

# Towards resource-smart food systems

Using partnerships to link production areas to urbanising regions

In urbanised regions, food systems have grown more complex, due to the growing distance between primary producers and consumers. Crucial natural resources, such as soils and

ecosystems are often not managed sustainably or efficiently enough to be able to produce sufficient amounts of food. Furthermore, a significant part of the production is lost, due

to inadequacies in storage, processing and transport to cities. Farmers, who manage most of the food production and distribution systems are often aware of the challenges, but not in a position to introduce improvements. Typically, the main causes for this are a lack of access to good quality inputs (such as seeds, fertilisers and water), a lack of access to urban markets, and low and unstable food prices.

Therefore, a shift towards resource-smart food systems is necessary. These are food systems which do not compromise the environmental basis and deliver food security, support livelihoods and ensure

human health for future generations. In resource-smart food systems, natural resources are managed sustainably and efficiently. The produced food is used efficiently with low levels of food losses and food waste. These food systems also make a positive contribution to human health, for instance, by discouraging the consumption of ultra-processed foods.

To promote resource-smart food systems, coalitions and partnerships can be created to bring the required capacities together. Businesses such as retailers and food companies should invest in local and regional supply chains around large cities. This involves

supplying inputs to farmers, setting fair prices, and creating adequate storage and processing facilities. Governments should create a proper enabling environment for farmers with attention for good rural infrastructure, knowledge transfer and education, and the creation of a fair and accessible legal system which enforces land tenure rights. NGOs should stimulate beneficial developments by having a positive-critical role towards both governments and private actors, defining local standards for sustainable production and creating new coalitions, for instance through the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms.

## Food systems: activities and actors

