



Ensuring Food Systems Nurture Humanity and the Planet

Columbia Climate School's Food for Humanity Initiative Strategy 2025 – 2030

Arranged by
The Food for Humanity Initiative

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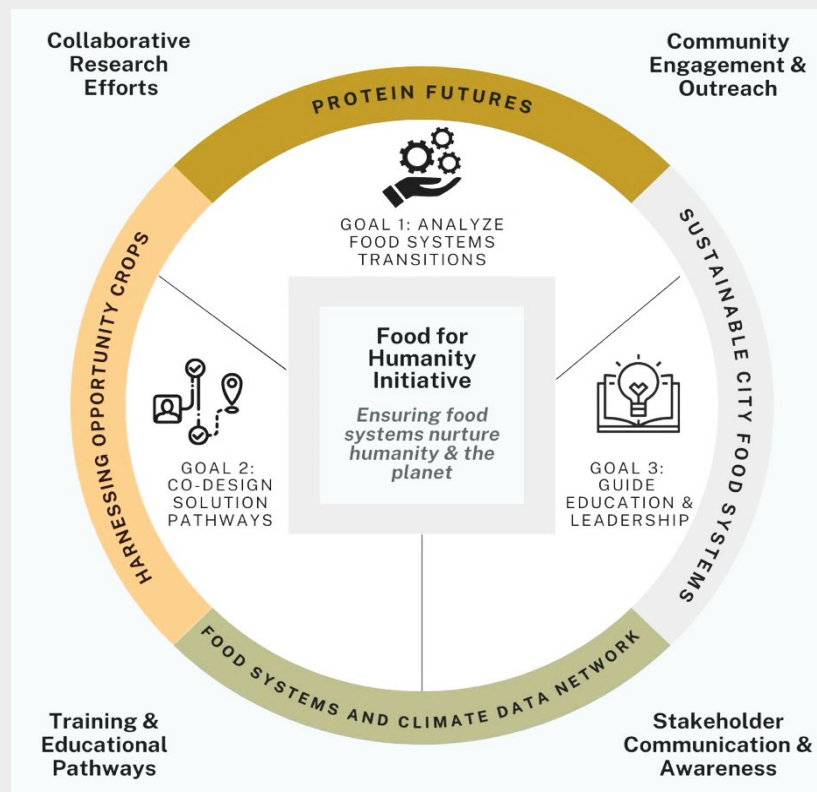


Overview



Food systems are the lifeline between climate change, environmental sustainability, optimal diets, and nutrition outcomes. Yet food systems face increasing fragility in the larger context of massive world order disruption and reconfiguration. The range of challenges experienced by countries—none of which have a monopoly on food systems successes or failures—points to the complexities of food systems. We need to understand and apply political will and science to address the current challenges of today's world and realize a resilient, equitable global food system.

The **Food for Humanity Initiative (F4Hi)** at the Columbia Climate School envisions a just transformation of food systems that supports the adaptive capacity to climate variability and change, promotes environmental sustainability, provides reliable livelihoods, ensures access to healthy diets, and optimizes better health and nutrition for everyone. We are a multidisciplinary collaborative network that brings together people and projects on food systems research, teaching, policy, and programming from across Columbia University. Our work touches on the complexities of food systems, with activities around health, agriculture, the environment, equity, and justice.



Our vision is supported by research, policy, and education goals. Specifically, we aim to:

- **Analyze food systems transitions:** Investigate and analyze how food systems can transition toward equitable, sustainable pathways and assess trade-offs between human health, climate, ecosystems, poverty, and labor conditions.
- **Co-design solution pathways:** Co-develop solutions for policymakers, communities, and other partners toward climate-resilient, equitable, and nutritious food systems, prioritizing the most vulnerable and marginalized.
- **Guide education and leadership:** Educate students, professionals, and the public about the complexities of the global food system and prepare the next generation of food systems leaders and change agents.

Collaboration is the cornerstone of our approach. Situated within the Columbia Climate School, we aim to tackle the complexities of food systems challenges from an interdisciplinary perspective, with climate as a cross-cutting theme. We reach across Columbia University's schools, departments, and centers to bring together a diverse set of experts, practitioners, researchers, and students. Sitting in New York City, we engage directly in the global processes of food governance and international policymaking.

We work across a set of cross-cutting areas toward food systems transformation, drawing from our multi-disciplinary expertise as well as our unique niche and comparative advantage. These cross-cutting areas are:



- *Food systems and climate data network:* The state of food systems measurements needs to be advanced to capture the complexities of interactions. This can be done by integrating climate information, using artificial intelligence (AI), models, satellite imagery, and more.
- *Protein futures:* The consequences of a shift to alternative proteins, as well as the necessary evidence, frameworks, policies, and regulations required for this shift, are largely unknown. Finding consensus on these political, cultural, and ethical issues is essential.
- *Sustainable city food systems:* These activities will help restore local food systems where it makes economic and political sense. They will also support outcomes that improve food access, equity, and local nutritional outcomes while strengthening regional food systems.
- *Harnessing opportunity crops for climate and nutrition resilience:* We will work to better understand if and how opportunity crops can ensure climate and nutrition resilience among empowered communities.