



Food Systems Solutions Webinar 2024

Water Matters: The Essential Role of Water in Food Systems

19 November 2024, 14:00 – 15:00 (CET) | Virtual

Background

Water is essential to food systems and is vital for ensuring food security and for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This has become even more evident in the light of the current global water crisis that manifests in various ways, highlighting the vulnerability of our food systems to water scarcity and the impacts of climate change.

There is a growing global consensus that coordinated action is essential to foster meaningful change. In 2016, UN-Water emphasized the need to integrate water and sanitation considerations into multisectoral policies and plans to effectively deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. Since then, FAO has launched its new 'Water Journey', promoting integrated solutions of sustainable water resources management for the Four Betters. In 2023, FAO's Conference endorsed the proposal of water being the theme of FAO's Governing Bodies for the biennium of 2024-2025, putting water on the global agenda. During COP28, last year, a new Partnership on Water-Resilient Food Systems was launched to support countries to integrate water and agriculture considerations into their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and other national climate strategies. All crucial steps towards elevating the water-food nexus in climate discussions.

Although the interconnections between water, food systems, and food security are increasingly acknowledged by the broader UN system and governments, the concrete implementation of integrated actions remains inadequate. For instance, only one-third of the national food systems transformation pathways submitted during the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 addressed water in a meaningful way. Furthermore, while the UN 2023 Water Conference emphasized the significance of resilient agri-food systems for sustainable water use and management, only 13% of the commitments made to the Water Action Agenda included agriculture. This highlights a persistent gap in recognizing and incorporating water-food interlinkages into global processes and policies.

Purpose of the webinar

Since 2022, the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and its partners have organized a series of Food Systems Solutions Webinars (FSS Webinars) aimed at fostering peer learning on food systems transformation and enhancing science-policy interfaces. This webinar will explore the critical role of water in transforming food systems. Participants will gain insights into the interconnections between water and food systems, as well as strategies for translating these insights into actionable measures for water and food security. The session will also showcase ongoing initiatives designed to strengthen the linkages between water and food systems at a global level.



Agenda

Duration	Item
5 min	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lifeng Li, Director, Land and Water Division, FAO
10min	Keynote presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nathalie Dubler, Junior Professional Officer, Land and Water Division, FAO. Presentation on the preliminary results of an analysis of water in the National Food Systems Pathways
30 min	Panel discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maurice Opondo, Director Irrigation Water Management, Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation, Kenya on best practices and lessons learned in integrating water in food systems transformation pathways and enhancing cross-sectoral policies• Tamisha Lee, President of the Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers on water-related challenges for agrifood systems• Catharien Terwisscha van Scheltinga, Senior Researcher Water Management, Wageningen University and Research on challenges / tradeoffs of different water users including agriculture, and how these challenges can be overcome Moderator: Mia Madsen , Policy Officer, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub
10 min	Q&A
5 min	Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stefanos Fotiou, Director, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub