The Policy Environment for Sustainable City-Region Food Systems

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under **grant agreement No 862663**.

Project facts

Programme: Horizon 2020 “Innovation Action” under the Header of Sustainable Food Security

Duration: 02/2020 – 02/2024 (48 months)

- **24 partners** in 8 countries
- **8 research institutions** in Bologna, Naples, Barcelona, Tenerife, Wageningen, Dortmund, Soest, Paris
- **5 municipalities**: Bologna, Naples, Sabadell, Romainville, Lansingerland
- **11 NGOs** and **SMES**

+ 40 further stakeholders

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FoodE’s key vision…

…is to **accelerate the growth of citizen-led food system initiatives** and create related innovative and inclusive job opportunities at local level.

1. To promote cross-pollination between European CRFS
2. To contribute to **increase access to affordable, safe and nutritious food**
3. To create a tool mobilising CRFS stakeholders in sustainability assessment
4. To upscale the output to other EU cities

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FoodE – Project activities

- **WP 2: Develop sustainability assessments of CRFS initiatives & decision support tools**
- **WP 3: Facilitate cross pollination**
- **WP 4: Implement innovative CRFS solutions (pilot projects)**
- **WP 5: Investigate business models in CRFS**
- **WP 6: Investigate conditions & make recommendations for upscaling**

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WP6: Upscaling

- T6.1 Analysis of EU & national framework conditions & policies / Identification of constraints & challenges
- T6.2 Analysis of the roles & relationships of different actors in the food chain
- T6.3 Co-development of a framework for replication of “best practice
- T6.4 Co-design of scenarios for upscaling, preparation of European Guidebook to sustainable CRFS

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What is a “policy”?

“…the set of techniques by which governmental authorities wield their power in attempting to affect society - in terms of values and beliefs, action and organization - in such a way as either to improve, or to prevent the deterioration of the quality of the natural environment.“

Mickwitz, P. (2003): A Framework for Evaluating Environmental Policy Instruments. Context and Key Concepts. Evaluation, 9(4). 415-436.

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What is a “policy”? (contd.)

For the purpose of this activity, we defined “policy” as encompassing:

a) regulations

b) incentives

c) awareness-raising measures

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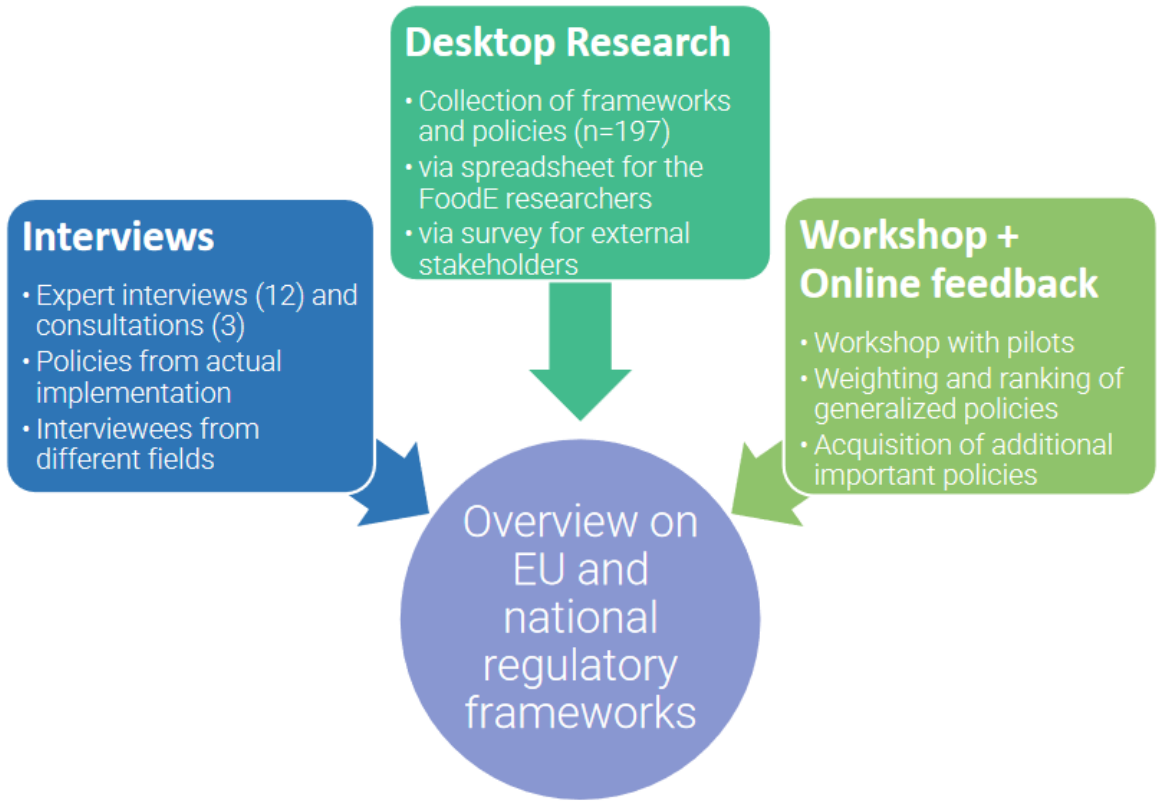
Policy Collection & Analysis

- Desktop research/survey
- Include experience from other projects → Expert interviews
- Workshop with practitioners
- Creation of factsheets



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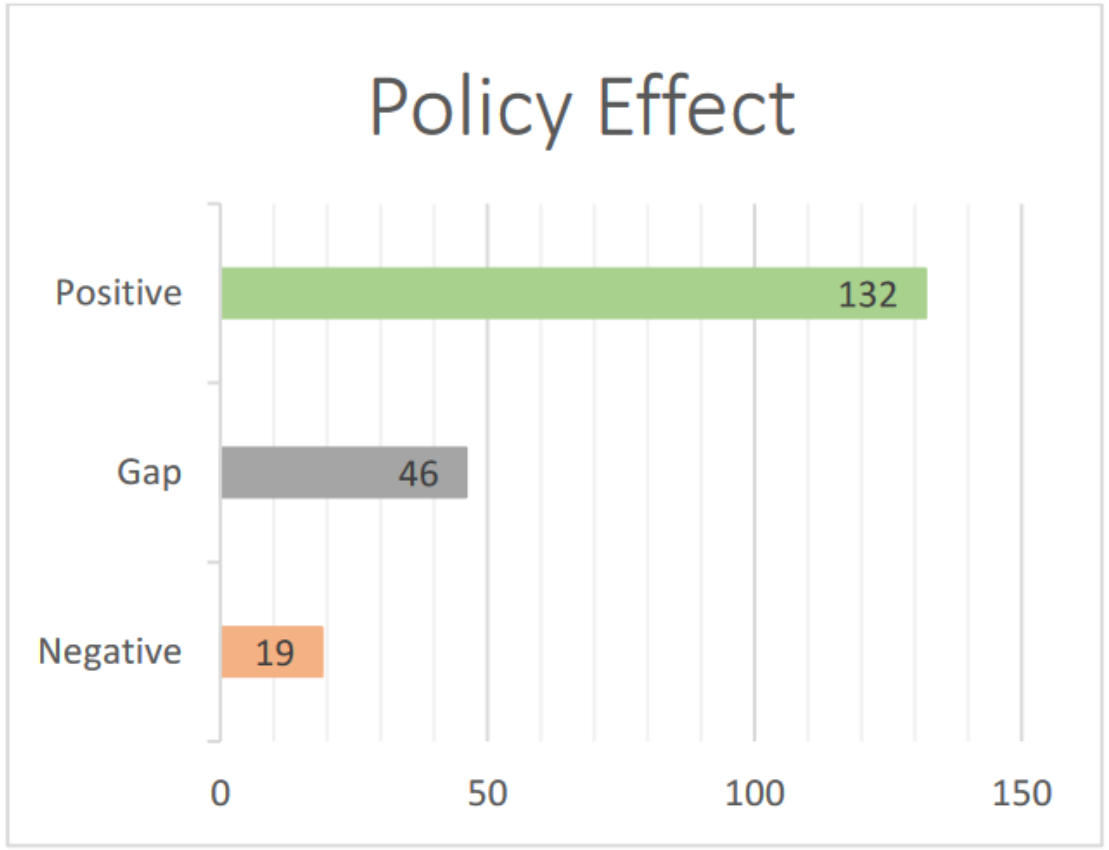
Is the policy negative, positive, or a gap?



197 policies collected

(single response)

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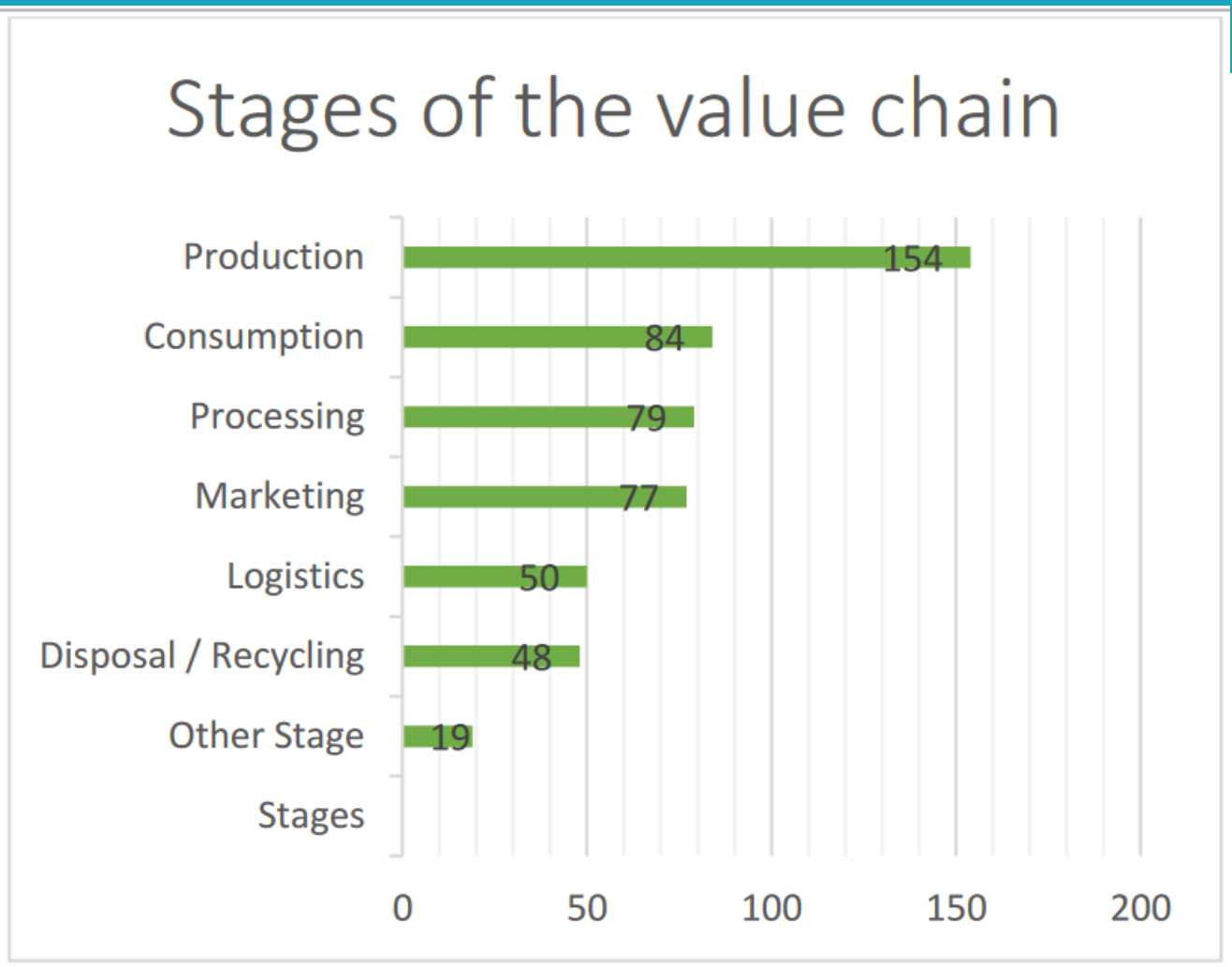
Stages of value chain affected

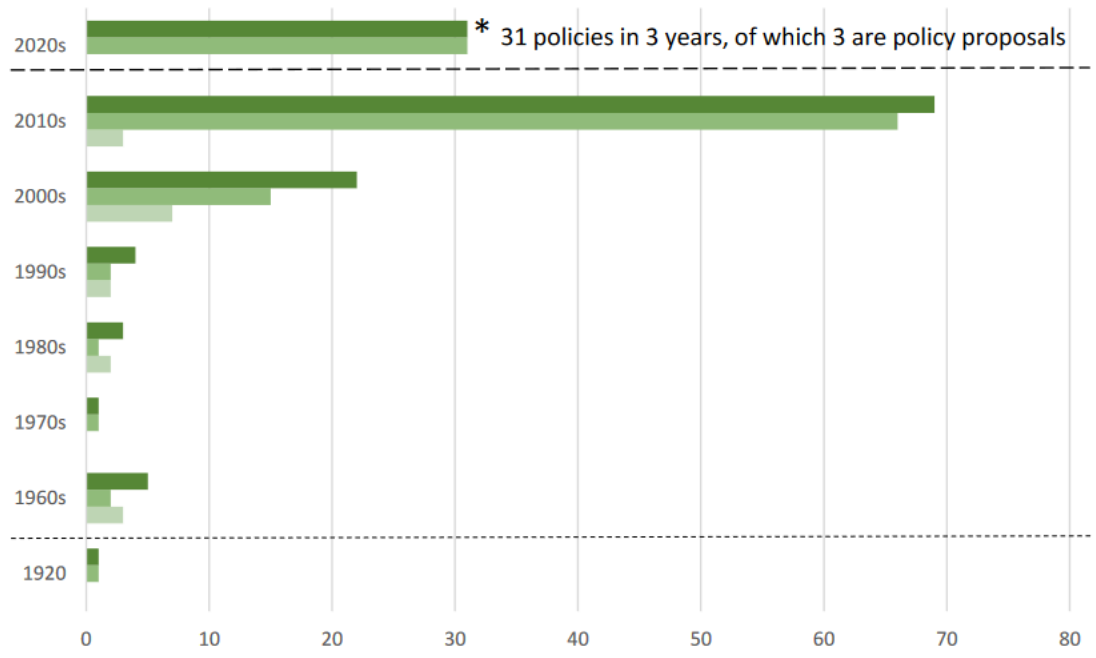


(multiple responses were allowed)

d innovation programme under **grant agreement No 862663**.

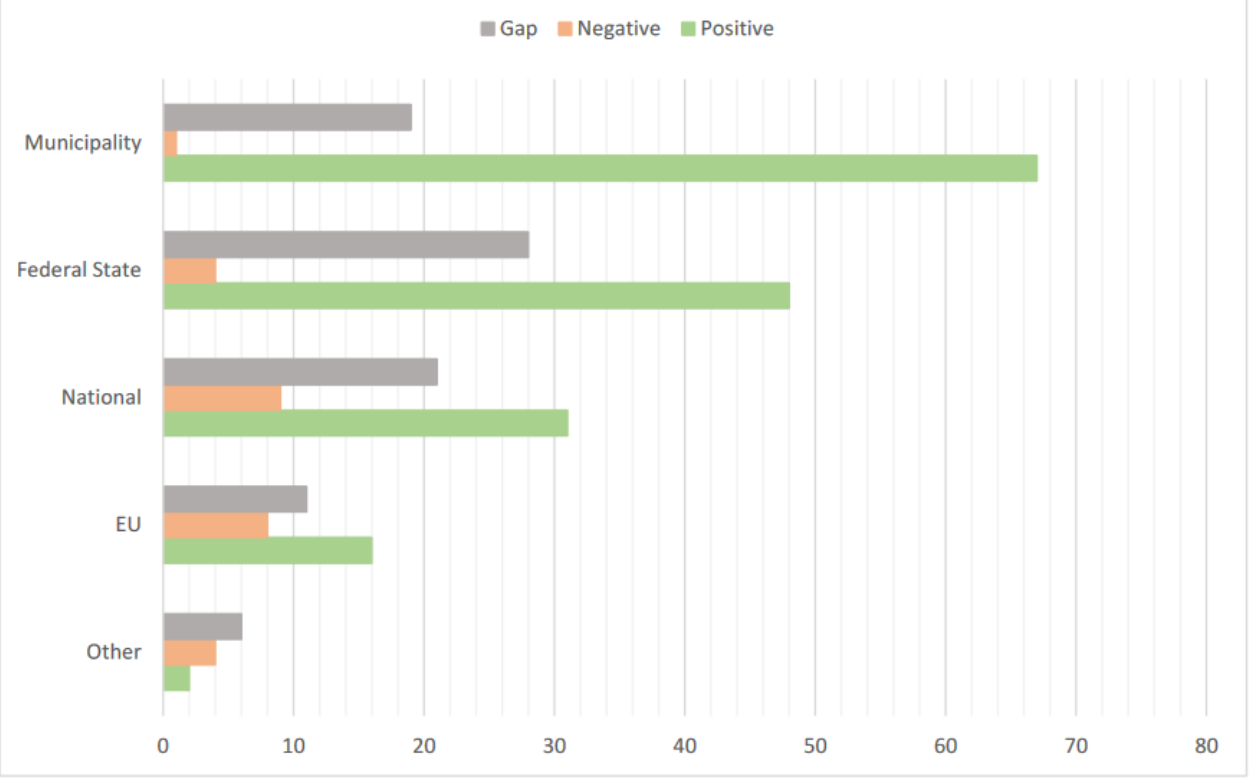
Decade & „Level enacted“

Decade enacted / Effect



	1920	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	2020s
Total	1	5	1	3	4	22	69	31
Positive	1	2	1	1	2	15	66	31
Negative	0	3	0	2	2	7	3	0

Policy Effect / Gov. level enacted



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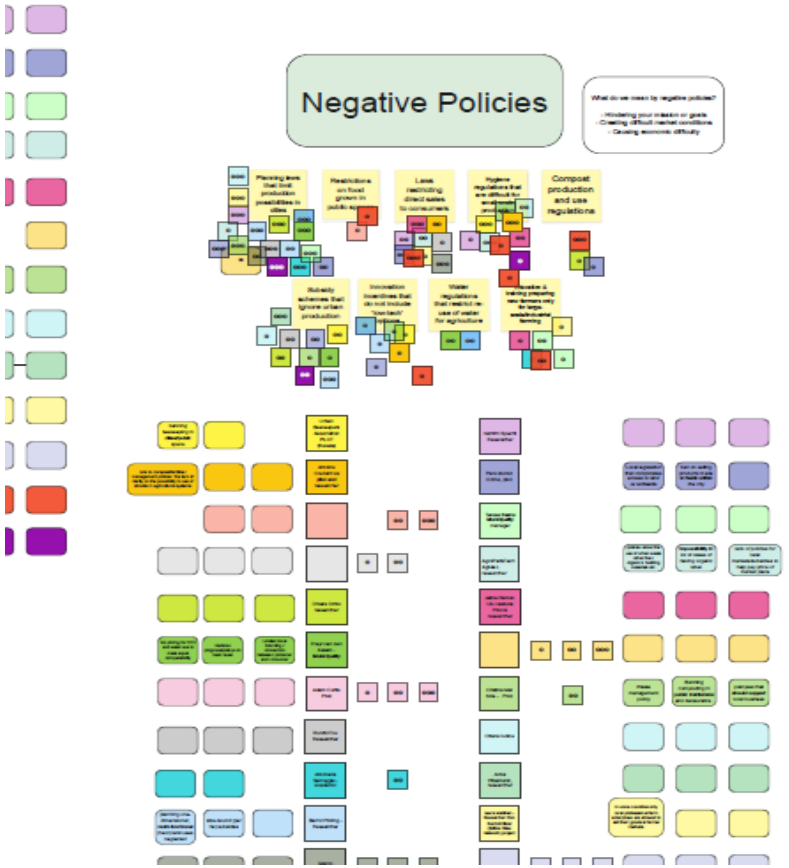
Interviews/Workshop with pilots



23 participants
10 practitioners
15 researchers (some overlap)

Policies were summarised & presented to participants for weighting and adding to

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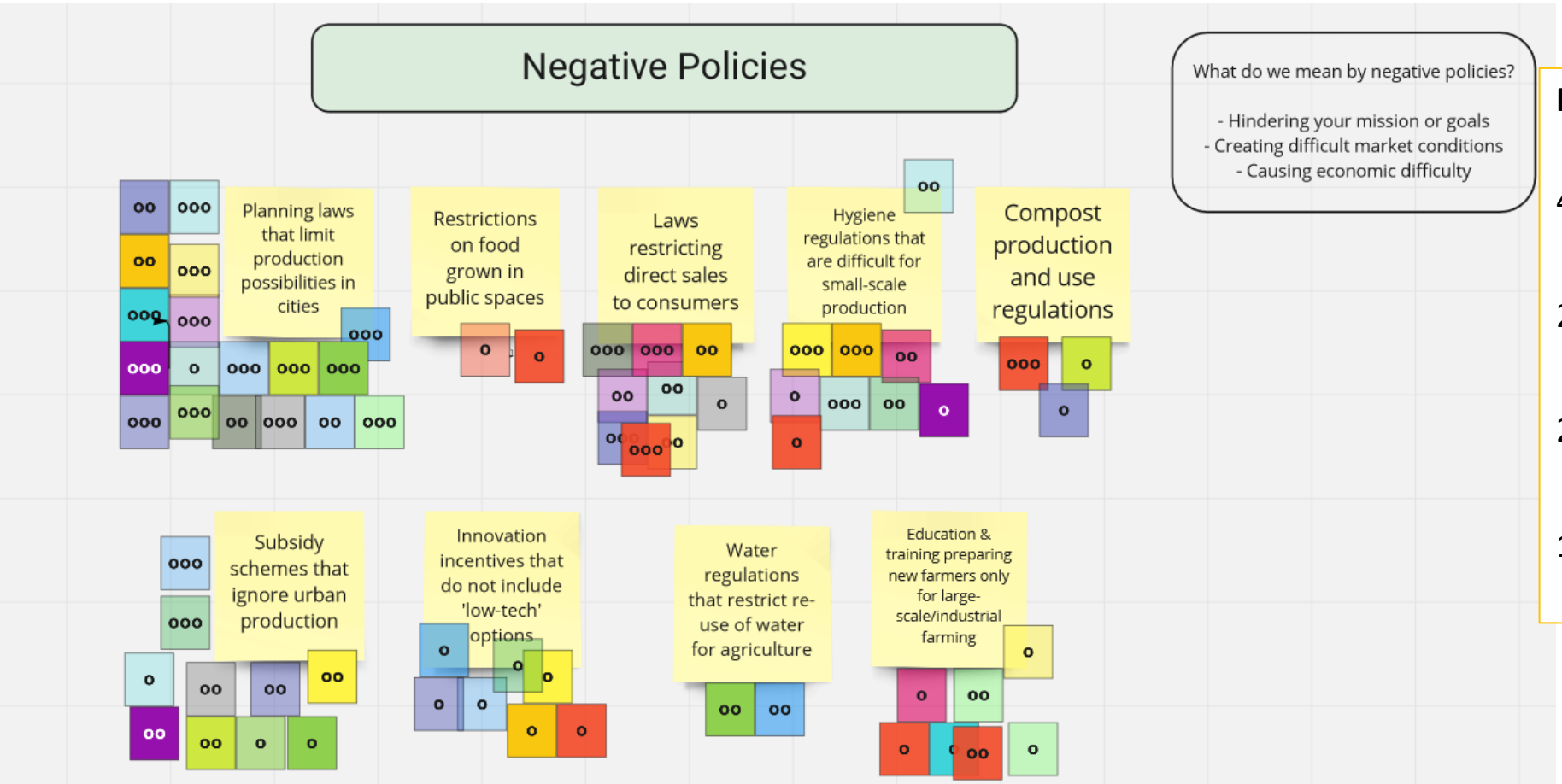
Workshop with pilots: policy weighting



Most important negative policies

48 - Planning laws that limit production possibilities in cities

21 - Hygiene regulations that are difficult for small-scale production

21 - Laws restricting direct sales to consumers

19 - Subsidy schemes that ignore urban production

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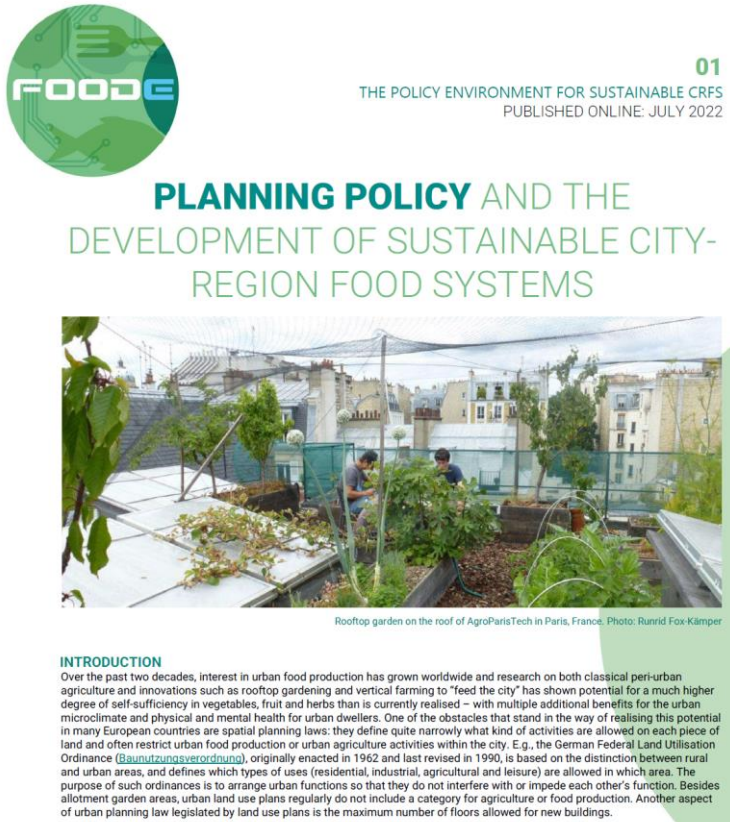
Policy Factsheets: Planning

Barriers to CRFS:

- land use categories in several countries exclude food production, separate „urban“ & „rural“ activities
- Peri-urban farms land threatened by development
- Urban planning laws are usually made at national level (framework laws), then turned into regulations at regional/state level and implemented in the municipalities → multi-level governance
- Soil protection goals exist but not enforced → implementation gap



01
THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE CRFS
PUBLISHED ONLINE: JULY 2022

PLANNING POLICY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE CITY-REGION FOOD SYSTEMS

Rooftop garden on the roof of AgroParisTech in Paris, France. Photo: Runrid Fox-Kämper

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, interest in urban food production has grown worldwide and research on both classical peri-urban agriculture and innovations such as rooftop gardening and vertical farming to "feed the city" has shown potential for a much higher degree of self-sufficiency in vegetables, fruit and herbs than is currently realised – with multiple additional benefits for the urban microclimate and physical and mental health for urban dwellers. One of the obstacles that stand in the way of realising this potential in many European countries are spatial planning laws: they define quite narrowly what kind of activities are allowed on each piece of land and often restrict urban food production or urban agriculture activities within the city. E.g., the German Federal Land Utilisation Ordinance (Baunutzungsverordnung), originally enacted in 1962 and last revised in 1990, is based on the distinction between rural and urban areas, and defines which types of uses (residential, industrial, agricultural and leisure) are allowed in which area. The purpose of such ordinances is to arrange urban functions so that they do not interfere with or impede each other's function. Besides allotment garden areas, urban land use plans regularly do not include a category for agriculture or food production. Another aspect of urban planning law legislated by land use plans is the maximum number of floors allowed for new buildings.

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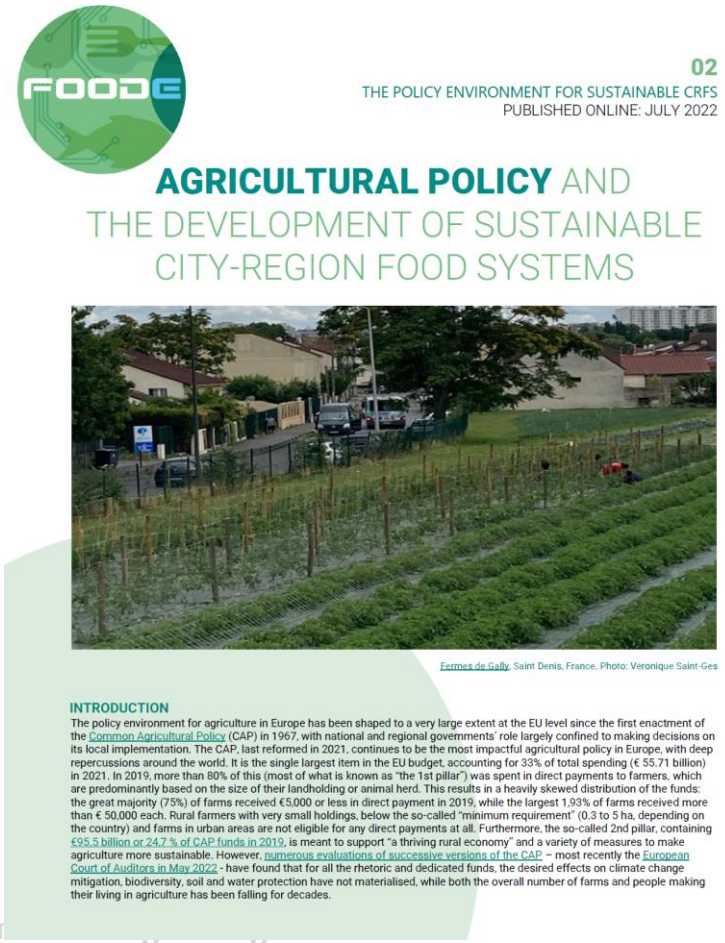
Policy Factsheets: Agriculture

Barriers to CRFS:

- GAP subsidies favour larger over smaller operators twice over:
  - through direct support and
  - through the resulting market distortion

- EU policies also reinforce the separation between „urban“ & „rural“



02
THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE CRFS
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AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND
THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE
CITY-REGION FOOD SYSTEMS

Fermes de Gally, Saint Denis, France. Photo: Véronique Saint-Ges

INTRODUCTION

The policy environment for agriculture in Europe has been shaped to a very large extent at the EU level since the first enactment of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 1967, with national and regional governments' role largely confined to making decisions on its local implementation. The CAP, last reformed in 2021, continues to be the most impactful agricultural policy in Europe, with deep repercussions around the world. It is the single largest item in the EU budget, accounting for 33% of total spending (€ 55.71 billion) in 2021. In 2019, more than 80% of this (most of what is known as "the 1st pillar") was spent in direct payments to farmers, which are predominantly based on the size of their landholding or animal herd. This results in a heavily skewed distribution of the funds: the great majority (75%) of farms received €5,000 or less in direct payment in 2019, while the largest 1,93% of farms received more than € 50,000 each. Rural farmers with very small holdings, below the so-called "minimum requirement" (0.3 to 5 ha, depending on the country) and farms in urban areas are not eligible for any direct payments at all. Furthermore, the so-called 2nd pillar, containing €95.5 billion or 24,7 % of CAP funds in 2019, is meant to support "a thriving rural economy" and a variety of measures to make agriculture more sustainable. However, numerous evaluations of successive versions of the CAP – most recently the European Court of Auditors in May 2022 - have found that for all the rhetoric and dedicated funds, the desired effects on climate change mitigation, biodiversity, soil and water protection have not materialised, while both the overall number of farms and people making their living in agriculture has been falling for decades.

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programm

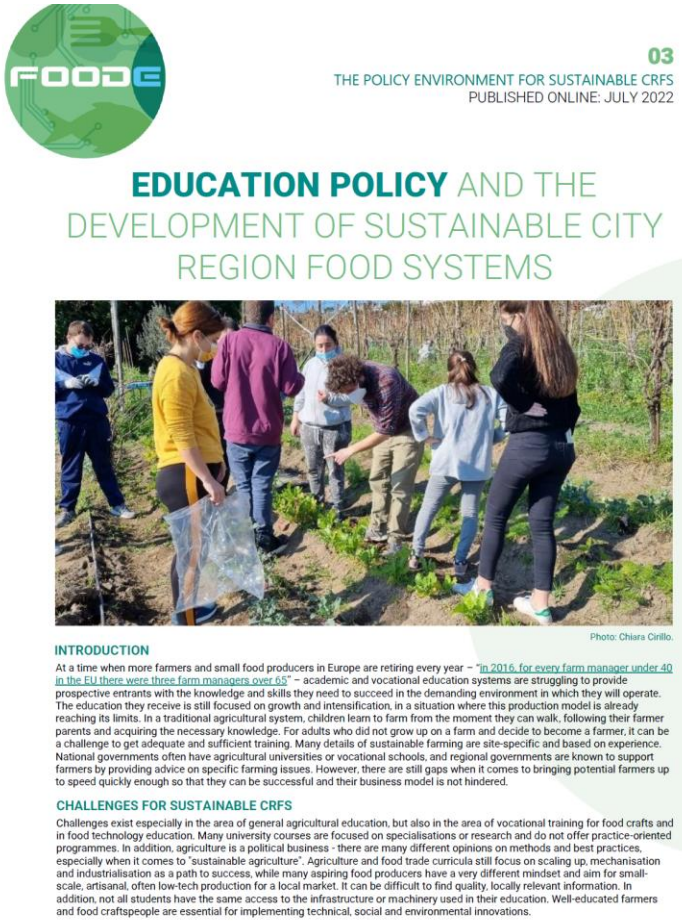
Policy Factsheets: Education

Barriers to CRFS:

- Training & education programmes in agriculture, food craftsmanship and industry very focused on scale, technology, don‘t include alternative models

  → Educational frameworks set at national or state level

  → Curricula developed by state or individual university/school



03
THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE CRFS
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EDUCATION POLICY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE CITY REGION FOOD SYSTEMS

Photo: Chiara Cirillo.

INTRODUCTION

At a time when more farmers and small food producers in Europe are retiring every year – "in 2016, for every farm manager under 40 in the EU there were three farm managers over 65" – academic and vocational education systems are struggling to provide prospective entrants with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the demanding environment in which they will operate. The education they receive is still focused on growth and intensification, in a situation where this production model is already reaching its limits. In a traditional agricultural system, children learn to farm from the moment they can walk, following their farmer parents and acquiring the necessary knowledge. For adults who did not grow up on a farm and decide to become a farmer, it can be a challenge to get adequate and sufficient training. Many details of sustainable farming are site-specific and based on experience. National governments often have agricultural universities or vocational schools, and regional governments are known to support farmers by providing advice on specific farming issues. However, there are still gaps when it comes to bringing potential farmers up to speed quickly enough so that they can be successful and their business model is not hindered.

CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE CRFS

Challenges exist especially in the area of general agricultural education, but also in the area of vocational training for food crafts and in food technology education. Many university courses are focused on specialisations or research and do not offer practice-oriented programmes. In addition, agriculture is a political business - there are many different opinions on methods and best practices, especially when it comes to 'sustainable agriculture'. Agriculture and food trade curricula still focus on scaling up, mechanisation and industrialisation as a path to success, while many aspiring food producers have a very different mindset and aim for small-scale, artisanal, often low-tech production for a local market. It can be difficult to find quality, locally relevant information. In addition, not all students have the same access to the infrastructure or machinery used in their education. Well-educated farmers and food craftspeople are essential for implementing technical, social and environmental innovations.

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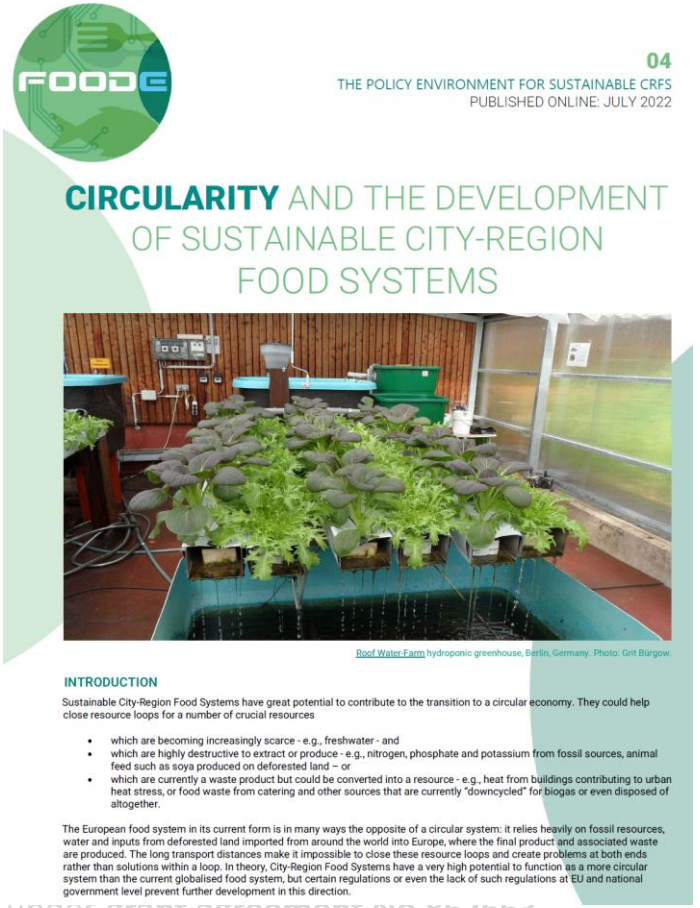
Policy Factsheets: Circularity

Barriers to CRFS:

- EU regulations on wastewater recycling for urban agriculture, and also on animal feed preclude the closing of cycles
  - → Technology exists
  - → The need for resource conservation is clear & acknowledged
  - → Circularity runs counter to the underlying logic of the current policy regime



04
THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE CRFS
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CIRCULARITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE CITY-REGION FOOD SYSTEMS

Roof Water-Farm hydroponic greenhouse, Berlin, Germany. Photo: Grit Bürgow.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable City-Region Food Systems have great potential to contribute to the transition to a circular economy. They could help close resource loops for a number of crucial resources

- which are becoming increasingly scarce - e.g., freshwater - and
- which are highly destructive to extract or produce - e.g., nitrogen, phosphate and potassium from fossil sources, animal feed such as soya produced on deforested land – or
- which are currently a waste product but could be converted into a resource - e.g., heat from buildings contributing to urban heat stress, or food waste from catering and other sources that are currently "downcycled" for biogas or even disposed of altogether.

The European food system in its current form is in many ways the opposite of a circular system: it relies heavily on fossil resources, water and inputs from deforested land imported from around the world into Europe, where the final product and associated waste are produced. The long transport distances make it impossible to close these resource loops and create problems at both ends rather than solutions within a loop. In theory, City-Region Food Systems have a very high potential to function as a more circular system than the current globalised food system, but certain regulations or even the lack of such regulations at EU and national government level prevent further development in this direction.

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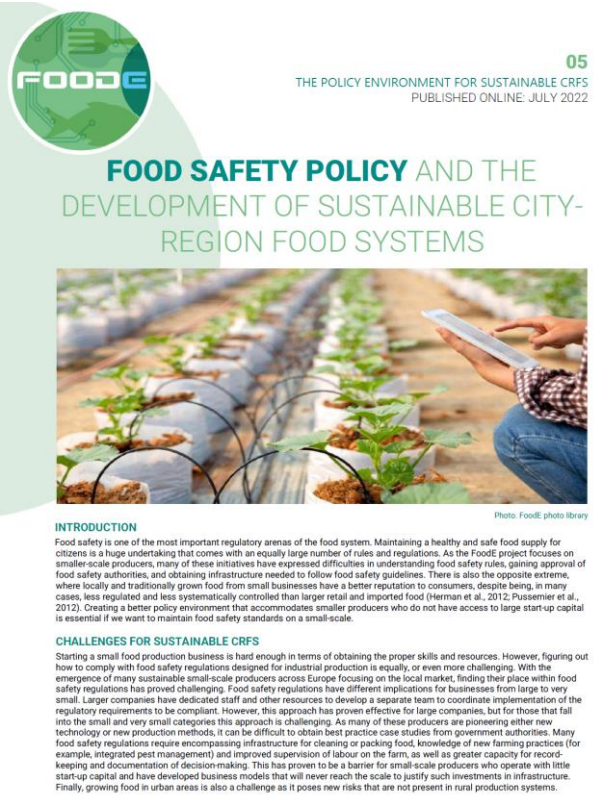
Policy Factsheets: Food Safety

Barriers to CRFS:

- EU & national regulations on food safety are very onerous to smaller operators – they have led to a great loss of food processing infrastructure
  - → Need for expensive infrastructure/technology, services, knowledge, time (bureaucracy!)
  - → Perverse outcomes: policy meant to address problems caused by industrialisation end up reinforcing it



05
THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE CRFS
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FOOD SAFETY POLICY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE CITY-REGION FOOD SYSTEMS

Photo: FoodE photo library

INTRODUCTION

Food safety is one of the most important regulatory arenas of the food system. Maintaining a healthy and safe food supply for citizens is a huge undertaking that comes with an equally large number of rules and regulations. As the FoodE project focuses on smaller-scale producers, many of these initiatives have expressed difficulties in understanding food safety rules, gaining approval of food safety authorities, and obtaining infrastructure needed to follow food safety guidelines. There is also the opposite extreme, where locally and traditionally grown food from small businesses have a better reputation to consumers, despite being, in many cases, less regulated and less systematically controlled than larger retail and imported food (Herman et al., 2012; Pussemier et al., 2012). Creating a better policy environment that accommodates smaller producers who do not have access to large start-up capital is essential if we want to maintain food safety standards on a small-scale.

CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE CRFS

Starting a small food production business is hard enough in terms of obtaining the proper skills and resources. However, figuring out how to comply with food safety regulations designed for industrial production is equally, or even more challenging. With the emergence of many sustainable small-scale producers across Europe focusing on the local market, finding their place within food safety regulations has proved challenging. Food safety regulations have different implications for businesses from large to very small. Larger companies have dedicated staff and other resources to develop a separate team to coordinate implementation of the regulatory requirements to be compliant. However, this approach has proven effective for large companies, but for those that fall into the small and very small categories this approach is challenging. As many of these producers are pioneering either new technology or new production methods, it can be difficult to obtain best practice case studies from government authorities. Many food safety regulations require encompassing infrastructure for cleaning or packing food, knowledge of new farming practices (for example, integrated pest management) and improved supervision of labour on the farm, as well as greater capacity for record-keeping and documentation of decision-making. This has proven to be a barrier for small-scale producers who operate with little start-up capital and have developed business models that will never reach the scale to justify such investments in infrastructure. Finally, growing food in urban areas is also a challenge as it poses new risks that are not present in rural production systems.

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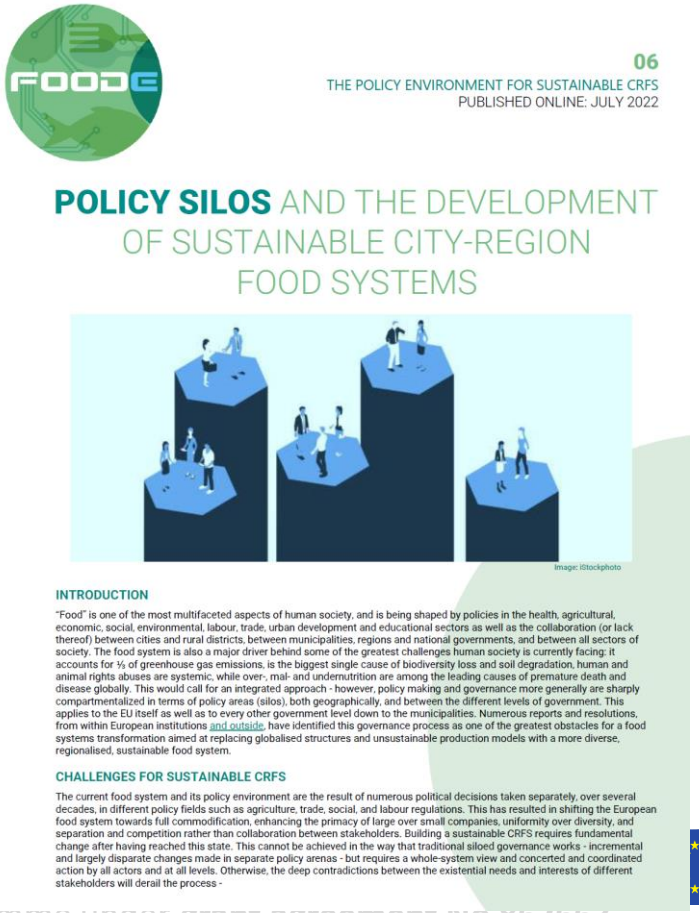
Policy Factsheets: Silos

Barriers to CRFS:

- Lack of joined-up policy making at all levels from EU down to municipalities
  - → inability to address systemic problems & effect transformation
  - → individual “costs” outweigh system-wide “gains”



06

THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE CRFS
PUBLISHED ONLINE: JULY 2022

POLICY SILOS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE CITY-REGION FOOD SYSTEMS

Image: iStockphoto

INTRODUCTION

“Food” is one of the most multifaceted aspects of human society, and is being shaped by policies in the health, agricultural, economic, social, environmental, labour, trade, urban development and educational sectors as well as the collaboration (or lack thereof) between cities and rural districts, between municipalities, regions and national governments, and between all sectors of society. The food system is also a major driver behind some of the greatest challenges human society is currently facing: it accounts for ⅓ of greenhouse gas emissions, is the biggest single cause of biodiversity loss and soil degradation, human and animal rights abuses are systemic, while over-, mal- and undernutrition are among the leading causes of premature death and disease globally. This would call for an integrated approach - however, policy making and governance more generally are sharply compartmentalized in terms of policy areas (silos), both geographically, and between the different levels of government. This applies to the EU itself as well as to every other government level down to the municipalities. Numerous reports and resolutions, from within European institutions and outside, have identified this governance process as one of the greatest obstacles for a food systems transformation aimed at replacing globalised structures and unsustainable production models with a more diverse, regionalised, sustainable food system.

CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE CRFS

The current food system and its policy environment are the result of numerous political decisions taken separately, over several decades, in different policy fields such as agriculture, trade, social, and labour regulations. This has resulted in shifting the European food system towards full commodification, enhancing the primacy of large over small companies, uniformity over diversity, and separation and competition rather than collaboration between stakeholders. Building a sustainable CRFS requires fundamental change after having reached this state. This cannot be achieved in the way that traditional siloed governance works - incremental and largely disparate changes made in separate policy arenas - but requires a whole-system view and concerted and coordinated action by all actors and at all levels. Otherwise, the deep contradictions between the existential needs and interests of different stakeholders will derail the process -

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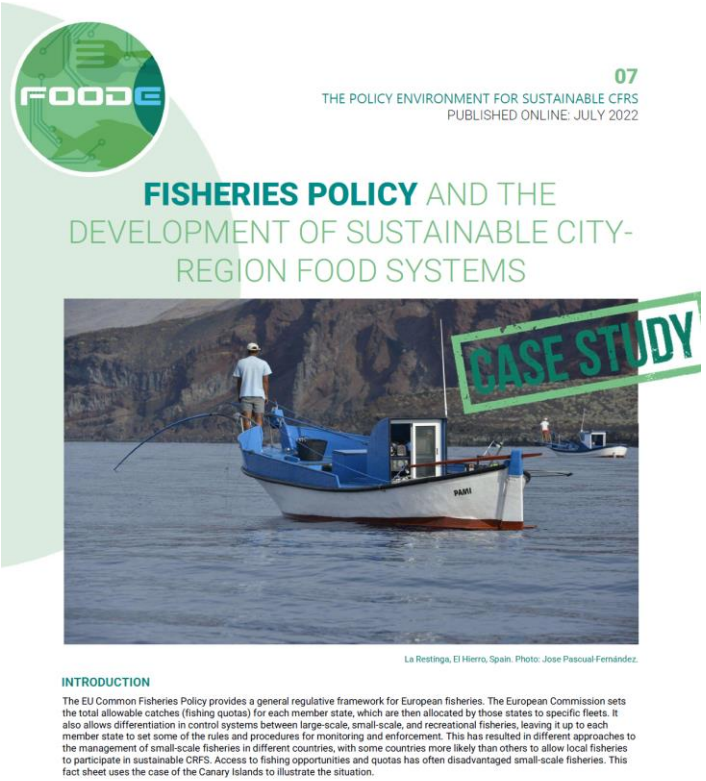
Policy Factsheets: Fisheries

Barriers to CRFS:

- Fishing regulation set at EU level and even above
- Implementation through e.g. allocation of quotas & enforcement at national, regional & local level

  → small-scale fishers unable to lobby in Brussels & beyond

  → uneven implementation & enforcement



07

THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE CFRS

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FISHERIES POLICY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE CITY-REGION FOOD SYSTEMS

CASE STUDY

La Restinga, El Hierro, Spain. Photo: Jose Pascual Fernández.

INTRODUCTION

The EU Common Fisheries Policy provides a general regulative framework for European fisheries. The European Commission sets the total allowable catches (fishing quotas) for each member state, which are then allocated by those states to specific fleets. It also allows differentiation in control systems between large-scale, small-scale, and recreational fisheries, leaving it up to each member state to set some of the rules and procedures for monitoring and enforcement. This has resulted in different approaches to the management of small-scale fisheries in different countries, with some countries more likely than others to allow local fisheries to participate in sustainable CRFS. Access to fishing opportunities and quotas has often disadvantaged small-scale fisheries. This fact sheet uses the case of the Canary Islands to illustrate the situation.

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Any questions or comments?

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