

DESCRIBE, DIAGNOSE, DECIDE: A NEW DASHBOARD TO SUPPORT KENYA'S FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

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KEY MESSAGES

Kenya is committed to transforming its food systems. Doing so is essential to overcome its persistent struggles with food and nutrition insecurity; conserve its stunning natural environment; and mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects, which are already being felt across the country.

The Kenya **Food Systems Dashboard**, unveiled in February 2024 and managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, brings together much-needed data to support this food systems transformation. It includes an overview of Kenya's food system, offering valuable insights into both opportunities and challenges.

Featuring at least 70 carefully curated data visualizations and diagnostics, Kenya's Food Systems Dashboard can support policymakers, non-governmental organizations, businesses, civil society leaders, and others to: understand key dimensions of Kenya's food systems; perform comparisons in-country; and identify key challenges. Kenyan users can also consult the data on the global Food Systems Dashboard to understand how Kenya's food system compares to others.



KENYA'S COMMITMENT TO FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

Though Kenya has a rich and vibrant food culture and has been making steady progress on tackling many forms of malnutrition, its food systems still struggle to meet the basic nutrition needs of its people, with some 27% of the population undernourished.¹

Sparked by the 2021 United Nations Food System Summit (UNFSS), Kenya devised an ambitious plan to transform its food systems to *'build prosperity through inclusive, innovative, collaborative, and dynamic food systems, based on data-driven decisions, ensuring access to diverse diets from climate-resilient production in every region of the country.'*²

This plan, aligned with Kenya's Vision 2030³, focused on sustainable agricultural methods, encouraging diverse diets, and strengthening value chains to guarantee fair food access. It also recognised that Kenya's vision for food systems transformation hinges on forming partnerships and embracing innovation.

Four specific actions focusing on food and nutrition security were identified as key to realising the transformation plan:

1. Increasing the number of young people and women with access to the productive resources they require to thrive in food systems;
2. Increasing the uptake of digital agricultural solutions;
3. Improving the diversity of diets including fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat and fish, as well as grains; and
4. Heightening climate action to build the resilience of Kenya's people.



Despite a change of administration, the Kenyan government remains committed to developing and implementing pathways and policies essential for driving food systems transformation. Such transformation is expected to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Kenya's Vision 2030. Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is working to support this food systems transformation agenda, including by helping to popularize the launch of the Kenya Food Systems Dashboard and its adoption at the county (sub-national) levels.

Food systems encompass an entire range of actors – including, but not limited to, farmers, traders, processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, and consumers – and the processes that get food from the fields to markets to tables. Well-functioning food systems can ensure the availability, accessibility, and affordability of nutritious foods for healthy diets.

¹ The Food Systems Dashboard. The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). 2023. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36072/db>.

² [Kenyan Food Systems – A Call to Action 2021](#)

³ Launched in 2008, Kenya Vision 2030 is the long-term development blueprint for the country and is motivated by a collective aspiration for a better society by the year 2030. <https://vision2030.go.ke/>

WHAT IS THE FOOD SYSTEMS DASHBOARD?

The Food Systems Dashboard (FSD)⁴ is a unique resource that offers a comprehensive view of food systems across the globe by consolidating data from multiple sources for hundreds of indicators and providing analysis and guidance on how to use this data. The FSD was launched in 2020 as a joint initiative between GAIN, Johns Hopkins University (whose role has since been assumed by the Columbia Climate School), and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and supported by many partners.⁵

Designed for policymakers, non-governmental organizations, researchers, businesses, civil society leaders, and other stakeholders, the FSD facilitates the timely visualization of national food systems. It helps in understanding interconnections across multiple sectors, making comparisons between countries, identifying key challenges, and prioritizing actions⁶. For more information about key components of the FSD, see Box A.

To our knowledge, the FSD is the first tool that gathers country-level data across all food system components. By offering in-depth analysis and guidance on how to leverage this data, the FSD is a valuable asset in the pursuit of improved food system outcomes and impacts. Stakeholders can use it to set actionable priorities and monitor progress.

The Dashboard has the potential to halve the time required to gather the relevant data, helping public agencies and private entities to grasp the three Ds more rapidly: Describe, Diagnose, and then Decide

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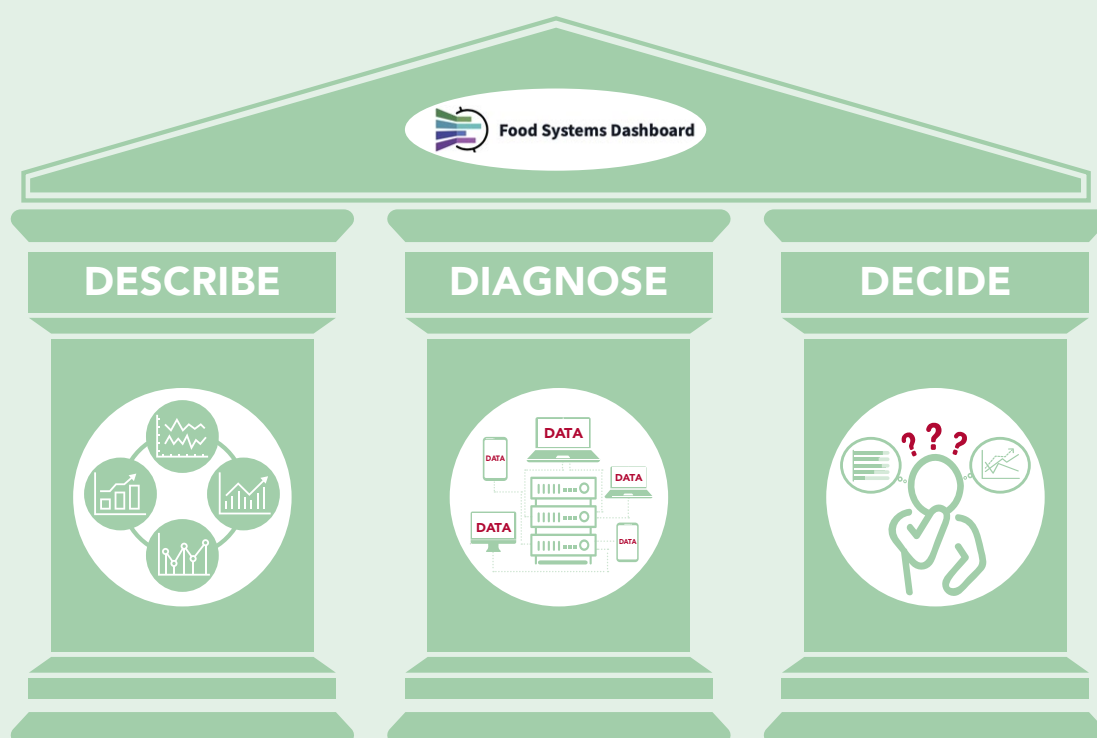
⁴ Link to Global Food Systems Dashboard: <https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org/>

⁵ Including the Rockefeller Foundation, Johns Hopkins University's Alliance for a Healthier World, German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Irish Aid, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands, IDRC, and Swiss Development Corporation.

⁶ For an example of its use to policymakers, see "Using the Food Systems Dashboard to examine the food supply, nutrition, and health outcomes in Kenya & Tanzania for policymakers." Brief #2. March 2023. Online at <https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org/resources/Transformation%20Brief%20-%20Food%20supply%20in%20Kenya%20&%20Tanzania-Mar27.pdf>



Box A: The Global Food Systems Dashboard's three pillars: Describe, Diagnose, Decide



Describe

The FSD consolidates existing data from over 275 indicators, offering users a comprehensive perspective on food systems, covering their drivers, components, and outcomes. These indicators are sourced from over 40 public and private entities, including United Nations agencies, the World Bank, the Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research (CGIAR), Euromonitor, and cross-country project-based datasets. Continuously updated, the FSD incorporates new indicators, ensuring that users have access to the most recent and relevant data for informed decision-making and analysis.

Diagnose

Each country's performance is evaluated based on 39 diagnostic indicators that encompass food supply chains, food environments, nutrition and health outcomes, and environmental outcomes. For every indicator, countries are categorized into green (indicating that challenges here are unlikely), yellow (indicating potential challenges), or red (indicating likely challenges), providing a clear visual representation of their strengths and areas needing improvement.

Decide

The FSD incorporates policies and actions focused on enhancing diets, nutrition, and environmental sustainability. Stakeholders can explore and prioritize these actions according to the specific requirements of their food systems, fostering a tailored approach to address their unique challenges and goals.

Find out more about the Food Systems Dashboard and how to navigate it by visiting <http://foodsystemsdashboard.org/countries/ken/subnational-data>.

A NEW DASHBOARD FOR KENYA

Expanding on the global FSD initiative, the FSD team has sought to develop sub-national dashboards for several countries, including Kenya. These Country Food Systems Dashboards apply the framework of the global FSD at a subnational level, providing data for comparing across regions within a country. This offers a deeper and more nuanced look at local food systems. Kenya's dashboard⁷, launched in February 2024, allows for comparing the drivers, components, and outcomes of food systems at the county level, providing valuable insights into potential policy priorities.

Many aspects of transforming Kenya's food system will need to be applied nationally. However, given the country's diversity of agroecological zones, as well as its varied challenges and opportunities in the food and nutrition sector, different regions will also likely have different priorities and resource needs. This makes it essential to disaggregate national statistics to gain local insights. Kenya's FSD helps do this by consolidating data that are typically fragmented and difficult to access into a comprehensive and accessible resource.

Kenya's FSD aligns with the Kenya Kwanza Government's focus on data management and digitization. Furthermore, the FSD complements various initiatives such as the upcoming Agriculture Statistical Data Gateway (Kilimo Stat⁸) and the National Information Platform for Food Security and Nutrition (NIPFN), enhancing the overall landscape of data-driven decision-making in the country.

7 The dashboard can be found online at: <https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org/countries/ken/subnational-data>

8 Kilimo Stat: <https://statistics.kilimo.go.ke/>

9 i.e., living below the threshold set by the World Bank of less than US\$2.97 per person, per day

10 Samburu, Bomet, Siaya, Wajir, Turkana



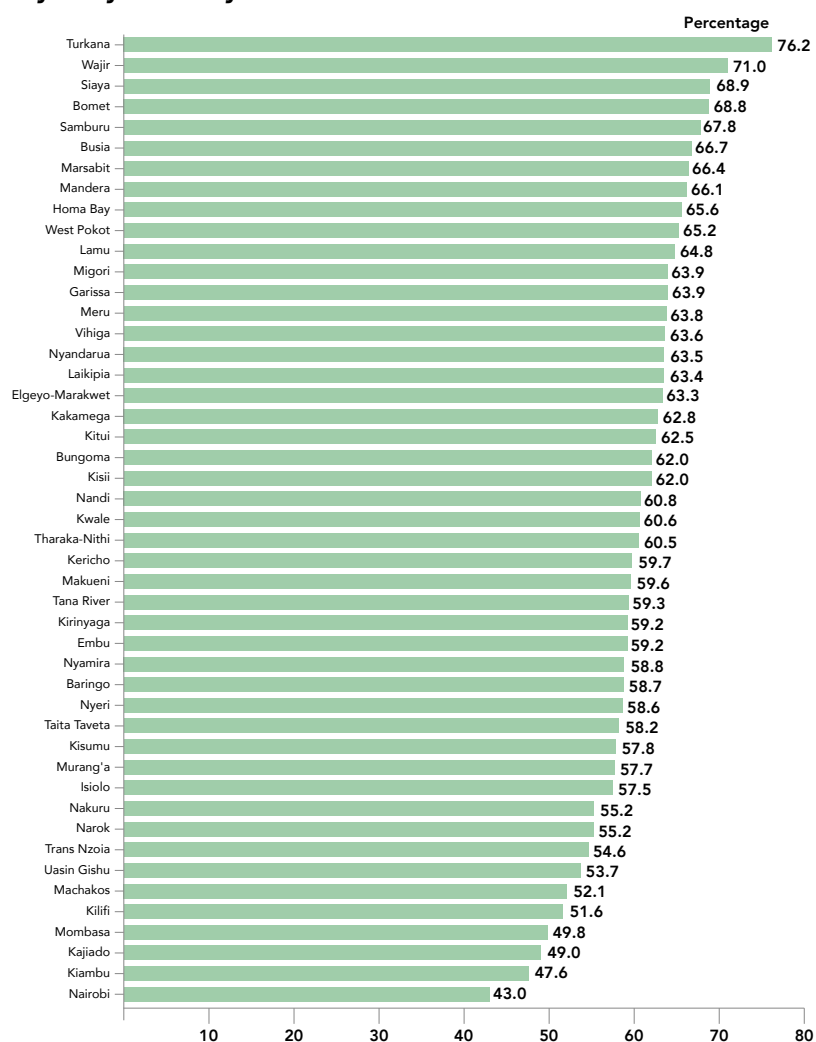
Box B: Subnational and global perspectives – an example

The global FSD tells us that in Kenya nationally, households spend on average 55% of their budgets on food and beverages. For households on low incomes⁹, the same figure is 67%. The global FSD reminds us:

“ Low-income countries tend to spend a larger percentage of their income on food. As income increases, food expenditure increases as well, but not as fast, as households devote more of their budget to non-food items. Low-income households spending a large portion of their income on food are more vulnerable to income or price shocks, which may lead to reductions in the quality or quantity of food consumed. ”

Kenya's FSD shows us the breakdown of this same figure sub-nationally (Figure 1). It varies from 43% of the budget spent on food in Nairobi to 76.2% in Turkana County, **exceeding the national average of 55% in 39 of the 47** counties. It also exceeds the 67% estimated for low-income households in five counties¹⁰. This type of mapping can suggest the counties where more households might struggle to afford nourishing, diverse diets – suggesting priority areas for interventions focusing on improving food affordability or increasing incomes.

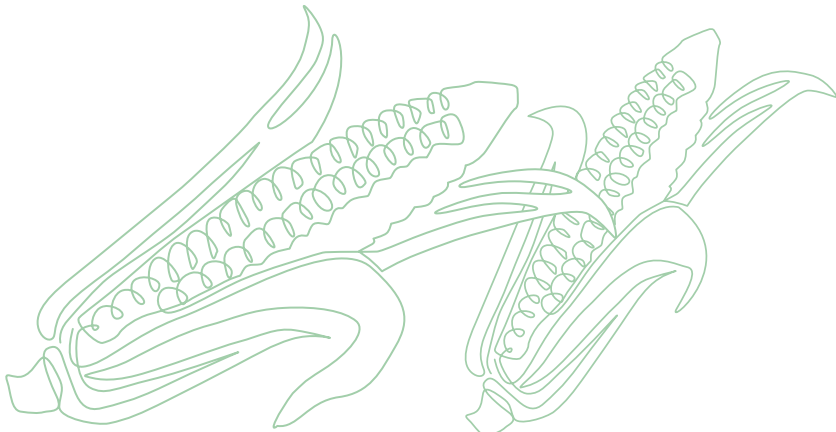
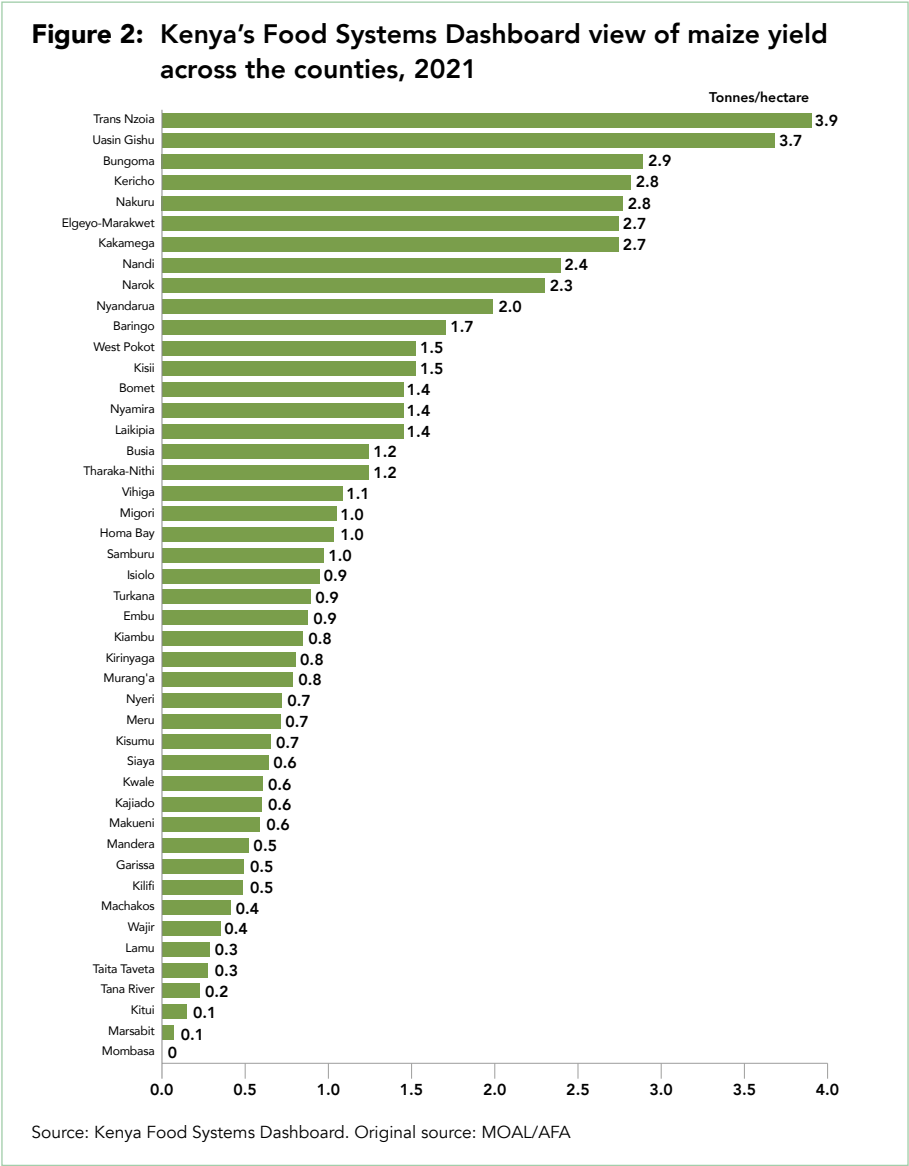
Figure 1: Estimated proportion of household spending on food and beverages, 2016, by Kenyan county



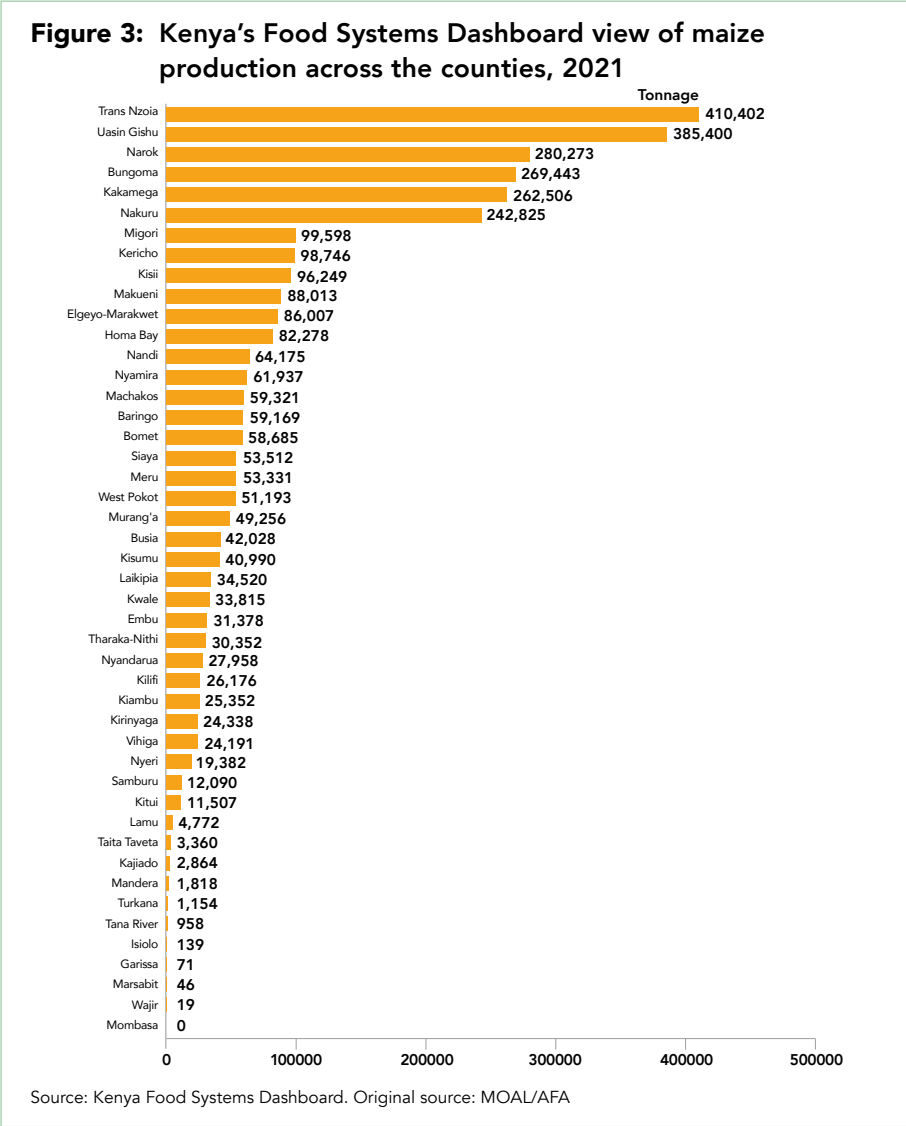
Source: Kenya FSD, 2016 data. Original source KIHBS

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE DATA

How can disaggregated data help better target support? Considering production of key crops as an example, Kenya’s FSD shows the distribution of production and yields by county for key crops like maize and beans, as well as several other nutritious foods like tomatoes and kale. The latest maize yield map (Figure 2) shows yields in 2021, which vary from a high of 3.9 tonnes/ha in Trans Nzoia County to a low of 0.52 tonnes/ha in Mandera County. The maize production map (Figure 3) similarly shows how production is distributed. The data suggest that if the top-ten maize producing counties had maize yields of 3.21 tonnes per hectare (the average yield of the top-five-yielding counties in 2021), maize production from these counties could have been around 38% higher.



As Kenya progresses with its determined efforts to implement its ambitious food system transformation plans, it is poised to serve as a leading example for other nations aspiring to transform their food systems. The new Kenya Food Systems Dashboard stands as a comprehensive repository of food system data, poised to steer this transformation process and guarantee action based on solid evidence.







CALL TO ACTION

The Government of Kenya is unwavering in its commitment to formulate and execute strategies and policies crucial for steering the transformation of food systems. Central to the development and implementation of these policies is the reliance on data and evidence. The Kenya Food Systems Dashboard (Kenya FSD) offers a comprehensive and nuanced examination of local food systems, facilitating comparisons of drivers, components, and outcomes at the national and county levels. This, in turn, provides valuable insights into potential policy priorities. We urge both the National and County governments to consider investing in the routine collection and maintenance of data through the Kenya FSD. The national and county governments should leverage the dashboard to inform decision-making processes and generate statistical briefs for public consumption. This proactive approach will enhance understanding and interconnectedness across various sectors, enable comparisons between counties, identify key challenges, and aid in prioritizing sustainable actions.

Healthier diets. For all.

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