

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**August 9, 2023**

### **FOOD SYSTEM EXPERTS LAUNCH PROJECT TO TRANSFORM GLOBAL FOOD TRADE RULES**

*Three-year initiative brings together experts from Global South and North to reshape global agricultural trade rules to support sustainable food systems in diverse contexts*

**MINNEAPOLIS**—The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy ([IATP](https://www.iatp.org)) is pleased to announce the launch of an ambitious three-year project that will advance urgently needed changes to the global trading system to meet the mounting challenges in global food distribution. Funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, the project brings together a core consortium of international scholars and nongovernmental organizations from the Global North and South, including India, China, Brazil, Uganda, Switzerland and the United States.

IATP is co-leading the initiative, with the Centre for Development and Environment at the University of Bern (CDE), the International Association of Feminist Economics (IAFFE), the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences (a+) and ETH Zurich.

The current WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) fails to support food systems that are consistent with the ambition of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Not only are global warming, biodiversity loss, pandemics and wars putting pressure on food production and distribution worldwide, but agriculture itself is exacerbating the problems because agricultural commodity markets fail to internalize important costs.

In response, the “[Agreement on Agriculture Reimagined](#)” project will draft an alternative framework for trade rules for agriculture, an Agreement on Trade in Agriculture for Sustainable Development (AoA TSD). The goal is to encourage agricultural trade that supports sustainable food systems in diverse contexts. The AoA TSD will be developed along agroecological principles of accountability and inclusion, justice and sustainability, and tested in iterative stakeholder consultations. In the final year, in two rigorous rounds of mock negotiation at the Swiss domestic level and international level, draft rules will undergo refinement prior to dissemination. The goal is to support an ambitious agenda of policy reform in international trade negotiations.

“IATP has been wrestling with the paradox that food trade is growing in importance as climate shocks and conflicts disrupt food production and distribution, yet the WTO rules do a poor job of supporting investments in sustainable practices. We must and can do better to protect trade flows while supporting and protecting diversified and resilient food systems,” says IATP Executive Director Sophia Murphy, Ph.D. “IATP brings to the project over 35 years of experience working on and advocating for trade governance paradigms that enable the creation of food security and regional food systems. We are delighted to help lead this ambitious effort to reform our global trade system.”

Project leads include Dr. Sophia Murphy (Executive Director, IATP), Dr. Elisabeth Bürgi (Senior Lecturer, CDE) and Caroline Dommen (Executive Director, International Association of Feminist Economics). Four experts from the Global South will also join the project, from Brazil, China, India and Uganda. Learn more about the project [here](#).

###

Based in Minneapolis with offices in Washington, D.C., and Berlin, Germany, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. To learn more, visit: [www.iatp.org](https://www.iatp.org).