

Healthy **Diets**



Protected **Environment**



Decent **Livelihoods**



Guiding framework for the Transformation of Agriculture and Food Systems

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Introduction

Since the mid-20th century, agriculture and food systems (AFS) have seen significant productivity gains and some success in the fight against world hunger. At the same time, the harmful effects of AFS, especially on natural ecosystems, have increased, however. As things stand, AFS can neither provide healthy food and fair living conditions for all people, nor do they respect the planetary boundaries. This is why the transformation of agriculture and food systems has become an existential condition. In the future, AFS must make a greater contribution to solving global challenges that endanger people and the environment, instead of further exacerbating them. Notably, this goal cannot be achieved by accelerating gradual adjustments alone. The **transformation** does not only stand for the guiding principle of moving our AFS towards better health, greater sustainability, and higher prosperity. For GIZ as an implementer of integrated solutions for global challenges, the requirement is also to offer a profile that contributes directly to the transformation of AFS and thus ensures excellence in project implementation¹. The **agriculture and food systems perspective** scrutinises narrow, sector-specific perspectives in order to do justice to the complexity of how we produce, process, transport, handle and consume food. Only by doing so, can we take into account the associated effects on people and the environment. This change of perspective also requires orientation regarding our services: we must offer a profile that is fit-for-transformation under complex conditions and high levels of ambition.

The transformation of AFS presents us with substantial challenges in international cooperation. Firstly, **objectives and targets** must be renegotiated. In AFS, healthy nutrition, efficient agricultural production, impacts on climate and the environment, and the fair distribution of wealth cannot be achieved simultaneously to the extent required. It is therefore a central challenge to anticipate and communicate conflicting goals and to negotiate feasible solutions and just compromises.

¹ [GIZ Corporate Strategy 2023-2027](#)

Secondly, new **areas of tension for our approaches and implementation methods** ranging from continuity to disruption are becoming acute. Can a transformative agenda actually be pursued in the long term without merely reinterpreting established strategies as „transformative“ (*old wine in new bottles*)? Can such an ambitious and systemic agenda be translated into implementation in the local context without losing focus on the system perspective and structural ambition (*lost in complexity*)? Can the strong focus on context-specific approaches be combined with systematic monitoring that documents and communicates impacts (*what gets measured vs. what gets done*)?² To address these areas of tension, we therefore need to systematically expand our core competencies.³

The Guiding Framework for the Transformation of Agriculture and Food Systems sets out the new requirements placed on GIZ as part of the political vision of its commissioning parties and partners. It provides guidance on how we can recalibrate ourselves in terms of our technical and methodological approach to portfolio development, programme and project development, communication and advisory services. The Guiding Framework is therefore aimed at all GIZ colleagues in order to create coherence in implementation, communication and external presentation. A particular focus is on defining a **shared vision and transformative design principles** for our services and on providing **technical orientation** regarding transformative actions.

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² Höffler et al. (2023). *Transforming agricultural and food systems – why and how*. Rural 21

³ GIZ (2020). *Transforming our Work: Getting ready for transformational projects*

1/ Framework conditions

The transformation of AFS is increasingly discussed by the international donor landscape as indispensable for achieving global objectives and agendas. The climate crisis, the degradation of ecosystems, new consumption patterns in emerging economies, continued population growth, geopolitical conflicts and fragility have exacerbated the challenges for food production, trade and consumption. New evidence on the state of agriculture and food systems underlines the urgent requirement and the great potential for a transformation.

1/1 Why is the transformation of agriculture and food systems necessary and beneficial?

AFS encompass all activities and elements required for the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food. They are embedded in other systems and structural drivers and have social, economic and environmental impacts. In the status quo, AFS cannot ensure sufficient and high-quality food for humanity, nor can they respect planetary boundaries. In recent years, the trend of declining hunger figures has reversed and SDG 2: No Hunger of the Agenda 2030 has become a distant prospect as the world's population grows; conflicts intensify and the effects of the climate crisis hamper with AFS. In 2023, around 733 million people worldwide went hungry and 2.8 billion could not afford a healthy diet⁴. According to United Nations forecasts, 582 million

people will still be affected by hunger in 2030. At the same time, 20 - 40 % of all food produced in AFS is lost in production, trade and consumption or goes to waste. AFS are also a major driver of the climate and biodiversity crisis, as they are associated with 23 - 42 % of all greenhouse gas emissions and 86 % of all endangered species. Last but not least, AFS structurally contribute to high inequality. More than 1.2 billion people earn their income in AFS, but around two thirds of them live in poverty. Due to this high inequality, marginalised groups are most affected by unsustainable and unjust AFS in the context of fragility and security – often with fatal consequences.

The transformation of AFS is therefore not only attracting increasing public and political attention, its necessity and its benefits are also increasingly supported

by evidence. Measured along health, environment and prosperity dimensions, the hidden costs in AFS amount to around EUR 12 trillion per year worldwide – this corresponds to more than 10 % of global gross domestic product and even exceeds the market value of products and services produced in AFS⁵. AFS therefore systematically externalise and distort costs that are indirectly borne by people and the environment. These high costs are offset by the modelled gains of a structural transformation: only EUR 200 to 500 billion per year would be needed to reduce around EUR 5 to 10 trillion of the hidden costs⁶. The transformation of AFS can not only minimise hunger, unhealthy diets and poverty associated with AFS, but in combination with other sectors (e.g. Energy, Transport, Trade), the transformation of AFS can also ensure that the 1.5 degree objective of the Paris Climate Agreement is achievable.^{7,8}

Both the high costs of current AFS and the benefits of a transformation therefore allow only for one conclusion: „business as usual“ or gradual adjustments in sectoral silos are no longer an option. The negative effects and untapped potentials of AFS are too great for this. Consequently, visions for sustainable and just AFS are required and transformative action must be scaled to bring them into effect.

4 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO (2024): [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024](#)

5 FSEC (2024). [The Economics of the Food System Transformation. Food System Economics Commission \(FSEC\), Global Policy Report](#)

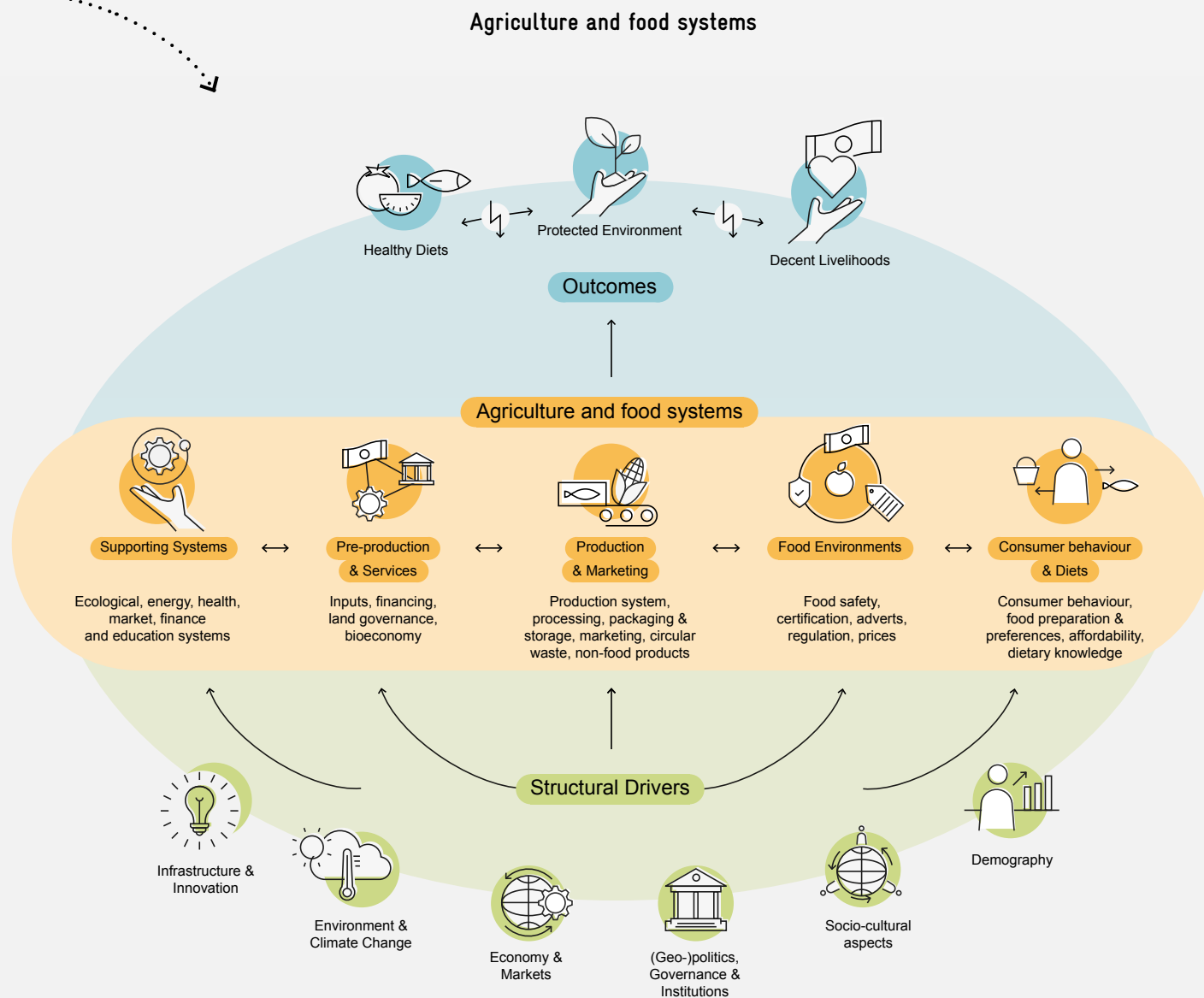
6 FAO (2023). [Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: A global roadmap, Rome](#)

7 FAO (2023). [Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: A global roadmap, Rome](#)

8 Weltbank (2024). [Recipe for a Livable Planet](#)

Trade-offs in agriculture and food systems

Trade-offs and hence conflicting objectives are an inherent part of AFS. Trade-offs exist between the different target dimensions of AFS – for example, when economic concerns are not directly compatible with ecological or social concerns. Conflicting objectives also exist between groups of actors when the interests of one group contradict those of another. Trade-offs in AFS become particularly visible and acute under transformation conditions, which explains the centrality of moderation and conflict resolution measures. When structural drivers (e.g. climate change, crises, conflicts) reconfigure target dimensions in AFS, solutions and compromises must be constantly renegotiated. If transformation involves a shift in resources, rights, benefits and costs between groups of actors (e.g. producers, the private sector, and consumers), trade-offs can become particularly acute and endanger marginalised groups to being left behind. At the same time, there is a risk that the transformation agenda will lose acceptance and legitimacy if trade-offs are unknown or deliberately ignored. The political paradigm shift towards a transformation of AFS therefore entails a new focus on and approach to trade-offs. For GIZ, as an implementation organisation of integrated solutions, this means that successful impact in the transformation of AES depends heavily on how well trade-offs are anticipated, communicated, and negotiated in a goal- and target group-oriented manner.



1/2 What are the priorities of clients / commissioning parties and partners?

Our commitment is always derived from the interests of our clients and partners in developing countries and emerging economies. In Germany, in the European Union and on the multilateral level, our commissioning partners are also recipients of our services. Commissions serve to strengthen sustainable AFS in the narrower sense, but also contribute to related international agendas for climate and biodiversity protection and the conservation of natural resources. GIZ's commitment in the field of agriculture/food and nutrition security is based on trust and long-term client and partner relationships. The political will of clients and partners for transformative change processes as well as agile cooperation management enable our service delivery. GIZ's portfolio development and implementation is based on strategic and programmatic guidelines from clients and partners.



The implementation of the **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development's** core thematic strategy „Life without Hunger – Transformation of Agriculture and food systems“, the special initiative „Transformation of Agriculture and food systems“ and the Ministry's priority area are taking place in the context of

a feminist development policy, the human rights concept of German development policy and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development's objectives for strong multilateral development cooperation for social justice. Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development regional strategies for Africa, Asia and Latin America emphasise the relevance of the transformation of AFS for social justice and the protection of climate and biodiversity.



Other **German public sector commissioning parties** include the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, the Federal Foreign Office, and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection. The national security strategy, food strategy, sustainability strategy and the climate foreign policy strategy of the Federal Government provide guidelines for commissioning from the departments.



The European Union is currently the most important co-financing donor both for GIZ as a whole and in the transformation of AFS. Priorities of the European Com-

mission and the Delegations cover the entire spectrum of AFS. The ability to cooperate in Team Europe initiatives and the complementarity with financial cooperation partners are important future requirements for positive business development with the European Union.



Foundations set geographical and thematic priorities in their funding approaches. The variety of topics addressed by internationally active foundations ranges from food security in emergency situations to circular economy approaches, the economic participation of women and youth employment to a focus on sustainable urban development.



GIZ also provides its range of services as part of the operational implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures through **international climate funds**, with the Green Climate Fund in particular being an important client / commissioning party with a focus on agroecology, climate change mitigation services and risk management as well as systemic reconfiguration of AFS.



Companies commission GIZ in the field of AFS, particularly with regard to the design of sustainable agricultural supply chains and in relation to the European Directive on the freedom from deforestation and the German and European Regulation of deforestation-free products (EUDR). Private companies are also a relevant stakeholder group in the client landscape with regard to voluntary contributions to climate change mitigation and adaptation.



Partner priorities must be assessed on a context-specific basis in view of the diversity of AFS and the dynamic socio-economic and political conditions. GIZ is guided in particular by regional agendas (e.g. the development of the African Post-Malabo Agenda) and national plans (e.g. the UNFSS National Pathways) in order to strengthen partner interests and take them into account in the development of the service profile.

A dynamic geopolitical environment and shifts in political priorities at national and international level are changing the framework conditions for the transformation of AFS on the one hand and for GIZ as a service provider for international cooperation on the other. Priorities and relevance of transformation agendas are thus shifting on both the commissioning parties and partner side. In various future scenarios, it can be assumed that specific competencies will become more important for the entire GIZ and the sector. These include a) negotiation and process competence in the mediation of interests in the political sphere, b) evidence-based impact communication and c) competence in the use and governance of data, artificial intelligence, and adaptation to climate change.

A broad cooperation landscape of political, scientific, private sector and civil society actors enables us to support transformative agendas in a dynamic environment. GIZ positions itself in this environment as a partner and service provider from the local to the international level and is guided by a vision of the transformation of AFS, the guidelines of which are described below.

2/ Our approach to the transformation of agriculture and food systems

We create coherence and excellence in implementation by setting out a vision for the transformation of AFS in our service profile that is geared towards sustainability and equity. This vision is adapted to the context and the requirements of partners and commissioning parties in dialogue with partners and pursued in implementation. In doing so, GIZ draws on design principles for transformative action and a technical orientation to expand core competencies.

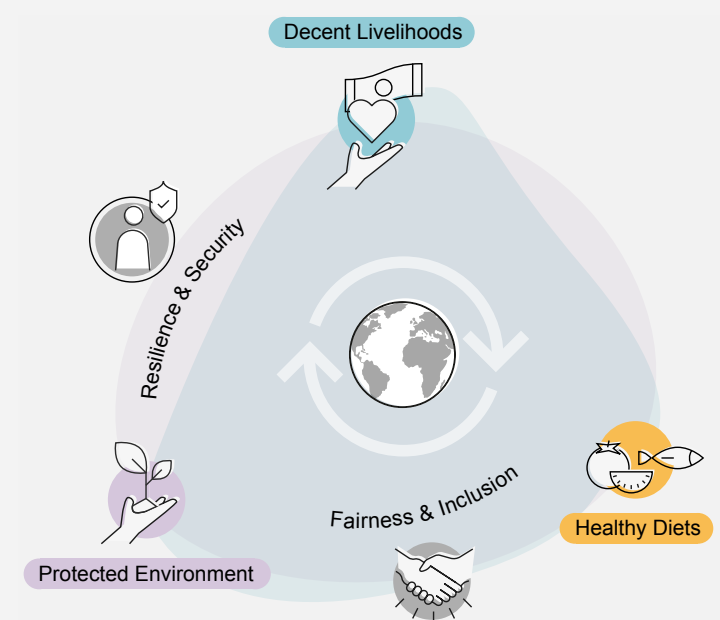
2/1 The vision: sustainable and fair agriculture and food systems

We pursue the vision of sustainable and fair agriculture and food systems that ensure healthy nutrition, respect planetary boundaries and create good living conditions⁹. A particular focus is placed on the cross-cutting issues of fairness and inclusion as well as resilience and security. This vision stands for a **high degree of connectivity with partners and clients or commissioning parties** and it corresponds to GIZ's core interests and competences¹⁰.

Although there is no clear international objective for the transformation of AFS, key target dimensions have been adopted and institutionalised under international law

through **binding rights and conventions**. The implementation of global agendas in particular is directly dependent on the transformation of the AES. This includes, the *Right to Adequate Food*, the SDGs of the *Agenda 2030*, the Rio Conventions – with the *Paris Agreement* (UNFCCC), the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) and the *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification* (UNCCD). In addition, the results of the *United Nations Food Systems Summit* (UNFSS) and its follow-up processes in the form of Coalitions of Actions, National Pathways and two-year stocktaking moments (*UNFSS Stocktaking Moments*) on the status of transformation provide important guidance on which implementation areas and levers are prioritised at national level.

Sustainable and fair agriculture and food systems – the vision of GIZ



⁹ In short „Sustainable and fair agriculture and food systems“

¹⁰ GIZ works to shape a future worth living around the world. See also: [Identität – giz.de](https://www.giz.de/identitaet)

Based on these international agendas, we prioritise **three transformation dimensions and two cross-cutting issues** in our work.



Healthy diets

This dimension aims to ensure that all people can eat a healthy diet. The objective is enshrined in international law through the **Right to Adequate Food** and it links to **SDG 2 – Zero Hunger** of the 2030 Agenda. The availability, accessibility, affordability and attractiveness of food characterise nutritional environments and form the basis for consumers' food choices. Approaches that promote sustainable and healthy diets range from nutrition-sensitive production and value chains, income generation and social protection to national nutrition policies and strategies as well as nutrition education and social behaviour change measures. More sustainable and healthier food environments can be created through financial incentives and regulations, such as food labelling or taxation of unhealthy foods. In addition, access to and use of health and WASH services (water, sanitation and hygiene) as well as measures to strengthen the role of women and young people are essential to ensure a healthy diet. The One Health approach¹¹ also defines health-related objectives that go beyond healthy nutrition (e.g. increased animal welfare, prevention of pandemics).



Protected Environment

The dimension has the objective of shaping AFS in such a way that they comply with planetary boundaries. This objective is thus directly linked to **goals 13 - 15 of the 2030 Agenda** as well as the **Paris Agreement** (UN-FCCC), the **Convention on Biological Diversity** (CBD) and the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** (UNCCD). The transformation of AFS goes hand in hand with ambitious disruptions. In the context of production and marketing, it brings about a shift towards the widespread use of sustainable practices without ignoring the specific context and partner interests. For example, agro-ecological practices, compensation mechanisms for environmental services, the redeviation of environmentally harmful subsidies, integrated repurposing approaches to soil protection and rehabilitation, water resource management, climate- and animal welfare-oriented animal husbandry and deforestation-free supply chains in their combination form the basis of production and marketing that does not exceed planetary boundaries. Nutritional practices and environments are changed in such a way that they make climate- and resource-friendly nutrition possible and the norm¹².



Secure prosperity

This dimension aims to ensure that people working in AFS can make a good living from their activities, particularly smallholder farmers, family members employed there and informal agricultural production workers as well as target groups along agricultural value chains (**SDG 1 – No poverty, SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth, SDG 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure**), but also consumers who should benefit from a healthy and affordable supply of diverse food (SDG 12 – Sustainable consumption and production). The transformation of AFS aims in particular to create good incomes and living conditions in AFS (Decent Work for All), to strengthen rural areas in a sustainable way (e.g. by promoting green jobs) and to build open and resilient markets that are shaped by fair agricultural policies. Short-term costs and medium to long-term benefits of the transformation are also distributed fairly and contribute to reducing local and global inequality.

¹¹ GIZ 2024: [Paving the Way for One Health](#)

¹² See for instance: GIZ (2024). [Agroecology – From Principles to Transformative Pathways](#) oder GIZ (2024).

Entry points for transforming agricultural and food systems for healthy diets and improved nutrition for all.



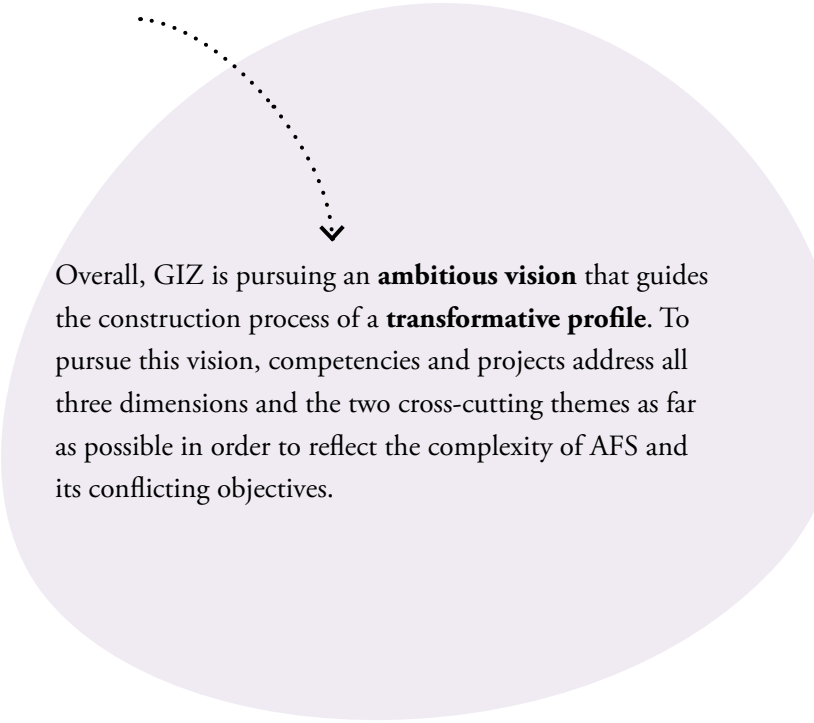
Fairness & Inclusion

This cross-cutting theme has the objective of shaping transformation along all dimensions in such a way that marginalised sections (e.g. women, children and youth, minorities) and entities (threatened natural habitats and species) are particularly protected, strengthened and involved. This objective corresponds to the *Leave No One Behind* principle of the 2030 Agenda, the approaches of a *Just Transition*¹³ and German core concerns, such as feminist development policy or the **human rights concept of German development policy**. The transformation of AFS therefore creates conditions under which the fight against poverty and inequality is a central concern. This means that human rights-based approaches (e.g. the Right to Adequate Food) are better institutionalised and conflicting goals of transformation are anticipated, communicated and negotiated through evidence and moderation processes.



Resilience & Security

This cross-cutting topic has the objective of shaping transformation along all dimensions in such a way that resilience and security are guaranteed. The aim is not only to strengthen the resilience of AFS to short-term shocks (e.g. conflicts, extreme weather events), but also to strengthen adaptability to long-term changes (e.g. climate change, demographics, urbanisation). This objective is particularly important in the context of multiple crises. Systemic resilience must be increased in order to fundamentally reduce the potential for humanitarian crises and at the same time build capacities to overcome crises quickly and with broad impact. In addition, preventive measures and a close link between emergency and Transitional Development Assistance and international cooperation are required in order to create and maintain the foundations for the transformation of AFS, even in the context of fragility.

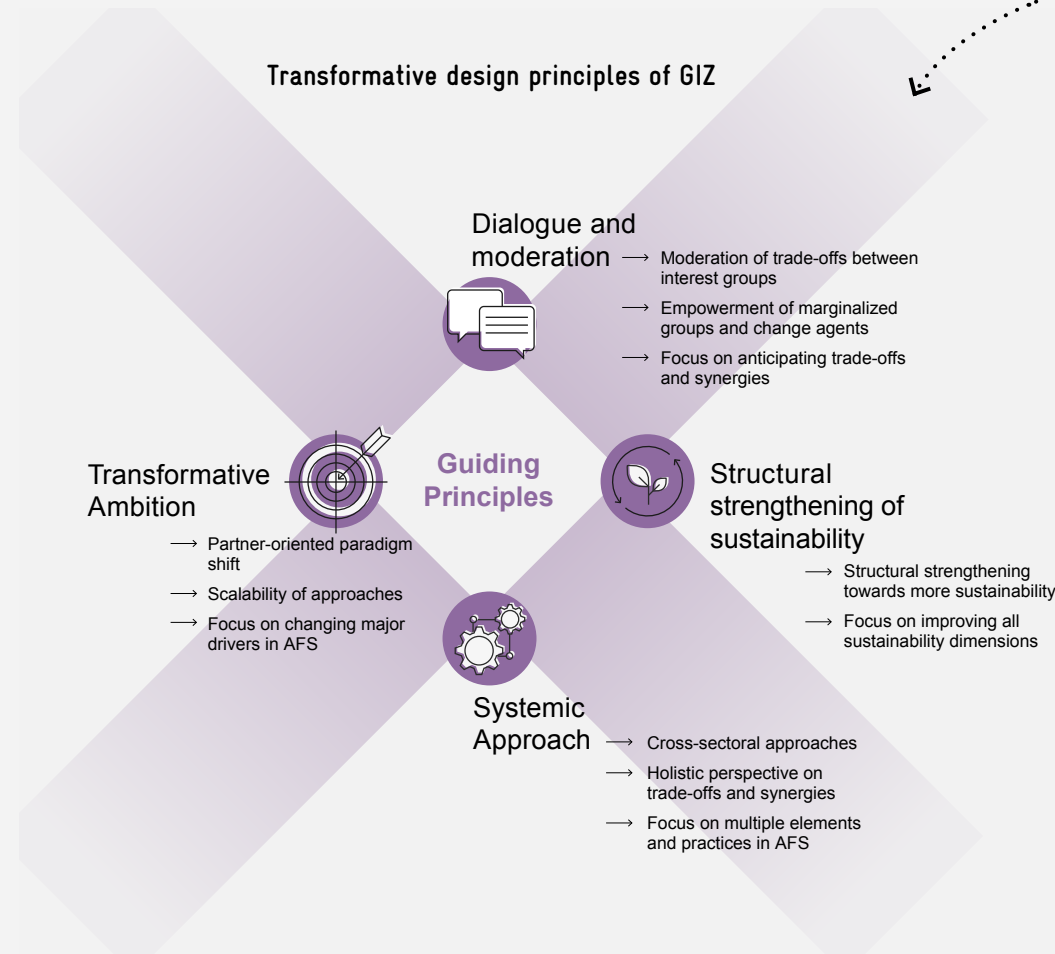


Overall, GIZ is pursuing an **ambitious vision** that guides the construction process of a **transformative profile**. To pursue this vision, competencies and projects address all three dimensions and the two cross-cutting themes as far as possible in order to reflect the complexity of AFS and its conflicting objectives.

2/2 Transformative design principles of GIZ

Transformative design principles provide orientation for the development of integrated solutions in AFS (see info box „Integrated solutions and approaches“). The design principles are not fixed or hard criteria, but guidelines that, in their combination, provide orientation in service delivery. The starting point is GIZ’s core competences: the promotion of technical and social innovations, capa-

city development, the development of conducive political framework conditions and the moderation and negotiation of trade-offs. We are systematically expanding these core competences – towards new transformative expertise and methods in project design and implementation as well as in advisory and moderation services.

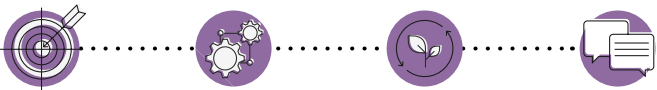


Integrated solutions and approaches

Based on Destination GIZ 2028, we are working towards becoming an implementer of integrated solutions for global challenges – a vision that also applies to our contribution to the transformation of AFS.

Integrated solutions involve new, integrated approaches to service delivery and adjustments to the operating model in order to make the what (integrated approaches) and the how (operating model) of our work more effective and efficient, even under conditions of increased fragility, conflict and global political multipolarity. Integrated solutions in AFS aim to strategically link projects within the agriculture and food sector and with other sectors, within and across countries, and to achieve greater impact through integrated expertise and standardised products.

Integrated approaches are a subset of integrated solutions. They relate to the approaches of our service delivery. In AFS, this applies to all phases of commission management, in which holistic perspectives are cultivated in order to meet the complexity of a transformation „by design“. In concrete terms, this has an effect on project commissioning and our technical priorities, for example.



GIZ is pursuing four design principles in the transformation of AFS:

Transformative ambition

Transformative work means a fundamental paradigm shift in cooperation with partners and in the objectives of projects in AFS. It requires a change of perspective on existing objectives in AFS and leaves the status quo (business as usual). Since a transformative objective always has a normative underpinning and must therefore be negotiated politically (Why transform? How to transform?), we strive for a **paradigm shift that is led and supported by our partners**. This means that projects are always contextualised through an engaged exchange with our partners and adapted in the process to contribute to a transformation of AFS that also corresponds to our understanding of a future-proof transformation. In this sense, the design principle takes into account the need for contextualised up- and down-scaling of transformative objectives in order to work *with* rather than *against* key drivers and institutions in agriculture and food systems (e.g. governance, social norms, institutions).

Systemic approach

Working transformatively means that projects are designed systemically and holistically by considering the various elements, activities and effects of the agriculture and food systems in terms of their interactions. The complexity of AFS is recognised through **cross-sectoral approaches**.

Synergies and conflicting goals are made transparent and negotiated between stakeholders in order to find locally adapted solutions. Transformative projects therefore utilise and offer entry points to existing country portfolios so that they can participate in a long-term and cross-project transformation. In addition, transformative projects pursue a **multi-level approach** that takes into account the different competences and responsibilities as well as unequal power structures within AFS.

Structural strengthening of sustainability

Working in a transformative way means striving to **strengthen sustainability along ecological, social (including health) and economic dimensions** across several areas of impact of AFS. Above all, projects are geared towards creating favourable framework conditions that have an impact at a structural level and can endure. **Structural measures** can include, for example, a reorientation of agricultural support, changes in trading conditions or the taxation of unhealthy foods. Accordingly, the aim is to strengthen sustainability not only through bottom-up approaches (e.g. capacity development among farmers) but also through policy advice on transformative approaches at regional, national and international level and with the help of systemic nexus approaches as a central paradigm for the transformation of AFS.

Involvement through dialogue and moderation

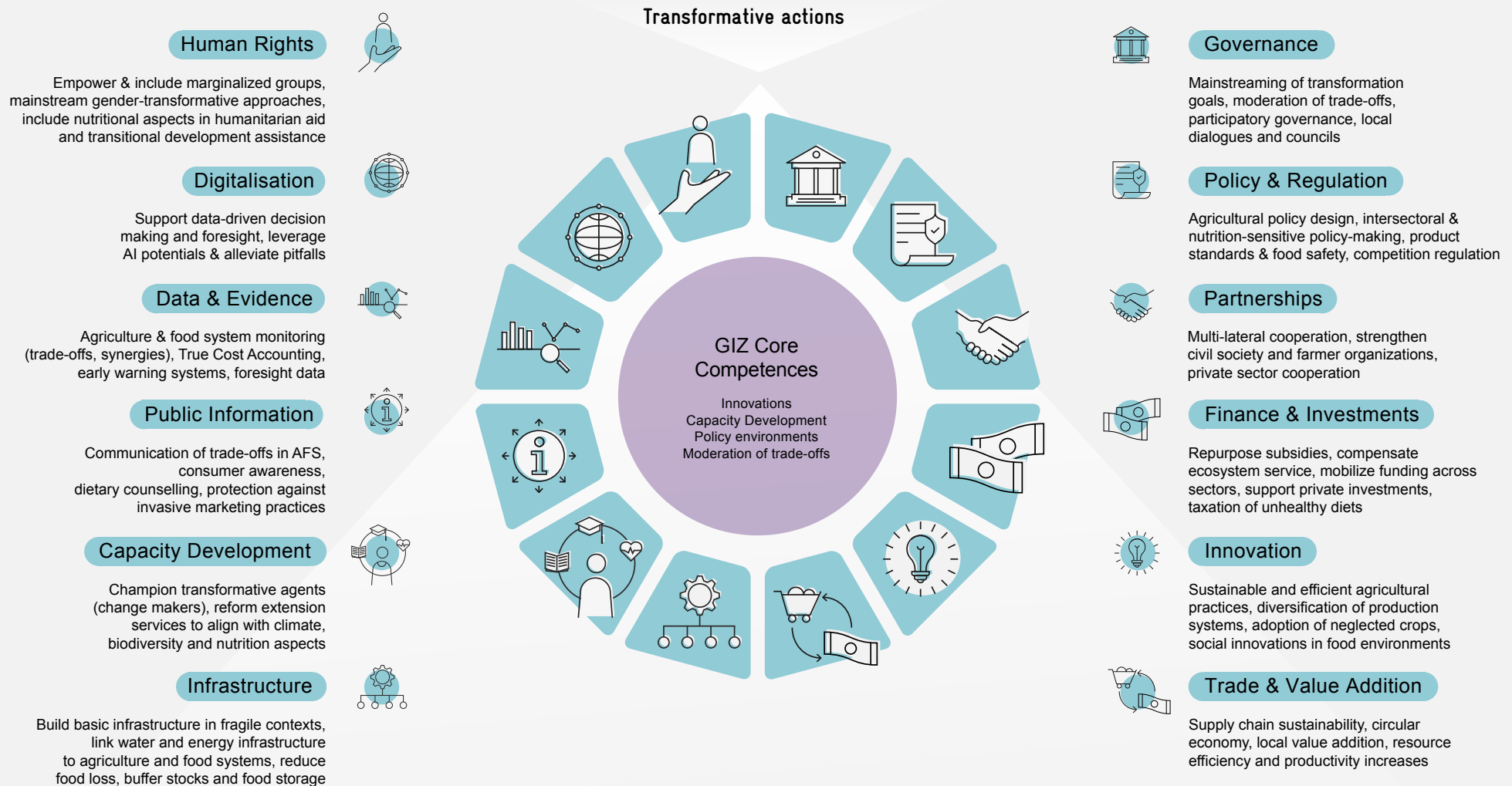
Transformative work means **bringing together and strengthening different actors** in order to jointly formulate visions, objectives and activities for the transformation of AFS. Dialogue and moderation ensure that conflicting objectives and trade-offs in the transformation process are anticipated, made visible and negotiated between actors. Multi-actor processes specifically involve strategic partners (e.g. ministries, the private sector, associations, civil society, academia) and marginalised groups in order to guarantee co-creation in the design and implementation of transformative projects. The **empowerment of change agents** and a high level of ownership among implementation partners and target groups are important approaches here. Women and marginalised groups in particular are given a high level of attention, as they are systematically at risk of being left behind in the context of a transformation (see: Leave no one Behind – principle of the 2030 Agenda). Transformative projects therefore focus on the **inclusion and empowerment of women and marginalised groups as well as concrete measures to structurally reduce the causes of marginalization** (e.g. gender-transformative or post-colonial approaches). In particular, the rights, resources and representation of women are strengthened at all levels.

2/3 Technical orientation of GIZ

New requirements on the part of commissioning parties and partners, as well as a shared vision and transformative design principles, provide orientation for the development of GIZ's service profile.

The action wheel for the transformation of AFS provides an important basis for **expanding GIZ's core competences** in project design and implementation to include transformative approaches. The action wheel builds on

the internationally established UNFSS areas of implementation.¹⁴ In all **12 areas of implementation** GIZ can offer and further develop concrete actions with particularly transformative aspirations in its service profile.





Governance

GIZ complements approaches such as good governance with approaches that strengthen the mainstreaming of transformative agendas between multilateral, regional, national and local levels. The aim is to link local implementation with structural policy agendas. GIZ also contributes to the establishment of cross-sectoral governance in order to moderate conflicts of objectives by means of participatory formats and to protect and strengthen marginalised groups (e.g. through decentralisation, youth and women's networks, farmers' organisations). The establishment of governance for shaping food environments is promoted, for example, through local dialogues and food councils.



Policy & Regulation

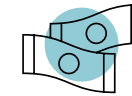
GIZ uses its experience in policy advice and the creation of conducive framework conditions to develop agricultural policy strategies and policy instruments in cooperation with partner ministries that meet ambitious objectives (e.g. high environment and health standards,

taxation of unhealthy food, regulation of invasive marketing practices), ensure a *Just Transition* (e.g. strengthening and participation of marginalised sections, incentives for employment-intensive and conserving resources practices) and can be implemented efficiently at various levels (e.g. multi-level approach). In particular, intersectoral, nutrition-sensitive policy approaches are strengthened.



Partnerships

GIZ promotes partnerships and networks that explicitly aim to transform AFS, with GIZ taking on a moderating and process-oriented role to build transformative partnerships with multilateral organisations, state institutions, the private sector and civil society. In the area of tension between multi-lateral agendas and different local conditions, particular attention is paid to initiating and strengthening partnerships that make structurally effective contributions and, if possible, promote several areas of impact (social, health, ecological and economic) of AFS simultaneously.



Finance & Investments

GIZ develops and implements new mechanisms for financing the transformation of AFS, with a particular focus on supporting partners and commissioning parties in the reallocation of misdirected subsidies (*Repurposing*) and the introduction of compensation payments for ecosystem services. To this end, new sources of financing are mobilised across sectors (e.g. climate and biodiversity) and investments by the private sector are leveraged and guided in compliance with safeguards for rural structural change and green transformation. Access to financing services for small and medium-sized enterprises and smallholder farmers is strengthened.



Innovation

GIZ promotes technical innovations in the agri-food sector that increase efficiency in a context-based manner but also contribute to sustainability and resilience (e.g. sustainable, diversified agricultural production and marketing, integrated aquaculture, improved animal husbandry, dissemination of traditional varieties, reduction of food loss and waste). In addition to technical innovations, GIZ also guides social and economic innovations (e.g. land use planning and land rights, innovative financing and marketing models, social change in food environments).



Trade & Value Addition

In addition to promoting value chains, GIZ implements ambitious measures to strengthen local value creation, resilience, sustainability and fairness in supply chains (e.g. deforestation-free supply chains, nutrition-sensitive or circular value chains). In addition, GIZ advises and supports the design of transformative agricultural investment and trade policies (e.g. standardisation, free trade zones, warehousing) to promote local value creation and employment in the agricultural sector and in rural rooms.



Infrastructure

In addition to the construction of roads, water and sanitation facilities and health centres in Transitional Development Assistance, GIZ also supports access to and development of production and marketing infrastructures that promote healthy and sustainable diets and prevent high food losses (e.g. irrigation, soil information systems, storage). Infrastructures that systematically link sectors are gaining in importance (e.g. agrivoltaics).



Capacity development

GIZ uses its experience and broad impact to expand target group-based knowledge and capacity development, with a particular focus on communicating sustainability in production, trade and consumption (e.g. expanding agricultural advisory services to include climate, biodiversity and nutrition aspects). Smallholder farms and small and medium-sized enterprises are given priority. In addition, GIZ guides the capacity development of change makers (e.g. particularly visionary individuals, innovators, advocates) who have the potential to shape processes in the area of tension between global agendas and national implementation, with particular attention to trade-offs (e.g. by strengthening farmers' organisations).



Public information

GIZ contributes to creating social and political acceptance and attention for the transformation of AFS by organising effective public formats. One focus is on communicating trade-offs. At target group level, information is provided on sustainable and resilient cultivation and marketing practices as well as healthy and sustainable nutrition (e.g. nutrition education and advice). Particularly vulnerable groups are protected from misinformation and invasive advertising of unhealthy diets and non-sustainable cultivation methods (e.g. campaigns for social behaviour change).



Data & Evidence

GIZ contributes to strengthening the monitoring and evidence-based modelling of AFS and designing target group-based visions and pathways for the future. This includes the development and scaling of foresight approaches that increase resilience and prevent fragility (e.g. early warning systems, food systems foresight). A special focus is on the protection of data of marginalised sections and their autonomous access to data in AFS.



Digitalisation

GIZ contributes to strengthening data-based capacity and knowledge transfer in production, marketing and consumption (e.g. precision agriculture, sensor technology, Internet of Things in livestock farming, big data, AI), reducing the digital divide and empowering marginalised sections to reap the benefits of digitalisation in AFS. This includes capacity building for data-based decision-making and digital literacy to identify and avoid risks of digitalisation (e.g. data extraction, information asymmetries).



Human rights

GIZ systematically contributes to strengthening, institutionalising and implementing human rights-based approaches. To this end, GIZ works with gender-transformative and postcolonial approaches in AFS to empower marginalised groups. We support partners and commissioning parties in strengthening equitable access to land, the design and implementation of public procurement programmes (e.g. school feeding programmes) and social protection, with a particular focus on healthy diets in fragile contexts to ensure the Right to Adequate Food in Transitional Development Assistance.

3/ Outlook


GIZ's objective is to evolve from a project organisation to an implementer of integrated solutions for global challenges¹⁵. As Germany's most important implementer in international cooperation in 2023, GIZ has supported over 2.2 million people together with partners in overcoming hunger and malnutrition¹⁶. This goes hand in hand with a responsibility to make a strong contribution to the transformation of AFS. Based on its unique experience and expertise in the agriculture and food sector, GIZ is a reliable and solution-oriented partner to carry the high level of ambition and systemic complexity of a transformation of AFS into implementation.

The Guiding Framework Transformation of Agriculture and Food Systems is a basis for addressing areas of tension in the global challenge of transforming AFS. A clearly defined vision and design principles for our service delivery ensure that we can systematically guarantee a transformative agenda in the development and implementation of integrated solutions in AFS (see area of tension „*old wine in new bottles*“). The continuous and impact-oriented expansion of our core competencies to include transformative approaches enables us to design integrated modes of delivery, project types, sectors and country portfolios in a coherent manner under complex conditions (see area of tension „*lost in complexity*“) and to achieve the greatest possible impact and high quality (see area of tension „*what gets measured gets done*“).

In order to continue to make a substantial contribution to the transformation of AFS, GIZ is not resting on its laurels, but is permanently repositioning itself in order to further transform its service profile and tailor it to the interests of its commissioning parties and partners. The guiding framework forms the basis for accompanying products (transformation reader, training courses, foresight publications), which are updated on an ongoing basis.

¹⁵ GIZ Corporate Strategy 2023-2027

¹⁶ GIZ (2024). [Integrated Company Report 2023](#)



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