

Legislative framework for a Union sustainable food system

**Expert Group meeting
12 July 2023**

**Unit E.1,
Farm to Fork strategy,
DG SANTE**

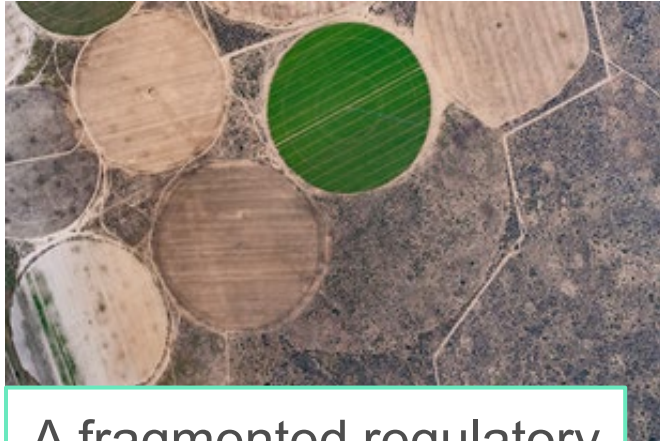
European Union



State of play

1. Co-Lead DGs: SANTE, AGRI, ENV and MARE
2. Impact Assessment is being finalised
3. Adoption planned for Q3 2023
4. Extensive consultation, workshops and targeted surveys were carried out in 2022

What are the problems?



A fragmented regulatory approach towards sustainability, hindering the functioning of the internal market and the free circulation of products



Making healthy and sustainable choices remains too complicated



Food system actors do not systematically carry out sustainable operations

Objectives of the Framework Law

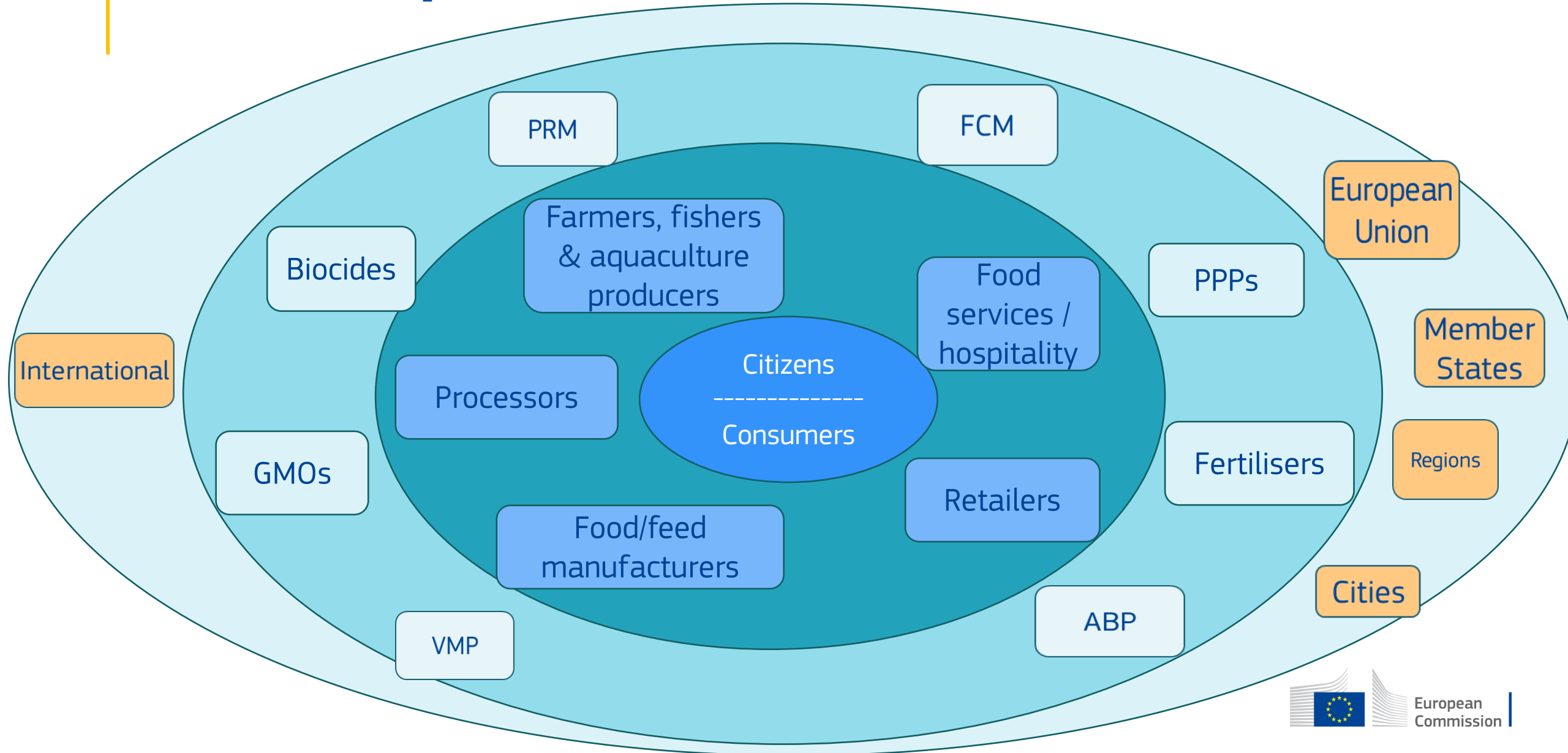
Overarching objective:
to improve the functioning of the internal market, in a manner that enables the systemic changes needed by all actors for the transition to a resilient and sustainable EU food system

Strengthen the coherence of EU food system law, by mainstreaming a harmonised approach to sustainability in all food-system policies

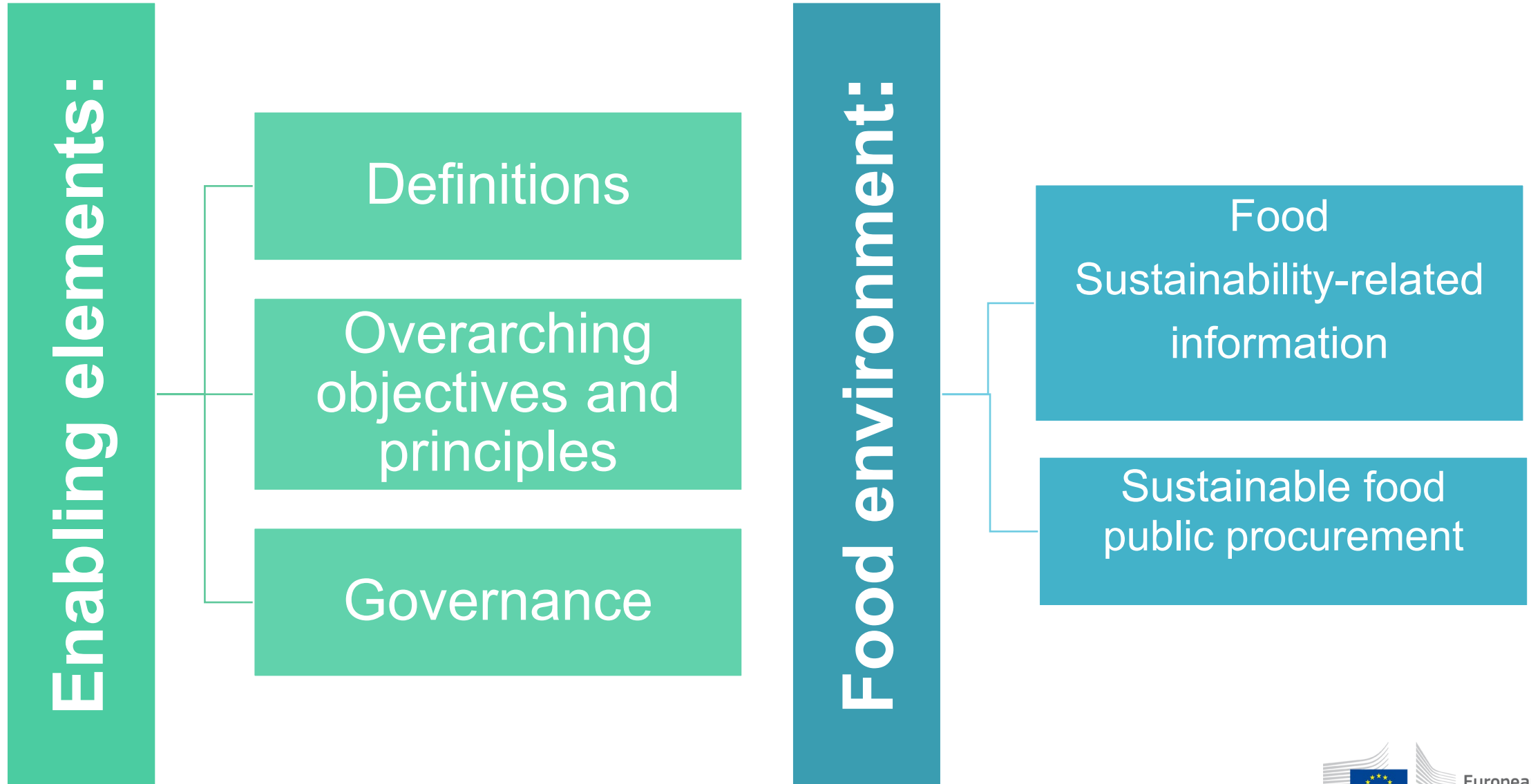
Facilitate sustainable choices by food system actors and establish a favourable and transparent food environment

Incentivise food related operations to become increasingly sustainable

Broad scope



General architecture of the FSFS



Sustainability (inspired by FAO definition)

“ Means the process of fulfilling the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations’ it consists of three interconnected dimensions: environmental, social (including health) and economic. ”

Environmental dimension of sustainability

Means all aspects relating to climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, the sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources, the transition to a circular economy, pollution prevention and control and the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Should further aspects be covered by this dimension?

Social dimension of sustainability

Means all aspects that pertain to healthy diets including food safety aspects, animal health, welfare and plant health, responsible business practices, fair employment.

Should further aspects be covered by this dimension?

Economic dimension of sustainability

Means all aspects that pertain to a fair distribution of returns and other impacts across the food system.

Should further aspects be covered by this dimension?

Food system (inspired by FAO definition)

“ Means the entire range of actors and their related activities involved in the production, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries and aquaculture and food system inputs [including the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded] ”

Food system law

“ Means the laws, and administrative provisions governing the food system in general and the sustainability of the food system in particular, whether at Union or national level [including food law]; it covers any stage of production, processing, distribution, [use], consumption and disposal of food system products ”

Food environment

“ Means the context in which consumers engage with the food system to make their decisions about acquiring, preparing, consuming [and disposing] food; it includes – but it is not limited to – the physical and digital places where food is made available and their accessibility; the characteristics of the products and the relevant food system inputs used; factors influencing food desirability, including marketing and advertising; the consumers’ personal characteristics ”

Sustainable diets

“ Means diets that are of adequate quantity and quality to achieve optimal growth and development of all individuals and support functioning and physical, mental and social wellbeing, protective and respectful of the environment, *[biodiversity and ecosystems]*; culturally acceptable; accessible, economically fair and affordable; safe and health-promoting and disease-preventing, providing adequacy, without excess of nutrients and health-promoting substances from nutritious foods and contributing to food security *[and to healthy life]* for present and future generations ”

What are your views about these definitions?

Sustainability objectives for « food system law »

- Illustrative list

Environment

- **Climate change** mitigation and adaptation;
- Sustainable use and protection of **land, soil, air and water**
- Protection and conservation of **aquatic resources**
- Transition to a **circular economy**, including **food loss and food waste** reduction
- **Pollution** prevention and control
- Protection and enhancement of **biodiversity and ecosystems**
- **Other?**

Social

- High level of **animal health and welfare and plant health**
- Promotion of **sustainable diets**, ensuring **the right of people, including vulnerable groups, to a food environment** that provides and promotes access to such diets.
- **Contribution to decent work and** adequate living standards, inclusive and sustainable communities and societies;
- Preservation of **cultural and food heritage**
- **Other?**

Economic

- **Contribution to a fair distribution of returns** across the food system, in particular by ensuring a **fair price** for SMEs (including farmers, aquaculture producers and fishers);
- **Transparency and accountability** across the supply chain;
- **Responsible business practices**, including in marketing in advertising
- **Other?**

What are your views about these objectives?
Are there other objectives of food system law to be considered?

Sustainability principles for «policy makers»– Illustrative list

- Food security
- Do no significant harm
- Fairness and just transition
- Collaboration and public engagement
- One Health
- Transparency
- Circularity
- Innovation
- Other?

What are your views about these principles?
Are there other principles that should underpin food
system law at Union level?

Governance

What is the aim?

1. Encourage and support MS in the development of enabling food environments to improve access to sustainable food
2. Stimulate participative processes at national, regional and local level
3. Share good practices at EU level by connecting national, regional and local experiences

On-going reflection?

1. **Monitoring framework on food environments** to improve and share the knowledge and related policies across MS
2. **EU network of local and regional Food Councils** or similar organisations, with the aim to share experiences across MS
3. Recommend MS to establish **Food Councils at national and, where appropriate, at regional and local level**

Food Sustainability-related information

- Govern the provision of sustainability-related information to consumers on foods to empower consumers to make sustainable food choices and to incentivize food business operators to improve progressively the sustainability of their food products.

Sustainable food public procurement

- Market-based tool to improve the availability and price of food sustainably produced and promote sustainable diets in institutional catering, by raising awareness and know-how and through establishment of minimum mandatory criteria.

Thank you



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