



Food and Agriculture
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MILAN
URBAN
FOOD
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THE MILAN URBAN FOOD POLICY PACT MONITORING FRAMEWORK

A practical handbook for implementation

RESOURCE 4

Notes on selecting, customizing and working with indicators

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These notes are from a series of discussions that took place at the MUFPP monitoring framework pilot training workshop (Rome, May 2019) about how to get started. There is some overlap with Resources 1 and 2, and also with steps 1, 2 and 3 in the handbook, but the full notes provide rich and interesting reflections between the pilot cities and also help to illustrate the process that they followed in preparing to work with the indicators.

1. Priorities for action – areas of shared interest

All three pilot cities have strong political priorities around health and economic equality and shared the following priority areas:

- › Governance
- › Increased food security
- › Reduced poverty
- › Increased accessibility of food to the most vulnerable groups (especially Nairobi)
- › Improved health & nutrition
- › Safer food (especially Nairobi)
- › Increased resilience of the food system and the people involved (especially farmers) to deal with crises and emergencies
- › Resilience of food supply and distribution systems
- › Food waste (reduction and management) and especially i) recovery of surplus edible food (all) and ii) recycling organic materials including food waste into compost (Nairobi).

Accompanying issues:

- › Challenges with sourcing data and capacity to analyse
- › Data sharing – often data are not available from one project to the next
- › Funding needed to undertake primary data collection where necessary.

2. Strategic outcomes – what do cities want to achieve by using the monitoring framework?

Nairobi

- › Helping to clarify budget decisions
- › How best to improve food safety and reduce contamination
- › Confidence to talk about the status of the food system in a formal and evidenced way
- › To inform a food system strategy and its implementation
- › To increase adoption of technologies (e.g. sack gardens, safe small-scale pasteurization)
- › To build M&E institutional capacity.

Quito

- › To raise awareness and implement coordinated actions
- › To build cross-organizational collaboration
- › To encourage citizen participation
- › Land – good use of public spaces and increased urban agriculture using organic and agro-ecological practices
- › Quantification and classification of organic waste and surplus foods.

Antananarivo

- › To help outline a strategy with clear priorities and outcomes (in time and space) – a written document
- › Consolidate the stakeholder network and work together on priorities
- › Turn priorities into drivers of new action to bring more support to existing initiatives
- › Putting food onto the development agenda of the city (urban planning, etc.)
- › Raise awareness of national government and donors.

3. Issues to consider when thinking about indicators and data collection

Accountability

- › When it comes to achieving outcomes and measuring progress, who is accountable for what?
- › How to clarify this and ensure that there is appropriate accountability?
- › How can the system of using a monitoring framework lead to increased clear accountability?
- › What does 'accountability' actually mean in practical terms for each city?

Disaggregation of data

It is very important that data collected is as rich and equitable as possible and that it reflects the diversity and lived experiences of its citizens. Disaggregation is needed for several indicators in relation to i) economic status/income levels/high v low income spatial areas; ii) gender (especially for Nairobi). This has to be worked out by each city in relation to specific situations and in relation to what data sets will be most useful. (See [Resource 11](#) and [12](#) on gender).

4. Data challenges: sources of data and making use of data in the best way

Much of this discussion was around process; i.e. the process of engaging others in this work being as important as gathering and analysing data, if not more important.

Questions to consider and helpful tips

- › Start by building consensus of what data is important and why it is important; 'Will researching this indicator bring benefits to our city?'
- › Consider who is looking at the data; who is sitting at the table; who is 'we' in each of the pilot cities?
- › Are there groups of people who have expert knowledge and may already/potentially be accountable for certain types of data (e.g. a Task Force or a working group with a focus on a specific food system outcome area?)
- › Beware! It is not always useful to focus on available data. The data gaps may be a more useful focus.
- › What data do local and national governments collect; by which departments; of this data, what would be most useful to you?
- › Are there other researchers with useful data? Universities can be very helpful in guiding discussions.
- › Do we start or end with data? It is not always a neat linear process, but more circular and iterative.
- › The **quality of the process** may determine the quality and ultimate usefulness of the data. E.g. the multi-departmental food security council in Brazil met regularly, built consensus, developed a shared language, became familiar with each others indicators. This led to a regular collective analysis of data and this in turn led to better budget decisions.
- › Important to involve relevant policy makers as part of a stakeholder group from the start of the process (see notes on stakeholders in Resource 1).
- › A good process will help with negotiating and working out conflicts of interest, disagreements and power imbalances.

Challenges that all the cities may face

- › How to find out exactly where, what and how much food is produced (in the city; around the city)
- › Need to be really clear about your own city's definitions of data sets; important to make definitions and classifications explicit; important to clarify and make explicit any relevant geographical boundaries
- › It may well be that initial (limited/poor/incomplete) data sets will pave the way for others (improved) in time; therefore, start from where you are now using what you have.

5. Shared reflections on working with indicators

This discussion followed a practical work session on selecting indicators using [Resource 8](#) as a workbook template.

Customize and adapt the indicators to suit your situation

- Customize the indicators to your local situation; the data should answer the questions you want answered
- Add qualifying 'sub-indicators' or 'sub-categories' that are most relevant to your particular situation to some of the qualitative or 'binary' indicators (i.e. those that start 'the presence of/ no presence of...'). For example, Quito has done 2 years of work on developing a food strategy and has a multi-stakeholder platform but in 2019 the political support was not yet in place. The indicator could therefore have more sub-categories/desired outcomes that are steps towards achieving the final indicator.

Quality of data

- May need to assess the quality of data; don't assume all data is good quality.

Ownership and accountability

- Who should pick the indicators; and why? May need to establish an institutional mechanism/ working group
- Need to build capacity on using the framework: awareness, pilot application.

Missing indicators that need to be developed

- Need to ensure there are good environmental/climate resilience indicators (still a weak area of the MUFPP monitoring framework)
- Consider what really matters (e.g. survival rate of tree samplings, not just number planted).

The indicators can help highlight problems

- How to re-orient existing indicators/actions to both support and measure improved performance? (E.g. the Madagascar school feeding programme data is focused on rice rather than more healthy diverse foods)
- Use indicators to shed light on problems (e.g. a lack of data might actually indicate there is a problem that needs attention).

Use whatever data you have

- There may be very limited available data, but use whatever you have and work with what is missing. For example Antananarivo had very little available data, so the pilot project also considered:
 - Temporary data
 - Total data gaps
 - Poor/insufficient data
- For finding data, it may be helpful to use existing data collection processes (e.g. add in extra survey questions to an existing piece of research).

Shared practices between cities

- › How to tackle data problems and adapt indicators
- › Any additional local contextual indicators; this might also highlight different approaches or practices that can also be shared.

6. Discussion on criteria for selecting indicators

- › Match local priorities (including customizing MUFPP wording)
- › Get endorsement from key local stakeholders
- › When selecting indicators, think of what is ‘small enough to achieve, but big enough to matter’
- › Data availability
- › Qualitative vs quantitative indicators – aim for a manageable balance
- › Remember that the qualitative indicators have a yes or no answer, but such a finding on its own will not be useful without further assessment of issues like effective implementation or strong stakeholder support, etc.