**Proponent**

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| FAO, in collaboration with the RUAF Foundation, is promoting city region food system (CRFS) approaches, by building and implementing a methodology to strengthen and improve food systems’ sustainability and resilience at city region level. |

**Main responsible entity**

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| FAO |

**Date/Timeframe**

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| 3 years: 2014-2017 |

**Funding source**

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| Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany: implementation in Colombo (Sri Lanka), Lusaka and Kitwe (Zambia).  FAO: implementation in Medellin (Colombia) |

**Location**

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| Global:   * Colombo, Sri Lanka * Lusaka, Zambia * Kitwe, Zambia * Medellin, Colombia |

**Background/Context**

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| At present more than 50 percent of the world’s population is living in urban areas and it is expected to rise to 70 percent by 2050, especially in the developing world[[1]](#footnote-1) The transformation of food supply systems that has occurred in the last 60 years has led to a multidimensional rural-urban divide, contributing to broader issues, such as food and nutrition insecurity in the cities, urban and rural poverty, difficult living conditions and unsustainable natural resources management[[2]](#footnote-2).  Food system governance and planning has for a long time been absent in urban planning and city policy making[[3]](#footnote-3). Nevertheless, city and metropolitan governments have started prominently and actively to take part in local and (inter)national dialogue on the future of urban food security and nutrition. Moreover, cities, with their key role in shaping rural areas, represent a relevant governance scale to contribute in solving broader issues affecting both urban and rural areas. In addition, food systems are closely related to a number of activities and management of public services carried out across different sectors of local and regional governmental decision-making, including food and organic waste management; public health; transport; markets; enterprise creation in the food system, consumption and food insecurity/malnutrition, land use planning, and climate change adaptation strategies amongst others.  A city-region perspective, associated with a food system outlook, represents a relevant and efficient approach to address broad challenges impacting both urban and rural areas and dwellers, and build more resilient, fair and sustainable territories. There is the need to enable local authorities to ensure sustainable and resilient food systems at a city region scale, by strengthening urban-rural linkages and enabling the involvement of all key local stakeholders, with particular attention to smallholder farmers, urban dwellers, and local authorities.  In recent years, the concept of City Region Food System (CRFS) has emerged to go beyond the classic urban and rural divide, and take into account environmental and socio-economic aspects for more resilient and sustainable food systems. FAO and RUAF have developed an approach to operationalize the concept of CRFS in a number of pilot cities at global level. |

**Focus/Objectives**

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| A City Region Food Systems approach fosters the development of resilient and sustainable food systems within urban centres, peri-urban and rural areas surrounding cities by strengthening rural-urban linkages.  In collaboration in the RUAF Foundation, FAO seeks to build sustainable and resilient city region by:   * Strengthening capacity of local actors within a local food system to improve food and nutrition security; * Strengthening rural-urban linkages while ensuring sustainable use of natural resources; * Strengthening governance for enhanced local actor capacity and multi-stakeholder dialogue; * Scaling-up practices by evaluating, monitoring and mapping the food system. |

**Key characteristics of the experience/process**

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| **The city region food system concept: developing territorial approaches to urban food systems**  A city region food system is defined as the "complex network of actors, processes and relationships to do with food production, processing, marketing, and consumption that exist in a given geographical region that includes a more or less concentrated urban center and its surrounding peri- urban and rural hinterland; a regional landscape across which flows of people, goods and ecosystem services are managed."[[4]](#footnote-4)  The term ‘City region’ refers not only to megacities and the immediate, proximate rural and agricultural areas surrounding them, but also to small and medium-sized towns that can serve to link the more remote small-scale producers and their agricultural value chains to urban centres and markets in developing countries[[5]](#footnote-5). From theory to practice: operationalising CRFS concepts The programme builds on the demand to better understand and operationalize the concept of city region food system as a basis for further planning and informed decision making, prioritizing investments and designing food policies and strategies for a more resilient and sustainable food system.  The starting point is to assess, characterize and map the food system in city region context, adapting on each local context. Then, through a multi-stakeholder dialogue a scenario building exercise is done to elaborate strategies and action plans to improve city region food system by strengthening the urban-rural linkages. |

**Key actors involved and their role**

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| Local research and academic institutions (IWMI in Colombo, UNZA in Lusaka, CBU in Kitwe) are key actors for data collection and analysis along with the local government and other stakeholders such as civil society and private sector. National government also play a critical role in ensuring alignment with national policy and linkage to international processes. |

**Key changes observed with regards to food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture and food systems**

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| Even though the project is still on-going, first concrete results can be highlighted.  **Medellin, Colombia:**  Following the appraisal of the CRFS and coupling it with the existing appropriate framework for action, the project facilitated institutional integration between the Government of Antioquia, Medellin Mayor's Office and the Metropolitan by creating an **inter-institutional taskforce called “El Buen Vivir”**. This taskforce aims to generate political, administrative and economic synergies, in order to facilitate the implementation of actions in the city region. The public authorities, through the taskforce, are starting to implement activities to build a more sustainable and resilient CRFS. More specifically, projects will follow two directions: (i) Enhancement of the **agricultural production** in the districts of Medellin, and (ii) improvement of the **access and availability of safe and diverse produce** for city region dwellers, by strengthening the food supply system.  Through the project, FAO is also working closely with the **Management of Food Security and Nutrition (MANA) programme, led by** the government of Antioquia (region of Medellin), that institutionalizes the issue of food security and nutrition as public policy since 2003. Outcomes of the assessment are used to build more targeted and coherent policies towards a food secure territory.  **Colombo, Sri Lanka:**  The IWMI, FAO and RUAF, along with the Colombo Municipal Council as the institutional focal point are jointly implementing the Colombo CRFS approach. The project has raised interest at province level, within the Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development’s Masterplan. The assessment will be up scaled and an analysis of challenges to the future food system will be conducted, based on the experience and with the support of the Colombo CRFS initiative. Ultimately the results will be integrated into the development masterplan. |

**Challenges faced**

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| * Multistakeholder governance processes: a CRFS approach implies to go beyond administrative boundaries, but also beyond sectoral barriers. Putting together stakeholders from different administrative units and sectors is crucial; * Availability of data at city level when conducting the CRFS assessment and data collection phase; * Complex, systemic and local-specific approach that can lead to difficulties to understand and implement the concept locally; * Raise the awareness of sustainable food systems and the importance of food system planning among the policy makers. |

**Lessons/Key messages**

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| * Multistakeholder dialogue is key in strengthening CRFS: food related issues are transversal and need multiscale and multisectoral dialogue; * Local governments and stakeholders are key players in reshaping the food system at city region level, and the complexity of the system approach can effectively be implemented at this scale; * Use different indicators of food system in different cities to match the unique local demand and characteristics. |

1. United Nations (UN), Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2014. *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision, Highlights.* New-York, USA: United Nations, 32p [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Berdegué J. A,. Cazzuffi C., Proctor F. J., 2014. *Inclusive Rural–Urban Linkages.* Santiago, Chili: RIMISP, Working Group Development with Territorial Cohesion, 118p. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. De Schutter, O., 2014. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food. Final report: The transformative potential of the right to food [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [www.cityregionfoodsystems.org](http://www.cityregionfoodsystems.org) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Desakota Study Team, 2008. Re-imagining the Rural-Urban Continuum: Understanding the role ecosystem services play in the livelihoods of the poor in desakota regions undergoing rapid change. Institute for Social and Environmental Transition-Nepal (ISET-N), Kathmandu, Nepal. ISBN: 978-9937-8019-1-1, 125 pp. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)