Friday, November 5, 2021
16:45-18:00 GMT (local time)
South Downs (Multimedia Studio 1), Blue Zone

Background

The UN IPCC warns that global warming of 2 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels could trigger a worldwide food crisis. Recent research indicates that emissions from food systems *alone* could push global temperatures past the 2-degree limit set in the Paris Agreement of 2015. At the same time, lack of an integrated, transdisciplinary understanding of food systems and their interactions with climate are a major obstacle to ensuring human, planetary, and economic health. Rapid scaling-up of cooperation between the research community, policy makers, and other stakeholders that integrates expertise across disciplinary and sectoral boundaries is needed to collaboratively resolve critical food and climate systems challenges.

Researchers who engage with food systems stakeholders can better assess knowledge gaps and understand how research can support solutions. Research-stakeholder alliances can help develop connections across networks to make such research more targeted and actionable, and research outcomes more visible and understandable. The event is framed around the formal launch of the one such effort, the *Food and Climate Systems Transformation (FACT) Alliance*.

The FACT Alliance is a global network of 16 leading research institutions spanning six continents. Led by MIT's Jameel Water and Food Systems Lab (MIT J-WAFS), its mission is to catalyse new research partnerships that will drive food systems sustainability transformations. The FACT Alliance represents a new approach to driving change – integrating research across diverse disciplines, making stakeholders partners in the research process, and assessing impacts in complex and interconnected food and climate systems. Such global alliances will play an important role in supporting the commitments made at COP26 and at the recent UN Food Systems Summit.

Objectives

This event will seek to raise the bar for more collaborative, action-oriented research and innovation for food systems, driving transformations for people, nature and climate, in line with the COP26 campaign on *Transforming Agricultural Innovation*.

Looking at existing knowledge gaps and barriers to data access and dissemination, this event will show the path forward for collaborative, actionable, multi-level (global, national, local) research and innovation for food and climate systems. Speakers will discuss how to shift towards evidence-based decision making, policy assessment, progress monitoring, and support to research efforts for climate-smart food systems.

Agenda

Time (GMT, local time)	Speaker
16:45 - 16:50	**Welcome and objectives** **Maria Zuber,** Vice President for Research, MIT; Co-chair, President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology
16:50 – 17:00	**Keynote: Co-designed solutions to a broken global food system** **Pete Smith,** Professor, Aberdeen University and Food and Climate Systems Transformation (FACT) Alliance
17:00 – 17:25	**Panel discussion** **Moderator: Greg Sixt, Director,** Food and Climate Systems Transformation (FACT) Alliance, MIT J-WAFS **Panelists:** **Charlotte Watts,** Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of Research and Evidence, UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) **Theo de Jager,** President, World Farmers' Organization **Diane Holdorf,** Managing Director, Food & Nature, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) **John Furlow,** Director, International Research Institute for Climate and Society, Columbia University **Pete Smith,** Professor, Aberdeen University and Food and Climate Systems Transformation (FACT) Alliance
17:25 – 17:55	**Q&A and interactive session with audience** **Moderator: Greg Sixt,** FACT Alliance/MIT J-WAFS
17:55 – 18:00	**Final remarks and wrap up** **Greg Sixt,** FACT Alliance/MIT J-WAFS