FABLE Consortium Collaboration Framework

Operating as part of the [Food and Land Use Coalition](#), the Food, Agriculture, Biodiversity, Land-Use, and Energy (FABLE) Consortium is an international network of country teams from leading research institutions that develop and promote integrated analyses of food and land-use systems at national and global scales. Such analysis aims to help countries improve the coherence and raise the level of ambition of national policies related to land use and food systems, which are critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the Paris Agreement.

To this end, the FABLE Consortium promotes the uptake and development of modeling tools and supports analysis to develop integrated pathways that cover agriculture, bioenergy, food security, and dietary health, water quality and environmental flows, biodiversity, and other critical dimensions of food and land-use systems. FABLE's analysis also assesses international spillover effects. The consortium operates on the core principle that country pathways be prepared by teams at the national level and on the principles of open-access science, meaning that its data, models, and analytical tools should be openly and transparently available.

This document outlines the roles and activities of FABLE country teams and individual members and the requirements and process for joining the consortium. It also provides an overview of the responsibilities covered by the FABLE Secretariat and technical partners. It is subject to modification based on changes to the consortium's overall priorities and capacity during a given time frame.

1   Country teams

The FABLE country teams are the foundation of the consortium's activities and mission. They develop national bottom-up pathways for sustainable food and land-use systems and engage with national stakeholders to promote more sustainable policies. By joining the FABLE Consortium, teams are part of a community that promotes a science-based approach to the sustainable transformation of food and land-use systems. They are members of a network of scientists seeking to fill in knowledge gaps, learn from other experts, and exchange best practices in modeling, policy analysis, and stakeholder engagement. Membership is free and open to teams with the requisite technical skills and engagement capacity.

1.1   Activities

- Modeling and analysis:
    - Develop and adapt modeling tools to the national context
    - Collect data related to food and land-use systems at the national level
    - Prepare long-term pathways of the food and land-use system for a given country

- Participate in the consortium-wide FABLE Scenathon when this activity is adopted as part of the consortium's yearly work plan and when resources allow

- Engagement:
    - Engage with stakeholders and policymakers to provide analysis that can inform the policy process
    - Promote or represent FABLE in public fora, specifically making links to other ongoing projects or networks

- Consortium activities:
    - Participate in monthly calls, bi-annual FABLE Consortium meetings (virtual for the foreseeable future), occasional bi-lateral calls with the FABLE Secretariat and technical partners, providing advance input when required (e.g., short surveys, team updates, etc.), and notifying the FABLE Secretariat of any changes to the team structure (e.g., new team members)
    - Contribute to FABLE-wide reports and scientific publications
    - Contribute to FABLE-wide fundraising proposals; lead on country-specific fundraising proposals.

1.2   Profile and skills

FABLE country teams should be broadly structured and include experts with the areas of specialty and skills based on the information outlined below. Members should adhere to open-access principles within and beyond their teams, meaning they should constantly strive to make their data, models, and analytical tools available to the broader research community.

- Team structure, area(s) of specialty, and skills:
    - A FABLE country team:
        - Must be coordinated by a senior researcher or practitioner with proven experience in at least one aspect of land use and food systems and in coordinating projects that connect science to policy
        - Should include two or more members from one or more national research or policy institutions, public or private
        - May include master's or doctoral students
        - Must have the capacity to conduct both the technical modeling and carry out science-policy engagement
    - The team's areas of specialty should cover one or more of the following areas across both the biophysical and social sciences:
        - Biophysical: climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation, agriculture, biodiversity, bioenergy, food and nutrition, forestry, and water, etc.

- Social sciences and policy: economics, sociology, geography, etc.
- The team must have at least one member with intermediate to advanced quantitative and data analysis skills, at minimum in Excel and ideally with another statistical or programming software such as R, Stata, GAMS, etc.
- The team should have at least one member, either a researcher or practitioner, with experience engaging with national stakeholders, policymakers, and experts on food and land-use issues or a related field:
    - Ideally, this team member will already be engaged in national policy networks working on issues of food and land-use systems, including with relevant ministries. They will also have experience communicating about science to non-technical audiences and linking research to national policy processes.
- A member with knowledge of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data analysis is an asset

2   Individual Members

The consortium aims to continually strengthen its geographical coverage, technical capacity, and policy engagement by collaborating with partners with modeling or policy expertise. Therefore, the consortium also welcomes individuals from universities, research institutes, or other not-for-profit organizations with backgrounds in one of the areas described in section 1.2 who have an interest in developing long-term pathways for sustainable food and land-use systems openly and transparently and/or in strengthening the science-policy interface on food and land topics.

Individual membership can be a transition stage, allowing the individual to increase their knowledge of the FABLE Consortium and its tools, and engage with other experts and policymakers in the country before building a new country team and buy-in for the FABLE analysis.

An individual member may cover some or all the following activities.

- Modeling and analysis:
    - Develop and adapt modeling tools to the national context
    - Collect data related to food and land-use systems in their country
- Engagement:
    - Engage with experts to inform the design of a national pathway
- Consortium activities:
    - Participate in monthly calls, bi-annual FABLE Consortium meetings (virtual for the foreseeable future), occasional bi-lateral calls with the FABLE Secretariat and technical partners, providing advance input when required (e.g., short surveys, team updates, etc.)

- Contribute to FABLE-wide fundraising proposals; lead on country-specific fundraising proposals.

3 FABLE Advisory Council

The Advisory Council provides critical thinking and analysis on strategic direction, oversight, policy-setting, and fundraising decisions. Its functions include:

- Decide on new potential Consortium members

- Decide on the FABLE governance structure

- Suggest short-term and long-term objectives

- Review achievements compared to the objectives, and recommend areas for progress

- Provide advice on new recruitment for Secretariat positions

- Provide advice on new strategic collaborations

- Participate in fundraising for the Consortium

The composition of the Advisory Council should be of seven (7) members in total: four internal advisors from the FABLE Consortium and three external advisors. The term is limited to one year, and it can be renewable for up to three years.

4 The FABLE Secretariat

The Secretariat is currently composed of staff from three institutes: the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT.

The Secretariat is responsible for:

- coordinating the consortium's program of work, notably including the FABLE Scenathon, consortium-wide analysis, and the organization and facilitation of the FABLE Consortium meetings and calls

- developing the FABLE Calculator, supporting users to improve and adapt the tool to their national context (including training materials), and releasing an updated open-access version every year

- developing tools and processes to ensure the global consistency of national pathways (e.g., the Linker tool, online dashboard, trade harmonization, Scenathon)

- developing guidelines, reporting templates, and the data infrastructure to ensure the comparability, transparency, and reproducibility of the national pathways

- fundraising, managing grants across multiple FABLE country teams, highlighting funding calls to consortium members

- coordinating and leading some joint publications (e.g., reports, policy briefs, scientific papers)

- ensuring dissemination and promotion of the FABLE Consortium's work through media, newsletters, and events, and by maintaining the FABLE page on the FOLU website

- evaluating membership requests from new country teams or individual members

- developing partnerships with international partners from the modeling and policy communities

5 Technical partners

The technical partners of the FABLE Consortium are currently composed of modeling teams from IIASA and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK).

The technical partners are responsible for:

- providing access to geo-spatially explicit modeling tools (IIASA's GLOBIOM and PIK's MAgPIE) to country teams with the requisite technical, human, and financial capacity

- providing documentation and online training materials on the aforementioned tools

- answering consortium members' questions on the aforementioned tools, including providing transparent assessments of their strengths and limitations

- contributing to the scientific strategy of the FABLE Consortium

- participating in the bi-annual virtual FABLE Consortium meetings

6 Joining the FABLE Consortium

6.1 Financial resources

There is no cost to joining the FABLE Consortium, however, each country team should have or seek a minimum amount of funding to ensure their capacity to maintain and continually improve their models and analysis and engage with the consortium and stakeholders[1]. The following are base assumptions to cover the costs of participation **per year**[2]:

- 6 full-time person-months (PMs) to work on the FABLE Calculator or 12 full-time PMs to work on a Partial Equilibrium (PE) model[3]

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[1] Country teams may also request technical support from institutions outside the FABLE Consortium and are encouraged to make connections between the work they carry out as part of FABLE and other relevant projects or initiatives.

[2] Person days are calculated based on the following assumptions: 228 working days per year (253 working days excluding weekends, public holidays (10 days), and private holidays (25)) and 8 hours worked per day. **1 Person Month (PM)** (or total number of worked hours per month): 8 x (228/12) = **152 hours**

[3] If the country team would like to use another tool than the FABLE Calculator, funding will be needed for the technical partner who has developed this tool to cover the following activities: (1) prefilled tool with national statistics, training materials, and hotline for advice and debugging and (2) quality assurance and help to analyze results

- ~3 PMs for meetings and project management (Consortium, coordination within country team, and national stakeholder engagement)

- Software costs (e.g., Excel is required for the FABLE Calculator, GAMS is required for GLOBIOM and MAgPIE)

6.2 Application process for an individual member wishing to join independently of a country team and for a country team not represented in the consortium

An individual interested in joining the consortium as an individual member, technical partner, or group wishing to form a FABLE country team should complete and send a membership application form to the FABLE Secretariat email (info.fable@unsdsn.org).

Once received and reviewed, the Secretariat will inform the prospective FABLE member about potential next steps, which may include an evaluation of technical skills and a request for a formal proposal, outlining and agreeing to the aims of the collaboration.

The FABLE Advisory Council decides on new members. Once a member or a team's membership request has been approved, they will submit a letter of intent signed by their host institution(s) using a template provided by the FABLE Secretariat. After the team or individual member's acceptance into the consortium, the FABLE Secretariat will provide them with a package of materials, including a FABLE Calculator for their country, all FABLE Calculator training materials and documentation, as well as other supporting materials and access to shared files, listservs, and invitations to standing calls.

6.3 Application process for an individual member interested in joining an existing country team and for a country team already represented in the consortium

Where a FABLE country team already exists, the decision to accept new individual or institutional members is left to the discretion of the existing FABLE country team. Individual members or a prospective team wishing to join a FABLE country team should, therefore, directly contact the relevant FABLE country team coordinator to discuss the potential avenues for collaboration and engagement. The contact information for FABLE country team coordinators can be found on the individual FABLE country pages on the FABLE website. If an individual coordinator's contact information is unavailable, prospective members may contact the FABLE Secretariat for more information (info.fable@unsdsn.org).

7 Annexes

Table 1 | Modalities and benefits of FABLE Consortium membership

Members bring...	Members benefit from...
Their own **modeling tools** that cover food and land use systems or part of the system if available	The FABLE Calculator (using FAO Data) if no modeling tool is available to the member/team and the infrastructure to compute **globally consistent national pathways**
Databases (i.e., from national statistics) relevant to food, agriculture, biodiversity, land, and bioenergy	**Feedback** on the data to improve quality, **process** data to facilitate use in models, and **use** of the data for policy impact assessments
Training on key concepts, databases, software, models, etc. they have expertise on	**Training** on key concepts, databases, software, models, etc. the other members have expertise on
Their **policy and research networks** and experience to engage with stakeholders	**Network** with the other FABLE members and share knowledge and experience on engagement with stakeholders on food and land use issues. Experience and international policy and research networks represented in the FABLE Secretariat, SDSN, IIASA, PIK, EAT, and Bioversity.
Outreach and Communication to enhance the visibility of the FABLE Consortium	**Higher visibility** as a member of an international network, the FABLE Consortium, and the opportunity to join publications FABLE Secretariat and other members' efforts to showcase FABLE's work through joint publication and communication
Human resources and technical skills to fill current gaps in the analysis and build innovative approaches and tools in collaboration with other FABLE members	Access to **a globally diverse and interdisciplinary network** of researchers interested in contributing to the global good
Constant exploration and collaboration opportunities on science and policy, policy engagement, and showcasing of FABLE, such as national and subnational level conferences, working groups, policy dialogues, relevant groups	**Constant exploration and collaboration opportunities on science and policy, policy engagement, and showcasing of FABLE,** such as international conferences and policy discussions (i.e., UN Food Summit 2021, COPs), etc.