EGYPT CONVERGENCE INITIATIVE WORKSHOP

CONVERGENCE ACTION BLUEPRINT (CAB) – EGYPT

1.1 BACKGROUND ON THE CONVERGENCE INITIATIVE

The Convergence Initiative is a unique collaborative effort led by the Government of Egypt with the overall coordination and support of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, the UN system, other development partners, and national stakeholders. It aims to strengthen and foster alignment and collaborative joint programs between the Egypt food systems transformation, health and climate action agendas, thereby advancing systems approaches and inter-sectorial win-win collaborations. This will enable the Government to strengthen synergetic action that will simultaneously support the achievement of the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement goals. Egypt is the second Arab country and the third in Africa to implement the Convergence Initiative. The National Convergence Initiative workshop was held from 14 to 16 July 2025 in the New Administrative Capital, Cairo, bringing together approximately with 100 participants from the Government of Egypt, the UN system and other stakeholders. The workshop is convened within the framework of the National Committee for Food Systems and Nutrition, chaired by the H.E. the Prime Minister of Egypt, Dr. Mostafa Madbouly.

In the lead-up to the national convergence workshop, a background paper was developed to analyze the status of food systems, health and climate policies. Furthermore, an overview of national climate action policies (including NDCs and food systems pathways) were reviewed to create forward and backward linkages between the food systems, health and climate action.

1.2 THE CONVERGENCE ACTION BLUEPRINT

The Climate Action Blueprint (CAB) is a comprehensive and integrated strategy rooted in Egypt's robust national processes. It builds on key frameworks such as: Egypt Vision 2030; the Egypt National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS) 2050; the National Operational Plan for Food and Nutrition Systems (2025-2030); the Sustainable Agriculture Development Strategy (SADS); the Nexus of Water–Food–Energy (NWFE) platform; the Hayah Karima ('Decent Life') Initiative; Golden 1,000 Days program; and the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP 2022). Additionally, it aligns with international initiatives and commitments, including the FAST Initiative, the Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN), the Food Systems Transformation Pathway (UNFSS 2021), Egypt's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), efforts advancing National Adaptation Planning in line with the NAP framework and the Adaptation Communication (ADCOM). These frameworks collectively reflect Egypt's commitment to resilient, low-emissions development and integrated food–climate–health strategies.

This comprehensive approach ensures that Egypt is well-prepared to leverage synergies between food systems, health and climate action, thereby enhancing expanded capacities and resources to effectively address climate, food systems and nutrition challenges that are simultaneously and collectively hindering resilient and sustainable economic growth, improved livelihoods and inclusive development. The CAB is structured around four key pillars: convergence vision and objectives; key interventions; milestones; and monitoring, evaluation and accountability.

1.3 NATIONAL CONTEXT AND CURRENT STATE

With a population exceeding 110 million and continuing to grow, ensuring stable access to affordable, nutritious, and safe food remains a pressing national development and security concern. Recent national data indicate that the percentage of Egyptians experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity increased from 28% in 2015 to almost 30% in 2022 (FAOSTAT), a figure exacerbated by the compounding effects of inflation, currency devaluation, and global supply chain disruptions (CAPMAS., 2023; WFP, 2023d). About 90% of the country's water supply depends on the Nile River, while non-renewable groundwater contributes just 0.5 billion m^3 (Government of Egypt, 2021). This supply falls far short of Egypt's annual needs of at least 90 billion m^3, resulting in a significant water deficit (Government of Egypt, 2021). Per capita water availability declined to 570 m^3 in 2018 and is projected to drop further to 534 m^3 by 2030, well below the international water poverty line of 1,000 m^3.

Climate change compounds these pressures, exposing Egypt, despite its low emissions to rising temperatures, sea-level rise, and altered rainfall patterns that threaten agriculture, infrastructure, and food security (Government of Egypt, 2021). The Nile Delta is one of the three most vulnerable hotspots in the world (World Bank 2021). Moreover, increased temperatures drive higher evapotranspiration rates, escalating water demand, especially for heat-sensitive crops such as maize and vegetables. Model-based analyses from the World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal, IFPRI, and Egypt's National Climate Change Strategy 2050 indicate that yields of major crops like wheat, maize, rice, and soybeans could decline by 10–30% by 2050, particularly under scenarios of water scarcity and heat stress. These impacts pose serious threats to national food security, while also exacerbating existing challenges such as water scarcity and land degradation.

The country's dependence on food imports, particularly staple commodities, makes its food supply highly vulnerable to international market volatility. Egypt imports over 55% of its caloric intake, including more than 40% of its cereal consumption making it one of the three world's largest countries importing wheat globally (FAOSTAT, 2023b). In addition to crop production, fisheries and aquaculture are also increasingly vulnerable to climate change. Rising sea temperatures and changes in salinity along Egypt's coasts are expected to affect marine ecosystems, endanger aquatic biodiversity, and disrupt livelihoodsdependent on coastal and inland water resources.

While progress has been made in reducing child malnutrition, stunting declined from 21% to 13% and wasting from 8% to 3% between 2014 and 2021 (MoHP). Egypt continues to face a complex and evolving nutrition landscape. The prevalence of undernourishment rose from 6.3% to 8.5% between 2015 and 2022, and 44.4% of the population is unable to afford a healthy diet (FAOSTAT). At the same time, obesity increased from 39% to 44%, and iron deficiency anemia remains widespread among women and children. This double burden of undernutrition, obesity, and micronutrient deficiencies calls for an integrated, multisectoral approach to food systems transformation that is both nutrition-sensitive and climate-resilient. Although the government operates one of the largest universal food subsidy systems globally, including the Baladi Bread Program that serves over 70 million people, structural challenges remain in dietary diversity, early childhood nutrition, and food utilization.

Constitutionally, the Right to Food is guaranteed under Article 79 of Egypt's 2014 Constitution, which affirms every citizen's entitlement to sufficient, healthy, and sustainable food and commits the state to ensure national food sovereignty (Egypt's Constitution, 2014). However, translating this legal guarantee into real improvements in food access, nutrition, and system resilience requires strengthened inter-ministerial coordination, local implementation mechanisms, and long-term investment in food systems transformation.

Additionally, Egypt's climate vulnerability is pronounced and growing, with direct implications for agriculture, food security, and rural livelihoods. The Nile Delta, a region that supports a significant portion of Egypt's agricultural production and is home to over 30 million people is acutely threatened by sea-level rise, saltwater intrusion, and coastal erosion. According to the Ministry of Environment and Egypt's Adaptation Communication submitted to the UNFCCC, drought frequency, temperature variability, and irregular flood patterns are intensifying across the country, placing additional stress on farming, fisheries, and irrigation systems, especially in fragile zones like Upper Egypt and the Western Desert oases (Ministry of Environment, 2022; UNFCCC, 2022).

While Egypt has taken important steps through the development of its National Climate Change Strategy 2050 and successive NDCs, food systems and nutrition remain only marginally reflected in key national climate instruments (Ministry of Environment, 2022; UNFCCC Egypt NDC, 2023). The 2022 ADCOM identifies food security as a cross-cutting issue, yet most sectoral policies continue to operate in isolation. The lack of integrated climate–food assessments, agrometeorological data infrastructure, and early warning systems further constrains adaptive capacity and limits evidence-based decision-making across ministries (WFP, 2023d).

In response to these challenges, the government gave high priority to food systems transformation. The National Committee for Food and Nutrition Systems in Egypt was established to create a sustainable food and nutrition system, improve nutrition standards, and enhance food security by 2030. This committee operates with multi-sectoral coordination involving various ministries and experts from governmental and international bodies. Its key goal is to develop strategies and food system action plans that will guide all state bodies.

SECTION 2: CONVERGENCE ACTION BLUEPRINT

PILLAR I: VISION AND OBJECTIVES:

"Transform Egypt's food systems to be more sustainable, equitable, inclusive, and resilient to climate change, ensuring access to affordable, nutritious, and safe diets for all. Aligned with Egypt Vision 2030 and national strategies, this transformation will be people-centric and will be guided by the principles of efficiency, equity, and environmental stewardship, including the sustainable management of water/natural resources. It will improve health and well-being, particularly for people in vulnerable situations, reduce import dependency; adapt to climate change; and promote long-term resilience, paving the way for a healthier, more sustainable future for all."

PILLAR II: KEY INTERVENTIONS

This section outlines the intervention areas and activities that can provide the foundation for aligning food systems transformation and climate action, complementing and enhancing already existing and ongoing national strategies and efforts. The intervention areas address crucial elements necessary for the successful integration of food, health and climate strategies. Together, these areas and interventions constitute a comprehensive approach to fostering convergence between food systems, health and climate policies and actions, ensuring both sustainability and inclusiveness in national development efforts.

1. Governance and Coordination

Egypt has placed food systems governance at the highest political level through the establishment of The National Committee for Food and Nutrition Systems. To support the effective and systemic function of the National Committee, the following interventions are recommended:

- **Establish an inclusive Convergence Group** within the sub-technical working groups of the The National Committee for Food and Nutrition Systems with representatives from Ministries, government agencies, NGOs, private sector and other stakeholders. This group will be tasked with providing technical and operational advice to the National Committee in line with its mandate. The Convergence Group will develop its Terms of Reference, avoiding duplications with existing mechanisms, with each ministry appointing a focal point that can be contacted.
- **Ensure that the convergence group** will be functioning and providing guidance based on existing scientific evidence and in response to Egypt's commitment in the UNFSS processes.
- **Identify capacity building and technical needs** of the Convergence Group and the inter- ministerial committee to support coordinated, evidence-based governance of food systems transformation and climate action. The UN Country Team, in collaboration with other stakeholders, will envisage to address these needs in line with national priorities.
- **Conduct a mapping of existing relevant food systems, health and climate** convergence initiatives and programmes; and formulate a national position to enhance the effectiveness of these initiatives and avoid duplication. **Strengthen the enforcement of environmental and food safety laws**, especially those related to pesticide management, waste disposal, and emissions from agrifood industries.
- **Review and amend existing laws, legislations and regulations** related to food systems to incorporate food loss and waste, principles of climate resilience and sustainability (e.g., environmental impact assessments for agribusiness projects).

2. Policy & Planning Alignment

- **Ensure that a systemic approach is reflected and implemented** towards food systems, climate and health strategies and policies, aligning food systems, climate action and health targets across various sectors plans and strategies and identify/address the gaps using tools and mechanisms such as SCOPE, ICAN, and others.
- **Apply a systemic approach to existing and planned interventions** such as the 1000 Golden Days initiative, School Feeding Programs, Food Loss and Waste Programs in a way that would achieve triple wins, resulting in improved food security, enhanced health and decreasing carbon footprint.
- **Develop a compendium of existing convergence success stories** at the national and international levels that can be implemented in the Egyptian context - to facilitate learnings across the stakeholders.

3. Joint Programmatic Action

The list below includes interventions grouped under the thematics of health and nutrition, agriculture and environment:

a) Health and Nutrition:

- **Propose legislation** that can discourage the consumption of unhealthy food and promote sustainably sourced, nutrient-rich foods and reduce import dependency by promoting local production. This can take place through measures such as sugar taxes and restrictions on advertisements for children among other legislations.
- **Address micronutrient deficiencies** through a comprehensive approach that includes the expansion of the fortification of staple food with micronutrients, the provision of targeted supplementation for vulnerable populations, building on existing social solidarity systems to improve nutrition status of all people, especially women, older people and infants.
- **Raise nutrition and environmental awareness** of all of society including, children, women and rural communities. This can take place through nutrition campaigns, school curriculum and targeted media campaigns.
- **Establish or strengthen interventions to improve consumer behavior and choices.** This can take place through the utilization of smart taxation, improved nutrition and climate labelling.
- **Build on the success of the First 1000 Days nutrition programme** to ensure full coverage in Egypt. Ensuring nutritional outcomes throughout all stages of life and utilizing nutrients that are locally sourced and environmentally sustainable. The programme may be enhanced to ensure triple win returns for social, health and the environment.
- **Expand nutrition intervention initiatives** beyond the first 1000 days to cover during maternity and all children under the age of 5, enhancing their access to nutritious food and ensuring improved cognitive and health outcomes.
- **Map existing reproductive health services** in climate-affected and vulnerable areas and identify gaps that can be supported by the UN and partners.
- Ensure the **delivery of nutrition services in climate-vulnerable areas**, including via mobile units, to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality.

b) Agriculture:

- **Encourage increased government funding** and green box subsidies for the adoption, sustainable, safe, and nutrition-sensitive agricultural practices.
- **Strengthen models of regenerative, nutrition-sensitive, sustainable, climate-smart agriculture** and circular economy, reducing food waste and loss; with focus on promoting better livelihoods and employability of women and youth.
- **Scale up and expand agricultural innovations**, clean energy and water saving techniques to enhance productivity and adapt and mitigate impacts of climate change and the emissions of the agriculture sector, in line with Egypt's NDCs.

- **Develop innovative and responsive early warning systems and anticipatory action programmes**, with the support of the UN agencies, to help increase resilience and mitigate the impact of climate change and shocks across the food systems, especially farmers and producers.
- **Align nutritional supplements** with national and international climate and food security strategies to ensure consistency and effectiveness in promoting sustainable food systems and enhancing climate resilience.
- **Raise awareness and capacity to farmers** on environment and nutrition-sensitive agriculture through targeted approaches such as simplified climate related capacity building programs.
- **Promote research and development** to enhance productivity and minimize food losses and improve food safety.
- **Standardize and regulate pesticide use** at both national and export levels by expanding oversight beyond the Ministry of Agriculture to include the Ministry of Health and Population as a committee member, ensuring that health impacts are duly considered in the approval process.
- **Mainstream Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as a climate-resilient alternative to chemical pesticide dependency**, by embedding it into national extension systems, farmer field schools, and climate-smart agriculture programmes.

c) Environment:

- **Scale up projects and programmes** to restore and protect the Nile Delta from sea level rise through integrated coastal zone management in cooperation with the relevant Ministries, government agencies and other stakeholders.
- **Integrate ecosystem-based adaptation plans** and nature-based solutions into national development and urban planning.
- **Scale up regenerative and climate-smart agriculture practices** including crop diversification, composting, climate-smart irrigation (e.g., drip systems, solar pumps) and low-water crops, drought tolerant crops and enhancing access to clean technologies and integrated pest management, especially in climate-vulnerable areas.
- **Support the development of "climate-smart villages"** or "resilient and sustainable food hubs" that demonstrate integrated solutions on food systems and climate change including clean water, renewable energy, nutritious crops.
- **Strengthen food systems practices** including cold chain infrastructure and local food storage to reduce post-harvest losses and emissions.
- **Enhance national and sectoral capacities**, including within the private sector, to plan and implement climate adaptation measures, ensuring integration of the food-climate-health-nexus.

d) Financing & Investment

- **Conduct a mapping exercise** of existing national and development partner funding to food systems with the objective of identifying gaps and shifting from project-specific/nationally-led funding to a coherent, sustainable financing structure
- **Enhance existing climate mechanisms**, such as the NWFE Initiative, including through resource mobilization to enable the achievement of the Initiative's objective and to embed nutrition-sensitive agriculture.
- **Use the Convergence Action Blueprint as a tool** to mobilize sufficient and concessional climate financing through the development of investment cases on targeted interventions on food systems and climate action.
- **Exploring the establishment of** a dedicated national Climate-Food Innovation Fund for public, private, and development finance to support SMEs in agroecology and climate-smart innovations.
- **Incorporate the Convergence aspects** into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).
- **Develop results-based financing mechanisms** for community-led climate adaptation activities and initiatives in food systems.
- **Promote sustainable and responsible private sector engagement** in food systems transformation agendas and actions at the national level.
- **Develop public-private partnerships** for expanding innovative-technology based solutions for climate adaptation.

PILLAR III: MILESTONES

Short-term (by end of 2026):

- Establish the Convergence Group and agree on the Terms of Reference and capacity needs (2025).
- Present the CAB at the UN Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake (UNFSS+4) and COP30 (2025).
- Assess and strengthen the capacity of government institutions, including the National Committee for Food Systems and Nutrition, to effectively design, implement, and monitor multi-sectoral, climate-resilient, and gender-responsive plans and initiatives for transforming food systems.
- Update the Food Systems National Pathways and NDCs, taking into consideration the outcomes of the UNFSS+4 Stocktake and the CAB (2025).
- Develop bankable financing proposals and partnership strategies for food systems transformation and climate action, ensuring safe and nutritious food and shift to healthy and sustainable consumption patterns (2026).
- Develop a database/platform to map the existing initiatives to avoid duplication of work and promote shared learning (2026).
- Conduct a study on investment environment to enable sustainable and responsible engagement of private sector in food systems transformation initiatives.
- Integrate the CAB elements into the implementation of Egypt Joint SDG Fund projects. “Strengthening Sustainable and Resilient Food and Nutrition Systems in Egypt for SDG Acceleration”.
- Develop a broad National School Feeding Strategy to expand the coverage of school feeding with the objective of improving nutrition and enhancing health.
- Issue the Code of Marketing of breast milk substitutes.
- Generate evidence to inform integrated, climate resilient and gender responsive food systems plans and policy decisions, and to develop programs to raise public awareness on food systems challenges and behavior changes.

Medium Term (2026-2030):

- Development of climate food and nutrition local plans and budgets.
- Develop a national anticipatory action system based on climate early warning data.
- Review the national subsidy system to ensure its alignment of food systems, food security and climate action objectives.
- Present necessary legislation to the Parliament to support food systems climate action convergence, including discouraging the consumption of unhealthy food.
- Mainstream CAB in all policies and strategies and develop sector-level CAB strategies.

Long Term (2030-2040):

- Achieve sustainable equitable, healthy and resilient food systems.
- Achieve the SDG2 food security and nutrition related indicators.
- Deploy digital tools and climate-smart technologies tailored to Egyptian needs.
- Achieve carbon neutrality.

PILLAR IV: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The objective is to strengthen, enhance or develop monitoring systems that can track progress on convergence actions, and to reduce risks and damages of climate.

Building on the existing mechanisms developed by the Ministry of Planning, Economic Development, and International Cooperation, and using national indicators related to SDGs, the Convergence Group will develop a robust monitoring and evaluation system in line with Egypt's strategy. The development of the monitoring system will be supported by the Food Systems Coordination Hub.

Efforts will be devoted to strengthening institutional and technical capacity for monitoring and evaluation through systematic training programs while developing transparent information-sharing mechanisms that enable effective cross-stakeholder learning and adaptation.

The system will deploy integrated digital solutions and AI-based data management systems to streamline data collection, analysis, and reporting processes, ensuring timely and accurate tracking of progress across all intervention areas.

The Monitoring and Evaluation and knowledge systems may consider aspects such as:

- **Develop an integrated food systems and climate vulnerability dashboard**, linking data on agriculture, health, environment, and nutrition based on the integration of climate and food interlinkages into climate vulnerability and adaptation assessments.
- **Early Warning Systems**: Develop community-based, climate-informed early warning systems with strong multisectoral coordination to anticipate and respond to shocks.
- **Food security and food safety monitoring** for the local population.
- **Monitoring and Evalutation Unit**: Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) unit to track NDC implementation across climate, agriculture, and water sectors.
- **Integrated Monitoring**: Develop convergence indicators and a digital platform to track progress on food, climate and health goals.
- **Resilience Measurement**: Adapt resilience tools such as RIMA to assess vulnerability and adaptive capacity.
- **Feedback & Learning**: Create feedback loops for adaptive learning and continuous improvement of national strategies.
- **Evidence-Based Decision-Making**: Strengthen the G2G platform to enhance coordination and strategy oversight at national and local levels.
- **Develop climate-food Convergence KPIs** (e.g., GHG reduction in agriculture, food loss reduction, percentage of local climate-smart produce in school feeding) and integrate them in reporting systems (e.g., SDGs, NDCs, Egypt Vision 2030, and others).