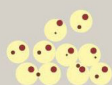


Setting the table – a story of food policy innovation

NORDIC FOOD POLICY LAB



Contents

Welcome solutionist	4
PREFACE: Setting the table	5
INTRODUCTION: When policy meets the 21st century	7
Co-creating the Nordic Food Policy Lab	8
The Museum of Food	11
CHAPTER 1: Creating agenda setting spaces for solutionists	16
Your food policy lab shopping list	21
30 labs engaging 1200 solutionists	22
CHAPTER 2: Building your policy lab tool kit	25
Method #1: Nordic Food Policy Lab	26
Method #2: International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems	29
Method #3: Food Systems Dialogues	33
Method #4: Nordic Food Systems Transformation Dialogues	36
Method #5: Future Trends in Food in the Nordic-Baltic Region	40
Method #6: Project Disrupt	44
Method #7: Southern Africa Food Lab	48
Method #8: WHO Regional Office for Europe	52
Method #9: The Global Alliance on the Future of Food & Salzburg Global Seminar	55
Method #10: World Food Policy Center at Duke University	60
Method #11: Vinnova	64
THE 1,5° FOOD FESTIVAL	69
CHAPTER 3: Starting your policy lab journey	72
Tips and tricks for becoming a policy lab hero	73
Nordic Food Policy Lab Bookshelf	75
Selection of podcasts	77
Meet the authors	79
Acknowledgements	80
About the initiative Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges	81
About this publication	83

This publication is also available online in a web-accessible version
at <https://pub.norden.org/nord2021-008>

Solutionist

noun so•lu•tion•ist

An adept solver of problems

Welcome Solutionist!

The call for concrete examples of how to encourage sustainable and healthy diets can be heard loud and clear from all corners of the globe.

We believe that by gathering different actors and sparking new conversations, we can conceive ideas and solutions that can create the significant change that is needed both locally and globally. That's why you are seated around this table.



PREFACE:

Setting the table

We all have the power to change systems. And it takes brave people to take the lead, take action and transform our food systems. This is the Nordic Food Policy Lab's essential guide to creating policy playgrounds and pushing the climate agenda.


Everyday across the world, food policy experiments take place. Big and small, these policies address new frontiers and attempt to influence food systems. While what we often discuss is the front-end — the policy itself — we often forget to share what it takes to initiate impactful policies and actions, and the process behind it.

In 2017, the Nordic Food Policy Lab (NFPL) of the Nordic Council of Ministers was born. It was part of a larger vision, the Nordic prime ministerial initiative “Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges”. The lab was one of six flagships addressing the calls to action laid out in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Although the scene was set, the content was emergent, adaptable and demand-led by design. The NFPL's inaugural lab at the United Nations Climate Conference (COP23) was one of the first to put food policy solutions at the heart of the Nordic climate change agenda. Together with other movers and shakers, we brought the debate into the Nordic Pavilion. A lot — and we mean a lot — has changed since then.

As the lab's network, agenda and activities evolved, we began documenting the diverse ways in which food policy can change society for the better. Standing on the shoulders of the co-operation on Nordic Nutrition Recommendations and the New Nordic Food Programme, the Solutions menu: A Nordic guide to sustainable food policy became the first ever exploration of 24 innovative food policies that have had important societal, cultural and environmental knock-on effects in the Nordic Region. This was no navel gazing exercise; the point was to stimulate conversation, share ideas and actions with other solutionists and innovators, and improve on the home front.

Since then, the understanding and acceptance of the impact of food systems on human and planetary health has grown significantly. There has also been increased outcry to radically augment our paradigms and an acknowledgement of the untapped role of policy in achieving this. Despite this progress, we still live in a tumultuous period, where a changing climate threatens our very existence, where multiple aspects of society are highly polarised, where pandemics disrupt food supply chains and where our modern eating habits compromise our health.

The Nordic prime ministerial initiative — and so too the NFPL — came to a close in 2021. As we — the team members of the NFPL — shift to new



endeavors, we're taking the opportunity to share some of the secret ingredients for building momentum through a policy lab approach. This is a reflection of the Nordic Food Policy Lab's experiences and methods, paying tribute to what we learned and changed along the way, and to the people who dedicated their visions, knowledge and energy.

In the 21st century, disruption is on many people's minds. In this guide, you will learn more about the Nordic Food Policy Lab's journey and that of others working to ignite new conversations moving us closer to a tastier, healthier and more sustainable future for our food. This collection of reflections and approaches opens the door to new policy playgrounds and investigates some of the inner workings of innovative policy development. Whether in a programme setting or during pop-up events, "lab thinking" can be an important policy asset. Creating spaces to engage new and familiar voices and paving the way for unconventional ways of addressing multifaceted challenges are the new black.

Sincerely,

The Nordic Food Policy Lab team

”

We often forget to share what it takes to initiate impactful policies and actions, and the process behind it

INTRODUCTION:

When policy meets the 21st century

ONCE UPON A TIME...

Not so long ago, the primary aims of food policy were to make sure that no nasty bacteria spoiled your food, to advise citizens on how to make the right food choices to live a healthy life or to provide agricultural subsidies.

Today, food policy is an increasingly more complex space. Not only do policies need to address human nutrition, food-borne illness and farmers' livelihoods, but also greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity, destructive resource use, and food culture, among other things.

Because of the way our food systems influence many of our most pressing global challenges, food has started to move into the heart of policy discussions around everything from climate change, trade, the spread of zoonotic disease and public health. It has also taken on a more subtle role as a form of diplomacy also known as food diplomacy.

At the same time, the scientific evidence-base supporting the importance of food systems has grown dramatically. Voters have also grown increasingly concerned about the environmental and human impacts caused by the food we eat, both before and after it hits our plates. Companies are also under increasing pressure to consider the planet over profit. This all means that the world of food policy has had to undergo major changes to match the needs of society.

”

Voters have also grown increasingly concerned about the environmental and human impacts caused by the food we eat, both before and after it hits our plates

The imperative to change can be dizzying. Policy makers and civil servants – unless in a very unique situation – often have few opportunities or incentives to experiment with new approaches, swap ideas with counterparts around the world and to rapidly update their knowledge of the science evidence at hand. Many policymakers find themselves asking: *where are the bold policies to follow, support or implement to lead the transition to healthier and more sustainable food systems?*

In order to keep up with the pace of change, the role of policy in society and the ways we interact with decision-making processes need a makeover. In fact, the call to

action comes not only from outside of governmental walls, but also from within. The appetite for more creative policy processes is growing.

Many policymakers find themselves asking: where are the bold policies to follow, support or implement to lead the transition to a healthier and more sustainable food system?

Co-creating the Nordic Food Policy Lab

What happens when you combine an interdisciplinary scientist, a communications specialist, a policy advisor and a food systems knowledge broker with the world's oldest regional partnership and a mandate from the prime ministers of five nations? A food policy lab!

The Nordic Food Policy Lab (NFPL) was born out of the need to frame policy as a major engine of positive change in food systems as a part of the UN's Agenda 2030.

Between 2017 and 2021, the NFPL team carefully created safe spaces to discuss the future of food policy. We had the mandate from the highest powers in the Nordic countries, the prime ministers. The Nordic Food Policy Lab was one of six flagships offering Nordic solutions to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Grounded in the acknowledgement that one had yet to find the answers, what made the concept unique was that we had the license to experiment.

We've witnessed the power of food policy — not just in the Nordic Region, but around the world. We've seen how entire food cultures can be uplifted and transformed. We've seen how smart policies and public-private-partnerships can help citizens make healthier and more sustainable dietary choices. We've seen previously siloed governmental agencies and ministries come together in a joined-up food systems agenda. And perhaps most importantly, we've seen huge interest in our way of re-framing discussions about the future of food, resulting in crowded event spaces and demand for sharing our way of working with food policy labs.

This guide is the conclusion to a conversation started by the Nordic prime ministers with Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges in 2017. Since then, the Nordic Food Policy Lab has staged dialogues, set the table for new encounters, co-produced knowledge and insights, and advocated for the potential of policy to change the world.



We've seen previously siloed governmental agencies and ministries come together in a joined-up food systems agenda

Dive in!

The information within the pages of this guide is meant to ensure that policymakers do not stand in a position where they see the daunting scale of the problem but feel unequipped to deal with it.

CHAPTER 1 is a reflection of the team members' experiences and an attempt to distil some of the most important lessons learned from the NFPL.

CHAPTER 2 looks at the different methods being used to improve and inspire food policy. We put forward inspiring examples that highlight how policymakers around the world (who find these discussions hard) are nevertheless starting to ask the important questions and – with food system stakeholders – seek to find solutions that lead to better diets and more resilient food systems.

CHAPTER 3 sums up and passes the baton to you, dear reader, with the hope that you will build on these foundations with your allies to build new partnerships, engagement campaigns, policy labs, systems design missions and more.

*When it comes to making our
food systems more sustainable,
we see food as a catalyst for
climate action*

Katrín Jakobsdóttir
Prime Minister of Iceland

THE MUSEUM OF FOOD

An exhibition about endangered food

What do honey, bananas, beef and shellfish have in common? They will all disappear in the foreseeable future unless we start changing our habits and making alternative choices.

The Museum of Food simulates a future where some of our favourite foods from our daily lives are gone. This exhibition consists of nine time capsules that capture the essence of these endangered foods. By vacuum packing the products, the time capsules create a visually pleasing yet distancing environment — ultimately stimulating reflection and contemplation amongst the audience. The historic and symbolic value of these foods is communicated through various additional objects included in the time capsule, showcasing how the perception and interpretation of these foods has evolved over time.

The Museum of Food was an important element when staging the discussions at Nordic Food Day at COP23 in Bonn, 2017. By staging a pop-up think tank at the Nordic Pavilion, the Nordic Food Policy Lab welcomed dreamers, visionaries and enablers to the table and provided a tasting menu of initiatives and scientific knowledge supporting sustainable food systems.

A Nordic Food Policy Lab x ArtRebels collaboration.



Orange

Oranges used to be one of the more popular fruits, and perhaps even the most common of the whole citrus family. The taste of the orange had just the right balance between sweetness and acid, which made the fruit's juice immensely popular. But a phenomenon called citrus greening disease infected orange trees worldwide, and it put a stop to global orange production.

In 1000 BC, citrus fruits were not juicy, and people mainly ate the rind rather than the fruit or used citrus rind to make perfumes.

Honey

In the past, everyone knew the saying 'the land of milk & honey' – but these days, the land is all milk. The sticky natural sweetener was a popular product in everything from cakes to tea and was even used as a natural medicine. Unfortunately, it didn't survive the environmental changes caused by humans: honey became the glaring victim of the global colony collapse disorder, which was triggered by pollution, rising water temperatures and loss of habitat.

In the Araña Caves of Spain, one can find an 8000-year-old cave painting of a honey collector.

Bananas

Actually, we humans managed to exterminate the banana not once, but twice. In the 1960s, a fungal disease spread around the world and quickly got rid of what was called the Gros Michel banana. Shortly after, the banana industry had another go and discovered the Cavendish cultivar. Unfortunately, a new fungal disease started spreading among the crops around 1990. Since the banana industry was focused on one species, the disease had fatal consequences.

Cavendish bananas were named after William Cavendish, the 6th Duke of Devonshire.



Chocolate

Back in the day, chocolate was everybody's favourite guilty pleasure. But it, too, suffered the tragic destiny of falling victim to massive droughts around the world. Dry weather in West Africa, where most cacao was once produced, led to substantial price increases. By 2030, climate change was responsible for significantly reducing chocolate's accessibility in the global food economy.

During the Aztec Empire, the cacao bean was a form of currency.

Peanut

In the past, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches were an integrated part of almost every childhood in the North America. As the name suggests, the sticky and popular heart of these sandwiches – peanut butter – consisted almost solely of peanuts. Unfortunately, the peanut plant required constant warm temperatures and rain for five months a year to grow properly. Eventually, climate change made those conditions impossible to meet.

The people of South America made pottery in the shape of peanuts and decorated jars with peanuts as far back as 3,500 years ago.

Coffee

Once an integral part of morning routines in the West, coffee provided the caffeine kick we needed to get ready for the day. Although it was responsible for collective bad breath and sleep disorders, coffee also possessed the unique ability to catalyse social situations of any kind. Sadly, pest infestations, deforestation and changing weather patterns due to climate change exterminated coffee production.

During the Age of Sail, seamen aboard the British Royal Navy ships made a coffee substitute by dissolving burnt bread in hot water.

CHAPTER 1:

Creating spaces for agenda-setting solutionists

A policy lab may sound a bit daunting, but in essence it is a space (physical or digital) where people with different skills and perspectives can come together to deep-dive into emerging topics related to policy. In our case, the common thread that ran through all of our policy labs was food policy. Each lab was different, covering topics like gastronomy and culinary identity, food-based dietary guidelines and public procurement of healthy and sustainable ingredients.

Some of our inspiration came from following a growing professional body of systems designers, innovation leaders and co-creation facilitators who were eager to open up and rethink policy processes. We also saw a growing interest within the public sector to explore new tools, methods and develop new skills to better support policy change and tackle complex, interconnected problems. Today we're seeing an even more ambitious push to try to embed these new skills within public administration, building more diverse teams that can support new kinds of policy processes.

In chapter 2, you'll learn about exciting approaches from around the world. You can pick and choose those that make sense according to your purpose. But before that, here are some tips and learnings from the NFPL.

Setting up a policy lab takes multiple ingredients... and one of them, in particular, is hard work. But equally important is a high level of ambition and a visionary mind.

A policy lab may sound a bit daunting, but in essence it is a space where people with different skills and perspectives can come together to deep-dive into emerging topics related to policy

Who do you want to play with?

It all starts with building your **DREAM TEAM**. Having a lot of trust in and tolerance for working together towards a common vision is key. It's also important to have team members with different skill sets. It's up to you, however, to match the skill sets of the lab-participants, to your overall purpose. Diversity, the mix of people, skills, dreams and perspectives, as well as wanting to learn, share and change are the foundation of every lab.

Understanding the **VALUES** that guide your team is another important exercise. The first value that comes to mind is **TRUST**. Trust is the foundation of sincere and meaningful discussions, especially when we want to move an agenda forward and propose innovative solutions and approaches. Trust is a guarantor of a 'safe space'. This enables everyone to dare to be brave and consider new ideas, activities and initiatives. The importance of establishing trust between yourselves as organisers and the participants of the lab, showing that you understand the dilemmas of the issue on the table and their various unique contributions, is not to be underestimated. In turn, this helps you create **LEGITIMACY** as a trusted convenor and partner.

Trust also applies to the institution that backs your activities. By financing the Nordic Food Policy Lab, the Nordic Council of Ministers made a conscious decision to invest in a project that may have, under different conditions, never seen the light of day. The backing of the prime ministers meant that we had full backing from all five of the Nordic countries that we represented. Since "lab thinking" was a new concept at the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Nordic Food Policy Lab was viewed with curiosity (and a healthy dose of skepticism). This was because the Lab had an exploratory and fluid structure that was hard to pin down. Without trust and **PATIENCE**, the project would have not been possible. In fact, it was nothing short of a leap of faith for an intergovernmental agency to invest in such a project.

An **INNOVATION MINDSET** is another crucial element in your value system. The NFPL was curious, open to change, had a bias towards creativity and an ability to think big. There was also an unrelenting desire to challenge the norm amongst our team members. We also made sure that our "pop-up" policy labs reflected this ideology and that our communications before, during and after the policy labs invited new ideas and exploratory conversations.

COURAGE goes hand-in-hand with an innovation mindset. Being courageous helps teams to do things that only exist outside of collective (and individual) comfort zones – be it curating a policy lab on a polarising topic or testing out new methods. The important thing is to make people feel safe enough so that they don't need to think twice about venturing into unfamiliar territory.

”

It all starts with building your dream team

Preparing for your policy lab

How you select, organise, and present your content is vital to hosting successful policy labs. This makes **CURATION** a top priority. We did this in a number of ways: through our themes, overall packaging, and how we communicated about our labs.

When considering themes for your policy lab, dare to ask the challenging questions. This means openly discussing the elephant in the room. Pay close attention to framing your questions in a way that engages rather than alienates your policy lab participants. Another thing to keep in mind is to ensure that your themes are grounded in the scientific evidence.

Think about **CONTEXTUALITY** when determining the themes that are most relevant to your audience. Since no audience is ever the same, you'll need to bring in different perspectives at different times. Don't be afraid of testing things out.

Our approach when determining themes for our labs was to look at **NEW ENTRY POINTS** to food policy. In our context, it made sense to take the perspective of food consumption rather than production. We asked questions like: How can we change food culture? What role does food entrepreneurship play? And how can healthy and sustainable meals become the norm? This is not to say that farm subsidies are not an important instrument for policymakers. But as we have recently seen in the EU's effort to reform the Common Agricultural Policy, political lock-in can mean some discussions will be more stifled than others. We used food labs to explore new avenues to transform food systems and realised that sometimes, launching new entry-points to a conversation can affect the way a controversial topic is debated. We noticed that this gives energy and momentum to an agenda of change.

This all takes **SOLID 360° PREPARATION**: selection of the participants, the questions, the process and staging. Dare to remove the time-killing 'introduction session' in order to dive quickly into the discussions. Minimise this to those who 'should be involved' and instead choose based on commitment, activism and competence. Create conditions for **SERENDIPITY** through unconventional matchmaking, bringing new combinations of people and ideas together.

When doing something that has never been done before, you'll need to draw on the **DIVERSE EXPERTISE** around you. Our core team was made up of just four people, so we constantly needed to seek expertise to help us achieve the ambitious goals that we had set for our project. We scanned the food policy arena and drew on the expertise in our Nordic and international networks.

”

Daring discussions don't come from doing familiar things

Minimise introduction to those who 'should be involved' and instead choose based on commitment, activism and competence

Creating new normals

Remember to **WALK THE TALK** when it comes to how you use your vocabulary, set your agendas and stage your labs. Consider how you are packaging information. Keep in mind that you need to catch the attention of your audience. Tell a **UNIQUE STORY** for your labs that makes people curious and that signals that this lab is not to be missed!

STAGING is also something we can easily pass up as unimportant. But if you want to create new normals you need to send the signal that you're not falling into the "this is how we've always done it" trap. This could be hosting policy labs in unusual settings or adding in an unexpected element of interaction or playfulness. Be sure that participants take an active role in whatever format you choose. We developed every policy lab with the mission of the participants leaving feeling that they have co-produced **NEW KNOWLEDGE**. Think: what do you want people to remember about this lab five years from now?

Don't just invite unusual suspects because they're a nice part of the decor. Be sure to integrate and involve alternative voices into the conversations. No matter who they are, go the extra mile and prepare your speakers and presenters with the right amount of information that they will require to make their messages loud and clear. We set the tone by calling everyone that decided to play with us a "**SOLUTIONIST**". We did this because we expected them to deliver ambitious visions for the future of food policy.

Policy labs may be one-off events, but they should feed into a **BROADER MISSION**. In the case of the Nordic Food Policy Lab, this broader mission was to demonstrate the importance of food policy in addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Each policy lab, no matter what the theme, demonstrated the present and future roles of policy-makers in creating ambitious, evidence-based policies to address challenges concerning human and planetary health. When your labs feed into a broader mission, you can generate **MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE**.

OPENNESS is a major factor in creating interesting and thought-provoking discussions. This goes hand in hand with creating spaces where people feel comfortable to share their experiences. We often used the Chatham House Rules in discussions where more sensitive issues were discussed. This means that participants are free to use the information received during a meeting, but they may not reveal the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant. Openness also applies to sharing the outcomes of the lab with the world. Our team did this by distilling key takeaways and messages from the labs and creating short, publicly-available reports, videos and shareable material on social media.

”

Don't just invite unusual suspects because they're a nice part of the decor

Your food policy lab shopping list

*When setting up
your food policy lab,
The Nordic Food
Policy Lab team
recommends
considering:*

- Trust
- Patience
- Legitimacy
- Innovation mindset
- Courage
- Curation
- Contextuality
- New entry points
- Solid 360° preparation
- Diverse expertise
- Walk the talk
- Unique storytelling
- Staging
- Conditions for serendipity
- Solutionists
- Feed into a broader mission
- Generate momentum for change
- New knowledge
- Openness
- Dream team

30 labs engaging 1200 solutionists

Over the course of three years, the Nordic Food Policy Lab co-curated more than 30 digital and in-person labs and exchanges where 1200+ solutionists from around the world took the opportunity to rethink food policies by sharing their knowledge, actions, and what they learnt. Take a look below.

Political —
tools to shape
food identity —
May 2017
Netherlands —

UNFCCC COP23:
Setting the stage
for a sustainable
food future —
November — 2017
Bonn, Germany



— **Food policy**
dialogue on new
tools for sustain-
able nutrition —
January — 2018
Germany

WHO: —
Symposium on
Mediterranean
and New Nordic
Diets — May 2018
Denmark

UNFCCC Bonn
Intersessional:
Eating for the
Climate —
May 2018
Bonn, Germany

EAT Forum 2018: —
Designing Your Menu of
Food Policy Solutions for
— **Sustainable Diets**
June 2018
Stockholm — Sweden



UN High Level —
— **Political Forum:**
Serving up solutions
for Agenda 2030 —
July 2018
New York City — USA



UN General Assembly:
FoodSystem —
— **Approaches to the**
Prevention of NCDs —
September 2018
New York City — USA



Indo-Nordic —
— **Food Policy**
roundtable —
December 2018
New Delhi, India



World Food Security:
Nordic, international
networking lab at —
— **Committee**
October 2018
Rome — Italy

World Food —
Programme Global
— **Child Nutrition**
Forum —
October 2018
Tunis — Tunisia



UN Food and —
Agricultural
Organization (FAO):
Presentation of
Nordic solutions —
October — 2018
Rome, Italy —

Nordic solutions —
at East Asia
Urban Food —
Policy conference
November 2018
Seoul — Korea

People's food – people's
health: Towards healthy
and sustainable —
European Food Systems
November 2018
Vienna — Austria

UNFCCC COP24:
Urban food policy
action for climate
friendly diets —
December 2018
Katowice, Poland



Multistakeholder lab:
Towards sustainable
healthy food systems
in the Baltic region
January 2019 —
Riga — Latvia

Sustainable Food —
Systems Programme
Global Conference —
February 2019
San Jose, Costa Rica

UN multi-agency —
collaborative conference
Resilience frontiers
April 2019 —
Seoul — Korea

Strategies Towards —
More Sustainable Food
Systems: Lessons from
working on the Nordic
diet
May 2019 —
Palermo — Italy

EAT forum: The power of
gastronomy to —
democratize healthy
food within planetary
boundaries
May 2019
Stockholm — Sweden



Co-creation of new food
policy ideas at —
youth-led ReGeneration
conference
August 2019 —
Åland — Finland

World Food Summit —
workshop on Improved
Resource Efficiency —
August 2019
Copenhagen, Denmark

C40 Summit: joint —
Climate-KIC workshop on
public food procurement
September 2019
Copenhagen – Denmark

OECD Food Chain —
Analysis Network:
effective tools enabling
consumer led food —
systems change
September 2019 —
Utrecht — Netherlands

WHO regional —
meeting dialogue:
Dietary Patterns —
for Health and
Sustainability —
October 2019, Spain

Policy exchange —
with Nordic case
studies on food —
labeling
October — 2019
San José, Costa Rica



Conference of European
Nutrition Societies:
The Way to Nordic —
Sustainable Nutrition
October 2019 —
Dublin — Ireland

Backcasting from 2050:
What would a world with-
out food waste look like?
Nordic embassies in —
Shanghai, November 2019
Shanghai — China



Google Food Lab:
Food Choices for
A Healthy Planet
November 2019
Los Angeles, USA

Future Food Policy —
— Strategic Insight Lab:
Northern Ireland and —
policy exchange on the new
UK National Food Strategy
— December 2019
Belfast, Northern Ireland

UNFCCC COP25 —
Nordic Hub: Policy lab on
new policy tools for —
— climate smart food
consumption
— December, 2019
Stockholm — Sweden



UNFCCC COP25 —
Nordic Hub: —
— 1.5-degree food
festival —
December, 2019 —
Stockholm — Sweden



A framework for collabora-
tive action between politics
and gastronomy – Perspec-
tives from the Nordic Food
Policy Lab —
November 2020 — Peru

Global Bioeconomy —
— Summit: Food culture
shifts as drivers of systems
change lessons from the —
Nordics — November 2020
Germany —

CHAPTER 2:

Building your policy lab tool kit

NOW FOR THE PRACTICAL BIT...

So how do you actually put lab thinking into practice? And what methods can you use to inform future food policy? When it comes to an initiative, we often hear about the outcome and not the process. But it's also important to expose the inner workings of a policy lab so that others can take the idea and run with it.

We've done some of the hard work for you. The Nordic Food Policy Lab has hand-picked a diverse array of interesting methods for igniting dialogue, co-creating solutions or new directions and unravelling complex issues. Keep in mind that policy labs take different shapes and forms. Below, we look at eleven different methods and approaches that can be used by anyone innovating the future of food policy. Some labs are one-off events while others are the result of long-term engagement processes.

”

It's important to expose the inner workings of a policy lab so that others can take the idea and run with it

In a nutshell

As you read more about the policy labs, you'll notice some commonalities between them:

Participatory – Involving diverse groups and engaging different people in the process

Explorative – Trying to understand a complex challenge from different angles

Mutual respect – Acknowledging and appreciating diversity of opinion

Iterative – Past experiences and initiatives inform the development of future processes

Flexible – Adapting to the current context and shifting gears when needed

#1

Nordic Food Policy Lab, NORDIC REGION

Participatory art and gastronomy: seeing and feeling the future of food

The Nordic Food Policy Lab frequently collaborated with artists and chefs to stage new conversations about the future of food policy. Providing both a backdrop as well as the focal point for discussions, these art forms encouraged lab participants to consider food in a new light.

The overall aim of the Nordic Food Policy Lab project was to encourage the use of Nordic policy solutions to address the food issues identified as challenges in the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The Nordic Food Policy Lab established opportunities to advocate for innovative policies encouraging consumers to choose more sustainable diets.

How it's done

At the United Nations Climate Summit in 2017, the Nordic Food Policy Lab joined hands with the cultural design studio, Art Rebels, to create the Museum of Food. The Museum of Food simulated a future where some of our favourite foods from our daily lives are gone. This exhibition consisted of nine time capsules that capture the essence of these endangered foods. By vacuum packing the products, the time capsules create both a visually pleasing yet distancing environment to ultimately stimulate reflection and contemplation amongst the audience. The historic and symbolic value of these foods is communicated through various additional objects included in the time capsule, showcasing how the perception and interpretation of these foods have evolved over time.

At the United Nations High-level Political Forum, the Nordic Food Policy Lab and the Swedish Government co-hosted an interactive event held in a restaurant. The attendees – from Mexico to Estonia – were asked to bring their solutions to the table and discuss tangible actions for the successful implementation of food policy through the novel lens of food culture. Each course of the meal fuelled a new topic of discussion around policy and how it influences and is influenced by food culture and gastronomy.

In 2019, the Lab teamed up with 31T and Restauranglabbet to create Taste the

Transition: The 1.5°C Food Festival. Attendees co-created a climate-smart menu from a colourful spectrum of bite-sized foods. The combinations were then entered into an app and projected onto a big screen for others to see. The policy lab merged technology and gastronomy to demonstrate the power of dietary change.

When it comes to complex issues, it is easy to feel numb to the startling statistics and daunting challenges that lie in front of us

The outcome

One of the most inspiring take-aways from the Taste the Transition events was to see the engagement that was created when people were invited to be playful and create climate-solutions based on everyday food choices. What we ended up with were essentially deeply personal and future-proofed tasting menus, born out of a curiosity spurred by irresistible ingredients and a magical mix of chef + interaction design + policy inspiration.

Daring discussions and new perspectives don't come from doing what's familiar

Nordic Food Policy Lab



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.norden.org/en/nordic-food-policy-lab

WHY DOES BLENDING THE ARTS WITH POLICY-MAKING MAKE SENSE?

The Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson once said that *"Facts are one part; just as guilt does not inspire initiative, people will not act on facts alone. We are inspired to act by emotional and physical experience."* When it comes to complex issues, it is easy to feel numb to the startling statistics and daunting challenges that lie in front of us. According to Stephen Bennett from the UK government's Policy Lab, art can help us engage with policy processes in three different ways¹:

1. Engagement with data and evidence, visualising rather than alienating us from the facts at hand.
2. Thinking about the future and minimising the risk of policy being rendered obsolete by changes in technology, geopolitics or society.

Creative approaches to policy making by moving us away from conventional thinking.

1. Bennett, 2018: https://apolitical.co/en/solution_article/role-art-policymaking

#2

The International Panel Of Experts On Sustainable Food Systems, Europe

Collective intelligence: Co-developing regional food policy

The International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) used co-production methods to develop a Common Food Policy vision for Europe. The Common Food Policy vision draws on the collective intelligence of more than 400 farmers, food entrepreneurs, civil society activists, scientists and policymakers consulted through the three-year process of research and deliberation.

In 2016, IPES-Food launched a three-year process to co-develop a Common Food Policy vision, a holistic framework. The purpose of the Common European Food Policy is to **reinvent public policies** and **respond to challenges** in European food systems. Policy labs were held at local and regional levels in order to collect the views of multiple stakeholders. The labs were supplemented with extensive research and scientific opinions.

How it's done

A total of four local labs were held in four European cities. Each lab was co-ordinated by local partners such as research institutions, municipal governments, international organisations and foundations. The policy labs had three unique elements: 1) introduction to specific food systems challenges by invited speakers; 2) parallel working group discussions that would deep-dive into issues such as rural-urban linkages and scaling policy interventions; and 3) a discussion that brought all the different perspectives together.

Another cluster of five policy labs took place in Brussels as well as one at the EU Food and Farming Forum. Each lab took place over a two-day timeframe. A moderator kept the working group discussions going, collecting ideas from their table. These were then presented in plenary. From there, the proposals were carried over to the next labs for discussion.

At the labs, a traffic light approach was taken to reach consensus: Red light = not good, yellow light = improve, green light = go ahead. The process was iterative, enabling other participants to join in the discussions and add their opinions.

After collecting all the proposals, IPES-Food included the proposals that got the green light into the report. Background research was conducted on all the proposals.

Afterwards, some of the yellow light proposals were considered. In total, the labs generated 83 proposals for a common food policy for the EU. At least 80% of the proposals came directly from the participants at the policy labs.

Stakeholders were invited based on IPES-Food's request to involve local actors who had already participated in the debate around the Milan food policy and its implementation. The selection of participants also followed the principles of Responsible Research and Innovation, fundamental criteria also utilised to develop the food policy, involving actors from four different groups: local authorities, civil society, private sector, academia.

The purpose is to reinvent public policies and respond to challenges in European food systems

The outcome

The Common Food Policy for the European Union's vision was finalised in 2019. It presents a direction of travel for the whole food system, bringing together the various sectoral policies that affect food production, processing, distribution, and consumption, and refocusing all actions on the transition to sustainability.

A spin-out of the IPES-Food policy labs is the creation of a coalition of 60 organisations with an executive board that is now pushing for the implementation of the EU Common Food Policy.

Collective intelligence is shared or group intelligence that emerges from the collaboration, collective efforts, and involvement of many individuals

What we offered to policy-makers were not only proposals but a political consensus of the EU food systems community backing those proposals.

Francesco Ajena

Former Policy Advisor, IPES-Food

Francesco Ajena's Advice:

The labs and their participatory approach allowed a wide range of ideas to emerge, be tested and articulated. The labs' structure allowed all participants – including policy-makers, NGOs, and researchers, among others – to present and discuss their solutions in a horizontal way, eliminating hierarchies and structures they normally face in their daily work. This allowed ambitious proposals to be gathered while also testing their feasibility with a diverse and multidisciplinary group. Finally, the labs allowed consensus to emerge and have been a cornerstone that has underpinned the impact of the report.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.ipes-food.org

WHAT IS COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE?

IPES Food used a method called collective intelligence. Collective intelligence is shared or group intelligence that emerges from the collaboration, collective efforts, and involvement of many individuals. This method can be used in consensus based decision making in large groups of people. According to NESTA, an innovation foundation, collective intelligence depends on numerous things²:

Observation – The ability to see, hear and sense through data flows and feedback of all kinds.

Creation – The ability to imagine, innovate and design.

Attentio – The ability to focus on the right things.

Memory – The ability to remember (and not to repeat past mistakes).

Analysis – The ability to think and reason.

Judgement – The ability to judge, in conditions of uncertainty, and the ability to be wise.

Collective intelligence initiatives around the world have been used for the following purposes:

1. Better understanding facts and experiences
2. Better development of options and ideas
3. Better, more inclusive decision-making
4. Better oversight of what is done

2. Saunders and Mulgan, 2017: https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/governing_with_collective_intelligence.pdf

#3

Food Systems Dialogues, INTERNATIONAL

Curated dialogues: framing open stakeholder interaction around context-based challenges

The Food Systems Dialogues uses a curated format to connect actors and share experiences that can accelerate the transformation of food systems. The issues discussed in these dialogues are carefully framed so that there is scope for open interactions between diverse actors in a context characterised by mutual respect and trust.

In 2018 the Food Systems Dialogues (FSDs) were launched by the World Economic Forum, the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU), EAT, and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). A small secretariat is based in Oslo, Norway.

Food Systems Dialogues provide a forum for systems-based problem solving among food systems stakeholders from different sectors. The dialogues offer opportunities to broaden understanding, identify new actions and encourage joint efforts around concrete solutions. They facilitate highly participatory dialogue and debate among small groups of diverse participants (usually 8-10 people) who would not usually have the chance to interact. This interaction increases trust amongst stakeholders and provides the conditions for greater alignment and systemic actions. In doing, so Food Systems Dialogues contribute towards greater convergence on the means to pursue food systems transformations and increase the likelihood for co-operative action towards achieving the agreed outcomes.

The approach of the Food Systems Dialogues has been chosen by the Special Envoy of the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 as the preferred means of enabling the engagement of multiple stakeholders in the transformation of food systems all around the world. In November 2020, all Member States have been invited to organise three stages of Food Systems Dialogues to shape pathways towards sustainable food systems in preparation for the Summit. Furthermore, all those who want to contribute to the preparation of the Summit are encouraged to organise independent Food Systems Dialogues. The 'Food Systems Dialogues' have therefore evolved into 'Food Systems Summit Dialogues', building on the experience and tools developed since 2018.

The outcome

As of early 2021, 43 dialogues have been convened, in 23 countries, across 6 continents, engaging 2651 food systems practitioners³.

From these events, an overarching vision for food system transformation has been developed and five themes, each with a set of recurring 'red threads', have emerged. Two Red-Thread Synthesis Reports have been prepared. The first report covered the period 2018 – 2019 where four themes were identified, with a second synthesis report covering the period January 2020 – July 2020. This second synthesis introduced a fifth theme and reflects interactions between COVID19 and food systems.

The Food Systems Dialogues have helped to connect local and global discourse on food systems transformation and to engage a wide range of stakeholders in this transformation. The method to prepare and run multi-stakeholder dialogues on food systems has been standardised to enable a franchised approach of the Food Systems Dialogues. In October 2019, a 'Dialogues in a Box Toolkit' was launched. This toolkit included key resources and a common reporting template. In May 2020, as a result of COVID19, this toolkit was modified to also allow for dialogues to be convened virtually.

The Food Systems Dialogues have helped to connect local and global discourse on food systems transformation

Food Systems Dialogues are a powerful opportunity to engage meaningfully, explore collectively and emerge resiliently for sustainable food systems

David Nabarro

Curator, Food Systems Dialogues



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.foodsystemsdialogues.org

3. This does not include Food Systems Summit Dialogues.

CORE VALUES OF THE FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUES

Inclusive – The FSDs are founded on a recognition of the importance of creating interaction between stakeholders. The FSDs aim to achieve diverse representation in a spirit of welcoming inclusivity.

Systematic approach – The FSDs believe that the transformation of food systems requires a systematic approach; no single actor or group of actors can achieve the change required, and transformation in all areas must be achieved simultaneously.

Science-based – The FSDs are committed to being a space in which proposals for food systems transformation are supported by data and scientific evidence.

Locally-anchored – FSD events and proposals should strive to reflect local culture, language and norms, and emphasise that people who are affected by the actions must be willing to buy into them.

A safe space – Despite a degree of consensus on what food systems transformation looks like, there is insufficient action; the FSDs are a space where roadblocks and disagreements can be openly explored.

#4

Nordic Food Systems Transformation Dialogues, NORDIC REGION

Co-producing knowledge: Understanding transformation in a Nordic context

The Nordic Food Systems Transformation Dialogues were the first-ever attempt in the Nordic Region to gain diverse perspectives on what transformations our food systems must undergo in order to be more environmentally, economically as well as socially sustainable.

In 2019 and 2020, a series of five interactive dialogues were held in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. This roadshow built on the findings of the 2019 *Nordic food systems for improved health and sustainability* report by the Stockholm Resilience Centre, which applied the findings of the EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet, and Health in a Nordic context. A total of 115 actors representing 86 organisations participated in the interactive dialogues.

How it's done

The Nordic Food Systems Transformations Dialogues were set up in three steps:

Step 1: Ahead of the Nordic Food Systems Transformations Dialogues, researchers from the Stockholm Resilience Centre designed a Nordic food system analysis in line with the EAT-Lancet report. The outcome of this analysis was a report that 1) synthesised the current evidence base on healthy and sustainable food in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, 2) proposed Nordic food system targets based on a translation of the global EAT-Lancet targets, and 3) benchmarked current food system performance in the Nordics against these food system targets.

Step 2: The researchers leading this development of the Nordic food system analysis met with different stakeholder groups that represented diverse parts of the food system to share findings from the analysis. This provided a key forum for the exchange of information where stakeholders were introduced to the latest scientific evidence on sustainable food systems, while the research team was able to learn about stakeholder perspectives and plans regarding sustainable food systems in the Nordic region.

Step 3: One-day dialogues were held in each of the five Nordic countries, bringing together a mix of policy makers, business representatives, civil society, researchers,

producer organisations, consumer representatives, funders, and youth organisations in order to discuss four food system futures: reduced red meat intake, increased consumption of nuts and legumes, moves towards local food systems, and full integration into global markets. These four futures were chosen because they emerged from the discussions described in step 2 as highly contested issues among stakeholders. During the one-day dialogues, participants were assigned to small groups and given 40 minutes to discuss each of the four food futures. They were asked to capture their insights on a food systems grid. The goal of the dialogues was to understand the diverse perspectives and interests that stakeholders held about these specific food system futures.

Steps 2 and 3 were funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

One-day dialogues were held in each of the five Nordic countries

The outcome

Each of the participating countries was presented with a summary from their dialogue. These summaries highlighted the benefits, trade-offs, barriers and uncertainties related to the four food futures discussed. This was complemented in a Nordic analysis, in which the results of all five dialogues were examined together. This Nordic analysis highlighted potential pathways towards sustainable dietary and food system changes. This information can be used to influence national policy making in the five Nordic countries.

A series of four insight papers were published on the back of the dialogues, explaining in more detail the findings from the project. Stakeholders were also invited to join a series of online webinars to learn about and discuss the project's findings.

Co-production of knowledge is the contribution of multiple knowledge sources and capacities from different stakeholders

Food systems are influenced by many different actors, so it is critical to engage these actors – to understand their concerns and learn from their own initiatives – if our aim is for lasting, coordinated change towards sustainable food systems

Dr. Amanda Wood

Project Manager of the Nordic Food Systems Transformation Dialogues, Stockholm Resilience Centre

Dr. Amanda Wood's advice:

It takes significant time to build and maintain networks across different stakeholder groups, but the result of a co-created lab is so much richer than one that relies on a single knowledge source.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.stockholmresilience.org

WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION?

The Nordic Food Systems Transformation Dialogues co-produced pathways towards sustainable dietary changes in the Nordic Region. Co-production of knowledge is the contribution of multiple knowledge sources and capacities from different stakeholders spanning the science–policy–society interface with the goal of co-creating knowledge and information to inform decision-making.

Principles of successful knowledge co-production⁴⁵:

Context-based – the process is embedded into the context that it aims to address.

Pluralistic – the process is appropriate and the participation by stakeholders is diverse.

Goal-oriented – the process has clearly articulated goals that are mutually beneficial for the participants.

Interactive – the process encourages trust and relationship-building.

4. Wood, Halloran and Gordon, unpublished
5. Nordström and others, 2020: https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-019-0448-2.epdf?shared_access_token=7ZtjeGxdHenejwrW_dHPntRgNOjAjWel9jnR3ZoTv0PU1D54Zfz zNCx7gqZsmyU_5x0EF_gwF3mMBwBgRGdzqykq_MGI4gNajKKTyUJ7hJRHrgng8z24cpuae0PSji8uvkHXULw oTOQMO5fmkWWmw%3D%3D

#5

Future Trends in Food in the Nordic-Baltic Region Project, NORDIC-BALTIC REGION

Megatrends: determining the forces shaping future food systems

The Future Trends in Food in the Nordic-Baltic Region used megatrends to discuss how to change current food production and consumer preferences in the region. Instead of concentrating on regional differences, this project aimed to find common ground for a future based on inclusivity, transparency, co-creation and society's ability to shape a sustainable future together.

In 2020, the Nordic Council of Ministers' Latvian office convened food systems experts from the Nordic-Baltic region to look into the megatrends influencing the region and its food systems. This exercise sought to highlight gaps in knowledge and awareness in the future of food, nutrition, health and sustainability

How it's done

The megatrends were determined through a number of interactions with stakeholders in the project and externally:

Step 1: In February 2020, the project team took part in the 24-hour Hackathon on Future Food in Riga, Latvia. The hackathon provided a platform for connecting students, food innovators, start-up founders and leading industry experts to brainstorm, build and validate new ideas that could potentially transform the food sector. Hackathon participants developed project ideas within the following four sectors: food waste, circular shift, new food, and digitalisation. At the end of the event, the project team listened to the different groups pitch their final project ideas. Around 100 people attended the hackathon, mainly from Nordic and Baltic countries.

Step 2: Following the hackathon, the project team met for one day at the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Riga to generate more ideas for megatrends. The first part of the workshop focussed on coming up with megatrends influencing the Nordic-Baltic region. From this list, each participant was asked to choose and rank what they felt were the top three megatrends. The second part of the workshop

used Sitra's 2020 megatrends update⁶ as a conversation starter to explore how these relate to the future of the Nordic-Baltic food system.

Step 3: A review of the current literature on the emerging themes generated during the hackathon and workshop helped to create eight distinct megatrends.

Step 4: After completing these steps, the megatrend descriptions were developed. Project members and external experts were invited to comment on the megatrends and suggest improvements.

Hackathon participants developed project ideas within the following four sectors: food waste, circular shift, new food, and digitalisation

The outcome

Through the workshops, eight different megatrends influencing food systems in the Baltic-Nordic Region were identified:

1. Technology will penetrate all areas of social life.
2. Food systems will be redesigned with a new set of goals.
3. Digitalisation is opening new horizons.
4. Society will become increasingly polarised.
5. Products will be valued based on the amount of waste they produce.
6. A new appreciation for the environment will develop.
7. People will become more anxious and fearful.
8. New lifestyles will emerge and redefine our value systems.

A megatrend is a general direction of development, consisting of several phenomena, or a wide-ranging process of change

6. Sitra, 2020: <https://www.sitra.fi/en/news/here-they-are-the-most-important-trends-of-the-2020s/>

When we think about the future, we must think about sustainability. Defining megatrends proved to be an enjoyable and thought-provoking exercise that revealed where our society is heading in terms of food systems. This was the first joint Nordic-Baltic trial on a pan-regional scale that has attempted to identify common future trends – and is hopefully not the last one.

Maija Kale

Project Manager, Future Trends in Food in the Nordic-Baltic Region Project

Maija Kale's advice:

Futurism is a necessary additive when talking about common goals and values in terms of our food systems. Thinking about the future can help to overcome barriers and prejudices as well as boost a productive ideation that leads to solutions. Such an exercise is great fun too, which is just as important in food policy as taste is in food.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.gainhealth.org

WHAT ARE MEGATRENDS?

In essence, a megatrend is a general direction of development, consisting of several phenomena, or a wide-ranging process of change. Megatrends illuminate familiar aspects of life. These are the changes we already see around us that are likely to continue happening tomorrow. Examining megatrends is just one of many anticipatory thinking and foresight tools⁷.

7. Grivins and others, 2020: <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1506755/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

#6

Project Disrupt, INTERNATIONAL

The Delphi technique: reaching consensus through systematic, interactive forecasting

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, the Alliance of Biodiversity and CIAT, and EAT conducted a Delphi study involving 52 leading thinkers and doers from 25 different countries with the goal to brainstorm and identify innovations that can be game-changers in emerging markets to provide affordable, safe, and nutritious food in a sustainable way.

The Project Disrupt consultative process used a modified Delphi technique — a qualitative, prospective research methodology from the field of futures studies. This method relies on expertise and intuition to brainstorm and filter a set of ideas about the future through three successive rounds of research to elicit insights about which of these ideas have the most promising potential to have a transformative impact. The aim of the study outcomes is to guide concrete strategic investments towards high-potential innovation areas that are suitable for local contexts, and to develop strategies to address the social and other barriers they will likely encounter.

How it's done

Experts in the field of innovation and sustainable food systems were invited to comment on innovative thinking and the new ideas needed to propel the changes necessary to secure a future of improved nutrition in low-resource contexts. Project Disrupt addressed the main question: *Which innovations can be game-changers in making affordable, safe and nutritious foods available in an environmentally sustainable way by 2030?*

Three food system settings were chosen as entry points: urban Bangladesh, semi-arid rural Ethiopia, and tropical coastal Mozambique. These contexts were chosen because they are high-priority contexts where nutrition and environmental challenges pose particular barriers for development.

Each participant was asked to complete three online surveys over the course of three months. Project Disrupt was kicked off with an introductory webinar where the setup, survey, methodology and guidelines were set forth. A second webinar occurred four weeks later where results of the first round were presented and discussed and guidelines for the second round were provided. A third and final

webinar was held at the end of the three months to present and discuss the results. The total time commitment for the participants was five hours over a period of three months.

Cross-pollination between experts, innovations, and contexts was a motivating benefit of the process and resulted in a constructive exchange of solutions

The outcome

85 innovations surfaced from the Project Disrupt Delphi study. In-depth assessments, including transition-to-impact maps, for 20 diverse innovations across technological, nature-based, and policy/ institutional themes were also developed. Essential actions along transition pathways were identified and can be used to inform action strategies. Cross-pollination between experts, innovations, and contexts was a motivating benefit of the process and resulted in a constructive exchange of solutions.

The Delphi consensus-building methodology did not lead to the surfacing of previously unimaginable solutions; rather, it emphasised that existing technologies, when contextualised in place and analysed across environmental, health, and social impact criteria, have significant potential to support positive transformation. The process also revealed that 'game changing' is also about building portfolios of synergistic interventions, creating enabling environments, facilitating flexibility, and supporting interactions across value chains.

Collaboration for innovation is critical, and some of the most seemingly impactful innovations may actually be the most simple if we can incentivise and inspire action. I also think that these types of initiatives can still better incorporate the 'why' and 'how' for getting it done through specific actions that can dimensionalise and monetise these innovations.

Laura Shulman

Delphi study participant and President and Founder of Food Future Strategies

Project Disrupt's advice:

If groups of stakeholders like to engage in a "virtual lab environment" to generate consensus around the selection of game-changing innovations that address malnutrition and environmental impact relevant to a particular context, the partners have developed a "Delphi Toolkit", available to everyone. It is possible to adjust the first step which asks the Delphi participants to source relevant innovations. They can find these on the new Food Systems Solution portal (IFSS portal), which contains descriptions of 100+ innovations from previous studies, from the Action Tracks of the Food System Summit and other groups. Additional innovations are regularly being added to the portal, as are concrete examples of solutions from various countries. This open-source catalogue of innovations can be used as a starting point for a Delphi study. In addition, the IFSS portal contains another consensus generating tools which can be used to define roadmaps for the implementation of innovations to influence diet in relation to a healthy planet.

The Delphi method is a forecasting process framework based on the results of multiple rounds of questionnaires sent to a panel of experts



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.gainhealth.org

WHAT IS THE DELPHI METHOD?

Project Disrupt used the Delphi method. The Delphi method is a forecasting process framework based on the results of multiple rounds of questionnaires sent to a panel of experts. Several rounds of questionnaires are sent out to the group of experts, and the anonymous responses are aggregated and shared with the group after each round. The experts are allowed to adjust their answers in subsequent rounds, based on how they interpret the "group response" that has been provided to them. Since multiple rounds of questions are asked and the panel is told what the group thinks as a whole, the Delphi method seeks to reach the correct response through consensus.

WHAT MAKES PROJECT DISRUPT UNIQUE?

- Delphi process engaging a very diverse group of experts in a facilitated way to come to some level of consensus
- Open, outside-of-the-box, solution-focused brainstorming on solutions
- Starts from concrete contexts, rooted in real-life challenges, and connects the local and the global
- Focus on how to leapfrog availability of affordable, safe and nutritious foods in an environmentally sustainable way
- Multiple outcome products and links to other projects and future strategies

#7

Southern Africa Food Lab, SOUTH AFRICA

Transformative scenario planning: working with uncertainty

The Future Food Project of the Southern Africa Food Lab (SAFL) used transformative scenario planning (TCP) to get people talking and thinking differently about the food system in South Africa. Part of this exercise focused on considering what could be done collectively to avert potentially dire outcomes. TCP is defined by three main things: 1) the production of a co-owned set of scenarios; 2) the use of these scenarios to generate strategic conversations about more sustainable pathways into the future; 3) and the potential to collaborate, often across polarised beliefs and positions, toward enabling these strategies.

The SAFL brings together diverse, influential stakeholders in southern African food systems in order to respond to systemic issues in creative ways and to inspire change in how we think and act on complex social challenges. The purpose of the SAFL is to facilitate interaction, communication, and collaboration between different stakeholders, including those with conflicting interests, in order to design, implement, and highlight the need for coherent, systematic responses to the food system through collaborative learning and experimental action.

How it's done

The Future Food project TCP process consists of five steps. The first four steps of the five-step approach to TSP were navigated over the course of a year:

Step 1: Convene a team from across the whole system – The Southern Africa Food Lab recruited a scenario team comprising 25 influential people from government, agribusiness, farmers' unions, nongovernmental organisations, social movements, and academia. Although each person only held a deep but narrow slice of perspective, this team was chosen because they collectively held a 360-degree perspective of what was happening in the southern African food system.

Step 2: Observe what is happening – To do this, the team asked three main questions: What is the most recent data saying about the food system? What perceptions do role-players from different parts of the food system hold? And what

are the day-to-day experiences of ordinary South Africans? These questions were answered through a literature review, a series of interviews, and a series of interactions with people whose experiences the 25-person scenario team would not normally encounter first-hand.

Step 3: Construct stories about what could happen – In several iterations, the scenario team produced four scenarios. Each of these scenarios explored the possible interplay over the ensuing 15 years between the key uncertainties identified in the interviews. Storylines from the scenarios were produced, as well as multimedia materials developed to make the scenarios accessible to a wider audience.

Step 4: Discover what can and must be done – The Southern Africa Food Lab and the scenario team launched the scenarios at a workshop, where a wider circle of people from business, government, civil society, and academia together considered questions such as: What would it mean for me, personally, if any of these events, sequences of events, or outcomes came to pass? What would it mean for my organisation? What would it mean for South Africa? How could I exercise my leadership to influence the food system in a desirable direction? And what are the things I cannot do alone, but that we could do together, to create the kind of future food system we want?

Step 5: Act to transform the system – The scenario teams continue in their individual roles and use their newfound knowledge and experiences to influence the transformation of food systems.

The Southern Africa Food Lab recruited a scenario team comprising 25 influential people from government, agribusiness, farmers' unions, nongovernmental organisations, social movements, and academia

The outcome

The TCP process provided critical reflection of the implementation plan for the South African Food Security and Nutrition policy by situating the scenarios as the context and feeding into the process designed to develop the implementation mode. The TCP also informed a strategic discussion with the Free State Land Reform Committee to reach a clear, concrete, proactive, locally applicable and realistic plan for the co-operation and direction needed to address the real needs for land and transforming the agricultural sector.

The Southern Africa Food Lab has provided support to private sector representatives that have been involved in the construction of the scenarios to practically respond within their corporate strategies.

Transformative scenario planning is an approach that brings together relevant stakeholders from different, often conflicting, perspectives

Transformative scenarios are created through a series of conversations in which a group of people invent and consider several varied stories about how the future may unfold. Ideally, these stories should be carefully researched and full of detail, be able to expose new understandings and hold some surprises. Scenarios can be powerful tools for challenging current assumptions about the world. In doing so, they lift the barriers that constrain our own creativity and understanding about the future.

Scott Drimie

Southern Africa Food Lab

Scott's advice:

We used the TSP to help us focus on enabling open communication, honest speaking and genuine listening. This allowed people to take responsibility for their own learning and ideas and created a "safe-enough space" or "container" for people to voice their assumptions, question their previous perceptions, judgements and worldviews, and change the way they think as they looked towards the future. The TSP can generate new ideas or solutions that go beyond what anyone had thought of before and create a different level of understanding of people and problems.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.southernafricafoodlab.org

WHAT IS TRANSFORMATIVE SCENARIO PLANNING?

The Southern Africa Food Lab used transformative scenario planning in some of their policy labs. Transformative scenario planning is an approach that brings together relevant stakeholders from different, often conflicting, perspectives. People work to discuss pressing sets of problems to build stories that illustrate a range of potential futures that could come from taking different paths. By doing this, the people involved learn more about their present situation, and what the dynamics in a specific situation are doing to help or hinder progress toward a more equitable and climate resilient future.

#8

WHO Regional Office for Europe, EUROPE

Nominal group technique: reaching consensus through group decision-making

The WHO Regional Office for Europe used focus groups and the nominal group technique to examine the views of, and to generate a consensus among, nutrition, health, and environmental sciences experts and policymakers. The techniques were used during an expert meeting to identify obstacles, actions, and tools to shift the current WHO European Region's food systems to becoming healthier and sustainable.

The Expert Meeting on Dietary Patterns for Health and Sustainability in the WHO European Region was held in 2019 to support member states in formulating national dietary guidelines that consider the multiple dimensions of sustainability. The overall objective was to create a framework document that includes actions, tools and best practices.

How it's done

In the first step, online interviews were conducted with 19 experts from European countries to discuss their views on multiple dimensions of food sustainability and health. Participants needed to be researchers with experience in the field of food sustainability or public health, or policymakers. These individual interviews were held in the lead up to the meeting.

During the participatory expert meeting, 29 experts participated in smaller nominal group technique (NGT) groups (5-6 people in each). Two questions were asked in the NGT groups: (1) In your opinion, what are the desirable characteristics of a healthy and sustainable dietary pattern, and what aspects should be included in food-based dietary guidelines? and (2) What actions and policies should be implemented for a healthier and more sustainable food system? By themselves, the experts were asked to write their own ideas about these issues. The participants then shared their ideas with the group. All the ideas generated by the participants were recorded verbatim on a flipchart. The participants were invited to provide either verbal explanations or more detailed information, and they also expressed their agreement or disagreement with the presented ideas presented by the other participants. After this step was completed, each group aimed to reach a consensus on the five to ten

most important ideas for each issue and to rank them in order of importance.

Following the NGT, focus groups were held to learn more about the actions recommended in the NGT groups, the resources needed to implement those actions, and the stakeholders that should be involved.

Based on the expert meeting, a programme of work featuring seven different workstreams in the field of healthy and sustainable diets was developed

The outcome

The interviews, NGT and focus groups helped to identify various data gaps and necessary actions, including: feasible, evidence-based guidelines and policies developed by multisectoral expert teams; better co-operation between different stakeholder groups; sustainable public food procurement; capacity-building interventions; and well-implemented monitoring and evaluation systems.

Based on the expert meeting, a programme of work featuring seven different workstreams in the field of healthy and sustainable diets was developed by the WHO Europe NCD Office.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.apps.who.int

NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

The Expert Meeting on Dietary Patterns for Healthy and Sustainability in the WHO European Region used the nominal group technique (NGT). NGT is considered an alternative to brainstorming that helps ensure that important information is not overlooked. NGT generally involves four key stages: silent idea generation, round robin, clarification and voting (ranking). This consensus method can be directed at problem-solving, idea-generation, or determining priorities⁸.

8. McMillan and others, 2016: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4909789/>

#9

*The Global Alliance on the Future of Food & Salzburg Global Seminar,
INTERNATIONAL*

The Salzburg Process on the Climate Emergency and the Future of Food: Transformation for a 1.5°C world

The Global Alliance for the Future of Food in partnership with Salzburg Global Seminar hosted "The Salzburg Process", one of the first global online convenings to take place during the pandemic on the transformation of food systems and action on the climate emergency.

The Salzburg Process was planned to bring together 300 diverse global stakeholders on "The Climate Emergency and the Future of Food" in Salzburg, Austria in May 2020. The Process was driven by the need to accelerate the actions, investments, and policies needed for healthy, equitable, resilient, and diverse food systems. Delivered as a series of online events rather than an in-person international dialogue as originally planned, The Salzburg Process aimed to create a space where ideas, issues, tensions, convergences and divergences related to food systems and climate change could be explored and discussed. The process centred on connecting individuals and networks and to, where possible, build strategic alignment on key areas for transformation at the nexus of climate and food. The process was made up of thought-provoking presentations and curated conversations with the exchange of knowledge and informal interactions.

How it's done

Overall, The Salzburg Process sought to address five key questions:

- How can we work together to develop shared priorities and strategic pathways for the transformation of food systems?
- How/when can we strategically and effectively contribute to the global discourse on food and the climate emergency and advance systems change?
- Where are the greatest opportunities and challenges for transitioning to more sustainable, equitable food systems in a world whose climate is changing?

- How can we better understand and communicate the implications of the interdependence of food, people, and the planet in a transition to more sustainable food systems?

The virtual process took place over a six-week period. The initial kick-off keynote event featured prominent global experts in the fields of food systems, climate, nutrition, environment, health, and agriculture.

In the days following the kick-off, facilitators led deep-dive discussions into five hot topics – nature-based solutions, just transitions, sustainable and healthy diets, industrial livestock production, and food loss and waste – as well as four cross-cutting levers of change: policy reform, financial reform, practice reform, and public narratives and strategic political communications.

All participants were given think-pieces/discussion papers written by thought leaders and researchers in advance of the event, helping create common ground by spelling out some of the key areas of contention and different perspectives on solutions that surrounded each of the topics up for discussion.

Participants were then asked to self-select their chosen topic. Present at the deep dive sessions were stakeholders from philanthropy, researchers, grassroots movements, the private sector, farmers and food systems workers, indigenous peoples, government and policymakers, communications, and others. The final day focused on levers of change, and participants from across the hot topics were brought back together for a dialogue on the next steps, including an exploration of the opportunities and challenges.

The Salzburg Process aimed to create a space where ideas, issues, tensions, convergences and divergences related to food systems and climate change could be explored and discussed

The outcome

211 diverse changemakers, experts, and leaders from the local to global levels attended the virtual gathering. What began as a virtual gathering in 2020 continued over the following year to develop a reflection paper, which can be used by participants and others according to their own mission, resources, and capacity. This resulting outcome document – a synthesis of the process, the discussions, the feedback, and key take-aways from the convenors – highlights additional issues, opportunities, and areas of tension that require further dialogue and collaborative exploration.

211 diverse changemakers, experts, and leaders from the local to global level attended the virtual gathering

For far too long, policy discussions related to food systems and climate change have fallen into silos, remaining disconnected across departments, strategies for action, research agendas, and more. Taking an integrated and inclusive approach to ensure that all policies relating to food promote human, animal, AND ecological health and well-being have never been more urgently required. In practice and reflective of what we have learned from eight years of convenings like this, this way of working requires real leadership, vision, and a commitment to deep listening and engagement with all stakeholders.

Ruth Richardson

Executive Director, Global Alliance for the Future of Food



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.futureoffood.org

CONVENING A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROCESS ONLINE

In light of the pandemic, the organisers of The Salzburg Process needed to quickly shift their event to an online format. Here are their top six takeaways from the experience:

- 1. Diverse, inclusive participation requires an intentional, high-tech approach.** Online convenings open the door to people all around the world to take part, especially those who can't travel, for whatever reason. Yet, that participation becomes limited to people who have stable access to computers, electricity, and the internet. Scheduling to suit multiple time zones is also key. High-speed internet reimbursements were offered and sessions were scheduled at different times of the day to enhance inclusivity and engage diverse perspectives.
- 2. Power dynamics are real and must be addressed.** Power dynamics must be acknowledged, attended to, and mitigated meaningfully, otherwise the process itself comes into question. The nature of multi-stakeholder processes means that tensions are unavoidable; what is paramount is that these processes aim to be inclusive, transparent, and accountable. For example, feedback mechanisms must be open and visible to all participants.
- 3. Think physical convening; act digital convening.** Building trust takes time, investment, and space. Getting to know people at your table, having time to discuss issues over a coffee, swapping stories, and making connections are all the great "extras" that come from an in-person event. The original plan was to host a three-day convening with high-profile keynotes, author panels, informal receptions, and breakout discussion groups and workshops. Instead, the organisers decided to parcel up the schedule to rollout over six weeks and got creative with the networking possibilities. To give the convening that human touch, partners were asked to voluntarily host informal "meet and greet" sessions, inviting participants from similar time zones to sign-up and connect over a coffee.
- 4. Move slowly, don't break anything: identify your technology needs and choose wisely.** There are a lot of different platforms on the market which are designed to enhance participation and engagement in online convenings. These platforms can either be key accelerators or key stumbling blocks. In the case of The Salzburg Process, Zoom breakout rooms during the webinar sessions were essential because of the high pay-off and almost zero learning curve. Meanwhile, the online collaboration platform Hivebrite was a heavy-lift and a steeper learning curve. As more of us host events and test various platforms, there will inevitably be a convergence towards platforms that are more effective

and that, crucially, participants will be more familiar with. Always have your participants' needs in mind and share what you learn so that we all continue to adapt to working virtually. It is also essential to provide support to participants so that they can access/upgrade their internet capabilities and for translation/interpretation services too.

5. **Feed the system with information, lots of information.** Organisers and participants need to have both the time and all the relevant information well in advance in order to really benefit from the event experience. Unlike face-to-face meetings, online events do not lend themselves to garnering the full attention of participants, even more so in the midst of a global pandemic. And it's not always as obvious what to do, when, and with who as it is at a conference. It is crucial to have everyone – participants and organisers – on the same page to ensure clarity and reduce stress from uncertainty. Information on process design, expectations, roles, and expected actions need to be more deliberate, more accurate, and more actionable than in face-to-face convenings where there are less inputs to handle. Crucially, information needs to be communicated in a timely way.
6. **Don't underestimate the value of the right people at the right time, in the right place.** The right capacity is essential for any convening but even more so in an online environment where discussions are more dispersed and lack the "physical glue" to bring outputs and outcomes together. Supported by partners, the organisers created a robust team of lead facilitators, auxiliary facilitators, technology support, voluntary note-takers, as well as cross-cutting teams assigned to different "meeting rooms" who listened for priority messages and other common themes. The organisers met regularly and at the end of each event day to reflect, adjust plans as required, and develop clear, highly-detailed instructions on what each person was responsible for and when.

#10

World Food Policy Center at Duke University, USA

Moving from "on behalf of" to "in support of": Deep listening to empower agents of change

The Duke World Food Policy Centre supported a community-led process to understand the intersectionality of urban food justice. The process focused on listening, humility, and how institutions can re-learn how to be in community, moving from a leader to a listener and supporter.

The World Food Policy Center (WFPC) is a research, education, and convening organisation within Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy. Its mission is to advance connected and inclusive food system policy and practice in support of the equity and resilience of local and global food systems. Their theory of change is that relationships and community-led solutions are central to creating sustainable foodways. And, that food systems cannot be equitable at a global level if they are not equitable at the local level.

Relationships focused on leveraging the position of Duke while shifting power to community leaders are at the heart of the WFPC model. Previous research has shown that networks among people and organisations produce and maintain power relationships within communities, often excluding people or organisations led by people of colour. Access to networks can often be restricted as people in positions of power (either by intention or default) work with those who are already in their proximate networks. In instances where these networks are exclusionary, inequalities are often exacerbated at the detriment of projects and organisations. Research on interlocking directorates has shown how power is held within very small groups of people across a range of organisations nationally, and these processes translate to local communities as well. These patterns were also factors in the current project and needed to be addressed head-on to uphold the principles of justice and equity

How it's done

Working locally in the United States in Durham, North Carolina, the WFPC supported a decolonised food justice planning process. The process began by convening a "Design Team", intended to bring a Durham-based approach to problem solving and community planning that recognised intersectionality, layered systems, and the need to build common frameworks for lasting solutions. As opposed to bringing together traditional institutional leaders, the Design Team brought together a diverse set of Durham-based voices, including community organisers, food justice advocates, educators, strategic planners, evaluators, and racial equity trainers. This group worked collectively to take on key project elements: building trust, setting goals, creating an overall process, facilitating activity, and establishing terms to move forward with care, intention, and ability to adapt the work from an emergent and relational as opposed to a linear and transactional perspective.

Key elements of the Design Team's decolonised approach included: 1) co-developing agenda for meetings; 2) beginning and concluding with "centering experiences" such as sharing of personal stories; 3) regular communications to keep connected but consciously not rushing the process (continuing to "move quickly and move slowly" with trust-building guiding the process); 3) leaning into discomfort and being self-reflective to cultivate another way of thinking, feeling and being in the shared space as a team; 4) sharing materials and facilitating discussions that informed the Design Team's function (e.g. articles on race equity/research methods); 5) responsiveness to stakeholder voices; 6) embracing flexibility (e.g. timeline) and emergent strategies (embracing a shift from food systems to food justice planning); and 7) moving at the speed of trust when relationships need to be nurtured and processes interrogated.

Food systems cannot be equitable at a global level if they are not equitable at the local level

The outcome

The outcome of the community-led process was that establishing a "plan" for justice in Durham was antithetical to the principles of justice and community leadership. Instead, focusing on building trust and relationship across institutions and community leadership were the MOST critical aspects for long-term systems change. To build these relationships, the team needed to learn how the inequities in Durham came to be. As a result of this process, three key products were developed to understand the history of the inequities in Durham's food system, how whiteness shows up in food systems efforts, and how relationship can begin to address some of the inequities through innovative equity-focused financing of community-led efforts:

1. Power and Benefit on the Plate, The History of Food In Durham, North Carolina
2. Identifying and Countering White Supremacy in Food Systems
3. How Innovative CDFIs Fund Equitable Food Oriented Development

Focusing on building trust and relationship across institutions and community leadership were the MOST critical aspects for long-term systems change

The WFPC team often reflects on this quote from Lilla Watson: "If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

Lilla Watson

Indigenous Australian activist, artist and academic

The World Food Policy Centre's advice:

The WFPC would advise not to use the word "lab" or "model", but to approach relationship with humility, seeking to listen and to learn, and to use the power and influence your own institution has for collective benefit.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.wfpc.sanford.duke.edu

MOVING FROM "SCIENCE-POLICY LAB" TO BROADER PARTICIPATION

The WFPC's original intention was to start up policy innovation labs and to create a bridge between science and policy. They were interested in having policymakers and scientists in the same room and trying to identify disconnects and where policymakers needed more information. As the project evolved, so have their ideas about what is needed. They understood that institutions should use their power to support community leadership. Another evolution of their model had to do with ensuring people most impacted by policy decisions were leading discussions and decisions for equitable policy change, and that institutional leadership will need to continue to lean into shifting its influence from working "on behalf of" communities to working "in support of" and in relationship with communities.

#11

Vinnova, SWEDEN

Better school meals in Sweden: Piloting a mission approach

In a unique collaboration, the Swedish Food Agency and Vinnova are exploring how to design a sustainable system for school meals together with municipalities, businesses and several other authorities.

The project *A new recipe for school meals* explores what a system that is socially, environmentally and economically sustainable can look like. The idea is that school meals can form a model for how the entire food system can be adjusted. In 2019 and 2020, several agencies in the Swedish government and other practitioners in the field identified important areas to address in order to make the system around school meals more sustainable.

How it's done

Vinnova, the Swedish Innovation Agency and the Swedish Food Agency collaborated with a group of 20 experts that represented government authorities, chefs, producers, civil society organisations, students and businesses. The expert group participated in a number of workshops during the project and contributed with valuable contacts, and expert input. An external design firm was procured to facilitate the process and the design thinking methodology was used. This methodology is particularly successful to understand the user's needs, obstacles and where there are possibilities to make changes and is seen to be helpful when trying to tackle complex societal challenges that involve several different stakeholders where there are contradictions. The method strengthens the conditions for collaboration between actors and identifies concrete obstacles and opportunities, which has been clear throughout the project.

In step 1 (2019-2020), background research, interviews and a series of workshops were conducted. The design firm facilitated four co-creation workshops, together with the expert group. During these workshops the actors worked on mapping the system in order to deepen the insights about the system and the target groups. The workshops were complemented by background research using published documents on the topic of school food in addition to 78 in-depth interviews with target groups to identify the needs, attitudes, obstacles and driving forces of the target groups. The plan was to also make a lot of observations in schools and its restaurants, but due to Covid-19 it was not possible.

Based on the outcome of the workshops, the background research and the

interviews, the project team identified obstacles and patterns and how these patterns are linked to the challenges.

The system map then provided information on eight different places to intervene in the system, so called acupuncture points, that need to be addressed in order to produce and provide more sustainable school meals. As part of mapping the system, policies that affect the system started to be identified. However, the project realised that insights on policy issues will probably be more prominent in the testing phase, where new solutions are to be tested to address the acupuncture points (phase 2).

In step 2 (2021), the testing phase, solutions that address the acupuncture points will be developed and tested in four municipalities that will act as system demonstrators. The solutions proved successful in the demonstrators should be able to be scaled up nationally and should contribute to social, ecological and economic sustainability. To do this, municipalities were invited to apply to become demonstrators for sustainable school meals. Twenty-five municipalities applied and four municipalities were selected.

Vinnova collaborated with a group of 20 experts that represented government authorities, chefs, producers, civil society organisations, students and businesses

The outcome

The insights from Phase 1 were analysed in detail and were made available to the public ([see here](#)).

Vinnova is currently working with four municipalities that have been selected through an open call to serve as testing grounds for sustainable school meals. With the support of the National Food Agency, Vinnova and several other national actors, these municipalities will test innovative solutions to make meals sustainable - from the farmer to the classroom and back again. The experiences of these four municipalities will be used to inspire all municipalities in Sweden to use school meals as a tool to approach the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the goals in other sustainability and food strategies.

Vinnova is currently working with four municipalities that have been selected through an open call to serve as testing grounds for sustainable school meals

To succeed with system transformation, innovation with a system perspective is needed and this is where Vinnova's roll has been proven to be important. Even though the mission approach has been both challenging and frustrating it has shown me as a program manager at Sweden's Innovation Agency what we as a national agency are capable of when taking a system perspective and acting as a change agent and not only as a funder. If all innovation agencies would take on this role, I believe we are one step closer to reaching the sustainable development goals.

Jenny Sjöblom

Programme Manager, Vinnova



For more information about a mission approach, check out the Cookbook for systems change – Nordic innovation strategies for sustainable food systems.

WHAT IS A MISSION APPROACH?

Vinnova uses a mission approach to their work on sustainable food systems. This is a way to direct multi-stakeholder innovation towards a common understanding of how best to solve our urgent grand challenges. Missions aim to bring about change across a system in a way that benefits society by addressing the complex, systemic and urgent problems that affect our lives.

Seeing the “big picture” is necessary in order to understand the scale and scope of our grand challenges. We also need to zoom in to understand how we can set goals for food system changes in particular contexts in order to tackle these challenges. Reaching these goals will take an “all hands on deck” approach, and systemic changes will be needed to tackle these complex and multi-faceted grand challenges. This means that we need to co-ordinate our action to achieve the desired change. Governments, particularly public innovation agencies, can play a key leadership role in co-ordinating this action.

For more information about a mission approach, check out the Cookbook for systems change – Nordic innovation strategies for sustainable food systems

*The climate crisis, ecological crisis
and health crisis – they are all
interlinked*

Greta Thunberg

Climate activist

THE 1,5° FOOD FESTIVAL

How to co-create the climate-smart menu of the future? By joining forces with creative designers, chefs and researchers!

The 1,5° food festival merged technology and gastronomy to inspire everyday climate activism through food. A democratic process to explore what sustainable diets can look like for different people in different regions of the world. Everyday food heroes were invited to choose between 64 sustainable food ingredients and design the best tasting food combinations. The experience was a real-life bite into a more diverse food future with 249,984 possible flavour combinations.

The 1,5° food festival on 5 December 2019, was part of the Nordic Climate Action weeks in Stockholm running in parallel to the UN Climate negotiations in Madrid. The Nordic Food Policy Lab also hosted a series of talks on the theme "Taste the transition" and a policy lab investigating how new food policy tools can be used to translate climate ambitions into climate action.

A Nordic Food Policy Lab x Another New Design Studio x Restauranglabbet collaboration







CHAPTER 3:

Starting your policy lab journey

The 11 examples of policy labs in chapter 2 demonstrate not only the range of methods that can be used to transform food systems, but also the diversity of actors involved. Food labs can exist at all levels – from the hyper local to international settings. Due to the contextuality of each of the policy labs, it's important not to cut and paste but rather to draw inspiration and build on what others have done. You never know until you try.

Below, we have distilled some of the tips and tricks that can be used to further develop your food policy lab. *And remember, you're not doing a panel discussion – you're designing the framework needed for progressive policy discussions.* Digital or in real life, start with the content and form – and remember that communication can be the key driver in engaging your community, staging the agenda and sharing insights.

Agenda: what's your mission? How can we make this relevant? For who? You have to know what motivates the people you invite. Don't think that your agenda is interesting to them just because it's interesting to you.

Cast your crew: who do you need to play with in order to make this happen?

Staging: create a wow effect – a safe and inspiration space that makes everyone shine! Collaborate with designers, artists and chefs.

Diverse line up of Solutionists: the combination of different perspectives, backgrounds and skills are important when you're inviting participants for the lab.

Difficult questions: you need to ask difficult questions in order to move forward. Spend time researching which methods and/or moderator to use in order to get the most out of the experience.

Learning: compile and share the new knowledge that has been produced directly when the session is still top-of-mind. This means that everyone can start new conversations and discussions in other networks.

Be generous, open-minded and kind!

”

It's important not to cut and paste but rather to draw inspiration and build on what others have done

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR BECOMING A POLICY LAB HERO

Some great advice on how to set up, execute and conclude a policy lab:

Before

- Consider your level of ambition when deciding your format and set aside enough time and resources to match it.
- Select a broad range of participants from different backgrounds and localities, organisations.
- Reflect on the trade-offs of involving or excluding specific stakeholder groups.
- Create a format that is easy to follow and enables the maximum amount of participation.
- While in-person dialogues are always recommended, some formats can be adapted to online formats.
- For large-scale, international initiatives, consider establishing a secretariat to co-ordinate the practical matters associated with setting up the dialogues.
- Keep your method flexible enough so that a natural evolution can occur when new information is generated.
- Consider if you need help from external experts to (co-)design your policy lab.
- New methods yield new results, so take your time to determine which one may work best for your purpose.
- Secure buy-in from key parts of government/administration in this effort (government as convener).
- Budget project time properly and be mindful of how you prioritise staff hours.
- Do your background research. It's not about rushing in and figuring out the best-practice models, it's more about long-term relationship building.

During

- Good moderation and facilitation is key to ensuring successful dialogues.
- Be able to show a process leading on from dialogues. End each policy lab by informing the participants what the process is.
- Focus on a handful of key, high-impact elements that make current food systems unsustainable rather than focusing every issue under the sun or doom and gloom.

After

- Make detailed summary reports of the labs publicly available.
If you're hosting a series of labs, consider developing a synthesis of common threads flowing across the labs and identify emerging themes from past events.
- Keep iterating until you feel that you have reached your desired goal and that everyone's voices have been heard.

- Arrange for one-to-one follow-up conversations with participants after the labs.
- Find other ways to include the opinions and perspectives of stakeholder groups who are missing from the process.
- Allow time for fine tuning recommendations either by organising follow-up meetings or by spending more time at a gathering. This allows for more in-depth conversations as well as the development of trust and bridge-building. This also helps create a network amongst the people involved which can be really useful as a more organic ecosystem that can help propel change.
- Remember that the seeds that are planted during policy labs will most likely require time to grow. That's why it's always good to follow up with participants to understand what they took home from the lab.

Nordic Food Policy Lab Bookshelf

Want to learn more? Read more about the Nordic Food Policy Lab's work:

Books

→ **Solutions menu: A Nordic guide to sustainable food policy**

The Solutions Menu includes 24 policies that aim to change food consumption and intends to inspire new and robust policy responses to the societal and environmental challenges caused by our current food systems.

→ **Menú de Soluciones**

El Menú de Soluciones incluye 24 políticas que pretenden cambiar el modo en que consumimos alimentos e inspirar nuevas y sólidas respuestas políticas a los desafíos sociales y medioambientales provocados por nuestros actuales sistemas de alimentación.

→ **Dreamer's Guide**

An abridged version of the Solutions Menu: A Nordic guide to sustainable food policy

→ **What can the Covid-19 pandemic tell us about resilient food systems?**

This think piece is intended to stimulate a discussion around the vulnerabilities of the Nordic food system and to highlight the importance of developing a systems-based resilience strategy to ensure that the Nordic Region can bounce forward after future shocks.

→ **Eight megatrends in Nordic-Baltic food systems**

This research paper uses megatrends as a way to reflect on the future of food in the Nordic-Baltic region. Here, futures thinking is understood as an informed reflection on the major changes that will occur in the coming decades in all areas of society.

→ **Cookbook for systems change – Nordic innovation strategies for sustainable food systems**

This strategy cookbook provides the ingredients you need to create your own recipes for food systems change. It contains templates for developing interventions, guides for how to get started and examples of cross-cutting projects. Focusing on the role of a strong public innovation system, this cookbook describes a so-called mission approach for deliberate food systems transformation.

Briefs

→ **Joining Forces: Takeaways from the Designing Your Menu of Food Policy Solutions**

This brief is a detailed account of some of the discussions that took place during the 'Designing your menu of food policy solutions for sustainable diets policy lab' at the EAT Stockholm Food Forum in 2018.

→ **Harvesting bold solutions: Ten takeaways from the policy lab "Serving up solutions for agenda 2030" at the UN HLPF**

This brief summarizes the co-production of new food policy insights at the "Serving-Up Solutions for Agenda 2030" policy lab at the UN High-level Political Forum.

→ **Setting the stage for a sustainable food future Seven takeaways from Nordic Food Day at COP23**

This brief presents seven main outcomes from Nordic Food Day at COP23.

→ **Democratising good food: Mapping Sustainable, Inclusive and Healthy Gastronomy Initiatives**

This brief maps sustainable, inclusive and healthy gastronomy initiatives around the world.

→ **In the spirit of collaboration: Transforming Baltic diets**

This brief is an account of the outcomes of the "Towards healthy and sustainable food systems in the Baltic region" workshop held in Riga, Latvia in 2019.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.norden.org/foodpolicylab

Selection of podcasts

Monocle's The Foreign Desk:

→ Social Gastronomy

Nordic Talks:

→ Ugly vegetables need love too

→ Game-changing protein

→ Food choices for change

Think Nordic:

→ How can we eat our way to a green and healthy future? Nordic solutions at COP24

Nordic FoodTech podcast series "Taste the transition":

→ Re-generation 2030's Emil Vincentz on the youth's vision for our future food system

→ Södertälje municipality's Sara Jervfors on the school lunch diet for a green planet

→ Stockholm Resilience Centre's Amanda Wood on the science-backed diet that can transform the world

→ Jävligt Gott's Gustav Johansson on how comfort food is the secret to a sustainable diet

→ Nordic Food Policy Lab's Marie Persson on taking climate action through food



Swedish minister Isabella Lövin, Dr. David Nabarro, and changemaker Mari Hasle Einang discussing the future of food at the Nordic Pavilion during COP24.



Join the conversations in our LinkedIn group **Community for Future Food Policies** curated by **Nordic Food Policy Lab** and stay in touch!

→ [Nordic Food Policy Lab on Twitter](#)

Meet the authors



**Afton
Halloran**



**Marie
Persson**



**Elisabet
Skylare**



**Mads
Frederik
Fischer
Møller**

This handbook was written by the team members of the Nordic Food Policy Lab:

Afton Halloran (author and editor) is an independent consultant in sustainable food system transitions and researcher at the University of Copenhagen. She was formally an external consultant to the Nordic Food Policy Lab. Afton is also the host of the Nordic Talks podcast, a podcast about innovative solutions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the Nordics and abroad.

Marie Persson (author) was the project manager of the Nordic Food Policy Lab. Marie now works at the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket) with inter-agency and cross-sector coordination in the implementation of the Swedish Food Strategy. Governance innovation, knowledge development and knowledge dissemination is her focus.

Elisabet Skylare (author) was the communications strategist of the Nordic Food Policy Lab. She led on the design of the agenda-setting playgrounds and creative collaborations. Elisabet is a senior communication advisor at the Nordic Council of Ministers with significant experience in using communication as a driver for transdisciplinary innovation.

Mads Frederik Fischer-Møller (author) is a professor in food policy at Scotland's Rural College and current head of the Future Food Systems Challenge Centre. He is a former senior policy advisor for food at the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Food Policy Lab. Mads was recruited to work in Scotland with the ambition of helping Scotland transition their food system with inspiration from Nordic food policy solutions.

Suggested citation: Halloran, A., Persson, M., Skylare, E., Fischer Møller, M. (2021) Setting the table: a story of food policy innovation. Nordic Council of Ministers, Copenhagen.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank everyone who participated in Nordic Food Policy Lab labs, events and conversations. A special thanks to the follow people who contributed to the development of this guide: Francesco Ajena, Alexander Alvsilver, Scott Drimie, Johanna Franzén, Maija Kale, Kaisa Murphy, Arne O'Donoghue, Charlotte Pedersen, Jenny Sjöblom, Amanda Wood, Sarah Zoubek and Mette Agger Tang.

About the initiative Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges

In 2017, the five Nordic prime ministers launched the initiative "Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges". The objective of the initiative was to help meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals by sharing Nordic knowledge and experiences that touched on three themes: Nordic Green, Nordic Gender Effect and Nordic Food & Welfare.

The six flagship projects under the initiative translate words into action:

- Nordic Food Policy Lab promotes a consumer-driven transformation towards a sustainable food future.
- Nordic Sustainable Cities aims to export solutions for sustainable, liveable and smart urban development.
- Nordic Energy Solutions seeks to assist countries in the design of renewable energy systems.
- The Nordic Gender Effect at Work advocates for the economic and social benefits of gender equality.
- Nordic Green to Scale focuses on scaling up existing climate solutions to reduce climate emissions as part of Nordic Climate Solutions. Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform encourages a redirection of resources from subsidies to sustainable alternatives as part of Nordic Climate Solutions.
- Nordic Welfare Solutions offers innovative and inclusive solutions to global healthcare challenges.

The prime ministers of the Nordic countries want to bring Nordic solutions to global challenges. These Nordic solutions will be effective tools in our common work to reach the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals before the year 2030.

Erna Solberg

Prime minister of Norway



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

www.norden.org/nordicsolutions



The Nordic prime ministers launched their outreach initiative "Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges" at the research centre run by the Institute of Marine Research in the tiny Norwegian fishing community of Austevoll.

About this publication

Setting the table – a story of food policy innovation

Afton Halloran (editor), Marie Persson, Elisabet Skylare, Mads Frederik Fischer-Møller

ISBN 978-92-893-6921-3 (PDF)

ISBN 978-92-893-6922-0 (ONLINE)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.6027/nord2021-008>

© Nordic Council of Ministers 2021

Layout: Mette Agger Tang

Cover illustration: Prang Lerttaweewit, Another New Design Studio

Published: 28.06.2021

Where are the bold policies to follow, support or even lead the transition to a healthier and more sustainable food system? This guide is the conclusion to a conversation started by the Nordic prime ministers with Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges in 2017. Since then, the flagship project, Nordic Food Policy Lab, has staged dialogues, set the table for new encounters, co-produced knowledge and insights, and advocated for the potential of innovative policy to change the world. Throughout the pages of this guide, you'll find a diverse array of 11 methods from around the world, for igniting dialogue, co-creating solutions or new directions and unravelling complex issues. The information within the pages of this guide is, therefore, meant to ensure that policymakers do not stand in a position where they see the daunting scale of the problem but feel unequipped to deal with it.

Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, economics and culture and plays an important role in European and international forums. The Nordic community strives for a strong Nordic Region in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation promotes regional interests and values in a global world. The values shared by the Nordic countries help make the region one of the most innovative and competitive in the world.

The Nordic Council of Ministers

Nordens Hus

Ved Stranden 18

DK-1061 Copenhagen

pub@norden.org

Read more Nordic publications on www.norden.org/publications