

FOOD FOR SOCIETY

A SUSTAINABLE AND DYNAMIC VALUE-BASED FOOD SYSTEM

FOOD 2030: CIRCULARITY, INNOVATION



Access to safe, nutritious, affordable, and sufficient food is key to providing rural and urban communities with good health, sustainable jobs, and self-fulfilment. To achieve food and nutrition security (FNS), it is necessary to tackle global challenges like population growth, resource scarcity and urbanisation by making food systems sustainable, resilient, diverse, inclusive, and competitive for the benefit of society.

SPECIFIC R&I BREAKTHROUGH TOPICS

Community driven social innovations: Climate change, global trade imbalances and the ensuing food insecurity are affecting specific societal groups differently. Local communities and vulnerable groups are reacting faster to the challenges than other levels of governance. In Europe, communities are fostering social innovation through citizen participation to research, City Labs, and citizen science, as well as agricultural practices like urban cropping, urban keeping, and community-supported agriculture.

Green public procurement: Public authorities are major consumers participating in and shaping market practices and norms in the food system. Green public procurement - focusing on the provision of nutritious and sustainable meals for schools, hospitals, elderly people residences and public administrations' canteens – can help stimulate a critical mass of demand for more sustainable goods and services.

Social entrepreneurship: Many entrepreneurs are adapting their business models to the changing policy landscape and consumers' preferences to reflect an increasing concern for health and social and environmental considerations. Social enterprises focus on food as a public good, instead of solely considering profit, thus incorporating issues like fair trade, reduced waste and fair treatment of labourers into their models.

Awareness of waste in social context: While reducing food waste is of great interest to the vast majority of food systems' stakeholders, Europe is starting to realise the scale of the problem and its economic and environmental

impacts. Increasing awareness and modifying certain beliefs related to the size of portions, colour and aspect of food is needed to reduce the amount of waste from restaurants, schools and, more significantly, households. Innovative initiatives include communication campaigns aimed at overcoming the stigma of using leftovers in the kitchen; cooking workshops on converting wilted vegetables into soups and smoothies; creation of apps and databases which foster donation of edible fractions to social services or to produce bio-fuels or biopolymers.

Trade and consumption norms: The influence of the advertising industry has long encouraged producers, processors, retailers, and consumers to select or discard food solely upon considerations on its aspect and shape. The urgent shift towards imperfect or less processed food as a more ‘natural’ option bears potential to gradually push the market to value food for its nutritional properties. The awareness of eco-social and environmental impact is increasingly leading to rethinking trade and consumption norms, thus having a positive effect on citizens’ health and wellbeing, as well as the amount of waste produced.

Traditions & Do It Yourself (DIY): Consumers show increasing interest in products that are perceived to align as closely as possible with their own traditional cultures. Reacting to the loss of trust in the food industry, consumers are gradually resorting to DIY as a way to access food which values sustainability, authenticity and ethics, and that satisfies emotional and social needs.

EXPECTED IMPACT

The development, diffusion and use of innovation towards food systems transformation occurs within society and in interaction with social relations, practices, norms, and values. As systemic change invariably produces winners and losers, public authorities will need to ensure that innovation in the food system is environmentally sustainable, as well as socially and economically just and safe, especially with regard to the most vulnerable social groups. This may be achieved by reorganising innovation as a social and collective learning process, with the purpose of co-designing and implementing solutions to common grand challenges and the ultimate objective of improving society through the provision of a fundamental public good such as safe, nutritious and affordable food.

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES

- Vested interests across the supply chain and institutional resistance to systemic change may hinder the absorption of social innovations by the single market.
- Structural limitations to Green Public Procurement linked to the small size of public authorities at local and national levels can be overcome by the support of European initiatives.
- While market opportunities exist for social entrepreneurs, innovative start-ups are often driven out of the market by a lack of sufficient demand for their services.
- The rise of home-cooking due to anti-Covid-19 lockdown measures taken by many governments represents an excellent opportunity to mainstream DIY practices and build a more conscious relationship between food production, processing, and consumption.
- Ensuring hygiene and safety of food waste recovery, e.g. when donating edible fractions or in DIY products.

EXAMPLE REFERENCES

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ASSOCIATED TRENDS IN FIT4FOOD2030 (URL)

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ○ Urbanisation | ○ Urban agriculture / urban farming |
| ○ Demographic change | ○ Health and food consciousness |
| ○ Migration | ○ Responsible consumers |
| ○ Scarcity of natural resources | ○ Destabilised consumer trust |
| ○ Rise in energy consumption | ○ Consumer engagement |
| ○ Economic globalisation | ○ Traditions and Do It Yourself |



- Social media and food
- Food waste recovery up-cycling / waste cooking
- Women's empowerment

ASSOCIATED CASES IN FIT4FOOD2030 (URL)

- Feeding the 5000
- Foodwin project
- Losaeter
- Microgardens Dakar
- Fareshare
- Alexandra Rose Charity
- Parkslope Food Coop
- Slowfood Europe

