the project does not address commercialisation and exchange of produce



Examples / Indicators

- Re-establishing connection between consumers and producer emphasising connectivity and trust, less intermediaries
- Access to markets emphasising short food chains and local food webs
- Encourage and sensitise for seasonal and regional demand
- Re-establishing and reinforcing the connection between communities and territories (including spiritual and ancestral connections)
- Public procurement schemes for agroecological produce especially favouring smallholder food producers
- Organisation and support of local farmer markets, workers cooperatives, CSAs and/or PGS
- Community restaurants, soup kitchens

12. Land and natural resource governance



HLPE Definition: Strengthen institutional arrangements to improve, including the recognition and support of family farmers, smallholders and peasant food producers as sustainable managers of natural and genetic resources.

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Asserts basic rights (especially the right to food and water, land rights) and strengthens institutional arrangements to support agroecological production and smallholder food producers as sustainable managers of natural and genetic resources
Lack of alignment	Neutral to rights-based approaches and/or ignores role of local communities in natural resource management
n/a	This principle may be non-applicable if I and natural resource governance and institutional arrangements fall outside of the scope of the project



Examples / Indicators

- Recognition of smallholder rights & conflict resolution in their support
- Respecting, protecting, fulfilling, promoting the right to food
- Respecting, protecting, fulfilling, promoting the right to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed
- Respecting, protecting, fulfilling, promoting rights of traditional knowledge protection
- Promotion of food sovereignty
- Integrated seed governance emphasising farmer managed seed systems
- Land tenure that respects traditional and customary land rights and ensure equitable and secure access to land for smallholders/ family farmers and peasant food producers. (e.g. social forestry, community-based forest management, protected area management by local communities)
- Control of inland and marine water resources by coastal/fishing communities; governance of water resources include their representatives

- Equitable ownership and access to natural resources recognising the crucial role of small holders and IPLCs as stewards of the environment
- Improving the enabling policy environment for agroecology, sustainable land use and natural resource management (e.g. Public and private incentives for provision of ecosystem services through agriculture and land management, national land use policies that protect agricultural land from conversion)

13. Participation



HLPE Definition: Encourage social organization and greater participation in decision-making by food producers and consumers to support decentralized governance and local adaptive management of agricultural and food systems.

DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
Strong alignment	Places smallholder food producers and vulnerable, marginalised communities at the centre of decision-making; encourages decentralized governance; strengthens organisational capacity for self-determination and autonomy and actively strives for greater food actor agency – i.e. participation of all food actors and wider civil society in decision-making about how food is produced, processed, stored, transported and consumed
Lack of alignment	Does not actively encourage inclusive participation and/or centralises decision- making
n/a	This principle is always applicable



Examples / Indicators

- Inclusive and meaningful participation of women, youth, IPLCs and other marginalised groups in policy and decision (e.g. making Increased agency of all actors in the food systems, their legitimate and self-selected representatives sit in relevant governance and implementation bodies)
- Participatory, inclusive and equitable food system governance (including policy development, food councils)
- Multi-actor food system processes, communities of practice
- Deliberative and consultative democracy such as citizen's juries, or participatory monitoring or budgeting mechanisms
- Devolved decision-making
- Community-based natural resource management
- Participatory land use planning, landscape design
- Participatory biosphere conservation and restoration, catchment management
- Local adaptive management
- Rights awareness and capacity to claim for rights holders and accountability for duty bearers
- Strengthened organisational capacity for participation, self-determination and autonomy / increasing agency (e.g food sovereignty)



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