

IPES-FOOD, NOURISH SCOTLAND & PARTNERS

December 2021

Metrics Matter

SUMMARY OF MUFPP 7th GLOBAL FORUM SIDE EVENT



GLASGOW
FOOD AND
CLIMATE
DECLARATION

7th MUFPP Global Forum
2021 - Barcelona

Metrics Matter: How to measure the impacts of integrated food and climate policies

Monday 19th October, 0900-1045

Co-organizers: IPES-Food & Nourish Scotland
(on behalf of the Glasgow Declaration Process)

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INTERNATIONAL PANEL OF EXPERTS
ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

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With COP26 in sight, this MUFPP Global Forum 2021 side event brought together city representatives and experts to discuss their experiences, successes, and challenges in developing and using appropriate metrics and indicators for measuring the climate, biodiversity, health, and resilience impacts of their food policies.

The organisers thank the MUFPP and the City of Barcelona for hosting this important conversation.

Moderator

Victoria Williams, Director, Food Matters

Speakers

Aïsha Sif, Deputy Mayor of Marseille

Jean-Charles Lardic, Coordinator of the municipal sustainable food policy, Marseille

Froukje Idema, Programme Manager Food, Ede Municipality

Franco La Torre, Project Manager, Risorse per Roma

Sarah Hargreaves, Senior Consultant, Resource Futures, representing the City of Bristol

Jess Halliday, Programme Officer, RUAF

Opening statement by the Deputy Mayor of Marseille Aïsha Sif and Jean-Charles Lardic

In 2015, after the Paris Agreement was adopted, Michael Bloomberg closed a meeting with the words “what is not measurable is not manageable”. This phrase reveals our struggles with reducing GHG emissions. When we work only with what is measurable, policy is directed to what is easily measurable. That means actions related to technology and leaves aside human factors and systemic, cross-cutting policies that are more difficult to evaluate. Integrated municipal food policies are affected by this. Moreover, the Paris Agreement is curiously silent on food systems’ contribution to GHG emissions. This neglects one of the most important contributions that cities can make to tackling climate change and deprives us of important support for our food transition.

As the Glasgow Declaration insists, sustainable food policies have co-benefits that touch on all the SDGs in a way that technological equipment does not. A photovoltaic collector system produces few social connections, except between shareholders in a company perhaps. A photovoltaic collector does not challenge discrimination. It can hardly be said to support biodiversity. But shared gardens do all of this.

We, cities, must come together in Glasgow to ensure that this reality is recognised and that means are provided in support of sustainable food policies. We must stress our contribution to the resilience of our territories, which goes far beyond simple GHG emission reductions. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) must be adapted accordingly. States must finance our food policies, just like energy saving from our buildings. We need a legal transition away from regulations that hinder our creative social and food transitions.

But while we wait for States, we must try to quantify the benefits of our food policies. This is a difficult task, so we are ready to collaborate with all cities gathered here in the spirit of the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration.



SUMMARY OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION

Sarah Hargreaves, Senior Consultant, Resource Futures, representing the City of Bristol shared that when deciding how to develop targets, addressing the low-hanging fruit first is a good way to quickly make progress, gain community buy-in, and build momentum for food policies. In this case, food waste can be a good place to focus first. Rather than taking a purely quantitative approach to measuring and evaluating impact, taking a qualitative approach can create more social support.

Collaborating on a citywide level brings stakeholders together to tackle challenges in measuring impacts from the beginning and as they arise. The key is to engage different people who normally don't participate in food policy work and speak to people about food in ways that they will understand and in ways that directly involve them. Collaboration allows residents and stakeholders to share knowledge, data points, and learnings to successfully set, measure, and meet goals.

"We know we've succeeded when food is an issue that both genders take seriously, not just women!"

- Froukje Idema, City of Ede



Froukje Idema, Programme Manager Food, Ede Municipality said that in deciding what to measure, Ede has focused on children, their education, nutrition, and childhood obesity. Because Ede's food plan takes a whole systems approach, it has a tailor-made monitoring system with a mix of new indicators made by the city and indicators based on the MUFPP monitoring framework, which has been an important resource for tackling monitoring challenges systematically. The city has an accessible platform where residents can access data on the city's food policy. This engages everyone in the food issue.

To the food policy team in Ede, monitoring is essential as there are so many potential actions to take. But with limited resources and a growing interest in evidence-based food policy, difficult choices have to be made and it is important to know which actions have a real and desired impact. That said, it can be a challenge to convince the rest of the city council to invest in good data and good interpretation as monitoring can be expensive, especially for middle-sized cities.

Franco La Torre, Project Manager, Risorse per Roma said that when deciding what to measure, establishing good food policy governance is key. Involvement in the policy process is the priority. While it is difficult to gather all relevant stakeholders in the same room, it is only through a democratic process that we can guarantee success in setting and meeting our goals. "The issue is democracy and guaranteeing a democratic process; the process is the priority."



Jess Halliday, Senior Programme Officer, RUAF shared that when deciding what to measure, consider monitoring as a journey. Think about monitoring from the beginning before activities are planned, rather than picking metrics retrospectively. Be resourceful because data collection is difficult and expensive. Look at what data is already being collected, at what level, and if it can be disaggregated. Mobilize people across departments and organizations and collaborate to obtain data from various sources. Municipalities may find that there are existing surveys that they can tap into and add to. Lastly, laying out clear monitoring and evaluation methodology is key. The methodology used and data gathered should be transparent and accessible to all residents.

"Collecting new data is expensive, cities can try to be pragmatic and resourceful about using data that is already available"

- Jess Halliday, RUAF



Jess Halliday also presented RUAFs new handbook and resource pack which accompanies the MUFPP Monitoring Guidance. Available [here](#). During the 7th Global Forum, RUAF presented the handbook at a plenary session on 'tools for tracking food systems transformation', which can be re-watched [here](#).

SUMMARY OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Participants were split into small groups to discuss the speakers' contributions and answer the following questions: 1) Where is your city in its monitoring journey? 2) What successes or challenges has your city had in developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks for food and climate-related policies/actions? 3) What is needed for this work to be better, from whom? It can be helpful to think of the monitoring journey in 4 stages:

1. **We don't know yet what's most important to measure...**
2. **We know what we want to measure but we can't because...**
3. **We know what we want to measure and we're measuring it but we can't relate any changes to our actions...**
4. **We know what we want to measure and we're measuring it and we can connect change to our actions/policies.**

Four topics emerged from the discussion groups where participants shared lessons learned, suggestions and challenges for cities to consider in their food policy monitoring work.

1. The politics and democratic aspect of metrics

- When choosing metrics, cities should choose metrics that are both scientific and political. Find out what can be done during a term of office. Then get as many people on board as possible to build confidence, political capital, and community consensus.
- While comparable metrics are important, it is equally important to investigate the ideas and interests behind what is measured and be transparent about these as well as any associated trade-offs. A selected set of metrics will support some policies/actions and not others and can thereby cement a certain trajectory for the food policy.
- Metrics are essential to democratise the food policy process and provide the information and data needed to feed discussions in a participatory food council. Data / evidence-based food councils can help create the support base needed to support the food policy process in the city.
- When engaging residents and communities in monitoring work it is important to manage expectations: In one of the participating cities a group had been brought together to agree on key food metrics as part of the visioning phase of the food policy. However, after many meetings, the food policy still hasn't been adopted by the city and it created frustration among the people & groups who participated in the food policy development process.

2. Monitoring as part of the policy process

- It is important to create a transparent baseline where specific areas (e.g. food waste, local food outlets, obesity or other) are counted, measured, and categorised in a transparent manner. This should be part of the process of creating effective food policy aims and targets. Well-considered metrics and monitoring should therefore be a continuous part of the policy-making and implementation process.
- Likewise, data dashboards can be an output of the food policy process.

3. Tackling harder to measure areas of food and climate policy

- While food waste can be relatively easy to measure, a more challenging but popular food-climate policy area in cities includes the protein transition and meat consumption reduction when relevant to the local/regional context. One solution is measuring if and how many vegetarian options are available on menus as well as the volume of meat on menus.
- Example: In Bristol, the Eating Better Award put food waste and better food sourcing practices into business plans. Commercial contracts (like school cafeterias) require a Bristol Eating Better Award. To achieve this, businesses can add in requirements for veggie options or certain ratios of plant-based protein on menus.
- A major hurdle of investing in indicators is the difficulty to attribute impact: officials may be reluctant to assign budget to collect data on change processes that they cannot directly link to their own actions. Food systems are affected by many different factors and it's almost impossible to attribute impact to a single actor. This leads some decision-makers to question whether there is an added value to measuring impact.

"In Milan, the high-level, hard data on food waste is about volumes, it was not useful for monitoring targets and it did not capture what social actors (like food banks) are doing. This meant there was a need to develop a whole new face-to-face data-collection system on food recovery"

- Example from discussion group



4. Accessing and collecting the right data

- Where some food-related data are already being collected by the municipality, a challenge is that it is not always the right data; it may not be clear what the indicators mean or what the data is telling you. In that case, it may be necessary to ask different questions, collect different kinds of data, or collect it from different people.
- Accessing existing data can sometimes be very difficult, either due to data protection rules or because of a lack of joined-up governance within the municipality. Factors include that it can be unclear whose job it is to collect and share which data and poor communication/no dynamic between technical people and decision makers.
- There is a need for a new culture and capacity to connect researchers (who have the information) with decision-makers who can use it. As well as internal capacity in municipal governments to connect all the dots (data governance), to get out of thinking in silos and find common objectives.
- Funding support is required for data-collection and monitoring, especially for medium-sized cities. Large/mega-cities often have more funding for monitoring and small cities may be able to do low cost data collecting but the entire process can be particularly expensive for medium-sized cities.

"In Oostende, household data is collected every 3 years across 13 cities in Flanders. There are some food-related questions, but they are not necessarily the most useful to the food team. There may be scope to include more questions, but all 13 cities must agree"

- Example from discussion group



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