

# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR CONVENORS OF INDEPENDENT DIALOGUES





## WELCOME TO THE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR CONVENORS OF INDEPENDENT FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT DIALOGUES!

Thank you so much for taking on this essential leadership role in your community. We hope that your journey as a Dialogue Convenor will bring about new connections, ideas and opportunities to enable multiple stakeholders to shape food systems that will nurture all people and the planet.

**the UN Food Systems Summit Secretariat**



# ENCOURAGING CHANGE IN FOOD SYSTEMS THROUGH DIALOGUE

In September 2021, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres will convene the first **Food Systems Summit** to launch bold new actions to transform the way the world produces and consumes food, delivering progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). People everywhere are encouraged to participate in this historic Summit, and to contribute as vital stakeholders in the world's food systems.

Independent Summit Dialogues are both an important avenue for citizen engagement and a key part of the Summit process. **Anyone with an interest in food systems is invited to convene an Independent Food Systems Summit Dialogue.** Locally based, locally led and fully adaptable to different contexts, Independent Dialogues crowdsource sustainable solutions to strengthen local and global food systems. **A diverse range of stakeholders**—including youth activists and Indigenous leaders, smallholder farmers, fishers, scientists and business leaders—can ensure that your Dialogues identify the most powerful ways to make food systems more sustainable and equitable for all. Most importantly, Dialogues offer citizens everywhere the opportunity to contribute directly to the Summit's ambitious vision and objectives.



Independent Dialogues **can take many forms**, depending on what is most appropriate for your community and constituency—from a webinar to a town hall meeting to an informal gathering of community members. The Summit’s only request is that three key features hold true across all of these formats: all Dialogues respect the Summit’s principles of engagement; feature structured conversations among groups with different perspectives; and contribute to the Summit process through an official feedback form, as described below.

As official feedback forms are uploaded to the Summit Dialogues Gateway, the outcomes of the Independent Dialogues will **inform the Summit process** and help to guide individual and collective action towards a future of food that is sustainable, equitable and secure. Syntheses of the Dialogues will feed into the Summit’s five priority areas, or Action Tracks, as well as the preparatory work of its Scientific and Advisory Groups, Champions Network and other Summit support structures.

The success of the 2021 Food Systems Summit depends on the **engagement of citizens** all over the world, and across a diversity of viewpoints and sectors. Independent Dialogues facilitate this engagement in a way that is guided by the values of sustainable development and informed by science and experience. By participating in the Dialogues programme, people in every corner of the world can contribute to this milestone Summit.

## ACTION TRACKS

1

Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all



2

Shift to sustainable consumption patterns



3

Boost nature-positive production



4

Advance equitable livelihoods

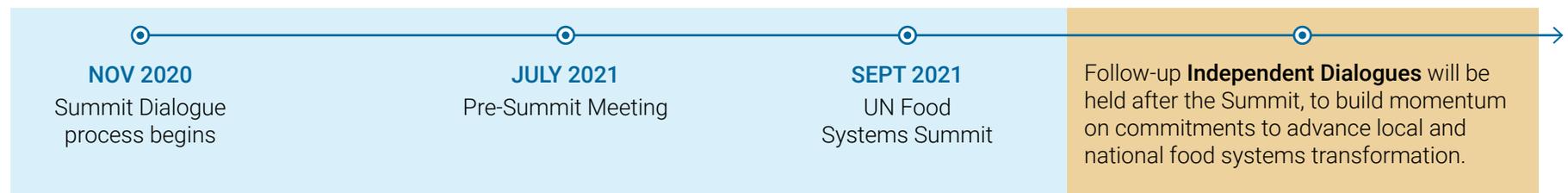


5

Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

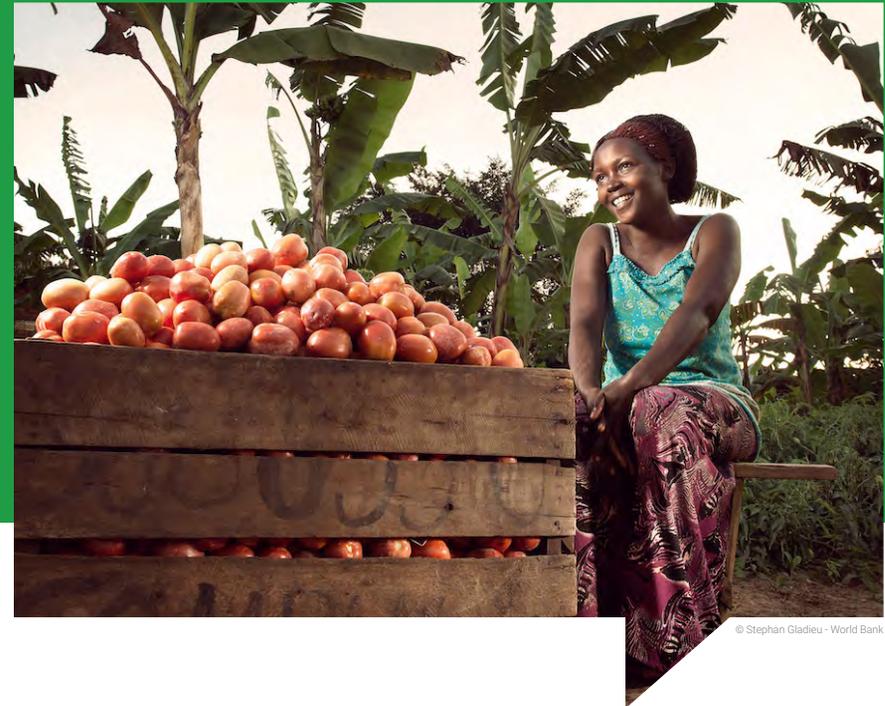


### Timeline



# GUIDANCE FOR CONVENORS OF INDEPENDENT DIALOGUES

Convenors of Independent Dialogues are **essential change agents** who bring together local stakeholders and provide leadership on issues that affect us all. Convenors have a large degree of freedom in deciding the focus of the Dialogue and adapting the standard methodology. The following step-by-step guide is meant to assist you on your path.



## Step-by-step Guide for Convenors of Independent Dialogues



**Register** for the Summit [Dialogues Gateway](#) “Take Part Zone” (and while there subscribe to the newsletter). In the Take Part Zone, you can find key resources and complementary materials to assist you. Read the reference manual for Dialogue Convenors and [familiarize yourself with the Summit’s Principles of Engagement](#).



**Training is available** for Independent Dialogue Convenors. This training complements the resources on the Gateway, and gives you access to tips, tricks and best practices. Details about the training sessions and how to register can be found on the Take Part Zone [here](#). Explore the Gateway to see if other Dialogues are being planned in your area. You may wish to also connect with other Independent Dialogue Convenors in your country, region or Dialogue theme.

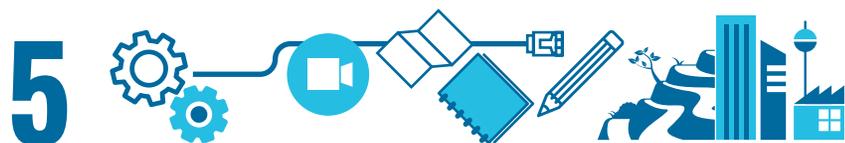


**Choose a focus for your Dialogue.** Some Independent Dialogues will have a focus on the whole of a food system, others may have a more restricted focus—such as the links between food producers and consumers or ways to reduce the risks associated with food production. The focus may alternatively be on links between the five objectives of the Summit or the potential for collaborative action on the five Action Tracks. The focus could be on cross-cutting issues such as policy, finance, innovation, Indigenous knowledge and the empowerment of women, young people and marginalized groups. Alternatively, a Dialogue could focus on specific aspects of food systems in a particular place or a particular challenge to food systems, such as climate change or the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus should be reflected in the title of the Dialogue when announcing in the Take Part Zone that will then appear on the Dialogue on the Summit [Dialogues Gateway](#).

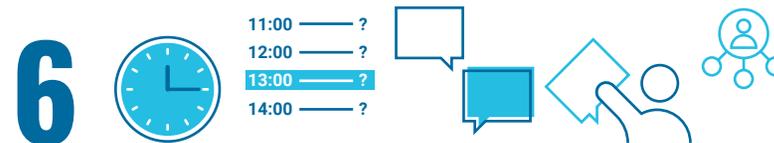


**Identify and invite your participants.** Dialogues are most meaningful when they include a wide range of stakeholders who are involved in moving food from farm to fork. They may include professionals who work for the health and nutrition of women and children, as well as those who help to govern territories, protect livelihoods, foster resilience, regenerate ecosystems, participate in climate action, manage freshwater and steward coastlines, seas and the ocean. They may be from small, medium or large enterprises, community organizations, universities, schools and more; they may also include members of more vulnerable stakeholder groups including women, youth, Indigenous peoples and migrants. It is essential for convenors to encourage connections between stakeholder groups, especially those likely to have differing positions on food systems issues (e.g., farmers and environmentalists, food retailers and consumer advocates)..

You can use the tools of the [Take Part Zone](#) to announce your Dialogue and invite participants.



**Plan the logistics of the Dialogue.** In many settings, face-to-face meetings may not be possible either because of the risk of COVID-19 or other challenges. Convenors may wish to use applications that permit online meetings, all the time seeking ways to avoid excluding those groups for whom connection is a challenge.



**Organize the programme,** including special guests, plenary sessions and the composition of the Discussion Groups. This work includes preparing your discussion topics and planning the Discussion Groups. Be sure to maintain diversity in each discussion group, ideally limiting each to 8-10 participants. Identify facilitators for each Discussion Group and encourage them to participate in one of the collective training opportunities (note-takers can also be identified and join the training). Make sure all facilitators are fully briefed before the Dialogue.



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**Convene the Dialogue.** Make sure there is plenty of time for discussion and time to reflect on the outcomes of the Discussion Groups. And be sure to **harvest the outcomes** of the discussion groups on the day. You may want note-takers to put the outcomes into the “Facilitator Discussion Group Template” available with all materials available in the Take Part Zone. **Good luck!**



**Submit feedback via the official feedback form.** It is best to involve the facilitators in this process and to include them in discussions before finalizing. All feedback received by the Summit Secretariat using this form will be synthesized and made available to the UN Food Systems Summit Scientific Group, Action Tracks, UN Task Force and Advisory Committee, among other Summit support structures. The Dialogue outputs will inform preparations for the pre-Summit meeting in July 2021 and the Summit itself in September. More details about the official feedback form can be found [here](https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/dialogues/independent).



Take a moment to **celebrate your contribution** to the Summit and to improving our food systems. The leadership you displayed in organizing a Dialogue is exactly the type of action the world needs if we are to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Who can you share your official feedback with to make this knowledge go further? Have you shared it on the Food Systems Summit Community Platform? Lastly, you might consider whether you would like to host other Dialogues, either pre- or post-Summit. Are participants from the Dialogue interested in working on a particular initiative or in making a commitment to future action? Can you connect with others conducting similar Dialogues?

# KEY INGREDIENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUE



## Careful selection of participants

Successful Dialogues bring together a diversity of voices, especially those that have traditionally been marginalized.



## Good group size

Having more than 100 participants makes the event challenging to manage. Discussion groups of 8-12 individuals should be the heart of the event.



## Pertinent discussion topics

Discussion topics should be positive and forward-looking but should not shy away from complex issues. They should acknowledge trade-offs and take into account active policy discussions.



## Effective discussion leaders

Strong leaders encourage new connections, ensure that everyone in the group is heard, and help the group navigate contentious issues constructively.



## Solid logistics

Participants should have all of the relevant information in advance, and they should be able to easily join the discussions, whether the meeting is held online or in person.



## An inspiring framing of the meeting

Short, impactful opening and closing speeches can provide the political and strategic context and set the tone for constructive discussions.



## An accurate synthesis

Using the official feedback form, convenors should prepare a post-Dialogue synthesis that captures not just what was said, but also the mood and spirit of the conversation.



## WHERE TO LEARN MORE

Detailed information about Food Systems Summit Dialogues is available through the Summit Dialogues website at [summitdialogues.org](https://summitdialogues.org). This is where convenors register, access advice, arrange to participate in training programmes, upload official feedback once their Dialogues are complete and receive updates via regular newsletters.

This Step-by-step Guide is a living document and complements other resources found on the Summit Dialogues website. Please send any comments to [info@summitdialogues.org](mailto:info@summitdialogues.org).

#summitdialogues



[un.org/food-systems-summit](https://un.org/food-systems-summit)