



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

# From silos to systems: Transforming the future of food and agriculture

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Food Systems Transformation in LMICs: Opportunities to Strengthen the Dutch contribution – 18 June 2025

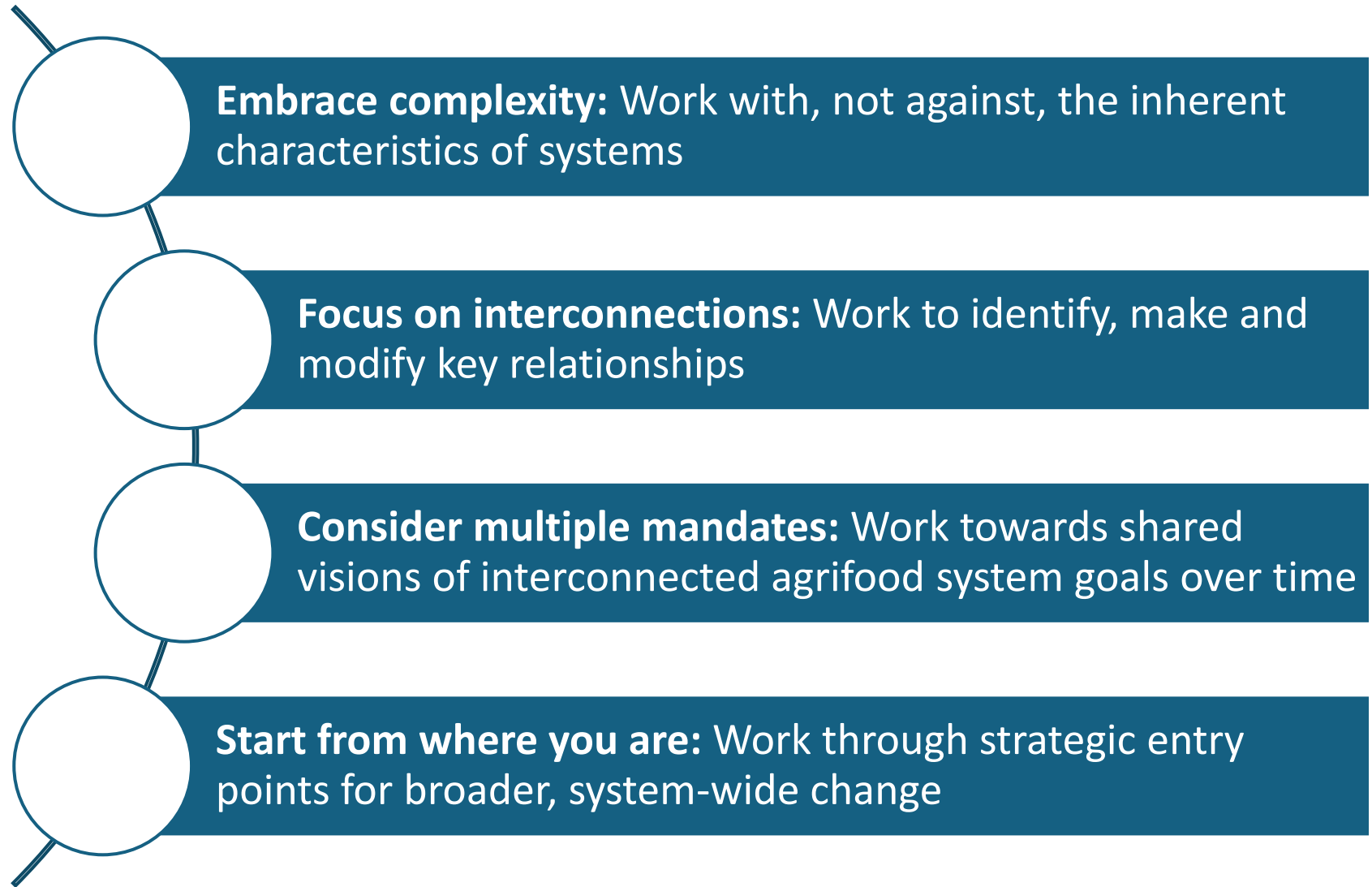
## Defining a systems approach to agrifood system transformation: "consider connections"

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A systems approach is a way of thinking, acting and working together that considers the interconnections among components & outcomes across agrifood systems & interrelated systems. Its goal is to change how agrifood systems function to deliver multiple interconnected outcomes at scale ("transformation").

A systems approach gives decision-makers the opportunity to deliver greater impact with the same resources by intentionally making and modifying relationships across agrifood systems

Core principles to  
guide the  
implementation  
of a systems  
approach






## Focus on (ten) key relationships



Production and  
consumption




Norms,  
values and  
behaviours



People and  
institutions




Short, medium  
and long-term



Sub-  
systems



Across space,  
place & levels



Agrifood  
system  
practices and  
outcomes



Agrifood  
system  
outcomes

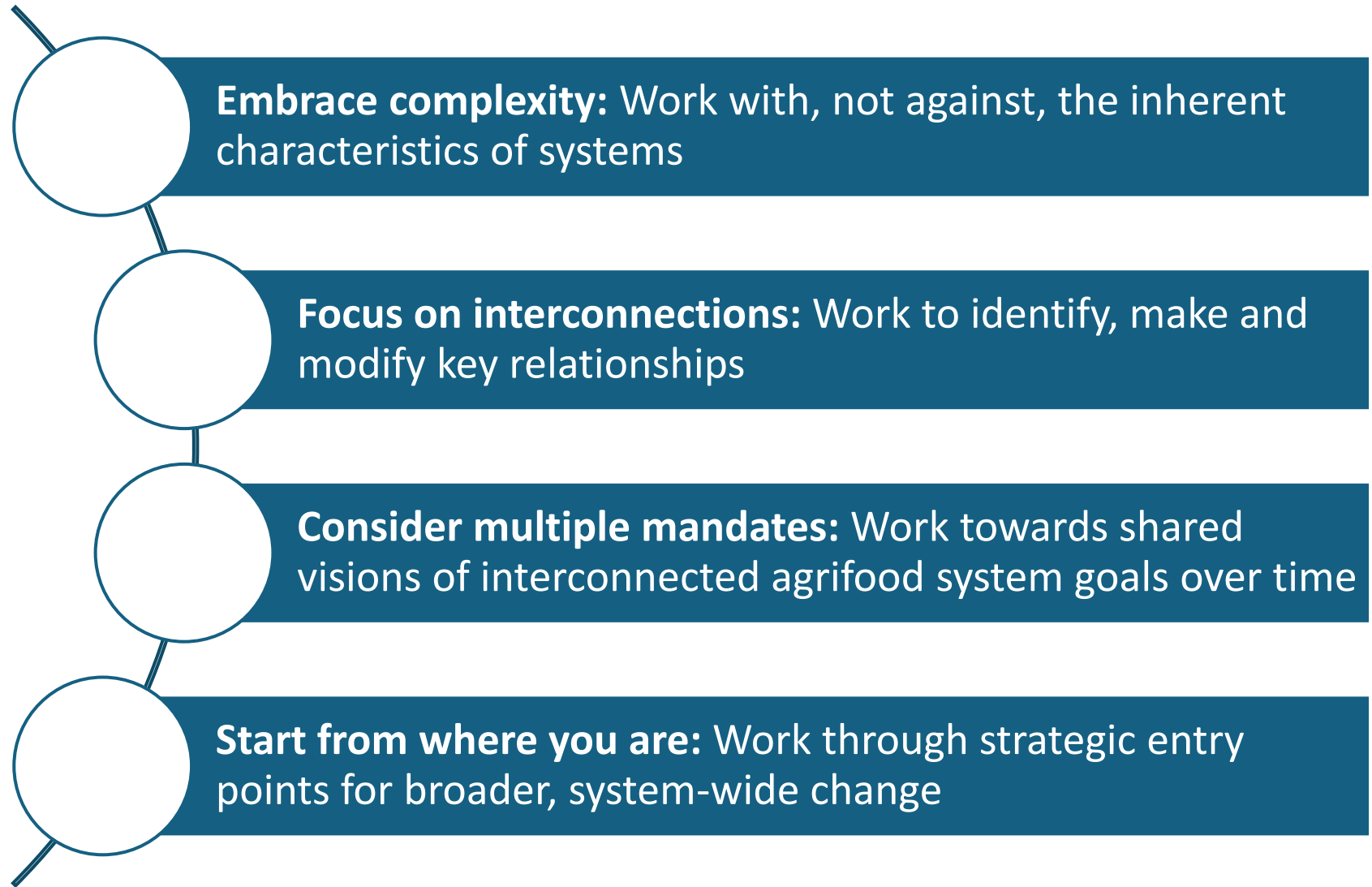


Agrifood systems  
and interrelated  
systems



Power  
relations

Core principles to  
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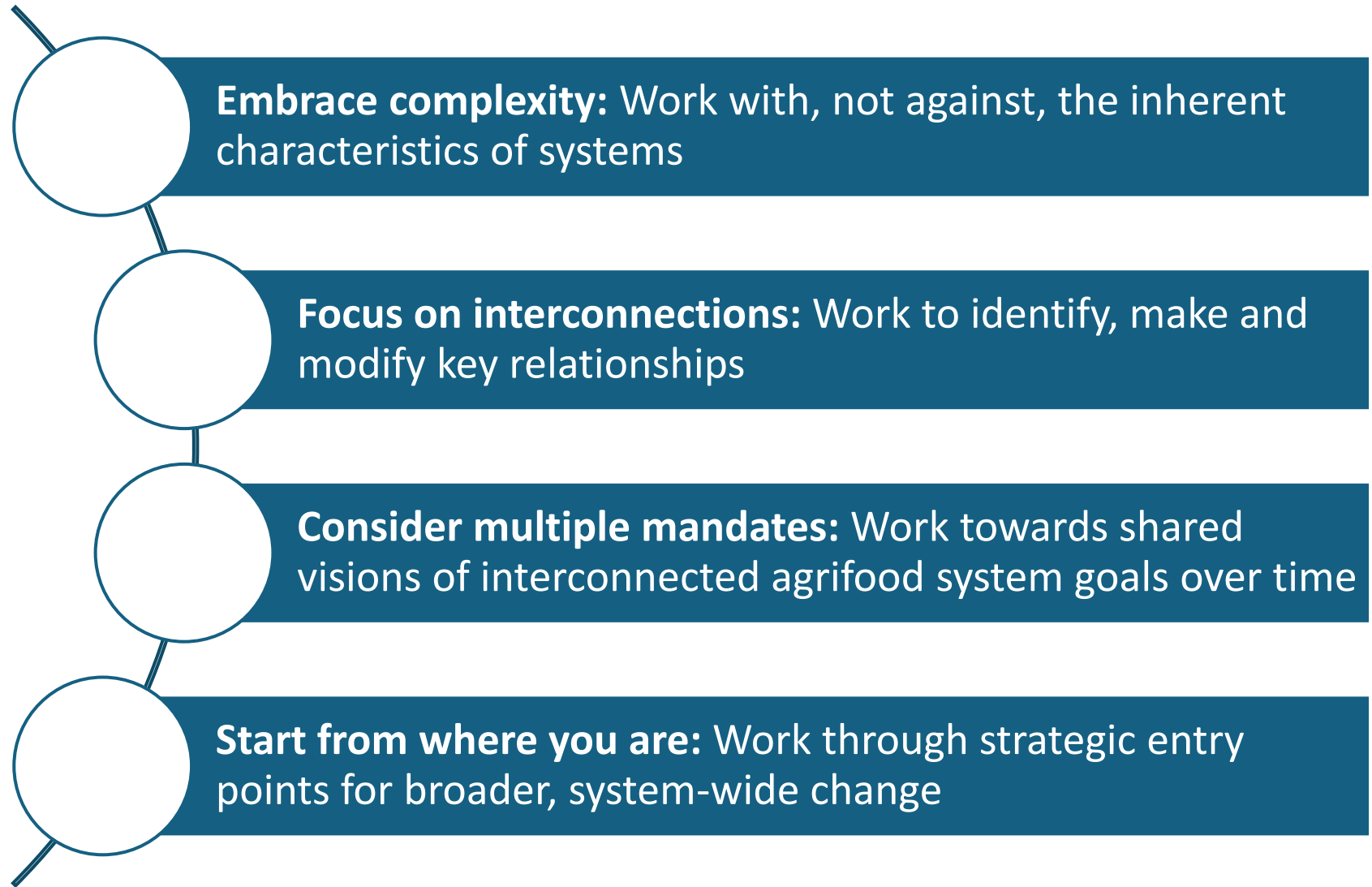


# What are we transforming towards?

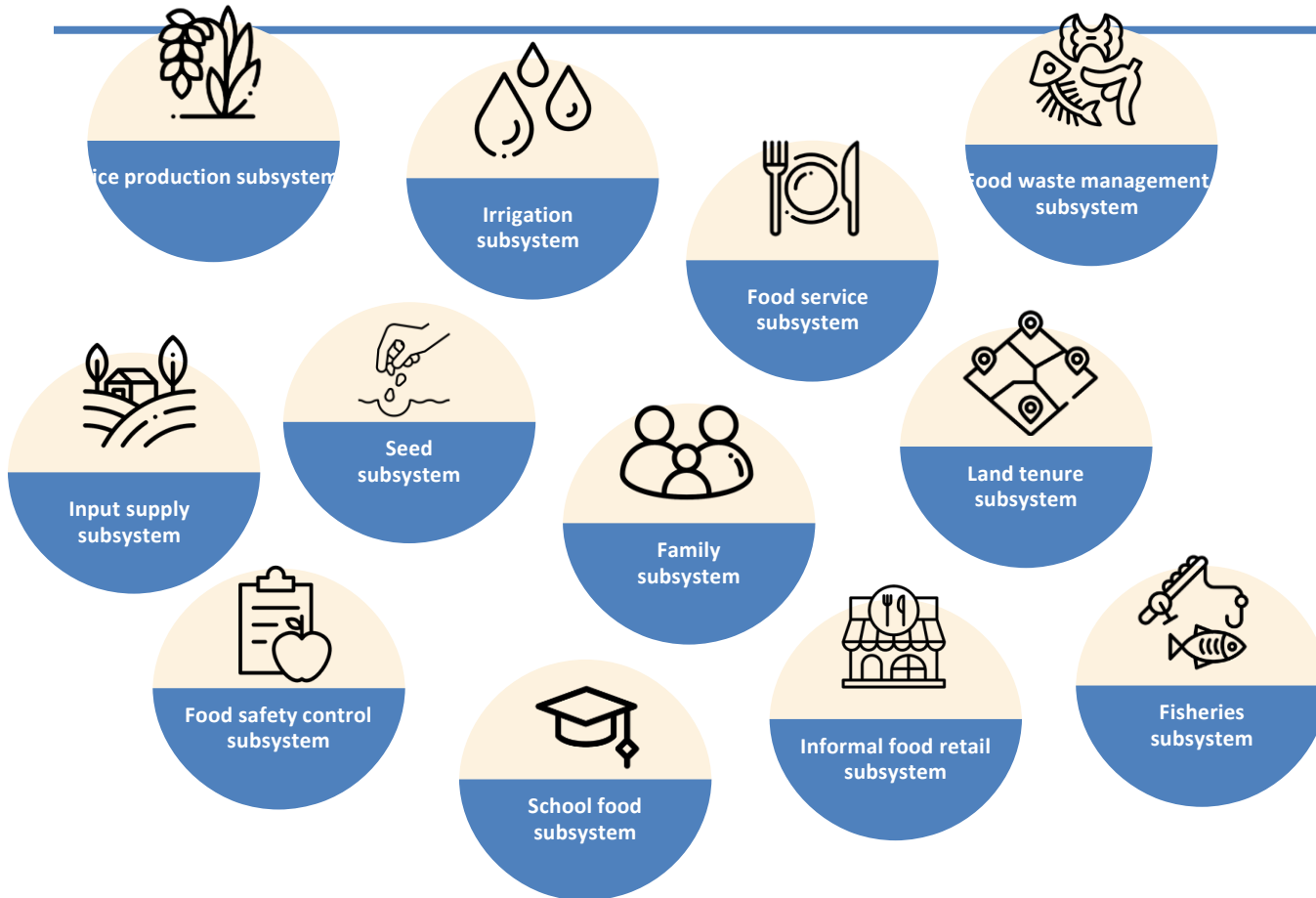
Consider multiple mandates, interconnected outcomes



Core principles to  
guide the  
implementation  
of a systems  
approach



## Work through 'strategic entry points' in subsystems



For example:

- Activate feedback loops that spread change
- Convert a dysfunctional into a functional subsystem
- Address blockages emerging from power relations
- Fix broken connections



# From silos to systems: the six elements of a systems approach

The concrete difference needed in the way we think, act and work together



# From silos to systems: the six elements of a systems approach

The concrete difference needed in the way we think, act and work together

**FROM SILOS....**

**....TO SYSTEMS**



**Systems Thinking**

Seeing priorities, problems & solutions in isolation

Seeing beyond mandates & identifying connections



## Mindsets that see systems

### From siloes....

*Seeing priorities, problems  
& solutions in isolation*

### .... to systems

*Seeing beyond mandates & identifying  
interconnections*

#### Key Shift 1

Seeing only one's own perspective,  
mandate, objectives, solutions and  
priorities

Bringing together different views  
to see interconnections,  
problems and solutions in new  
ways to craft shared visions and  
common solutions

#### Key Shift 2

Characterizing entry points only as  
priority problems and solutions

Identifying strategic entry points  
with potential for transformative  
change

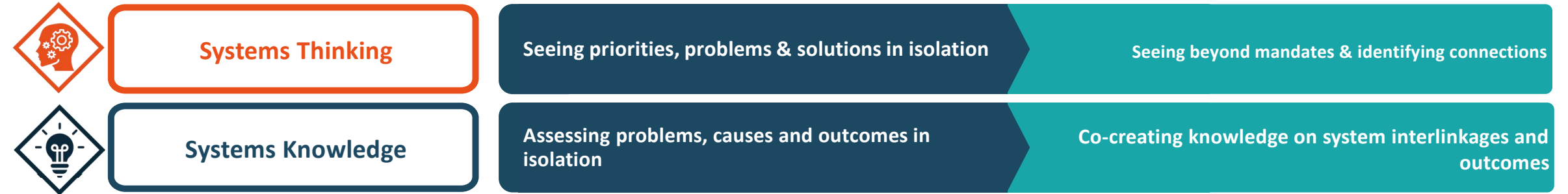
#### Key Shift 3

Building only sector-specific  
technical expertise

Building capacities for systems  
thinking, leadership and  
innovation

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## SYSTEMS DOING

Implemen-  
ting policies  
& actions that  
harness inter-  
connections

### From siloes....

*Fragmented interventions*

### .... to systems

*Implementing coherent, mutually reinforcing,  
multi-purpose actions*

#### Key Shift 1

Addressing a priority problem  
with single silver-bullet  
interventions

Combining mutually-reinforcing  
actions for system-wide effects

#### Key Shift 2

Actions that consider just one  
objective

Implementing interventions  
that deliver multiple benefits

#### Key Shift 3

Taking actions that fly blind into  
trade-offs or deliberately ignore  
them

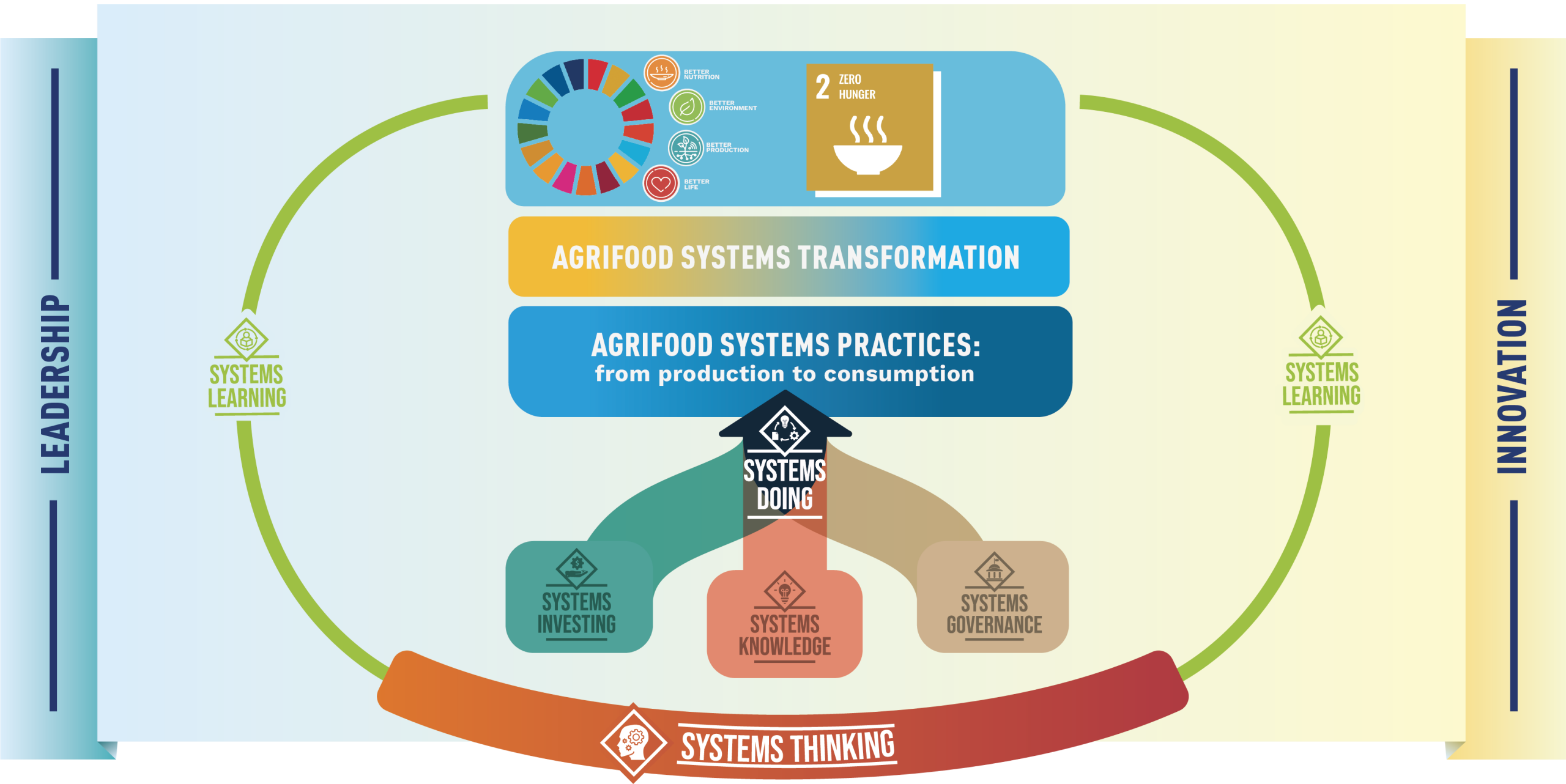
Actively managing and  
mitigating trade-offs with  
equity-focused innovations

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# AGRIFOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION THROUGH A **SYSTEMS APPROACH**



# Thank you

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