



URBAN FOOD MATTERS

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR INCLUSIVE, RESILIENT, SAFE AND DIVERSE FOOD SYSTEMS



Like any successful restaurateur, a large helping of the work cities do is coordinating the many actors around them. From civil society to business and research organisations, cities are perfectly placed to ensure a streamlined synergy between stakeholders that ensure innovative solutions for the food system and yields the best result.

Cities use an array of policy instruments: citizen engagement, social innovation, new governance models and socially responsible public procurement to collaborate in innovative solutions for a more sustainable food system.

Food: a key ingredient in many dishes

Food has a critical role in many areas of competence of cities:

Food production and consumption were often seen as separate processes. However, due to the complexity and the interrelatedness of the whole food cycle, from production to consumption, from sowing seeds to filling rubbish dumps, it has become important to approach food related issues with a systemic perspective.

This new vision has opened up a new role for cities as critical actors in the food system. Cities are becoming facilitators, bringing actors together and developing comprehensive sustainable food strategies.



The recipe so far

Activities related to urban food across cities entail a similar range of themes and actions, even if the main drivers and priorities can differ according to the local context. Some cities see healthy diets as their main area of concern, for others is climate action, for others is poverty eradication or job creation.

So far, around one in three European cities, and others across the world, have developed food strategies that are comprehensive and have a dedicated person or city department working across sectors to coordinate food related areas. At the same time, many cities have become interested in getting involved in food related activities, developing new food related policies and/or projects.



Who's cooking?

Around a third of the interviewed cities have developed a comprehensive strategy, and each city has created its own recipe for success. This includes the 'chef' in charge of food-related activities who can be:

- a newly appointed person/department responsible for food policies and projects
- representatives of different departments working together, in informal meetings

- official steering groups at city level composed of members of different city departments
- established working groups or city council bringing together city officials and key external stakeholders

Rather than having a specific department or person, most cities appoint the existing department or agency closest to the main area of work within their food activities.

What are cities doing?

GOTHENBURG

The Environment department is in charge of the new strategy, which has a strong environmental focus. The Real Estate Department, which manages the peri-urban lands owned by the municipality, is also involved in food activities

MILAN - an inclusive food strategy

The 'Guiding Principles of the Milan Food Policy 2015-2020' is the result of a very participatory process with around 1000 stakeholders. The vice-mayor acts as food policy coordinator. A food policy officer and a food communication officer will be added to the interdepartmental team

ROTTERDAM - the food cluster

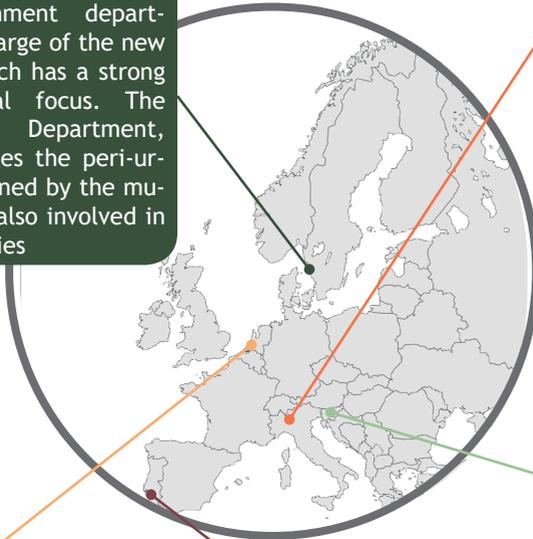
The Economic Development department manages the governance system, which follows the triple helix approach, a cooperation of private, public sectors and researchers. Depending on the action, other city departments may be involved

LISBON - Municipal plan to combat food waste

The Social and Health department manages the plan, while other projects and activities are under the Green structure and energy department

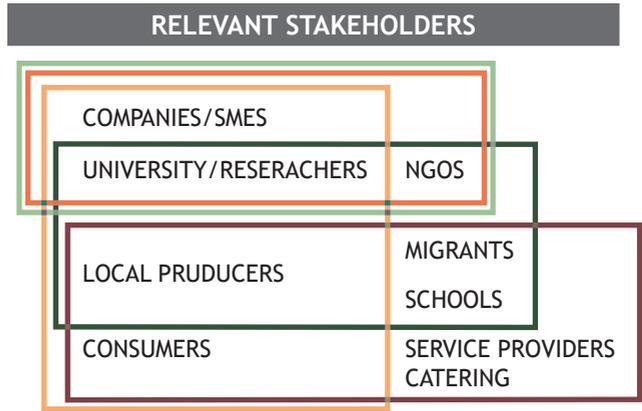
LJUBLJANA- strategy for rural development

Department of Environmental Protection is in charge of the comprehensive strategy implemented for 2014-2020. Others, like the Department for Pre-school Learning & Education and the one for Health & Social Security are also involved in the management of food related issues



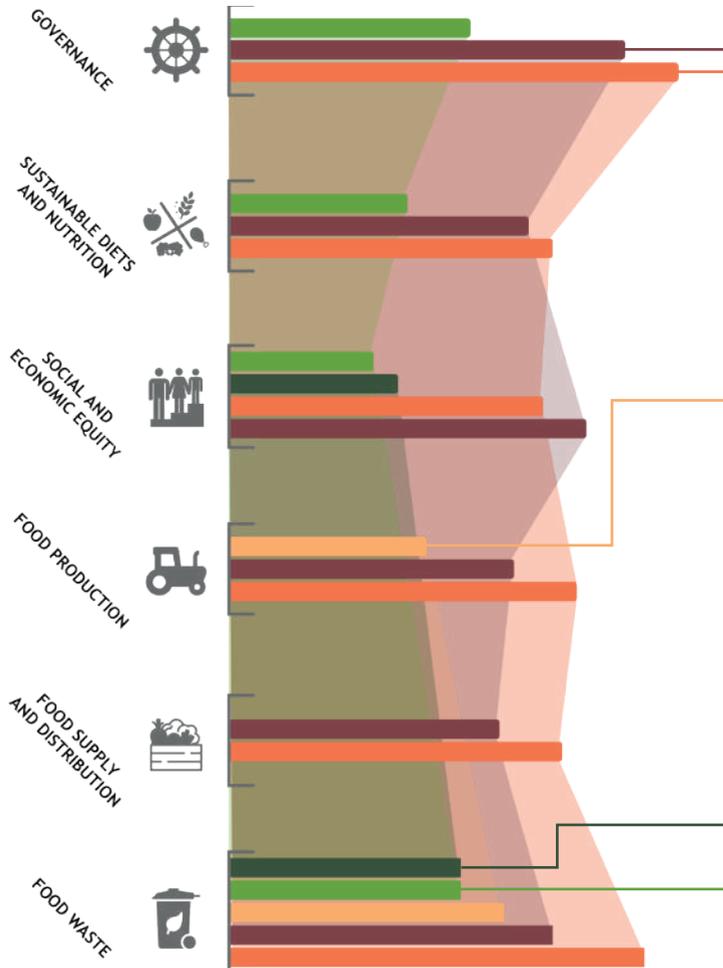
Always in need of a good sous-chef

All cities insist on the importance of involving relevant stakeholders in the development of a food strategy. The most relevant partner varies from city to city depending on the area of work the city has favoured.



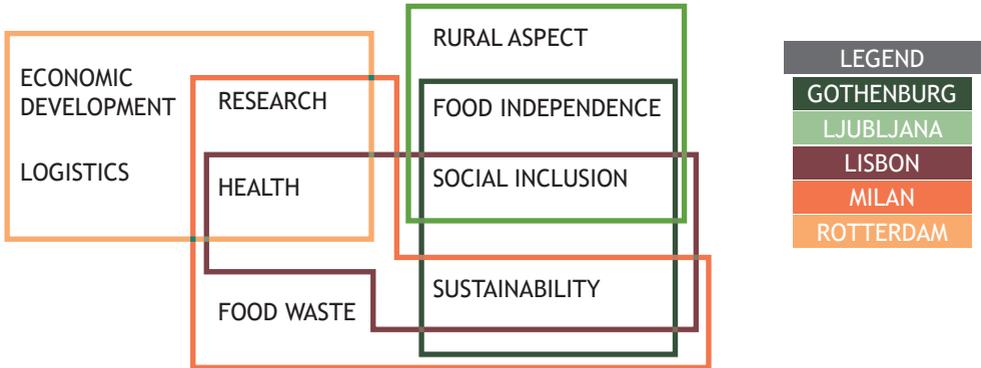
Urban food policies: cities' ingredients for success

Cities prioritise different policy instruments depending on population makeup, poverty rate, the presence of third country nationals, the obesity rate, as well as their main working area related to food. However, the size and geography of the city don't seem to have a relevant impact in the choice of the favoured policy instrument used in food related actions, at least in Europe.



The six categories used in this study are in line with the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) framework of activities.

MAIN AREAS OF WORK



Infrastructural development

A re-connection of the rural food producers with the urban consumers increases the sustainability and resilience of the food system, which goes far beyond the production stage. It also entails packaging, distribution, retail, consumption and waste management. Cities can create and support an infrastructure that facilitates and encourages urban-rural linkages, for instance in the form of an increased presence of municipal food markets.

Governance

An enabling environment is absolutely necessary for effective actions towards the development of a comprehensive food strategy. New links across city departments, the empowerment of civil society organisations and collaboration with research and the private sector facilitate this difficult task.

Innovative public procurement

By making use of their purchasing power, cities can influence the food system markets into their desired direction, for example by developing creative tendering documents to incentivise the provision of healthy and diversified foods in public canteens.

Citizen involvement and social innovation

Embracing a more inclusive and participatory process to co-create food strategy through the active involvement of civil society and other local actors cities help to truly respond to the context-specific issues and needs of citizens.

Research

Cities appreciate contributions of a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary research approach that provides data and insights to measure the impacts of their urban food initiatives. In-depth research is needed to empower local actors, by enhancing their knowledge of broad food systems and by fostering knowledge exchange. One area of intervention is the development of research-based education initiatives.

Good practices

In **1991**



the **Toronto Food Policy Council** was launched to advise the city on food policy issues and to serve as an advocate for community food security strategies

A strategic obesity group within **Birmingham's** Food Council was set up, which – among others – decided on the restriction of further development of fast food chains in close proximity to school, with



a minimum of **800** meters

Barcelona set up the Institute of Markets to manage the municipal markets, with a focus on improving market infrastructures and services, which is currently handling



39 food markets

Drawing on the development of a Swedish food strategy, **Gothenburg** is developing a comprehensive strategy tackling

3 main challenges (environmental impact, health and food security)



in **5** focus areas

In the **Dutch City Deal** **12** municipalities and the national government collaborate to



Ljubljana's threefold Strategy for Rural Development 2014-2020 aims at increasing the city's self-sufficiency in food by promoting organic and integrated agriculture, to empower the rural areas and lastly to develop social capital and the preservation of the municipality's rural identity, as

2/3

of their land is classified as agricultural



co-create a comprehensive national food policy called "From Agriculture to Food Policy"

Lisbon's

'**Hortas Urbanas**' project consists of

750

plots in **16** p directly involv management production

Athens collaborates



schools in its "A for Food Policy" organises work food product

The one-year creation of **Milan's** comprehensive food

policy involved

1,000



stakeholders from academia, civil society, public and private organisations

The city of **Porto** participates in Portugal's "right price menu" scheme, where restaurants have been asked to reduce portion sizes and costs to

Rotterdam's Food Cluster, is composed of local government representatives, more than

6,000

companies and education and knowledge institutions collaborating to boost investment in the local sectors and has a budget of

€750,000



decrease food waste and to make their meals more accessible for low-income people



Ghent's "Resto Restje" doggy bag scheme has

Edinburgh supports

the "Social Bite" project, which employs and trains long-term unemployed and homeless people, and provides

100,000

food items and hot drinks to homeless people



116

participating restaurants

arks and citizens are involved in the of land and food

with **130** Athens Laboratory "city" project, which workshops on healthy ion

environment, the public company Eau de **Paris** made

153 hectares of land available for organic farmers, which in 2014 led to a share of



27.3% of sustainable food in municipal canteens

Cities' ambition

Food related actions require the integration of many segments of society, levels of governance and policy areas. The main ambition for cities is therefore to develop holistic strategies that encompass and integrate all the areas of work related to food, social economy and integration, environment, and health.

The creation of urban food strategies is innovative by definition: they aim to roll out and scale up new methods, ideas, and products emerging from the private sector, civil society organisations, citizens, and industries.

The role that cities see for themselves is to work as facilitators involving a wide range of stakeholders. They want to encourage the spread of innovative practices at the local level, provide a way for actors to connect with each other, and to scale up activities.

Barriers

- **Implementation gaps**
missing integration of the work across and between city departments
- **Challenging or adverse political situations**
e.g. food activities are not seen as a political priority or some activities are a competence of the regional level
- **Unclear division of competences among different levels of governments**
e.g. presence of national policies that restrict, limit or contradict municipal priorities
- **Lack of multi-level governance and policy coherence**
absence of effective multi-sector, multi-actor and multi-level engagement mechanisms among different city departments, different levels of government and different types of actors
- **Difficulties in including and engaging critical actors**
- **Missing links between research, practice and policy**

Solutions

- **Identify and select entry points for food related activities**
that will be both successful and demonstrate impact, in order to build a coalition of support across government and other stakeholders and actors
- **Use longer planning cycles**
to transcend political or election cycles
- **Establish mechanisms for the engagement of different city departments, different levels of government and different local actors**
- **Secure parallel sectoral or multi-level governmental support**
- **Collaborate with universities and research centres**
to collect data and monitor the impact of the food activities
- **Build demand driven and mutually beneficial learning and exchange networks**
with local authorities at national or international level

Research on food & cities: Six innovation dynamics towards reaching their goal and scaling-up

Cities must enable the emergence and recognition of local innovative practices so that they can support them and scale them up. How can they attain their ambition?



1. Emphasis on community buy-in

- give space to bottom-up community-led initiatives & decrease government involvement in development of food policies
- connect bottom-up initiatives and top-down strategies



2. Enhancing participation in the governance system

- devise innovative governance approaches and mechanisms that aim to enhance civil society participation in the design and implementation of food policies
- connect with a wider set of actors in reciprocal relationships, to build capacity within and between the sectors and actors



3. Local empowerment as a policy goal

- devise initiatives that target the most vulnerable segments of population
- develop urban agriculture to maximise social inclusion



4. Shortening food supply chains

- give visibility to the existence, or lack of, socio-economic and environmental relations that shape the urban food-scape
- reconnect the city to its surrounding areas breaking the rural-urban divide and developing new kinds of functional areas



5. Systemic thinking

- develop an innovative systemic approach to food policy, focusing intervention on other stages of the food chain emphasising connections between different stages of the food system and other social contexts and sectors



6. Translocalism

- establish translocal networks that enhance knowledge exchange and co-operation between urban areas



EU funding can have great impact

EU funded projects, and especially EU funds for research and innovation, have the potential to create a strong impact in cities and their development of food related activities and policies*.

In order to support cities and to deliver the greatest impact, European funded projects need to be aligned with the local political priorities. Project research questions and project implementation should be done in cooperation with local authorities and other relevant actors. Projects have stronger impact where cities have the ability to learn and exchange with each other on best practices.

*Often the project produces an impact in the city, but the fact that the results of the work are from EU funding sources is not recognised.

EU funded projects can

- increase political will and involvement
- ensure project impact goes beyond project duration

When cities are **project partners** it is clearer and easier to define the impact of a project beyond its initial duration. Being a project partner supports the engagement at the political level, which is fundamental to incorporating project results.

Project priorities need to be aligned with the **city priorities**. Therefore, a successful project needs to have a certain level of flexibility to adjust to the emergence of new needs at local level and new political goals.

Research is fundamental to providing data and data analysis, but research questions need to be defined together with the users, in order to maximise research and innovation projects' impact.

Projects have stronger impact where cities have the possibility to **learn and exchange** with each other on successful **good practices**.

Coordination with other sources of funding, in particular cohesion funds, is important in order to maximise the impact of different projects.

This publication is a summary of the FOOD IN CITIES study on innovation for sustainable and healthy production, delivery, and consumption of food in cities, supported by the European Commission, Directorate General for Research and Innovation.

This study aims to provide an overview of the food innovation dynamics in cities, in addition to providing evidence on the role and impact of European funded projects for research and innovation (R&I) in cities. Its findings are based on input provided by the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) signatory cities and EUROCITIES members through an open survey, interviews, desk research and focus group meetings. More than 40 cities from Europe and nine cities from across the Globe participated in the survey. Among these, five cities were chosen for a more in-depth analysis of their food activities and the impact of EU funded projects for research and innovation.

You can check the overall results of the study at https://ec.europa.eu/research/openvision/pdf/rise/food_in_cities.pdf

About the EUROCITIES WG food

EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities. Among the more than 40 working groups divided into seven areas of work, the working group food aims to become a 'creative hub' for sharing information, ideas, best practices and experimenting with innovative solutions related to urban food.

On 15 October 2015, 117 mayors across Europe and the world signed the Milan Urban Food Pact (MUFPP), through which they committed, among other things, to develop sustainable food systems, to grant healthy and accessible food to all, protect biodiversity and fight against food waste. The great attention demonstrated by cities to this initiative proved the need to deepen the attention to these issues on a city cooperation basis and underlined the urgencies of defining models for an integrated approach to food systems at the urban level. This working group represents the starting point for setting up a European framework to consolidate the path undertaken.

www.eurocities.eu

About the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) was announced in February 2014 at the C40 Summit in Johannesburg, where the mayor of Milan launched the proposal for a pact to be signed during the forthcoming Expo 2015. The activities started in September, when Milan and over 40 cities from every continent began to exchange views to define the contents of the Pact through video-conferences. By signing, cities commit to developing sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse. As of today, the pact has been signed by 175 cities from all over the world representing more than 450 million inhabitants.

<http://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/>

...current food systems are being challenged to provide permanent and reliable access to adequate, safe, local, diversified, fair, healthy and nutrient rich food for all.

Cities, which host over half the world population, have a strategic role to play in developing sustainable food systems and promoting healthy diets...

- from Milan Urban Food Policy Pact



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