FABLE Consortium Collaboration Framework

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1 Background

The Food, Agriculture, Biodiversity, Land-Use, and Energy (FABLE) Consortium is an international network that develops and promotes modelling of food and land-use systems at national and global scales. Its work supports countries in aligning policies on land use and food systems with higher sustainability ambitions, which is critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the Paris Climate Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal global Biodiversity Framework. Through FABLE, members join a community that promotes a science-based approach to the sustainable transformation of food and land-use systems. They seek to fill knowledge gaps, exchange best practices in modeling, policy analysis, and stakeholder engagement, and shape the consortium's collective agenda.

FABLE fosters the uptake of modeling tools to build quantitative integrated pathways for food and land systems, with agriculture playing a central role. While the FABLE Consortium welcomes a diversity of models, the FABLE Calculator (FABLE-C) is the common tool used across all FABLE country teams. Upon joining the Consortium, each country team receives for free a national FABLE-C with the most recent model developments and preloaded with country data extracted from global databases. Teams are regularly invited to contribute national pathways to account for international trade and monitor the alignment of national policies with global sustainability goals. There are no membership fees. No funding is provided but the Secretariat highlights relevant funding opportunities.

The FABLE Consortium is guided by the principles of open science and international collaboration. All members engage with one another in mutual respect and on equal grounds, regardless of geopolitics, individual political views, religion, or gender.

This document outlines the governance system of the FABLE Consortium. It clarifies the different bodies of the Consortium, the respective responsibilities and rights of FABLE members, and highlights the requirements and process for joining the consortium.

2 Governance Structure

The FABLE Consortium is made up of FABLE Country Teams dispersed globally, a FABLE Secretariat that supports the global team, and a FABLE Advisory Council providing strategic direction.

2.1 FABLE Country Teams

FABLE Country Teams are responsible for developing national bottom-up pathways for sustainable food and land-use systems that describe the changes needed to achieve mid-century sustainability objectives. The teams bring together researchers with a wide range of backgrounds to support policymaking towards sustainable food and land systems in countries. In addition to developing pathways, Country Teams also engage with national governments to promote ambitious sustainable policies, develop partnerships, and participate in communications and resource mobilization. For a full list of the FABLE Country Teams, see here.

2.2 FABLE Secretariat

The FABLE Secretariat is responsible for coordination of the FABLE Consortium and is co-managed by three institutions: the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. Together they oversee modelling developments and innovations for the FABLE Calculator, support country teams, and coordinate communications, fundraising, and partnerships for the FABLE Consortium. See more about the FABLE Secretariat Team here.

2.3 FABLE Advisory Council

The Advisory Council provides critical thinking and analysis on strategic direction, oversight, policy-setting, and fundraising decisions. It is made up of seven (7) elected members: four internal advisors who are members of the FABLE Consortium and three external advisors. The current Advisory Council Members can be found here.

3 FABLE Country Teams

3.1 Country Team Composition and Roles

FABLE Country Teams are the foundation of the consortium's activities. They bring together experts from diverse disciplines relevant to food and land systems, such as economics, agronomy, ecology, statistics, and geography. Members are based in one or more research or knowledge institutes in the country, e.g., universities, think tanks and research institutes. Teams must combine technical modeling capacity with the ability to engage in science-policy dialogue.

Each country team should designate a team coordinator, a modelling focal point, and a policy focal point. While not mandatory, having a member with knowledge of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is an asset to extract relevant information from geospatial data. The team coordinator and the modelling focal point should be able to communicate and write in English while the policy focal point should be fluent in the official language of the country.

A) *The coordinator*

The coordinator is responsible for submitting the country application and serves as the contact point for the Secretariat and external partners, e.g., in case of funding or collaboration opportunities. They should feel comfortable speaking and writing in English. Responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that FABLE modelling work at national level is advancing and the team participates in Scenathons,
- Understanding and sharing the national political context with key stakeholders and the FABLE Consortium network,
- Ensuring that connections with relevant country stakeholders are established and

maintained,

- Sharing updates on the country team activities with the rest of the Consortium during monthly meetings,
- Disseminating activities, publications and relevant information through communication channels (LinkedIn, FABLE website, other project channels),
- Sharing information about FABLE activities with all other country team members,
- Ensuring that open science principles are applied,
- Contributing with their country team to FABLE-wide publications,
- Co-building the overall strategy of the consortium
- Providing requested resources and information to participate in Consortium activities.

B) *The modelling focal point*

This person should have intermediate to advanced quantitative data analysis skills. Early career scientists are encouraged to take on this role. Responsibilities include:

- learning the FABLE-C using available training materials and questions are addressed to the Secretariat,
- implementing new mandatory update packages,
- adapting the tool to the national context e.g., replacing default data with national data when needed, developing new scenarios, and documenting these changes
- checking the quality of the results,
- publishing the improved country FABLE-C in the public domain (e.g., Zenodo), (typically every three years).

C) *The policy focal point*

He/ she / they should be active in national policy networks related to aspects of food and land-use systems. This can be the same person as the country team coordinator. Responsibilities include:

- understanding the political context and key policies related to food and land systems,
- sharing updates on the national political context relevant for food and land systems with the rest of the Consortium during meetings and through the FABLE website,
- participating in relevant meetings with stakeholders or convening meetings with stakeholders and other actors of food and land systems,
- ensuring the policy relevance of the country-level modelling.

3.2 Resources needed for active participation

Each country team should have or seek a minimum amount of resources to ensure their capacity to maintain and continually improve their models and analysis and engage with the consortium and stakeholders. The following are base assumptions to cover the costs of participation **per year**:

- ~6 full-time person-months (PMs) to learn and adapt the FABLE-C during the first year, and at least 3 PMs to implement new update packages, participate in Scenathons, or improve the tool the other years.
- Between 0.5 and 1 PM to participate in FABLE Consortium meetings and network activities
- ~3 PMs to follow policy processes and minimum national stakeholder engagement
- Some travel budget e.g. for at least one member of the team to attend the annual Consortium meeting
- Software and computer costs (e.g., Excel is required for the FABLE-C).

3.3 Observer status

New and existing country teams who may not be able to meet all of the human and financial resources requirements as Active Members may be granted Observer status based on the following criteria:

A) *New country teams*

While there is interest in joining FABLE, i) the team is not sure to understand enough about FABLE and would like to assess whether it meets their expectations or ii) lacks funding to engage fully. The status may be granted for an initial one-year period by the FABLE Advisory Council after the review of the team application. After one year, the Secretariat and the Advisory Council will re-evaluate the situation in consultation with the team, and either extend the observer status or allow a transition to full country team status. The team may also formally retire from the Consortium.

B) *Existing country teams*

After discussions with the Secretariat and the Advisory Council, existing country teams that cannot temporarily fully contribute to FABLE activities may be granted observer status for one year. During the time as an observer, the team will continue to receive key updates, including invitations to FABLE meetings and events, but members will not be able to vote or be elected. This period can also be used to seek other partners in the country, i.e., new country team applications are possible. After this period, the Secretariat and the Advisory Council will re-evaluate the situation in consultation with the team, and either extend the observer status, allow the country to revert to full country team status potentially with a new or different team composition and leadership, or the team may formally retire from the Consortium.

4. 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 composition of the team is available on the FABLE Consortium website. The FABLE Secretariat:

- organizes networking activities within the Consortium,
- ensures the dissemination and promotion of the FABLE Consortium's work through the FABLE website, the Scenathon dashboard, LinkedIn, and events,

- coordinates and mainstreams FABLE-C developments through update packages and related documentation
- develop the method and infrastructure to perform the bottom-up global analysis (cf. Scenathon) and publish Scenathon databases in the public domain
- produces new country/region FABLE-Cs
- develops FABLE-C connected tools such as the Sensitivity tool, the tool for the automatic implementation of mandatory update packages, the scenario interface tool (PPL), and the spatially explicit tool
- develops materials to facilitate FABLE-C use and answer questions. *Note: Tailored training will only be provided if a project can cover these costs – either from the country team side or the Secretariat side*.
- fundraises and highlights funding calls of interest to consortium members.
- coordinates and edits joint FABLE publications (e.g.,reports, policy briefs, fact sheets).
- develops strategic partnerships with international actors from the relevant modeling and policy communities.

5. FABLE Advisory Council

The Advisory Council provides critical thinking and analysis on strategic direction, oversight, policy-setting, and fundraising decisions. It is composed of seven (7) elected members: four internal advisors who are members of the FABLE Consortium and three external advisors.

FABLE Secretariat members contribute to the preparation of the Advisory Council meetings and implementation of Advisory Council's recommendations. They are not eligible to become members of the Advisory Council.

Nominations are submitted by Consortium members in December, and elections are held in January through an anonymous online voting system (Balotilo).

Council members serve a two-year term, with the option to step down after one year or to renew their mandate for another term, subject to a new vote.

The Advisory Council meets quarterly for 1.5 to 2 hours. The agenda is proposed by the FABLE Scientific Director, and the meeting is facilitated by the FABLE Consortium manager and the FABLE Scientific Director. Meetings are not recorded and follow Chatham House rules. **Internal members will be invited to report to the Consortium members on the activities of the Advisory Council without disclosing sensitive or confidential information.**

Important decisions, including approval of new country teams, will be made by simple majority vote (anonymous vote).

More specifically, the Advisory Council:

- reviews country team applications and votes for inclusion or not,
- provides advice on governance, conflict management, and problem solving,
- makes recommendations on the Consortium's objectives,
- highlights funding opportunities for the Consortium.

6. Conflict Resolution

Exchanges among members should always be conducted with mutual respect, professionalism, and integrity.

Behaviors that are not acceptable include:

- insulting or disparaging other FABLE members in meetings, on social media, or through other communication channels,
- plagiarism, misrepresentation of research or misrepresentation to contributions to this research,
- discrimination, harassment, or exclusionary conduct,
- and any actions that compromise the trust and credibility of the FABLE Consortium.

Depending on the outcome of the assessment of the case, exclusion from the FABLE Consortium might be decided.

A. Conflicts within or among country teams

1. Submission of a complaint: Any concern related to non-professional behavior within or among country teams shall be submitted in writing to the info.fable@unsdsn.org using this template.
2. Initial assessment: The FABLE Secretariat shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and conduct an initial assessment with the FABLE Secretariat and through a call with the complainant to determine the scope, severity, and whether informal resolution is appropriate.
3. Resolution or escalation:
    a. Where appropriate, the issue may be addressed through facilitated dialogue or mediation by the FABLE Secretariat among the parties concerned.
    b. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the FABLE Secretariat shall escalate the issue to the Advisory Council for review and recommendations.
4. Outcome and follow-up: The parties concerned shall be informed of the outcome, and any agreed or recommended corrective actions shall be communicated and monitored as appropriate.

B. Conflicts within or involving the Secretariat

1. Submission of a complaint: Any concern related to non-professional behavior within or involving the Secretariat shall be submitted in writing to the Advisory Council.
2. Initial assessment: The Advisory Council shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and conduct an initial assessment through a call with the complainant to determine its scope, severity, and appropriate course of action.
3. Resolution:

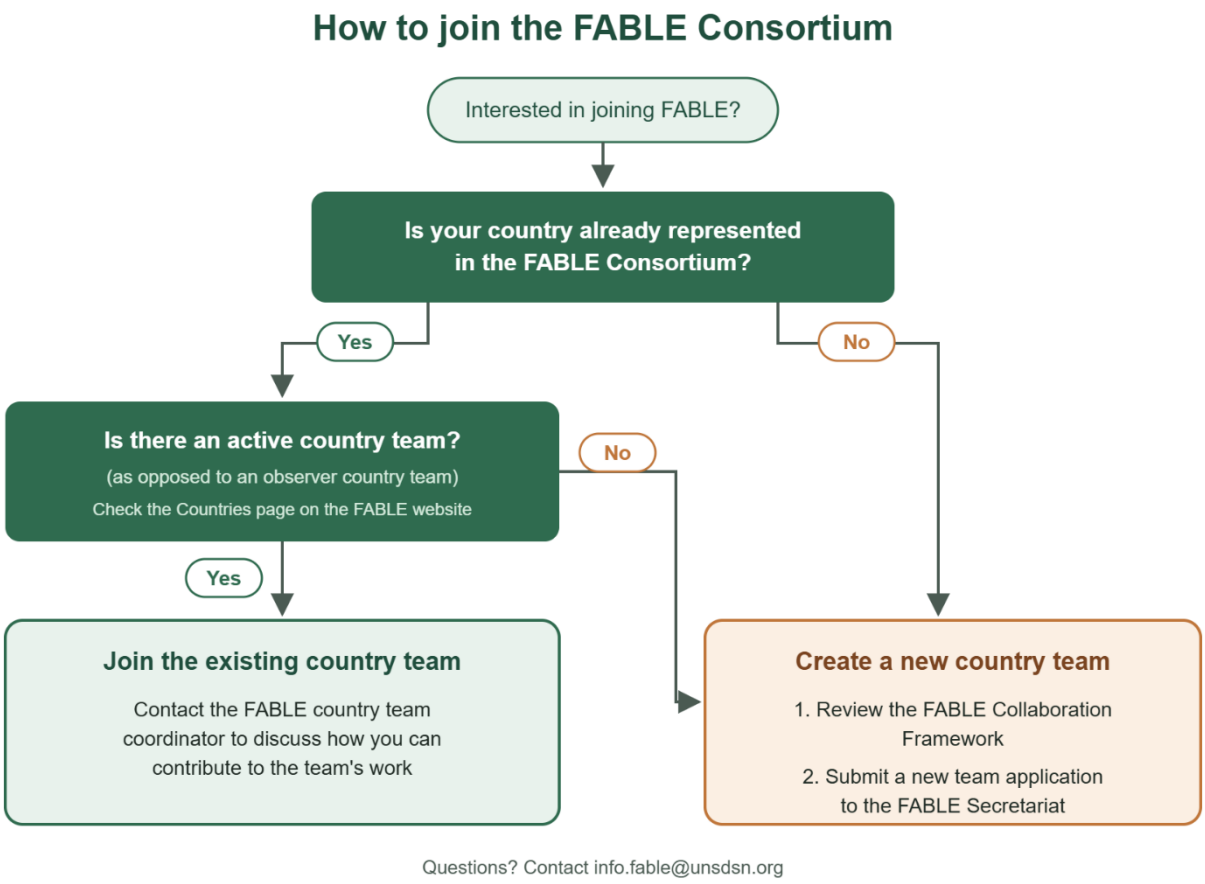
a. Where appropriate, the Advisory Council may seek to resolve the issue through facilitated dialogue or mediation.

b. If the matter is serious, the Advisory Council may take or recommend appropriate actions in line with the Consortium's governance arrangements.

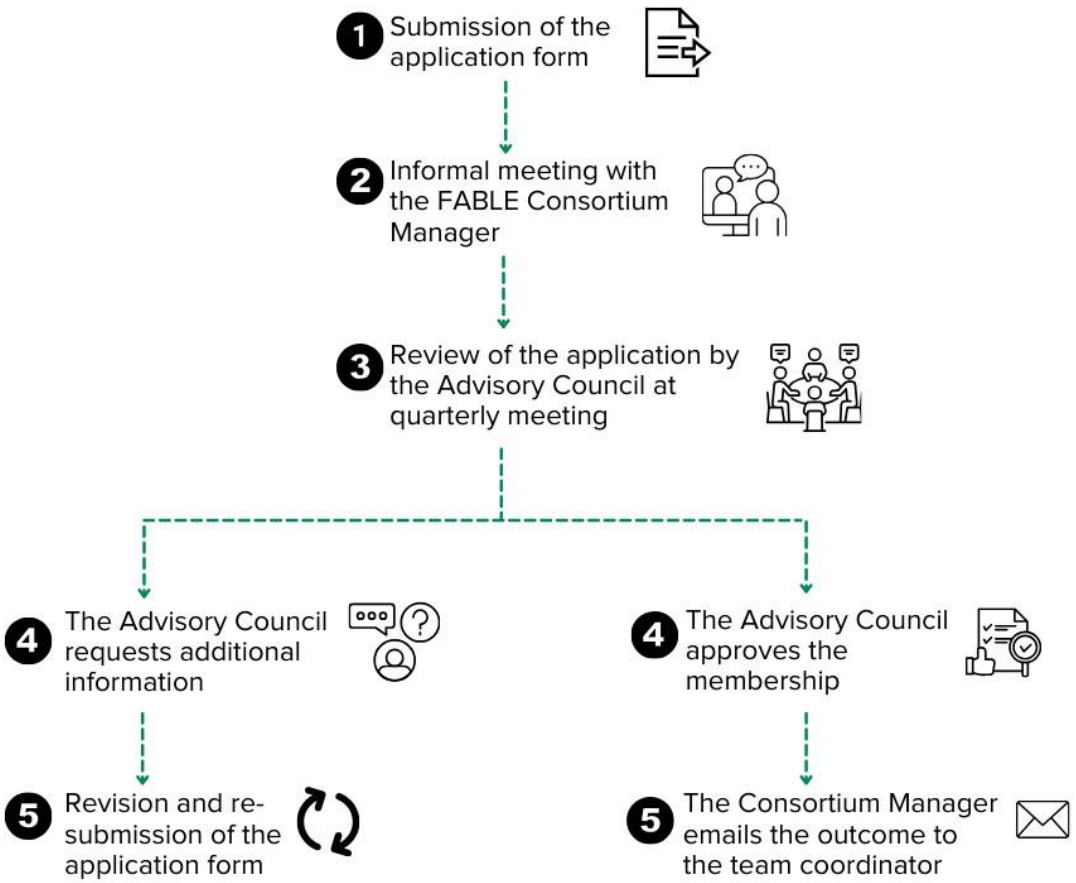
4. Outcome and follow-up**:** The parties concerned shall be informed of the outcome, and any agreed or recommended corrective actions shall be communicated and monitored as appropriate.

7. Joining the FABLE Consortium

7.1 How to join the FABLE Consortium



7.2 Application process for new members



The Advisory Council will assess the application regarding the following criteria:

- The three roles (team coordinator, modelling focal point, policy focal point) are covered with people with relevant expertise
- The institute(s) where the team is located is (are) well aligned with FABLE's mission and endorse(s) the application
- The motivation to join FABLE is clear and convincing
- The team has resources available to cover participation in FABLE activities (see 3.1)

**Important: The team coordinator should endorse the open science principles of the Consortium, accept the use of the U.N. global map in all FABLE publications and communication that involves several countries, and agree to work collaboratively with all members of the Consortium, above religious and political considerations.*

7.3 Next steps after approval

Once a team's membership request has been approved, the FABLE Consortium manager

will add all the team members' emails to the Consortium lists and online folders, share invitations to standing calls, and introduce the new country team members to the rest of the Consortium members during the next consortium call. The country team coordinator will have one month to provide the text and references to create the country webpage.

The FABLE Secretariat will also produce and send a national FABLE-C populated with national data from global databases and share available FABLE-C training materials and documentation. A max 2h introduction call for the FABLE-C will be scheduled with one of the FABLE-C focal points in the Secretariat.

8. Annex: Modalities and benefits of FABLE Consortium Membership

Members bring…	Members benefit from…
Own Modeling tools that cover food and land use systems or aspects of it depending on what's available	The **FABLE Calculator** and annex tools, and national-global-national modelling infrastructure
National databases relevant to food, agriculture, biodiversity, land, and bioenergy	**Global database** relevant to food, agriculture, biodiversity, land, and bioenergy
Expertise on key concepts, databases, software, models, etc.	**Expertise from the other members** on key concepts, databases, software, models, etc.
Policy and research networks and experience to engage with stakeholders	**Network** with the other FABLE members and international policy and research networks represented in the FABLE Secretariat
Outreach and Communication to enhance the visibility of the FABLE Consortium in national events / within their institutes	**Higher visibility** from FABLE website, the opportunity to join publications and speak at international events
Resources to participate in FABLE activities	**Funding opportunities** channeled through the FABLE Secretariat (e.g., funding proposals led by the Secretariat, country case studies for other organizations)