

UNLOCKING THE TRUE COST AND PRICE OF FOOD BASKETS: A PATH TO SUSTAINABLE, JUST, AND HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS

Every food item on our plate carries hidden costs—to the environment, society, and our health—that are not reflected in its price. These costs are borne by society through environmental degradation, public health crises, and unfair working conditions of food value chain actors. Without insight into these costs, decision-makers, businesses, and consumers lack the tools to drive positive change.

OUR PROJECT

The True Cost & True Price of Food Baskets project aims to reveal these hidden costs by analyzing the environmental, social, and health externalities of current and (nationally) advised food baskets. With an innovative, holistic approach to health impact assessment at the food group level and a focus on affordability, we will use true cost accounting to empower policy-makers, consumers, and value chain actors to make informed, impactful decisions.

OUR AIMS

- Policy Impact: Equip governments with actionable insights to optimize agri-food policies for nutrition and health, sustainability, social justice, and affordability.
- Value Chain Transformation: Guide businesses to reduce externalities, contributing to better health, equity and environmental outcomes.
- Consumer Awareness: Help citizens understand the hidden societal costs of their dietary choices.

OUR APPROACH

Through research and stakeholder engagement, this three-year project will:

- Build a knowledge base and stakeholder network to guide methodology and implementation.
- Quantify and monetize the health, environmental, and social impacts of current food baskets and model cost reductions from (nationally) advised alternatives.
- Compare the costs of current and advised food baskets, offering recommendations for healthier, fairer, and more sustainable options while being mindful of nutritional value and affordability.
- Engage stakeholders and advocate for shifts in food production and consumption to reduce environmental, health, and social costs.

ADDED VALUE

With a focus on both high-income and low- and middle-income countries, the project builds on the publicly available True Price Method to develop a robust, scalable methodology that is adaptable to diverse contexts. Food baskets reflect what people have access to every day, making them a powerful tool to drive concrete policy actions that directly impact lives and address systemic challenges.

Your investment into this project will catalyze impactful solutions, amplify global influence, and position you at the forefront of a movement reshaping how the world values food.

JOIN US

Your support will enable us to come together and implement this initiative. Your expertise, experience, and interests will help further define the scope of work and contribute to the successful conduct of this project. Together, we can create a future where healthy, sustainable, equitable, and affordable diets are within everyone's reach, everywhere, and at any time.

FOCUS COUNTRIES

Building on the existing networks and experience of our current consortium, we will conduct the project in 3 countries, initially including the Netherlands, Kenya, and Indonesia. The inclusion of both HICs and LMICs ensures the development of a methodology that is both robust and adaptable, laying the groundwork for broader scalability across diverse contexts. This approach is particularly innovative, as true pricing initiatives have predominantly concentrated on HICs to date.

Countries may be adjusted based on donor interests, stakeholder discussions, and scoping activities within the initiation phase

WHY NOW

With momentum from the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and the 2023/2024 FAO's State of Food and Agriculture reports on true cost accounting, the global community is calling for accelerated action to transform food systems. This project responds directly to that need, offering concrete tools and data-driven insights for transformation.

INVEST IN A HEALTHY, JUST, AND SUSTAINABLE AGRI-FOOD FUTURE TODAY!

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