

GLOBAL
ALLIANCE
FOR THE
FUTURE
OF FOOD

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS:
THE POSITIVE HEALTH BENEFITS AND IMPACTS OF
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Deadline: Friday 27 July 2018

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SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS: THE POSITIVE HEALTH BENEFITS AND IMPACTS OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

The Global Alliance is pleased to announce a **Call for Proposals – Systemic Solutions for Healthy Food Systems: The positive health benefits and impacts of sustainable food systems**. We seek to work with an external consultant, researcher, or team, to better understand the positive health benefits and impacts of sustainable food systems and collaboratively identify systemic solutions that promote healthy food systems. This work supports the Global Alliance for the Future of Food's ongoing process of research and engagement related to the food-health nexus and involves compiling diverse evidence about the positive health benefits and impacts of food systems, identifying success stories that demonstrate how food systems can be managed for health, and highlighting policies that promote health. The Global Alliance is interested in an iterative process where research informs an ongoing dialogue with diverse partners and stakeholders to inform grant-making, highlight pathways to health-focused food systems reform, as well as stimulate local and global action that promotes and amplifies the positive benefits of food systems.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Global Alliance for the Future of Food is a unique collaboration of philanthropic foundations that have come together to strategically leverage our resources and networks to get sustainable food systems on the political, economic, and social agenda, now and for future generations. Our collective approach allows us, together with others, to unify and amplify our voice, and to reach the global stage at a scale and scope we might not otherwise achieve individually. We can have greater impact than our individual organizations can have alone, by combining our collective knowledge, expertise, influence, and resources.

We are guided by a set of shared food systems principles – renewability, resilience, diversity, equity, healthfulness, and interconnectedness. When taken together, these principles have broad application and multiple entry points, and provide an effective and powerful framework to make more informed, comprehensive, and principled decisions, and avoid siloed approaches, unintended consequences, and limited, narrow, short-term solutions.

RENEWABILITY

Address the integrity of natural and social resources that are the foundation of a healthy planet and future generations in the face of changing global and local demands

RESILIENCE

Support regenerative, durable, and economically adaptive systems in the face of a changing planet

EQUITY

Promote sustainable livelihoods and access to nutritious and just food systems

DIVERSITY

Value our rich and diverse agricultural, ecological, and cultural heritage

HEALTHFULNESS

Advance the health and well-being of people, animals, the environment, and the societies that depend on all three

INTERCONNECTEDNESS

Understand the implications of the interdependence of food, people, and the planet in a transition to more sustainable food and agricultural systems

A system as vastly complex as food requires that we apply a systems approach. To understand and influence the interrelated economic, ecological, and social drivers of our current food systems we are initially focused on the following three impact areas, using our principles and values to frame our work: health and well-being, true cost accounting, and agroecology. Information about our impact areas can be found on our [website](#).

Through our work on health and well-being, we aim to amplify the fundamental role that food systems play in creating health and well-being in all ecosystems, human and non-human communities, making the impact of food systems on health and well-being more visible. The impacts we seek include:

- Increased knowledge of and evidence for the positive and negative health externalities of food systems, leading to systemic solutions toward truly healthy, sustainable food systems.
- Support of sustainable food and agriculture systems by government and private sector through the identification and highlighting of current policies that undermine healthy food, and the promotion of new policies that promote health.
- Increased understanding of food system reform strategies and effectiveness in grant-making and investing through the development of collaborative philanthropic approaches.

This RFP builds on previous work supported by the Global Alliance, including [Unravelling the Food-Health Nexus: Addressing practices, political economy, and power relations to build healthier food systems](#) – a report written by [IPES-Food](#) (the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems), and [four scoping papers](#) from experts-in-the-field on: 1) “Institutional Food Purchasing as a Tool for Food Systems Reform”; 2) “Diet, Chronic Disease and the Food System: Making the Links, Pushing for Change”; 3) “Dietary Guidelines and Sustainable Diets: Pathways to Progress”; and 4) “Improving the Well-being of Food System Workers”.

2. INITIATIVE RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF WORK

We seek to work with an external consultant, researcher, or team, to better understand the positive health benefits and impacts of sustainable food systems and collaboratively identify systemic solutions that promote healthy food systems. This work supports the Global Alliance for the Future of Food’s ongoing process of research and engagement related to the food-health nexus and involves compiling diverse evidence about the positive health benefits and impacts of food systems, identifying success stories that demonstrate how food systems can be managed for health, and highlighting policies that promote health. The Global Alliance is interested in an iterative process where research informs an ongoing dialogue with diverse partners and stakeholders to inform grant-making, highlight pathways to health-focused food systems reform, as well as stimulate local and global action that promotes and amplifies the positive benefits of food systems.

The Global Alliance understands all of its [Impact Area](#) work as interconnected. This collaborative initiative will complement the recently released report commissioned by the Global Alliance, [Unravelling the Food-Health Nexus: Addressing practices, political economy, and power relations to build healthier food systems](#) – written by [IPES-Food](#) (the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems), and [four scoping papers](#) commissioned in 2015. The work will also contribute to the work of [TEEB for Agriculture and Food](#), a project supported by the Global Alliance, that has developed a holistic food system valuation framework. Our food-health nexus research and engagement process will also build on and complement our forthcoming [Beacons of Hope](#) work, which explores food system transitions globally.

Over the course of this initiative, the Global Alliance seeks to engage in a collaborative process to answer the following questions, in relation to our broader strategy:

Forge new insights and strengthen evidence for global systems change

Building a diverse evidence base and understanding the health impacts

- What kinds of diverse evidence are required for understanding the positive health impacts of food systems? How does lived experience, Indigenous/traditional knowledge, grey literature, peer-review literature, and other forms of evidence contribute to our understanding of the food-health nexus? What are the tensions and opportunities related to this broader framing of evidence? How can diverse evidence be mobilized in support of the precautionary principle?

- What evidence exists about the positive health benefits and impacts of food systems? What are the direct and indirect public health benefits of food systems? What is the state of the research related to the positive health benefits of food systems, and what are key gaps and debates? What opportunities exist to strengthen the body of evidence?

Identifying levers for change

- Where are food systems being managed for health in different contexts? What are success stories of food system transformations that positively impact health and well-being? What can we learn from these experiences, and how can this inform systems change? What is the relationship between the success stories and the evidence? What levers across sectors and scales promote healthy food systems?

Supportive policy and pathways for action

- How can success stories, evidence, and policy support a transformation toward healthier food systems? What policies and regulations undermine healthy food systems, and what policies promote the broad social determinants of health in support of health-focused food systems? Why aren't known health-positive policies being more widely adopted? What policies or policy frameworks promote or could promote positive health impacts and minimize negative health impacts of food systems?

Convene key food systems actors and facilitate meaningful dialogue

- Who is leading change at the food-health nexus? Who are the diverse decision-makers and influencers the Global Alliance should be engaging? How are narratives about the food-health nexus generated and by whom? Where is there convergence or divergence across narratives and perspectives? What evidence do they consider and why?

- How can the Global Alliance best connect to diverse decision-makers and influencers in different contexts and geographies to drive change? What partners/allies/networks should the Global Alliance be engaging to promote healthy food systems? What should be the focus of engagement opportunities and strategic convenings related to the food-health nexus?

Stimulate local and global action for transformational change

- How can the insights forged through this research and engagement process be used strategically to strengthen the movement for food systems reform? What role can the Global Alliance play to inform a diverse community of actors to take up windows of opportunities related to health-focused food systems policy? How can the Global Alliance and other allies apply what we are learning about how to promote healthy food systems to catalyze collaborative action?

The Global Alliance principles for sustainable food systems will guide and provide a framework for this work, as will the work emerging from the Blue Marble Evaluation (BME) initiative (see below). The Global Alliance takes a food systems approach, and understands this work to be an iterative process of research, engagement, and action supporting the global transformation toward sustainable food systems. The process, research and engagement supported by the consultant(s) will generate key insights and inputs over time for discussion by the Global Alliance and partners at meetings, through webinars, at a major convening in the spring of 2019, and at the Global Alliance 2020 International Dialogue.

Research/consultant role

The consultant(s) will:

- Attend relevant Global Alliance Health and Well-being Impact Area meetings, respond to input from the committee, and present results to the committee;
- Work closely with the Global Alliance secretariat;
- Research key questions above, present results, and prepare public-facing documents to share with partners;
- Identify and engage key partners and advisors to inform process and work;
- Prepare research, key inputs, and materials, for an ongoing process of engagement, which might include small group meetings, webinars, a strategic convening in spring 2019 and International Dialogue in 2020;
- And adapt as the research evolves.

The consultant(s) will NOT be responsible for organizing the logistics of the meetings, webinars, and convenings, but will provide strategic advice on the engagement process.

Key milestones

2018

August Selection of consultant team

September	Project kick off
December	Preliminary presentation of research results to GA
2019	
February	Presentation of key inputs for strategic convening
Spring	Strategic convening
June-November	Final products/materials prepared for 2020 International Dialogue

Budget

We will accept proposals in the range of \$40,000-60,000 USD.

3. ABOUT THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR THE FUTURE OF FOOD'S APPROACH

The consultant/team will demonstrate an understanding of the Global Alliance's history, principles, strategy, impact areas, and approach.

Together, and with others, the Global Alliance's strategy is to leverage our resources to:

- **FORGE NEW INSIGHTS and STRENGTHEN EVIDENCE** – We develop research and tools based on systems perspectives and built on diverse knowledge and evidence. This approach helps us as a global community to understand and assess interrelationships, dependencies, priorities, risks, and trade-offs, and to craft meaningful solutions through their ability to highlight what's wrong with the current system and point to changes needed to bring about a more desirable future.
- **CONVENE KEY FOOD SYSTEMS ACTORS and FACILITATE MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE** – We facilitate authentic, meaningful, and actionable dialogue amongst diverse agents of change – the scientific community, grassroots movements, policymakers, farmers, the private sector, Indigenous Peoples, and others – committed to food systems reform, so that, together, we can better understand the system, co-create the solutions we need, and inform action within our respective constituencies.
- **STIMULATE LOCAL and GLOBAL ACTION for TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE** – We connect global and local perspectives, knowledge, and understandings, with the recognition that change must be contextually sensitive and grounded in the interactions between local and global processes and scales of change. We stimulate local and global action on food system reform within our member organizations, the broader world of philanthropy, and with partners and allies at the global level, so that we collectively accelerate effective food systems transformation on the ground, across scales and geographies.

The Global Alliance works with Blue Marble Evaluation, a framework for how we make sense of changes at the global systems level and our role vis-à-vis these changes. It is a cutting-edge innovative evaluation approach devised by Michael Quinn Patton and currently developed in collaboration with organizations and institutions working on global issues, including the Global Alliance for the Future of Food and the McKnight Foundation. BME intends to respond to the increasingly complex and interconnected world in which we operate, the global issues we need to deal with, and the multifaceted and entangled changes required for promoting meaningful systems transformations. The BME approach includes:

- **Global Systems Thinking** – Apply Global Systems Thinking to any and all aspects of global systems change, including: target change globally; connect global and local perspectives, knowledge, and understandings; integrate and coordinate interventions across sectors, issues, problems, and traditional program areas.
- **Globalization Knowledge** – Design and implement global initiatives with an understanding of globalization history, patterns, dynamics, issues, and realities, including: know and take into account historical attempts at

global systems change and how they inform present and future interventions; know and take into consideration diverse perspectives on globalization history, patterns, dynamics, issues and realities; and design and implement global initiatives with attention to both formal and informal structures and relationships.

- **Transformational Change** – Ensure that what is called transformational is transformational in degree, nature, scope, speed, and magnitude of change, including: identify systems-based interventions, develop an evidence-based theory of change; catalyze and connect multiple initiatives world-wide; and apply systems thinking and complexity theory to transformational change initiatives globally.

The Global Alliance believes that how we work is a critical component to realizing positive change. Alongside our principles (see above), which express the shared vision of the Global Alliance and provide a diagnostic, assessment, and strategic intervention tool, we are guided by a set of shared operational values that define how we will work together as an alliance and with other partners and allies.

We apply these six operational approaches to our work:

1) Be principles-based and attend to the whole: We are guided by a set of six principles that: are meaningful to those expected to follow them; are adhered to in practice; attend to the interconnected dynamics and interdependencies of the system; and, lead us to the desired results of food systems transformation.

2) Collaborate with all stakeholders: We nurture deep and trusting relationships as the basis for long-term, creative, and productive collaborations, within the Global Alliance and with a broad range of diverse system actors across sectors and scales to advance collective aspirations for systems change.

3) Respect and value difference: We respect diverse institutional and individual perspectives, opinions, outlooks, and lived experience, acknowledging issues of power and approaching relationships with humility, openness, honesty, and a spirit of possibility.

4) Focus on best and highest role: We aim to be a strategic alliance by being needs-based, focused, responsive, and solutions-oriented in order to influence landscape level shifts through achievable goals across timescales suited to our specific role and strengths as an alliance of philanthropic foundations.

5) Remain relevant: Working at the global level, we value understanding the context in which we operate, being relevant across the different geographies and scales where our member foundations work, and connecting the significance of our work with other related initiatives.

6) Learn and adapt: We infuse our work with reflective monitoring and evaluation as we work within complex systems in order to inform structure and strategies, and enhance our effectiveness, if and as our strategic intent requires.

This approach has implications for the transformative food systems research, engagement, and convening we are engaged in. We embrace food systems complexity and strive to take a systems approach. While acknowledging different pathways for change (i.e., social movement, private sector, government, etc.), and different levels of transformation, we seek to accelerate systems transformations and identify catalytic action. The Global Alliance embraces diversity (of stakeholders, areas, perspectives, knowledge, sources) and engages and facilitates dialogue across diverse stakeholders, geographies, disciplines/sectors, and scales. We uphold diverse sources of evidence and knowledge: grey literature, traditional knowledge, community impacts, etc. and strive to capture and report

these diverse perspectives while seeking to find convergence and consensus across different perspectives, as well as acknowledging differences.

The approach outlined above should be reflected in the proposal submitted. The Global Alliance is a lead partner in the research it commissions, playing an active role in framing the research and shaping key messages and insights.

4. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Applicants should provide information on:

- a) Suitability of applicant(s) for this project (including strengths and weaknesses in relation to the request - which sections are within the applicant's strong areas of expertise and which are not)
- b) Work approach / methodology related to each of: addressing research questions / inclusion of diverse evidence / stakeholder identification and engagement
- c) Description of how milestones will be met and presented
- d) Biography or CV of the project lead and any team members who will offer additional expertise
- e) Two writing samples: ideally, these will be reports, articles, or published papers on similar topics
- f) Work schedule (if differs from RFP)
- g) Fee estimate

The criteria for evaluating proposals will include:

- Qualifications of applicant
- Work approach and methodology outlined
- Quality of previous writing projects
- Clarity of the proposal
- Affordability
- Ability to work within the scope and general timeframe

Collaborative proposals are encouraged, so as to draw on the strengths of different researchers. Individual proposals will also be accepted.

Please submit the proposal as a singular PDF document to Lauren Baker, Director of Programs, lauren@futureoffood.org, by Friday 27 July 2018.