



Conscious Food Systems Alliance: Call for Proposals for Conscious Food Incubator 2023 Guidelines for Applicants

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The Conscious Food Systems Alliance

Introduction to CoFSA

The Conscious Food Systems Alliance (CoFSA), convened by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is a movement of food, agriculture, and consciousness practitioners united around a common goal: **to support people from across food and agriculture systems to cultivate the inner capacities that activate systemic change and regeneration.**

The vision of the Alliance is anchored in the realisation that we have the science, technical capacity and technological tools needed to transform food systems; however, these solutions are not delivering the impact needed. To understand why, we must examine **our collective blind spots** and look beyond the problems' symptoms, patterns and structures, at what fundamentally drives the systems. **Consciousness and mental models** are increasingly recognized as the key to unlock systems change.

Often, the human inner factors driving the problems we face are overlooked and present critical barriers to the impact of solutions. To transform food systems, we must work not only on policy, research and project implementation, but also on the **inner drivers of individual, collective and institutional behaviours.**

On this basis, CoFSA promotes the **cultivation of *inner capacities*** – our individual and collective awareness, mindsets, beliefs, values, worldviews, and associated (cognitive, emotional and relational) qualities and skills - **as a key complementary approach** to activate the adaptation, implementation, and sustained impact of transformative solutions.

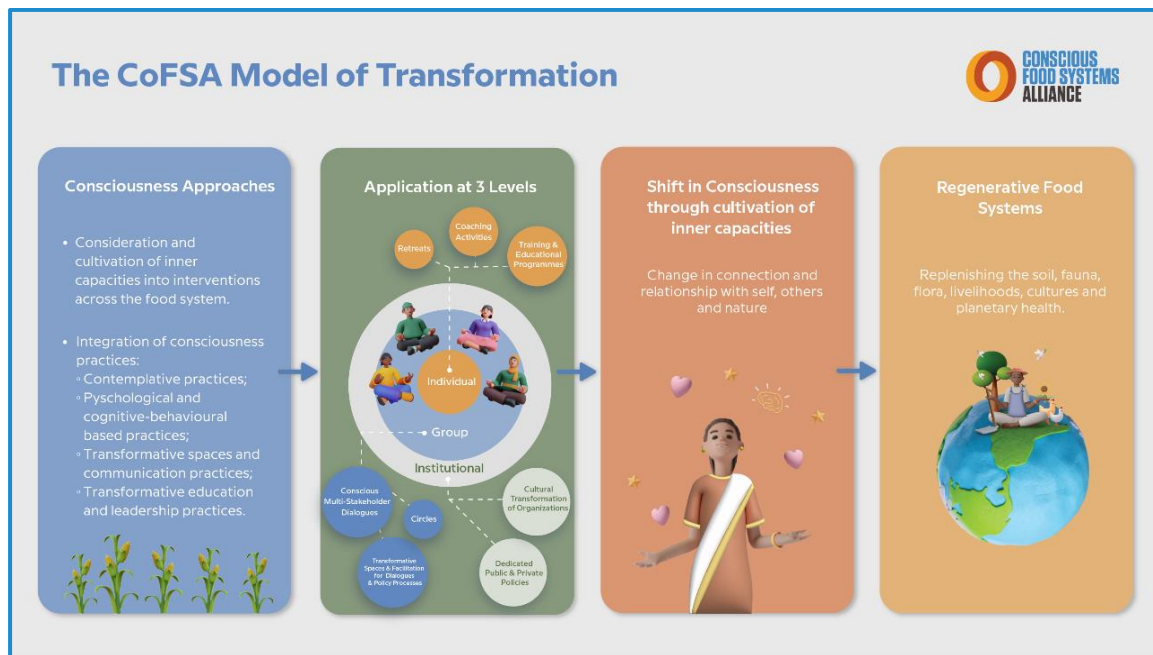
It does this by:

- **Convening a Community of Practice and Learning:** CoFSA brings together an intentional community of peers, supported by a collaborative digital platform, where individuals and organizations can connect, learn and exchange knowledge, support and inspire each other, and collaborate to build conscious food systems.
- **Pioneering the application of consciousness approaches and practices:** across food systems, through a global portfolio of interventions, including the delivery of trainings, coaching and facilitation services, supported by research and learning frameworks.

More information of the Conscious Food Systems Alliance can be found at our website: <https://consciousfoodsystems.org/>.

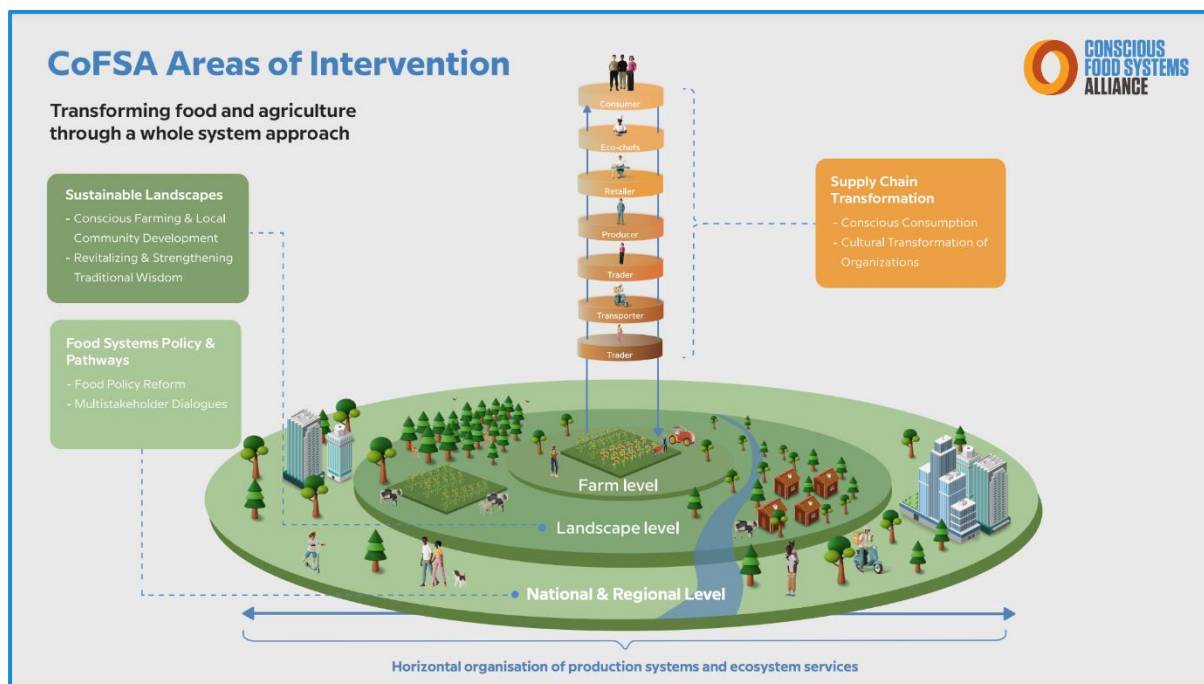
What is a CoFSA Intervention?

CoFSA Interventions work with a diversity of **consciousness approaches** that support the **consideration and cultivation of inner capacities into interventions to support food systems transformation, at the individual, group and institutional levels.**



CoFSA Interventions focus on supporting food systems transformation across three main areas (see more details in Annex II):

- **Food Systems Policy and Pathways**
 - **Food Policy Reform:** to improve the quality of interaction of policy-makers, and to support them in designing policies that integrate a more 'compassionate' and systemic approach.
 - **Multi-stakeholder Dialogues:** to create safe, connecting, and transformative spaces for conscious multi-stakeholder dialogues in food systems contexts.
- **Sustainable Landscapes**
 - **Conscious Farming and Local Community Development:** to improve the wellbeing and resilience of farmers and their communities, and help them cultivate regenerative mindsets and agricultural practices.
 - **Revitalizing and Strengthening Traditional Wisdom:** to promote traditional cultural practices and knowledge that support regenerative food systems
- **Supply Chain Transformation**
 - **Cultural Transformation of Organizations:** to support the cultivation of regenerative mindsets, values and skills that catalyze supply chain transformation.
 - **Conscious Consumption:** to support the adoption of more healthy, sustainable and local diets, and strengthen traditional food cultures.



CoFSA approaches food systems transformation by working with **all relevant stakeholder groups across food systems**, including consumers, companies, governments, development agencies, academia, global and local NGOs, local communities, and farmers and food producers.

Consciousness approaches can leverage certain practices which actively support the cultivation of inner capacities. They include a vast range of:

- **Contemplative mind-body practices**, often rooted in a variety of wisdom-based traditions (e.g. nature connection and mindfulness),
- **Psychological and cognitive-behavioural based practices** (e.g. self-reflection and-inquiry practices),
- **Transformative spaces and communication practices** (e.g. deep listening and Non-violent Communication),
- **Transformative education and leadership practices** (e.g. experiential learning).

These can be applied at three interconnected levels:

- **Individual:** through trainings, educational programmes, and retreats, as well as coaching activities;
- **Group (collective):** by building safe, connecting, and transformative spaces and networks for conscious multi-stakeholder dialogues and platforms;
- **Institutional:** by supporting the cultural transformation of organizations, dedicated public and private policies;

CoFSA Interventions commit to follow the Principles for Cultivating Inner Capacities, which emphasize the need for context-specific and culturally relevant interventions, founded on respect and equity, as well as awareness of power dynamics. Interventions should be supported by a diversity of evidence and knowledge (see more detail in Annex II).



CoFSA Interventions **commit to share learnings** with the CoFSA Community of Practice by leveraging the **CoFSA Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework** [here](#).

More information on conscious food interventions can be found in the [CoFSA Rationale for Action report](#) and the [CoFSA Collection of Case Studies](#).

The Conscious Food Incubator

Objectives

The Conscious Food Incubator intends **to support the experimentation of innovative approaches to transform food systems through the cultivation of inner capacities, to scale up and accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** The cultivation of inner capacities for regenerative food systems constitutes a new field of practice which requires testing and innovation to identify, develop and nurture potentially transformative solutions.

The Conscious Food Incubator creates a space for **collective experimentation and learning**, through prototyping and testing different approaches for cultivating inner capacities of stakeholder across food systems, **which can inspire scaling up of successful experiences.** The learnings and solutions generated through the Conscious Food Incubator are intended to support people in cultivating and applying these capacities and approaches, while also embedding them in UNDP's own ways of working, to maximise development impact towards the SDGs.

The **objectives** of the Conscious Food Incubator are the following:

- To **test and demonstrate** how consciousness approaches can strengthen inner capacities that in turn help accelerate the transformation of food systems to make them more regenerative, sustainable and equitable.
- To **generate a set of learnings and learning resources** – in the form of case studies, training materials, trainers and partners – which can be used to **scale-up** the integration of consciousness-based practices and strengthening of inner capacities for food systems transformation.

Through this first round of call for proposals for the Conscious Food Incubator, UNDP will fund approximately **four pilot interventions of up to US \$20,000.**

What do grantees get?

- Receive an grant of up to **US \$20,000** to implement their conscious food intervention;
- **Technical support** from CoFSA Secretariat to refine your intervention strategy, facilitate implementation (e.g. connections with relevant CoFSA partners) and support the capitalization of lessons learnt leveraging the CoFSA MEL framework;
- UNDP CoFSA will promote the selected Conscious Food intervention to a broader audience across its network.

Commitments

Grantees are required to make the following commitments:

- To complete implementation of their conscious food intervention and related deliverables within the agreed milestones and timeframe;
- To adhere to and sign **UNDP Low-Value Grants Agreement ([here](#))**;
- To share regular (at least monthly) updates on the intervention progress with the CoFSA Secretariat by email and/or calls;
- To act in accordance with the CoFSA Values (Annex IV) and Principles for Cultivating Inner Capacities (Annex III) in all activities related to the intervention;

- To share learnings with the CoFSA Community of Practice and Learning, leveraging the CoFSA MEL Framework.

Who can participate?

Eligibility criteria

1. **Eligible Entity:**
 - a. Civil society and (national or international) non-governmental organizations, including non-governmental academic or educational institutions.
 - b. Private sector and commercial entities, and governmental organizations (e.g. regional governments, municipalities, etc.) are not eligible.
 - c. Individuals are not eligible.
 - d. Partnerships between eligible organisations or institutions are permitted, but a lead applicant is required. All partners must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant.
2. **CoFSA Interventions criteria:** the proposed intervention must meet the CoFSA Interventions criteria (Annex I).
3. **CoFSA Principles:** the proposed intervention must generally align with CoFSA Principles for Cultivating Inner Capacities (Annex III).
4. **Application Form and Award Amount:** The Applicant must apply for an Award of up to \$20,000 and submit a duly completed application form.
5. Applicants cannot be on the UNDP Vendor Ineligibility List (See the UNDP Vendor Sanctions Policy [here](#)).

Geographic Focus: There is no specific geographic focus or restriction on the location of beneficiaries or applicants for the Conscious Food Incubator. Interventions can target stakeholders at local, regional and/or global levels, they can focus on one country or have multi-country focus (e.g. through online delivery options). Proposals can be submitted by applicants in any location.

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

All grant proposals will be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee comprised of relevant UNDP representatives. The Evaluation Committee will assess proposals according to the following evaluation criteria:

1. **Strategic Relevance for CoFSA Agenda and Learning:** proposals will be assessed on their strategic relevance to advance CoFSA agenda (such as core areas of interventions etc.) as well as commitment and potential to advancing learning on conscious food systems. (30%)
2. **Quality of Intervention:** the coherence, clarity, and overall quality of the proposal (including relevance of the proposed budget) will be carefully assessed, as well as the expertise and experience of the project team or delivery partner(s). (30%)
3. **Implementation Capacity:** all Applicants must demonstrate their expertise and capacity to implement their proposed interventions within the set timeframe, in particular adequate financial, material, human and other non-financial resources, and an advanced proposed design of the intervention. At a minimum, Applicants will need to have at least 2 years of experience in the relevant sector. (30%)
4. **Application of CoFSA Principles:** the extent to which the CoFSA principles are applied will be carefully appraised (e.g. fine-tuning to adapt to the local context, harnessing local resources and a plurality of knowledge and wisdom, sensitivity in tackling power dynamics, etc.). (10%)



The diversity of the portfolio of interventions (including geographic, thematic, target beneficiaries, etc.) may also be considered by the evaluation panel. Where multiple proposals of similar quality are received, priority will be given to proposals which benefit stakeholders in low/middle income countries.

Evaluation and Selection Decision

All duly completed applications submitted before the deadline will be reviewed against the eligibility criteria. For those Applicants that fail to pass this initial review, the selection process ends here.

Duly completed applications, submitted before the deadline, and passing the eligibility check will be evaluated by a UNDP Selection Committee. Applications will be assessed and ranked following the Evaluation and Selection Criteria. The minimum threshold for selected grantees is a total score of 60%. The highest ranked applicants (approximately four) will be awarded up to \$20,000 each to implement their intervention.

The final decision for awarding is made according to the ranking list and contingent on approval from the Project Board, Nature Hub Management and, if applicable, additional Due Diligence.

Following the award decision, the selected Applicants will be offered to sign the Low-Value Grants Agreement. Prior to contract signature, UNDP and successful applicants will agree on specific activities, outputs, and timetables for the implementation of the intervention. Awarding is done under the general provisions of the **Low-Value Grants Agreement** ([here](#)), and the payment is done based on UNDP rules.

Applicants not selected for grant will be notified of the decision via email once the evaluation and awarding decision has been completed and award/s have been approved and signed. More information on **UNDP's Low-Value Grants Policy** can be found [here](#).

Implementation and Monitoring of Interventions

Implementation

The Awardee must carry out the intervention carefully and efficiently in accordance with the intervention plan and budget, respecting the provisions of the Low-Value Grants Agreement. Any significant deviation from the Intervention workplan (e.g., changes of timetables, or proposed milestones are not achieved) requires consultation with the UNDP CoFSA Secretariat.

The overall implementation will be overseen by the CoFSA Secretariat. The CoFSA Secretariat will also cooperate with relevant UNDP Country Offices, which will be informed about the progress of the intervention.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout the intervention development and implementation, progress will be monitored through regular updates each month (either by email or calls) between the Awardee and the CoFSA Secretariat to provide updates on the project implementation.

Interventions are required to use the **CoFSA Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework** ([here](#)) (which can be adapted to fit the intervention needs and set-up) to document progress and learning. Awardees will be required to complete a **final report** based on the template provided in the MEL Framework (3-4 pages), as well as co-producing a short **case study** (2-5 pages) of their story of change with support from the CoFSA Secretariat.



The Conscious Food Incubator will be an opportunity to gather lessons on monitoring CoFSA interventions and to refine the Framework.

Disbursement

Disbursement of funds will be made as per milestone deliverables specified in the Intervention plan (initial workplan outlined in Application Form and finalised with CoFSA Secretariat after selection). Namely, the submission and approval of Deliverable 1: Final Intervention Design and Workplan (80%) (*disbursement approximately one month after contract is issued*) and Deliverable 2: Final Report based on the MEL Framework (20%). Grantees will also be required to submit financial and workplan performance information, as specified in the Low-Value Grants Agreement.

In the case that the Awardee fails to perform any of its obligations under the Low-Value Grants Agreement, UNDP shall be under no obligation to issue any further payment upon termination of this Low-Value Grants Agreement, and may, at its sole discretion, require that all or any part of the payments made by the UNDP to the Awardee be repaid to UNDP.

Intellectual Property

Since the solution to a development challenge is generated by the grantee, and not UNDP, the intellectual property for solutions rests with the grant recipient, but through the grant application process, the grantee agrees to give UNDP an irrevocable, unlimited, cost-free license to use the solution in its programmes, and to replicate and disseminate it. The grant recipient retains the right to use the solution for its own commercial benefits.

Additional Information

UNDP implements a policy of zero tolerance on proscribed practices, including fraud, corruption, collusion, unethical practices, and obstruction. UNDP is committed to preventing, identifying and addressing all acts of fraud and corrupt practices against UNDP as well as third parties involved in UNDP activities.

In responding to this Call for Proposals, UNDP requires all Proposers to conduct themselves in a professional, objective and impartial manner, and they must at all times hold UNDP's interests paramount. Proposers must strictly avoid conflicts with other assignments or their own interests, and act without consideration for future work. All Proposers found to have a conflict of interest shall be disqualified. Without limitation on the generality of the above, Proposers, and any of their affiliates, shall be considered to have a conflict of interest with one or more parties in this solicitation process, if they:

- Are or have been associated in the past, with a firm or any of its affiliates which have been engaged by UNDP to provide services for the preparation of the design, Terms of Reference, cost analysis/estimation, and other documents to be used in this competitive selection process;
- Were involved in the preparation and/or design of the programme/project related to the services requested under this Call for Proposals; or
- Are found to be in conflict for any other reason, as may be established by, or at the discretion of, UNDP. In the event of any uncertainty in the interpretation of what is potentially a conflict of interest, proposers must disclose the condition to UNDP and seek UNDP's confirmation on whether or not such conflict exists.



How to Apply

Once completed, submit your **Application Form** ([here](#)) and all supporting documents via email to procurement.rblac.regionalhub@undp.org. Please include "Conscious Food Incubator submission" and the name of the Applicant in the Subject line. Attachments should be no bigger than 10MB.

The deadline for submissions is 18 of August 2023 at 12:00 PM CEST (Central European Summer Time).

Timeline of Key Dates

- Applications open: 6th July
- Information session: Friday 12th July at 3-4:30pm CEST
- Deadline for submissions: 18th August at 12:00pm CEST
- Evaluation & Selection: end of August
- Announce Grantees: September
- Contracting: September
- Implementation: by March 2024

You can also find this call for proposals on the UNDP [Procurement Notices](#) and the [Conscious Food Systems Alliance](#) webpages.

Online information session will be held on **12th July 2023 at 3-4:30pm CEST**. Register [here](#).

If you have any questions, submit to procurement.rblac.regionalhub@undp.org by **21st July 2023**. All clarifications submitted by the deadline will be made publicly available on the [UNDP Procurement Notices](#).

Contact

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Annex

Annex I: CoFSA Interventions Criteria

- The application or integration of **consciousness approaches and practices**:
 - contemplative mind-body practices, often rooted in a variety of wisdom-based traditions (e.g. nature connection and mindfulness),
 - psychological and cognitive-behavioural based practices (e.g. self-reflection and-inquiry practices),
 - transformative spaces and communication practices (e.g. deep listening and Non-violent Communication),
 - transformative education and leadership practices (e.g. experiential learning).
- In the context of **food and agricultural systems**,
- Address one or more of **CoFSA core areas of intervention**:
 - **Sustainable Landscapes** (Conscious Farming and Local Community Development; and Revitalizing and Strengthening Traditional Wisdom),
 - **Food Systems Policy and Pathways** (Food Policy Reform; and Multi-stakeholder Dialogues),
 - **Supply Chain Transformation** (Cultural Transformation of Organizations; and Conscious Consumption).
- To support systemic change towards **regenerative food systems**,
- General commitment to **CoFSA Principles** (Annex III),
- Commitment to **sharing learnings** from the intervention(s) with the Alliance members.

Annex II: CoFSA Core Areas of Intervention

1. Sustainable Landscapes

Conscious Farming and Local Community Development

- Target audience: farmers and local communities
- Aims: to improve livelihoods, and conserve forests, biodiversity, water resources, and soil health.
- Approaches:
 - **Support the adoption of regenerative agricultural practices through the cultivation of associated mindsets and values** (connection to the land, responsibility and solidarity, intrinsic orientation, etc.).
 - **Support the resilience, well-being and empowerment of farmers, local communities and change agents** through trainings, peer circles, trauma-healing etc.
 - **Support conscious human-centred project design and implementation** by assessing and taking into consideration inner capacities (motivations, attitudes, etc.)

Revitalizing and Strengthening Traditional Wisdom

- Target audience: Indigenous Peoples and local communities
- Aims: to revitalise and strengthen traditional wisdom.
- Approaches:
 - Support intergenerational learning of **food and land-related traditional knowledge**, through participatory media training (see appendix), and locally-designed curriculums.
 - **Revitalize traditional cultural practices for conscious dialogues and conflict-solving**, including through trainings in mindfulness and non-violent communication

2. Food System Policy and Pathways

Food Policy Reform

- Target audience: government officials i.e. ministers, directors, policy makers
- Aims:
 - to **improve the quality of interaction of policy-makers**
 - to design and pass policies and laws that integrate a more 'compassionate' approach to humans and nature
- Approaches:
 - **Transform civil service and political cultures** through trainings in mindfulness, compassion, nature connections, etc.
 - **Improve the framing and decision-making on complex problems** through training.
 - **Design and implement conscious and compassionate policy processes.**

Multi-stakeholder Dialogues

- Target audience: multi-stakeholder platforms
- Aim: the creation of **safe, connecting, and transformative spaces** for conscious multi-stakeholder dialogues.
- Approaches:
 - **Equip stakeholders with the skills and practices to overcome communication challenges, deal effectively with conflicts and build trust and empathy between stakeholders.**
 - **Support deep dialogues through conscious facilitation.**
 - **Enable participants to create a new lens to look at a problem** and take collective action from a place of shared awareness.

3. Supply Chain Transformation

Cultural Transformation of Organizations

- Target audience: companies, global NGOs, development agencies
- Aims: supply chain transformation to support transition to regenerative food systems
- Approaches:
 - **Foster conscious leadership for collective action through trainings, coaching, awareness-based learning journeys and team-building retreats.**
 - **Support conscious procurement** through deep dialogues and immersion with local communities.

Conscious Consumption

- Target audience: consumers or 'eaters'
- Aims: the adoption of more healthy, sustainable and local diets.
- **Approach: education programmes** in particular for youth, around:
 - **Traditional food cultures,**
 - **Healthy and sustainable diets** through behavioural change and mindful eating practices.

Annex III: CoFSA Principles for Cultivating Inner Capacities

CoFSA's principles for cultivating inner capacities were developed through a series of co-creative workshops in 2021-2022. We recognize the need to keep this approach alive, constantly evolving and maturing.

- **Context-specificity**
 - CoFSA interventions, whether at global, national or local levels, must be **tailored to specific challenges** at hand and the needs and wants of change agents.
- **Respect and Equity**
 - The application of consciousness practices and approaches must respect everyone's own path of evolution, and not treat people as objects to be changed. Rather, CoFSA offers the **tools to support greater individual and collective awareness and flourishing**, trusting, based on the emerging science, that these interventions will ultimately support systemic transformation towards regenerative food systems.
- **Power dynamics**
 - CoFSA aims to create safe, connecting and transformative spaces and conditions for systemic change and regeneration. If these spaces and conditions don't include explorations of power and bias, they may not lead to the deeper mindset shifts needed, furthermore they may reinforce a dominant group's' values^{cx}.
- **Cultural relevance**
 - CoFSA interventions must be locally relevant in terms of language, techniques, frameworks, religions, philosophies, and other cultural considerations. **Supporting locally-led initiatives which harness local resources**, and traditional wisdom, is crucial to enacting this principle.
- **Working with a variety of consciousness practices and approaches**
 - CoFSA is committed to working with a diversity of consciousness approaches and practices that can support the cultivation of inner capacities, according to their relevance in different cultural contexts, in particular local traditional wisdoms. CoFSA acknowledges both the spiritual origin of many consciousness practices and approaches, and welcomes the role that faith and religious organizations and perspectives can have in supporting development of inner capacities for the transformation of food systems. At the same time, it recognizes the opportunity in many contexts to promote secular practices to respect the beliefs and values of stakeholders across food systems.
- **Evidence-based approaches and plurality of knowledge**
 - CoFSA is informed by and integrates both evidence-based consciousness practices and approaches, and the lived experience, knowledge, and wisdom of food practitioners, particularly of local and Indigenous communities. CoFSA recognizes the critical contribution of Indigenous Peoples as wisdom-keepers and land- and biodiversity-protectors, and the role of Indigenous ways of knowing and being in maintaining harmonious local food systems.