



# World Food Forum

## Global Youth Action Plan 2025–2026

*Version 1.0*



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Cover image

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# About the World Food Forum

The World Food Forum (WFF) was launched in 2021 as an independent network of partners hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It serves as the premier global platform to actively shape agrifood systems for a better food future, accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through youth action, science and innovation, and investment, the WFF forges new paths of action and multi-sector partnerships for agrifood impact at the local, regional and global levels to achieve a more sustainable, resilient, inclusive and hunger-free food future for all.

Within this framework, WFF Global Youth Action was established to harness the passion and power of youth, and to incite positive action for agrifood systems through youth empowerment. It acts as a catalytic movement and driver of youth engagement in food governance, and serves as a knowledge center and innovation lab, fostering and inspiring youth-led solutions. It thus actively contributes to the implementation of the UN Youth 2030 Strategy and enhances youth engagement in the follow-up to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.

WFF Global Youth Action is implemented through a set of thematic programmes that leverage intergenerational and cross-sectoral collaboration around Policy, Innovation, Education, Culture and Local Action.

All year-long activities of WFF Global Youth Action culminate in an annual flagship event, which harnesses intergenerational collaboration, as well as partnerships and action across policy, science, innovation, education, culture and investment.

# About the WFF Youth Assembly

The Youth Assembly is a year-round, open and inclusive platform where youth entities, organizations, and constituencies unite to co-create and discuss key policy topics. Through a variety of sessions—ranging from regional policy dialogues to global consultations—the Assembly fosters collective action on issues related to agrifood systems, sustainability and the broader objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Co-created by passionate youth leaders and led by the WFF Youth Policy Board (YPB), the Youth Assembly brings together young individuals, youth entities, organizations and constituencies to discuss specific issues within agrifood systems and develop joint recommendations or solutions.

The Youth Assembly builds a unique bridge between youth-driven insights and global policy frameworks. Through intergenerational dialogues, the Assembly ensures that young voices are heard and that their perspectives are incorporated into policy recommendations produced by the YPB. This is especially crucial as the world faces growing challenges such as climate change, food insecurity and social inequalities, all of which disproportionately affect younger generations.

In 2021, the WFF Youth Assembly and its YPB, formerly known as the Focal Points Group, drafted the WFF Youth Action Compendium 2021 Edition, which consolidated the perspectives of young people on the urgent need to transform our agrifood systems globally. In 2022, the YPB identified and drafted regional policy recommendations that were compiled into the WFF Youth Action Regional Compendium 2022.

Throughout 2023 and early 2024, efforts focused on identifying region-specific agrifood systems challenges through youth consultations, along with corresponding solutions to create specific and measurable impact pathways for the future. To facilitate this, the 24 members of the 2024–2025 YPB cohort from six regions – Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, LAC, the NENA, and North America – have been convening stakeholders to refine and develop the regional policy priorities and further transform them into the actions found within this document.

# About the WFF Youth Policy Board

Comprising 24 diverse members from across the globe, the YPB is tasked with providing strategic, youth-led direction for the policy activities carried out through the Youth Assembly. By coordinating regional efforts and leading the development of youth policy positions, the YPB ensures that young people are empowered to engage with critical issues related to agrifood systems and that their voices are included in key international dialogues and events.

Central to the YPB's role is its responsibility to oversee the creation of policy recommendations based on inclusive global and regional consultations with youth groups. These recommendations serve as the foundation for WFF activities throughout the year and guide the Assembly's outputs. YPB members actively participate in drafting these outcome documents, ensuring that the priorities and perspectives of young people are reflected in the broader policy discourse.

In addition to shaping the WFF's youth policy agenda, the YPB plays a vital role in fostering collaboration among youth, facilitating their engagement with global food and agriculture issues, and advocating for the transformation of agrifood systems. By leading this work, the YPB guarantees that youth voices are central to shaping a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient future for global agrifood systems.

The YPB not only serves as the governing body for youth policy-making within the WFF, but it also plays a crucial role in leading the consultations that shape the WFF Global Youth Action Plan 2025–2026. As the driving force behind these consultations, YPB members engage youth from diverse regions to ensure that the perspectives of young people are central to global agrifood transformation. These consultations provide an inclusive platform for young leaders to discuss regional challenges, identify policy priorities and propose actionable solutions, all of which form the foundation of the Global Youth Action Plan.

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# Acknowledgements

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This working draft was prepared by the following YPB members: YPB co-chair Mikayla Hyland-Wood (Australia), YPB co-chair Audrey Wong (United States of America), Gabriel Adami (Brazil), Zack Ahmed (Kenya), Hanin Aljifri (Saudi Arabia), Marilena Bachmeier (Germany), Selma Bichbich (Algeria), Treasa Cadogan (Ireland), María José Cervantes Calderón (Costa Rica), Alessandro Cavaliere (Italy), Jennifer Eloundou (Cameroon), Mohammed A. Mahjoub (Libya), Chemora McKnee (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Elif Menderes (Türkiye), Seth Charles Mkisi (United Republic of Tanzania), Andile Mnguni (South Africa), Osman Naqvi (Canada), Daniel Valdovinos Pérez (Mexico), George Platt (United Kingdom), Eduard Rostomyan (Armenia), Joko Tri Rubiyanto (Indonesia), Sara Kate Smith (Canada), Vikrant Srivastava (India), Shreyaa Venkat (United States of America), Nada Zammel (Tunisia) and Yuhan Zheng (China).

# Abbreviations

- World Food Forum (WFF)
- Youth Policy Board (YPB)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (GIYC)
- Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)
- Near East and North Africa (NENA)

# Abstract

The WFF Global Youth Action Plan 2025–2026 acts as a two-year blueprint to guide the activities of the YPB, the Youth Assembly Secretariat and relevant stakeholders. The plan provides an overview of each region’s challenges and identified policy priorities, coupled with an action plan to address these challenges in alignment with the policy priorities. It details the methodology undertaken by each region during their consultations, the refined policy priorities based on the consultations, the proposed solutions and the relevant actions that would make these tangible. In addition, each region delineates a call to action to engage policymakers, scientists, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, farmers, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, the private sector, youth leaders and advocates, and other relevant youth stakeholders to help transform the policies into action.

# Executive Summary

REGION	POLICY PRIORITY	ACTIONABLE ITEMS
Africa	<i>Support smallholder families, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth farmers by enhancing their capacities through targeted training and workshops on digital technologies, strengthening partnerships with research institutions and promoting climate-smart agriculture.</i>	<p><b>Actionable Item 1</b> Enhance Skills in Digital Technologies and Preserve Traditional Knowledge</p> <p><b>Actionable Item 2</b> Advocate for Inclusive Policies that Support Agrifood Systems Transformation</p>
Asia and the Pacific	<i>Invest in and promote the production, accessibility and consumption of safe and nutritious food for healthy diets by educating stakeholders, offering capacity development tools and enhancing their understanding of the interconnected challenges within agrifood systems.</i>	<p><b>Actionable Item 1</b> Increase Awareness and Knowledge on Better Nutrition and Food Labeling Literacy</p> <p><b>Actionable Item 2</b> Support Skill Development for Sustainable Food Production Policies and Practices</p>
Europe and Central Asia	<i>Increase youth involvement across various fields and positions within the supply chain by fostering local collaborations. These efforts will focus on reducing food loss throughout the supply chain, while also promoting youth participation in rural development initiatives.</i>	<p><b>Actionable Item 1</b> Enhance Knowledge and Awareness on Food Loss in Western Europe</p> <p><b>Actionable Item 2</b> Champion Youth Voices in Rural Communities in Decision-Making Processes in Eastern Europe and Central Asia</p>

REGION	POLICY PRIORITIES	ACTIONABLE ITEMS
Latin America and the Caribbean	<i>Support the dissemination of knowledge on finance, credit and funding to diverse rights holders while preserving, acknowledging and sharing Indigenous knowledge to support agroecology and local and nature-based solutions for the conservation of biological diversity and climate change mitigation.</i>	<p><b>Actionable Item 1</b> Promote Mechanisms to Improve Access to Finance for Youth</p> <p><b>Actionable Item 2</b> Facilitate Multistakeholder Partnerships and Intergenerational Knowledge Sharing for Sustainable Agrifood Systems</p>
Near East and North Africa	<i>Improve life and work conditions for rural people, particularly social minorities in agrifood systems, by promoting environmentally and socially-friendly practices in agriculture.</i>	<p><b>Actionable Item 1</b> Develop a Collaborative Platform for Agricultural Innovation for Young Farmers</p> <p><b>Actionable Item 2</b> Promote Accessible Education for Sustainable Agriculture Practices</p>
North America	<i>Promote a timely and sustainable transition towards a closed-loop food supply chain that minimizes waste and maximizes resource efficiency by confronting policy and implementation barriers within university settings, identifying cross-functional solutions and leveraging existing research and experiences to drive youth-led impact.</i>	<p><b>Actionable Item 1</b> Enhance Knowledge and Engage North American Youth in Learning about the Food Waste Hierarchy</p> <p><b>Actionable Item #2</b> Establish an Indigenous Advisory Circle</p>



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# 1. Africa

## 1.1. Background and overview

Agriculture is a crucial pillar for livelihoods and economies across Africa, yet the continent remains particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, despite contributing minimally to its causes. The agricultural sector holds immense potential, especially for Africa's youth who are projected to make up 42 percent of the global youth population by 2030 (UN DESA, 2015).

In Africa, this youthful demographic is driving the transformation of digital agriculture. However, as identified through previous consultations, significant barriers persist, preventing this transformation from being inclusive, particularly for marginalized groups. Addressing the low levels of access to digital tools and skills among the population – especially among women, youth and marginalized communities – is essential.

In 2022, key themes identified for the region included strengthened partnerships and connections among stakeholders, incentivizing environmentally and socially friendly practices, supporting marginalized communities, and investing in resilient, nature-positive agrifood systems. Building on these themes, the YPB in 2023 prioritized advancing climate-smart agricultural practices to combat resource depletion and environmental degradation, while also amplifying the voices of farmers who are having to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. These initiatives set a strong foundation for 2024, with a focus on bridging the gap between traditional agricultural practices and modern digital innovations to ensure a prosperous and environmentally sustainable future for African agriculture.

The integration of digital tools, such as mobile platforms, remote sensing and data-driven decision-making, presents an opportunity to empower marginalized groups by improving their access to resources and market insights. Therefore, the region's goal for 2024 is to enhance the inclusion of smallholder farmers, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth by leveraging digital technologies and strengthening resource access to improve productivity, sustainability and resilience.

## 1.2. Methodology

In 2023, the Africa regional consultation discussed the need for investment in resilient and nature-positive agrifood systems. The challenges identified during this consultation helped frame the discussions at the Africa Regional Youth Assembly held during the 2023 WFF flagship event under five thematic areas: enabling policies, education and capacity development, transition packages, market access, and land tenure and rights.

2024 consultations which engaged over 565 participants:

- First Regional Youth Assembly session on 27 July 2024;
- Second Regional Youth Assembly session on 7 September 2024;
- Youth stakeholder survey, "Empowering voices in agrifood systems", held from 23 July to 30 September 2024;
- Roundtable consultation with young farmers on 10 October 2024;
- Roundtable consultations with the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (GIYC) during the WFF flagship event on 15 and 17 October 2024;
- Regional Youth Assembly at the WFF flagship event on 15 October 2024;
- Roundtable consultation with young parliamentarians at the WFF flagship event on 16 October 2024.

Key consultation takeaways:

- Improved digital connectivity and training programmes have begun to enhance agricultural productivity and market connectivity in rural areas, empowering farmers and marginalized groups.
- Increased support from digital platforms and farmer cooperatives is helping smallholder farmers connect with reliable markets, access agricultural inputs and secure sustainable financial services, leading to increased incomes.

- The integration of traditional farming techniques with modern digital agriculture solutions is enhancing productivity and resilience.
- Initiatives involving youth and women in leadership roles are fostering more equitable participation and inclusive decision-making in agrifood systems.

### 1.3. Policy priorities

Based on the work conducted in 2023 and further refined through various consultations in 2024, the following policy priority was selected by the region: ***Support smallholder families, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth farmers by enhancing their capacities through targeted training and workshops on digital technologies, strengthening partnerships with research institutions and promoting climate-smart agriculture.***

### 1.4. Key gaps identified

The Regional Assembly has identified the following gaps hindering the transformation of policy into action:

- Barriers to digital inclusion, along with inadequate infrastructure and training, continue to cause significant challenges for rural farmers in accessing digital technologies and resources. This limits their ability to modernize practices and connect with larger markets.
- Limited technological adaptation remains a significant gap, hindering rural development and weakening resilience against climate-related challenges.
- Fragmented agricultural networks prevent smallholder farmers from accessing crucial information, market opportunities and sustainable financial systems. This hinders their ability to scale operations effectively, leaving them vulnerable to economic instability.
- Insufficient political commitment and weak institutional backing have resulted in minimal progress in developing and promoting policies that support youth and women in agriculture, leaving marginalized groups without the necessary frameworks to thrive in the sector.

## 1.5. Actionable items

To close the gaps, the YPB members from Africa have identified the following actionable items. The Africa Regional Youth Action Plan will be launched with the support of WFF National Chapters, with plans for future expansion. Following the initial phase, they will begin discussions to explore new opportunities in other locales, starting with French-speaking countries. This approach aims to broaden their impact, fostering collaboration and growth across different regions as they work to scale and enhance our initiatives.

### Actionable item #1 | Enhance skills in digital technologies and preserve traditional knowledge

The representatives of the region seek to develop and provide free capacity development opportunities for smallholder farmers, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth through:

#### **Training on agricultural technologies and farm management**

- Work with local organizations to develop demonstration programmes that teach participants how to integrate technologies into their day-to-day farming practices through practical, hands-on workshops.

#### **Training on the usage of digital platforms**

- Partner with existing programmes to ensure youth have access to education on digital marketing and e-commerce, specifically focused on utilizing digital platforms to sell produce directly to consumers or businesses.

#### **Facilitating intergenerational knowledge exchange**

- Strengthen youth networks by organizing virtual intergenerational dialogues through regular meetups, online discussions and peer-learning initiatives. These will foster informal cross-generational mentorship and share knowledge on agroforestry, crop rotation and organic farming practices.

#### **Advocacy for technology access**

- Collaborate with institutions to assess the level of technology access in rural areas and develop an advocacy plan to promote increased access for underserved regions.

#### **Expected impact**

- Increased capacities of participants to optimize planting, irrigation, crop protection and access micro-financing through mobile platforms;

- Empowerment of participants with hands-on knowledge and digital skills to enhance their agricultural productivity;
- Enablement of young farmers to make informed business decisions based on real-time agricultural data.

## **Actionable Item #2 | Advocate for inclusive policies that support agrifood systems transformation**

The representatives seek to engage young leaders and policymakers in shaping inclusive policies for smallholder farmers, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth that support agrifood systems transformation by:

### **Advocating for inclusive policies**

- Engage with existing youth policy advocacy fellowships and programmes to offer workshops on policy negotiation and youth representation in national decision-making fora to their participants.

### **Promoting knowledge of financial systems**

- Partner with non-governmental organizations to conduct workshops on budgeting, financial management and credit-building tailored to agricultural contexts, empowering youth and women farmers to navigate financial systems.

### **Providing policy advocacy training**

- Collaborate with experts, universities and organizations to deliver workshops on leadership and policy advocacy, equipping participants with the skills to advocate for policy changes effectively.
- Host policy roundtable discussions and webinars that bring together youth, women, Indigenous leaders and policymakers to address gaps in agrifood policies and propose actionable solutions.

### **Expected impact**

- Prioritization of digital transformation within agrifood systems;
- Development of inclusive agrifood policies;
- Increased access to knowledge on microloans, subsidies and grants.

## 1.6. Timeline

### ACTIONABLE ITEM 2 ACTIONABLE ITEM 1

	Q4   2024	Q1   2025	Q2   2025	Q3   2025	Q4   2025	Q1   2026	Q2   2026
	Begin planning and drafting capacity-building workshops.	Initiate capacity-building workshops for smallholder farmers, youth, and Indigenous peoples.	Begin cross-generational mentorships that integrate traditional knowledge with modern practices.	Start planning on the expansion of digital training to new regions based on feedback from Q1 and Q2 initiatives.	Assess programme impact and gather feedback through post-training surveys. Publish findings and adjust strategy.	Scale up the program by fostering partnerships with universities and tech providers.	Review and finalize documentation of lessons learned, with a long-term implementation strategy.
	Initiate advocacy efforts and policy roundtable discussions with different stakeholder groups.	Launch advocacy campaigns for microloan programmes and financial accessibility for marginalized groups.	Develop and implement policy advocacy training for young leaders.	Host fora for youth and marginalized communities to present policy recommendations.	Review advocacy efforts and adjust strategies.	Begin advocating inclusive agrifood policies. Focus on integrating smallholders into larger supply chains and digital platforms.	Complete final assessment of advocacy impacts. Submit policy recommendations for scaling inclusive agricultural policies.



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## 2. Asia and the Pacific

### 2.1. Background and overview

The Asia and the Pacific region represents half of the world's malnourished population and severe food insecurity, with more women than men being food insecure (FAO, 2023). Factors including conflict, COVID-19 and climate change have exacerbated these statistics, with 55 million more people facing food insecurity now than in 2019 (Elbehri, A. *et al.*, 2022). These issues are compounded by the rising cost of a healthy diet, reliance on processed and imported foods, and lack of sufficient and effective investment, driving inequities in the production, accessibility and consumption of safe, healthy and sustainable food.

In 2022, the key themes identified for the Asia and the Pacific region through a compendium analysis included promoting the production and consumption of safe, healthy and sustainable food, establishing inclusive, healthy and sustainable feeding programmes, and ensuring policies and innovations that support and benefit smallholders, families, Indigenous Peoples and young farmers.

Building on this and through additional consultations, in 2024, the YPB members from Asia and the Pacific refined the focus of the region to encourage investment in and promotion of safe, healthy and sustainable food production, consumption and access in the region, taking into account regional and cultural diversities.

## 2.2. Methodology

The Regional Youth Assembly sessions in 2023 and the survey “Voice Up Youth Voices” identified primary challenges, including the high cost of healthy diets and nutritious foods (making them less accessible for many), a lack of awareness about what constitutes healthy foods, difficulty in distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy food options, and limited availability of healthy food choices in local contexts.

2024 consultations which engaged over 445 participants:

- First Regional Youth Assembly on 27 April 2024;
- Second Regional Youth Assembly on 31 August 2024;
- Youth stakeholder survey, 'WFF Asia and the Pacific Regional Youth Action Survey', held from 18 July to 30 September 2024;
- Roundtable consultation with young farmers on 10 October 2024;
- Roundtable consultations with the GIYC at the WFF flagship event on 15 and 17 October 2024;
- Regional Youth Assembly at the WFF flagship event on 16 October 2024
- Roundtable consultation with young parliamentarians at the WFF flagship event on 16 October 2024.

Key consultation takeaways:

- Significant challenges are hindering youth from taking action towards more sustainable agrifood systems transformation and healthy diets. A lack of capacity development, limited education and insufficient funding are major barriers.
- The incorporation of local and traditional foods into modern diets is becoming a growing area of interest to support domestic food security and preserve traditional knowledge.
- There is a pressing need for targeted support to empower young people to transform their diets and actively participate in policy discussions.
- Collaboration across youth organizations, government bodies and educational institutions is essential for addressing these challenges and enabling young leaders to thrive in the agrifood sector.

## 2.3. Policy priorities

Based on the work conducted in 2023 and further refined through various consultations in 2024, the following policy priority was selected:

***Invest in and promote the production, accessibility and consumption of safe and nutritious food for healthy diets by educating stakeholders, offering capacity development tools and enhancing their understanding of the interconnected challenges within agrifood systems.***

## 2.4. Key gaps identified

The Regional Assembly has identified the following gaps hindering the transformation of policy into action:

- Funding constraints hinder sustainable food programmes, which limits the ability of youth to participate effectively in agrifood systems.
- There is a lack of comprehensive training and awareness beyond basic nutrient needs, exacerbating disparities and highlighting the urgent need for reforms that provide equitable learning opportunities for youth.
- Progress is hindered by difficulties in accessing and engaging small rural villages and stakeholders, indicating a disconnect between traditional agrifood systems and contemporary sustainability goals.
- Limited access to education on sustainable practices exacerbates disparities, emphasizing the necessity for a more integrated approach to agrifood systems transformation.
- Sustainable food approaches are not sufficiently adapted to the wide variety of diets and culinary practices, which hinders their relevance and effectiveness in different communities.
- The diversity of food cultures across the Asia and Pacific region presents a significant challenge, necessitating localized sustainable solutions tailored to specific contexts.
- Dialogues lack the inclusivity needed to recognize and respect diverse food cultures in order to promote sustainable practices and advocate for a holistic understanding of agrifood systems.

## 2.5. Actionable items

To close the gaps, the YPB members from the Asia and the Pacific region have identified the following actionable items, orienting each to a specific stakeholder group.

### Actionable item #1 | Increase awareness and knowledge on better nutrition and food labeling literacy

The YPB members of this region seek to involve educators, policymakers, local food producers, traditional practitioners and consumers in creating awareness about better nutrition practices and understanding of food labeling through:

#### Education and awareness

- Conduct workshops on “From awareness to action - Advocating for better food label literacy” and “Understanding food labels - Your key to healthier choices” that consist of understanding basic nutrition principles and labels on packaged foods, developed with inputs from nutritionists, public health experts and the GIYC to create sub-regionally accessible and locally relevant materials.
- Pair the workshops with advocacy campaigns in collaboration with local organizations, including groups recommended by WFF National Chapters and the GIYC, to raise awareness about safe, healthy and sustainable food consumption.

#### Policy engagement

- Work with youth and Indigenous advocacy groups and policymakers to promote standardized, accessible food labeling that highlights nutritional value, environmental impact, and sourcing transparency.
- Facilitate youth engagement in policy dialogues through the YPB by utilizing platforms such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other relevant fora. This includes organizing workshops, capacity-building sessions and forming partnerships with relevant multi-stakeholder groups to empower youth in food labeling and policymaking processes.

#### Expected impact

- Increased youth literacy on nutrition awareness and food labeling;
- Greater community engagement in safe, healthy and sustainable food consumption practices;

- Enhanced youth advocacy for transparent labeling policies and locally relevant food consumption.

## Actionable Item #2 | Capacity development for sustainable food production practices

The YPB members of this region seek to facilitate the development and implementation of training and advocacy programmes focused on sustainable food production policies and practices with young and Indigenous farmers, educators and communities through:

### Education and awareness

- Facilitate an accessible platform for youth to share experiences and knowledge about sustainable production practices to foster a collaborative learning environment and organize events that connect young leaders with experienced practitioners in the agrifood sector.
- Partner with the Youth Skills Hub and WFF Education activities to connect youth with grant opportunities for research and innovation in sustainable agrifood systems, such as the WFF Youth Food Lab, the WFF Transformative Research Challenge and other competitions.

### Policy engagement

- Collaborate with educational institutions and local organizations to enhance practical knowledge and skills on sustainable food production policies and practices and traditional food systems, including developing resource materials with relevant stakeholders.
- Work with educational institutions and organizations to integrate sustainability concepts into existing curricula across various disciplines, ensuring a holistic understanding of agrifood systems and promoting interdisciplinary research.

### Expected impact

- Improved knowledge sharing and collaboration on sustainable food policies and practices among young leaders in the agrifood sector;
- Strengthened research capacities and innovation in sustainable agrifood systems;
- Enhanced access to financial support for youth initiatives in sustainable agriculture.

## 2.6. Timeline

	Q4   2024	Q1   2025	Q2   2025	Q3   2025	Q4   2025	Q1   2026	Q2   2026
ACTIONABLE ITEM 1	Start initial planning of two masterclasses. Conduct two masterclasses on "Better Nutrition and Food Labeling Literacy."	Expand masterclass findings to subregions/ WFF National Chapters and local communities.	Develop regionally accessible materials for youth and youth organizations.	Increase advocacy efforts through social media, on sustainable consumption practices collaborating with the WFF communications team.	Expand partnerships with institutions/ youth organizations to implement long-term learning programs on food labeling.	Publish outcomes from youth and community engagement events.	Evaluate campaign success and plan further initiatives.
ACTIONABLE ITEM 2	Start initial planning on training materials and engagement methods on sustainable food production policies and practices.	Map relevant stakeholders and conceptualize the transition from food label training to broader agrifood systems interpretation.	Collaborate with WFF National Chapters in designing a workshop on sustainable food production policies and practices.	Run workshops on sustainable food production policies and practices.	Communicate and adapt the workshop findings into WFF National Chapters/ organizations.	Develop a social media campaign to showcase the results of the workshops to encourage youth involvement and scaling the initiative across the region.	Evaluate the workshop to improve planning and execution in the following years.



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## 3. Europe and Central Asia

### 3.1. Background and overview

Europe and Central Asia is a region characterized by a diverse agricultural landscape, from large-scale commercial farming to smallholder and family farms. This region faces distinct challenges due to climate change, resource limitations and rural poverty, which disproportionately affect young and Indigenous farmers, fishers and hunter gatherers.

In 2022, the Europe and Central Asia region identified food loss and waste; access to affordable quality education on nutritious, safe and sustainable food; the necessity of local markets; and the integration of traditional knowledge as areas for action. The WFF Youth Action Regional Compendium 2022 provides detailed policy recommendations aimed at promoting sustainable practices and supporting small-holder farmers, families, Indigenous Peoples (e.g. Inuit and Sámi) and young farmers.

These recommendations emphasized the establishment of knowledge-sharing hubs, the provision of regenerative farming techniques to equip young farmers with the tools to reduce food loss and waste as well as education and awareness raising initiatives to improve resilience within food supply chains.

As the global population is projected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050, a 70 percent increase in food supply will be required to address food security challenges (UN DESA, 2015) especially as climate change and limited resources continue to impact food production.

In the Europe and Central Asia region, FAO notes that food security challenges persist despite the region's strong agricultural productivity. This region will face significant pressure due to changing dietary patterns, climate change and limited natural resources (FAO et al., 2024). Reducing post-harvest losses is crucial, as it can enhance productivity, increase food security for farmers, improve economic performance and yield environmental benefits.

In 2023, the Europe and Central Asia YPB members focused their efforts on scaling up initiatives to reduce food loss and waste. They developed a youth consultation to highlight youth-led innovations, foster public-private partnerships and emphasize the role of legal frameworks in facilitating food recovery and redistribution. These discussions underscored the importance of regional cooperation and innovation in minimizing food loss through improved food packaging, storage, transportation.

In 2024, feedback from regional assemblies and consultations revealed a pressing need for broader strategies to tackle food loss through practical education and collaboration. In addition, the need to focus on the role and challenges of youth in rural areas was strongly expressed. Hence, as the region looks ahead, the policy priorities were refined to focus on establishing training and knowledge-sharing hubs aimed at addressing the systemic barriers faced by youth in the agrifood sectors.

## 3.2. Methodology

In September of 2023, the pre-Assembly focused on reducing food loss and looked at the formulation of policy recommendations, implementation strategies and proposing elements to harness education and community engagement. The Regional Youth Assembly held in October 2023 discussed food loss policies and frameworks, and called upon youth to engage in corresponding innovative initiatives.

2024 consultations which engaged over 325 participants:

- First Regional Youth Assembly on 20 July 2024;
- Second Regional Youth Assembly on 30 August 2024;
- Youth stakeholder survey, "Youth perspectives on tackling food loss in the agrifood supply chain", held from 20 September to 30 September 2024;

- Roundtable consultation with young farmers on 10 October 2024;
- Roundtable consultations with the GIYC at the WFF flagship event on 15 and 17 October 2024;
- Regional Youth Assembly at the WFF flagship event on 15 October 2024;
- Roundtable consultation with young parliamentarians at the WFF flagship event on 16 October 2024.

Key consultation takeaways:

- A broader focus on local action and intergenerational collaboration is needed.
- Age imbalances and village abandonment remain significant challenges, with young farmers on small family farms struggling to maintain their livelihoods due to post-harvest losses.
- Young professionals are key to driving sustainable agricultural innovations, with knowledge-sharing hubs and supporting youth-led startups identified as essential strategies.
- Collaboration between public, private and academic sectors is crucial for scaling sustainable solutions, and building resilient agrifood systems.
- An expansion of plant-based agriculture and adopting composting practices to reduce mineral fertilizer reliance and enhance soil health are crucial steps is needed, aligning with FAO's 2022–2031 recommendations for climate-resilient farming.
- Mobile technology innovations are essential for creating crisis-proof agrifood systems and supporting farmers.

### 3.3. Policy priorities

Based on the work that was conducted in 2023 and further refined through various consultations in 2024, the following policy priority was selected:

***Increase youth involvement across various fields and positions within the supply chain by fostering local collaborations. These efforts will focus on reducing food loss throughout the supply chain, while also promoting youth participation in rural development initiatives.***

### 3.4. Key gaps identified

The Regional Assembly has identified the following gaps hindering the transformation of policy into action:

- Systemic barriers, cultural norms and gaps in training, resources and access to mentorship hinder youth from fully participating in decision-making processes across all fields of the supply chain and scaling up innovations
- Insufficient awareness and local initiatives on food loss in the region and its implications on global and regional food security.
- Western Europe faces different challenges compared to rural and agricultural youth in Central Asia and the Caucasus.
- Indigenous youth and young farmers, fishers and hunter gatherers lack sufficient dialogue and recognition regarding autonomy and meaningful participation.
- Greater investment is needed to empower young leaders in sustainable farming and consumption, along with structural incentives for agribusiness to adopt sustainable practices.
- There is limited structured engagement with youth in Central Asia, where rural development initiatives are crucial.

### 3.5. Actionable items

To close the gaps, the YPB members from Europe and Central Asia have identified the following actionable items, orienting each to a specific stakeholder group. After various consultations and to be able to reflect the diversity of the region, the action plan has been divided into two regional action items, one for Western Europe and a second for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

## Actionable Item #1 | Enhance knowledge and awareness on food loss in Western Europe

The members of this region seek to encourage local initiatives on food loss, raise awareness in the region about this topic and create spaces for meaningful exchanges and consultations with Indigenous communities in the region through:

### Capacity development and partnership building

- Engage with WFF National Chapters in Western Europe to drive progress toward reducing food loss within production processes, from harvest to pre-retail stages, by prioritizing actions that prevent the disposal of food and ensure it remains within the supply chain for productive uses at the local level.
- Collaborate with the WFF National Chapters in Western Europe (e.g. Netherlands, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, Italy) to develop the capacity to identify and engage with key national, regional and subregional stakeholders – from agrifood industries to young farmers – to address food loss.

### Youth Assembly engagement and the identification of policy and advocacy opportunities

- Identify key entry points in policy processes and global, regional and national initiatives to advocate for food loss reduction by leveraging the networks and expertise of the WFF Youth Assembly.
- Ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous youth and historic Arctic communities in consultations, recognizing their traditional knowledge in sustainable food practices. This will include supporting the formation of an “Indigenous regional youth agrifood council” for the region that brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth with regular consultations, advisory functions and joint action statements.

### Awareness raising campaigns

- Develop regional social media campaigns by partnering with influencers and local and regional organizations for educational social media campaigns that inspire action on food loss reduction and fight miscommunication in agrifood systems. Engage with the FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium to use existing online platforms and tools.

- Create (in collaboration with the YPB and WFF National Chapters) a podcast series featuring young farmers, in which they discuss their challenges and solutions related to food loss to provide a platform for diverse youth voices to be heard.

### **Expected impact**

- Increased access to food loss reduction strategies for young and Indigenous farmers delivered through WFF National Chapters;
- Increased awareness in the region about food loss and its impact on food security and the environment;
- An increase in scalable, youth-driven innovations that address critical points of food loss in supply chains;
- A more tailored approach to including the perspectives, voices and influence of Indigenous youth towards achieving contextualized policy priorities in the region;
- Creation of a formalized advisory circle with European and Central Asian youth including youth from Indigenous backgrounds and developing food policy priorities around their underrepresented voices within the WFF.

### **Actionable Item #2 | Champion youth voices in rural communities in decision-making processes in Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

Acknowledging that the issues affecting youth in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are different challenges than those faced in Western Europe, members of the YPB seek to address context-specific issues of meaningful youth inclusion and brain drain in rural and agricultural-based communities in the region through:

#### **Amplification and connection of youth voices**

- Invite Eastern Europe and Central Asian youth leaders to co-design a Rural Champions programme overseen by Eastern Europe and Central Asia WFF National Chapters and the regional YPB.
- Encourage Rural Champions to actively promote their local rural cultures and community storytelling, and to counter the exodus of youth from agricultural spaces.

### **Capacity development with new WFF National Chapters**

- Form co-design partnerships with the WFF National Chapter in Uzbekistan and the FAO regional office for Europe and Central Asia to work towards leadership programmes for rural youth.
- Host a collaborative event with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the WFF at the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum and 43rd UNESCO General Conference in Uzbekistan promoting rural culture and agricultural storytelling in partnership with the Uzbekistan WFF National Chapter and the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum.
- Collaborate with WFF National Chapters and GIYC to ensure that Indigenous youth and young farmers are actively involved in co-designing the Rural Champion programme. Ensure their voices are central to initiatives that persevere rural heritage and counter the exodus of young people from agricultural spaces.

### **Expected impact**

- Enhanced attention and strengthened efforts to reduce brain drain in rural communities of Eastern Europe and Central Asia by fostering local awareness, personal development opportunities and community storytelling capabilities;
- Increased inclusion of youth voices in policy dialogues related to sustainable agrifood systems across Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
- Development of partnerships between Central Asian youth and their European counterparts as well as growing awareness of UN FAO regional priorities and tools;
- Increased affinities between the multilateral youth organizations and further collaboration between the WFF YPB and the UNESCO Youth Forum.

### 3.6. Timeline

#### ACTIONABLE ITEM 1

	Q4   2024	Q1   2025	Q2   2025	Q3   2025 - Q2   2026
	<p>Start discussing and developing the Food Loss Knowledge and Awareness Raising campaign with the regional WFF National Chapter representatives and start building partnerships.</p>	<p>Conduct regular consultations with WFF National Chapters and the Youth Assembly to identify context specific strategies for stakeholder mapping.</p> <p>Start consultations with GIYC (one consultation per month).</p> <p>Create terms of reference for Indigenous regional youth agrifood council and co-design session with the GIYC and YPB.</p>	<p>Design of a social media and podcast series featuring young farmers discussing food loss reduction and present it to the FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium.</p> <p>Identify national strategies and stakeholders on food loss and waste.</p> <p>Agree on a working plan for the Indigenous regional youth agrifood council and schedule an in-person meeting hosted by a FAO office, WFF National Chapter or Arctic youth network partner.</p>	<p>Roll out social media campaigns and podcast series (one every two months until mid- 2026).</p> <p>Propose jointly backed food policy priorities with the Indigenous regional youth agrifood council at 2025 WFF flagship event.</p> <p>Open applications for 2026 membership in the Indigenous regional youth agrifood council.</p>
	<p>Propose Central Asia Rural Champion programme to FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, and the Central Asia WFF National Chapters.</p>	<p>Discuss collaboration at the Uzbekistan-hosted 14th UNESCO Youth Forum in November 2025 with Uzbekistan National Chapter.</p>	<p>Recruit Rural Youth Champions through the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, the Central Asia WFF National Chapters and the FAO European Rural Youth Conference.</p>	<p>Appoint Rural Youth Champions in Central Asia and run a social media campaign to share rural heritage and culture stories in collaboration with the Central Asia WFF National Chapters.</p> <p>Co-host a YPB-UNESCO event at 14th UNESCO Youth Forum on rural youth champions and “Youth culture and agri-Culture”.</p>

#### ACTIONABLE ITEM 2



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## 4. Latin America and the Caribbean

### 4.1. Background and overview

The Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, one of the world's most biodiverse areas, has a rich agricultural heritage deeply rooted in Indigenous practices (UNDP, 2022). Youth across LAC play a crucial role in preserving this legacy through agroecology, which emphasizes genetic diversity, ecosystem resilience and the conservation of ancestral knowledge. These practices are essential for building sustainable, climate-resilient agrifood systems that address challenges like biodiversity loss, climate change and malnutrition. By championing these traditions, LAC youth are strengthening community resilience and ensuring the region's ecological and cultural wealth is sustained for future generations

In 2022, the YPB of LAC prioritized several key areas for investing in agrifood systems. These included innovative agroecological frameworks, support for marginalized and underprivileged communities, inclusive environmental education, recognition of traditional knowledge and the application of a food sovereignty approach to uphold the human right to food.

Following the launch of the WFF Youth Action Regional Compendium 2022, the YPB conducted consultations from 2023 to 2024 that highlighted various challenges facing the region. To address these challenges, they proposed the following solutions:

- Identifying and sharing successful examples and strategies of decentralized credit lines and plans is key to facilitating the full development of young people in both rural and urban areas;
- Comprehensive and cross-sectoral land reforms across all countries in LAC to guarantee equal land rights and access for all producers, especially young people, fostering a more equitable agrifood system; and
- Acknowledging the significance of ancestral, Indigenous and local knowledge to transform agrifood practices and raise awareness to support better techniques, encouraging these communities to address solutions on a global scale.

According to *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024* (FAO *et al.*, 2024) enhancing financial inclusion is crucial for achieving sustainable agrifood systems. While financing for food security can be scaled up through innovative instruments, marginalized groups often face significant barriers to accessing these financial services. This disparity can hinder not only women's social and economic empowerment but also the overall livelihoods of their households, including food security and nutrition outcomes. Thus, targeted policies and programmes that promote financial inclusion for vulnerable groups are essential to foster equitable participation in agrifood systems, ultimately contributing to the region's broader goals.

To promote the interconnection of the three Rio conferences, the youth of the region have emphasized the need to foster collaboration in tackling the triple planetary crisis – climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss – while enhancing the inclusion of policy inputs that promote these synergies, ultimately leading to more sustainable and inclusive development.

## 4.2. Methodology

The LAC region held an online youth pre-assembly in September 2023, in addition to the Regional Youth Assembly at the WFF flagship event in October 2023. The goals identified included increasing the adoption of agroecology and valuing ancestral knowledge.

2024 consultations which engaged over 405 participants:

- First Regional Youth Assembly on 17 July 2024;
- Second Regional Youth Assembly on 29 August 2024;
- Youth stakeholder survey held from 23 July to 30 September 2024;
- Roundtable consultation with young farmers on 10 October 2024;
- Roundtable consultations with the GIYC at the WFF flagship event on 15 and 17 October 2024;
- Regional Youth Assembly at the WFF flagship event on 15 October 2024;
- Roundtable consultation with young parliamentarians at the WFF flagship event on 16 October 2024.

Key consultation takeaways:

- The lack of access to information for decision-making is hindering producers from actively participating in local, national and international decision-making spaces.
- Underrepresented youth groups are inadequately included in decision-making and governance bodies, limiting their capacity to influence agricultural policies.
- Insufficient transparency in agricultural sector processes and decisions is creating distrust and reducing active participation.
- Young and small producers are facing challenges in acquiring or securing land ownership, compromising their ability to invest in long-term sustainable practices.
- Despite existing mechanisms designed to protect producers, such as insurance and support networks, their implementation remains deficient, lacking effective enforcement and economically viable solutions for sustainability.

### 4.3. Policy priorities

Based on the work conducted in 2023 and further refined through various consultations in 2024, the following policy priority was selected:

***Support the dissemination of knowledge on finance, credit and funding to diverse rights holders while preserving, acknowledging and sharing Indigenous knowledge to support agroecology and local and nature-based solutions for the conservation of biological diversity and climate change mitigation.***

## 4.4. Key gaps identified

The Regional Assembly has identified the following gaps hindering the transformation of policy into action:

- Rural and Indigenous youth struggle to access flexible financing necessary to support and scale up their projects, while regional funding for implementation and achieving results remains scarce or inefficient.
- The lack of conservation and recovery of native species (such as animals, insects, microorganisms and plants) related to agrifood ecosystems contributes to the loss of biodiversity and ancestral knowledge. There are few efforts to combine ancestral knowledge with modern agricultural practices, limiting the sustainability and resilience of the sector in the face of current challenges.
- Unsustainable agricultural practices and poor soil management are leading to a progressive deterioration of soil, water and ecosystem services, compromising agricultural productivity and the resilience of ecosystems.
- Young producers do not have access to the information they need to understand and take advantage of opportunities in agricultural markets, limiting their ability to compete and be sustainable.
- Agriculture and land-based jobs continue to be perceived as unattractive for young people due to a lack of awareness regarding innovation and technology development in the sector.
- The lack of adequate infrastructure in rural areas, such as roads, technology and basic resources (health, education, recreation), makes it difficult to attract and involve young professionals in the agricultural sector.
- The development and promotion of supportive policies for youth in the agricultural sector are limited due to a lack of political will and institutional backing.

## 4.5. Actionable items

To close the gaps, the YPB members from LAC have identified the following actionable items, orienting each to a specific stakeholder group.

## Actionable item #1 | Promote mechanisms to improve access to finance for youth

The YPB members in the region aim to advocate for increased access to financing mechanisms for young people by engaging with public entities, multilateral agencies, financial institutions, and youth and rural development organizations. This includes:

### Providing information about financing

- Develop a financial literacy capacity-building programme using a “training of trainers” approach and culturally appropriate communication materials for young people in agrifood systems to facilitate access to various sources of financing.

### Creating an Advocacy Plan

- Advocate for the development of incentive programmes and strategies compiled in the Transformative Pathways to Scale Local Solutions<sup>1</sup> to encourage young people to promote their sustainable, regenerative and agroecological agrifood production projects, and financial, multilateral and government entities to orient their strategies.
- Develop a multi-pronged approach to disseminate the findings of the initiative and enhance knowledge sharing to enable partnerships to develop accessible and comprehensible strategies for access to finance in LAC.

### Expected impact

- Improved dynamics and an enabling environment for the creation of strategic multi-stakeholder alliances while strengthening youth initiatives in the communities;
- Greater access for young people to financing networks, markets and investment funds for the implementation of sustainable and resilient projects;
- Strengthened youth capacities in terms of access to financing and project formulation;
- Expanded network of institutions, countries, cooperation agencies and multilateral organizations endorsing and supporting the Roadmap.

<sup>1</sup> “Transformative Pathways to Scale Local Solutions” is a YPB pilot initiative designed to help youth in Latin American and Caribbean agriculture overcome barriers to resources, knowledge, technology, and finance. It calls for stronger policy support to promote agroecology in line with regional goals and proposes actionable strategies for collaboration among youth, cooperatives, the private sector, and government to empower sustainable, inclusive agricultural transformations rooted in agroecological principles and local cultures.

## Actionable item #2 | Facilitate multistakeholder partnerships and intergenerational knowledge sharing for Sustainable agrifood systems

The YPB members of the region seek to establish and enhance strategic alliances among diverse stakeholders in the agrifood sector, including public and private entities, young entrepreneurs, producers and other rights holders to promote knowledge sharing and drive innovation by:

### Creating an awareness campaign

- Develop and execute an awareness campaign highlighting the importance of nature-based solutions, ancestral knowledge preservation, agroecology and other local solutions to raise awareness of the relevance of these actions and their link to climate governance through briefings, podcasts and social media content-sharing stories from the region.

### Hosting intergenerational dialogues

- Organize a series of pilot Intergenerational Dialogues where Indigenous and traditional communities share their ancestral knowledge with youth through storytelling sessions, practical demonstrations and discussions on integrating traditional methods into modern practices, which can be published on social media platforms and radio stations.

### Expected impact

- Increased inclusive participation of young people and strengthened social networks within the community;
- Facilitated co-creation of local solutions with young people tailored to community needs;
- Increased active participation of young people in the formulation and advocacy of public policies aimed at promoting local solutions;
- Increased awareness and access to information on ancestral practices and rescue of local knowledge among youth;
- Empowerment of youth through success stories of Indigenous community resilience.

## 4.6. Timeline

### ACTIONABLE ITEM 1

Q4   2024	Q1   2025	Q2   2025	Q3   2025	Q4   2025	Q1   2026	Q2   2026
<p>Identify mentors and partners (Indigenous and traditional communities, local associations, FAO Regional Office for LAC, local research institutions, graphic designers, etc.) for the capacity development programme.</p>	<p>Plan the first concept note of financial literacy capacity-building programme through the establishment of new partnerships.</p> <p>Connect with specialists that can provide technical and political knowledge to the “trainers for trainers” and financial literacy programmes.</p> <p>Partner with at least one country for each sub-region and three value chains in order to receive commitment to support actions.</p>	<p>Set the first draft of financial literacy capacity-building programme.</p>	<p>Implement the financial literacy capacity-building programme.</p> <p>Conduct outreach on the state of the call to actions of the Roadmap (social media, newsletter).</p> <p>Continue efforts to expand government, value-chain and organizational support through a call to action.</p>	<p>Launch the financial literacy capacity-building programme material.</p>	<p>Evaluate the financial literacy capacity-building programme (lessons learned and indicators).</p> <p>Run a social media campaign of the results of the financial literacy capacity-building programme</p>	<p>Develop a financial literacy capacity-building programme report.</p>

**ACTIONABLE ITEM 2**

Q4   2024	Q1   2025	Q2   2025	Q3   2025	Q4   2025	Q1   2026	Q2   2026
<p>Create an awareness campaign strategy highlighting the importance of nature-based solutions, ancestral knowledge preservation, agroecology and other local solutions.</p>	<p>Prepare the awareness campaign (creation of the social media cards, emails etc.).</p> <p>Plan and partner with LAC members of the GIYC to promote the pilot Intergenerational Dialogues.</p> <p>Plan the concept note of the pilot Intergenerational Dialogues in coordination with the GIYC.</p>	<p>Launch the social media awareness campaign.</p>	<p>Develop the concept note for a series of podcasts about topics related to the awareness campaign strategy with WFF National Chapters.</p> <p>Plan and partner with the WFF Young Scientists Group to develop outreach materials from the podcast stories.</p>	<p>Launch the pilot Intergenerational Dialogues in the GIYC.</p> <p>Create a compendium of the information gathered by the associations, organizations and other stakeholders that participated in the campaign.</p>	<p>Evaluate the pilot Intergenerational Dialogues (lessons learned and indicators).</p>	<p>Develop a report on the outcomes from the pilot Intergenerational Dialogues.</p>



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# 5. Near East and North Africa

## 5.1. Background and overview

The Near East and North Africa (NENA) region is characterized by a rich blend of agricultural diversity, socio-economic challenges and ethnic complexity. Agriculturally, it encompasses arid and semi-arid climates, which necessitate innovative water management and resilience cropping (De Boni et al., 2022) techniques due to scarce natural water resources (Belhassan, 2023, de Waal et al., 2023). Socio-economically, the region faces significant challenges, including high youth unemployment, economic disparities, and reliance on food imports, which can impact food security. Ethnically and culturally, the NENA region is diverse, hosting a variety of ethnic groups, languages, and dialects, with deep-rooted traditions that influence agricultural practices and community structures (Kinoti, 2024). Despite these challenges, NENA countries are actively working towards sustainable agriculture, enhanced food security, and inclusive socio-economic growth through policy reforms and community initiatives.

In 2022, the Youth Assembly drafted regional youth action policy compendia that would account for regional specificities, ensure better inclusivity in policy asks and set the foundation for future activities. The primary themes identified in the NENA region were the identification and scaling up of sustainable technologies, ecosystem conservation, social protection of marginalized communities, advance environmentally and socially friendly practices through education and collaboration, and investment in resilient agrifood systems.

In response to these pressing challenges, the YPB members focused their efforts on advancing environmentally and socially responsible agricultural practices through accessible education and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Ongoing consultations held through 2024 emphasized the importance of enhancing social protection for rural populations, particularly for marginalized communities within agrifood systems.

To effectively address these vulnerabilities, the region requires coherent, evidence-based policies that expand social protection systems and target the needs of the most vulnerable groups, including Indigenous Peoples. These policies should recognize and respect traditional knowledge and practices while ensuring equitable access to resources and support.

The YPB members from the NENA are committed to empowering young people to take an active role in shaping sustainable agriculture and food systems. This dedication is driven by a recognition of the critical need for inclusive and effective policy frameworks that reflect regional specificities.

## 5.2. Methodology

In 2023, a survey was launched to collect inputs from the students and youth groups across the region through multiple-choice questions and short-response prompts to understand the specific needs and challenges of promoting sustainable agrifood systems through educational institutions. A regional virtual consultation was also held to cover the thematic areas of multi-stakeholder awareness, fostering communication, access to knowledge and opportunities, and policy as a tool for change.

2024 consultations which engaged over 340 participants:

- First Regional Youth Assembly on 18 July 2024;
- Second Regional Youth Assembly (in collaboration with Politics4Her) on 30 August 2024;
- Third Regional Youth Assembly held on 27 September 2024 in Jordan at the RCOY MENA 2024;
- Youth stakeholder survey held from 13 August to 30 September 2024;
- Roundtable consultation with young farmers on 10 October 2024;

- Roundtable consultations with the GIYC at the WFF flagship event on 15 and 17 October 2024;
- Regional Youth Assembly at the WFF flagship event on 16 October 2024;
- Roundtable consultation with young parliamentarians at the WFF flagship event on 16 October 2024.

Key consultation takeaways:

- Youth-led innovations in rural empowerment and eco-friendly agricultural practices are showcasing the potential for sustainable development, particularly through technological solutions and social entrepreneurship.
- Recognition of the intersection between climate change, gender inequality, and food insecurity in the NENA region necessitates innovative, gender-responsive solutions.
- Increased emphasis on youth involvement in policy advocacy and accountability within agrifood systems is emerging as a key factor for driving change.

Currently, the YPB seeks to collaborate with WFF National Chapters in Qatar, Egypt and Mauritania. Plans are underway to establish more National Chapters across the NENA region in the coming year, expanding the WFF's reach and impact.

### 5.3. Policy priorities

Based on the work conducted in 2023 and further refined through various consultations in 2024, the following policy priority was selected:

***Improve life and work conditions for rural people, particularly social minorities in agrifood systems, by promoting environmentally and socially-friendly practices in agriculture.***

### 5.4. Key gaps identified

The Regional Assembly has identified the following gaps hindering the transformation of policy into action:

- Enhancing women's participation and promoting gender equality in the agricultural sector are crucial for overall progress.

- Limited access to resources (information, finance and land) remains a significant barrier for young people in agriculture and there is insufficient integration of technology with capacity development initiatives in rural communities.
- Specific needs of smallholder farmers, such as vulnerabilities to climate impacts, limited access to resources and reliance on traditional practices, must be addressed to develop effective solutions in the face of climate change.

## 5.5. Actionable items

To close the gaps, the YPB members from the region have identified the following actionable items, orienting each to a specific stakeholder group:

### Actionable Item #1 | Develop a Collaborative Platform for Agricultural Innovation for Young Farmers

The YPB members of this region seek to establish a regional network of agricultural innovation hubs with young entrepreneurs, agricultural students and rural youth. These would provide opportunities to:

#### Foster knowledge sharing and collaboration

- Identify and leverage existing online platforms to members of the Agricultural Innovation Hub, National Chapter members and Young Scientists across the region, facilitating knowledge exchange, hosting virtual events and organizing innovation challenges to stimulate creative problem-solving in agriculture. The NENA YPB team aims to collaborate with the National Chapter of Mauritania to combine online resources with community outreach and locally tailored solutions to ensure inclusive participation and maximize impact across diverse rural contexts.
- Identify and leverage existing online platforms connecting National Chapter members and Young Scientists across the region, facilitating knowledge exchange through virtual events, organizing innovation challenges to stimulate creative problem-solving in agriculture.
- Collaborate with the National Chapter of Mauritania to integrate online resources with community outreach programs and implementing locally tailored solutions ensuring inclusive participation across diverse rural contexts.

### **Establish innovation hubs**

- Partner through National Chapters (such as Qatar and Egypt) and the WFF Youth Food Lab with startup incubators, local universities, agricultural institutions and across the region to establish Innovation Hubs that support youth-led agricultural startups. These hubs will focus on offering access to agritech tools, co-working spaces, and entrepreneurial training programs tailored to the NENA agricultural landscape.

### **Providing information about support initiatives and seed resources**

- Develop a capacity-building programme for young people, especially young farmers, to illustrate which are the existing support initiatives and seed resources and how to access them. This can initially be implemented in Gulf countries via WFF National Chapters, with potential for expansion.

### **Build capacity and connect youth to funding opportunities:**

- Develop and deliver training programmes helping young farmers identify and access existing funding opportunities. This will be achieved by partnering with Qatar National Chapter to create awareness about available agricultural grants and investment programs, providing capacity building workshops on proposal writing, business planning and agricultural entrepreneurship, and guiding young farmers through application processes for regional and international funding opportunities.

### **Expected impact**

- Development of innovative, locally adapted solutions for sustainable agriculture and improved adoption of sustainable farming practices;
- Creation of new job opportunities in rural areas;
- Establishment of a knowledge sharing network across the NENA region;
- Long-term establishment of a comprehensive, regionally-tailored innovation ecosystem across NENA countries to empower youth-led agricultural startups through collaborative spaces, agri-tech resources and specialized training.

## Actionable Item #2 | Promote Accessible Education for Sustainable Agriculture Practices

Building on existing programs at universities in countries such as Egypt and Qatar, the YPB members of the region seek to structure and provide free courses to smallholder farmers, young agripreneurs, women's cooperatives, farmers in water-scarce areas, local water management committees and others, with a target of at least 40 percent female participation, This would include:

### Providing training on sustainable agriculture (Course Series 1)

- Develop an online capacity-building programme using a “training of trainers” approach with a specific focus on traditional farming methods and modern techniques to combat water scarcity and desertification by teaching them how to farm sustainably with limited resources and access technology, offering solutions that suit regions facing instability or displacement which aims to target primarily female farmers in the NENA region.
- Provide business skills, marketing and sustainable practices for smallholders and cooperatives.

### Providing training on water management and resilience (Course Series 2)

- Develop an online capacity-building programme using a “training of trainers” on innovative water-saving techniques and drought-resistant crops, sharing successful case studies from within the region to inspire adoption.
- Enhance capacities for effective water management advocacy at local and regional levels through training and resource development.

### Strategy Implementation

- The program will utilize a cascading training model where selected trainers from different cities across the region will first receive comprehensive online training. These certified trainers will then conduct in-person training sessions in their local communities, ensuring efficient resource use while maintaining effective local impact.
- Both series will be tailored to the region with the guidance of experts. Courses will be offered in Arabic as primary language, along with local dialects and languages where appropriate, to ensure accessibility across the NENA region. This multilingual approach aims to reach diverse communities.

### **Expected impact**

- Increased accessibility to agricultural education and training;
- Reduction in gender disparities in access to agricultural resources and knowledge;
- Improved water use efficiency in agriculture and increased water scarcity resilience;
- Enhanced food security in water-stressed regions.

## 5.6. Timeline

### ACTIONABLE ITEM 1

	Q4   2024	Q1   2025	Q2   2025	Q3   2025	Q4   2025 - Q2   2026
ACTIONABLE ITEM 1	Conduct consultations and develop partnerships.	Begin platform research development and start planning the establishment the first agricultural innovation hub.	Test platform, recruit mentors and plan the first innovation challenge.	Launch the agricultural innovation hub and start pairings for mentorship programme.	Launch the first innovation challenge, explore local market connections and evaluate impact.
ACTIONABLE ITEM 2	Hold consultations and plan capacity building curriculum.	Recruit experts, select the platform and develop Course Series 1 content.	Begin translations and launch Course Series 1.	Plan Course Series 2, collect feedback and refine Course Series 1.	Develop, translate and launch Course Series 2.



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## 6. North America

### 6.1. Background and overview

The North American region is comprised of vast and complex food systems, encompassing a network of large-scale industrial farms, processors, distributors and retailers that serve millions of consumers. Yet, despite its ability to produce an abundance of food, the region also grapples with numerous access gaps, environmental degradation and structural inequities. Notably, resource overuse has led to rising food waste, harming biodiversity and economic productivity. Moreover, the region has historically excluded Indigenous voices from critical conversations around agrifood systems reform, overlooking traditional knowledge and practices that promote sustainability and resilience. However, it is clear that North America's diverse population needs innovative, cost-effective initiatives to drive sustainable transformation of its agrifood systems.

In 2022, the North American YPB identified several key priorities, including supporting marginalized communities, scaling up access to sustainable technologies, investing in resilient nature-positive agrifood systems, promoting sustainable feeding programmes and creating inclusive local markets and distribution systems.

Therefore, in 2023, the region's policy focus was centered around school nutrition; however, during 2024, an additional priority emerged, leading to a move from focusing on food nutrition at schools to food waste reduction in post-secondary settings. This shift took into account the recent policy reform within North America geared towards addressing food nutrition in schools.

Thus the new focus became transitioning from a linear food system to a circular one. This approach prioritizes the avoidance of food waste and recovery at its highest market value, ensuring any waste is repurposed and/or returned to the natural environment.

In the United States, nearly one-third of all vegetables and milk served through the National School Lunch Program is wasted, with an estimated 530 000 tons of food and 45 million gallons of milk wasted per year in school cafeterias (CSPI, 2023). In college campuses across the United States, nearly 10 thousand tonnes of food is wasted annually (Hutchinson, n.d.).

In Canada, almost 2.3 million tonnes of edible food is wasted each year, costing Canadians in excess of USD 20 billion (National Zero Waste Council, n.d.). In addition to the amount of food wasted, the awareness of how to place food waste correctly in different recycling bins is lacking.

Given this context, the North America YPB members have recognized the importance of integrating food waste reduction alongside ongoing efforts to improve school nutrition. Circular economy principles for food waste have become a critical component of the region's advocacy for sustainable agrifood systems, with initiatives already being implemented at the local level across communities.

## 6.2. Methodology

In addition to the survey and the two virtual regional assemblies held in 2023 that set the foundation of the policy priorities and the in-progress Student Ambassador Program that launched in May 2024, this year, the region held multiple consultations to refine the policy priorities, shape the pilot initiative and consult stakeholders on the actionable items for their Regional Global Youth Action Plan.

2024 consultations which engaged over 410 participants:

- First Regional Youth Assembly on 22 April 2024;
- Second Regional Youth Assembly on 16 July 2024;
- Third Regional Youth Assembly held on 23 August 2024;
- Youth stakeholder survey held from 16 July to 30 August 2024;
- Roundtable consultation with young farmers on 10 October 2024;

- Roundtable consultations with the GIYC at the WFF flagship event on 15 and 17 October 2024;
- Regional Youth Assembly at the WFF flagship event on 16 October 2024;
- Roundtable consultation with young parliamentarians at the WFF flagship event on 16 October 2024.

Key consultation takeaways:

- A growing need for a broader understanding of how to scale food redistribution systems.
- The rise of micro-scale programmes and student-led clubs/organizations is receiving minimal support or involvement from postsecondary institutions.
- Negative perceptions around food waste reduction, inflexible meal plans and limited expertise are leading to poor initiation and execution of action plans.

### 6.3. Policy Priorities

Based on the work conducted in 2023 and further refined through various consultations in 2024, the following policy priority was selected:

***Promote a timely and sustainable transition towards a closed-loop food supply chain that minimizes waste and maximizes resource efficiency by confronting policy and implementation barriers within university settings, identifying cross-functional solutions and leveraging existing research and experiences to drive youth-led impact.***

### 6.4. Key Gaps Identified

The Regional Assembly has identified the following gaps hindering the transformation of policy into action:

- There is a lack of comprehensive education to address and fill knowledge gaps around the circular economy, notably in relation to the food waste hierarchy.
- There is insufficient meaningful engagement of Indigenous communities, particularly the integration of traditional perspectives within policy development and implementation.
- There is limited access to resources and opportunities for youth engagement around food waste management, especially for initiatives that offer scalable, circular solutions to food waste.

## 6.5. Actionable Items

To close the gaps, the YPB members from North America have identified the following actionable items, orienting each to a specific stakeholder group:

### Actionable item #1 | Enhance knowledge and engage North American youth in learning about the food waste hierarchy

The YPB members of this region seek to empower young people, specially young innovators to take on leadership roles in specific levels of the food waste hierarchy (reduce, recover and recycle) by:

#### Hosting panel workshops and developing resource guides

- Organize a series of panel workshops and create accompanying resource guides focused on the food waste hierarchy to equip young innovators with the knowledge and tools necessary to effectively understand and address food waste challenges through expert insights and actionable strategies. Examples include:
  - creation of “Food Waste Resource Guides” outlining best practices and case studies to create one’s own project and/or join an existing movement;
  - opportunities to network and connect with industry leaders, relevant stakeholders and actors from various sectors; and
  - identification of actionable pilots and applicable solutions within the North American region.
- Partnership with the GIYC to ensure traditional knowledge is incorporated into the aforementioned resource guides.

#### Engaging stakeholders

- Collaborate with policymakers, community organizations, national chapters, Indigenous youth and educational institutions to raise awareness and promote the importance of food waste management initiatives, ensuring a multi-stakeholder approach to reducing, recovering and recycling food waste.
- Establish collaborations with at least two post-secondary institutions each in the US and Canada to magnify action items and expand stakeholder engagement.

### **Expected impact**

- Foster enabling environments for student-driven change within post-secondary settings to incorporate more cost-effective food waste management practices into institutional programs and policies;
- Cultivate collaborative spaces where industry leaders and young innovators can come together to implement sustainable food waste solutions; and
- Facilitate gradual reductions in food waste within post-secondary institutions, guided by the resource guide recommendations.

### **Actionable item #2 | Establish an Indigenous Advisory Circle**

The YPB members of this region seek to establish a formal Indigenous Advisory Circle that would serve as a bridging mechanism between our Youth Policy Board North America team and members of various Indigenous communities.

### **Launching Indigenous Advisory Circle in partnership with the GIYC**

- Forge a synergetic partnership to ensure Indigenous knowledge is incorporated into the regional panel series (Action Item #1)
- Host collaborative discussions to ensure alignment on regional priorities.

### **Engaging stakeholders**

- Co-identification of opportunities to highlight success stories and approaches among Indigenous youth, as well as to support Indigenous involvement in our regional assemblies and the scaling of our global action plan items in the leadup to next year's WFF flagship event, which will align with the bi-yearly Indigenous Youth Forum.
- Enhanced capacity for Indigenous communities to advocate for their rights and interests through various mediums.

### **Expected impact**

- Integrate Indigenous voices throughout our development processes via routine meetings and engagement opportunities;
- Bolster cultural sensitivity by increasing regional understanding and respect for Indigenous cultures and traditions, notably within the agrifood systems context; and
- Yield more informed and targeted policies that appropriately reflect the needs and perspectives of Indigenous communities.

## 6.6. Timeline

### ACTIONABLE ITEM 1

	Q4   2024	Q1   2025	Q2   2025	Q3   2025	Q4   2025	Q1   2026	Q2   2026
	<p>Engage stakeholders and share GYAP with relevant actors to build partnership networks.</p> <p>Plan panel workshops and finalize the list of speakers with expert consultation.</p>	<p>Identify institutional partners who will serve as key stakeholders for the panel series.</p> <p>Host the series of panel workshops and release first resource guide.</p>	<p>Connect with representatives at institutional partners to gather and incorporate feedback accordingly.</p> <p>Continue the series of panel workshops and release second and third resource guides.</p>	<p>Evaluate the panel series and the resource guides.</p>	<p>Plan expansion of panel series.</p>	<p>Continue planning the expansion of the panel series.</p>	<p>Continue planning the expansion of the panel series.</p>
	<p>Brainstorm potential collaborations</p> <p>Hold GIYC-internal conversations.</p>	<p>Launch the Indigenous Advisory Circle.</p> <p>Conduct first Advisory Circle Meeting.</p> <p>Outline work objectives.</p> <p>Collaborate on the panel series and release first resource guide.</p>	<p>Conduct panel series</p> <p>Hold second Advisory Circle Meeting.</p> <p>Continue collaboration on the panel and release second and third resource guides.</p>	<p>Highlight the first milestones in WFF flagship event.</p> <p>Potential joint session with GIYC in alignment with the WFF Flagship Event and Indigenous Youth Forum.</p>	<p>Highlight the first milestones in WFF newsletter.</p> <p>Host joint feedback session with GIYC and relevant stakeholders to gather insights based on the results at the 1-year mark of this collaboration.</p>	<p>Re-evaluate the collaboration plan and outline strategic objectives over the coming year.</p>	<p>Plan renewed collaborations.</p>

### ACTIONABLE ITEM 2

# Way Forward

The Global Youth Action Plan integrated the feedback received from policymakers, scientists, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, farmers, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, the private sector, youth leaders and advocates, and other relevant youth stakeholders including consultations held during the 2024 World Food Forum flagship event.

This document, launched on 18 October 2024, will serve as a blueprint for developing a comprehensive Global Youth Implementation Roadmap for 2025–2026. This Roadmap will outline specific action steps, including execution timelines, relevant partners and stakeholders, and key performance indicators. It will guide the action of the YPB in 2025 and 2026, ensuring that challenges and gaps in regional agrifood systems are adequately addressed through policy and action.

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# Annex

## Methodology

Prior to drafting the Global Youth Action Plan, each region convened stakeholders in online Regional Youth Assembly sessions in mid-2024 to map the challenges in their local agrifood systems. The foundation for this remained the policy priorities mapped in 2023 and the outcomes of these consultations fed into refining the priorities for 2025–2026. Surveys and expert consultations provided further input into this process. This document seeks the inputs of parliamentarians, farmers, Indigenous youth, scientists, consumers and other stakeholders to further refine the Action Plan and create a robust Global Youth Implementation Roadmap 2025-2026.



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