



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

CITY REGION FOOD SYSTEM TOOLKIT
TOOL/EXAMPLE



Published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and RUAF Foundation and Wilfrid Laurier University, Centre for Sustainable Food Systems

May 2018





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Tool/Example:

Utrecht CRFS Boundaries Options

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Project: RUAF CityFoodTools project

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 compares the various options and considerations that define the boundaries for the City Region Food System of Utrecht.
Expected outcome	Definition of the CRFS boundaries for a specific city region
Expected Output	Comparison of different CRFS boundary options
Scale of application	City region
Expertise required for application	Understanding of the local context, existing data availability and administrative boundaries and mandates
Examples of application	Utrecht (The Netherlands)
Year of development	2016
References	-

Tool description:

This document compares the various options and considerations that define the boundaries for the Utrecht City Region. Five different options were considered as described in the document. These possible delimitations of the Utrecht City Region were compared for the following criteria: 1. Data availability and ability to aggregate municipal data; 2. Level of connectivity (urban-rural linkages); and 3. Influence and ability to take policy actions. On this basis, the U10 region was selected as the most appropriate city region with sufficient data availability and potential for generating food policy processes at territorial scale.

Defining the Utrecht City Region boundaries

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Different studies use different boundaries for the city region. As a general rule, an area of 30 to 100 kilometres around the city centre is included, depending on the local context and the type of city. Several possibilities for the definition of the Utrecht City Region for the purposes of this project were identified. These are:

1. *Utrecht municipality*
2. *The region 'U10': Utrecht municipality with 9 other neighbouring municipalities*
3. *Utrecht province*
4. *Stadsgewest Utrecht (urban region)*
5. *Grootstedelijk agglomeratie Utrecht (large urban agglomeration)*
6. *A specific region defined by local food marketing initiative 'Lekker Utrechts'*

Province of Utrecht

A specific advantage of using the province as boundary for the city region is that data are readily available on this level (disaggregated by municipality). Also, the province has published (or is about to publish) a range of documents on the status and trends of agriculture developments. An example is the 'landbouwverkenning Provincie Utrecht tot 2015 (LEI, 2011). This document is based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and the LISA (national register for employment).

Map of the province of Utrecht and its 26 municipalities (Source: [Wikipedia](#))



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U10 Region

U10 is a network of 10 municipalities around the city of Utrecht. Looking at the province it *excludes* the municipalities of Amersfoort, the region ‘Gelderse Vallei’ (including the municipalities Utrechtse Heuvelrug, Veenendaal, Renswoude, Eemnes, Baarn, Soest, Woudenberg), and the municipalities Montfoort, Oudewater, Wijk bij Duurstede, De Ronde Venen. As mentioned earlier the U10 region largely overlaps with the region of ‘Lekker Utreghs’, a marketing initiative for local food products. The U10 municipalities are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bunnik (Werkhoven, Odijk)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stichtse Vecht (Loenen, Maarssen, Breukelen, Tienhoven, Kockengen, Oud-Aa, Loenen a'd Vecht)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>De Bilt (Bilthoven, Groenekan, Maartensdijk)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Utrecht</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Houten (Schalkwijk, t Goy)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vianen</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>IJsselstein</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Woerden (Kanis, Kamerik, Zegveld, Harmelen)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nieuwegein</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zeist (Den Dolder)</i>





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The U10 region functions as a network of municipalities with the goal to improve cooperation on economic affairs, residential areas, spatial planning, mobility and accessibility, and the social domain ([Gemeente Utrecht, Afdeling Onderzoek, 2013](#)).

Lekker Utrechs

Stichting Lekker Utrechs is an initiative that aims to promote consumption of locally produced food. The Stichting promotes food producers from the region: the entire province of Utrecht, with the exception of north-western part of Utrecht and the region Eemland/Gelderse Vallei. Lekker Utrechs used the following considerations for defining the region: on the north of the Province of Utrecht, there are towns and villages that are oriented more towards cities such as Amersfoort, Amsterdam and Hilversum. To the east, the hills of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug form a natural boundary; towns and villages beyond the Heuvelrug are considered to be oriented more towards cities such as Veenendaal, Ede, Wageningen, and Arnhem (interview project team with Louis de Jel, Lekker Utrechs). To the south, the river Kromme Rijn forms the natural boundary of the region. To the west, the grasslands, the villages and towns are largely orientated on Utrecht city (this is somewhat arbitrary). Also see the document '[Reglement Keurmerk Lekker Utrechs](#)' (2012).

Rationale for selection of the appropriate city region boundaries

After weighing different options, the CRFS assessment project team decided to select the U10 region (hereafter referred to as the 'Utrecht Region') as study area for the Utrecht city region food system assessment. The Utrecht Region consists of the municipalities of Utrecht and 9 neighbouring municipalities: Bunnik, De Bilt, Houten, IJsselstein, Nieuwegein, Stichtse Vecht, Woerden, Vianen and Zeist.

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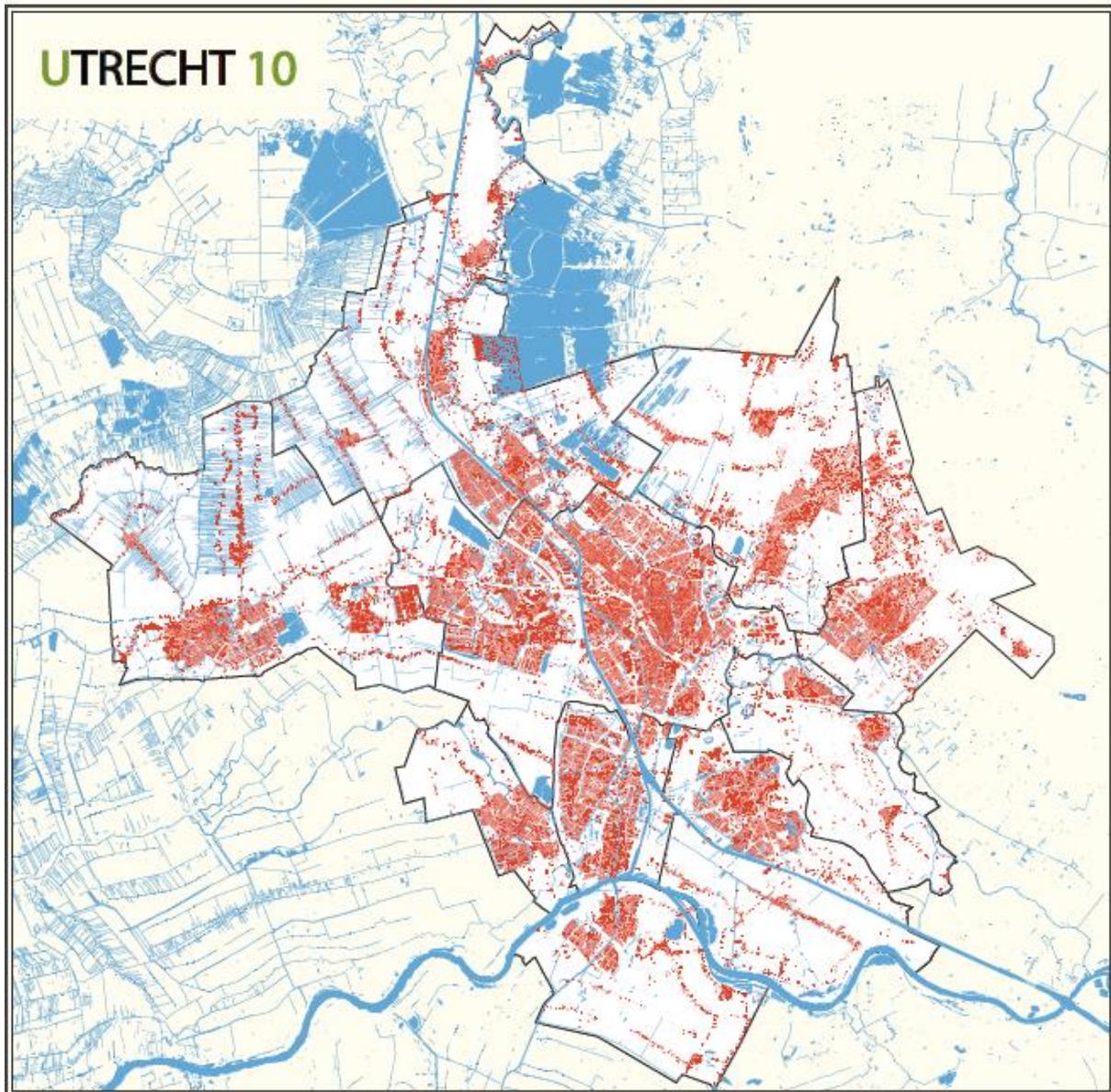


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(Source: Basisregistratie Topografie, Kadaster, 2017)

The rationale for choosing U10 as boundary for the Utrecht City Region, is based on the following:

- 1. Data availability and ability to aggregate municipal data:** Many data sets and statistics are disaggregated at national, provincial and municipal level. The Utrecht Region follows municipal boundaries.
- 2. Level of connectivity:** The Province of Utrecht is home to different larger cities, including the cities of Utrecht and Amersfoort with its respective surrounding areas. Other parts of the Province are more focussed on cities in neighbouring provinces (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Ede and Wageningen). The Utrecht Region is concentrated around the





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municipality of Utrecht, and there are very strong connections, in terms of flows of people, employment, goods and services, between the different municipalities in the region.

- 3. Influence of the city and ability to take policy actions:** U10 is an existing network of municipalities that already takes joint decisions and implements (policy) actions. Several member municipalities (Zeist, De Bilt, Bunnik, Houten and Utrecht) indicated interest in joint food system work.

On this basis, the U10 region was selected as the most appropriate city region with sufficient data availability and potential for generating food policy processes at territorial scale.

Table 1 below gives a more detailed overview of the considerations applied for the different city region options outlined.



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Table 1: Overview of options for delineating the Utrecht City Region

Item	Utrecht Municipality	U10 region	Utrecht Province	Stadsgewest Utrecht	Grootstedelijke agglomeratie	Lekker Utrechts (project based)
Policy context	Low: municipal boundaries do not include larger food production areas	Relevant: U10 is a network organisation, although it does not have a specific jurisdictional mandate; common themes are discussed at network level and the level of individual municipalities.	Relevant: the province has various instruments to influence its agenda on agricultural development, in relation to environment, economic development. However, the role of Utrecht in these decision-making processes is limited.	Low: Does not have its own institutional body.	Low: Does not have its own institutional body.	Low: Lekker Utrechts is a local non-administrative/non-governmental initiative. Project boundaries do not fully coincide with municipal boundaries.
Policy interest	High: there is strong interest from the municipality of Utrecht on the theme of food, in relation to other policy themes (like health).	Low: agriculture land-use remains one of the largest land-uses in the region, but food and regional food systems do not yet seem to be high on the agenda of U10. There is interest from some member municipalities to start working on this.	High: several policy documents, strategy documents highlight the potential and importance of urban agriculture, multifunctional agriculture, and regional food.	Low: Not known	Low: Not known	Difficult to judge: unsure whether Lekker Utrechts has sufficient organisational capability/networking capability to influence policies.
Relevance (agricultural potential)	Very low: there are hardly any agricultural areas in the municipality.	Reasonable: Remaining presence of dairy farming, and to a lesser degree fruit farming, albeit low diversity of food production systems.	High: agricultural diversity (compared to U10 region) is higher, although agriculture in the Utrecht province has also a strong representation of dairy farming.	Reasonable: there is substantial agricultural land in the region.	Low : area is made up of the municipality of Utrecht and Stichtse Vecht, and agricultural land-use is limited.	Reasonable: there is substantial agricultural land in the region covered, but again with a strong presence of dairy farming, and to a lesser degree fruit farming.

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Item	Utrecht Municipality	U10 region	Utrecht Province	Stadsgewest Utrecht	Grootstedelijke agglomeratie	Lekker Utrechts (project based)
Relevance (environmental)	Reasonable: city greening (though not necessarily through multifunctional agriculture) is an important interest with regards to public health.	Reasonable to high: Land-use, agriculture, and environment are strongly linked in this region. Environmental concerns are management of the fragile grass peat lands in the west of the region and water tables, compaction of soils, as well as nature and agricultural landscape conservation.	Very high: Land-use, agriculture, and environment are strongly linked in this region. Environmental concerns include height of water tables, agricultural pollution of ground- and surface water (nitrogen, pesticides), compaction of soils.	Reasonable to high: Land-use, agriculture, and environment are strongly linked in this region. Environmental concerns are management of the fragile grass peat lands in the west of the region and water tables, compaction of soils..	Reasonable: city greening (though not necessarily through multifunctional agriculture) is an important interest with regards to public health.	Reasonable to high: Land-use, agriculture, and environment are strongly linked in this region. Environmental concerns are management of the fragile grass peat lands in the west of the region and water tables, compaction of soils.
Relevance (economic)	Low to reasonable: food system services, specifically distribution, retail, but also research and development around food and food systems provide a relatively small share of employment.	Reasonable: current and potential future role of food system services, production, processing, distribution, retail, to provide employment	High: on provincial level, the economic contribution of food system services is higher compared to smaller regions, stronger representation of food production. Some specific food production sectors are under strong economic stress.	Reasonable: current and potential future role of food system services, production, processing, distribution, retail, to provide employment	Low to reasonable: food system services, specifically distribution, retail, but also research and development around food and food systems provides a relatively small share of employment.	Reasonable: current and potential future role of food system services, production, processing, distribution, retail, to provide employment
Relevance (social)	High: Utrecht municipality will see continued population growth, and a relative young population, with high degree of ethnic diversity. Increasing consumer demand for more sustainable food.	High: idem as for Utrecht Municipality	Reasonable: strong relations exist between people and places in the region, in terms of work, growth, housing, mobility. No clear link with food systems however.	Reasonable: strong relations exist between people and places in the region, in terms of work, growth, housing, mobility. No clear link with food systems however.	Reasonable: strong relations exist between people and places in the region, in terms of work, growth, housing, mobility. No clear link with food systems however.	High strong social relation between different food system actors are supported.

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Item	Utrecht Municipality	U10 region	Utrecht Province	Stadsgewest Utrecht	Grootstedelijke agglomeratie	Lekker Utrechts (project based)
	Large variety of social initiatives.					
Level of existing data	High; data are collected for municipal boundaries; several municipal institutions have data, also national and provincial institutes collect data on municipal level.	High; data are collected for different municipalities in U10; several municipal institutions have and publish data, also national and provincial institutes collect data that collect and analyse data on municipal level.	High	High	Reasonable: the boundaries not always overlap with municipal boundaries.	Low: for data, the region does not overlap with administrative boundaries. Lekker Utrechts did carry out some studies for the city of Utrecht.
Presence of historical data	High, longer term data collection for health, economy, less for consumption of local/regional food.	High, idem as for Utrecht Municipality.	High, specifically for agriculture	High: boundaries overlap with municipal boundaries.	Reasonable: see above.	Low: see above
Number of sources for data	High; although different for different themes. Also national studies and publications.	Reasonable to high: availability of a range of data sources and publications on food related issues. Larger cities (such as Utrecht) tend to have more data.	High: the provincial boundaries are used by the province itself but also by other research organisations	Low to reasonable: although boundaries overlap with municipal boundaries, there have been few publications or other data sources for this region.	Low to reasonable: although boundaries overlap with municipal boundaries, there have been few publications or other data sources for this region.	Low: see above

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