

## About SCF

SEI Asia, with support from the Swedish government (SIDA), launched the Strategic Collaborative Fund Phase 2 (SCF2) programme in 2018 to enhance the current 2030 Agenda efforts in Asia and the Pacific. SCF2 aims to foster regional cooperation and policy dialogue for sustainable development and environmental sustainability, through capacity building, knowledge sharing and increased collaboration.

Human rights and gender equality are central to SCF2, as it champions regional and inter-regional collaboration for transboundary environmental policy development.

Learn more about the programme [here](#).

## Theme

Harnessing the Benefits of Agrobiodiversity to Build Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems

## Specific focus/priority

This call attempts to explore and strengthen the linkages between agricultural biodiversity practices and its contribution to sustainable, resilient, just, and equitable food systems. The proposed regional event should identify opportunities where agrobiodiversity can contribute to sustainable food systems and help achieve [Sustainable Development Goals](#), [Aichi Targets](#) of CBD, and realise the right to adequate food and healthy environment. Special consideration goes to proposals that include indigenous food systems, women's roles in food systems, and the importance of smallholders for agrobiodiversity.

## Rationale

The world is under pressure to provide more, safer, and more nutritious food for its growing population. By the year 2050, it is projected that agriculture will have to provide food and nutrition requirement for 9 billion people. This drives agriculture intensification and increased production, leading to the destruction of ecosystems, biodiversity loss, and continued climate change<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Convention on Biological Diversity. <https://www.cbd.int/agro/whatstheproblem.shtml>

## Who is most affected?

Biodiversity loss and food insecurity affect various groups differently due to their different access, capacity and control over resources. There is a complex and robust interconnectedness of how we produce and consume food, and agriculture, as the primary method for producing food, has posed great risks to the environment and human populations<sup>2</sup>.

Many Asian countries are suffering from competition between food production, industrial crops production, and conservation of ecosystems. Majority of our staple food has narrowed to three main cereals (maize, wheat, rice) instead of local and more diverse and nutritious crops<sup>3</sup>. The food that we consume is simplified and homogenous, putting us at higher risk of climate impacts and, as we currently experience, global pandemics.

In addition, disadvantaged and marginalised population groups depend on a healthy and bio-diverse environment both for livelihood and to sustain their well-being. Hence, losing the access to a healthy environment would adverse the impact of climate change and limit their adaptive capacities and choices.

Negative impacts increases significantly as it intersects with gender, ethnicity, class, and poverty. For example, rural smallholders and marginalised farmers, through government extension services, are pressured to narrow their seed selection, use chemical inputs and produce in line with presumed market preferences. Whilst Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities act as custodians of the landscapes, they risk losing their land and traditional ecological knowledge for the sake of fulfilling global food demand. Evidently, unsustainable agriculture will have a devastating impact on human rights including rights to food, water, health, and life for all.

Concerns are also raised related to the gender dimension in agriculture and food systems. Gender roles and norms result in differentiated access and control over natural resources, access to information and division of labour. This often puts women in situations of vulnerability, where they are more prone to experience negative effects of food homogenisation and land consolidation due to power imbalances and biased social institutions. On the other hand, women's livelihoods are often disproportionately reliant on their natural environment, which creates a rich knowledge of food systems that often remains overlooked. Understanding the gender dynamics

---

<sup>2</sup> Bioversity International, 2017. *Mainstreaming Agrobiodiversity in Sustainable Food Systems: Scientific Foundations for an Agrobiodiversity Index*. Bioversity International, Rome, Italy.

<sup>3</sup> FAO. 2019. *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*, J. Bélanger & D. Pilling (eds.). FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Assessments. Rome. 572 pp. (<http://www.fao.org/3/CA3129EN/CA3129EN.pdf>)

with regards to agrobiodiversity and food systems would help address gender inequalities through targeted actions while also fill knowledge gaps to improve food systems.

### **How can we address gaps?**

Enhancing the linkage between biodiversity and food systems is crucial to achieving sustainability and ensuring the full enjoyment of all human rights<sup>4</sup>. The following SDG goals and Aichi Targets are directly linked with agrobiodiversity and food systems:

- **SDG 1 : No Poverty especially Target 1.4 to ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic and natural resources**
- **SDG 2: Zero Hunger especially target 2.4 ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practice**
- **SDG 5: Gender Equality especially target 5.A Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic and natural resources**
- **SDG 13: Life on Land especially target 15.5 to take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity**

Aichi Target:

- **7: Sustainable agriculture aquaculture and forestry**
- **13: Genetic Diversity maintained**
- **18: Traditional knowledge respected and integrated**

Additionally, the issue also directly relevant to Universal Declaration on Human Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on right to food.

A synergistic effort is needed to tackle these challenges. The potential food supply from our environment through forestry, fisheries, and other ecosystems services needs to be assessed and considered. Diversity can be regarded at the landscape level, species level, and variety level; however, agrobiodiversity is not a one-size-fits-all recipe. The implementation needs to be contextual and acknowledging local

---

<sup>4</sup> Waldron, A., Garrity, D., Malhi, Y., Girardin, C., Miller, D.C. and Seddon, N., 2017. Agroforestry can enhance food security while meeting other sustainable development goals. *Tropical Conservation Science*, 10, p.1940082917720667.

ecological and knowledge systems. With such a diverse context, it is important to gather evidence and input to influence policy development processes in building our food systems to be sustainable from a social, economic, ecological, and well-being perspective.

---

## Regional Strategic Collaboration

The thematic call aims to support activities, events, and processes that help achieve the transition towards sustainable and inclusive food systems by fostering regional partnerships around the interlinked themes of biodiversity, climate change, gender, human rights, and well-being in the Asian context. The event expected to influence policies to increase agrobiodiversity implementation through various levers, such as governance, economic and financial measures, individual and collective action, science and technology. The types of initiatives could include, but not limited to:

- Strengthening coordination between systems and sectors to accelerate the progress to achieve global goals such as Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Biodiversity Targets and realise human rights, including, but not limited to, right to food, adequate standard of living.
- Sharing and build lessons on synergies and interconnectedness across systems in relation to agrobiodiversity and food systems
- Aligning with the national or regional event or policy pathways and ensuring that traditional ecological knowledge, rights, customary and indigenous practices are integrated
- Targeting policies that help to promote gender and social equity, and human rights

The events could be linked with an ongoing project and initiatives that need to be scaled up or scaled out whilst integrating gender, human rights and social equity. The outcomes of the event should feed into larger policy processes and framework at country and regional scales. It could mean engaging with regional organisations like ASEAN or international coalitions of organisations and countries working on the issue of biodiversity, food systems, SDGs. The applicants also encourage to design national/regional event that will feed into international fora such as ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity, CBD COP, or any other significant policy event. Ideally, the outcome of the event(s) would be an input to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021. engagement with and inclusion of organisations/community groups working on human rights and gender issues, especially in biodiversity contexts is strongly encouraged.

## Expected results

We invite proposals for a regional event that will discuss the linkages between ecosystems and food systems, especially from the view of disadvantaged and marginalised groups and/or women.

Theory of change			
Outputs	Increase number of stakeholders, policy and decision makers that are aware on the importance of linking biodiversity and food	Increase participation and inclusion of women's, indigenous people, disadvantage, and marginalised people in food systems	Produced various communication products on the importance of biodiversity on food diversity and nutrition to various stakeholder
Outcomes	Better informed policy and decision-making process in promoting biodiversity and sustainable food systems	Enhancing women, indigenous people, disadvantaged and marginalised group access to information, recognition of their knowledge, and meaningful participation in the context of local ecological systems	Joint event or collaboration to put Agrobiodiversity and sustainable food systems in international agenda setting (eg UN Food Summit 2021)
Impacts	Policy and decision makers support agrobiodiversity to ensure food production	Create pathways for food systems that are inclusive, just, and equitable	Strengthened regional partnership and multistakeholder collaboration to achieve related SDGs, Aichi Target, and basic human rights

## Theme-specific criteria

The successful event proposal will meet the following criteria:

- **Integrating a rights-based approach and mainstreaming gender to ensure that the environmental and food systems are equitable and inclusive and raising awareness of human rights and associated obligations related to the adverse environmental impacts of the global food system to catalyse action**
- **Addressing interconnectedness of agrobiodiversity and food systems**
- **Identify and enhance regional collaboration and policy actions to achieve sustainable food systems with agrobiodiversity practices**
- **Promoting a collaborative approach by designing, facilitating, and involving diverse range of stakeholders, ensuring inclusive and meaningful participation.**