

KEY WORDS

Food council, participatory food policies



Governance

Action 1.1

Action 1.2

FOOD POLICY

Municipal Food Council

✓ OBJECTIVES

- To create a food policies participatory space, involving the economic and social fabrics, aiming at co creating and driving transforming food policies.
- To consolidate local food policies.
- To improve the relocalization of the local food system, promoting local production to be consumed locally.
- To contribute to a cultural change in terms of how food is produced and its impact on health, the local economy, the territory and the climate.
- To generate economic food structures that allow local food farmers to increase their sales through short distribution channels.

**CONTRIBUTION TO
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**



📄 POLICY DESCRIPTION

The Valencia Municipal Food Council is a consultative and sectorial participation body belonging to the Valencia City Council whose aim is to promote a more sustainable, healthier and fairer local agri-food system, in line with the commitments adopted by the Valencia City Council through the signature of the *Milan Urban Food Policy Pact*.

During a year, three workshops took place with local organisations to consider which local food governance space would be the most convenient to improve local food policies. From this process emerged the decision to establish a food council, as a formal space within the City Council, aiming at defining a food policy framework, based on some ground principles:

- Create a space of governance and local participation within the City Council (aiming at existing beyond the political mandate).
- Promote processes of joint construction of local food policies among civil society, the economic and social fabric and local administration actors.
- Channel upwards propositions coming from civil society.

The food council has 4 working areas:

- Joint creation of projects coming from civil society towards the public administration.
- Intra-municipal coordination among different departments.
- Definition of a food policy monitoring and evaluation system emerging from the economic and social fabrics.
- Promotion of multilevel coordination spaces with supra local entities driving food policies. Coordination with the *L'Horta Council* (*L'Horta de València* is a very fertile stripe of land in this mediterranean region famous for its vegetable crops) at metropolitan level and with the network of cities for agroecology at national level.

One additional aspect is the work towards local agrifood good governance from a territorialised food system perspective.

The food council comprises seven working groups on the following topics:

- Public food procurement.
- Local markets and short distribution food channels.
- Right to food and vulnerable groups.
- Traditional local fishing.
- Climate change and food.
- Agroecological transition.



The process started in 2018. In 2109, the Municipal Agri-food Strategy was approved and the work framework created. By the end of 2022 it is expected that the Food Council will be consolidated with seven operational working groups. Since 2022, the Technical Secretary is integrated into the Department of Agriculture.

🏠 DEPARTMENTS IN CHARGE

Agriculture, Sustainable food and *Horta*





€ BUDGET

The Municipal Food Council does not have a specific budget as such. It depends on the proposals presented by the working groups each year.

👤 BENEFICIARIES

40 entities participate in the Valencia Food Council, related to agriculture, agroecology, agribusiness, social fabric, economy, consumption, nutrition and ecology.

ASPIRATIONAL QUANTITATIVE OBJECTIVES

- To introduce public food procurement for the 9 municipal schools integrating social and ecological criteria.
- To create of 3 local farm markets as direct selling points in Valencia.
- To create an integral project to reduce by 80% the waste of fruits and vegetables in Mercavalencia (wholesale market), the largest public food hub in Valencia.
- To create a network of organic farmers at *L'Horta de València*, to improve their sales to schools.

Overall aspiration of the food policies committed to The Barcelona Challenge:

<https://toolkit.thebcnchallenge.org/challenges/report/238>

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Social economy organisations, associations linked to food sovereignty and agroecology.

Department of agriculture, *Horta* and sustainable food.

College of nutritionists

STRENGTHS AND SUCCESS POINTS

The presence of a strong social and economic fabric linked to food sovereignty and protection of the territory and a tradition of vegetable cultivation in the area, with high social and historical values, and a citizenship engaged and motivated regarding these topics are the blocks that have built the Municipal Food Council. Another key aspect has been the engagement of a local administration that is highly sensitive to sustainable food and local agriculture with a strong technical will and a favourable international context, as Valencia is committed to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.

Another strength is the integration of a larger approach within food policies: broadening to other thematic areas such as health, trade... and mainstreaming sustainable food as a municipal policy.

Valencia's Food Council is the first of its kind at national level. It is a space where social entities can evaluate the City Council's actions and where the City Council can take proposals down to the field and get actors' feedback.

One of the success points is the inclusion of sustainability criteria in public tenders for schools food suppliers, thanks to the job of the public food procurement working group.

CRITICAL POINTS

Even if the Food Council can be a powerful initiative, it becomes necessary to strike a balance between its potential communicative outreach and the evaluation of the real impact of its actions.

It is also essential to ensure that the participation and discussion space yields specific actions, to minimise the risk of perceived greenwashing.

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

In order to ensure the continuity of the Food Council, a high level of political commitment is required, as well as establishing a coordination structure.

The fact that this is a very diverse, hybrid institutional space (public administration and civil society), makes it essential to find a balance within that diversity and to integrate complex working approaches for its management.

As it is an institutional initiative, it can be hard to reach field actors. To overcome that, the Food Council should approach them and find appropriate ways to reach them, adapting itself to sectors specificities, like the agricultural one.



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FURTHER INFORMATION

[Food Council website](#)