

# City Region Food Systems and Food Waste Management

## Linking Urban and Rural Areas for Sustainable and Resilient Development

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### Call for Strengthening Urban-Rural Linkages

The challenge of ensuring food and nutrition security for all is becoming an urban one. Rapid urbanisation, increasing vulnerability to food price hikes and climate impacts, changes in consumption patterns and the related increase in diet-related health problems – all call for increasing attention to providing the world's growing urban population with adequate, safe, balanced, and affordable food. Urban growth is also directly related to increased demand for natural resources (land and water) that provide vital food and ecosystem services. In this context, sustainable urbanisation, food and nutrition security, environmental and natural resource management – including the preservation of ecosystems – rural development and agricultural production, and distribution and marketing have become intrinsically linked.

In order to respond to these challenges, integrated territorial development and balanced urban-rural linkages must be pursued for the benefit of both urban and rural populations alike. City region food systems (CRFS) offer concrete policy and programme opportunities within which multiple development goals can be addressed and through which rural and urban areas and communities in a given city region can be directly linked.

It is for these reasons that integrated territorial approaches and urban-rural linkages are included in the Agenda 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These specifically address SDG target 11a, to support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas, and are instrumental in linking SDG 11 with SDG 2 (on sustainable agriculture and food and nutrition security) and SDG 12 (on sustainable production and consumption).

The New Urban Agenda (NUA) will set out goals and guidelines for sustainable urban development that will be applicable to all UN member countries. It recognises that urbanisation has increasingly linked cities with their peri-urban and rural hinterland, spatially as well as functionally.

Although contexts differ across cities and regions, in all situations, functional linkages and flows among people, goods and services extend beyond traditional administrative boundaries. This calls indeed for new strategies of planning and management of urban, peri-urban and rural areas in an integrated way and for new forms of multi-level and horizontal governance.

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## Developing Sustainable City Region Food Systems – Lessons learned from Case Studies around the World

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GIZ, RUAF Foundation and FAO have documented thirteen case studies from around the world which are developing CRFS projects, programmes, and policies, including those related to the prevention, reduction and management of food waste. These cases provide a comprehensive perspective on tools and practices that can enhance food security and sustainable development in both rural and urban areas. These practices can work in different regional contexts, and have – to a certain extent – already been applied by other city regions.

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## Institutionalisation of City Region Food Systems Policies and Programmes

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Lessons learned from the cases show that city region food systems (CRFS) offer a very concrete entry point for addressing challenges and opportunities related to more sustainable and balanced urban and rural development. To effectively use these opportunities, local, subnational, and national governments need to develop and institutionalise CRFS policies and programmes in an integrated way.

This requires:

1. Political will that guarantees CRFS policies and programmes an institutional home, assignation of financial resources in the form of a fixed budget, and a specialised technical team that can provide on-going support. Clear and strong institutionalisation of the programme, in the local (and national) government structure, reduces the risks of changes in city administration and shifts in allocation of budgets and is key to mainstreaming food in municipal policies. Securing food programmes through (local and national) legislation also makes the programmes more resilient to government changes.
2. Food system policies and programmes that are linked to and embedded in larger city (region) development objectives, staff and resources from other government departments and programmes on food security and nutrition, public health, planning, waste management, local economic development, climate change, and environmental management, amongst others.
3. Information on social, economic, and environmental food system impact indicators – for both urban and rural areas – that is collected and made available to the

public domain, including the authorities and decision-makers involved. Where impact data are available, these data principally refer to urban households and food security, while data for rural household livelihoods, preservation of rural agricultural areas, improvement of ecosystem conditions and services, and effects on sales of rural land are still often lacking. This also calls for international (donor) support to provide technical and financial assistance, and funding of research projects, for impact data collection on food system policies and programmes at the city region level across urban and rural areas.

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## Provide National and Legal Frameworks Embedding City Region Food Systems in Broader Legislation

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Local and (sub)national governments and governance systems will also need to:

1. Include the ‘Right to Food’ in (sub)national legislation and acknowledge the need to guarantee urban food and nutrition security (in addition to rural food and nutrition security);
2. Regulate urban expansion on agricultural land, by preserving and protecting agricultural land from (unplanned) urban expansion and regulate natural resources in order to safeguard food and ecosystem services;
3. Design policies, regulations and strategies that promote the prevention, reduction, and management of food waste and facilitate the recovery and redistribution of safe and nutritious food for human consumption. Prevention and reduction of food waste can be supported through integrally targeted capacity development along food supply chains, education and awareness raising, funding, and legal support.

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## Strengthening Cooperation and Coordination across Horizontal and Vertical Government Levels

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The city regions documented in the cases have acknowledged that the city region food system (CRFS) does not coincide with the municipal level. In several cases, food policies and programmes have shifted over time from food planning at the neighbourhood-city level to the city region level. Implementation of city region nutrition-sensitive food system and food waste prevention, reduction, and man-

agement strategies across urban and rural areas needs to integrate various administrative levels and stakeholders to coordinate implementation.

This calls for the establishment of institutional mechanisms or platforms to enhance dialogue and coordination, impacts, and efficiency gains at four different levels across:

1. Various departments and programmes internal to city governments and governance systems ('breaking down institutional silos'). As illustrated by the case studies, key government actors include authorities that are responsible for: agriculture, health, social and economic development, markets, planning, transport, and climate change;
2. Urban and rural local governance systems in a given (functional) city region that promote cross-jurisdictional dialogue and collaboration among urban and rural authorities that are not generally used to engaging in joint policy and planning;
3. Multi- or vertical levels of government that link local CRFS programmes to the wider (sub)national policy framework on agriculture, food and nutrition security, and urban development. This will enable more efficient and effective resource management and facilitate linkages among various government and donor support programmes
4. Different types of stakeholders including research, civil society, private sector, and governments ensuring real community participation and mobilising public-private-civil sector support.
5. Coordination platforms amongst governments and governance actors at the vertical and horizontal level should be identified and supported in areas where they tend to be limited to information sharing and lack joint planning, implementation, and financing.
6. In addition, the involvement of subnational (provincial, county) governments is vital to addressing food systems, agriculture, food waste, and land use planning across several jurisdictions (outside municipal boundaries) and to ensuring the aggregation of rural and urban food production needed to offer consumers a diversified and sufficient safe and nutritious supply of produce. They also play a crucial role in making available (additional) human and financial resources needed for programme implementation, for developing provincial level policies and programmes that accompany city-level strategies, and for supporting the scaling out of experiences to other areas.

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## Design Specific Programmes and Policies for Sustainable City Region Food Systems

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The documented case studies provide examples of strategies, tools, and instruments available to local, subnational, and national governments to:

1. Promote urban, peri-urban and rural agricultural production to improve agricultural livelihoods, ensure a safe and nutritious urban food supply, optimise local production capacity to reduce dependence on distant supply sources, and increase resilience against shocks, by providing training, technical and financial assistance and (market) organisation;
2. Protect ecosystems through land use planning, specifically protecting agricultural lands from (unplanned) urban growth and watersheds from unsustainable urban expansion, while securing user rights for farmers and maintaining important services such as local production, urban water quality and supply, and flood retention (or other reduced climate risks);
3. Seek to secure an affordable, safe and nutritious food supply for the most vulnerable urban and rural populations through food distribution, recovery and redistribution of safe and nutritious food for human consumption, food price regulation, and social protection programmes;
4. Support short supply chains by strengthening direct relations between producers and consumers and by providing producers access to different local market outlets, coupled with investment in processing and distribution infrastructure;
5. Combine production and marketing support for rural producers with consumer education and awareness.
6. Develop institutional procurement policies, favouring local procurement;
7. Promote organic and agro-ecological production practices among urban, peri-urban and rural farmers, coupled with safety and quality control and labelling
8. Develop sustainable food systems that are inclusive of (food) waste prevention, reduction and management – facilitating resource (re)use and recovery.

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## Conclusions

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There is increasing understanding and acknowledgement that a city region approach should be applied to reposition urban areas as part of a wider functional region. This will help to achieve a better understanding as well as planning of the continuum of space between urban and rural areas. There are clear benefits to integrated planning across urban and rural spheres for the protection of ecosystem services, especially water and watersheds. Improved urban-rural linkages can also ensure that food production occurs close to and within cities and towns, as well as in rural areas located favourably near inputs and markets, ensuring both improved food and nutrition security for the urban and rural vulnerable population, as well as enhanced livelihoods for all actors involved in food production as well as value and supply chains.

City region food systems (CRFS) are vital to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) in three key ways. First the benefits of CRFS are multiple and stretch far beyond the food system to key policy areas of concern to the NUA, including local economic development and urban governance, spatial and economic planning, public health, and ecosystem protection. Second, the development of CRFS can generate positive political support for wider urban-rural linkages through coalition building centred on food. And thirdly, CRFS merit attention in their own right, given the importance of addressing more sustainable urban food systems and rural development.



The case studies and full publication can be accessed at:  
<http://star-www.giz.de/pub?r=42540>

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