

# Background Document

## Framework for Sustainable Food Systems (FSFS) Stakeholder Workshops

### [Introduction to the FSFS](#)

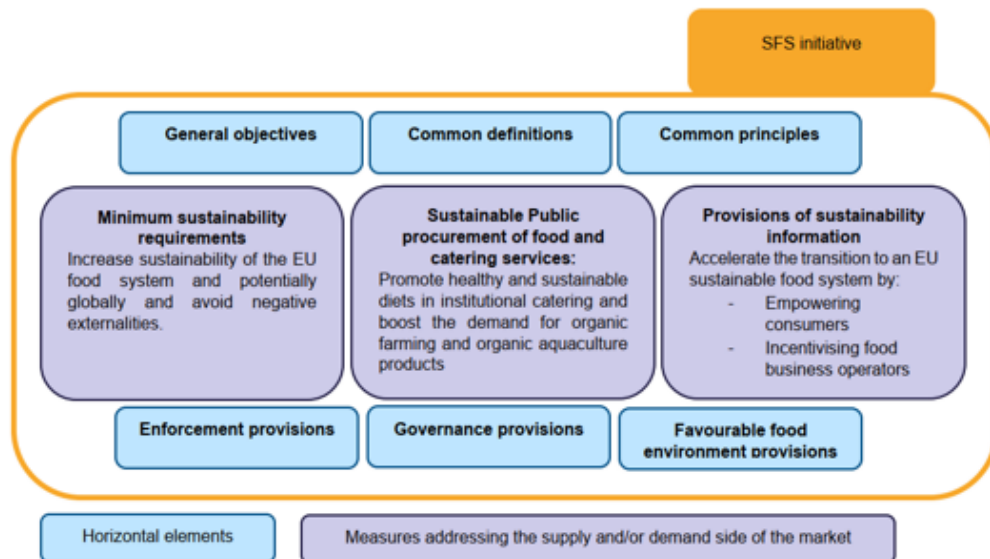
The “[European Green Deal](#)” and its comprehensive [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) acknowledge that “a sustainable food system will be essential to achieve the climate, biodiversity and other environmental objectives of the Green Deal, while improving the incomes of primary producers and reinforcing the EU’s competitiveness”. To accelerate and facilitate the transition towards sustainable food systems and ensure that foods placed on the EU market increasingly become sustainable, the Farm to Fork Strategy announced a horizontal framework law. The **EU sustainable food system initiative (Framework for Sustainable Food Systems, “FSFS”)**, to be put forward by the European Commission in the second half of 2023, will aim to establish new foundations for future food policies by introducing sustainability objectives and principles based on an integrated food system approach and lay down general principles and objectives, together with requirements and responsibilities for all actors in the EU food system.

### [Consultation activities](#)

In 2021, the European Commission published an inception impact assessment which was open for feedback during the period of 28 September – 26 October 2021. Over the course of 2022, as part of the impact assessment process for the FSFS initiative, a series of consultation activities have been undertaken, with the support of an external consultant contracted by the European Commission: an open public consultation ran from 28 April 2022 until 21 July 2022; a set of detailed surveys targeting business operators, civil society organisations and public authorities were launched on the 18th July 2022 and are running until 26 September 2022; a series of in-depth interviews have also been organised with stakeholders between July and September 2022. Preliminary results of these consultation activities will be presented during the last consultation activity, consisting of seven targeted stakeholder workshops, taking place from the end of September and over October 2022. These events aim to gather more detailed insight on the different elements of the FSFS and the impacts of envisaged policy measures, all the while offering the opportunity for constructive discussion amongst stakeholders and experts.

## General structure of the FSFS

The FSFS is comprised of several horizontal elements next to specific policy measures addressing the supply and/or demand of sustainable food products.



*Building Blocks of the Sustainable EU Food System initiative*

## Horizontal elements of the FSFS initiative

### **General objectives, common definitions, and common principles**

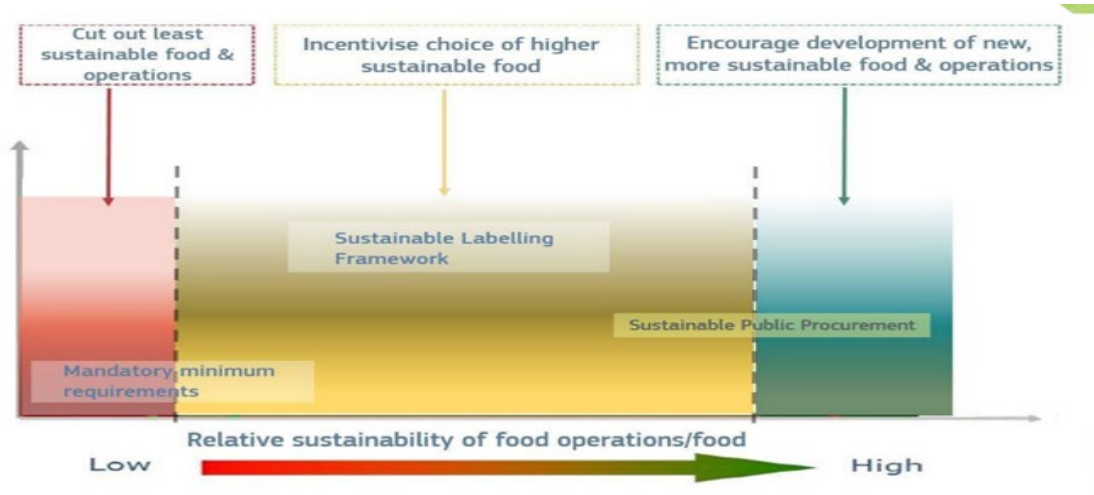
The overall objective of the FSFS is to set the foundations for the systemic changes that are needed by all actors of the food system, including policy makers, business operators and consumers to accelerate the transition to a sustainable EU food system. To that end, the FSFS will include sustainability principles and objectives, along with a set of definitions, providing a common understanding as goals to be achieved.

### **Governance, enforcement, and monitoring provisions**

The FSFS will set up governance mechanism(s) as appropriate, which could include cross-sectoral coordinating mechanisms for joint actions between governments, civil society and the private sector. Enforcement and monitoring provisions will also be designed, in accordance with the policy measures (see section below) which are selected to be pursued, following the impact assessment.

**Policy Measures envisaged under the FSFS (Measures addressing the supply and/or demand side of the market)**

To accelerate the transition to a sustainable EU food system, several policy measures are considered in the Framework for Sustainable Food Systems (FSFS), that include push and pull measures, as described in the figure below:



**Push provisions** would introduce minimum requirements for food products and related operations. They will have as an objective to gradually push the least sustainable foods and operations from the market.

For the food operations and products that meet the minimum requirements and are on the market, **pull provisions** would set incentives for producers to go beyond the minimal requirements, for instance:

- A sustainability labelling framework would incentivise the choice for food of higher sustainability
- Sustainable Food procurement would encourage the development of more sustainable food and operations

The below tables give an overview of the policy options for the different types of measures.

**Policy Measure 1: Introducing sustainability requirements for all economic operators of the food system (sustainable supply), consists of the following policy options:**

Option 0	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Requirements within FSFS		Option 5
				Option 4		
Do nothing	Voluntary	Review and alignment of sectoral legislation through requirements, in line with FSFS objectives/principles	Increasing compliance with sustainability standards by explicitly establishing the primary responsibility of business operators (strengthened due diligence) for sustainability purposes	Elimination from the Union market of the least sustainable food systems operations/products by setting minimum sustainability requirements based on the 'do no harm principle'		A combination of options 2, 3 (primary responsibility) and 4 (sustainability requirement)
				4A – Only products produced in the EU	4B – Products produced and placed in the EU (imports are covered in the scope)	<b>The options are not mutually exclusive</b>
The baseline is characterised by the "no policy change" scenario, where the current acquis would remain unchanged and all current measures and processes in the food system remain in force.	Voluntary approaches that go beyond legal requirements, such as policy guidelines and/or private initiatives such as codes of conducts. No legislative initiatives.	The FSFS will lay down a set of legally binding general principles and objectives applicable to the entire Food system, including public authorities in order to mainstream sustainability in all EU and national food system policies and ensure their coherence. This can be achieved through the following mechanism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of existing vertical and sectoral legislation by [e.g. 2030] except those instruments reviewed under the F2F action plan;</li> <li>• Where needs are identified, operationalize these principles/objectives via detailed requirements laid down in thematic/sectoral legislation (existing or, where needed, new).</li> </ul>	A general primary responsibility ( <b>strengthened due diligence</b> ) for business operators involved in the food system to ensure that their internal operations/ processes and/or products, within their businesses and under their control satisfy any sustainability-related requirements of EU/national law and to verify that such requirements are met.	Minimum sustainability requirements, based on the 'no harm' principle, requiring business operators to ensure that their operations on the EU territory and the food or feed that they are placing on the EU market do not significantly harm identified sustainability objectives, focusing on certain "non-negotiable" qualifiers around the three dimensions of sustainability.	Minimum sustainability requirements, based on the 'no harm' principle requiring business operators (EU and non EU) to ensure that their operations and the food or feed produced and placed on the EU market do not significantly harm identified sustainability objectives, focusing on certain "non-negotiable" qualifiers around the three dimensions of sustainability.	Cumulative 2,3 and 4.

**Policy Measure 2: Sustainability labelling consists of the following general policy options**

Option 0	Option 1	Regulatory options		
		Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
			New EU framework for sustainability labelling	
Do nothing	Voluntary	Reinforcing existing legislation	Optional EU sustainability label	Mandatory EU sustainability label
Currently applicable EU food labelling legislation remains in force. Upcoming vertical sustainability dimension/component specific labelling initiatives (e.g. front-of-pack nutrition labelling (nutrition), "green claims" (environment)) are adopted and implemented.	Voluntary approaches that go beyond legal requirements are developed by the Commission such as guidelines, and/or private commitments are <u>incentivised</u> such as memorandums of understanding or codes of conduct.	Sustainability labelling provisions related to <u>more than one sustainability dimension</u> (e.g. environmental + social sustainability) are developed in sector specific legislation (e.g. Fisheries Marketing Standards).	<p><b>1/ Development of an EU general framework</b> for sustainability-related food information to consumers applicable to all foods (scope, definitions, objectives and principles/general rules), and</p> <p><b>2/ Development of a voluntary harmonised EU sustainability label</b> for EU and imported food products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sub-option 3a:</b> voluntary label applicable only to food products of higher sustainability performance</li> <li>• <b>Sub-option 3b:</b> voluntary label applicable to all food products</li> </ul>	<p><b>1/ Development of an EU general framework</b> for sustainability-related food information to consumers applicable to all foods (scope, definitions, objectives and principles/general rules, and</p> <p><b>2/ Development of a mandatory harmonised EU sustainability label</b> on EU and/or imported food products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sub-option 4a:</b> label mandatory for all EU food products and voluntary for imported food products</li> <li>• <b>Sub-option 4b:</b> mandatory label for all EU and imported food products</li> </ul>

**Policy Measure 3: Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) of Food consists of the following policy options**

Option 0	Option 1	Regulatory options	
		Option 2	Option 3
Do nothing	Voluntary	General provisions and requirements aiming to raise awareness and improve skills and knowledge of SPP, capacity building and support authorities in using public procurement strategically	Mandatory general and specific requirements
Maintain the baseline, implementation of the Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement, and the use of the current Commission guidance documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria for food, catering services and vending machines</li> <li>• Buying Social – a guide to taking account of social considerations in public procurement</li> </ul>	Extend current guidance on Green Public Procurement (GPP) to cover the three dimensions of sustainability, and in particular healthy diets. No legislative action foreseen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the European Commission e-competence centre with tools and information to help public buyers with sustainable public food procurement</li> <li>• Establish an EU network of food procurement professionals;</li> <li>• Create centralized MS focal points</li> <li>• Require MS to set up national actions plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of a general mandatory requirement of procuring sustainably with a clear reference to the environmental, social-health and economic dimension of sustainability of food products and some related operations;</li> <li>• Empowerment to the Commission to adopt delegated/implementing acts to specify SPP criteria</li> <li>• Providing for the setting of national minimum (mandatory) targets with timelines as part of national actions plans.</li> </ul>