Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition • FSN Forum

TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSIONS

Call for submissions No. 197 • 08.02.2024 – 01.04.2024


CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

How can FAO better support countries in addressing governance of agrifood systems transformation to make them more sustainable, inclusive and resilient?

Template for submissions

This online call for submissions is being organized jointly by the Office of SDGs, the Food Systems and Food Safety Division, the Governance and Policy Support Unit, and the Development Law Service, to engage various stakeholders and gather examples of Governance-related measures and interventions with transformative impact for agrifood systems.

The results emerging from the received submissions will contribute to informing FAO’s work at country level related to policy, law, and governance for more inclusive, resilient, equitable and sustainable agrifood systems.

To take part in this Call for submissions, please register to the FSN Forum, if you are not yet a member, or “sign in” to your account. Please download the submission template in any of six UN languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese) and upload the completed form (in Word document format) in the box “Post your contribution” on the call webpage. Please keep the length of submissions limited to 2,000 words and feel also free to attach relevant supporting materials.

For any technical questions or assistance please contact fsn-moderator@fao.org.

The Call for Submissions is open until 1 April 2024.

Template for submissions

Please note that “transformative impact” refers to innovative, pro-active changes away from “business as usual”
How can the hidden costs and benefits of agrifood systems be effectively incorporated into decision-making for transformation?

1. **Proponent (name/institution/unit)**
   
   NYC Good Food Purchasing framework

2. **Title of the example presented and the type of governance-related transformative intervention/measure (policy, legal, institutional, financial...)**
   
   Policy

3. **Location of the transformative intervention/measure (global/regional/national/sub-national; urban/rural)**
   
   New York City (sub-national, urban)

4. **Which aspect, problem or challenge of the agrifood system was the transformative intervention/measure aiming to address?**
   
   The NYC Good Food Purchasing (GFP) framework aims to address several critical challenges within the agrifood system in New York City. These include combating the prevalence of ultraprocessed and unhealthy foods contributing to chronic diseases, reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with food consumption, and ensuring equitable opportunities for small, New York State, and/or Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) food vendors which refers to businesses in the United States that are owned, operated, and controlled by minorities (racial or ethnic minorities) or women. MWBE is similar to the European Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) in that both focus on supporting and promoting smaller businesses within their respective regions. While the specific demographics targeted may differ (minorities and women in the case of MWBE, and smaller-sized businesses in the case of SME), both initiatives aim to provide assistance, resources, and opportunities to businesses that might otherwise face challenges due to their size or ownership structure.

5. **What transformational impact was the intervention/measure aiming to achieve (including in terms of the three pillars of sustainability)?**
   
   The intervention sought to increase food spending by NYC agencies while simultaneously supporting public health, environmental sustainability, and local economies. The framework aimed to achieve economic, environmental, and social benefits, including improving nutrition, reducing environmental footprint, and fostering local economic development.
How can the hidden costs and benefits of agrifood systems be effectively incorporated into decision-making for transformation?

6. What was the impact achieved in practice?

Seven city agencies now report their food purchasing data, which is publicly available on the Mayor’s Office of Food Policy (MOFP) website. Quantitative metrics have been identified to track progress in nutrition, environmental sustainability, local economic support, and animal welfare. Collaborative efforts with procurement, menuing/nutrition, and culinary teams have resulted in the adoption of healthier and more sustainable food practices in agency settings.

7. How was the transformative change obtained by the intervention/measure? (a) data and evidence collected, b) concrete ways to measure, c) actors involved)

The GFP dashboard provides analyzable data on various metrics, including food spending compliance, greenhouse gas emissions, spending on NY State and MWBE vendors, among others. Key actors involved in implementation included MOFP, procurement teams, Mayor’s office, Center for GFP, and project management entities like Karen Karp and Partners (KKP).

8. What were the key challenges and trade-offs identified and how did a measure/intervention succeed in producing co-benefits and synergies [delivering on economic, environmental and social (including gender equality) sustainability] rather than favoring one option over the other?

The key challenges and trade-offs identified in implementing the NYC Good Food Purchasing framework revolved around balancing competing priorities while achieving desired outcomes. However, the intervention successfully produced co-benefits and synergies across economic, environmental, and social dimensions.

The framework capitalized on co-benefits and synergies by emphasizing the promotion of plant-based, whole foods, which not only addressed health concerns but also contributed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, thereby aligning with economic, environmental, and social sustainability objectives.

Furthermore, by prioritizing procurement from New York State and MWBE vendors, the initiative not only reinvested in the local economy but also supported social goals such as empowering minority and women-owned businesses. Additionally, investments in culinary training not only boosted motivation and excitement among culinary service teams but also enhanced client satisfaction and invested in the city’s workforce, contributing to social sustainability.

However, these successes were not without trade-offs. Budget constraints necessitated careful consideration when procuring higher-quality food, often requiring menu swaps to balance costs while maintaining health and sustainability priorities. Similarly, the transition to whole plant-based foods required significant investments in culinary training programs, presenting financial challenges despite the associated benefits to workforce development, long term benefits, and client satisfaction.
9. Who were the key actors and stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of the intervention/measures in question, and what were their respective roles and capacities to exert power and influence?

The design and implementation of the NYC Good Food Purchasing (GFP) framework involved a diverse array of key actors and stakeholders, each contributing unique roles and wielding varying levels of influence.

Menuing/nutrition teams at agencies, comprising agency program staff, were crucial in designing and serving recipes aligning with food standards and emphasizing plant-based options that were delicious. Their direct involvement in menu planning and food preparation ensured that GFP principles were integrated into agency operations, holding significant influence over client satisfaction and nutritional outcomes.

Culinary training programs like Wellness in the Schools (WITS) and Hot Bread Kitchen (HBK) provided essential training to culinary staff, equipping them with skills to prepare delicious and plant-based meals.

Procurement teams, including the Administration for Children's Services (ACCOs), Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS), and legal experts, were tasked with implementing GFP values in procurement processes. With authority over purchasing decisions and contractual requirements, they significantly influenced the adoption of GFP principles across city agencies.

The Mayor’s role was pivotal in formalizing the GFP program through Executive Order 8, providing legitimacy and political support. The Mayor’s endorsement drove momentum for GFP implementation and ensured compliance across city agencies.

The Center for Good Food Purchasing played a crucial role in data collection and analysis, offering insights to inform decision-making and track progress. Serving as a central hub for data, the Center guided strategic planning, optimizing GFP effectiveness, and ensuring accountability.

KKP provided project management and technical assistance, facilitating collaboration and implementation efforts. Their expertise in project management streamlined coordination among stakeholders and maximized the impact of GFP initiatives.

The successful implementation of the NYC Good Food Purchasing framework was a result of collaborative efforts among diverse stakeholders. From menuing and procurement teams to the Mayor's office, the Center for GFP, and external partners like KKP, their collective contributions were essential in driving the adoption and integration of GFP principles.

10. Did any of these key actors and stakeholders oppose or resist the envisioned transformative intervention, and if so, what were their main motivations and interests, and how was this resistance addressed?

In the implementation of the NYC Good Food Purchasing framework, several key actors and stakeholders initially resisted the transformative intervention, each driven by different motivations and interests.

Initially, legal and procurement teams had knowledge gaps regarding the legality of using procurement to advance Good Food Procurement (GFP) values. In response, collaborative
5. How can the hidden costs and benefits of agrifood systems be effectively incorporated into decision-making for transformation?

Efforts were undertaken with the Center and other cities to showcase successful precedents and advocate for the Good Food Bill at the national level. This approach aimed to build internal capacity and foster a deeper understanding of the legal pathways to support GFP values within procurement practices.

Similarly, some menuing/nutrition teams initially had reservations regarding client satisfaction with more plant-based options. To address this, efforts were made to engage with culinary training programs, conduct client satisfaction questionnaires, and provide nutrition education. These initiatives were designed to connect the principles of GFP with consumer preferences, focusing on taste and quality to not only increase infrastructure, but acceptance of plant-based offerings as well.

Notably, the primary resistance faced occurred prior to programming changes. Within two months of the changes being implemented, there was little to no resistance, highlighting that change can be difficult regardless of the topic, but primarily so beforehand. Through collaboration, education, and technical assistance, the intervention succeeded in garnering support, overcoming initial resistance, and paving the way for the successful implementation of transformative measures within the NYC Good Food Purchasing framework.

11. To what extent is this measure transformative in improving the livelihoods of the most disadvantaged, and how does it contribute to a more inclusive food system?

The NYC Good Food Purchasing (GFP) framework has a transformative impact on improving the livelihoods of the most disadvantaged populations through healthier and delicious food options and contributes to reimagining what a more inclusive food system can look like. Participating agencies such as the Office of Food and Nutritional Services (OFNS), Health+Hospitals (H+H), Human Resources Administration (HRA), Department of Homeless Services (DHS), NYC Aging, Department Of Corrections (DOC), and Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) serve a diverse range of disadvantaged New Yorkers, including children, sick patients, individuals using food pantries, people staying at homeless shelters, older adults, individuals in custody, and juveniles in detention or congregate care settings.

By implementing the GFP framework, these agencies ensure that these populations receive healthier, more sustainable, and more delicious food options. This not only addresses immediate nutritional needs but also promotes long-term health and well-being, thereby improving the overall livelihoods of disadvantaged individuals and communities.

12. What means were used to demonstrate positive changes in the most disadvantaged sectors of the population, and what monitoring and accountability mechanisms were put in place to ensure proper implementation?

To demonstrate positive changes in the most disadvantaged sectors of the population and ensure proper implementation of the NYC Good Food Purchasing (GFP) framework, several means and mechanisms were utilized. The primary focus was on centering client satisfaction and taste while advancing GFP values.

Agencies serving disadvantaged populations, such as OFNS and H+H, implemented culinary training programs to enhance the taste and appeal of healthier, sustainable food options. Successes observed in these agencies served as evidence of positive changes in client satisfaction and overall acceptance of plant-based offerings.
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satisfaction and taste preferences, indicating the effectiveness of GFP principles in meeting the needs of disadvantaged populations. Successful initiatives, such as culinary training programs, were identified and replicated across participating agencies, particularly those serving disadvantaged communities.

For example, the success of culinary training programs at OFNS and H+H prompted efforts to replicate these programs at agencies like the Department of Correction (DOC) and Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), supported by the Climate Neutral Cities Alliance grant. This replication and scaling approach ensured that positive changes observed in one agency could be extended to others, thereby benefiting a broader range of disadvantaged populations.

Monitoring and accountability mechanisms were put in place to track the implementation of GFP principles and measure progress towards desired outcomes. This included regular data collection and analysis by the Center for GFP, which provided insights into the impact of GFP initiatives on disadvantaged populations. Additionally, agencies were required to report their food purchasing data, including details on nutrition, sustainability, and vendor diversity, ensuring transparency and accountability in the implementation of GFP values.

13. Key lessons that can be learned from your case (both positive and negative) and whether these could be applicable in other contexts with similar characteristics

Key lessons learned from the implementation of the NYC Good Food Purchasing (GFP) framework, both positive and negative, provide valuable insights that could be applicable in other contexts with similar characteristics. The framework demonstrates that health and sustainable food options often align, minimizing the need for policy tradeoffs and improving public health while reducing environmental impact. Additionally, cities possess significant purchasing power, which can be harnessed to drive transformative change in food systems. By strategically leveraging procurement practices, cities can incentivize sustainable and equitable food production while supporting local economies and marginalized communities.

Collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders, including government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community partners, proved instrumental in the success of the GFP framework. The availability of resources and expertise from various stakeholders facilitated the implementation and scaling of initiatives, underscoring the importance of building partnerships for collective action.

However, one of the challenges encountered was the difficulty in ensuring transparency and collecting comprehensive data. Establishing robust systems for data collection and transparency is crucial for monitoring progress, identifying areas for improvement, and demonstrating accountability. Enforcing vendor contract terms posed a significant challenge in ensuring compliance with GFP principles. This highlights the importance of developing clear contractual agreements and implementing mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement to uphold sustainability standards throughout the supply chain.

Overcoming resistance to change, particularly in entrenched business practices and institutional norms, also proved to be an obstacle. Changing entrenched behaviors and shifting away from business-as-usual practices requires concerted efforts in education, stakeholder engagement, and policy support.
14. Based on your experience, what gaps/areas of improvement still remain that need further action?

Based on the experience with the NYC Good Food Purchasing (GFP) framework, several gaps and areas for improvement have been identified that require further action. There is a need to enhance transparency in the food supply chain and improve data collection processes. Establishing robust systems for tracking and documenting food sourcing, production methods, and supply chain practices can help ensure accountability, traceability, and sustainability throughout the food system.

Efforts to enforce vendors' contract terms and hold them accountable for meeting GFP standards require strengthening. Implementing mechanisms for monitoring vendor compliance, conducting regular audits, and imposing penalties for noncompliance can help ensure that vendors adhere to sustainability and equity criteria outlined in their contracts.

While efforts have been made to prioritize client satisfaction and taste preferences in menu redevelopment, there is room for improvement. Further investment in culinary training programs, menu innovation, and client feedback mechanisms can enhance the quality, appeal, and nutritional value of food served, ultimately improving client satisfaction and promoting healthier eating habits.

Finally, the complexity and ambiguity of procurement laws pose challenges to the effective implementation of GFP principles. Clarifying and streamlining procurement laws at the law and regulatory levels can provide clarity and guidance to procurement teams, facilitating the integration of sustainability and equity considerations into procurement practices.

Addressing these gaps and areas for improvement will require collaborative efforts among government agencies, policymakers, advocacy groups, industry stakeholders, and community members.

15. What are your key messages/takeaways from this intervention/measure?

The NYC Good Food Purchasing (GFP) framework underscores the transformative potential of municipal purchasing power, showcasing how cities like New York can drive significant positive change across various domains. By prioritizing sustainable and equitable food procurement practices, cities not only promote public health and environmental sustainability but also foster economic development and social equity.

This intervention highlights the multidimensional impact of sustainable food procurement initiatives, demonstrating that initiatives focused on healthful, environmentally sustainable food options can yield benefits across social, health, environmental, and economic realms. Municipal leadership plays a pivotal role in setting the agenda for sustainable food procurement, enacting supportive policies, and mobilizing resources to achieve tangible outcomes that benefit communities and the environment.

Moreover, the success of the NYC GFP framework underscores its replicability and scalability, showcasing how similar initiatives can be adopted and adapted by other municipalities. By learning from best practices and experiences, cities worldwide can implement sustainable procurement strategies tailored to their local contexts, amplifying the collective impact of efforts to build more resilient and equitable food systems.
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16. Please feel free to share relevant links to resources and documentation regarding your intervention.

https://www.nyc.gov/site/foodpolicy/good-food-purchasing/citywidedata.page