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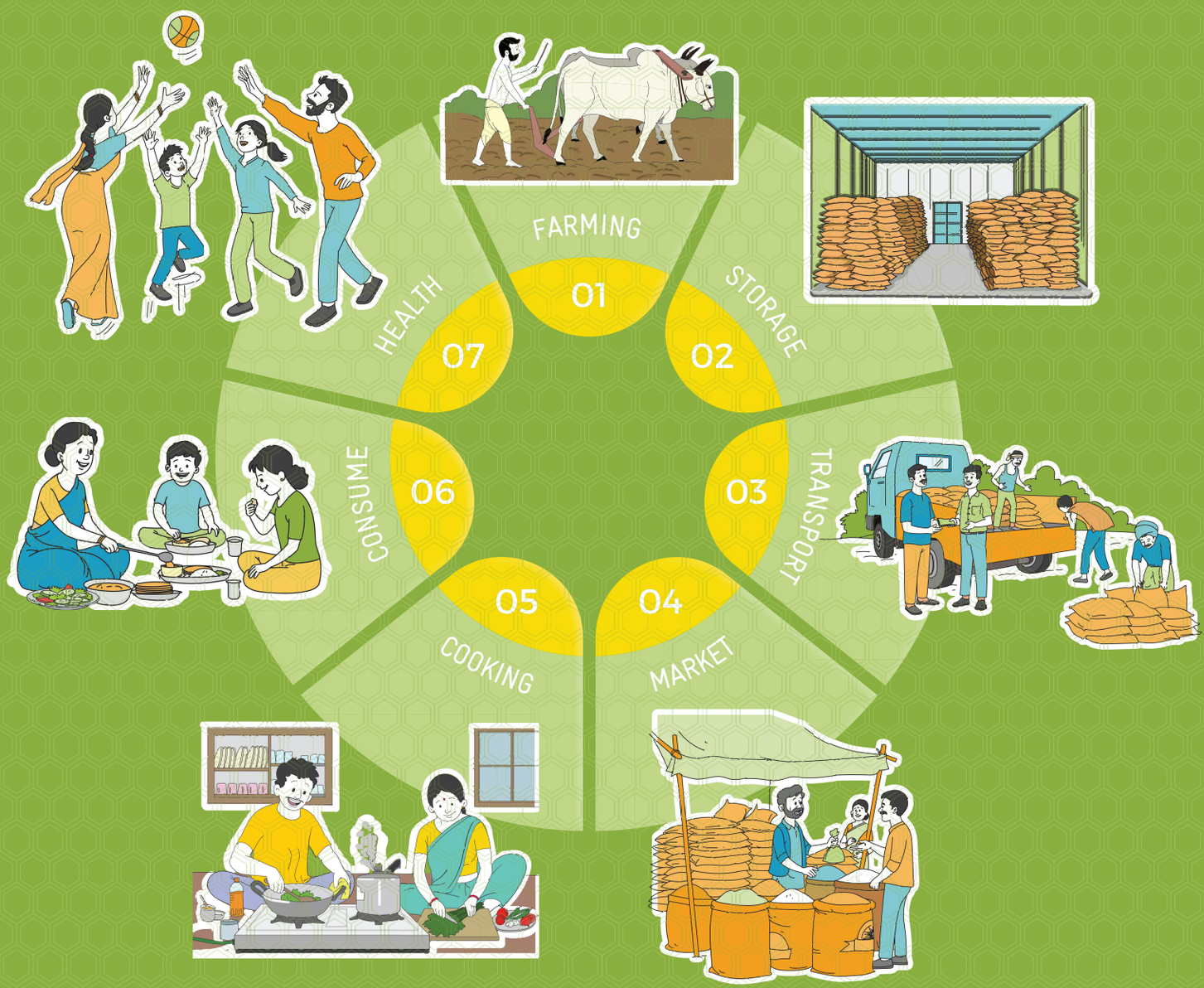
Understanding Food Systems Transformation and Convergence Across Departments for Government Functionaries



ONE-DAY ORIENTATION-CUM-WORKSHOP FACILITATOR GUIDE

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Abbreviations

ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWW	Anganwadi Worker
CDPO	Child Development Project Officer
FPO	Farmer Producer Organisation
FPS	Fair Price Shop
FST	Food System Transformation
MDM	Mid-Day Meal
NRLM	National Rural Livelihood Mission
PDS	Public Distribution System
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHG	Self Help Group
WCD	Women and Child Development

Introduction

Food and nutrition outcomes are shaped by a complex web of interconnected factors that extend well beyond agriculture. Health, Women and Child Development (WCD), Education, Public Distribution, Rural Development, markets, natural resource management and consumer behaviour all influence what food is produced, how it is distributed, what people consume, and ultimately their nutrition and well-being. Addressing food and nutrition challenges therefore requires moving beyond sector-specific approaches towards a systems perspective that recognises these interconnections.

Food System Transformation (FST) provides such an approach. It enables departments to view their existing mandates, programmes and services as part of a larger food system where actions in one sector influence outcomes in others. This perspective promotes stronger coordination, convergence and evidence-informed decision-making, leading to improved food security, nutrition, livelihoods, environmental sustainability and resilience.

Government functionaries play a pivotal role in this transformation. Through policy implementation, programme management, service delivery and local planning, they influence multiple dimensions of the food system. Their ability to understand these interconnections, recognise trade-offs and identify opportunities for convergence is critical for achieving national development priorities, including nutrition security, climate resilience and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Building this shared understanding across departments is therefore essential for translating existing programmes into collective action for better food system outcomes.

The Orientation-cum-Workshop on Food System Transformation has been designed to strengthen this understanding among government functionaries through interactive discussions, participatory exercises, systems thinking and collaborative reflection. The workshop enables participants to appreciate departmental roles within the broader food system, identify complementarities across sectors, and explore practical mechanisms for strengthening coordination within existing institutional structures.

This Facilitator Guide supports trainers in conducting the workshop through a structured, interactive and participatory approach. It provides session objectives, facilitation processes, discussion points, participatory activities, trainer tips and resource requirements to create an engaging learning environment that promotes dialogue, reflection and collaborative problem-solving.

Objectives of the Facilitator Guide

This Facilitator Guide has been developed to:

- Provide a structured framework for facilitating the Orientation-cum-Workshop on Food System Transformation.
- Support facilitators in delivering participatory and experience-based learning.
- Build a common understanding of FST and systems thinking among government functionaries.
- Enable participants to recognise departmental roles, interconnections and opportunities for convergence within existing programmes and institutional mechanisms.
- Facilitate dialogue, reflection and collaborative action planning to strengthen interdepartmental coordination for improved food and nutrition outcomes.

Key Topics Covered

The workshop introduces FST through a systems lens, covering food systems and nutrition, food systems and development, systems thinking, departmental roles, convergence and collaborative action to strengthen food and nutrition outcomes.

Theme	Key Topics
Food Systems Perspective	FST, food systems thinking, changing food patterns
Food Systems & Nutrition	Food systems and nutrition outcomes, healthy diets, food security and nutrition security
Food Systems & Development	Linkages with livelihoods, climate resilience, SDGs and national priorities
Systems Thinking	Interdependence within food systems, institutional web, systems approach
Departmental Roles	Contribution of Agriculture, Health, WCD, Education, Public Distribution System (PDS), Rural Development and allied departments to food system outcomes
Convergence	Interdepartmental coordination, identifying complementarities, opportunities for convergence
Collaborative Action	Strengthening coordination, collective problem-solving and identifying practical actions for improved food and nutrition outcomes

How to Use this Facilitators' Guide

The guide provides a structured yet flexible framework for planning and conducting the workshop. Facilitators are encouraged to adapt examples and discussions to the local context while ensuring active participation and helping participants connect their departmental responsibilities with broader food system outcomes.

Key Facilitation Tips

- Review each session and prepare the required materials before the workshop.
- Follow the suggested flow while adapting examples to the local context.
- Encourage engagement of participants from all departments and ensure balanced discussions.
- Use questions and activities to promote dialogue rather than one-way presentations.
- Build on participants' experiences and connect them with FST concepts.
- Conclude each session by reinforcing the key messages before moving to the next.

Session Plan for One-Day Orientation-cum-Workshop Facilitator Guide

S. No.	Session Topic	Key Sub-Topics	Objectives of the Session	Methods (Activity Based)	Time	Materials Required
1	Opening, Introductions and Expectations	Purpose of workshop, participant expectations, role of departments	Build a shared understanding of the workshop purpose and encourage active participation	Introduction, expectation cards, quick interactive poll	9:30 - 10:00	Cards, markers, chart paper
2	Changing Food Patterns *'Pehle Aur Ab'* Exercise	Traditional foods vs current diets, loss of food diversity, influence of market, production and culture	Help participants understand how food habits and dietary diversity have changed over time and how these changes are linked to production systems, markets and culture	"पहले और अब" participatory exercise, participants prepare cards on foods eaten earlier and foods eaten now; placing of cards and group discussion on why diversity has reduced	10:00 - 11:00	Chart paper, markers, food group cards
3	Food System Concept, from Production to Nutrition	Food system stages: production, markets, food environment, consumption, nutrition	Enable participants to understand the food system as an interconnected system rather than isolated schemes	Food system mapping activity, group reflection, dialogue questions	11:15 - 12:15	Food system flip charts
4	Systems Thinking Web Exercise (Convergence Web)	Role of Agriculture, Health, WCD, Education, PDS, Rural Development in food systems	Demonstrate how different departments are interconnected in FST	Web Exercise - Participants stand in a circle holding a rope. Each participant answers a question about their department's role and throws the rope to another department. Gradually a web is formed showing convergence and interdependence	12:15 - 1:15	Rope or wool thread, role cards, questions

S. No.	Session Topic	Key Sub-Topics	Objectives of the Session	Methods (Activity Based)	Time	Materials Required
5	Food Systems and Development Goals (Why It Matters)	Nutrition security, livelihoods, climate resilience, SDGs	Connect FST with broader development goals and national priorities	Facilitated dialogue, visual poster discussion	2:00 - 2:45	Posters, PPT
6	Role of Departments in FST	Agriculture, WCD, Health, Education, PDS, Rural Development	Identify how each department contributes to nutrition and food system outcomes	Department group work - participants identify existing schemes and their role in food system outcomes	2:45 - 3:45	Department cards, scheme list
7	Identifying Gaps and Opportunities for Convergence	Bottlenecks in coordination, missed opportunities, joint planning	Encourage systems thinking and collaborative problem solving	Convergence lens analysis	4:00 - 5:00	Flip charts, markers

Session 1

Opening, Introductions and Expectations

Session Topic	Key Sub-Topics	Objectives of the Session	Methods (Activity Based)	Time	Materials Required
Opening, Introductions and Expectations	Purpose of workshop, participant expectations, role of departments	Build a shared understanding of the workshop purpose and encourage active participation	Introduction, expectation cards, quick interactive poll	9:30-10:00	Cards, markers, chart paper

1. Expected Outcomes

By the end of this session:

- Participants become familiar with one another and feel comfortable participating in the workshop.
- Participants gain clarity on the purpose and agenda of the workshop.
- Participants recognise the presence and roles of different departments participating in the workshop.
- Participants begin to appreciate the need for interdepartmental collaboration to address food system challenges.

2. Facilitation Process

The facilitator welcomes participants and introduces the purpose of the workshop, emphasising that improving nutrition and food security requires coordinated efforts across multiple departments such as Agriculture, Health, WCD, Education, Rural Development, and food distribution systems.

Participants are then invited to introduce themselves briefly by sharing

- Their name
- Their department
- One key programme or responsibility they are involved in

As participants introduce themselves, the facilitator places the cards on a chart titled "Departments Present in the Workshop."

Once all introductions are completed, the facilitator briefly highlights the diversity of departments in the room and emphasises that improving nutrition and food systems requires collaboration between multiple departments such as Agriculture, Health, WCD, Education, Rural Development, and food distribution systems. This sets the stage for the later sessions on systems thinking and convergence.

After the introduction, the facilitator distributes cards or sticky notes and asks participants to write their expectations. These are then placed on a chart paper under the heading "Expectations from the Workshop." The facilitator briefly reviews the expectations and explains how the workshop sessions will address many of these points.

3. Trainer Tips

- Encourage participants to keep their introductions brief to maintain the pace of the session.
- Acknowledge the presence of different departments and highlight their importance in the food system.
- Maintain an energetic and welcoming tone so participants feel comfortable sharing their ideas.
- Ensure that participants from all departments have the opportunity to introduce themselves.
- Use this session to emphasise that the workshop will focus on collaboration and convergence across departments.

Session 2

Changing Food Patterns *'Pehle Aur Ab'* Exercise

Session Topic	Key Sub-Topics	Objectives of the Session	Methods (Activity Based)	Time	Materials Required
Changing Food Patterns *'Pehle Aur Ab'* Exercise	Traditional foods vs current diets, loss of food diversity, influence of market, production and culture	Help participants understand how food habits and dietary diversity have changed over time and how these changes are linked to production systems, markets and culture	"पहले और अब" participatory exercise, participants prepare cards on foods eaten earlier and foods eaten now; placing of cards and group discussion on why diversity has reduced	10:00-11:00	Chart paper, markers, food group cards

1. Expected Outcomes

By the end of this session:

- Participants reflect on how food habits and diets have changed over time.
- Participants recognise the decline or transformation of traditional food diversity.
- Participants begin to understand the connection between agriculture, markets, and dietary patterns.
- Participants develop curiosity about how food systems influence nutrition outcomes.
- Participants engage actively in discussions and share their personal experiences.

2. Facilitation Process

Step 1: Introducing the Activity

The facilitator begins the session with an open conversation about food memories. The facilitator explains that everyone carries memories of foods they have eaten at different stages of their lives. These foods often reflect the agricultural practices, culture, and food availability of that time.

The facilitator may say that "Food is not only about nutrition or agriculture, it is closely linked to culture, traditions, and lived experiences. The foods we consume reflect what is grown, what is available, and what is valued in our communities. It is deeply connected with our memories, traditions, culture, and the places where we grew up. Today we will begin by reflecting on the foods we remember eating during different stages of our lives."

The facilitator then asks participants a few warm up questions to stimulate thinking:

- Which foods do you remember eating regularly when you were young?
- Which foods were common in your homes or villages/areas earlier but are rarely seen nowadays?
- Which foods have become more common now compared to earlier times?

Participants may begin sharing examples informally, which helps create a comfortable atmosphere before starting the exercise.

Step 2: Writing Food Items on Cards

The facilitator distributes 4–5 cards to each participant and asked to think about foods they remember eating or enjoying at different stages of their lives. These may include foods eaten during childhood, foods prepared in their homes, seasonal foods, traditional dishes, or foods that have become common more recently. Participants write only one food item on each card.

Examples could include:
- Traditional grains such as millets
- Seasonal vegetables and fruits
- Forest or local foods
- Homemade dishes
- Packaged or processed foods

The facilitator encourages participants to think freely and draw from their own experiences.

Step 3: Preparing the Activity Space

The facilitator places two large cards or chart papers on the floor at the front of the room.

One card is labelled - "पहले (Earlier)"

The other card is labelled - "अब (Now)"

The facilitator explains that these two spaces represent foods that were more common earlier and foods that are more common nowadays. Participants are told that they will come forward one by one to read their cards and place them in the category that best reflects when the food was commonly eaten.

Step 4: Participants Place Their Cards

Participants are invited to come forward one at a time. Each participant:
1. Reads aloud the food items written on their cards.
2. Places each card on the floor under "पहले (Earlier)" or "अब (Now)".

Participants decide where each card should be placed based on their understanding of when the food was commonly eaten. As the activity progresses, a visible display of foods begins to form in the two categories. The facilitator ensures that every participant participates and places their cards.

Step 5: Observing the Emerging Patterns

Once all cards have been placed, the facilitator invites participants to gather around and observe the two groups of foods. Participants are asked to look carefully at the cards and reflect on what they see.

The facilitator may ask:

- What differences do you notice between foods placed under "पहले (Earlier)" and those under "अब (Now)"?
- Are there foods that appear only in the earlier category?
- Which foods appear mostly in the "अब (Now)" category?
- Are there traditional foods that seem to have disappeared?

Participants usually begin identifying patterns such as:

- Decline in traditional grains and local crops
- Increase in packaged or processed foods
- Reduced use of seasonal and wild foods
- Greater dependence on market purchased foods

Step 6: Facilitated Discussion

After participants have discussed the changes in food habits, the facilitator summarises the key observations.

The facilitator highlights that the foods placed under "पहले (Earlier)" often include traditional and locally produced foods such as millets, seasonal vegetables, or homemade preparations, while the "अब (Now)" category may include foods that are more market-dependent, processed, or less diverse.

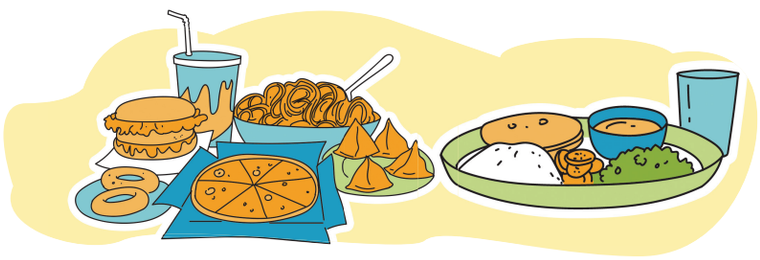
The facilitator then invites participants to reflect on an important thought:
"Today the foods we placed under "अब (Now)" represent our current diets. But when the next generation—our children—participate in a similar activity years later, the foods we call "अब (Now)" today will become their "पहले (Earlier)". If the diversity of foods is already reducing today, what kind of food diversity will they remember in the future?"

Participants are asked to reflect on these questions:

- What kind of food culture and diversity are we passing on to the next generation?
- Are we preserving diverse and nutritious food traditions, or are they slowly disappearing?
- What responsibility do we have as policymakers and programme implementers in shaping healthier and more diverse food systems?

Pause briefly after asking the reflection questions. Allow participants to think and share their thoughts. This moment often generates powerful insights and helps participants emotionally connect with the importance of FST.

This reflection encourages participants to think about the long-term implications of current food system trends. Food habits are not only personal choices, they are shaped by agriculture, markets, policies, and social practices. The decisions taken today in different sectors will influence what future generations grow, access, and eat.





Step 7: Linking the Activity to Food Systems

After the discussion, the facilitator summarises the key insights from the exercise. The facilitator explains that food habits do not change randomly. They are influenced by many interconnected parts of the food system, including:

- What farmers produce?
- What markets supply?
- Which foods are affordable and accessible?
- Cultural practices and social norms

The facilitator emphasises that when agricultural systems change, food consumption patterns also change, which ultimately affects nutrition outcomes.

3. Trainer Tips

- Encourage participants to recall local and traditional foods, not just commonly known foods.
- Allow brief discussions if participants disagree on where a food should be placed, as this often generates useful insights.
- Ensure that every participant gets the opportunity to read their cards and place them in the activity area.
- Avoid judging or correcting participants' responses; the purpose is reflection rather than accuracy.
- Use the discussion to highlight how dietary diversity has changed and how food systems influence food choices.

Session 3

Food System Concept, from Production to Nutrition

Session Topic	Key Sub-Topics	Objectives of the Session	Methods (Activity Based)	Time	Materials Required
Food System Concept, from Production to Nutrition	Food system stages: production, markets, food environment, consumption, nutrition	Enable participants to understand the food system as an interconnected system rather than isolated schemes	Food system mapping activity, group reflection, dialogue questions	11:15-12:15	Food system flip charts

1. Expected Outcomes

By the end of this session:

- Participants understand the concept of a food system as an interconnected chain from production to nutrition.
- Participants recognise how different stages of the food system influence food availability, access, and dietary patterns.
- Participants identify the role of different departments across various stages of the food system.
- Participants shift from a sectoral perspective to a systems thinking approach.

2. Facilitation Process

Step 1: Transition from Previous Session

The facilitator begins by connecting this session with the previous discussion and say that: "You have just reflected on how food habits have changed over time. We saw that many traditional and diverse foods are reducing, and diets are changing. But these changes are not happening randomly. They are influenced by many interconnected factors. To understand this better, we now need to look at the larger system that shapes what we grow, what we eat, and how it affects our nutrition."

This helps participants move from personal reflection to systems understanding.

Step 2: Introducing the Food System Concept

To introduce the concept of Food Systems, the facilitator invites participants to first explore the meaning of the word "system" by asking, "What is a system?"

After participants share their responses, the facilitator explains that, according to Systems Theory, a system is a group of interconnected and interdependent parts that work together as a whole. Simply put, each part has its own role, but only when all the parts work together can they achieve a meaningful outcome that none of them could achieve individually.

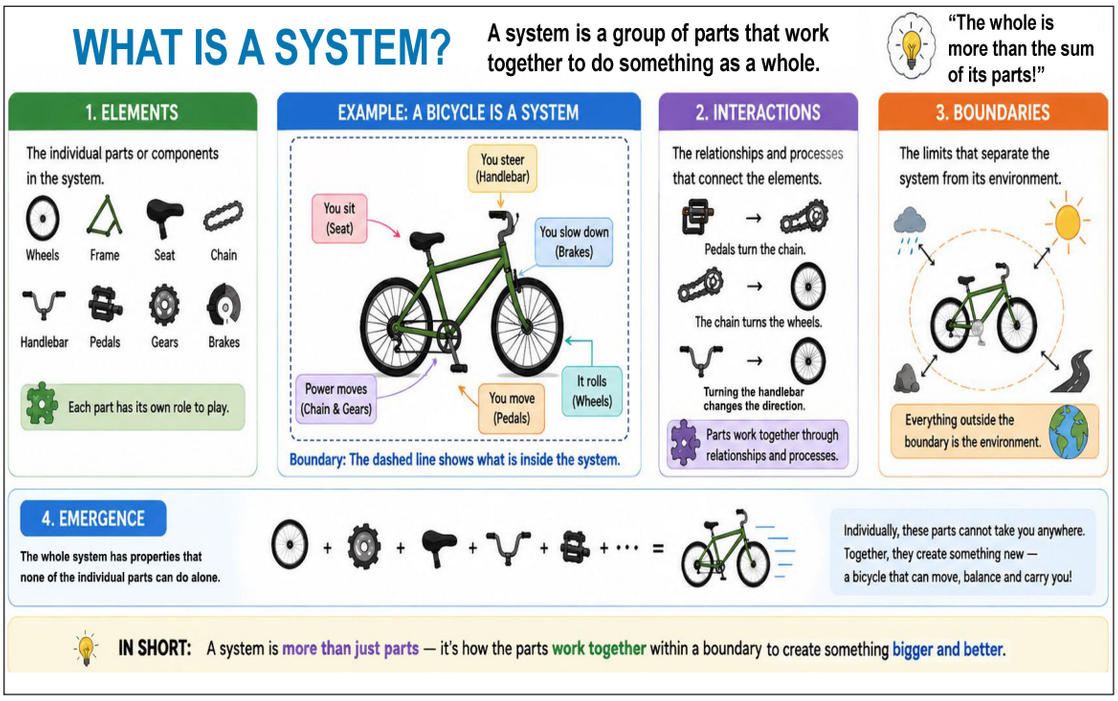
Key Components of a System

- **Elements:** The individual parts, components, or actors within the system.
- **Interactions:** The relationships, processes that tie these elements together.
- **Boundaries:** The conceptual or physical limits that separate the system from its external environment.
- **Emergence:** The scientific principle that the whole system exhibits properties and behaviours that cannot be found in any individual part on their own

The facilitator then explains that the concept of a system can be better understood through a few simple examples.

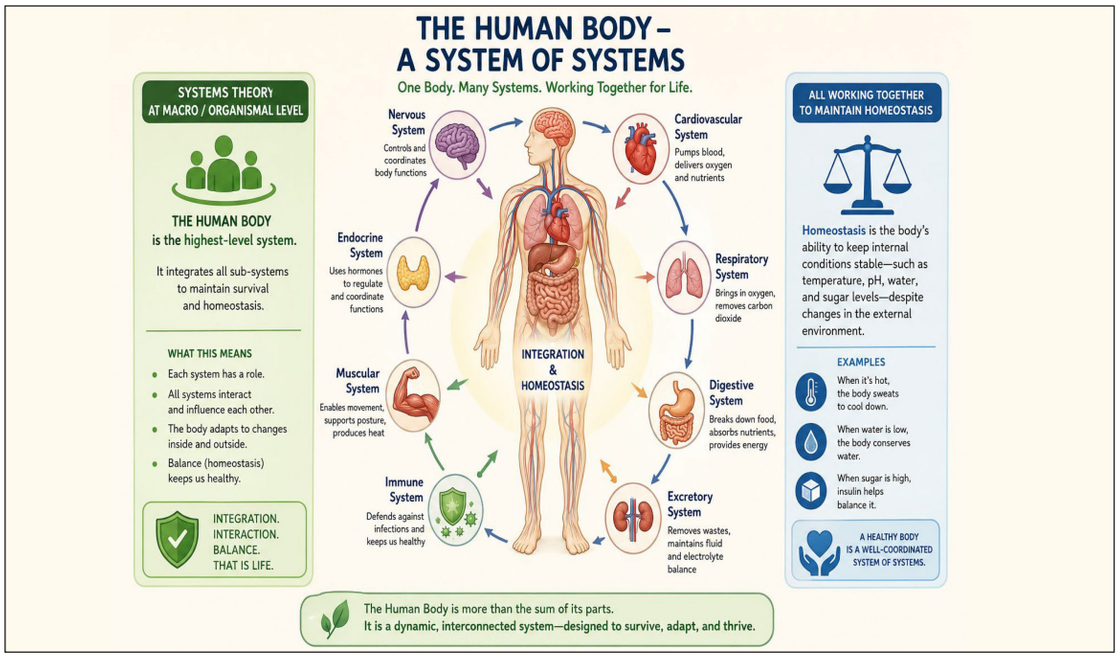
A Bicycle as a System

A bicycle is made up of many interconnected parts–such as the wheels, pedals, chain, brakes, handlebar and seat. Each part has a specific function and is important on its own. However, none of these parts can make a bicycle work independently. Only when all the parts are connected and function together does the bicycle move efficiently. If one critical part is missing or not working properly, the entire bicycle's performance is affected.



The Human Body as a System

The human body is also a system. It consists of different organs and systems – the heart, lungs, brain, stomach, muscles and blood circulation. Each performs a unique role, but no single organ can keep the body healthy on its own. Good health depends on all the organs working together in coordination. If one system is weak or fails, it affects the functioning of the whole body.



The facilitator explains that a food system works in the same way. It is made up of many interconnected components, including food production, storage, processing, transport, markets, food environments, consumption, nutrition, waste management and governance. Each component has its own importance, but none can achieve food and nutrition security independently. The food system functions effectively only when all these components are connected and work together. A weakness in one part – for example, poor market access, inadequate storage or unhealthy food choices – can affect the performance of the entire system and ultimately influence people's nutrition and well-being.

The facilitator explains that food reaches our plate through a long and interconnected journey across the food value chain. This journey begins with planning and input supply and continues through production, harvesting, storage, processing, transportation, marketing, distribution, preparation, consumption and, finally, waste management. Each stage of this journey influences the availability, accessibility, affordability, safety and nutritional quality of

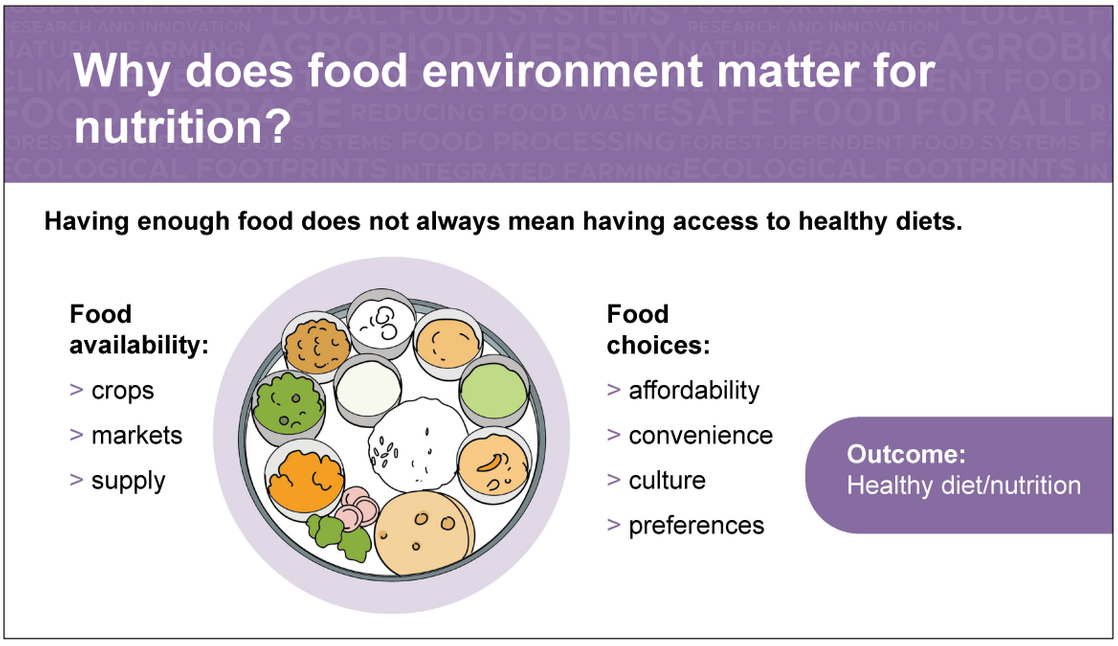


food, ultimately shaping nutrition and health outcomes. The facilitator also highlights that a wide range of actors including farmers, producer groups, traders, processors, transporters, retailers, service providers and consumers play important roles throughout the food system. In addition, several departments, such as Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Health, WCD, Education, Rural Development and the PDS, contribute to different parts of the food system. FST therefore requires these actors and departments to work together in a coordinated manner to improve food and nutrition outcomes.

The facilitator further explains that food and nutrition outcomes are influenced by a complex set of interconnected factors across the food system. What people eat is shaped not only by their individual choices, but also by what is produced, how food is processed and transported, what is available in markets, how affordable and safe it is, and how it is prepared and consumed. These factors are further influenced by livelihoods, policies, infrastructure, natural resources, cultural practices and the services provided by different sectors.

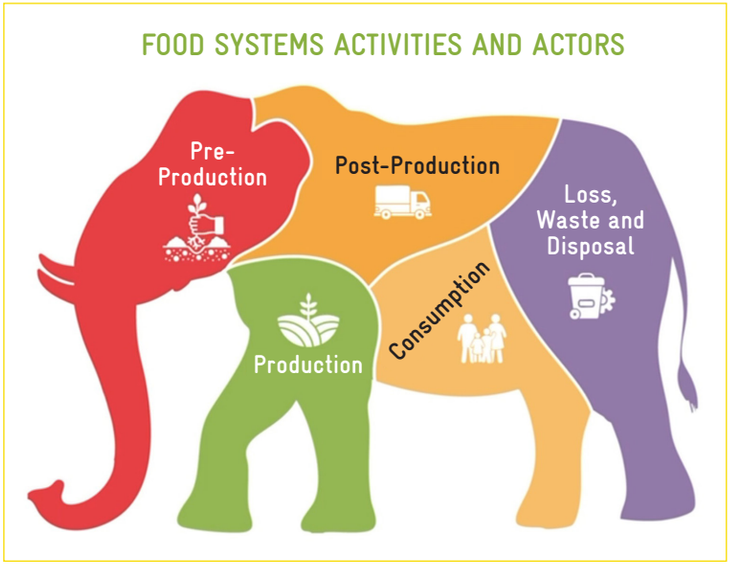
To reinforce the concept of systems thinking, the facilitator engages participants in a brief discussion by asking what might happen if one part of the food system does not function effectively – for example, if farmers produce nutritious food but there are no storage facilities, if food reaches the market but is unaffordable, or if nutritious food is available but people lack the knowledge or resources to consume it. Through this discussion, participants recognise that every stage of the food system is interconnected and that weaknesses in one part can affect the performance of the entire system. This understanding forms the foundation of FST, which seeks to strengthen every part of the system and improve the connections between them.

Having understood the interconnected nature of the food system, the facilitator invites participants to reflect on where their own department or organisation contributes within the system. Participants discuss the services, programmes and interventions implemented by their



departments and identify how these influence different stages of the food value chain. The facilitator encourages participants to consider which other departments they depend upon and where stronger collaboration could improve food and nutrition outcomes. This discussion helps participants appreciate that every department contributes to the food system and that meaningful FST requires coordinated action across sectors rather than isolated efforts.

To help participants visualise these interconnections more clearly, the facilitator introduces the Elephant Model through a visual or short video. The facilitator explains that the elephant is not a representation of the food system itself, but a simple learning tool that helps illustrate the different stages of the food system and how they are connected. Just as an elephant is made up of different parts that together form one complete body, the food system comprises multiple interconnected stages and actors across the food value chain, each influencing the others. The facilitator explains that the illustration will help participants understand the food system as a whole, recognise the relationship between its different stages, and appreciate why strengthening only one part of the system is not sufficient to improve food, nutrition and livelihood outcomes.



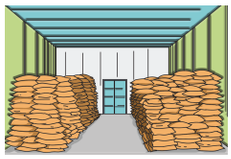
The facilitator then gradually walks participants through the visual. The front part of the elephant is used to represent what happens even before food is grown, including decisions related to seeds, soil preparation, water availability, inputs, and planning, which influence what is produced and how. The main body is used to explain the production stage, including farming, livestock, and fisheries, while emphasising that production alone does not ensure improved nutrition outcomes. The back of the elephant represents post-production processes such as storage, processing, transportation, and distribution, where weaknesses can lead to food loss or limited access. The middle part helps participants think about consumption – what people actually eat – and highlights that consumption is influenced by affordability, access, awareness, preferences, and social practices. The tail represents food loss, waste, and disposal, an often overlooked but important part of the system that affects overall availability and efficiency.

After explaining these parts, the facilitator reinforces the key idea that the visual is only a tool to help understand the system. The food system itself is broader and more complex, but this representation helps illustrate that all stages are interconnected. The facilitator emphasises that when one part of the system is weak, it affects the overall outcome, and therefore improving food and nutrition outcomes requires looking at the system as a whole rather than focusing on individual parts in isolation.

The facilitator may ask the following reflection questions:

- Which stages of the food system do we focus on the most in our work?
- Which stages or aspects tend to receive less attention?
- What happens to overall outcomes when one stage of the system is weak or not functioning well?

Add the following points from the table. The key stages of the food system are explained as:

Food System Stage	What it Means	Examples (Local Context)	Key Questions for Participants	Key Message
Production 	Where and how food is grown or produced, including farming practices, use of resources, and production systems such as agroecology	Crops (rice, wheat, millets, vegetables), livestock (milk, eggs), fisheries, natural farming, agroecological practices	Which major crops are grownin your district? Have cropping patterns or farming practices (e.g., natural farming, agroecology) changed?	What and how we produce determines what is available and influences sustainability and nutrition
Processing & Storage 	How food is cleaned, processed, stored, and preserved after production	Milling of grains, sorting, packaging, storage in warehouses, cold storage	What happens to food after harvesting? Are storage and processing facilities available?	Weak storage and processing systems lead to food loss and reduced availability
Markets & Distribution 	How food moves from farms to markets and reaches consumers	*Mandis*, local markets, traders, transport systems, supply chains	Where do people buy food? Do farmers sell locally or outside?	Markets influence availability, price, and movement of food
Food Environment 	The physical, economic, and social context in which consumers make decisions about what to buy, cook, and eat	PDS shops, local vendors, retail markets, food prices, advertising, seasonal availability	Are nutritious foods easily available, affordable, and desirable? What influences people's food choices?	Availability alone does not ensure access or healthy choices
Consumption 	What people eat and their dietary practices including intra-household decisions	Household diets, cooking practices, food preferences, cultural habits	Who decides which food is cooked? Are diverse and nutritious foods consumed?	Access does not always lead to healthy and diverse consumption
Nutrition Outcomes 	The impact of food consumption on health and nutrition status	Malnutrition, anaemia, child growth, women's health	Are people getting a balanced and adequate diet? What are the key nutrition issues?	Nutrition outcomes are shaped by all stages of the food system together

Step 3: Food System Mapping Activity (with Department Roles)

The facilitator divides participants into small groups. Each group is asked to select a common local food item such as rice, vegetables, milk, or pulses.

Part 1: Mapping the food journey

Participants are asked to map the journey of this food item across the food system by discussing:

- Where and how is it produced?
- How does it move from farms to markets?
- How do people access or purchase it?
- Who consumes it and how frequently?
- Does it contribute to good nutrition?

Participants prepare a simple flow or diagram on chart paper showing the movement of the food item through different stages of the system. During the activity, the facilitator moves between groups, asking probing questions and supporting discussions.

An example for facilitator

The facilitator may use a simple example such as rice (or any locally relevant crop/food item) to explain how food moves through the food system. It can be emphasised that this flow is broadly similar for many agricultural products, although specific processes may vary.

Let us take a simple example of rice and see how it moves through the food system.

Production: Rice is grown by farmers using seeds, water, labour, and other inputs.

Markets and Distribution: Rice is transported to local markets, *mandis*, or distributed through systems such as the PDS.

Consumption: Households purchase and prepare rice as part of their daily meals.



Processing and Storage: After harvesting, paddy is milled to produce rice and stored in warehouses or local storage facilities.

Food Environment: Rice becomes available in shops and ration stores, and its price and availability influence whether households can access it. In some cases, rice may also be fortified (for example, fortified rice distributed through PDS) to improve its nutritional value.

Nutrition Outcomes: Rice provides energy, but if diets depend mainly on rice without diversity, nutrition outcomes may remain inadequate despite sufficient calorie intake.

A simple flow while explaining this:



Part 2: Mapping departments in the food system

After mapping the food journey, the facilitator adds a second layer. Participants now identify which departments are involved at each stage.

The facilitator may guide them as follows –

Food System Stage	Departments/Institutions	Private/Market Actors
Production	Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry	Farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), input suppliers (seeds, fertilisers), agri-tech companies
Processing & Storage	Food Processing, Cooperatives	Millers, processors, warehouse operators, cold storage providers, food companies
Markets & Distribution	Marketing Boards, Rural Development	Traders, wholesalers, retailers, transporters, e-commerce platforms
Food Access	PDS, Civil Supplies	Retail shops, *kirana* stores, vendors, private distribution networks
Nutrition	Health, WCD, Education	Food industry (fortified foods), private health providers, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
Awareness & Behaviour	Education, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Health	Media, NGOs, digital platforms, private campaigns, influencers

Step 4: Group Presentation and Reflection

Each group presents their map showing:

- Food journey
- Departments involved

The facilitator asks:

- Which stage involves the most departments?
- Are departments working together or separately?
- Where do you see gaps in coordination?
- Which stage is most critical for improving nutrition?

Participants begin to realise that multiple departments are working on the same system but often in isolation.

Step 5: Key Message and Closure

After the group presentations and discussions, the facilitator brings the session to a close by summarising the key insights. The facilitator explains that food does not reach our plate

through a single step but passes through multiple interconnected stages such as production, processing, markets, access, and consumption, which together form the food system. It is highlighted that different departments play important roles at different stages for example, Agriculture Department in production, PDS in access, and Health and WCD Departments in nutrition but these efforts often function in isolation.

The facilitator emphasises that focusing on only one part of the system does not lead to desired outcomes. For instance, even if production increases, weak market systems can limit benefits to farmers; if food is available but not affordable, households cannot access it; and if diets lack diversity, nutrition outcomes remain poor. This helps participants understand that each stage of the food system is interdependent, and changes in one stage affect the entire system.

Participants are then encouraged to reflect on their own context by considering whether current efforts are working in isolation or as part of a system, and where gaps exist across different stages. The facilitator highlights that improving food and nutrition outcomes cannot be achieved by a single department alone and requires coordinated efforts across multiple departments.

The session concludes by reinforcing that understanding the food system is the first step towards improving outcomes, and that effective convergence between departments is essential to strengthen the system. The facilitator then links this understanding to the next session by stating that the following activity will further explore how different departments are interconnected and how convergence works in practice.

3. Trainer Tips

- Ensure groups include participants from different departments for richer discussion.
- Encourage participants to think beyond their department and identify others' roles.
- Use real examples of schemes (PDS, ICDS, agriculture schemes) to deepen understanding.
- Avoid over-explaining. Let participants discover connections themselves.
- Reinforce the idea that convergence already exists but needs strengthening.

Session 4

Systems Thinking Web Exercise (Convergence Web)

Session Topic	Key Sub-Topics	Objectives of the Session	Methods (Activity Based)	Time	Materials Required
Systems Thinking Web Exercise (Convergence Web)	Role of Agriculture, Health, WCD, Education, PDS, Rural Development in food systems	Demonstrate how different departments are interconnected in FST	Web Exercise - Participants stand in a circle holding a rope. Each participant answers a question about their department's role and throws the rope to another department. Gradually a web is formed showing convergence and interdependence	12:15-1:15	Rope or wool thread, role cards, questions

1. Expected Outcomes

By the end of this session:

- Participants understand the interdependence of different departments in the food system.
- Participants visualise how actions in one department influence others.
- Participants recognise the need for convergence and coordination.
- Participants reflect on gaps in collaboration across departments.
- Participants develop a systems thinking perspective.

2. Facilitation Process

Step 1: Setting the Context

The facilitator begins by linking the previous session.

"In the previous session, we understood that the food system has multiple stages and that different departments are involved at different points. Now we will explore how these departments are connected and how they influence each other."

Proposed list of the role or post

- Agriculture Extension Officer
- Krishi Sahayak/Field Assistant
- Horticulture Officer
- Veterinary Officer
- Fisheries Officer
- Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM)
- Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)
- Medical Officer
- Staff Nurse
- Anganwadi Worker (AWW)
- Anganwadi Supervisor
- Child Development Project Officer (CDPO)
- Fair Price Shop (FPS) Dealer
- PDS Inspector/Civil Supplies Officer
- School Teacher
- Headmaster/Principal
- Mid-Day Meal (MDM) (Cook/Helper)
- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)/ Self Help Group (SHG) Facilitator
- Panchayat Sarpanch/Secretary
- Gram Rozgar Sahayak
- SHG Member
- Trader/Wholesaler
- Retail Shopkeeper/Vendor
- Transporter
- Food Processor/Miller
- Hotel Manager

Additional roles and posts may be included based on the number and profile of participants.

The facilitator explains that the next activity will help participants experience the food system as a connected web rather than separate parts.

Step 2: Forming the Circle

Participants are asked to stand in a circle. The facilitator ensures that participants from different departments are mixed and visible. The facilitator provides small chits indicating the participant's role or post (e.g., AWW, ANM, Agriculture Officer, Teacher) to help them clearly identify their role during the activity. The facilitator then gives a rope or wool thread to one participant and explains the process.

"Each one of you represents a department in the food system. As we move forward, we will create a web that shows how all departments are connected."

Step 3: Building the Web

The activity begins with one participant holding the thread. The facilitator explains that each participant represents a department and their role within the food system.

Each participant, one by one:
- Introduces their department
- Responds to a guiding question (instead of only stating a role)
- Holds one end of the thread and passes/throws it to another participant whose department is connected to their work

Guiding Questions for Facilitator

The facilitator asks participants to respond to one of the following questions:
- What role does your department play in influencing food, nutrition or livelihoods?
- Which stage of the food system does your department influence?
- Which department do you depend on to achieve your outcomes?
- Which department benefits from your work?
- What would happen if your department's work is not functioning properly?

Note: Ask participants to throw the thread specifically to the department they mention. This strengthens the convergence understanding.

Process Flow

1. The first participant answers the question and throws the thread to another relevant department.

2. The next participant:
   → Responds to the question
   → Identifies another connected department
   → Throws the thread further

3. This continues until all participants are connected through the thread.

Gradually, a visible web of interconnections is formed. While participants are passing the thread, the facilitator ensures:



- Participants do not randomly pass the thread but choose a department they are linked to
- Connections reflect real relationships in the system
- Participants mention specific roles or schemes where possible

Step 4: Observing the Web

Once the web is formed, the facilitator asks participants to pause and observe the structure created by the thread. Participants are encouraged to step back and reflect on what they see. The facilitator asks what the web represents and how different departments are connected within it. As participants respond, the facilitator guides them to notice whether some departments appear more connected than others and whether there are any weak or missing links in the web.

The facilitator then deepens the reflection by asking what might happen if one department becomes weak or if one connection breaks. At this stage, the facilitator may gently pull one thread or ask a participant to loosen their hold, allowing everyone to observe how the entire web is affected. This helps participants understand that the system is interconnected and that a change in one part influences the whole system.

The facilitator then connects this activity to real-life situations by asking whether departments currently function in a similar interconnected way or tend to work in isolation. Participants are encouraged to reflect on where coordination exists and where gaps need to be addressed. The facilitator concludes by emphasising that the web represents the food system, where strong connections between departments are essential for improving food and nutrition outcomes.

Step 5: Demonstrating Interdependence

To deepen understanding, the facilitator gently pulls one thread and asks participants to observe what happens. Then, the facilitator may ask one participant to release the thread. The facilitator asks:

- What happened when one connection was disturbed?
- How did it affect the rest of the system?

Participants observe that when one part weakens, the entire system is affected.

Step 6: Facilitated Reflection

The facilitator leads a discussion using questions such as:

- Can one department alone improve nutrition outcomes?
- Where do we currently see coordination between departments?
- Where do we see gaps or lack of coordination?
- What happens when departments work in silos?

Participants are encouraged to share real experiences from their work.

Step 7: Key Message and Closure

The facilitator brings the activity together by explaining that the web created during the exercise represents the food system, where each department is connected and plays a crucial role. It is emphasised that no single department can independently address food and nutrition challenges, as each part of the system depends on the others. When one department is weak or disconnected, it affects the overall functioning of the system.

The facilitator highlights that in reality, departments often work in isolation, which limits the overall impact of their efforts. However, when departments coordinate and align their actions, the system becomes stronger and more effective in improving food and nutrition outcomes. This reinforces the importance of convergence and collaboration.

The facilitator concludes by stating that understanding these connections is essential for improving planning and implementation. The session sets the stage for the next discussions, where participants will explore how to strengthen coordination and identify practical ways to improve convergence across departments.

3. Trainer Tips

- Ensure that all participants actively take part in the web formation, and encourage quieter participants to also contribute.
- Keep individual responses brief to maintain the flow and energy of the activity, while ensuring clarity.
- Encourage participants to share examples from their real work and departmental roles rather than giving generic responses.
- Pay special attention to the reflection stage—do not rush this part, as it is critical for building understanding of interdependence and convergence.
- Use the physical web as a visual and experiential tool to reinforce the idea that all departments are connected and influence each other.
- Guide participants to make meaningful connections between departments rather than passing the thread randomly.
- Observe the web carefully and use it to highlight patterns such as strong linkages, weak connections, or missing links.

Session 5

Food Systems and Development Goals (Why It Matters)

Session Topic	Key Sub-Topics	Objectives of the Session	Methods (Activity Based)	Time	Materials Required
Food Systems and Development Goals (Why It Matters)	Nutrition security, livelihoods, climate resilience, SDGs	Facilitated dialogue, visual poster discussion	Facilitated dialogue, visual poster discussion	2:00-2:45	Posters, PPT

1. Expected Outcomes

By the end of this session:

- Participants understand the importance of food systems in improving nutrition outcomes.
- Participants recognise the link between food systems and livelihoods and income generation.
- Participants understand how food systems are connected to climate resilience.
- Participants become aware of how food systems contribute to achieving SDGs and national priorities.
- Participants appreciate the broader impact of FST beyond food and nutrition alone.

2. Facilitation Process

Step 1: Setting the Context

The facilitator begins by linking this session with the earlier discussions.

"In the previous sessions, we understood how food systems function and how different departments are interconnected. Now let us reflect on why strengthening food systems is important and how it impacts people's lives and development."

The facilitator explains that food systems are not only about food, but are closely connected to health, livelihoods, and the environment.



Step 2: Visual Exploration (Poster Walk)

The facilitator places posters or displays visuals around the room on key themes such as:

- Nutrition and health
- Livelihoods and farmer income
- Climate resilience
- National priorities such as SDGs or Viksit Bharat

Participants are invited to walk around, observe the visuals, and reflect on the connections between food systems and these themes. They may discuss in pairs or small groups and identify key observations.

Step 3: Facilitated Discussion

After the visual exploration, the facilitator brings participants together and invites them to share their observations.

The facilitator asks guiding questions such as:

- How does the food system influence nutrition and health?
- How does it impact farmers' income and livelihoods?
- What is the relationship between food systems and climate change?
- How are these linked to national priorities and SDGs?

Participants share their perspectives, drawing from both the visuals and their own experiences.

Step 4: Explaining the Linkages

The facilitator builds on the previous discussion by explaining that food systems are not only about producing food; they influence many aspects of development. The way food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed and managed affects nutrition, health, livelihoods, natural resources, the environment and the overall well-being of communities. A well-functioning food system therefore contributes not only to better food and nutrition outcomes but also to economic development, environmental sustainability and social equity.

The facilitator explains that because food systems are closely linked with many sectors, they also contribute directly to the achievement of several SDGs. Improvements in one part of the food system often create positive outcomes across multiple development goals. At the same time, decisions taken without considering the entire system may solve one problem while unintentionally creating another. This highlights the importance of adopting a systems perspective while planning and implementing programmes.



Food Systems and the SDGs

The facilitator presents the following examples and encourages participants to reflect on how their own departments contribute to these goals.

SDG	How Food Systems Contribute
SDG 1 – No Poverty	Strengthen livelihoods and increase incomes of farmers and food producers.
SDG 2 – Zero Hunger	Improve food availability, accessibility and nutrition security.
SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being	Promote safe, diverse and nutritious diets, reducing malnutrition and diet-related diseases.
SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation	Encourage sustainable water use and efficient resource management.
SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth	Generate employment across the food value chain.
SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production	Reduce food loss and food waste while promoting sustainable consumption.
SDG 13 – Climate Action	Support climate-resilient and low-emission food production systems.
SDG – 14 & 15 – Life Below Water and Life on Land	Protect biodiversity, ecosystems and natural resources through sustainable food production practices.

The facilitator then explains that food systems remind us that everything is connected. Agriculture influences nutrition, nutrition affects health, health affects productivity, markets influence food choices, and policies shape how the entire system functions. Similarly, natural resources, climate, technology, infrastructure, consumer behaviour and local governance, all influence food system outcomes. Looking at only one part of the system provides an incomplete picture.

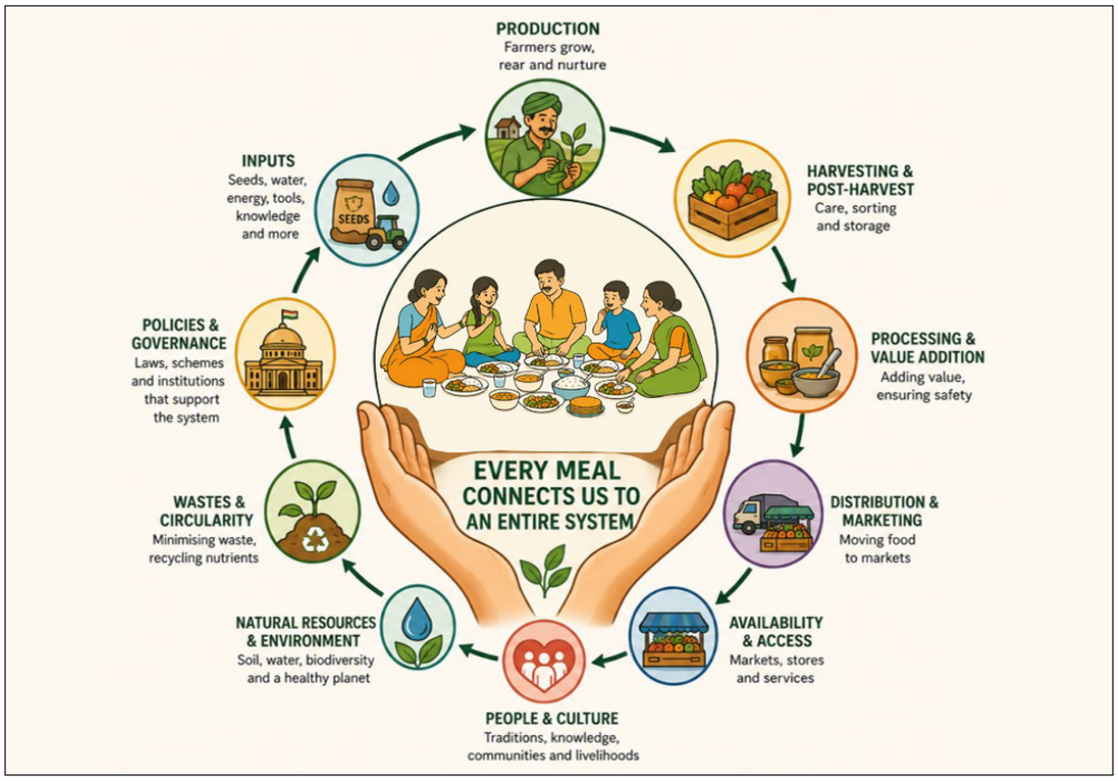
To illustrate this, the facilitator shares a few examples.

- Expanding irrigation may improve agricultural production and support SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). However, if groundwater is overexploited, it may negatively affect SDG 6 (Clean Water) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).
- Increasing the production of calorie-rich staple crops may improve food availability, but if nutritious crops such as millets, pulses and vegetables are neglected, dietary diversity and nutrition outcomes may decline, affecting SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) as well as environmental sustainability.

The facilitator concludes by emphasising that systems thinking helps us understand these interconnections. It enables departments and stakeholders to move beyond sector-specific planning and recognise how their decisions influence other parts of the food system. FST is therefore about strengthening every stage of the food system and improving coordination across sectors so that development interventions deliver better nutrition, stronger livelihoods, healthier ecosystems and more resilient communities.

Step 5: Key Message and Closure

The facilitator concludes the discussion by emphasising that food systems are far more than the production of food. They influence what people eat, their nutritional status, health, livelihoods, economic opportunities and resilience to climate change. Because every stage of the food system is interconnected, strengthening one part alone is not sufficient; meaningful improvements require strengthening the entire system and the linkages between its different components.



The facilitator reinforces that FST is not the responsibility of a single department or sector. It requires coordinated action by multiple departments, institutions, communities and other stakeholders, each contributing according to their respective roles and responsibilities. Working together in a coordinated manner enables programmes and resources to complement one another, leading to stronger food, nutrition and development outcomes.

The session concludes by highlighting that understanding the food system is only the first step. The next session will help participants explore the specific roles of different departments within the food system and identify practical opportunities to strengthen convergence and collaborative action.

3. Trainer Tips

- Use simple, local, and relatable examples to explain how food systems are linked to nutrition, livelihoods, and climate outcomes.
- Encourage participants to connect the discussion with their own work and field experiences, rather than speaking in general terms.
- Keep the session interactive by asking questions and inviting responses, and avoid making it overly theoretical or lecture-based.
- Ensure balanced participation from all departments so that diverse perspectives enrich the discussion.
- Build on insights from previous sessions and clearly highlight how this discussion connects to the broader food system understanding.
- Gently guide participants to see linkages across themes (nutrition, livelihoods, climate) rather than discussing them in isolation.
- Prepare participants for the next session by reinforcing the importance of departmental roles and convergence.

Session 6

Role of Departments in Food System Transformation

Session Topic	Key Sub-Topics	Objectives of the Session	Methods (Activity Based)	Time	Materials Required
Role of Departments in FST	Agriculture, WCD, Health, Education, PDS, Rural Development	Identify how each department contributes to nutrition and food system outcomes	Department group work - participants identify existing schemes and their role in food system outcomes	2:45-3:45	Department cards, scheme list

1. Expected Outcomes

By the end of this session:

- Participants identify the role of their department within the food system.
- Participants recognise how different schemes contribute to food and nutrition outcomes.
- Participants understand overlaps and complementarities across departments.
- Participants begin to identify opportunities for convergence across schemes.
- Participants move from scheme-based thinking to system-based thinking.

2. Facilitation Process

Step 1: Setting the Context

The facilitator begins by linking the previous sessions:

"In the earlier sessions, we understood the food system and how departments are interconnected. Now let us look more closely at the role of each department within this system and how existing schemes contribute to food and nutrition outcomes."

The facilitator explains that many departments are already contributing to food systems, but these contributions are often not seen together.

Step 2: Formation of Groups

Participants are divided into small groups, preferably department-wise or mixed groups, depending on the number of participants.

Each group is assigned or selects a department such as:

- Agriculture
- Health
- Women and Child Development
- Education
- PDS/Civil Supplies
- Rural Development

Step 3: Group Work - Mapping Department Roles

Each group is asked to discuss and list:

- Key schemes or programmes implemented by their department
- Which stage of the food system do these schemes influence?
- How these schemes contribute to food, nutrition, or livelihoods?

The facilitator may guide them to organise their discussion in a simple format:

Department	Key Scheme/ Programme	Food System Stage	How does this scheme influence food, nutrition, or livelihoods?	Which other department should this connect with?
		Production Access Consumption Nutrition		

Participants prepare their responses on chart paper. The facilitator may say that do not just list schemes. Try to understand how your scheme influences the food system, and which other department you need to work with for better outcomes.

Example row for clarity:

Department	Scheme	Food System Stage	Contribution	Convergence Needed
Agriculture	National Food Security Mission	Production	Increases crop production and availability	WCD, Health

Step 4: Group Presentation

Each group presents their findings to the larger group.

As groups present, the facilitator encourages others to listen and identify connections between departments.

The facilitator may ask:

- Are there similarities between different departments' work?
- Do some schemes support the same outcomes?
- Where do you see opportunities for working together?

Participants begin to see overlaps and linkages across departments.

Step 5: Building Convergence Understanding

The facilitator builds on the discussion and highlights that multiple departments are contributing to the same food system outcomes, even if they are working independently.

It is emphasised that:

- Agriculture influences production
- WCD and Health influence nutrition outcomes
- PDS supports access
- Education supports awareness
- Rural Development supports livelihoods

The facilitator explains that when these efforts are aligned, the impact can be much stronger.

Step 6: Key Message and Closure

After the group presentations, the facilitator brings together the key insights emerging from the exercise. The facilitator highlights that through the activity, participants were able to map their departmental schemes not only in terms of what they do, but also how they influence different stages of the food system such as production, access, consumption, and nutrition outcomes. It becomes evident that most schemes do not operate in isolation but contribute to multiple aspects of the food system.

The facilitator emphasises that an important learning from the exercise is the identification of linkages between departments. Participants have recognised that for their schemes to achieve better outcomes, they need to connect with other departments. For example, production-focused schemes need to link with nutrition and health services, while access-related schemes need to connect with awareness and behaviour change efforts. This demonstrates that convergence is not an additional task, but an essential approach to improving the effectiveness of existing programmes.

The facilitator concludes by reinforcing that when departments begin to see their work as part of a larger food system and actively collaborate with others, the overall impact on food and nutrition outcomes can be significantly strengthened. Participants are encouraged to carry forward this systems perspective and explore opportunities for collaboration in their respective roles, which will be further developed in the next session on identifying gaps and actionable solutions.

3. Trainer Tips

- Encourage participants to go beyond listing schemes and focus on how their schemes influence different stages of the food system (production, access, consumption, nutrition).
- Support participants in clearly identifying which other departments they need to connect with, rather than treating schemes as standalone efforts.
- If participants struggle, provide one example on the board to demonstrate how to fill the table effectively.
- Ensure that discussions remain practical and based on real experiences, not only theoretical understanding.
- Encourage mixed participation and ensure that voices from all departments are included.
- Help participants recognise overlaps and complementarities across schemes, and gently guide them towards identifying convergence opportunities.
- Keep reminding participants that convergence is about better coordination of existing efforts, not creating new schemes.
- Capture key insights from group work, especially examples of convergence, as these will be useful for the next session on gaps and opportunities.

Session 7

Identifying Gaps and Opportunities for Convergence

Session Topic	Key Sub-Topics	Objectives of the Session	Methods (Activity Based)	Time	Materials Required
Identifying Gaps and Opportunities for Convergence	Bottlenecks in coordination, missed opportunities, joint planning	Encourage systems thinking and collaborative problem solving	Convergence lens analysis	4:00-5:00	Flip charts, markers

1. Expected Outcomes

By the end of this session:

- Participants identify key gaps and bottlenecks in interdepartmental coordination.
- Participants recognise missed opportunities for convergence in existing programmes.
- Participants propose practical solutions for improving coordination.
- Participants develop a shared understanding of priority actions for strengthening food systems.
- Participants reflect on their role in enabling convergence within their context.

2. Facilitation Process

Step 1: Setting the Context

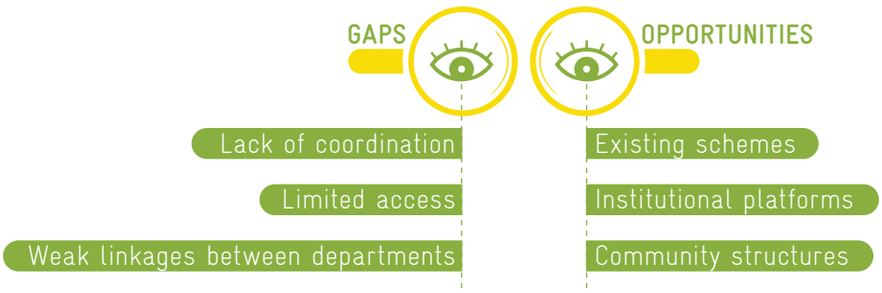
The facilitator begins by linking all previous sessions:

"Throughout the day, we have explored how food systems work, how departments are interconnected, and how different schemes contribute to food and nutrition outcomes. Now let us reflect on what is working well and where gaps exist."

The facilitator explains that this session will focus on identifying practical challenges and solutions for improving convergence.

Step 2: Introducing the "Lens" Concept

The facilitator introduces the activity by explaining that in order to better understand the food system, it is important to look at it from different perspectives. The facilitator may say that often, while working within departments or programmes, we focus mainly on what we are doing, but we do not always step back to reflect on what is missing in the system or what opportunities already exist but are not being fully utilised.



The facilitator then explains that in this activity, participants will analyse the food system using two simple lenses–**gaps** and **opportunities**. Gaps refer to areas where the system is weak, missing, or not functioning effectively, such as lack of coordination, limited access, or weak linkages between departments. Opportunities refer to strengths within the system that can be better utilised, such as existing schemes, institutional platforms, community structures, or resources that are already available but not fully leveraged.

To make this clear, the facilitator draws two large columns on a flipchart titled "Gaps (What is missing or weak?)" and "Opportunities (What exists and can be strengthened?)". The facilitator briefly explains each column with simple examples and clarifies that the purpose of this exercise is not to find solutions at this stage, but to develop a deeper understanding of the system by identifying patterns of gaps and opportunities. This sets the foundation for a more structured and meaningful reflection in the next steps.

Step 3: Guided Reflection (Individual → Collective)

Instead of group discussion, participants first think individually.

They are given sticky notes and asked to write:
- Two gaps they observe in the system
- Two opportunities they see

Encourage them to think across:
- Departments
- Schemes
- Food system stages

Step 4: Collective Mapping (Interactive Wall)

Once participants have written their responses, the facilitator invites them to come forward and place their notes on the chart under the two columns–"Gaps" and "Opportunities." Participants are encouraged to read their notes aloud while placing them so that others can listen and begin to notice emerging patterns.

As the process continues, the facilitator supports the mapping by gently guiding the flow and ensuring participation from all. The facilitator also begins to organise the notes without interrupting the activity.

During this process, the facilitator:
- Encourages participants to briefly explain their points while placing the notes
- Ensures that all participants get an opportunity to contribute
- Acknowledges repeated points and highlights them as important patterns in the system

As more notes are added, the chart gradually becomes a collective reflection of the system, making visible both the key gaps and the existing opportunities.

The facilitator maintains a non-judgemental and open environment, reminding participants that the purpose is not to evaluate responses but to understand the system better. This step helps shift the group from individual thinking to a shared understanding, setting the stage for deeper reflection in the next step.

Step 5: Facilitated Clustering

The facilitator reviews the notes placed by participants and begins to read them aloud, grouping similar responses together to form clear clusters. As the clustering progresses, the facilitator organises the responses under broader themes without interrupting the flow of discussion.

For example, under **Gaps**, clusters may emerge such as lack of coordination between departments, limited information sharing, weak market linkages, or gaps in access and awareness. Similarly, under **Opportunities**, clusters may include the presence of existing schemes, availability of multiple departments working in the same space, and community-level platforms such as SHGs and AWWs.

As these clusters become visible, the facilitator guides participants to observe patterns and reflect on them. The facilitator may ask:

- Which gaps are appearing repeatedly across different responses?
- Do these gaps relate more to coordination, access, awareness, or system-level issues?
- Which opportunities already exist within the system?
- Are these opportunities being fully utilised or are they underused?

The facilitator ensures that the discussion remains analytical and focused on understanding the system rather than moving towards solutions. Participants are encouraged to look at patterns and relationships between gaps and opportunities, helping them develop a deeper and more structured understanding of the food system.

Step 6: Key Message and Closure

After the clustering and reflection, the facilitator brings the discussion together by highlighting the key patterns that have emerged from the activity. The facilitator explains that the exercise has helped participants identify both the strengths that already exist within the food system and the gaps that continue to limit its effectiveness. Many of the challenges identified such as weak coordination, limited information sharing, fragmented implementation and barriers to access are interconnected and cannot be addressed in isolation. At the same time, participants have recognised that the food system already contains valuable assets, including government programmes, community institutions, technical expertise and local initiatives, which can generate greater impact when they are better connected and aligned.

The facilitator emphasises that strengthening food systems requires action at multiple and interconnected levels. While positive changes can begin within households or communities, sustainable transformation depends on supportive markets, responsive institutions and enabling policies. The illustration is used to demonstrate that each level – households, communities, markets, institutions and policy – has a distinct role, but meaningful change occurs only when these levels reinforce one another. Participants are encouraged to reflect

From individual choices to shared responsibility

Who can influence food environments?



Households



Schools



Markets



Businesses



Government



Communities

KEY TAKEAWAY

Food environments are not fixed—they can be shaped by choices made by individuals, communities and institutions.

on where their own department or organisation contributes within this framework and how stronger coordination with other stakeholders can create greater impact.

Building on this understanding, the facilitator explains that FST is a shared responsibility. No single department, institution or stakeholder can transform the food system alone. Producers, government departments, markets, educational and health institutions, researchers, civil society organisations, communities and households – all contribute to different parts of the food system. The facilitator uses the illustration to reinforce that dialogue, coordination, accountability and shared learning are essential for bringing these diverse actors together. Participants are invited to identify the stakeholders they currently collaborate with, those who are missing from their efforts, and practical opportunities for strengthening partnerships and convergence.

The facilitator concludes by reinforcing that FST is ultimately about strengthening both the system and the relationships within it. When different actors work together across multiple levels, existing resources can be used more effectively, programmes can complement one another, and communities can benefit from better food, improved nutrition, stronger livelihoods and greater resilience.



Workshop Closing

For closing the workshop, the facilitator says, "As we come to the end of this workshop, it is important to reflect on the journey we have taken together. Throughout the sessions, we have explored how food systems function, how our food habits are changing, and how different departments are interconnected in influencing food and nutrition outcomes. We have also reflected on the gaps that exist within the system and the opportunities that can be strengthened through better alignment and coordination."

"This workshop has not been about introducing new schemes or solutions, but about developing a shared understanding of the system we are all a part of. The key takeaway is that improving food and nutrition outcomes requires moving beyond working in silos and recognising the interconnected roles we each play. When departments begin to see their work as part of a larger system, the potential for impact becomes much greater."

"We hope that the reflections and insights from today will continue to inform your work and encourage stronger collaboration across departments. Thank you all for your active participation, valuable insights, and commitment to strengthening food systems and improving the well-being of communities."

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