

Revaluing Public Sector Food
Procurement in Europe:

*An Action Plan
for Sustainability*





The authors gratefully acknowledge funding from the European Community under the Seventh Framework Programme theme “Environment” for the collaborative project ENV.2010.4.2.3-3 FOODLINKS.

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The Foodlinks project: Using knowledge networks to promote sustainable food

The Foodlinks project aims to develop and experiment with new ways of linking research to policy-making in the field of sustainable food consumption and production. In order to do so, project partners have been leveraging new technologies, such as social media.

Three Communities of Practice

Foodlinks partners have used knowledge brokerage activities to create effective linkages between scientists, civil society actors and policy makers. To achieve this, Communities of Practice (CoP) were established in three project themes:

- > **Short producer to consumer food chains:** New relations between civil society and the chain of food provision
- > **Re-valuing public food procurement:** New relations between the public sector and the chain of food provision
- > **Urban food strategies:** The rise of municipalities and city-regions as food policy makers, pointing to new relations between the government and civil society

Researchers, policy makers and **civil society** actors sharing a common interest, a practice, a concern or a passion have built up learning communities that have evolved over the length of the project and beyond.

Foodlinks: Key facts

- > Funding: 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development of the European Union
- > Project number: 265287
- > Duration: January 2011 – December 2013
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Contents

Foreword

Executive Summary

1. Why change?

2. What change is happening?

Malmö (Sweden)

Rome (Italy)

East Ayrshire (Scotland)

Copenhagen (Denmark)

Vienna (Austria)

3. How to change

How to put sustainable food procurement into practice

An Action Plan for how to change



Foreword

This report on Revaluing Public Sector Food Procurement is the result of a unique collaboration between policy-makers, practitioners and scientists working together during the Foodlinks project. The idea for the report emerged during the initial stages of experimenting with how we exchanged our knowledge on public sector food procurement that came from our work within municipal administrations, urban and national governments, European platforms, civil society and the wider academic community.

We wanted to ‘make’ a report together that reflects not only the reality of devising and implementing innovative approaches to public sector food procurement throughout Europe, but also offers an Action Plan to help and encourage urban governments to take up the challenge of more sustainable purchasing practices.

This is the result of that work. The report was written as a joint collaboration over a number of months using a wiki on a web-based platform that was also open to other members of our knowledge-based Community of Practice. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this process.

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For more information on the Foodlinks project see: www.foodlinkscommunity.net

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report on Revaluing Public Sector Food Procurement is the result of a unique collaboration between policy-makers, practitioners and scientists working together during the Foodlinks project. It reflects not only the reality of devising and implementing innovative approaches to public sector food procurement throughout Europe, but also offers an Action Plan to help and encourage urban governments to take up the challenge of more sustainable purchasing practices.
2. Developing more sustainable food consumption and production patterns will have a significant impact on sustainable development. One area that European policy makers have identified for furthering sustainable consumption and production is the Greening of Public Procurement. Public sector institutions as centres of procurement – hospitals, care homes, schools, universities, prisons, armed forces, and canteens in government buildings – represent a significant part of the procurement of any national food economy. These agencies and institutions of the state, which serve the public, have a moral responsibility to promote an “ethic of care” for their communities and environment in the ways that they purchase, prepare and serve food.
3. Many public authorities at the local, regional and national levels have adopted sustainable procurement practices. A selection of inspiring best practices – five case studies from Malmö (Sweden), Rome (Italy), East Ayrshire (Scotland), Copenhagen (Denmark) and Vienna (Austria) - is presented with the aim of providing an overview of what change is happening across Europe. Each case study is presented according to the following categories: what change is happening; a focus on the driving forces that made change possible; what aspects of sustainability have been prioritized and why; and lastly, the main challenges encountered
4. The case studies demonstrate that revaluing public procurement is possible and takes different forms depending on the conditions and context of each European city. Although problems come up, creative and imaginative ways are found to resolve them. These different experiences and good practices provide trends of change to inspire municipalities that intend to take up the challenge of more sustainable purchasing practices.
5. The examples demonstrate that public procurement is one of the most powerful tools urban governments have at their disposal to fashion sustainable food systems that prioritize quality foods. They also show that successful long-term change must be tailored to the culture and system of governance in each city or region. As each case study demonstrates, commitment and creativity is vital and the ability to think ‘outside the box’ brings environmental, financial, health and social rewards.
6. This is the central message of revaluing public sector food procurement to all urban governments: investing today in public food systems may indeed imply a significant financial effort and sacrifice at a time of recession, but the savings made in other budgetary accounts will far outweigh and offset the costs of your initial investment.
7. At the policy level, the examples discussed highlight the importance of integration i.e. the adoption of an approach that recognizes and emphasizes the cross cutting, multifunctional nature of public food systems and their capacity to deliver socio-economic and environmental benefits.
8. At the practical level, the examples demonstrate the efficacy of a creative procurement approach, which manifests itself in different ways. In all cases, local governments have managed to promote re-localization without breaching the EU legislation on public procurement.
9. We present a two-step action plan to really make a difference to revaluing public sector food procurement:
 - i. adopt the set of basic indicators set out in the report to guide and monitor progress towards sustainability and the impact of your sustainable food strategy; and
 - ii. adopt the set of key actions outlined in the report and use them to guide your own policy-making, implementation and monitoring and evaluation practices.



1 WHY CHANGE?

Many of today's sustainability problems are related to the prevailing patterns of food consumption and production (including processing and distribution). The sustainability challenges faced by contemporary societies include the environmental challenges of water shortages, greenhouse gas emissions, pollution of soil and water, decreasing biodiversity, and waste throughout the supply chain including at the points of consumption. These existing problems are exacerbated by the rising social and economic trajectories of population growth, increasing concentration of populations in urban areas, notably in developing countries, where consumption trends are towards more protein (notably meat and dairy) intensive diets. Even in traditionally developed countries, new social divides are affecting equal access to health and quality food for less empowered people.

The increasing scarcity and rising costs of carbon based fuel, and of industrial and phosphorous based fertilizers, are more immediate as well as longer term challenges. Future scenarios for feeding the world are extremely challenging, with provision at more local levels related to these global trends. The interrelationships of the three pillars of sustainable development: environmental, social and economic, are clearly illustrated in the food provisioning needs of our societies.

Developing more sustainable food consumption and production patterns will have a significant impact on sustainable development. The significance of adopting policies addressing the sustainable consumption production (SCP) link were an outcome of the commitments made by governments at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, reinforced at the Rio meeting in 2012, which gave a fresh impetus to policy actions and strategies in relation to sustainability. The European Union has embraced the importance of SCP in its policies with an increasing emphasis upon sustainable food and improving the resource efficiency of food products with initiatives led by the European Commission, including DG Environment.

Public sector institutions as centres of procurement – hospitals, care homes, schools, universities, prisons, armed forces, and canteens in government buildings – represent a significant part of the procurement of any national food economy. For example, in the UK it is estimated that public sector bodies serve around 3.5 million meals per weekday, spending approximately 2.36 billion Euros (£2 billion) each year with 50% of that amount spent in schools (2007 figures). Urban authorities can provide a civic led economic activity that promotes environmental and social benefits for society as a whole. Public procurement has the potential to make a huge contribution to healthy and sustainable communities. However, the story of public procurement is largely a tale of untapped potential despite the enormous opportunity that it offers to drive more sustainable food consumption and production change in the economy and society. Here governmental bodies and institutions at all levels of the public sector, notably in more population dense urban areas, can provide a lead in purchasing and catering healthy and sustainable food.



The contribution that public procurement of food can make to sustainability crosses all three areas of environmental, economic and social improvement.

At an economic level: a large buyer, or collection of buyers, can have great economic benefits to local and regional communities through the market that the buyers provide. Establishing new local public procurement markets can contribute to enlarging the space for a civic led economy that supports both innovative food production and sustainable consumption practices.

From the environmental point of view, sourcing foods based on clear environmental criteria will help societies to reduce their ecological footprint and meet the challenges that current food supply practices pose to the natural resource base and ecosystems. Examples include purchasing food based on: low impact production methods with reduced carbon inputs and greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity attuned practices such as pasture reared meat, wild fish caught from sustainable fisheries, and enhanced animal welfare criteria. New production and consumption approaches reduce the costs of these environmental “bads” and improve the quality of our natural resource base, including the air, water and soil - which provide the ecosystem components upon which our ability to continue growing food and to maintain sustainable local communities depend.

Social benefits in the form of healthier school children and college students, improved patient recovery, more attentive pupils and healthier employees are direct outcomes of food produced for, prepared and consumed in public restaurants. The incorporation

of local cuisine in menu provision can enhance local cultural traditions and practices in the public space, as well as, acquaint consumers with the seasonality of traditional menus. In addition, the menus can provide templates of good sustainable dietary practice for the public and communities to pursue in their more private and personal consumption spaces. The reduction of diet related ill health costs and the attendant suffering as outcomes from eating a healthier diet provide further economic and social benefits. The procurement of fair trade foods provides a focus to raise public awareness on principles of greater equity and fairness in the distribution of profits along supply chains and across different communities where caring at a distance can unite urban producers with developing world producers.

In sum, the calculation of sustainability includes cost benefit analyses based on whole life cycle costs in economic and environmental and social terms. The agencies and institutions of the state, which serve the public, have a moral responsibility to promote an “ethic of care” for their communities and environment, in the ways that they purchase, prepare and serve food. The immediate priority is to present some guidelines and examples of how these goals can be achieved and maintained.

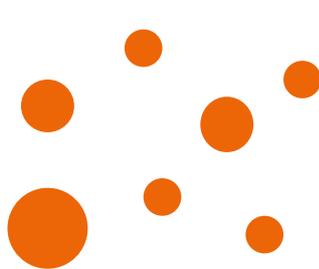
2 WHAT CHANGE IS HAPPENING?

Many public authorities at the local, regional and national levels have adopted sustainable procurement practices. A selection of inspiring practices – five case studies - is presented below with the aim of providing an overview of what change is happening across Europe.

Malmö (Sweden), Rome (Italy), East Ayrshire (Scotland), Copenhagen (Denmark) and Vienna (Austria) are municipalities that have triggered inspiring processes of change in their public procurement practices. These often start with school meal services then extend to an overall municipal policy for food procurement across different public services.

Each case study is structured as follows: what change is happening; a focus on the driving forces that made change possible; what aspects of sustainability have been prioritized and why; and lastly, the main challenges encountered.

The case studies demonstrate that revaluing public procurement is possible and takes different forms depending on the conditions and context of each European city. Although problems come up, creative and imaginative ways are found to resolve them. These different experiences and good practices provide trends of change to inspire municipalities that intend to take up the challenge of more sustainable purchasing practices.



MALMÖ (SWEDEN)

What change is happening?

Malmö is a city of 300 000 inhabitants. In Sweden the law states that all school lunches should be nutritious and fully financed through local taxes. Since 1997, the City of Malmö has dramatically increased its purchasing of organic food and by the end of 2012 about 40 % of the food budget was spent on organic food; about nine million Euros is spent on organic food every year.

Major change began in 2010, when a policy for Sustainable Development and Food was approved by the local government council (<http://www.malmo.se/English/Sustainable-City-Development/Sustainable-food-in-Malmo.html>). This decision was reached through a participatory process that involved several stages of negotiation and agreement between the various groups involved, such as cooks, teachers, nursing staff and decision-makers.

Main aims of the policy:

- > to serve good food of high quality in all public canteens
- > all food served in the City of Malmö to be certified organic by 2020
- > greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) related to food to be cut by 40 % by 2020, compared to 2002 levels

The most important measure adopted to cut greenhouse gas emissions is a reduction of meat consumption in municipal canteens. Malmö's school canteens serve more than 35 000 lunches and offer a vegetarian dish everyday and only vegetarian food on one day each week. Work to decrease meat consumption in other catering services such as pre-schools and elderly care homes has also started.

Every department of the City administration determines their own yearly goals and their own action plans to reach the final goals established by the policy by 2020.

What are the driving forces for change?

Although Malmö's school canteens have procured organic food since 1996, the initiative for change and the decision to develop the 'Policy for Sustainable Development and Food' came from civil servants and politicians, mainly from the Green Party with support from other left-wing politicians. This new policy change was primarily motivated by environmental concerns and was supported by the Environment Department that provided expertise and funds for training. This initiative tied in with the city's other areas of work that focus on reducing green-house gas (GHG) emissions for example, in transport and heating.

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- > **fair trade:** Malmö was Sweden's first Fair Trade City
- > **less meat:** the most important way to lower GHG emissions from food
- > **sustainable fishing/ Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) fishery certification programme:** helps reduce over-fishing and is easy to define and request in the procurement process
- > **healthy food:** an important social sustainability aspect
- > **seasonal food:** increases the amount of local food without conflicting with procurement legislation.



What are the main challenges?

Organic food production in Sweden is failing to keep up with the increase in demand. All organic food is sourced through catering wholesalers except vegetables, bread which are both delivered by a local suppliers and milk which is delivered from the local (large) dairy

Organic product development needs to keep up with demand. Not all kitchens can cook from scratch which means that highly processed food is also required by school canteens

Gaining acceptance of organic and sustainably produced food amongst school children, parents, teachers and other staff Keeping up the momentum to reach the policy goals and maintain them after 2020. This requires continuous work to train and inspire canteen staff. Training includes both why and how they should change their way of purchasing and cooking

Keeping to the very tight budget for food (in 2012, this was 1 Euro per portion for ingredients which is just below the average cost for school lunches in Sweden).

ROME (ITALY)

What change is happening?

Food served in schools in Rome has undergone a 'quality revolution' since 1999 when a national law (Finance Law 488) created a regulatory context that encouraged many municipalities to turn to organic. At that time, Rome was administered by a Green Party mayor who was particularly interested in the potential of organic procurement in school canteens.

The change to organic entailed three progressive phases, initiated by the city administration and advised by round tables, in order to gradually meet the service requirements of such a large city. The city feeds 150 thousand school children for 190 days per year, serving almost 150 tons of food per day. In Italy, school meal costs are met by a combination of fees that are paid by parents according to their income and by municipal budgets.

Phase 1: 2002 – 2004

Organic products were identified that could be supplied in sufficient quantities to meet demand and that were not too problematic for this upheaval in the city's procurement policy and tendering procedures. In order to do so, the tendering procedure was made more open and competitive by sub-dividing the municipality into new lots. This broke consolidated linkages between catering companies and city areas. This allowed all interested companies to respond to the call for tender.

Contracts were awarded on the basis of the 'economically most advantageous offer' taking into consideration the socio-environmental externalities of the proposed service through innovative criteria that went beyond price (price was weighted 51% in the overall award).

The tender identified a number of criteria that were essential to guarantee the basic quality of the service. For instance, catering companies were required to provide fresh organic fruit and vegetables during the first year of contract and to add organic legumes, bread, baked products, pasta, rice, eggs, and canned tomatoes during the second year. An exception was made for vegetables with a short harvesting season, such as peas, green beans, and spinach, which could be supplied frozen. In addition, the tender introduced a set of very innovative award criteria that aimed to stimulate bidders to further develop the socio-environmental quality of the products and services offered.

Contracts were awarded on a 100-point award system in which the price proposed accounted for 51 points. Another 30 points rewarded the organization of the service (that is, the number of staff and working hours offered by the catering companies, the environmental certifications they held, and the environmental friendliness of the transportation system they had organized). Fifteen points were awarded for 'projects, interventions, and services' proposed to promote food education amongst the users of the service and to reduce noise in selected school canteens. Finally, 4 points were allocated to catering companies capable of offering additional organic, PDO, and PGI food products beyond what the tender required.

Phase 2: 2004 - 2007

This phase focused on the introduction of more specific requirements in the tenders, including a revision of menus based on the following principles:

seasonality: summer and winter version of menus

variety: no dish to be served more than once every five weeks

territoriality: e.g. certification of meat products, bread baked and packaged within six hours and consumed no longer than 12 hours after packaging, thus making additives in bread ingredients unnecessary

nutritional content: in-line with the guidelines of the Italian Institute of Nutrition.

Implementing these principles meant extra effort for caterers in terms of logistics (for example, sourcing seasonal foods) and planning menus at a consistent level of quality.

Phase 3: 2007 - 2012

The third phase covered five years instead of three. This enabled catering companies to adjust to new demands over a longer period and make new investments. This phase included further requirements and innovations set by the city administration in the call for tender for the growing sustainable school meal service (for example, the inclusion of ethnic dishes, the distribution of leftover food to charity associations and animal shelters, recycling, reusable tableware etc.).

In 2008, the Roman model faced a turning point due to political change in the city administration, including a new Head of the Department for Education in charge of school meals. The new tendering process for the period 2013 to 2018 has been published and we wait to see how political change will affect the “school meal revolution” in Rome.

The new tendering process: 2013 - 2017

In the new tendering process, the 70% target for all foods to be organic remains unchanged. However, some new criteria have been introduced, including:

- > **new emphasis on local products:** these are defined as products produced within 150 kms of Rome fresh fish instead of frozen and fresh produce when possible
- > **sourcing produce from social co-operatives**
- > **reduction of energy consumption**
- > **re-use of leftovers from school canteens** to charity associations if edible, and if not, to animal feed and compost.



The new tender is worth 426 million Euros, with 11 lots, at 5.49 Euros per meal (the previous cost was 5.28 Euros). There are also new exemptions from payment for families with an ISEE indicator (Indicatore della Situazione Economica Equivalente - a tool used to estimate the economic situation of Italian families) lower than 25 thousand Euros per year.

What are the driving forces for change?

- > **political will to change**, including the role of specific politicians and local authorities
- > **adopting an incremental approach** and a broader interpretation of quality meals
- > **inclusive approach to change**, involving both production and consumption 'ends' of the chain. A permanent round table was created to allow public institutions, producers and suppliers to meet on a regular basis to discuss problems and plan together. The Canteen Commission formed by parents, administrations, teachers, catering company representatives and hygiene authorities was crucial to enable parents and teachers to be actively involved through monitoring and feedback and to address problems that emerged at the consumption level
- > **introduction of control and monitoring systems**: contracted companies are required to comply with ISO 9001 quality certification, introduce HACCP and develop a handbook of good hygienic practices. The municipality is in charge of monitoring the service supplied by contracted companies through inspections and may apply sanctions in the case of misconduct.

Which aspects of sustainability are prioritized and why?

- > **a list of organic products was made mandatory** to reach the 70% target of organic food supplied (this does not have to be regionally produced)
- > **PDO/PGI products introduced** to emphasize territoriality and traceability
- > **Fair Trade bananas and chocolate bars introduced** to emphasize socially sustainable products
- > **criteria was established** for the improvement of kitchens and eating environments
- > **education projects** involving teachers and parents and training of staff members introduced.

What are the main challenges?

- > **artisanal products reaching the capacity** needed to supply a large urban system
- > **cutting down 'food miles' and energy impacts** related to centralised national food platforms and systems of catering companies located far from Rome where even locally produced products must transit
- > **catering companies need to remain financially viable** as they adjust to new quality requirements set by public administration
- > **political continuity.**



What change is happening?

East Ayrshire is a mix of urban and rural areas in south-west Scotland with a population of 120 thousand. It has higher than average levels of deprivation in its population. The following example is a tried and tested development that has been operating in the East Ayrshire school meals service since 2004. The service has been thoroughly researched on numerous occasions and this readily accessible information has been both professionally and academically validated. It is provided here as an example that could be replicable, or at least adapted, in different settings across the public sector. The success of the scheme is dependent on involving schools, informing parents, local community support and the involvement of local suppliers. It also requires imaginative approaches to engage pupils and deepen their understanding about the importance of food and its impact on their health and on the environment.

Procurement generally favours building economies through scale and with as few suppliers as necessary but a key factor for change in East Ayrshire has been to configure/lot the contracts on a scale that is manageable for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to bid for contracts. Although in a mid or larger city context it might be necessary to consider multiple suppliers and contract packages for each product category in order to engage SMEs, the city and surrounding areas. This is innovative and against the procurement norm.

As a Local Authority, East Ayrshire has prioritized providing school meals to pupils based on unprocessed, local and a proportion of organic ingredients. The policy was established in a pilot in a single school in 2004 and by the school year 2008, the initiative covered 40 of the authority's primary schools, most of its pre 5 nursery schools and one out of nine secondary schools. The initiative was conceived and driven by the Council's Head of Catering who sought Committee approval from the Council after the successful one school pilot stage.

The East Ayrshire approach was created as a response to Scottish Government (SG) Guidance which fully funded an improvement agenda for school food and importantly, in cognizance of Directive 2004/18EC and other policies and guidance such as EU green procurement guidance and SG procurement legislation guidance on sustainability & procurement.

East Ayrshire Council subsequently decided to apply for externally assessed accreditation through the Food for Life Catering Mark devised by the Soil Association (see <http://www.sacert.org/catering>) and was awarded Gold Standard to reflect best practice in healthy and sustainable school meals. The initiatives that East Ayrshire developed predated the Soil Association's standard, but the local authority only needed to make minor enhancements to comply.

Food for Life Catering Mark (Gold Standard) requires that:

- > 75% of dishes are freshly prepared
- > at least 30% of ingredients are organic or Marine Stewardship Council certified
- > at least 50% of ingredients are locally sourced
- > meals contain no undesirable food additives or hydrogenated fats
- > menus are seasonal
- > meat is from farms which satisfy UK welfare standards
- > eggs are from cage-free hens
- > training is provided for all catering staff
- > no GM ingredients are used
- > organic meat, dairy products or eggs are served as the highest welfare standard
- > non-meat dishes are being promoted as part of a balanced, climate-friendly diet
- > food education is supported by the caterer in schools and in the community and information on the
- > provenance of food is highlighted on menus.

The scheme initially contacted suppliers and invited them to participate in the initial one school pilot. In particular, local suppliers were contacted and invited to participate in the initiative.

After the initial one-year pilot, a robust financial and quality model was put in place to allow the scheme to be critically evaluated. This fully applies EU procurement regulations, and tenders were evaluated on the basis of 50% price and 50% quality. Currently the scheme transacts in the region of 472 thousand Euros (£400 thousand) with SMEs and 12 schools are involved. There have been three separate tendering exercises in 2005, 2008 and 2012: nine lots were tendered and local SME suppliers were successful in their tenders for beef, lamb, pork, fresh fish, milk, eggs, cheese, fresh fruit and vegetables, bakery and grocery. Few of the national suppliers chose to tender.

Menus have been altered to comply with the national food and nutrient standards for school meals. The menus reflect the availability of seasonal produce and a decision has been taken to use almost entirely fresh food rather than rely on pre-cooked food which simplified compliance with the national standard.

A key success factor has been communicating effectively with all stakeholders what benefits East Ayrshire is seeking to achieve through food in schools both in cultural terms and for the local economy, health, education and the environment. Initially, presentations to Catering Managers, Head Teachers, parent groups and leaflets to parents were used and later, a marketing campaign using radio, branding etc. was used. In addition, training for Catering Managers and Cooks, establishing a menu and a recipe development working group (which included health and nutrition professionals), and a high quality kitchen manual for staff has been developed.

An evaluation by ADAS (an agricultural and environmental consultancy) for the Scottish Government found that East Ayrshire Council could keep within EU procurement procedures and still buy local, increase fresh and organic produce, purchase significantly improved quality of ingredients and achieve this at a modest cost increase in cost which was around the average food cost of all Councils in Scotland per meal. The evaluation recognized that there were a range of wider benefits, such as reduced environmental damage through reduced 'food miles' and waste packaging, social benefits for children and parents, health benefits and wider economic benefits for the local economy.

The authors also suggested that: *The social benefits that food initiatives can bring are cross-cutting. These benefits are not always taken into account when decisions around school meal supply are made, as they do not have an obvious associated monetary value. Further evidence of the monetary value of the economic, social and environmental impacts of local procurement will be crucial in encouraging local authorities to adopt new practices.*

Also, a study commissioned by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency carried out by AEATechnology, focused on an average size East Ayrshire Primary School with a roll of 300, and found that annual savings of 37.7 tonnes CO² or 10.2 carbon (transport/distribution saving) had been achieved by localizing the supply chain.

A further study by Footprint Consulting using Social Return on Investment methodology (SROI) calculated 7 Euros (£6) value is returned for every 1.18 Euros (£1) spent on the project. This represents a return per pupil of 117 Euros (£99) for an investment per pupil of 15 Euros (£13) per annum. They estimated that 472 thousand Euros (£400 thousand) was kept in the local economy.

What are the driving forces for change?

The Scottish Government has legislated for school food through the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition Scotland) Act, 2007 which built on an earlier seminal report titled 'Hungry for Success: A whole school approach to school meals'. In 2008, the Scottish Government added to this and created its National Food and Drink policy with a significant priority given to the role of public food and sustainable procurement.

At a corporate level the Local Authority's Chief Executive cites a 'joined-up' policy approach as school meals are seen as a 'cross-cutting' service linked to all main priorities of the local community strategy:

- > **addressing health inequalities** through changes in lifestyles
- > **halting rural de-population** through the development of the local economy
- > **promoting environmental sustainability** through an emphasis on local food products.

At the delivery level the caterers business plan, alongside providing good quality food and nutrition, has the intention of optimizing the impact and value of expenditure on school food for East Ayrshire as a whole by exercising due diligence and an ethic of care that incorporates the three pillars of sustainable development. At the local level, the initiatives are seen demonstrating East Ayrshire is a good place to live which contributes on a number of reputational and socio economic levels.

Which aspects of sustainability are prioritized?

- > seasonality, fresh and localness
- > responsible use of resources
- > lower food miles
- > higher quality of meals
- > investment in the local economy
- > public health and nutrition
- > good employer characteristics
- > links with education and community learning

What are the main challenges?

Competitiveness of SMEs and their ability to manage distribution and tender for contracts. Small producers in this case have demonstrated their ability to keep up with the requirements of school catering needs, overcoming the size and the seasonality constraints. However this might not have been readily achievable if the size of the contract opportunity offered had been larger. In these terms the lotting of contracts by product and geographically is important in encouraging local supply and viable competition.

Ingredients for a two course meal cost around 65 pence/.78 Euro [2004] and have consistently remained 10-15% higher than in schools in East Ayrshire not yet phased into the scheme. It's worth saying that the best/most competent catering managers showed no increase. However, research has shown that any additional cost did not exceed the national average for Scotland.

Time spent on menu and recipe development is important. For example, fresh meat contracted from a local farm can be around 75% more expensive than produce offered through a national butcher meat contract. In actual terms however, by skilled caterers managing menus and costs over the four-week menu cycle, this represents 10 pence per meal. Parents faced no increase in the price paid, the Council accommodated this expenditure through existing budgets but in any case, the cost of the school meals service in East Ayrshire is average for food and labour costs across Scotland.

Statistically there are encouraging signs of a reduction in overweight and obesity in East Ayrshire. While this cannot be attributed to school food alone, anecdotally, there is a higher awareness in schools of the importance of food for the individual and society which leaks into the community. However, spill-over has been slow although a neighbouring local authority has created a similar pilot on the Island of Arran. Also, the Scottish Government has recently funded [1million euro] the Soil Association for the period 2012-15 in order to encourage other Councils to achieve similar results through the Catering Mark accreditation scheme. At present only 2/32 have achieved bronze level, plus East Ayrshire's gold.

COPENHAGEN (DENMARK)

What change is happening?

Organic food on the public plate has been on the agenda in Denmark since the 1990s as part of a sustainable food strategy. Over the past decade, the city of Copenhagen has been a particular focus for the strategy as the municipality has developed ambitious policies and strategies for environmentally sustainable and healthy food procurement.

This was initiated by the adoption of the Dogme charter in 2000 which was based on inter-municipal cooperation that focused on urban sustainable development. Part of this programme gave the public procurement of food special attention and the politicians agreed on a common goal of achieving procurement of at least 75% organic food (measured in kilos). This goal was to be met within existing budgets and, at the same time, it needed to comply with existing nutritional recommendations.

The five municipalities of Albertslund, Ballerup, Fredericia, Herning and Copenhagen were the first participants of the Dogme 2000 network. Today the network has been renamed Green Cities, (<http://www.greencities.dk>). Together, these five municipalities are in charge of around 2000 public catering kitchens that were the target of the organic food sourcing strategy.

As the capital city and as the owner of one half of these kitchens, Copenhagen is by far the largest consumer of food for kindergartens, nursing homes, schools, sports arenas and workplace canteens in Denmark. The annual food budget in the municipality of Copenhagen is around 40 million Euros and approximately 60 thousand meals are prepared by 1750 kitchen employees daily.



As organic food was seen mainly as an environmental issue, the administration of the organic programme was placed in the Department of Technique and Environment (<http://www.kk.dk/FaktaOmKommunen/Forvaltninger/TMF.aspx>) and a team of civil servants was put in charge of developing the organic procurement programme.

An important part of the organic programme was educational activities for the catering staff since organic procurement involved new routines and preparation techniques. In addition to skills-focused topics, the teaching activity also included awareness raising activities. For instance, educational activities included lectures on the principles of 'the organic kitchen'. This has been an important part of overcoming mental barriers and attitudes that were often the main constraints to changing procurement practices to organic.

Over the following years, the Department of Technique and Environment, together with the staff of the public kitchens, has succeeded in developing one of the most ambitious organic public procurement programmes in Europe; especially since the programme was developed within existing budgets (<http://www.greencities.dk/Oekologi/Status/Oekologiske-foedevarer/>).

The success of the first steps resulted in a new and more ambitious goal. The municipality decided politically that:

- > **a threshold of 75% organic food had to be reached by 2012**
- > **with a goal of 90 % organic food by 2015**, since many kitchens had already reached the 75 % level.

By December 2008, an average level of 56 % take-up of organic food across the different public institutions had been achieved. In January 2009, the administration of the programme was transferred to the Copenhagen House of Food. This had been established in 2007 as an independent, non-commercial foundation by the City of Copenhagen.

The goal of 75% organic food was met successfully in 2012 and work continues towards 90 % in 2015. During this time, the organic programme has been partly supported by the Government strategy for developing public catering as a market for organic foods. This followed on from the Organic Action Plan II, adopted in the mid-nineties, which was aimed at developing organic food and farming in Denmark. In addition to strategies aimed at increasing demand in the retail sector, the Organic Action Plan set out some ambitious goals for changing how organic foods were sourced in the public sector.

What are the driving forces for change?

Setting a very clear political goal – an exact figure and a date (75% in 2012) - was one of the main reasons for the success of the change processes that have taken place in the Copenhagen public food system.

Concern for the protection of ground water sources was one of the main reasons behind the political decisions leading to the change.

Allocating money to support the process of change has also been important. The money was - and still is - spent on education of kitchen employees to help them understand the values of organic farming and food. Finance has also been spent on information in every part of the administration of the municipality. The change processes have been accompanied by educational measures for intermediary consumers in canteens and catering production units and kitchens. However, end-users such as children, parents and others, have only been targeted through public information services.

In general, organic conversion has been challenged by the fact that end users, such as young people at school, have shown limited commitment to the process of change. As such, the conversion process has mainly targeted those working in kitchens (back stage) and, to a lesser extent, end-users (front stage).

The case of Copenhagen has clearly shown that in order to maintain a strong political focus and secure the necessary money over a number of years it is important to show progress towards the end goal.

As measuring the exact amount of organic food in kilos in app. 2000 kitchens was impossible at the beginning of the programme, the Dogme 2000 network developed a simple, temporary method to estimate the increasing amount of food that changed each year from conventional to organic.

The method has been used once a year since 2005 and the results can be seen here: http://www.madstatus.helptool.dk/t2w_434.asp. From 2013 or 2014 a new fact based method will be adopted. This new method is national, it is government supported and based on the actual procurement of each kitchen: <http://www.oekologisk-spisemaerke.dk/>.

In recent years another driving force has become important. **Public food is seen as an important source of creating food literacy among children and young people and a way to advocate for a more sustainable and healthy food consumption pattern in general.**

Which aspects of sustainability are prioritized and why?

Protecting ground water resources from being contaminated with pesticides etc. Most of Denmark's drinking water is pumped from deep below the farming land surrounding the cities of the municipalities. More than a hundred wells around Copenhagen have been closed because of too high levels of pesticides from conventional farming. A new well costs app. 0.7-1.4 million Euros. The original idea of Dogme 2000 was to increase the area of organic farming by increasing the demand for organic food for public kitchens.

Reducing CO² emissions has given the organic programme an extra dimension and extra priority, as it obviously supports the climate goals of Copenhagen.

The principles of 'the organic kitchen' are based upon a slightly different composition of food to enable dietitians to plan for organic food within a conventional budget. The principles are based on the idea of **less meat, more fresh, seasonal and local vegetables and fruits and less food waste.** In addition, these principles comply with those of climate friendly food and in many cases with the principles of healthy eating.

Although the programme has set out to impact the farming practices in the region around Copenhagen and in the rest of the country, direct assessment of the impacts has not been carried out. There has been no particular effort directed at securing local food sourcing due to the strict requirements of EU procurement directive. Nor has the programme aimed at creating links to private consumption of organic foods.

In general the programme has aimed at creating change in food supply and, to a lesser extent, to monitor and create more scientific-based evidence. This includes questions about how the programme contributes to national growth of organic farming in Denmark and whether the programme has identified product gaps in Danish organic provision which have impacted on procurement/menus, including the need to import foods (e.g. winter fruit supplies). The same is true for questions related to accounting for externalities such as the impact on drinking water supplies.

What are the main challenges?

Changing the fundamental principles and routines in catering facilities for the organic procurement programme has been one of the main challenges; especially the question of jurisdiction. The department of Technique and Environment was responsible for the implementation of the political goal of 75% organic food but had no jurisdiction in the catering facilities which are managed by other municipal departments.

Another barrier was **the clash between different professional paradigms**. For instance, concerns were raised about the financing and the nutritional appropriateness of the food and the menu plans. This challenge was overcome by making small scale test projects, showing successfully how to afford healthy, tasty and organic food within the budgets. Today, the Copenhagen House of Food is experiencing similar issues over jurisdiction.

Another challenge has been related to **the organic food supply**. For kitchens and catering production units the right variety of organic food, delivered at the right time and packed in the right size packages, is imperative. This has been a clear challenge for the suppliers of organic foods. In some cases suppliers have had difficulties providing the contract requirements. Many are small enterprises that are not used to the very professional and paper driven procurement procedures and quality requirements that are abundant in public catering systems. For already established conventional suppliers that have taken up organic food as a 'side order' these challenges have been considerably easier to overcome.

The existing tenders were traditionally based on conventional food and they were not scheduled for renewal when the organic work first started. This was especially a challenge in the large-scale kitchens in the first years of the programme.

It is a major challenge to prepare tenders that meet EU regulations that are tailored to the needs of a lot of different kitchens during conversion processes from conventional to organic food that take place over several years.

The programme has also been challenged by the unpredictability of demand in certain parts of public sector catering in the municipality. In particular, demand for food in the school food programme has been much lower than expected. Unlike other countries, school food in Denmark is based on a pay per meal market approach and the demand in Copenhagen schools been much lower than expected. Only about half of the schools are still offering school meals and the uptake in these schools is about 20 %.

Another challenge relates to the **worldwide economic crisis that has resulted in speculation in food and an increase in prices**. Since higher prices do not result in increased budgets, the overall consequence could be a decrease in the amount of organic food sourced, as kitchens will have to go back to conventional food in order to keep within their budgets.

VIENNA (AUSTRIA)

What change is happening?

The city of Vienna offers the most successful initiative in Austria for making procurement more sustainable in public institutions. The programme 'ÖkoKauf Wien' ('EcoBuy Vienna') <http://www.wien.gv.at/english/environment/protection/oekokauf/> goes back to 1999 and was launched as part of the Vienna Climate Protection Program ('KliP Wien'). It uses public procurement, including food for hospitals, schools, kindergartens and nursing homes for the elderly, as a contribution to help reach climate protection goals.

Although overall coordination is with the Department of Environmental Protection of the Municipality, the programme is coordinated by the Viennese Department for Environment through thematic working groups. These involve about 180 people, representing a broad range of actors from local authorities, NGOs, municipal administrations and companies. The programme is managed by the Project Director and a Steering Group. External experts are included as the need arises. Public procurement practitioners from all parts of the administration are involved in these working groups and can actively contribute to the elaboration of criteria for tenders.

Tenders for public procurement use a set of criteria that are regularly evaluated and updated. These criteria are intended to be mandatory for public procurement and contracting and have to be taken into account by all departments of the Vienna City Administration. However, in reality, there are no sanctions if the requirements are not met.

While the focus of the programme was originally on ecological aspects there are growing efforts to include other aspects of sustainability, including fair trade, health, regionalism and seasonality. Market research was carried out before certain standards were introduced, including a feasibility study to calculate the maximum amount of organic food required by the Vienna Hospital Association.

At present the City of Vienna supplies food to around 85 thousand people in hospitals, schools, kindergartens and nursing homes for the elderly and the percentage of organic food has been increased in recent years.

The programme aims for public canteens to use at least 30% organic ingredients

The current situation is: hospitals are already at 38% and aims to reach 50% within the next two years; for kindergartens and for 90 schools offering after-school care (30 thousand children per day) the percentage of the overall spending has already reached more than 50% and is as high as 91% for dairy products. However, organic food supply for elderly people in nursing homes is currently at only 18%.

A new initiative as part of 'EcoBuy' could mean that the organic food provided for the elderly catches up. The '**Natürlich Gut Teller**' (lit. transl. 'naturally good plate') suggests public services providing food should prepare meals that meet the following mandatory criteria:

- > **organic, seasonal fruits and vegetables and less meat** (all meat needs to meet high animal welfare standards, and fish should be from sustainable production)
- > **minimum of 2/3 vegetarian ingredients**
- > **1/3 regional ingredients**
- > **one product certified as 'fair trade'**
- > **no packaging**
- > **innovative recipes**
- > **freshly cooked**

In Vienna's nursing homes the introduction of meals fulfilling these criteria has already been successful; at present, these meals are offered 4-5 times a week.

The 'EcoBuy' programme has helped to make the public procurement sector more sustainable. Figures show it has already made savings of about 17 million Euros and 30 000t of CO² emissions per year, including food. Data on other benefits (economic, social aspects) are not available.

What are the driving forces for change?

- > **Vienna's Climate Protection Programme was a political window of opportunity** to contribute a programme for public procurement to help meet climate protection goals. It aimed to represent a role model for citizens and the private sector.
- > **Committed key actors** – one of the core driving forces was/is the commitment of some officials from the City of Vienna who strongly support(ed) the idea to make public procurement more sustainable in the city.
- > **Motivated procurement officers** - commitment of the procurement officers to sustainable products is considered a very important driving force.
- > **Motivated chefs who cook fresh food on site** (e.g. every nursing home for the elderly has its own kitchen) create momentum that often goes beyond the criteria set up for 'EcoBuy'. For instance, one nursing home, located outside Vienna (St. Andrä), co-operates directly with the neighbouring farmers and they deliver milk and eggs directly to the kitchen. When the nursing home decided to offer more organic food, the neighbouring farmers were motivated to convert to organic agriculture. **National Action Plan for public procurement** – builds on the 'EcoBuy' programme to strengthen its legitimacy.
- > **Funding for further development** - the City of Vienna dedicates 300 thousand Euros per year to further develop the programme and for feasibility studies to review and evaluate the criteria etc.
- > **International rewards** - international appreciation of Vienna's public procurement strategy strengthens public support ('Dubai International Award for Best Practices' 2012, 'European Public Sector Award 2011' 'Un-Habitat DIA Award Winner 2010, Best Practice 2006 and 2004, Good Practice 2000). Cities from Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Switzerland, the Baltic Countries, and even from Mongolia and Lebanon have approached 'ÖkoKauf Wien' in order to learn from the City of Vienna.
- > **Networking with other stakeholders:** the organic farmers' association 'Bio Austria' is cooperating with procurement officers, with mills and with bakeries. As a result, the biggest hospital in Vienna (AKH – Allgemeines Krankenhaus) provides 100% organic bread made from regional grain. There is no such network for pasta and organic pasta served in the hospital is not made of Austrian grain.
- > **Price** : sustainable products do not need to be more expensive if calculated in a comprehensive way. Examples of this include:
 - Meat:* chefs notice and appreciate that organic meat is better quality. Good quality meat does not reduce its weight in the same way as low quality meat when cooked (low quality meat might lose up to 40 % of its weight). Including this in the calculation reduces the cost of organic meat and makes it more competitive with conventional prices.
 - Milk:* organic milk is only slightly more expensive than conventional. The Viennese hospital AKH included in its tender for milk products the requirement that if anything goes wrong with the delivery, the dairy must be able to send another consignment within two hours. This resulted in an Austrian dairy winning the tender. (Milk products make up between 15 to 17 % of grocery expenses in canteen kitchens).

Vegetables: organic vegetables are the same price or sometimes cheaper than those that are conventionally grown in high season. For example, when tomatoes are in season, canteen kitchens buy large quantities of those that do not conform to standard sizes and prepare a supply of sauce for when prices rise again.

- > Participation in shaping the programme - participation of public procurement practitioners from all parts of the administration in the working groups provides active contributions to improve and evaluate the criteria. This participatory approach has led to widespread acceptance.
- > Departmental core responsibility - although co-ordination of the programme does not take place in the catering department, close cooperation ensures best practice.

Which aspects of sustainability are prioritized and why?

The initial emphasis of the programme was on ecological impacts and this remains the main focus. Products are evaluated for their sustainability using a points rationing scheme. If a product is conventionally produced it is awarded a negative point unless one of its ingredients matches one of the ecological, social/ethical or health criteria listed below:

Ecological criteria

organic production: raw materials that comply with controlled organic farming are more desirable than those from integrated production

no genetic modification: plant cultivation must be pursuant to EU Directive 2092/91 on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs, respectively (Austrian Food Codex)

'naturally good plate': less meat (minimum of 2/3 vegetarian compounds), seasonal fruits and vegetables from organic production, fish from sustainable production. No packaging of meals.

Social & ethical criteria

fair trade: direct marketing, minimum price warranty, guaranteed delivery amounts, same pay for same work. Fair trade does not necessarily need to go along with organic but it often corresponds

animal welfare: 'keeping animals in their natural environment', no animal testing 'naturally good plate': one third of ingredients are regional, with high animal welfare standards if meat is used. Recipes are innovative although this often means 'retro-innovations' with recipes based on traditional meals.

Health criteria (in addition to common food safety standards)

specific guidelines on the reduction of trans-fatty acids, including the use of halogenated polymers.

What are the main challenges?

Although the programme has been running for 14 years, it still faces **several challenges to keep it running smoothly**. For example:

Decision makers in public institutions change: it is a big challenge not to lose momentum and to re-establish the importance of the programme.

Closure of kitchens: very little food is prepared on-site. For example, food for kindergartens is prepared centrally and then distributed. In hospitals, all kitchens will eventually be closed as most of them are quite old and do not comply with existing standards. Three new central kitchens are planned because renovation of existing kitchens would require too high investment.

Increasing use of cook & chill systems: there is little resistance to plans to shut down kitchens. People in favour of central kitchens argue that these are convenient and will be safer in terms of food hygiene. This argument is important to hospitals, although there has never been a food scandal in a Viennese hospital kitchen.

Pressure from big companies: pressure from big catering companies towards central kitchens and towards cook & chill systems is very strong. A big Austrian catering company ('Gourmet') is continuously searching for new contracts; procurement officers/the directors of the institutions don't want to break contracts with big companies because they offer a lot of incentives.

No sanctions in place: if the purchase does not comply with the 'EcoBuy' criteria.

Support for local economy: there is little effort to procure locally and this is not a requirement in the criteria.

Spill over to private consumption: it was originally intended to broaden the initiative to include private consumption, but this has not been that successful to date. There is an initiative certifying private 'green' restaurants ('Klimafit bei Tisch').



Photo: Christian Houdek

3 HOW TO CHANGE

Addressing people working on the ground

The examples of Malmö, Rome, East Ayrshire, Copenhagen and Vienna demonstrate that public procurement is indeed one of the most powerful examples urban governments have at their disposal to fashion sustainable food systems that prioritize quality foods. They also show that successful long-term change must be tailored to the culture and system of governance in each city or region. As each case study demonstrates, commitment and creativity is vital and the ability to think ‘outside the box’ brings environmental, financial, health and social rewards.

The meaning of quality food will also vary according to the context; in other words, cities can choose what type of ingredients they want to emphasize based on local needs and availability (for example, Malmö and Copenhagen have prioritized organic food). As described above, cities (especially large cities like Rome) have peculiar challenges to face in terms of calibrating demand and supply of quality ingredients. However, potential shortcomings in the availability of quality foods can be overcome through the adoption of an incremental approach (see examples of Vienna and Rome) which progressively enhance the range of quality ingredients on offer.

The cities and regions we have discussed above have all contributed to public health by raising the nutritional standards of the food served in public canteens. In the case of East Ayrshire, this appeared to result

in a significant decrease of overweight and obesity in the county but this has not been maintained over time. There have been important environmental benefits in terms of reduced packaging (and waste), lower food miles and, more generally, support for more environmentally benign types of agriculture (i.e., organic). In some cases (East Ayrshire, Vienna), the reform has also created important market opportunities for local and small-scale food producers, delivering a multiplier effect on the local economy.

Last but not least, these cities through their innovations are contributing to create a generation of more knowledgeable consumers, while also delivering on social justice grounds by increasing access to quality food for all citizens. East Ayrshire’s reform has achieved a Social Return on Investment Index of above 7 Euros (£6), meaning that for every 1.17 Euros (£1) invested in sustainable school meals the county is producing an investment worth of 7 Euros (£6) in environmental and socio-economic benefits.

This is the central message of revaluing public sector food procurement to all urban governments: investing today in public food systems may indeed imply a significant financial effort and sacrifice at a time of recession, but the savings made in other budgetary accounts will far outweigh and offset the costs of your initial investment.

How to put sustainable procurement into practice

At the policy level, the examples discussed above highlight the importance of integration i.e. the adoption of an approach that recognizes and emphasizes the cross-cutting, multifunctional nature of public food systems and their capacity to deliver socio-economic and environmental benefits. In Vienna, for example, the participation of public procurement practitioners from all parts of the municipal administration has led to widespread acceptance of change.

At the practical level, our examples demonstrate the efficacy of a creative procurement approach, which manifests itself in different ways. East Ayrshire, for instance, has broken the contract into as many as nine lots to promote the participation of small-scale local suppliers. Rome has achieved the same objective through the identification of innovative award criteria, such as "foods from bio-dedicated food chains" and general freshness requirements. Vienna's hospital awarded a contract for dairy produce by writing in to the tender that, if required, replacement milk must be delivered within two hours of the request. In all cases, local governments have managed to promote re-localization without breaching the EU legislation on public procurement.



Another important lesson that emerges from the story of Rome that could be of relevance to Malmö, is the importance of a progressive, incremental approach to the procurement process that can help cities to calibrate demand and supply of quality food products. Education and training for catering staff has been prioritized in Copenhagen's 'organic kitchen' and menu planning is another important strategy, as demonstrated by the example of Rome, where menus are planned on a 9-week rotation at the beginning of the school year.



Photo: Christian Houdek

AN ACTION PLAN FOR HOW TO CHANGE

Every public organisation has a vital leadership role within the civic realm. Embedding an ‘ethic of care’ in the supply chain and in the types of food provided can move society towards a more sustainable food system. Food has significant impacts on health and the environment and for the well being of communities. Consequently food used by publicly funded organisations should be exemplary.

We suggest a two-step action plan to really make a difference to revaluing public sector food procurement:

- i. adopt the set of basic indicators set out below to guide and monitor progress towards sustainability and the impact of your sustainable food strategy; and
- ii. adopt the set of key actions outlined below and use them to guide your own policy-making, implementation and monitoring and evaluation practices.

i. The indicators

A set of indicators must work for your own culture and system of governance but using the good practice set out in the case studies, we have identified the following basic indicators that can be adapted to help monitor progress towards sustainability and the impact of sustainable food strategies:

Environmental issues

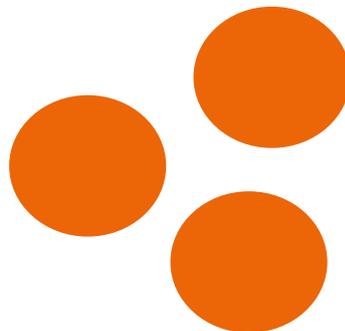
- Percentage of organic and sustainably sourced fish using recognized certification schemes e.g. Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)
- Availability of products that promote animal welfare
- Emphasis on seasonality/ local food
- Initiatives in place to minimize waste at all stages of the food chain
- Freshness (intended as use of unprocessed and freshly prepared foods)
- Number and/or percentage of vegetarian dishes and meals
- Reduce energy consumption
- Reduce water consumption/ protect ground water from contamination

Social/Health issues

- Availability/percentage of Fair Trade/fairly traded products
- Number of staff trained on sustainable public procurement issues
- Educational initiatives in place to promote awareness of sustainable food
- Social Return on Investment (SROI)
- Prioritize nutritional content
- Prioritize menu planning/ innovative recipes

Economic issues

- Support for local employment and local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) – ensure they remain financially viable when adjusting to new quality requirements
- Adopt an incremental approach – phase in change and budgets to support this over time
- Establish criteria to improve kitchens and eating environments
- Establish budgets to train catering staff and educate practitioners and the public over time.



ii. Key action points

The Sustainable Procurement of food and drink will not happen without intervention at both the corporate and operational levels. By adopting and taking the following key actions, public bodies maximise the opportunities to revalue public sector food procurement and help build a more sustainable food system for all.

Good Governance

It is vital that key Sustainable Development Objectives are identified corporately and reflected in each public organisation's strategy for procurement. This should include wider engagement with Civil Society.

Identify Sustainable Food as a Priority

Public bodies should specifically identify Sustainable Food Procurement as part of their Corporate Objectives. This is a key area where major sustainable development gains can be achieved across a range of policy sectors.

Sustainable Menus can deliver Multiple Dividends

Menus and recipes should be prioritised for health, carbon reduction, seasonality and for a capacity to promote biodiversity, animal welfare, sustainable fisheries, good employment practices and training opportunities.

Account for Sustainability

Public bodies should have a recognised methodology in place for evaluating contracts that applies a whole life cycle costing approach. This accounts for social, environmental and economic benefits which accrue through sustainable food procurement and should also include an assessment of regional impacts.

Help Create the Market for Sustainable Food

A diverse and sustainable agri-food sector is essential. Procurement Organisations should actively work with foodservice contractors and suppliers to source sustainable food. Each public organisation should ensure measures are in place to include participation from small businesses (SMEs). This will develop a sustainable and more competitive supply base.

Ensure Contracts Strengthen Competition

Public Sector Organisations should give a high priority to geographic and product lotting of contracts to allow for the inclusion of SMEs alongside larger businesses whether for food purchased through its own contracts or through a foodservice contractor on behalf of the organisation. For example, food and drink procurement can divide contracts into smaller lots and segment food categories into geographic lots of a suitable scale to allow a range of businesses to participate. Contracts should also be offered in separate lots for: soft drinks, milk, cheese, eggs, fresh meat, fish, poultry, fruit, vegetables, cereals, groceries or any suitable configuration.

Stimulate Demand for Sustainable Food

A strategy to stimulate more sustainable practices by suppliers in the food sector should be prioritized by each municipality, province and region. This includes strategic support for food production and carbon reduction, food safety and quality accreditations, reformulation of processed food, and tendering for public contracts, including electronic tendering mechanisms and capacity building.

Work with Suppliers

Procurement processes, ease of access to contracts, public and product liability insurance requirements and quality assurance accreditations should be proportionate to manage risk but not too onerous. They should not act as a disincentive for SMEs to tender or be a disproportionate cost in their tender price.

Plan for Sustainability and the Seasons

Lead times for production are critical in the food sector to allow for seasonal production planning. A Prior Information Notice (PIN) should be used to notify of the intention to advertise a food tender a minimum of 18 months in advance of the contract being advertised.

Skill Your Staff

Creating impetus for the sustainable purchase of food is essential at a corporate level. Inspire commitment and ensure knowledge and skills are firmly established within the procurement and catering functions, where the facility to implement change is found.

Know what your Organisation is Buying

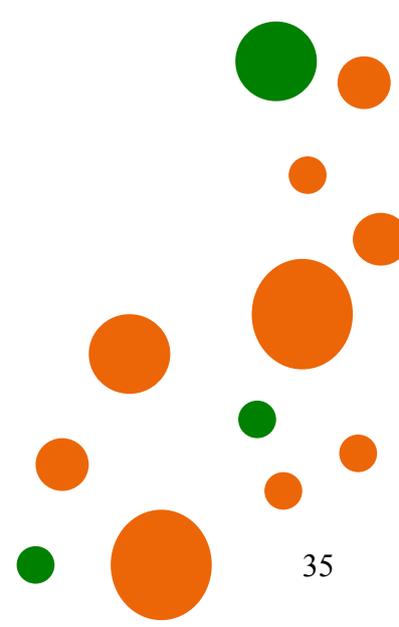
By prioritising food from sustainable sources, all public organisations should require that contracts record the place of origin of food. This should be monitored by the public buying agency.

Know where there is Waste

Every Public Organisation should monitor food waste and have transparent mechanisms that report progress on minimising food-waste and recycling.

Consumers value Sustainable Food

Every public organisation should educate its consumers by providing information on its policy for food and advertise this through the provenance of its menus. Wider community engagement is key to the success of wider sustainable food consumption.





www.foodlinkscommunity.net

