

## Metropolitan Food Clusters

By

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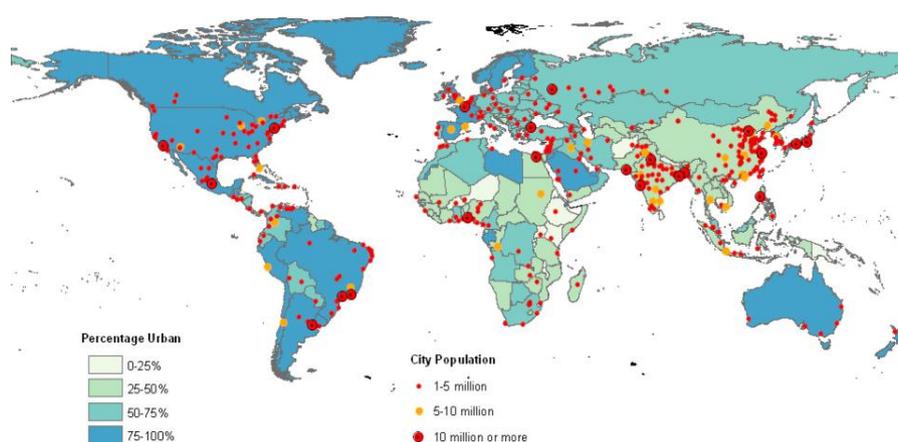
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The food supply for the world's continuously growing urban populations is largely relying on unsustainable forms of land management, food processing and food-trafficking. The growth of the world population (+35% till 9 bln in 2050), the increasing urbanization (till 70% in 2030), and the expected rise of the middle class will further pressure food supply systems. More specifically, metropolitan areas around the world face the challenge of reducing their ecological footprint, probably by developing new regional supply systems based on resource-efficient, short food-chains, and innovative as well as ecologically sound agricultural business models.

As claimed by the FAO, realizing sustainable, integrated food system solutions is not only a technical problem, but especially a governance problem. 'Eighty percent of the necessary production increases would come from increases in yields and cropping intensity, but good governance can be a major obstacle' (FAO, 2008). The urgency of starting transitions now to be able to feed the world in 2050 cannot be overstated.



Urban Agglomerations in 2009 (proportion urban of the world: 50.1%) UN- *World Urbanization Prospects, 2009 Revision*

The realisation of Metropolitan Food Clusters (MFC) may be the system innovation that meets many of the above mentioned challenges. However, according to certain stakeholders such integrated large scale food systems lie MFC are part of the problem instead of part of the solution. The MFC aim to shift from vertically and spatially specialized agrifood industries, towards multiple vertically and horizontally integrated, spatially (semi-)clustered value chains.

Already realising new MFC requires a long, productive collaboration of fundamentally heterogeneous stakeholders around the world. Experience in this field is mixed at best, although many stakeholders recognize the added value of synergetic creation and processing of crops, animals and foodstuffs. For example, stakeholder strategies of smallholders in India has a fundamentally different impact on inclusive systemic change towards MFC, than semi-public developmental companies in China. What are multi-stakeholder consortia that may promote the emergence of highly productive sustainable MFC around the world?

The paper shall try to go beyond the technological focus of many initiatives to review the relevant global networks and relationships that enable or hinder the realization of MFC. Given the long term realization trajectories of MFC it is important to analyze strategies, roles, reputation, trust, timing, etc to develop a multi-stakeholder strategies that can address this critical global issue of food supply in 2050.