

Activity 8.2: Combining economic, social and environmental objectives in a European perspective – Paths towards a sustainable development
Area 8.2.1 Socio-economic development trajectories

SSH.2011.2.1-1. „Economic, social and political conditions for satisfying the world food needs”

“The Challenge

The Food and Agriculture Organisation FAO estimates that more than one billion people are undernourished worldwide in 2009 (the highest absolute number at any time since 1970) and that hunger is likely to spread if, as expected, the world population grows from 6 to more than 9 billion in 2050 and if food production does not increase drastically.

The obstacles on the road to hunger reduction are many and complex. In particular, there are long term change factors which affect the cost of food throughout the world (high food demand, climate change, biofuel consumption, financial speculation, low stocks, and higher oil and fertilizer prices). Since the 1980s, agriculture has increasingly been neglected in many less developed countries, in particular because it had become cheaper for them to import foodstuffs on the international market and more profitable to invest in agricultural niches for exportation. Access to free world trade may have dire effects on the food security of poor countries. There is thus a need to address the agricultural policies of the least developed countries in order to improve the variety of products, adapt their agricultural capacities, redirect investments where necessary and increase self-sufficiency and sustainability. Besides, aspects of international trade policies, international speculation on food markets, the role of multinational firms, increasing use of intellectual property rights, the renting of vast agricultural territories in parts of Africa, the debilitating effect of political conflicts in some regions have also been suggested among others to explain actual and potential food shortages.

This challenge aims to bring the whole array of social sciences and the humanities into the analysis of food needs and food politics. It thus goes beyond and should complement the mere technical or technological inputs for agriculture. It should see how more food can be provided to help feed the increasing world population and how food can be better produced and distributed among the world population.

Why it matters for Europe

Given their historical, political, cultural and economic weight in the countries most affected by hunger (Asia and Pacific with 642 million people, Sub-Saharan Africa with 265 million, Latin America and the Caribbean with 53 million, Near East and North Africa with 42 million), the EU and its Member States have a role to play - through a number of policies, among which the external trade policy, the common agricultural policy and the development policy - in addressing food shortages in depressed world regions suffering from hunger.

These policies serve many potentially opposite purposes and a large array of various actors with different interests, cultures and resources in Europe itself and abroad. Can they be steered in a direction that contributes to relieving the hunger problem? How can Europe gather its acts effectively to help the developing countries with food problems?

The EU must lead an active diplomacy in international fora to push for more effective shortterm hunger crisis aid and, in particular, for structural aid that will help poor countries ensure their own food security policies. The World Summit on Food Security and the recent reform of the Committee on World Food Security and the debate on "the right to adequate food" illustrate the current international efforts in the domain. Also, the World Trade Organisation remains an essential forum where the outcome of negotiations is likely to have

a huge impact on the countries most affected by food crises.

Addressing the challenge

Research dimensions to be taken in consideration:

- The agricultural policies of the regions struck by hunger need to be analysed and compared over time, including all relevant dimensions such as land property and land reform, international trade, economic interests, evolving local diets in order to see how such regions and/or countries can develop food sovereignty. Research could also analyse how the EU Member States most involved in development aid coordinate (or not) their efforts between themselves and with the EU.

- There is ground to develop surveillance systems that monitor food deficits and food surpluses, anticipate hunger problems and enable adapted actions (such as food storage for instance) in order to buffer the worst effects of food crises. Are there lessons that can be drawn from past experiences? How could the EU and its Member States cooperate to manage such systems?

- Given the modes of consumption in rich countries, not only in terms of variety of cultures but also in terms of environmental impact (in particular rich meat diets and their impact on expanding livestock and overgrazing, or large food wastes, or also energy needs resulting in the development of bio-fuels, for instance) what are the trends in the demand side of the food/energy/agricultural equation in Europe? Foresight could be developed up to 2030/2050.

- There are growing hopes but also concerns about the commercialisation and intellectual property protection of natural substances and in particular of genetically modified crops (GMOs) because of their impact on the situation of farmers and consumers and on the biodiversity of the developing countries, as well as the low consumer acceptance in some countries. Can intellectual property rights and GMOs be used as tools in agricultural policies against hunger? Which direct or indirect interests are at play, and how can the least developed

countries mostly affected by food crises take advantage of expertise in this matter?

- How can the countries struck with food security problems and the EU work out together at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) trade mechanisms which support more sustainable modes of food production and consumption that will help both producers and consumers in the respective countries? In that perspective, research could investigate the link between the EU trade and agricultural policies and how the Common Agricultural Policy should progressively adapt to new conditions."

Funding scheme: Collaborative project (large scale integrated research project)

Für dieses Förderthema ist als Förderinstrument ein **Collaborative project¹ (large-scale integrating project)** vorgegeben.

Die **minimale Fördersumme für Projektanträge in diesem Topic liegt bei 6,5 Mio. € pro Antrag.**

Diese Summe stellt eine Mindestanforderung dar. Projektanträge, die eine finanzielle Unterstützung der Europäischen Kommission unterhalb dieser Grenze beantragen, werden nicht zur Evaluierung zugelassen.

An Projektanträgen müssen mindestens 7 voneinander unabhängige Partner aus mindestens 7 Mitglieds- oder Assoziierten Staaten beteiligt sein.

Dieses Topic ist unter dem **Call-Identifizier FP7-SSH-2011-1** ausgeschrieben. Projektanträge mit diesem Förderinstrument müssen bis zum **02. Februar 2011, 17:00 Uhr** (Ortszeit Brüssel) per [EPSS \(„Electronic Proposal Submission Service“\)](#) eingereicht werden.

Alle notwendigen Unterlagen zur Einreichung von Anträgen zu diesem Topic finden Sie auf der [Cordis-Webseite](#).

Bitte wenden Sie sich bei Fragen zur Antragstellung jederzeit an die Nationale Kontaktstelle Sozial-, Wirtschafts- und Geisteswissenschaften!

Unsere Kontaktdaten finden Sie unter:

<http://www.nks-swg.de/de/ansprechpartner.php>

¹ Verbundprojekte („*Collaborative Research Projects*“, CP) sind Forschungsprojekte, die von Konsortien mit Partnern aus verschiedenen Ländern und dem Ziel durchgeführt werden, neues Wissen, neue Technologien, Produkte, Verfahren oder Dienstleistungen zu entwickeln. Größe, Gegenstandsbereich und interne Organisation der Projekte können je nach Förderbereich und thematischem Schwerpunkt unterschiedlich gestaltet sein. Prinzipiell unterscheidet man zwischen kleinen bis mittelgroßen Verbundprojekten („*small or medium-scale focused research projects*“) und großen integrierten Projekten („*large-scale integrating projects*“).