



## Appendix A: Informed Consent Information Leaflet and Consent Form

### Information Leaflet and Informed Consent

**TITLE OF STUDY:** Monitoring and Evaluation of Food Systems Research Network for Africa (FSNet-Africa)

#### 1) Introduction

As a person engaged in the activities of FSNet-Africa, we request your inputs into the project's ongoing monitoring and evaluation efforts. This information leaflet will help you to decide if you want to participate. Before you agree to take part, you should fully understand what is involved. If you have any questions that this leaflet does not fully explain, please do not hesitate to ask the FSNet-Africa team.

In line with community data standards, at the data collection stage, we will ensure that we collect as little personal information as possible where human subjects are concerned and that we only collect personal information relevant to the project.

#### 2) Why are we undertaking monitoring and evaluation within FSNet-Africa?

FSNet-Africa is required by our funder, the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), to undertake robust monitoring and evaluation of our activities and to report on the outputs of these activities and any outcomes that emerge as a result. Our monitoring and evaluation efforts are guided by the FSNet-Africa theory of change.

In addition to meeting our reporting requirements, our monitoring and evaluation aims to contribute to understanding the extent to which integrated research and capacity building fellowship programmes can contribute to strengthening African science and innovation (at the individual, institutional, and systems level) and strengthen partnerships between the research community and stakeholders across the food system so as to enable the transformation of African food systems.

A total of 110 participants will be continuously involved in the monitoring and evaluation of FSNet-Africa. These include 20 fellows, 40 mentors, 10 institutional champions, 20 UP Hosts, and at least 20 food systems stakeholders in six countries. Additional ad hoc participants will include food systems stakeholders who will participate in fellowship events and research projects as necessary throughout the two-year fellowship period (July 2021 – December 2023).

#### 3) What will we ask you to do?

You will be requested to provide feedback to FSNet-Africa to inform our monitoring and evaluation at several points during the fellowship period (July 2021 to December 2023). These requests may take the form of interviews, surveys, or focus groups. We will collect data at the start of the fellowship (as a baseline), after each fellowship event, and at the end of the fellowship. Fellowship events where you may be invited to participate include an Orientation workshop, two summer schools, a workshop on science-to-impact communication, a stakeholder dialogue, and a workshop on publishing your research. Fellows and mentors will provide brief feedback (on a quarterly basis) to FSNet-Africa with regards to their progress on the research projects and their experiences within the fellowship.

#### 4) Risk and discomfort involved

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in our monitoring and evaluation efforts. FSNet-Africa has developed a data management plan which details the mechanisms we have put in place to protect any data you provide us and to ensure confidentiality.

#### 5) Possible benefits of participating in the FSNet-Africa monitoring and evaluation

The direct benefits of participation in FSNet-Africa are linked to the fellowship events, training opportunities, funding for research, and networking opportunities. These direct benefits are available regardless of participation in the FSNet-Africa monitoring and evaluation efforts.

There are no direct benefits associated with participating in the FSNet-Africa monitoring and evaluation activities.

There are, however, several indirect benefits. The ongoing monitoring and evaluation of FSNet-Africa (i) informs the implementation trajectory of the project and enables the team to adopt an adaptive approach to management to ensure challenges are addressed swiftly, (ii) provides a robust data set to demonstrate the value and impact of fellowship programmes for early-career researchers in Africa – strengthening the case for investment in such programmes by other institutions and funders, and (iii) enables insights into how science can contribute to food systems transformation through improving our understanding of the FSNet-Africa theory of change. The contributions you make to our monitoring and evaluation thus have potential for significant positive indirect benefit.



6) Optional aspects of the study (optional section)

As part of the project, video recordings, photos, and audio recordings will be taken. These will be used for training, websites, newsletters, pamphlets, science communication outputs, policy briefs, and marketing materials. You may choose to refuse to have any of these multi-media where you are visible used without giving any reason. If you choose not to allow FSNet-Africa to make use of these multi-media outputs, there will be no penalty.

7) What are your rights as a participant?

Your participation in our monitoring and evaluation is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to answer particular questions. You can refuse to participate or stop at any time without giving any reason. If you decide not to be in this research or if you decide to stop at a later date, there will be no penalty. You will be provided with the identities of all researchers who will have access to your data. Once the study is complete, you have the right to access and rectify any data concerning you. You also have the right to, at any point in time, object to the processing of the data concerning you.

8) Will you be paid to take part in this research study?

No compensation is offered for your participation in the FSNet-Africa monitoring and evaluation.

9) Has the study received ethical approval?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Pretoria. Written queries can be directed to: [tracey.reis@up.ac.za](mailto:tracey.reis@up.ac.za)

10) Information and contact person

If you have any questions or comments about the study, please contact Elizabeth Mkandawire at [fsnetafrika@up.ac.za](mailto:fsnetafrika@up.ac.za).

11) Confidentiality

All information that you give will be kept strictly confidential. Research reports, presentations, and articles in scientific journals will not include any information that may identify you. Before storing data, researchers will ensure that data confidentiality is protected by anonymising any variables that may be used to identify individuals. If complete anonymisation is not possible, researchers will keep personal information in a separate file from the research data collected and link them using anonymous identifiers

All researchers in FSNet-Africa will be required to take measures to prevent unauthorised access to data stored on vulnerable devices. All computer systems and sensitive data files need to be password protected. Computer software will be kept up to date at all times, and no personal or confidential data will be allowed to be sent via email. Viruses and malicious code will be avoided by keeping firewall protection and security-related upgrades up to date. All researchers who have access to personal data will be required to sign non-disclosure agreements to ensure that confidential information is not leaked.



## Consent to participate in FSNet-Africa Monitoring and Evaluation

I confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in the FSNet-Africa monitoring and evaluation has told me about the nature, process, risks, discomforts, and benefits of these processes. I have read the Information Leaflet and Informed Consent form and I understand the information.

☐ Tick this box if you confirm the statement above.

I am aware that the results of the monitoring and evaluation, including personal details, will be anonymously processed into research reports, publications, science communication outputs, and policy briefs. In any instance where anonymity is not possible, the FSNet-Africa team will provide me with an opportunity to (i) decide if the results be included in the relevant output and (ii) provide me with an opportunity to comment on any text prior to publication.

☐ Tick this box if you understand and agree to the statement above.

I hereby give consent to FSNet-Africa to use my image, likeness, and/or the sound of my voice as recorded in any photos, videos, or audio recordings in FSNet-Africa activities including, but not limited to, training, websites, newsletters, pamphlets, science communication outputs, policy briefs, and marketing materials. I grant FSNet-Africa the right and permission to use, re-use, publish, or re-publish any photos, videos, or audio recordings, in whole, in part, or in composite form, in conjunction with my own name. I understand that this excludes monitoring and evaluation data collected for the fellowship research project.

☐ Tick this box if you give consent to FSNet-Africa to use your image, likeness, and/or the sound of your voice as recorded in any photos, videos, or audio recordings in FSNet-Africa activities.

☐ I am above 18 (eighteen) years of age and am competent to contract in my own name.

I am participating willingly. I have had time to ask questions and have no objection to participate in the FSNet-Africa monitoring and evaluation. I understand that there is no penalty should I wish to discontinue with the optional aspects of the study, and my withdrawal will not affect any treatment in any way.

☐ Tick this box if you understand and agree to the statement above.

Signatory's name .....

Signatory's signature: ..... Date.....

Principal Investigator's name      Professor Frans Swanepoel

Signature ..... Date.....

Witness's Name ..... (Please print)

Witness's signature ..... Date.....