

POLICY BRIEF #2

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CO-CREATING RESILIENT AND
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS
TOWARDS FOOD2030

The EU-funded Cities2030 project will bring together researchers, entrepreneurs, civil society leaders, cities and all agents of urban food systems and ecosystems (UFSE) to create a structure focused on the transformation of the way systems produce, transport, supply, recycle and reuse food.

ABSTRACT / KEY MESSAGE

Subtitle

This Policy Brief aims to present some approaches and tools developed over the past decades that fall within the broader field of Food Policy.

The intent is to provide a range of possible solutions for managing the food transition to more sustainable and resilient forms.

This collection, which does not claim to be exhaustive, is intended as a toolbox of cases and examples concerning the scientific debate and practices around the food system, which can serve as useful references for public and private organizations interested in food policy development.

In addition to some exemplary cases that are well known and studied in the scientific debate within Urban Studies, ongoing experiences in the city-regions included in the case studies of the Cities2030 project partnership are included.

1. Introduction

When we talk about food policies, we refer to a rather broad field of experiences, theories, methodological approaches and innovative tools. The choice, use and application of these tools must consider the urban and territorial scale of reference, as well as the specificities of the territory under examination.

Large cities can develop real food plans, small cities can build Food Strategies that bring together different thematic aspects related to the food system, village networks can organize Food Councils capable of structuring exchange networks and innovation niches.



Depending on the scale of the city or region we consider, we can find the right tools.

The reference time scale is also a useful aspect to consider when assessing which approaches or tools to adopt in the case under study.

Some forms of food policy can be seen as different "evolutionary phases" of an increasingly structured process of activities that the Policy Lab can take on.

The **Food Council** can coordinate ongoing activities related to various associations or departments, constituting a first step towards a holistic view of the food system as an urban and territorial issue.

A **Food Strategy** has a broader scope, useful for building a future vision of the reference context, implies a sharing of intentions and values and allows the definition of work and commitment trajectories, as well as the involvement of local actors.

A **Food Plan**, on the other hand, has a more structured form of planning food management in the area, it implies that the public body takes charge of the development of a specific government tool for the food system, with consequent implications in regulatory terms.

Depending on the scale and complexity of the territory and/or the public entity involved, these tools can be steps in an evolving process or even alternative forms of management/planning of the food system (a metropolis can go through all these phases, a small might even have just one Food Council).



2. Tools for the Food Policy within CITIES 2030

Food Council

Food councils "primarily refer to governance tools that help connect stakeholders and food issues by defining the spheres of action, goals and processes needed to define, implement and measure policies" (Calori and Magarini, 2015, p.39). To apply these collaborative principles, local governments and associations around the world have begun to use the tool of the "food council." This can be defined as "a structure that brings together stakeholders from different food-related areas to examine how the food system works and propose ways to improve it" (Haysom, 2015). Introducing this type of governance tool does not mean taking power away from local government but accepting that multiple levels of action are needed to address the complex challenges of the food system. Participation is at the heart of these new governance tools-between rural-urban areas, territory, citizens, institutions, businesses-redistributing power. Food councils seek to return power to each actor in the supply chain, starting at the local level, using the experience of the individual as leverage to change small pieces of a larger system.

Bremerhaven

The Food Council MOIN! - Ernährungsrat für Bremerhaven, das Cuxland und umzu e.V. (Food Council for Bremerhaven, Cuxland and the surrounding area assoc.) is a local association that addresses issues of food, agriculture, sustainability and healthy eating in the city of Bremerhaven and its surrounding rural area (County Cuxhaven). The council was initiated in 2021 out of the local project "Wissen schafft Lebensraum" (KnowledgeCreates Habitat) to address challenges in the regional food system and promote positive changes in dietary habits, food production and distribution, and environmental concerns.

The aim is to promote sustainable, regional, seasonal and fair food production. This also includes promoting the marketing and consumption of such products, accompanying information work and calling for political framework conditions for a sustainable nutrition strategy. The emergence of the Bremerhaven Food Council stems from the growing awareness of the importance of sustainable and healthy nutrition. Bremerhaven, as a port city with a huge fish and food processing economy and the surrounding region with an agricultural tradition, has recognised that local food systems play an important role in providing healthy food to the community while reducing environmental impacts. The Food Council was created to bring together stakeholders from different sectors such as agriculture, gastronomy, education, health, environmental protection and administration to work together on solutions for sustainable food. The purpose of the Bremerhaven Food Council is to improve food security in the region, promote access to healthy and sustainable food, strengthen local food production, increase appreciation for regional and seasonal food and reduce the environmental impact of food production. The Council is working on concrete projects and initiatives to achieve these goals. These include measures such as promoting organic farming, supporting local farmers and producers, organising educational events on nutrition education, creating urban gardens and promoting the use of regional food in schools and public institutions.

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Food Strategy

Food strategies are intended as expressions of shared visions for the future of a certain food system, related to an urban or territorial scale. contains recommendations to address the major issues facing the food system: climate change, biodiversity loss, land use, diet-related disease, health inequality, food security and trade.

A food strategy can help improve the conditions of a city or territory's food system in terms of sustainability (social, economic, and environmental), independence from imports, and resilience with respect to climate change.

Food strategies are generally promoted by public institutions and land-government agencies, which are responsible for taking a medium- and long-term view of future programs and transformations.

Food Strategies can include specific policy tools, such as Food Plans.

Bruges, Belgium

should be seen as a guideline for sustainable nutrition and is also an important link in the realization of the 2030 Climate Plan. It is built around six objectives:

- Stimulate urban gardening.
- More plant-based foods (education).
- Limit food loss.
- Sustainable urban agriculture.
- Local food production and short chain.
- Fair trade.

This strategy was co-created in 2015 with the city, citizens, companies, local organizations, knowledge institutions and hotel schools. At the same time, they launched the platform 'Bruges Food Lab'. The Bruges Food Lab is a network that connects and strengthens various actors who work on sustainable food. The Bruges Food Lab is a booster of initiatives and overarching projects within Bruges' sustainable food strategy. The coordinator is embedded in a local non-profit (stadsmakers vzw) but payed by the city and they work closely together with the policy officer climate/food.

Food waste has always been an important pillar of the strategy and various actions are implemented in the last decade. In 2016 a strategic analysis was performed to measure where food is wasted and in what quantities. After estimating that a large amount of edible food was being wasted by retailers (750,000 kg/year), the city of Bruges launched an ambitious Zero Food Waste strategy. This strategy put a focus on specific sectors, such as health, which in 2015 wasted a total of 318 tons of food per year (for hot meals alone). After 2 years, important results have been achieved: Bruges has become an exemplary case in Europe for saving 43% of food waste in the main local hospital; in fact, the hospital has also saved part of the money usually invested in food waste prevention. For this in 2017 the city of Bruges was awarded at the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact conference with a special mention on food waste



Seinajoki, Finland

The case of Seinajoki shows how a medium-sized city of 64,000 inhabitants can effectively tackle food by developing a specific local food strategy and two more comprehensive Road maps that concern two specific issues transversal to food. The Local food strategy, inscribed in the national one, is nowadays improving the local food consumption in order to raise the usage of it in the entire food system and develop the local food culture. The two road maps concern the relationship between the food system and environmental threats. The first one is the Climate Road Map for the food sector in South Ostrobothnia. This road map identifies the main development areas of the food chain in the province which have an effect to the climate change. The second one is the Low Carbon Road Map for the Food Processing industry. This road map maps and suggests actions to reduce the food processing industry's carbon footprint.

Food Plan

Today, in many European urban contexts, the historical link between inhabited areas and productive areas of the territory is increasingly weak, above all due to the opening up of the scale of the markets which involve, on the one hand, heavy imports to supply the urban areas, on the other production often oriented to external markets. However, many cities have returned, in recent years, to increasingly consider their local area as a potential supplier of local food and the awareness that food is a complex system that involves all phases, activities, the actors and spaces of the supply chain. In order to be governed, this complexity requires planning tools to develop policies to support the transition of food systems.

Marseille, France

Marseille is the second largest city in France, after Paris, with 870,000 inhabitants within the municipal perimeter and 1,600,000 inhabitants throughout the urban agglomeration. The food system and its relationship with the city are the subject of two major plans: the first is a territorial food plan covering the entire food system, and the second, a plan for the development of urban agriculture. Since 2016, the Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolitan Area and the Pays d'Arles Pole of Territorial and Rural Equilibrium (PETR) have been involved in a strategic and operational process to jointly draw up a Territorial Food Project (Projet Alimentaire Territorial - PAT) for the Bouches-du-Rhône region. Created in 2014, these plans are the result of the national 'Law on the Future of Agriculture' and are drawn up collectively on the initiative of local actors (local authorities, agricultural and agri-food businesses, craftsmen, citizens, etc.). The aim of the PAT is to include regional players in the whole food chain (production, processing, distribution, consumption), to enable them to build a comprehensive agricultural and food policy. And, by doing so, to relocate food and agriculture in local areas by supporting the installation of farmers, short food supply chains and local products in public canteens. The aim is to build a food governance system that brings together local production and local consumption in all three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social.



The second plan is the Metropolitan action plan for the development of urban agriculture (Plan d'action métropolitain en faveur de l'agriculture urbaine). The main objectives of this plan are: the promotion of local production of fresh products for the inhabitants of the metropolis, as well as raising their awareness of healthy eating and urban agriculture; the control or reduction in the urban fringes of the risk of forest fires and the mitigation of the increase in temperatures due to climate change; the reactivation, through agriculture, of the social link between the inhabitants through shared, collective or school gardens.

The plan is developed in three strategic axes. The first axis aims to support local production and food. It is deployed at an urban planning level, for example by securing existing agricultural land and setting up Protected Agricultural Zones (ZAP), or by setting up more favourable water access tariff conditions for food producers. The support of local production is also provided through installation assistance via access to land, the establishment of a coordination-installation group and support for local distribution and marketing via the construction of a hall and dedicated sales windows. This axis aims to have the status of urban farmer recognized at the national level.

The second axis pursues different actions. The mobilization of urban agriculture in the service of strengthening nature in the city; the management of urban fringes via eco-grazing, bee nurseries and the creation of an experimental orchard; and finally, support for the circular economy by installing composters and reusing green waste from communities. The third axis promotes the emergence of an inclusive city. Via the creation of a resource center for collective gardens, the support for the installation of pilot projects of urban micro-farms in Priority Districts of the City, and the establishment of a support system for the creation of farmers' markets, baskets and solidarity AMAPs in food deserts (Métropole Aix Marseille Provence, 2019).

Others: where food is included in other programs

Haarlem, Netherlands

Haarlem is a medium-sized city in the Netherlands with 160,000 inhabitants. The municipality of Haarlem has initiated an extensive sustainability program that focuses on climate adaptation, energy transition and circular economy. Within this programme are a specific policy and a Roadmap related to the theme of food. In particular the Circular City policy aims to stimulate urban agriculture. Thanks to this municipality's program, by 2030, 50% of Haarlem's farms will be familiar with a circular food system. Furthermore, by 2030, every neighbourhood will have possible forms of urban or vertical agriculture. Local food cooperatives known by 50% of the inhabitants of Haarlem were activated, including the municipality's main countryside. Residents have developed bottom-up initiatives in the various neighbourhoods, supported by the municipality. Through campaigns and plant-based menus/activities, organic food is stimulated and encouraged for all social groups. The Roadmap Sustainability of Haarlem (Chapter 8, Chain Responsibility) has set goals that are necessary to achieve a more circular food dynamic between now and 2040. The city also supports organic food, through campaigns and the promotion of menus and activities, also to stimulate and encourage greater plant-based consumption.



Reykjavík, Iceland

Reykjavík is the capital of Iceland and home to 140,000 inhabitants. Two food policies concern the territory of the city and the entire country.

At the national scale the Food Policy for Iceland until 2030, that emphasises increasing local food production and value along the value chain, reducing food waste and carbon footprint. The five focus areas of the policy are value creation, consumers, appearance and safety, environment, and public health. At the scale of the city the Reykjavík Food Policy 2018-2022 is a comprehensive policy for development of food system in Reykjavík with seven focus areas for improvement: shorter and more localised food value chains; increased sustainability and quality; improved access to healthy food; improved food culture; and reduced food waste (CRFS Policy Lab Action Plan, Cities 2030).

At the scale of the city the Reykjavík, Food Policy 2018-2022, which was designed in 2018 and is currently being revised, is a comprehensive policy for development of food system in Reykjavík with seven focus areas for improvement: shorter and more localised food value chains; increased sustainability and quality; improved access to healthy food; improved food culture; and reduced food waste (CRFS Policy Lab Action Plan, Cities 2030). Its main objectives include but are not limited to improving food culture in the city, increasing several vegetable gardens, local food markets in city's neighbourhoods, reducing food waste in schools and city's canteens, increasing several food stores within walking distances from residential areas, and disclosing information about food's origins and environmental impacts.

3. Conclusions

This Policy Brief presented some of the approaches and tools developed in recent decades that fall within the broader field of Food Policy to build a food system that is fairer, healthier, more sustainable.

Gathering and studying these cases has allowed us to understand part of the current state of experimentation on food system issues, the tools available to public bodies and territorial governing bodies, and the methodologies available to those who question the food evolution of contemporary inhabited territories.

We have seen that both the time factor and the scale of action influence the choice of instruments to be deployed. Food councils act more directly to coordinate and strengthen existing initiatives and launch new ones, acting at a local scale, which can be adapted to the context of village networks or small towns. The Food strategy consists of a long-term programme, which does not end at the planning stage, but rather aims to achieve results over a longer period. The same happens in planning expressed through the Food Plan,



which allows the problems of the food system to be understood and mapped in order to identify the actions to be launched. This is why Food Strategy and Food Plans may be more suitable tools for metropolises or medium/large cities that have the resources and tools to field and manage these specific forms and models of government.

Finally, we have also seen that the Food Council, Food Strategy and Food Plan are not mutually exclusive, but on the contrary can be simultaneously included, thus enabling more complete collaboration and coordination between public, private and third sector organisations.

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