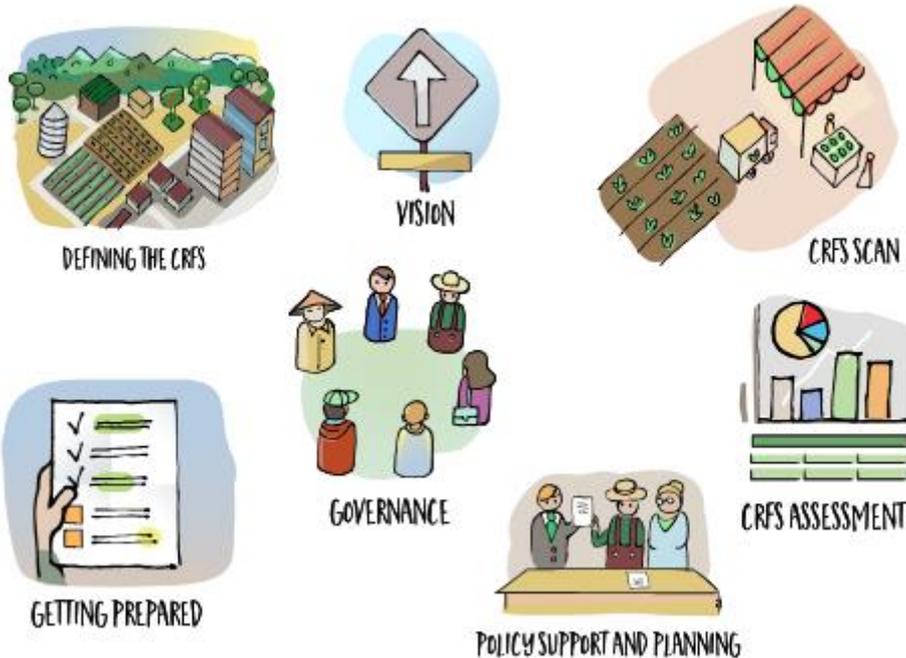




City Region Food System Toolkit
Assessing and planning sustainable city region food systems

CITY REGION FOOD SYSTEM TOOLKIT
TOOL/EXAMPLE



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Tool/Example:

Terms of Reference CRFS Multi-stakeholder Taskforce

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Project: FAO Food for the Cities programme

Introduction to the joint programme

This tool is part of the City Region Food Systems (CRFS) toolkit to assess and plan sustainable city region food systems. The toolkit has been developed by FAO, RUAF Foundation and Wilfrid Laurier University with the financial support of the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Daniel and Nina Carasso Foundation.

Link to programme website and toolbox

<http://www.fao.org/in-action/food-for-cities-programme/overview/what-we-do/en/>

<http://www.fao.org/in-action/food-for-cities-programme/toolkit/introduction/en/>

<http://www.ruaf.org/projects/developing-tools-mapping-and-assessing-sustainable-city-region-food-systems-cityfoodtools>

Tool summary:

Brief description	This tool provides a Terms of Reference for the CRFS multi-stakeholder taskforce
Expected outcome	Engagement of a multi-stakeholder taskforce in the CRFS project
Expected Output	Terms of Reference adapted to the local context
Scale of application	Project level
Expertise required for application	Project management
Examples of application	Kitwe and Lusaka (Zambia); Colombo (Sri Lanka)
Year of development	2015
References	-

Tool description:

The research/project team (including the institutional focal point) should work in close collaboration with a wider group of stakeholders and multi-stakeholder dialogue. This dialogue could initially be implemented through a local CRFS task force involving representatives from various government sectors and levels of government, research organisations and local universities, private sector and civil society. A Terms of Reference for such task force is provided below.

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Terms of Reference

Background

In order to ensure an integrated approach to city region food systems (CRFS) assessment and planning, and to harness knowledge, information and participation of different stakeholders involved in the food system, the CRFS assessment and planning process will be highly participatory and will promote local ownership. Specifically, it will foster inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue processes to support local governments and other multiple stakeholders, in taking informed decisions on food planning, enhance synergies and reduce costs and prioritise investments. In this context, the methodology recognises the great importance and added value of a consultation-participative processes, balanced with information and data collection and the use of more quantitative assessment tools.

The local CRFS Multi-stakeholder Task Force will be formed at the beginning of the process (Inception phase/ Getting started) where possible. This requires however initial stakeholder interest, participation and relations amongst food system stakeholders. In city regions where this is not yet the case, the CRFS task force can be formed in a later stage of the process, for example after the CRFS scan and further stakeholder mapping and analysis.

The CRFS multi-stakeholder task force will involve representatives from different relevant levels and sectors of government and other stakeholders that include representatives from the civil society (including producer and consumer associations, NGOs), national and international organisations and institutions, academia (including local universities), private and financing sector, media and professional associations, etcetera.

The CRFS Multi-stakeholder Task Force will support the research/project coordinator and the institutional focal point in assessing the CRFS, will contribute to identifying priorities and critical aspects for in-depth assessment and to defining strategies for strengthening the CRFS.

Main purpose and key functions

Key tasks and initiatives include:

- Provide information on your role in the city food system for the city region and any other information and statistics on aspects related to agriculture, food processing, marketing and consumption;
- Help identifying priorities and recommendations to improve to the CRFS assessment and planning process by facilitating the provision of inputs and feedback on project outputs by all interested stakeholders;
- Ensure building of a participatory food strategy and plan, harnessing inputs and commitments from all stakeholders, including beneficiaries;
- Help building a more permanent local food system network of key actors and broad inter-sectoral alliances;
- Bridge the communication gap between various stakeholders and engage in and support a multi-stakeholder process to promote a broader understanding of the CRFS components and governance;

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- Collaborate with other initiatives or groups to create synergies in this area of work;
- Facilitating the uptake of research results into the local policy and institutional programmes and processes;
- Provide any other necessary advise/guidance to the CRFS project team.

Annex: Principles and prerequisites for effective functioning of a multi-stakeholder group

(This annex was taken from RUAF training material on multi-stakeholder for a or MSF. The principles and prerequisites outlined can help reflect on and guide the organisation of a CRFS task force).

A multi-stakeholder group/forum (abbreviated as MSF) can only be effective when certain basic principles or rules are adhered to (for example “shared ownership”, “openness” and equality”). Some of the most important principles are:

- Building partnerships is a goal in itself,
- Shared ownership and equal participation,
- Matching individual interests with the common agenda,
- Openness and transparency,
- Open membership.

Building partnerships is a goal in itself

It is not enough in a multi-stakeholder forum to simply come together and assume that a partnership for urban agriculture development will magically appear. Building further institutional commitment and relations needs time and should be a conscious effort. Building partnerships should be a goal of the MSF in itself. Practically this means bringing it up as an agenda item and discussing it regularly.

Shared ownership and equal participation

A second guiding principle in the MSF and joint development of the CRFS assessment and planning implies shared ownership of the CRFS project outputs and an overall sense of joint responsibility for the outcomes of endeavours. Shared ownership and responsibility on their turn imply equal participation. It is important- but challenging in practice- to establish a culture of equality among all actors. This implies on its turn a relative reduction in the central role of the coordinating organisation and the need for all partners to create a balance between accommodating others’ interests and negotiating for their own position. Language barriers and socio-cultural factors might greatly influence the communications between the various stakeholders. A lot of attention should be given to overcome such barriers: building

mutual respect and trust, use of interpreters, working in homogeneous subgroups before sharing in plenary (especially important also for presenting women’s interest), good checking of understanding and whether all have been able to express their views before moving on, etcetera.

Matching individual interests with the common agenda

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The MSF needs to be able to link the common agenda to important institutional and personal interests of all stakeholders involved. Addressing partners' own institutional interests allows them to spend time on and provide their own resources for the functioning of the MSF and implementation of a future city regional food agenda. The link to personal interests further creates personal commitment. Common interests could further be strengthened by allowing sufficient time to allow for joint learning and exchange among partners, for example by presenting audio-visual material on partners' experiences or those in other cities or organising exchange visits.

Openness and transparency

A MSF cannot work unless there is openness and transparency in communication and decision-making. All participants should have an "open eye and ear" for differences in the interests and "cultures" of the different stakeholders. Mutual understanding and respect should be seen as a basis for dialogue and negotiation. This also implies that, from the beginning, stakeholders need to make their interests and expectations clear. The resources that can be made available from internal and external resources should be openly discussed. This allows the MSF to build on a common position of understanding and respect for each other's positions.

"Open membership"

The MSF needs to be prepared to change its stakeholder composition if and when necessary, for example when identifying new stakeholders after the assessment phase that should be involved in the policy support and planning phase. On the other hand, if one stakeholder wishes to leave- for whatever reason- that should be possible also.

Making the MSF work

What can we do to ensure that above mentioned principles will become a reality? How to make the MSF work and how sustain it? Working in multi-stakeholder partnerships is a challenge and problems are bound to arise. Being aware of them in advance may help to avoid mayor conflicts. Many lessons can also be learned by regular reflection on the functioning of the MSF through monitoring and periodic review of experiences gained. The MSF should develop an atmosphere of "learning from experience": documenting the functioning of the MSF and discussion of problems encountered and lessons learned are key to this.

Capacity building and learning by doing

Working together in a MSF might be a new experience for several or all stakeholders. Stakeholders need to understand what the objectives and potential benefits of the MSF are and what is expected from them. The stakeholders involved may also need training in how to work together with people they have never worked with before and how to engage in constructive dialogue, negotiation, joint decision-making and conflict resolution. For example, urban producers may need to learn to negotiate with different levels of government and other external agencies to achieve their goals. Sometimes it may be needed to organize a separate meeting with the farmer representatives prior to a MSF meeting to discuss the issues on the

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agenda and to prepare them well for the MSF meeting.

Definition of roles and agreements

Clarity is needed from the start about roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders. Overlapping roles can be a source of inefficiency, confusion and even conflict. In many cases, there is a need for formalising roles and responsibilities agreed upon, as well as steps that can be taken in case of non-performance, through the signing of an Inter-actor Agreement. The inter-actor agreement should not just be seen as a formal document, more important is its role in obliging partners to think about, and agree on, what they expect from each other and from the MSF (the common goals and strategies that are to be pursued jointly). Structure and procedures for decision-making should also be agreed upon in such a document. Clear and transparent agreements concerning financial contributions and rewards should be arrived at, including arrangements for transport or arrangements for compensation for loss of income by the farmer representatives in the MSF. It is important to accept that different stakeholders may work at different paces (institutional rhythms) with respect to speed in which they can take on board new ideas, make decisions and act.

Sharing of resources

Tasks, responsibilities and related resources should be truly shared among partners. Resources are not only needed for implementation, but also for organising and managing meetings of the MSF. This may take the form of financial contributions, but also materials, meeting rooms, vehicles or farmer field sites. One should be open about available budgets and partners' potential share in them. The principle of "own contribution" should be underlined, participation in the MSF is not a means to acquire easy money". On the other hand, "benefits" of the partnership should also be equally shared such as attending (international) training or being interviewed by the media.

Commitment grows from successful first actions

A MSF needs to build on a shared will to succeed, by pooling together experience, expertise and resources. It should be clarified what stakeholders can expect to gain from the MSF and what they are expected to contribute: knowledge, recognition, contacts etcetera. Commitment to the MSF can be demonstrated and reinforced through success.

Implementation of some initial actions at local level in an early stage of the process that produce concrete outputs with good visibility within a short period of time will help to reinforce the commitment and participation of those involved, especially the farmers and other intended beneficiaries, and create a positive environment for more complex and long-term processes.

Ensuring effective communication, joint monitoring and evaluation

Good and effective communication is central to achieve openness and transparency. Results and decisions made in the MSF meetings should be shared with all stakeholders, also those that could not be present in the meeting. Progress and results of activities implemented should also regularly be documented and shared. A budget for information and communication

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activities should be integrated in the budget needed for functioning of the Forum. Joint monitoring and evaluation are essential in this regard.

Need for clarity on decision-making framework

There should be clarity, from the very beginning of the process, regarding what will be done with the results of the agreements reached and decision taken in the MSF. In the end, if the CRFS process results in a food strategy or action plan, many cases, this may need to be presented to the Municipal Council (or one of its committees) that will review the proposals (and adapt it where necessary to the municipal legal/institutional framework in place) and subsequently present the plan to Mayor and Provincial Director/Minister, who will take the final decisions, formalise the plan, make a budget available, etc.

Managing conflicts

There will be differing views within the group, which is normal and reflects the different backgrounds, position, knowledge and interests of the various persons and organizations involved in the MSF. Especially since the objective of the MSF is to bring about institutional change and a shift in power and influence relations. When conflicts or disagreements arise, they should be minimized or resolved. Unnecessary conflicts (for example because of misunderstandings or insufficiently clarified roles) can be prevented through appropriate mechanisms (frequent and open communication, articulating expectations, development of an inter-actor agreement). Working with a joint vision (see Visioning as part of the CRFS process) and making optimal use of the differences of opinion, experience and expertise (including the local knowledge of farmers) should help to create win-win situations and build consensus.

Ensuring good quality facilitation

Poor facilitation is often a reason why MSF fail to achieve good results. A facilitating organization must focus on mediating the partnerships and assuming as neutral a role as possible. Ground rules for effective facilitation include at least involving partners in agenda setting, using participatory methods of decision-making and encouraging an atmosphere of respect, sharing and learning. The facilitating organisation is responsible for good organisation of the MSF meetings, with a clear time-schedule, division of labour, and agreements on how and when participation in decision-making will take place, and how monitoring of progress and results will be implemented. It is important to work with a committed and capable facilitating/coordinating team that has skills in conflict mediation, resolution and facilitation. Involving an external and experienced facilitator can be particularly useful at critical planning moments or when conflicts need to be resolved.

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