

5.C. Skills building seminar: Leveraging local government policies to improve food systems for public and planetary health

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Changing food systems is one of the most promising and impactful ways to address nutrition and health, climate change and environmental degradation. The International Network for Food and Obesity/NCDs Research Monitoring and Action Support (INFORMAS) developed the Healthy Food

Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) to measure the extent of implementation of healthy food environment policies by governments compared to international best practice. The Food-EPI provides a mechanism to assess government policies and infrastructure support to create healthy food environments. The Food-EPI tool covers seven food policy areas, including composition, labelling, promotion, prices, provision, retail and trade, and six measures of infrastructure, including leadership, governance, funding, monitoring, platforms and health-in-all-policies. The Food-EPI process includes the

drafting of a comprehensive evidence document on the implementation of policies, verified by government stakeholders and the assessment of those policies, as well as identification of priority policy actions by an expert panel at the national level. The tool and process were pilot tested and implemented in New Zealand in 2014 and then again in 2017 and 2020. Since 2014, about 50 countries have implemented Food-EPI at the national level, including more than 10 European countries. There is increasing demand for a similar monitoring tool and process which can be used at the municipal/city government level to assess government actions addressing food systems for both public and planetary health. Local governments can often make more rapid progress than national governments, but on the other hand may not have jurisdiction in all critical policy areas. INFORMAS recently developed a new Food Systems Policy Index, based on a compilation of international recommendations for good practice government policies to address food systems and a scoping review on the potential effectiveness of the recommended good practice policies and interventions to improve nutrition and environmental sustainability outcomes. The new index covers policies addressing food supply chains and food environments, and is being implemented in a range of West and East African and European countries and cities. The purpose of the workshop is to discuss the role and potential of local level government (cities and municipalities) policies in addressing food systems to improve both public and planetary. The workshop will have several key presentations, some with a more global perspective and some with a very practical local perspective. Together with the panelists and the audience, the key opportunities and challenges will be discussed for European cities and municipalities to address food systems, as well as the role of monitoring and benchmarking policy implementation to increase local actions on food systems.

Key messages:

- Monitoring and benchmarking the policy implementation to address food systems to improve public and planetary health by governments is key to increase accountability for action.
- A better understanding on the role and potential of local government policies in addressing food systems can be beneficial to accelerate and innovate policy implementation.