Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

FAO
Virtual
Learning
Centers

Facilitated online course: Sustainable and Local Food Systems
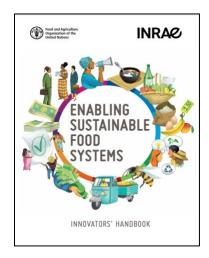
Innovate to sustainably transform your local food system!

WHEN	October to December 2023
HOURS	48 (over six weeks)
FORMAT	ONLINE HYBRID – a mix of facilitated, live, online training sessions, self-paced modules, team course work, practical project, external experts and helpful resources.

Introducing a new course

Food systems across the world are challenged in sustainability - ecological, economic and social. Innovation is the key to bring about sustainability for food systems transformation. This requires cross-sector intervention in all aspects of food systems from production through consumption, disposal and reuse in circular economies. Localization of innovative solutions can also help us to address climate change.

In 2020, FAO and the National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE) published a well-known compendium, 'Enabling Sustainable Food Systems - An Innovator's' Handbook'.

The handbook has since been developed into a highly interactive and participatory course designed specifically for places with limited resources by FAO and INRAE, in collaboration with Gustave Eiffel University and Dr. YSP University for Horticulture and Forestry. The course builds on relevant experiences from global, national and regional experts. Innovative systems design tools are used to solve real-world challenges of food systems transformation. It will be offered to selected innovators from around the world in October 2023.

Who is the course for?

As a one-of-a-kind, this innovative course is for all practitioners involved in solving real-world localized food systems challenges. It will bring together:

- experts who are currently innovating to solve challenges in food systems, including the authors of the handbook;
- forthcoming innovators;
- academics and research professionals;
- non-governmental organization professionals;
- government officials;
- producers and consumers.

What will you learn?

Use system design tools to analyze innovations.

Work with global teams to network and start solving real world food systems challenges.

Learn to apply systems-thinking for food systems transformations.

Share experiences and learn from experts who have developed localized solutions.

Use the tools in the publication - Enabling Sustainable Food Systems - An Innovators' Guide.

The course will introduce the concepts of food systems, the challenge of sustainability and provide advice on how to transform them.

It involves expert facilitation, access to unique systems design tools and the scope for using new systems tools. Participants will work with a global network of innovators on real-world problems in their own local food systems.

The course requires participants to undertake a live campaign as a team project and solicit feedback about the suitability of their co-developed innovations.

Participants will also have the opportunity to peer-review each other's work and will receive guidance reviews from the course tutors. The course allows the participants to learn systems-thinking and prepares them to lead innovative change towards sustainability in their local food systems.

What does the course involve?

The course will run over a six-week period, following an introductory session and the completion of a pre-requisite certificate course.

The course is comprised of three modules and 13 live, online sessions. In India, the event will be held as an online hybrid hosted at the Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. There is ample time in each session for team work as well as self-paced homework each week. A practical project (running a live campaign) will be required. The course requires 100% attendance for completion. The course also has a peer-review and tutor led rubric evaluation system for all participants and teams.

We recognize that participants are busy and have kept the programme flexible. We have also spread it out over a six-week period to keep the load to a maximum of three hours in a day. The total time invested in this program will be about 48 hours (including team course homework and practical project). We expect that all participants who finish the course will have gained practical knowledge about novel methods to address food system challenges based on local and innovative solutions.

A certificate of participation will be awarded to all those who complete the course.

Participants who have successfully completed the course should expect to remain active as ambassadors in FAO's global network of sustainable food system innovators.