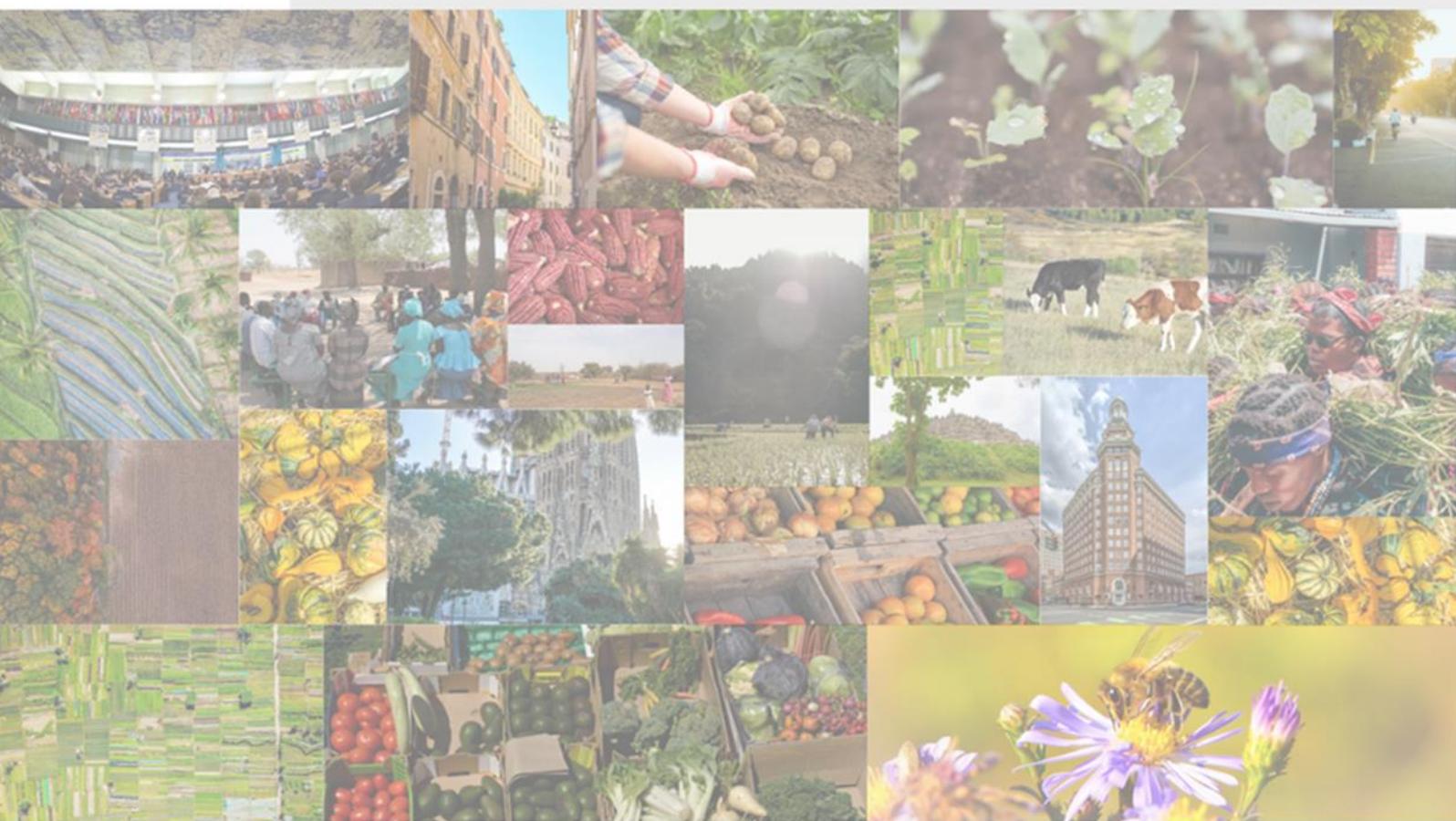


INTERNATIONAL PANEL OF EXPERTS ON
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

IPES-Food 2020 Activity Report





Highlights

2020 was an unprecedented year, compelling organizations across the globe to rapidly adapt to new working methods, while remaining relevant and productive in a situation in constant flux. The COVID-19 pandemic also served to expose the underlying risks, fragilities, and inequities in global food systems, making IPES-Food's work more relevant than ever. Over 2020, our expert panel continued to deliver cutting-edge analysis of the challenges we face – in an ever-wider range of formats, in debates that are rapidly evolving, and in collaboration with a growing number of partners. The year's highlights included:

- IPES-Food's **Special Report on COVID-19 & food systems** endorsed by former FAO Director-General Graziano da Silva, discussed with WHO Special Envoy David Nabarro, & covered in 28 media outlets;
- Publication of two IPES-Food reports on **agroecology in Africa**, with ministerial-level endorsement and media coverage in 12 African countries & multiple international outlets (including Le Monde & Deutsche Welle);
- Olivier De Schutter/IPES-Food appointed to a lead role within Track 3 (Nature-Positive Production) of the 2021 **UN Food Systems Summit**, & IPES-Food's 'lock-ins' used to guide analysis under this track;
- **Glasgow Food & Climate Declaration** launched by IPES-Food, Nourish Scotland and partners in the lead up to COP26, & endorsed by over 40 local and regional authorities on all 6 continents, including the Scottish Government, the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh and the city of Paris;
- IPES-Food's **Common Food Policy** blueprint identified as a key influence on European Commission's 'Farm to Fork Strategy' (May 2020), & endorsed/taken up by the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee (EESC), and the EU's scientific advisory bodies;
- Second tranche of funding secured, website launched, and membership formalized for 60-strong **EU Food Policy Coalition**, formed to advocate for a Common Food Policy;
- The **Alliance for Agroecology in West Africa** (3AO) designated as the consultative body for ECOWAS's Agroecological Transition Support Project in West Africa (AETSP), recognized via partnerships with IFAD, GIZ, FAO, ECOWAS, and the African Union, and independently funded;
- IPES-Food's **US Food Policy Partnership** launched;
- Followers up **+40% across all social media platforms** relative to 2019, **coverage in top-tier media** including Reuters, Al Jazeera, France24, Le Monde, and Deutsche Welle, and **400+ academic citations**.



1. Activities, outputs and impacts

Over 2020, in line with IPES-Food's workplan, the panel published new reports on crucial issues facing today's food systems, worked with civil society groups to promote agroecology and integrated food policies at the regional level, and communicated more often and in more formats to bring IPES-Food's ideas to new constituencies and regions. Within the 8 clusters of work outlined below, IPES-Food weighed into food system debates through a combination of activities and outputs – from long-form reports to short briefing notes, from one-off roundtable meetings to sustained alliance-building processes:

1.1. Money Flows: case studies on ag research in sub-Saharan Africa

In June 2020, IPES-Food, Biovision, and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) co-published **Money Flows: What is holding back investment in agroecological research for Africa?** The report assesses how current funding for agricultural research, development, and extension is allocated, and what percentage goes to agroecology, with case studies on the Gates Foundation (as a major philanthropic donor), Switzerland (as a leading bilateral donor), and Kenya (as a major implementer of AgR4D). Activities, outputs and impacts included:

- Report launch via a **general launch webinar** (June 10, 2020) and a **follow-up webinar targeting European donors** ('**Shifting European Finance towards Food System Transformation**', November 26 2020), both involving high-level participants from bilateral and multilateral agencies;
- **Suite of products** made available prior to and on launch day, including executive summaries in 4 languages, short **video interviews** with report contributors, two **Q&A** articles with IPES-Food panel members, and a short animated video on agroecology (in **EN** and **FR**);
- Coverage in **4 Kenyan newspapers** and more than **20 media outlets** in Africa and globally, including The Vanguard (Nigeria), Le Monde (France), Deutsche Welle (Germany), IPS (international), Ansa (Italy), Italia Oggi (Italy), Civil Eats (USA), Food Business Africa (Africa), Africa Science News Service, (Africa) and an **op-ed** in Devex (International);¹
- **144,000 impressions on Twitter** following report launch **27k+ views** of animated video on agroecology over the year.

¹ See IPES-Food press page: <http://www.ipes-food.org/press/>.



1.2. Agroecology in West Africa and the 3AO alliance

Launched in 2017, IPES-Food's process of alliance-building and collaborative research on agroecology in West Africa culminated in the release of a major report in September 2020: **The Added Value(s) of Agroecology: Unlocking the potential for transition in West Africa**. The report highlights the obstacles to and opportunities for agroecological transition in West Africa, drawing lessons from the experience of the Alliance for Agroecology in West Africa (3AO),² which continued to grow and developed an independent coordination³ over 2020. Activities, outputs and impacts included:

- Report launch via a **bilingual webinar** (September 7, 2020) attended by over 130 participants, and featuring addresses from the **former Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment of Senegal**, the **former Minister of Scientific Research and Innovation of Mali**, and representatives of ROPPA, AFSA and other leading civil society and farmer organizations;
- Coverage in **21 media outlets across West Africa** (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo), as well as regional & pan-African outlets including West Africa Democracy, AllAfrica, and CommodAfrica; and an **op-ed** in African Arguments (E. Frison & M. Goïta – September 2020);
- **125,170 impressions on Twitter** following report launch, including a retweet by **UN Biodiversity** and its Executive Secretary E. Mrema;
- Endorsement & **dedicated feature** by leading French agroecology expert **Marc Dufumier in Inter-Réseaux** (November 2020).
- Presentation of the findings at the **Giving Women Conference** and the **'Farmers Rights Underpin Sustainable Food Systems'** webinar hosted by Caritas Zambia (C. Clément – September-October 2020);
- Expansion, consolidation and operationalization of the **Alliance for Agroecology in West Africa (3AO)**, through: the organization of the **second full meeting of the Alliance** in Dakar (January 2020); securing of funding for independent 3AO secretariat (December 2020); designation of 3AO as the consultative body for ECOWAS's Agroecological Transition Support Project in West Africa (AETSP);

² Created in 2018, 3AO serves as a coordination and information platform to support the development of agroecology and sustainable food systems in the region. The Alliance now counts over 65 member organizations from 15 countries, comprising peasant organizations, research institutes, local and international NGOs, and social movements. The full list of members can be found **here**, with more information in the **3AO brochure**.

³ In mid-2020, IPES-Food transferred coordination of 3AO to ROPPA, West Africa's largest peasant organization, to serve as the new Secretariat host organization. IPES-Food has provided ongoing support during transition to an independent secretariat, including: organization of monthly steering committee meetings to oversee progress in the Alliance's action plan; publication of a quarterly bilingual newsletters oversight of new membership requests & fundraising activities.



development of strategic partnerships with the FAO West African office, IFAD, and the development agencies of 6 countries; co-convening of a 40-strong donor meeting on investment in agroecology with the Global Alliance for the Future of Food (GAFF), with attendance from the FAO and the Agricultural Director of ECOWAS (December 2020);

- Contributions to the UNDP's **Food & Agricultural Commodity Systems** (FACS) Strategy (E. Frison – July 2020) and a handbook on **Biodiversity, Food and Nutrition: A New Agenda for Sustainable Food Systems** (eds. D. Hunter, T. Borelli, E. Gee) based on IPES-Food's 2016 report on agroecology, *From Uniformity to Diversity*.

1.3. UN Food Systems Summit, CGIAR reform and a new global governance agenda

In 2021, the UN will convene the first ever Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs by 2030. With one foot inside and one foot outside the process, IPES-Food has delivered initial thought leadership on the Summit over 2020, as well as addressing the impending reforms of global agricultural research centers ('CGIAR'), and tracing out the pathways of long-term collaborative action that could allow civil society to reclaim global food governance spaces. Activities, outputs and impacts included:

- IPES-Food has been **engaging critically with the Summit** process since the appointment of **O. De Schutter as co-lead of the 'Sustainable management' pillar of the UNFSS's Action Track 3: Boosting Nature-Positive Production at Sufficient Scales**, as well as inputs into Summit planning discussions by various panel members;
- IPES-Food's analysis of the obstacles to food system reform – '**lock ins**' – has been adopted to guide discussions under Track 3 (see '**Discussion Starter**');
- Relaying of IPES-Food's concerns and proposals for the UNFSS in a **Guardian article** and an **op ed in Food Tank** (March 2020);
- Publication of an **open letter** and **IPS op-ed** on the impending restructuring of the CGIAR (July 2020);
- Chairing of session at the **3rd global conference of the 10YFP Sustainable Food Systems Programme**⁴ and written & oral contribution to the conference's **final outcome document** (C. Clément – November 2020);

⁴ The 10YFP's 3rd Global Conference serves as a major milestone in the preparation of the 2021 UNFSS, strengthening cohesion among leading actors in food systems and recommending actions and implementation mechanisms to promote sustainable food systems.



- Panel contributions to the **CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition** (February 2020), & provision of recommendations on the request of Ambassador Mohammad Hossein Emadi (Rapporteur of the CFS's Policy Convergence Process on agroecological and other innovative approaches) on the **governance of digital innovations** and the role of the **CFS at the UNFSS** (internal communication – July 2020);
- Over 2020, IPES-Food has advanced its exploratory work on a **'Long Food Movement'** (LFM), i.e. a quarter century plan for building sustainable food systems via enhanced civil society collaboration. Reaching the end of the initial 18-month exploration by the end of 2020,⁵ IPES-Food, ETC Group and CREPPA at UQAM had completed interviews and civil society dialogues, consulted the 20-member Advisory Group three times, and brought research and drafting to near completion (publication due March 2021). Some of the findings were previewed in IPES-Food's UNFSS outputs (see above) and a **Q&A** on global food systems governance (P. Mooney – July 2020).

1.4. COVID-19 and the crisis in food systems

In April 2020, in light of the unfolding global health crisis, IPES-Food published a special report on **COVID-19 and food systems** (also available in **FR** and **ES**). This report and IPES-Food's previous work on the food-health nexus received widespread attention as the pandemic and its impacts on food systems unfolded. Activities, outputs and impacts included:

- IPES-Food's Special Report & interviews with panel members on the impact of COVID-19 on food systems **covered in over 30 media outlets** around the world, including Intercept (US), Dissent Magazine (USA), France24 (France), Le Monde (France), Al Jazeera (International), Food Navigator (USA/EU), NPR (USA), Politico Europe (EU), EurActiv (EU), France Inter (France), RFI (France/Africa), and RTBF (Belgium);⁶
- The special report's findings cited/referred to by **major national and international bodies** including the European Commission, the FAO, CFS Open-ended Working Group on Food Systems & Nutrition, the Hungarian Permanent Representative to the FAO and President of the WFP executive board, the EESC, and Food Secure Canada;

⁵ The 18-month project timeline ran from May 2019-October 2020, with an extension through to December 2020. A second project grant was awarded by the Schmidt Family Foundation for the March 2020-December 2021 period to bolster dissemination and spin-off activities.

⁶ See IPES-Food press page: <http://www.ipes-food.org/press/>.



- **Retweets** of the COVID-19 Special Report by M. Nestle (144K followers), G. da Silva (29K); CIMMYT (35K), Global Landscapes Forum (38K), EAT Forum (19K), Thin Lei Win (Reuters, 12k), and A. Aubrey (NPR/CBS, 10k);
- **Invitation to dialogue with policymakers** in shaping COVID recovery plans including the WHO, the Organization of American States (OAS), France Insoumise (France), the government of Wallonia (Belgium), and the Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development;
- The publication of several **academic articles** based on / citing IPES-Food's Food-Health Nexus report (2017) and COVID-19 special report (see Section 2.2), as well as a piece in FIAN Belgium's annual magazine **Beet the System** (C. Clément – October 2020).

1.5. Common Food Policy & EU Farm to Fork Strategy

In May 2020, the European Commission announced its 'Farm to Fork Strategy', with a decisive influence attributed to IPES-Food's 2019 report, **Towards a Common Food Policy for the EU**, which was the subject of ongoing advocacy by the EU Food Policy Coalition, and was endorsed by various EU institutions through 2020. Activities, outputs and impacts included:

- IPES-Food's Common Food Policy vision taken up and endorsed by the **European Parliament** (draft INI report, December 2020)⁷ and the **European Economic and Social Committee** (September 2020) in their official responses to the Farm to Fork Strategy;
- Common Food Policy identified as key authoritative source by **The Science Advice for Policy by European Academies (SAPEA)** (April 2020) and featured in scientific journal articles (see Section 2.2);
- IPES-Food's Common Food Policy used by Danone as the central inspiration for its **Call to Action for a Common Food Policy** (May 2020), and as the 'bedrock' of the 11-million-euro **Cities2030 project** Horizon2020 project';
- Appointment of O. De Schutter & E. Frison to the **Africa Europe Strategy Group** on Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems of the Africa Europe Foundation;
- Presentations of the Common Food Policy vision to the **Flemish Parliament** (E. Frison – December 2020); the *En Marche* Working Group on Sustainable Food Systems of the **French National Assembly** (C. Clément – December 2020), and

⁷ The report states: "Over the past decades, many reports have been published with regard to the detrimental impacts of our food system on the environment and public health, and many practical and policy solutions have been put forward. The ENVI rapporteur welcomes these much-needed analyses and policy suggestions and draws particular inspiration from the IPES-Food report Towards a Common Food Policy for the EU."



webinars organized by the **Government of Catalonia/ Assembly of European Regions** and **IEEP/Mission of Canada to the EU** (N. Jacobs – December 2020);

- **Media interventions** in **Reuters** and the **FarmGate podcast** on CAP reform and the Farm to Fork strategy;
- Systematic advocacy for a Common Food Policy vision in CAP and Farm to Fork debates via the 60-strong **EU Food Policy Coalition**⁸, including an **Open Letter** to the European Commission on the urgency of publishing the Farm to Fork Strategy (April 2020), an **Open Letter** to the EU institutions on CAP reform (September 2020), and position papers on the external dimensions of the Farm to Fork strategy, and agroecology;
- Following a **roundtable with EC officials and trade experts** (September 2020), co-publication with ECDPM of a spin-off **briefing note on EU trade policy for sustainable food systems** and submission of the note to the EU Trade Policy Review (October 2020), and launch of an **animated video on trade** with 5000+ views.

1.6. Steps towards a US Food Policy

In September 2020, IPES-Food formally launched its **US Food Policy Partnership** project to push for a US federal-level food policy.⁹ Rooted in existing efforts and movement building, the process has been driven forward by a 5-strong working group of US-based panel members, with initial research undertaken by graduate students from the LBJ School of Public Affairs (under the guidance of R. Patel & IPES-Food secretariat). Following the results of the national election in November 2020, the process has also benefited from renewed conversations around food and agricultural reform. Activities, outputs and impacts included:

- At **kick-off meeting** (September 30-October 2, 2020), **participation of 40 US food system leaders**, and agreement to move forward with ambitious research & advocacy process¹⁰ beginning in 2021, taking an integrated approach to food

⁸ The EU Food Policy Coalition is currently composed of some 60 organizations. IPES-Food is one of seven Executive Board members. More information on the Coalition and its activities is available at <https://foodpolicycoalition.eu>.

⁹ A first in-person kick-off meeting was scheduled for March 2020 and was rescheduled to an online event in September 2020 due to COVID-19.

¹⁰ Agreed priorities include: reviewing platforms and policy reform proposals outlined by key partners (e.g. HEAL Alliance, National Family Farm Coalition) to draw out a framework for what a U.S. Food Policy might look like; identifying and reaching out to new partners missing from the current conversation, particularly private sector actors; identifying opportunities to engage in state and local-level conversations on food systems reform, identifying best practices that can be scaled up to the federal level; and ensuring that funds are obtained to cover the participation of groups working with limited resources.



systems change to break through the interconnected barriers to food system sustainability;

- Promotion of US food system reform and food policy development by IPES-Food panel members through multiple **media channels** including: interviews in **Food Tank** and **NPR**, op-eds in **Civil Eats** and the **New York Times** on various aspects of US food system reform and the priorities for the incoming administration, and a **short own-production video interview** with M. Anderson & R. Salvador (February 2020);
- **Policy proposal on food systems reform** requested by **the Biden campaign** 'Blue Sky' team (through R. Patel – June 2020);
- Conversations advanced with **potential funders** including the Kellogg Foundation, the Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems Funders (SAFSF), and US-based members of the Global Alliance;
- IPES-Food's '**Too Big to Feed**' report referenced in the Rockefeller Foundation's report: '**Reset the Table: Meeting the Moment to Transform the U.S. Food System**'.

1.7. The Glasgow Food & Climate Declaration and COP26

In December 2020, IPES-Food – in partnership with Nourish Scotland, ICLEI, the MUFPP and others¹¹ – officially launched the '**Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration**'. The Declaration, which already counts a number of high-level pre-signatories, will provide a unique opportunity to bring food systems to international climate debates, underlining the pioneering efforts of sub-national actors in building climate resilient food systems via integrated food policies, providing signatories with an opportunity to share innovative food system solutions, and putting the onus on national governments to take on the food and climate challenge. Activities, outputs and impacts included:

- Following a year of consultation and collaboration with a range of partners and local policymakers, formal launch of the declaration through a **webinar event** (December 14, 2020) attended by over 200 participants and featuring **keynotes from the Scottish Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment**, and the **Director of the Food Systems and Food Safety Division of the FAO**, a discussion panel between 6 high-level local authorities, and endorsement by a number of the Declaration's **early signatories**;

¹¹ For a list of partners, see: <https://www.glasgowdeclaration.org/partners>

- **Wide endorsement of the Declaration across social media channels** following launch, including: the **Vice Mayor of Milan** in charge of Food Policy and the MUFPP, the Scottish Government's Minister of Rural Affairs, H. Elver, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, G. Da Silva (former FAO DG) & signatory cities.
- **Presentations throughout the year** to raise the profile of the Declaration along the road to the December 2020 launch, including at the **ICLEI Daring Cities Conference** (C. Clément – October 2020), and the **10YFP Sustainable Food Systems Programme Webinar Series** (C. Clément – November 2020);
- **Discussions with international institutions** to explore COP26 collaboration, including FAO, UNEP, IFAD, the UNFCCC, the European Commission, and the Scottish Government.



1.8. Protein transition & diet shifts

Over 2020, IPES-Food has become an increasingly vocal and credible voice within debates on meat and protein, thereby positioning itself for the launch of its report on this topic (due Q2 2021). With intensive research and review undertaken through 2019 and 2020, IPES-Food's 'protein report' seeks to provide clarity on the many contested claims made within livestock and protein debates. Through the year, IPES-Food has engaged in broader debates around diet shifts, retail environments and the agri-food industry. Activities, outputs and impacts included:

- **Keynote presentation** of preliminary Protein findings at **EUFIC/PROTEIN2Food conference**, 'Food for the future: Accelerating the protein transition' (N. Jacobs – January 2020);
- Contributions to the World Benchmarking Alliance's '**Food and Agriculture Benchmark**' framework, and a range of **studies and debates around protein transition**, including: the Global Alliance's Salzburg Seminar discussion stream on Industrial Livestock Production (F. Ajena – April 2020); FoodShot's **Precision Protein project** (F. Ajena); and IDDRI's **EU protein transition report**;
- Discussions with ClimateWorks, Grace Communications, Jennifer Altman Foundation, & Oak Foundation on protein **outreach opportunities**;
- Research undertaken over first half of 2020 to advance IPES-Food's reports on **Food Environments** (co-rapporteurs: N. Bricas & O. De Schutter) and **Food cultures & identities** (M. Belay & J. Carino), both of which will be subject to renewed panel energies and likely publication in 2021.



2. Reaching new and diverse audiences

Benefiting from a full-time communications manager for the first time, IPES-Food has been able to significantly improve its online presence throughout the year thanks to a consistent and enhanced social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn, regular newsletter updates to our 7k subscribers, and frequent publication of op-eds and press releases.

IPES-Food also continued to multiply and diversify its comms-friendly outputs, releasing 2 new **short animated videos** in English and French to summarize key food system challenges in under 2 minutes, as well as 8 **short video interviews with panel members** recapping key food systems issues from their diverse areas of expertise.

Over 2020, IPES-Food also systematically published in multiple languages (e.g. COVID-19 Special Report in EN/FR/ES), and translated several of its earlier reports into and Spanish (Urban Food Policy case studies, foundational report on the New Science of Sustainable Food Systems).

Thanks to this enhanced activity, IPES-Food saw the following comms impacts:

- **Twitter followers +40%** relative to 2019, with a total of 8.8K followers by year's end;
- **Facebook followers +76%** relative to 2019, with a total of 1.4K followers by year's end;
- **LinkedIn followers +237%** relative to 2019, with a total of 1.3K followers by year's end;
- More than **27,000 views** across all platforms for animated video on agroecology (June 2020) and more than **5,000 views** for animated video on trade (October 2020).
- **Expanded global media coverage**, through a number of articles published in online & print media, particularly following the launch of IPES-Food's West Africa and Money Flows reports, with the help of regional comms support;¹²

Over 2020, IPES-Food also achieved unprecedented visibility with scientific and academic audiences:

- Several **journal articles published by IPES-Food personnel** to amplify the messages from various reports, including on the **Common Food Policy** and on **agroecology** in the Food Policy journal, on **COVID-19 in Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems**, and on the **food-health nexus in World Review of Nutrition & Dietetics**.
- IPES-Food **ideas/concepts taken up and applied** by multiple researchers, including an examination of **IPES-Food's 'lock-ins' in the Australian context**, a

¹² For all media coverage, see: <http://www.ipes-food.org/press/>.



comparative review of **IPES-Food and European Commission discourse** on food system reform, and a **CGIAR/Wageningen brief** contrasting the agroecological frameworks espoused by IPES-Food with climate-smart approaches.

- IPES-Food's various reports were **cited in 400+ scientific papers** in 2020 alone, including in high-impact journals such as **Food Security**, the **Lancet, Agriculture and Human Values**, and the **International Journal of Health Policy and Management**.

3. Planning ahead: internal evaluation, panel renewal and a new strategy

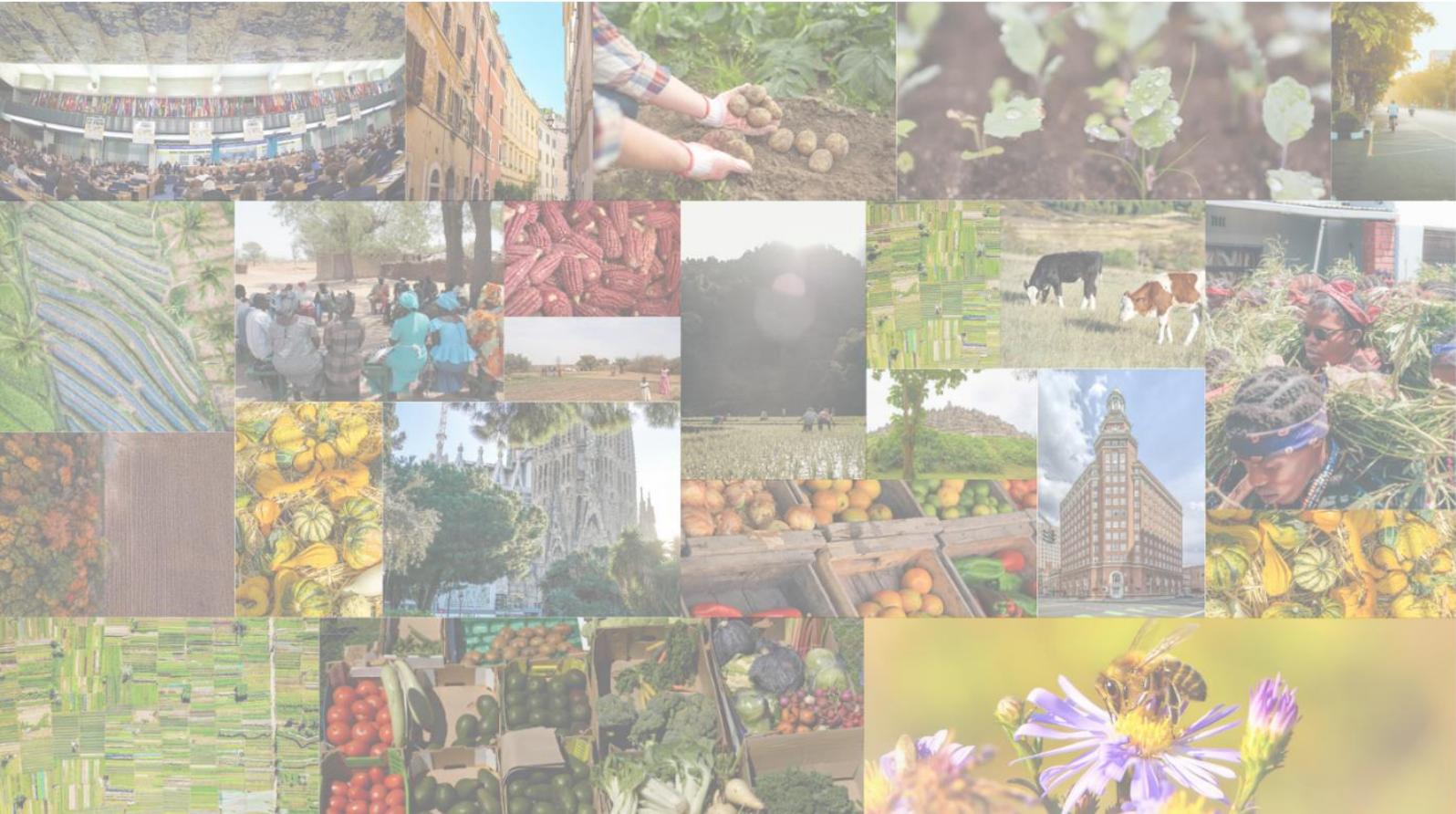
From January to April 2020, IPES-Food took stock of its strengths and weaknesses through an **internal evaluation**. The process involved interviews with panel members and staff, the compiling of a self-assessment report, and discussion of the findings at the April 2020 panel meeting. It yielded critical self-reflection on IPES-Food's overall strategy, effectiveness, and impacts. Later in the year, the findings were built into the process of **panel renewal** (coming to completion in January 2021 - see Annex 3) and IPES-Food's organizational strategy for 2021-2023, which was discussed by panel members at the November 2020 panel meeting.

Through the work it has advanced in 2020, the visibility it has achieved, and the self-reflection it has undertaken, IPES-Food is now well-placed to pursue an increasingly ambitious and relevant set of projects of the coming months and years.

The food system transformation that IPES-Food has systemically called for – based on building social equity and ecological resilience through agroecology, short supply chains, decent farm livelihoods, and access to healthy and sustainable diets for all – has become more relevant than ever in the wake of COVID-19. In order to harness the opportunities of the coming years, progressive voices must urgently come together and make a compelling case for food system transformation – rooted in science and grounded in the realities of those on the frontlines of climate breakdown, disease disruptions, and food insecurity. With one foot inside formal processes, IPES-Food is uniquely positioned to continue playing the role of 'honest broker' and forge consensus in these highly polarized debates.

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DECEMBER 2020



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