

Mapping tools chart path towards sustainable urban food supply

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The results of the EU-funded FOODMETRES project were discussed at the EU's Bioeconomy Investment Summit, held in Brussels in November 2015. Experts from across the agricultural industry collaborated to find innovative solutions that will ensure the economic and environmental sustainability of food supplies to urban areas. At the summit, project coordinator Dirk Wascher from Alterra Wageningen in the Netherlands outlined the project's key successes, and how these will benefit local and national level policy makers, consumers and businesses attached to the agro-food sector.

A key legacy of the [project](#) will be the series of technical references and decision support tools that have been developed. These have been designed to allow agro-[food](#) businesses, [policy makers](#) and civil society

organisations to gain a better understanding of urban food supply needs, and to achieve more innovative food chain planning and governance.

For example, stakeholders can now access the FOODMETRES Knowledge Portal, which is now available online. This portal provides insight into cutting edge research on achieving efficient [food supplies](#) and highlights successful local initiatives and business examples uncovered in the project.

A central element of the programme has been the mapping of agro-food systems at the local, metropolitan and global level. One of the project's key contributions has been to enable the visualisation of metropolitan supply and demand scenarios through developing interactive mapping tools, which will help stakeholders to better understand the possibilities for increasing metropolitan food sufficiency.

One of these tools – the Metropolitan Footprint Tool (MFT) – will allow policy makers to run simulations in order to help them improve regional food supply capacity. In addition, this will enable stakeholders all along the agro-food supply chain to make efficiencies and thus reduce operational costs.

The project team used these various mapping tools to carry out assessments in six [urban areas](#): Berlin (Germany), Ljubljana (Slovenia), London (UK), Milan (Italy), Nairobi (Kenya) and Rotterdam (Netherlands). For each case study, the project put forward a new strategic approach to food planning for sustainable metropolitan regions, focusing on involving all stakeholders – from policy makers to the agro-food sector – in evidence-based decision making.

Throughout the project, the FOODMETRES team focused on principles such as resource-efficiency, food cluster development and system innovation. Ultimately they were able to demonstrate that cities can be

self-sufficient with regards to region-specific food consumption and food supply capacities, but that better food planning and innovation are needed in order to make [food chains](#) more sustainable.

Many cities across the world are already developing their own food policies and programmes, in order to combine sustainable development objectives with food security and social innovation. Ensuring the sustainability of food chains – particularly in increasingly concentrated urban areas – will have a long-lasting economic and environmental impact. By providing new tools and methods for reducing the length of food chains and improving production efficiency, the FOODMETRES project represents a positive step forward.

More information: For further information please visit the FOODMETRES project website: www.foodmetres.eu/

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