

# Sustainable Healthy Diets (SHiFT)



**Sustainable Healthy Diets (SHiFT)** aims to ensure *sustainable healthy diets* for all through food systems transformation. It forms part of CGIAR's new Research Portfolio, delivering science and innovation to transform food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis. (see key definitions on page 3)

## About SHiFT

SHiFT combines high-quality nutritional and social science research capacity with development partnerships to generate innovative, robust food system solutions that contribute to healthier, more sustainable food choices and consumption of *sustainable healthy diets*. The Initiative builds on CGIAR's unparalleled track record of agricultural research for development, including 10 years of work on food systems and nutrition under the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH), particularly under the research flagship Food Systems for Healthier Diets.

## Objective

SHiFT's main goal is to ensure *sustainable healthy diets* for all through food systems transformation, making it the only CGIAR Initiative with this primary focus. SHiFT focuses on the consumer side of the food system and aims to stimulate the demand for sustainable healthy diets and to support micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and informal sector actors to deliver *sustainable nutritious foods* - foods that are



more nutritious, safe, affordable, and sustainably produced. At the same time, SHiFT's engagement with stakeholders generates evidence-based policy options, develops robust metrics and tools, and strengthens capacity to collectively catalyze food systems transformation in ways that also improve livelihoods, gender equity, and social inclusiveness.

More specifically, SHiFT aims to:

- Generate new evidence on drivers of food consumption and constraints to the supply of *sustainable nutritious foods*.
- Identify and test scalable innovations and policies to stimulate the consumption of *sustainable healthy diets* and the supply of sustainable nutritious foods while improving livelihoods, gender equity and social inclusiveness.
- Support the design and implementation of transformative policy option bundles that address trade-offs in food systems.
- Strengthen the capacity of national and subnational stakeholders to guide food systems transformation.

## AT A GLANCE

**Primary CGIAR impact area:** Nutrition, Health & Food Security

**CGIAR science group:** Systems Transformation

**Focus countries:** Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Vietnam (first phase); Benin, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Senegal (second phase)

**Works towards sustainable development goals:**

No poverty; Zero hunger; Gender equality; Decent work and economic growth; Reduced inequalities; Responsible consumption and production; and Climate action





## The Challenge

Food systems are not providing *sustainable healthy diets* for everyone, everywhere. *Sustainable healthy diets* promote human health and wellbeing, while limiting negative environmental, economic, and social impacts. To reach all the world's people, these diets must be accessible, affordable, safe, equitable, and culturally acceptable.

Currently, healthy diets are unaffordable for 3 billion people. Poor-quality diets are associated with all forms of malnutrition – including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight and obesity – as well as 11 million premature adult deaths each year. Although food systems are an important source of employment in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), many jobs are in the informal sector, where they offer low, uncertain income and poor labor conditions, especially for women and youth. Food systems also drive environmental degradation and biodiversity loss, and account for more than 25 percent of greenhouse gas emissions.

In both urban and rural areas of LMICs, diets are changing as incomes and women's employment increase, urbanization continues, and innovations occur in technology, food marketing, and public policy. Food environments increasingly promote foods that are ready-to-eat, convenient, and cheap, but are often ultra-processed and too high in fat, sugar, and salt, making them unhealthy and environmentally unsustainable. Effective research-based policy options are needed to build equitable and inclusive food systems that provide *sustainable healthy diets* for all.

“ Food systems are not providing sustainable healthy diets for everyone

“ SHiFT uses an innovative, consumer-focused perspective to understand how to increase demand for, and access to, *sustainable healthy diets*

## Activities

Working closely with local, national, regional, and global partners, SHiFT uses an innovative, consumer-focused perspective to understand how to increase demand for, and access to, *sustainable healthy diets*. During the first three years (2022-2024), activities will focus on Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Vietnam before expanding to Benin, Guatemala, Honduras, India, and Senegal from 2025 to 2030.

SHiFT collaborates with stakeholders at multiple stages of the food system, from individual consumers to businesses that sell food and employ workers to decision-makers at the national or subnational level. The Initiative, working closely with in-country partners, will generate knowledge about diets and food system actors, propose solutions to barriers to the consumption of *sustainable healthy diets*, and develop decision-support tools to address trade-offs. These activities, in turn, will support the development and implementation of context-specific pathways for food systems transformation.





Activities focus on the following areas:

### Consumers and their food environments:

Researchers are characterizing food consumption and dietary patterns among marginalized populations and identifying key drivers and inequalities, including between genders. This work will inform the co-design, testing, and evaluation of scalable innovations in the food environment–consumer nexus in cooperation with partners.

### MSMEs and the informal sector

Integrated research teams are generating knowledge about the decisions MSMEs are making about what food and beverages to sell and how to sell it. In partnership with stakeholders, this work will be used to identify and promote scalable, evidence-based innovations and policies to help actors in MSMEs and the informal sector increase their delivery of *sustainable nutritious foods* while promoting more decent employment for women and youth in particular.

### Governance and inclusive food systems

Researchers are identifying the policy “lock-ins” (intractable decisions) and barriers that disrupt food systems’ contributions to healthy diets, fair livelihoods, and sustainable environments, and through extensive consultation with partners, proposing context-specific and evidence-based solutions.

### Trade-off scenario analysis

Integrated research teams are developing, testing and applying decision support tools to analyze trade-offs and using those tools to raise stakeholders’ awareness and capacity to understand and navigate the potential tensions resulting from food systems innovations and policies.

### Catalyzing food systems transformation

SHiFT researchers are engaging in national food systems processes to identify, co-design, support, and learn from context-specific pathways for food systems transformation toward *sustainable healthy diets*.

“ SHiFT will support the development of pathways for food systems transformation.

### KEY DEFINITIONS

#### Food environment

The interface that mediates the acquisition of foods to people within the wider food system. (Turner et al. 2018)

#### Sustainable healthy diet

“A dietary pattern that promotes all dimensions of individuals’ health and wellbeing; has low environmental pressure and impact; is accessible, affordable, safe and equitable; and is culturally acceptable.” (FAO 2019)

#### Sustainable nutritious foods

Foods that are nutritious, accessible, affordable, safe, and sustainable, and are key components of a sustainable healthy diet.



## Outcomes

SHiFT's work will help stakeholders start implementing at least six food system solutions by 2024 that increase the demand for *sustainable healthy diets*, especially among marginalized groups, and help businesses deliver *sustainable nutritious foods* and promote more decent employment for all. These solutions will also have maximum impact on gender equality, opportunities for youth, and social inclusion in the food systems of SHiFT's first three target countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Vietnam).

The Initiative's activities will strengthen stakeholders' knowledge and capacity to engage in governance and political economy issues as they identify and develop pathways to transform food systems. These activities will support stakeholders as they navigate trade-offs among food system outcomes related to social inclusion, sustainability, climate change, food safety and diet quality. Through the Initiative's engagement with national processes, stakeholders will be able to implement a coherent, multisectoral set of actions to accelerate food systems transformation for *sustainable healthy diets*.

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CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food-secure future. CGIAR science is dedicated to transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis. Its research is carried out by 13 CGIAR Centers/Alliances in close collaboration with hundreds of partners, including national and regional research institutes, civil society organizations, academia, development organizations, and the private sector.

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**We would like to thank all funders who support this research through their contributions to the CGIAR Trust Fund:** [www.cgiar.org/funders](http://www.cgiar.org/funders).

To learn more about this Initiative, please visit [on.cgiar.org/SHiFT](http://on.cgiar.org/SHiFT)

To learn more about this and other **Initiatives in the CGIAR Research Portfolio**, please visit [www.cgiar.org/cgiar-portfolio](http://www.cgiar.org/cgiar-portfolio)

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