Healthy School Food Toolkit

Chapter 1 Chapter 2 Chapter 3 Chapter 4

HEALTHY WAVE

Co-funded by the European Union

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — **Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark** p.10

Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10

Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13

Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17

Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — **How to get started** p.22

1. Who will you be working with? p.22

2. Where do you want to go? p.23

3. What is your starting situation? p.24

4. What are your priorities? p.25

+ template needs analysis p.26

+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — **The action plan** p.35

How do I get started? p.36

To measure is to know p.37

The importance of piloting p.37

+ template action plan p.38

+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — **Background information** p.50

+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53

+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

INTRODUCTION

Why TOOLKIT?

This toolkit is one of the key outcomes of the Healthy Wave project. It was created to support you, municipal staff, who wants to start working on School Food or strengthen the initiatives already underway. Whether you are taking your very first steps or looking to deepen existing efforts, this guide is designed to help you move forward with confidence.

At the heart of this guide lies the Whole School Food Approach (WSFA): a holistic, step-by-step methodology that looks beyond isolated actions and instead builds a healthy food culture across the entire school environment.

Curious to get started? Then you're in the right place. This guide is intentionally short, practical, and easy to use. You won't find long theoretical explanations here. Instead, we focus on what matters most: clear steps, concrete examples, and tools you can apply directly in your local context. And no, you don't need to follow every step in order. Take what is useful, adapt it to your reality, and build from there.

This toolkit has been curated by Rikolto with the cooperation of:
- Agrupamento de Escolas Anselmo de Andrade (Almada)
- Asociatia Cluster de Educatie Cluj-Napoca
- Asociatia GAL Somes-Nadas
- Erasmus MC
- Municipality of Gothenburg
- Municipality of Milan
- Municipality of Riga
- City of Rotterdam
- Municipality of Varna
- Obs Delfshaven (Rotterdam)

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The guide is organised into five chapters:

Introduction: a brief overview of the Healthy Wave project and an explanation of the Whole School Food Approach.

Chapter 1
The four pillars and benchmarks of the WSFA, with possible actions for city administrations and inspiring examples from European cities.

Chapter 2
The preparatory steps you can take before launching a school food policy.

Chapter 3
A hands-on guide to developing a concrete action plan.

Chapter 4
Links to existing tools, websites, and good practices.

Chapter 5
The interplay of factors in the system that are important for successfull implementation of healthy school lunches and key leverage points.

This toolkit is here to support you in shaping healthier, more sustainable food environments for children and young people. **Let's dive in and take the next step together.**

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — **Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark** p.10

Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10

Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13

Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17

Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — **How to get started** p.22

1. Who will you be working with? p.22

2. Where do you want to go? p.23

3. What is your starting situation? p.24

4. What are your priorities? p.25

+ template needs analysis p.26

+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — **The action plan** p.35

How do I get started? p.36

To measure is to know p.37

The importance of piloting p.37

+ template action plan p.38

+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — **Background information** p.50

+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53

+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

INTRODUCTION

What is the Healthy Wave project?

Implementoring Healthy Meal for all (Healthy Wave) project aims to contribute to the implementation of the European Child Guarantee to ensure effective and free access to at least one healthy meal each school day for all children at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Europe. Therefore, we need to implement school lunch concepts that have high nutritious quality, are safe, sustainable and low in waste, inclusive, satisfactory to children, parents and school staff, feasible and affordable.

In this three-year mentor-mentee project, four pairs worked together to implement healthy school lunches: Almada & Baciu, Cluj & Riga, Gothenburg & Varna, Milan & Rotterdam. The cities used the Whole school food approach (WSFA) as a guiding framework.
This toolkit outlines the different steps they took to realise their goal. It aims to inspire and facilitate other cities in the future.

www.healthywave.eu



TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — **Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark** p.10

Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10

Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13

Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17

Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — **How to get started** p.22

1. Who will you be working with? p.22

2. Where do you want to go? p.23

3. What is your starting situation? p.24

4. What are your priorities? p.25

+ template needs analysis p.26

+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — **The action plan** p.35

How do I get started? p.36

To measure is to know p.37

The importance of piloting p.37

+ template action plan p.38

+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — **Background information** p.50

+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53

+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

INTRODUCTION

Why is school food important?

Most children do not meet their dietary recommendations[1]. They do not consume enough fruit and vegetables, while sugary drinks, sweets and snacks remain popular, also during their lunch at school[2,3]. This is a problem as eating healthy has many benefits for children. It supports brain development, healthy growth, boosts immunity, and supports good academic performances[4,5]. Also, a child that has a healthy diet, will be more likely to eat healthy later in life[6].

Unfortunately, social vulnerabilities have been linked with an increased risk of unhealthy eating in children across Europe[7]. This remains a significant issue in Europe as 19.5 million European children were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2024 corresponding to 24.2% of children under the age of 18 across the European Union[8].

Research on healthy school meals showed beneficial effects on healthy food consumption[9-12]. In addition, offering healthy school meals helps promote food equity, ensuring that every child receives at least one nutritious meal daily[13]. Almost all children, regardless of their socioeconomic, religious or cultural background, go to school together and spend a lot of their time there. Therefore, school lunch programs serve not only as health initiatives but also as essential tools to combat child poverty and promote equal opportunities. That is why the European Child Guarantee includes access to at least one healthy school meal per day[14].

School meal programs have existed for decades across the globe[15]. Yet, international surveys show that many European countries still struggle to provide school meals for children[16].

This is worrying given the commitments outlined in the European Child Guarantee, and these challenges can often be explained by the complexity of the systems needed to put school lunch programs into practice.

That is why the Healthy Wave project and this toolkit was brought to life. This mentor-project aims to help countries that want to make a healthy school lunch the norm. Together with their mentor that has a lot of experience already, they take steps towards this goal. By sharing experiences in a practical toolkit, we empower other cities and local governments to put healthy, sustainable school lunches on every table, giving all children a fair chance to grow and learn.

The European Child Guarantee

The European Child Guarantee is an EU initiative to fight child poverty and social exclusion by ensuring vulnerable children have access to key services like free early childhood education, education, healthcare, nutrition, and adequate housing by 2030.

Visit website

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10

Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10

Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13

Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17

Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22

1. Who will you be working with? p.22

2. Where do you want to go? p.23

3. What is your starting situation? p.24

4. What are your priorities? p.25

+ template needs analysis p.26

+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35

How do I get started? p.36

To measure is to know p.37

The importance of piloting p.37

+ template action plan p.38

+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50

+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53

+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

INTRODUCTION

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10

- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22

- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35

- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50

- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

INTRODUCTION

What is the Whole School Food Approach (WSFA)?

This toolkit is based on the framework of the Whole School Food Approach. WSFA is a method for developing a healthy and sustainable food culture in and around schools. The goal is to approach food in a holistic way, through a variety of learning situations and subjects that allow us to look at food from different perspectives. It is an evidencebased concept that contributes to communitywide systemic change and positively affects education, sustainability, inequalities, communities and health. WSFA focusses on four areas of work, or pillars.

The WSFA framework was initially made up for schools. The chosen benchmarks were all relevant for principals, teachers and other school staff. In the Healthy wave project, the actors are cities. During the project we organized several workshops to adjust the benchmarks to make sure they are more relevant for city staff. The 4 main pillars remain unchanged, but the underlying benchmarks are adapted to the different target group.

What are the 4 pillars of the WSFA?

1. **Policy & Leadership:** convincing stakeholders to make healthy and sustainable food an intrinsic part of school life and part of the local policy.
2. **Food & Sustainability:** providing healthy and sustainable food in school canteen, during breaks and outside the school.
3. **Education & Learning:** expanding the students curriculum as well as getting involved in the training of school staff, cooks, principals and teachers.
4. **Community & Partnership:** cooperation with stakeholders associated with the schools, such as school staff and teachers, local shops, restaurants, farmers, food initiatives, city government, etc.

The WSFA guidelines describe every pillar in detail. They also include possible starting points, implementation measures, stakeholder roles and evaluation criteria. This framework helps schools and municipalities facilitate the transition by providing information on practical teaching methods, learning activities and the active participation of pupils and teachers. The aim is to link and involve everyone along the entire chain with a new vision of sustainable school meals.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — **Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark** p.10

Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10

Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13

Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17

Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — **How to get started** p.22

1. Who will you be working with? p.22

2. Where do you want to go? p.23

3. What is your starting situation? p.24

4. What are your priorities? p.25

+ template needs analysis p.26

+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — **The action plan** p.35

How do I get started? p.36

To measure is to know p.37

The importance of piloting p.37

+ template action plan p.38

+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — **Background information** p.50

+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53

+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

INTRODUCTION

Who is involved?

The WSFA invites school staff, school meal providers, city officials, producers, farmers, parents, and pupils to sit together at one table. This makes it possible for everyone to understand where the food comes from, what it does to their bodies and how it impacts the climate and environment.

What is the specific role of cities?
Local and regional authorities such as cities and regions can act as catalysts for change and make a real difference to public health, society and the environment. They often play a significant role in improving education and in promoting sustainable public food procurement policies. As local and regional authorities operate in close proximity to different stakeholders, they can help implement the WSFA in schools through tailored guidance and the provision of coaching and networking opportunities to facilitate partnerships with local actors.

How does it work?

The WSFA acts as a framework that provides guidance for the implementation of healthy, sustainable school nutrition. Working with WSFA means working on all four pillars, as each pillar contains different building blocks to support the gradual implementation of a healthy and sustainable food culture. To achieve this, it is important that the city works together across different departments.

What are the benefits?

Health and sustainability are complex issues to deal with but at the same time crucial for the present and the future. We can't close our eyes to the fact that the way we produce and consume food is among the biggest challenges to reach a sustainable future. A municipality and its schools that work with WSFA gives students both knowledge on healthy and sustainable food, as well as motivation and opportunities to act and be conscious citizens here and now and in the future. **The goal is to realise sustainable behavioural change for our future generations.** Through the WSFA, we put young people in the lead to make the food system more sustainable.

WSFA builds on a holistic view of sustainable development, which means that both ecological, economic, and social perspectives are embedded in the work. For cities, working with schools is often the starting point for rolling out a broader food policy across the entire city. By collaborating across departments, food becomes a cross-cutting topic in urban policy.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10

- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22

- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- **+ template needs analysis** p.26
- **+ impact/effort matrix** p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35

- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- **+ template action plan** p.38
- **+ template M&E** p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50

- **+ How to work with your stakeholders?** p.53
- **+ Stakeholder matrix** p.54

INTRODUCTION

Where do I find support?

Want to implement the WSFA? Find out how in this practical guide: Practical guide for schools on how to implement the Whole School Food approach and guidelines for schools and cities (available in different languages) with indicators, tools, and good practices to get some inspiration.

Good practices from 2023
https://schoolfood4change.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2024-SF4C-Yearly-State-of-Play-Rikolto.pdf

Good practices from 2024
https://schoolfood4change.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/SF4C-Yearly-State-of-Play.pdf_compressed.pdf

Good practices from 2025
https://schoolfood4change.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/magazine-WSFA-CHANGED.pdf

Explore the WSFA criteria checklist and learn how to apply it.

Abbreviations used:

CLD: Causal Loop Diagram
KPI: Key Performance Indicator
M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation
Ngo: non gouvernmental organisation
SF4C: SchoolFood4Change
SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
WSFA: Whole School Food Approach

How to use this toolkit?

This toolkit provides concrete tips and a step-by-step plan for getting started with the WSFA. In **the first chapter**, we outline the four pillars of the WSFA and translate them into possible actions for cities. We illustrate this with good practices from all over Europe.

In the **second chapter**, we explain how a city can get started in very concrete terms. We guide you step by step through the initial and preparatory phase. In this phase, you look for the right people and bring them together around the table. You think about your common goal and what is needed to achieve it. Finally, you select your priorities together. Where necessary, we provide templates and tools to facilitate this.

Once it is clear what you want to do in your city, we guide you in **chapter 3** in drawing up an action plan. We provide a template for this, which you fill in step by step with a large group of stakeholders. This plan is the roadmap that shows you step by step what you need to do and when you will achieve your goal.

Chapter 4 can be seen as a collection attachements. It brings together several aspects of school nutrition that are important for cities (financing, regulations, policy influence, education and stakeholder management). These topics were chosen by the participating cities in the European Healthy Wave project, based on their needs.

Together with partners from the Healthy Wave project, we visualised the complex system of the provision of healthy school lunches in a European context. This overview, **in chapter 5**, helps you identify the many important factors and their interplay in the system. Based on this system map we identified leverage points for successfull implementation of healthy school lunches in your city.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — **Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark** p.10

Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10

Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13

Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17

Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — **How to get started** p.22

1. Who will you be working with? p.22

2. Where do you want to go? p.23

3. What is your starting situation? p.24

4. What are your priorities? p.25

+ template needs analysis p.26

+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — **The action plan** p.35

How do I get started? p.36

To measure is to know p.37

The importance of piloting p.37

+ template action plan p.38

+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — **Background information** p.50

+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53

+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Chapter 1: **Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark**

Intro:

In this first chapter, we take a closer look at the four pillars of the Whole School Food Approach (WSFA) and translate them into concrete, city-focused actions. The WSFA may be a broad framework, but here you will find what it means specifically for municipalities: what you can do, how you can contribute, and where your role becomes essential.

To make it tangible, each pillar is illustrated with good practices from cities across Europe. These examples show how others have approached similar challenges, what worked for them, and how their experiences might inspire your own local strategy. Think of this chapter as a reference document: a place to get ideas, **explore possibilities, and see how different municipalities are putting the WSFA into practice.**

It is also an excellent starting point for internal discussions within your administration. Whether you are exploring the topic for the first time or refining an existing policy, the actions described here can help you identify priorities, spark conversations, and build shared understanding across departments.

At the end of each WSFA pillar, you'll find a short summary capturing the essence of the actions and examples presented. Use these overviews to quickly orient yourself, compare approaches, or prepare for meetings and planning sessions.

Let's dive into the four pillars and discover how cities can play a powerful role in shaping healthier, more sustainable food environments in schools.



TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership

Definition
This pillar ensures the WSFA is endorsed by the cities leadership and enshrined in the city's vision, mission, values & policies.

Why?
This is necessary in order to allocate the necessary budgets and manpower at city level.

Possible actions for cities:

A. Working group

- Establish a city working group, with members from different city departments (Education, Health, Communication, Youth, Finance, ...).
- Encourage working groups in schools. For example, by helping schools to organise an information evening, draw up an action plan (providing examples, templates, facilitator).
- Engage partners, NGO's or associations.
- Support schools in working with 'food ambassadors' (pupils engaged in school food) by organizing selections, trainings, meetings, ... for these ambassadors.

Examples

In **Antwerp**, a working group was set up within the city, comprising all employees involved in school meals. These meetings revealed that many initiatives already exist, but that they are often unaware of each other and operate independently. The main objective of this working group is therefore to join forces and avoid duplication of effort.

In **Nuoro** an inter school food working group has been established. One board for all schools in town with teachers and headmasters, public doctors, and families. In the future they also want to involve pupils, chefs' representatives, and the caterer referent. The goal is to regularly keep a gathering to discuss and organize (school food) activities.

In **Mermoz-Laënnec**, a vulnerable neighborhood in Lyon, the local educational council identified the topic of food as a priority to work on, to support healthy and sustainable eating habits in the neighborhood. The meetings are the occasion to know the wide range of partners, to gain mutual knowledge on existing territory projects, as well as identify common needs. The group collectively decided to organize trainings for the school staff from the neighborhood schools, with the aim of being better armed to answer parent's questions on food. Mermoz-Laënnec council now want to get closer to the parents and include them actively in the educational council, to reinforce the co-construction of actions aimed at supporting healthier and more sustainable food diets in the neighborhood.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Chapter 1: Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark

B. Planning, monitoring & evaluation:

- Evaluate local food culture: identify what is already happening in the area of school nutrition, first with the city working group, later on together with the schools.
- Co-organise an annual evaluation and planning meeting (peer review) with schools, focusing on results and lessons learned.
- Scale up the WSFA. On the one hand, by expanding it to other sectors such as care institutions (childcare, elderly care, etc.) and other urban catering, and on the other hand, by getting more schools on board.



C. Communication

- Promote the steps you take in regard to WSFA in its own communication channels and in the local/national media, with a focus on the achievements of schools in its own region/city.
- Co-organise an annual event: facilitating networking between schools, inviting other stakeholders to a workshop/brainstorming session on cooperation, presenting the results of a design competition for school canteens, presenting schools' plans, …

Examples

Leuven, Secondary school - Paridaens:
The school rules included various rules and tips about food at school.
Newly enrolled pupils received a lunch box from GF@S containing all kinds of tips on how to fill the lunch box in a healthy and sustainable way.

In the **Czech Republic** communication efforts are directed to the pupils but also to caregivers. You can find tips& tricks and picture here.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Chapter 1: Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark

D. Funding & resources

- Allocate budget for staff within the city administration, who can work on school meals.
- Make a budget available for schools (for example, for a farm visit, canteen day, masterclass, ...).
- Actively seek (preferably structural) funding and resources, both in the public and private markets.
- Consider social correction mechanisms for the payment of meals (if a parental contribution is requested) and allocate the necessary budget.

Examples

Brooddoosnodig (Belgian non-profit): They work with a donation platform that relies on the network around the school. They encourage everyone in and around the school (parents, grandparents, family members, local residents and local traders) to treat the children to a nutritious school meal through a solidarity contribution.

E. Political commitment

- Share your experiences with other local and national authorities.
- Put the importance of healthy and sustainable (school) food on the political agenda by looking at good practices at home and abroad.
- Start an urban working group on food (at school), with members from all relevant city departments. Work together on an urban food strategy (for schools).

Summary
the city's role in pillar 1: Policy & Leadership

In this pillar, the city plays a key role as a driver and connector of the Whole School Food Approach. Through clear political support and policy decisions, the city ensures that school food is not a standalone project, but a shared ambition embedded in vision and policies.

Specifically, the city:

- **Provides leadership** by explicitly recognising WSFA in policy documents, strategic plans, and political agendas.
- **Facilitates collaboration** through urban and interdepartmental working groups.
- **Ensures structure and continuity** by organising planning, monitoring, and evaluation, and by scaling up successful practices.
- **Creates visibility** by actively communicating efforts and achievements.
- **Mobilises resource**s by providing budgets, staff, and external funding.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability



Definition
This pillar aims to provide a safe, appropriate space in schools where all children, regardless of background, can enjoy a healthy lunch in peace, either offered at school or brought from home. The food and beverage offer at school is tasty, healthy and balanced, taking into account sustainable criteria that aim for a positive environmental and social impact as much as possible. This way, children and young people are encouraged to improve their knowledge around healthy, sustainable food and apply it in practice.

Why?
Because it all starts with providing healthy, sustainable and tasty food.

Possible actions for cities:

A. Procurement

- Integrating sustainability and health criteria into public procurement by cities and schools.
- Developing a procurement model that schools can use for new catering contracts.
- Promoting cooperation between different schools in the areas of food purchasing, catering contracts, canteen design and healthy and sustainable food via vending machines.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19
Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34
Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46
Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Chapter 1: Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark

Examples

MILAN:

- Milano Ristorazione has increasd its sustainability and quality criteria in the tenders, putting additional criteria (non-compulsory) dedicated to education. Regarding the type of tender this criterion provided extra points to be added to the proposal submitted by the supplier.
  In 2023/2024 in the organic yogurt tender, the winning company has proposed an educational activity in six classes of primary schools.
  In 2025/2026 four new projects related to bread, fruits & vegetables and gnocchi, involved 9 schools with more than 500 students.
- Milano Ristorazione promoted three open meetings named as market dialogues, to meet the producers and present the opportunities related to the food provision for the school canteens. These meetings have been announced through public communication on the websites of the entities, and they were addressed to all potential producers and local producers interested in knowing the tender procedures of the company and the production process to understand the type of production chain.

RIGA:

Riga started with the integration of Green public procurement in 2020.

Green public procurement criteria that must be fulfilled by the caterer if he wants to offer catering services to municipal educational institutions:

Use of **organic products** in cooking:

- mandatory products are determined, which must be of 100% organic origin during the entire contract: milk, kefir, butter, whole grain oatmeal, wheat flour (qualification criteria).
- the procurement applicant chooses the list of organic vegetables and fruits on offer (evaluation criterion).

Use of **local products** in cooking:

- use of **National Quality Scheme products** (= products of which at least 75% of the raw materials were produced in one of the EU countries, or the entire production process was carried out in one of the EU countries).
- use of **integrated agricultural products** (= products produced according to careful assessment of plant protection techniques to identify the most ecological and economic solutions in their application.)
- determining the **minimum distance** from the place of product cultivation or production to the place of catering service. All products used in catering must be grown or produced no more than 300 km away from the educational institution (qualification criterion).

Use of **seasonal products** in cooking:

- for all fruits and vegetables used in catering, a seasonality calendar is determined in procurement (=months in which only local products must be delivered).

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

B. Healthy & safe food standards

- Organise training for school staff (and parents) on healthy and sustainable nutrition, taking into account different cultural needs.
- Draw up a city-wide guideline to provide vegetarian or plant-based food on a regular basis, for example.
- Help schools in making healthy and sustainable food accessible to a large group by focusing on affordability, allergen-free meals and taking cultural & philosophical dietary habits into account.

Examples

ALMADA (PORTUGAL):
Encourage school staff and administrators to have lunch in the canteen whenever possible, to build trust among students and parents in the school's food quality and safety.

MANUAL PLANT BASED SCHOOL FOOD:
See document

C. Facilities

- Support schools in renovating, remodeling and furnishing their dining rooms and kitchens to make these spaces more pleasant and educational and to get pupils more involved.
- Sponsor the installation of drinking fountains in schools.

Examples

MILAN:
Improving eating habits, raising awareness of nutrition issues and promoting waste reduction, by transforming the refectories of four schools.
Discover pictures of the Milan canteens.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

D. Food Waste

- Help schools to prevent food waste, for example with tools to measure food waste, tips & tricks, training & coaching.
- Set an ambitious goal to reduce food waste at city level by a certain percentage.

Examples:

MILAN:
Three main initiatives have been launched to address food waste:

- **Sacchetto Salvamerenda**: a reusable and recyclable snack bag provided by Milano Ristorazione to students, helping them take home uneaten bread, fruit, or desserts, reducing food waste within the school environment. In 2024/2025, 26.930 bags distributed and 117 schools involved.
- **CARE Project**: a collaboration between the City of Milan and Milano Ristorazione, to recover surplus bread and fruit from school canteens. These food items are redistributed through ethical delivery services, such as Cargo-bikes, to Milan's Food Waste Hubs.
- **SITICIBO**: : in cooperation with banco Alimentare foundation the activity aims at collecting fruits and bread from schools to be redistributed to charity organizations.

GOTEBORG:
Food waste management: see attachement, page 21.

Summary
the city's role in pillar 2: Food & Sustainability

In this pillar, the city plays a central role in creating the conditions for healthy, sustainable, and enjoyable school meals. By implementing food standards supporting infrastructure, and guiding procurement, the city ensures that every child has access to good food at school.

Specifically, the city:

- **Sets standards** and expectations for healthy, sustainable, and culturally appropriate meals.
- **Guides procurement** and partnerships by integrating sustainability and health criteria into contracts.
- **Improves facilities and environments** by supporting the renovation of kitchens and dining spaces.
- **Reduces food waste** by providing tools, training, and city-level goals.
- Builds **capacity and awareness** through staff training, educational projects, and communication.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Pillar 3: Education & Learning

Definition
Teaching to cook, grow and understand where food comes from and what effect it has on the environment. Food and food system education touches on all three dimensions of sustainable development: ecological, social and economic. In addition to the children, the target group also includes parents, school and canteen staff, city administration, etc.

Why?
Education strengthens the support for healthy eating at school.
In addition, it is essential to achieve lasting behavioural change among pupils. Authentic learning also plays a significant role in this regard.

Possible actions for cities:

A. Staff training

Organise training for teachers and school staff on the WSFA and sustainable food systems (including setting up local projects).

Examples

GENT
Training for teachers of children with behavioural and emotional problems, whose biggest threshold is to let the children enjoy food. See document

B. Food in the curriculum

- Support schools in **integrating the theme of healthy and sustainable food** into various school subjects for different age groups (e.g. pedagogical guidance, exchange of courses and tools between schools, inspiration from other schools).
- Create an **overview** for teachers/schools **of available teaching materials**, reliable sources, activities and subsidies for nutrition education.
- Lobby to give nutrition a **more prominent place** in education.
- Make a list of **places** that the school can **visit** where children can learn about nutrition. Think of neighbourhood vegetable gardens, farms, commercial kitchens, supermarkets, etc.
- Provide a **subsidy budget** for trips to such places or workshops.

Examples

LEUVEN
Through a tender process, the city selected a chef who gives practical workshops on healthy eating at schools.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
- Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
- Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
- Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

C. Authentic learning

- Subsidise or organise educational initiatives for pupils and/or school staff (E.g.: Copenhagen Food House).
- Make gardening and composting materials available through the municipal parks department so that pupils can create a vegetable garden at school or in the neighbourhood. Provide training and coaching if necessary.

Examples

COPENHAGEN
- Local school garden: see document
- House of food: see document

DUNKERK
Cheff challenge, organized by municipality, combining raising awareness on food issues with fun activities for young people. The theme was the fight against food waste.

Summary
the city's role in pillar 3: Education & Learning

In this pillar, the city acts as a facilitator of food education, ensuring that children, staff, and the wider school community gain the knowledge and skills to make better food choices.

Specifically, the city:

- **Builds capacity** by providing training for teachers, school staff, and canteen teams.
- **Integrates learning into the curriculum** by providing access to teaching materials, and supporting educational trips and workshops.
- **Fosters authentic, practical experiences** such as school gardens and cooking workshop.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Pillar 4: Community & Partnership

Definition

Cooperation with a wide range of actors in the environment surrounding the schools. In doing so, you always seek a win-win collaboration for all partners.
In this area, the city can play a major supporting role for schools, since it often has a good overview of the existing network.

Why?

An integrated approach requires many different stakeholders.
Only this way you can involve everyone and ensure a sustainable result.

Possible actions for cities:

- Make a list of local actors who are willing to collaborate with schools.
- Provide **inspiration** and organise **exchanges** between different schools on how to collaborate with different actors.
- Organise a **reflection/brainstorming** session in a local food council (meeting with all stakeholders and the local or regional government) on possible partnerships between schools and other local stakeholders, such as shops, caterers, farms, food companies, neighbourhood communities, retirement homes, refugee homes or other local groups.
- Contact **local stakeholders** directly and encourage them to collaborate with schools on a WSFA.
- Suggest possible **initiatives** that these stakeholders can take to promote healthy, sustainable nutrition among children/adolescents
- Organise activities that also involve **parents/caregivers**.
- Facilitate concrete projects on site (such as visits to farms), together with the **wider community.**
- Address the **broader food environment** around schools, which influences children's diets. Start by analysing whether healthy, sustainable food is available in school environments and try to increase its availability and limit access to unhealthy food (e.g. by imposing restrictions on fast food outlets and marketing).

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — **Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark** p.10

Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10

Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13

Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17

Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — **How to get started** p.22

1. Who will you be working with? p.22

2. Where do you want to go? p.23

3. What is your starting situation? p.24

4. What are your priorities? p.25

+ template needs analysis p.26

+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — **The action plan** p.35

How do I get started? p.36

To measure is to know p.37

The importance of piloting p.37

+ template action plan p.38

+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — **Background information** p.50

+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53

+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Chapter 1: **Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark**

Examples

MILAN

The “From Garden to Table” project aims to promote healthy eating habits and sustainability among families and children. It is specifically designed for families with children attending primary schools in the Municipality of Milan. During the sessions, that take place in a Cooking Center of Milano Ristorazione, parents actively participate in meal preparation, observe cooking techniques, engage in discussions with experts on childhood nutrition, and conclude the event by dining together with their children. Children, guided by professionals, take part in hands-on workshops.

CLUJ-NAPOCA

By engaging various stakeholders such as local authorities, businesses, parents, and schools, they created a supportive ecosystem for providing nutritious meals to students. Key actors included local authorities, public institutions, food producers & suppliers, Health & Nutrition Experts, community & civil society organizations, and educational institutions, each playing a distinct role in ensuring the program’s success. By integrating these diverse stakeholders, the initiative strengthened the food supply chain, enhanced meal quality, and fostered a community-driven approach to sustainability in school nutrition.

Summary
the city’s role in pillar 4: Community & Partnership

In this pillar, the city acts as a connector and facilitator, helping schools build strong partnerships with a wide range of local stakeholders.

Specifically, the city:

- **Maps and engages local actors** by identifying potential partners and encourages them to collaborate with schools.
- **Facilitates collaboration** by organising networking events, workshops, and local food councils where schools and partners can share experiences and co-design initiatives.
- **Supports community-based projects** such as farm visits and educational workshops that involve pupils, parents, and local partners.
- **Shapes** the wider **food environment** by promoting access to healthy and sustainable options around schools and limiting exposure to unhealthy food.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Attachement

Food Waste Management – The City of Gothenburg

The City's Ambition and Goals

Gothenburg aims to make its public kitchens models of sustainability. According to the city's waste plan, by 2030 food waste should be reduced to no more than 30 grams per served meal, includingpreparation, serving, and leftovers. The initiative – The Gothenburg Model for Less Food Waste – was developed by the Måltid Göteborg network, the city's environmental department, and local kitchen professionals.
The model views food waste as an environmental, moral, and financial issue. Producing food consumes energy, water, and land, and every discarded meal contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing waste means saving both money and the planet — turning everyday cooking into climate action.

Smart Menu Design and Cooking Practices

Flexible menu planning is central to the Gothenburg Model. Menus should adapt to available ingredients and leftovers, favor popular dishes, and use seasonal produce for better taste and less spoilage. Clear dish names and tracking of waste help kitchens adjust recipes effectively.
Chefs are encouraged to cook only what is needed, use ingredients fully, and prepare food in smaller batches. During serving, smaller trays and proper utensils help control portion sizes. Food in unopened containers can be safely reused, and good communication between kitchen and serving staff prevents overproduction.

Engaging Students in Reducing Waste

Involving students is an effective way to both educate and reduce waste. Schools can hold food waste challenges, displaying how much food is thrown away and rewarding progress. Labeled bins (e.g., "I took too much," "I didn't like it") help students reflect on their habits. Showing the monetary value of wasted food also makes the issue tangible — motivating everyone to waste less and value more.
Handbook: Handbook for reducing food waste

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

Chapter 2: how to get started?

Introduction

Feeling inspired by the good practices from the previous chapter? Ready to explore what this could look like in your own city?
In this chapter, we guide you through a set of practical tools that can help you prepare for launching or strengthening a school food policy.

These tools are not meant to be followed in a strict sequence. Instead, think of them as a menu of options: you choose what is relevant and feasible in your local context. Whether you want to assemble a motivated team, define your long-term goals, map needs, or set priorities, each tool offers a clear and accessible way to take the next step.

The aim is simple: to build a solid foundation for the more detailed action planning that follows.

In Chapter 3, we will translate this preparation into a concrete framework for an action plan. But first, let's explore how you can set yourself up for success from the very beginning.

1. Who will you be working with?

Objective

To identify who in your local community is already involved in school nutrition and who should definitely be involved in developing this initiative.
You can divide people into a core group with only members from the cities own administration and a group with everyone that plays a role in implementing your initiative.

Make a (city) working group.

The city working group is the basis for getting started. It is important that everyone at city level is aware of your initiative and that tasks can be divided up. Later on, this group can be complemented with other relevant stakeholders:

- Schools (teachers, head masters, school boards, ...)
- Academic institutions (university, research centres)
- Non Governmental Organisations dealing with food & nutrition (NGO's)
- Suppliers (catering, food initiatives)
- Producer organisations or associations
- Educational organisations
- ...

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
- Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
- Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
- Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

2. Where do you want to go? 'Start with the end in mind'

Objective
To get to know the various members of the working group and their points of view.

Methodology?
Bring together the broader working group. Do a quick round to get to know each other's background. Then, do the Dream Exercise with the group, a fun exercise that immediately clarifies where each member wants to go in the future with healthy school meals. At the end of the session, there is a common goal for the future, shared among all participants.

Good to know
- there are no right or wrong answers.
- dare to dream and think outside the box.
- make it as concrete as possible.

Dream Exercise 'What do I want in my city by 2035?'

Divide a large sheet of paper into four quadrants, corresponding to the four pillars of the WSFA. If the group is not yet familiar with the WSFA, first give a brief introduction to it.

Each member of the group dreams individually about what you want to see achieved within 10 years, within the four different pillars of the WSFA. You get 10 minutes to write down ideas and visions for the future on post-it notes.

Possible introduction for the dream exercise:

Imagine yourself in a school in your city in the year 2035, where not only technological advancements catch your eye but also a remarkable shift in the approach to nutrition and health. As you stroll through the school, you can sense the healthy energy that permeates the air.
The school cafeteria has transformed into a culinary hub of health and well-being. How does it look?
Is Nutrition integrated into the curriculum within the classrooms? About what do your students learn? Where do they learn?
Does your school have school nutrition policies and where do they focus on? As you explore this school, do you observe new collaborations and with whom?
Let this dream exercise transport you to a future where schools not only impart knowledge but also actively contribute to the well-being and health of their students.

Then each participant shares their post-it notes with the group and they are stuck in the correct quadrants, next to the respective pillars. At the end, the workshop leader summarises the dreams for each pillar and tries to formulate a common dream, a shared goal for the future, together with all members of the group.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

3. What is your starting situation?

Objective

To make it very clear where the municipality currently stands and ensure that all members of the working group are well informed about this.

Methodology?

Bring together the working group. (This can be in a second meeting or on a same day as the dream exercise, but after a break).

Analyse the current situation with them. Take post-it notes and the large sheet of paper and write down what is already happening in your city for the four pillars of the WSFA. Participants can share what they do in their own job, but also initiatives they know are happening in the city. Similar to the previous exercise, everyone gets 10 minutes to write it down and then share it with the group, pillar by pillar. The post-it notes are stuck in the correct quadrants, next to the respective pillars. The workshop leader summarises the current situation for each pillar.

*If you want to map out the initial situation in more detail, carry out a **needs analysis**. A need analysis is the process of identifying needs and challenges and define the "gap" between the future dream situation and what already exists (starting situation). Understanding the needs and challenges provides the foundation for successfully developing and implementing a new product or service.*

▶ See template 'need analysis'

Good to know:

In the template you find definitions of pillars and key factors of the Whole School Food Approach, together with some guiding questions, that can help you in analysing the current situation without having to go through the entire needs analysis.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1
- **Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark** p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2
- **How to get started** p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- **+ template needs analysis** p.26
- **+ impact/effort matrix** p.34

Chapter 3
- **The action plan** p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- **+ template action plan** p.38
- **+ template M&E** p.46

Chapter 4
- **Background information** p.50
- **+ How to work with your stakeholders?** p.53
- **+ Stakeholder matrix** p.54

4. What are your priorities?

Objective

To choose which steps are priority for the working group, given the current situation. Decide also which challenges you will leave aside for now.

Methodology

Between your shared end goal and your current starting situation lies a long road full of stops and challenges. To stay on track, it is important to know which stops you are working towards. Which challenges will you tackle and which will you leave aside (for now)? Choose 2 or 3 priorities.

Good to know

- Always keep the WSFA's integrated approach in mind.
- Look for the pillar where you can make the most progress and don't just focus on what you're already good at.
- Make sure are meaningful and contribute effectively to your dream scenario.
- Distinguish between short-term and long-term projects.
- Make sure you also have some "quick wins".
- Use the impact effort matrix

▶ See impact effort matrix

Outro

Are you still unsure about the steps you want or can take?
You can always return to the good practices in the previous chapter. In Chapter 3, we will work together to draw up an action plan.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
- Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
- Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
- Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

What is a needs analysis?

A need analysis is the process of identifying needs and challenges and define the "gap" between what is needed and what already exists. Understanding the needs and challenges provides the foundation for successfully developing and implementing a new product.
A needs analysis is simply a methodical examination of an organization/environment and the end users, with the **goal to identify areas that hold the potential for improvement**, as well as **identifying available resources/assets in the community.**

Apart from increasing your knowledge about the entirety of the current situation and the end users' needs, a thorough needs analysis has the added benefit of creating a feeling of ownership concerning the new program or a change across sectors, professions, and end users. When people have helped identify the problem and the need, and had opportunities to express what they want, this **early involvement helps create a sense of ownership** towards any program covering this given needs.

Why this template?

In a needs analysis, existing practice in the field will be identified and assessed. One of the first steps is to see what needs and assets in the specified context are already articulated or what still can be worth exploring.

The template is based on the four pillars of the Whole School Food Approach (WSFA).

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

How to use the template?

Step 1

What is your final goal? Make it as concrete as possible.

Step 2

Complete table 1
Now you will follow all pillars and key factors/benchmarks of the Whole School Food Approach and complete table 1 with your end goal in mind.
At the end of each pillar, there is an open category. To add your own key factor/ benchmark.
There is no need for elaborate stories in this needs analysis, but make sure it is clear for external readers.

Step 3

Prioritize needs
Give each line a color based on it's priority. Use the color scheme below.

GREEN — **HIgh priority**, definitely want to address.

YELLOW — **Low priority,** adress when possible.

RED — **No priority,** no needs to address.

Step 4

Complete table 2
Decide on a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 key factors/benchmarks you want to start with, to realise your final goal. Describe in your own words (1) why you have prioritized this key factor, (2) what you like to change and (3) what you need to get there.

Step 5

Discuss with stakeholder group
Plan a meeting with your stakeholders and discuss your needs analysis with them. Share your prioritized needs and ask them for input and their opinion. Based on this meeting you can add information to the template.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
- Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
- Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
- Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

Assets / Current situation

The needs analysis will start with identifying what is already available and present in a certain community regarding healthy school meals for all children. We do this to create awareness of local resources (personnel, finance, knowledge, equipment, stakeholder involvement and commitment, etc.), identify community connections, and meet needs and values within the community.

Examples of assets linked to healthy school meals:

- Any existing national and local policy, programs, services, data/sources
- All successful programs related to healthy school meals
- Built environment that supports healthy school meals
- Any other environmental resources and facilities that stimulate healthy school meals
- Social environment in supporting healthy school meals
- Attitudes of the people and stakeholders toward stimulating healthy school meals
- Interest, importance, and awareness of promoting healthy school meals
- Mobilization of community: individual level, community level
- Front runners, innovators

Needs

The second thing is to specify the needs you face in your community. Think about the perceived and present needs, as well as potential and unrecognized needs.

Things you should take into account are:

- Which groups of population are most in need or should be supported?
- Who will be the end-users and stakeholders involved?
- Are existing policies/programs adequate to stimulate healthy school meals?
- Identify the gap between what end-users and especially stakeholders / city government are able to do and what they need to do to make changes towards having healthy school meals for all children.
- Find out what skills, facilities, knowledge, etc. an individuals and groups need in order to facilitate healthy school meals or perform a particular role, such as a local stakeholder, city authority, etc.

Gaps / Starting point

Based on your assets / current situation and the needs you face, you specifically identify a gap and/or starting point. This is a specific point (1) what you want to change and (2) where to start from?

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Definitions of pillars and key factors of the Whole School Food Approach

KF	KEY FACTOR	DEFINITION
Pillar A	**POLICY & LEADERSHIP**	**This pillar ensures the WSFA is endorsed by the cities leadership and enshrined in the city's vision, mission, values & policies.**
A1	Working group	The group unites policy makers, caterers, canteen staff, pupils and school staff. Caregivers, neighbours or others who want to interact with the city on food issues can also participate.
A2	Planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning	• What is the city currently doing in terms of food policy, food environment, education, …? • Kick-starts the WSFA process, involving all relevant stakeholders. • Resulting action plan guides the implementation of the WSFA. • Plans are evaluated every year and form the basis for next year's plan.
A3	Communication	Cities can rely on their existing communication channels and cooperate with local media to promote all actions taken.
A4	Funding & resources	Budget for one-off and permanent expenditure. (Which fundings and resources are needed and which are available in the city?)
A5	Political commitment	Political support to develop initiatives around nutrition in schools. (What is the policy position on school nutrition? Who is for, who against and why? Is there enough political support?)
A6	Pupils' participation	Involve pupils that truly care about food and make them school food ambassadors.
Pillar B	**FOOD & SUSTAINABILITY**	**Turning the school's dining area into a learning environment. Meeting high food standards: sustainably sourced, traceable and nutritious food.**
B1	Attractive dining circumstances	An attractive school dining area piques pupils' interest and makes them eager to learn.
B2	Sustainable public food procurement	Tender contracts include sustainability criteria.
B3	Healthy lunch boxes and snacks	It is up to the school and pupils' parents/caregivers to encourage healthy breakfasts, snacks and lunches, making the school as healthy an environment as possible.
B4	Facilities	Space and materials to provide nutrition at school.
B5	Food security	Any meals provided should nurture culinary diversity and respect a wide range of dietary needs.
B6	Food waste	To prevent, reduce and manage food waste, together with suppliers, dining teams, parents/caregivers and pupils.
B7	Healthy food standards	A clear, uniform standard that healthy school food must meet.
Pillar C	**EDUCATION & LEARNING**	**Teaching children to cook, grow and understand where their food comes from and what effect it has on the environment. Food and food system education touches on all three dimensions of sustainable development: ecological, social and economic.**
C1	Food in the curriculum & authentic learning	Integrated into numerous subjects and preferably addressed in a multidisciplinary way, with several teachers collaborating.
C2	Staff training	Both teachers and canteen staff should get the right training and information. Specific workshops and targeted educational resources should be provided.
C3	Social aspects (of eating together)	Eating together creates connection. In between pupils and with the school team.
Pillar D	**COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIP**	**Cooperation with a wide range of actors in the environment surrounding the schools.**
D1	Parents/caregivers involvement	Ensuring food becomes a topic at home as well.
D2	Collaboration with local actors and communities	Sustainable and healthy food is the shared responsibility of many partners, including local associations, communities and businesses.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Table 1

KF	KEY FACTOR	ASSETS / CURRENT SITUATION • What works well already? • What resources are available? • Who is already involved?	NEEDS • What do you need? • Who does it apply to? • Who should help you with that?
Pillar A: POLICY & LEADERSHIP			
A1	Working group		
A2	Planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning		
A3	Communication		
A4	Funding & resources		
A5	Political commitment		
A6	Pupils' participation		
Open category			

Extra guiding questions

- What communication channels does the city have, and can nutrition be discussed through them?
- Are budgets being made available for use in schools?
- Are pupils and parents/caregivers involved in school/nutrition policy, and how can the city encourage or facilitate this?
- Are there other organisations that already support schools, and can nutrition be included in this?

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

KF	KEY FACTOR	ASSETS / CURRENT SITUATION • What works well already? • What resources are available? • Who is already involved?	NEEDS • What do you need? • Who does it apply to? • Who should help you with that?
Pillar B: FOOD & SUSTAINABILITY			
B1	Attractive dining area		
B2	Sustainable public food procurement		
B3	Facilities		
B3	Healthy lunch boxes and snacks		
B4	Food security		
B5	Food waste		
B6	Healthy food standards		
B7	Healthy food standards		
Open category			

Extra guiding questions

- Where do children eat in schools in your city? Are there canteens? Are there kitchens? How can these be optimised?
- How can schools work together on this?
- Who writes the tenders for school meals?
- Can the city play a coordinating or inspiring role here?
- Are there food standards imposed by the government at national or regional level? If not, who could develop them?
- Are there any initiatives in the city relating to food waste that could also be relevant for schools?
- Are meals accessible to all pupils? (Affordability, allergies, cultural diversity, etc.)

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1
- Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2
- How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3
- The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4
- Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

KF	KEY FACTOR	ASSETS / CURRENT SITUATION • What works well already? • What resources are available? • Who is already involved?	NEEDS • What do you need? • Who does it apply to? • Who should help you with that?
Pillar C: EDUCATION & LEARNING			
C1	Food in the curriculum & authentic learning		
C2	Staff training		
C3	Social aspects (of eating together)		
C3	Social aspects (of eating together)		
Open category			

Extra guiding questions

- How is nutrition addressed in the school curriculum?
- Is training also provided for canteen staff? Chefs, caterers, assistants, etc.
- And are the following topics covered: making healthy food appealing, preventing food waste, introducing pupils to new flavours in a positive way, etc.
- How much time do the children have for their lunch? Do the teachers eat with the pupils? Do they use this time to talk about healthy and sustainable food?
- Where in and around the city can children learn about healthy and sustainable food?

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

KF	KEY FACTOR	ASSETS / CURRENT SITUATION • What works well already? • What resources are available? • Who is already involved?	NEEDS • What do you need? • Who does it apply to? • Who should help you with that?
Pillar D: EDUCATION & LEARNING			
D1	Parents/caregivers involvement		
D2	Collaboration with local actors and communities		
Open category			

Extra guiding questions

- Are there ways to involve parents/caregivers (structurally) in school nutrition?
- With which other organisations and projects are synergies possible (e.g. cooperation between schools and residential care centres/social employment projects/etc.)?
- Which actors in the city can support schools in their nutrition policy? Consider existing networks around sustainability and health, buildings or locations owned by the city, organisations involved in nutrition, etc.

Table 2

KF Define category / pillar	KEY FACTOR	NEEDS • What do you need? • Who does it apply to? • Who should help you with that?	GAPS / STARTING POINT • What do you want to change? • Where to start from? • How do you want to do that?
	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
	5.		

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10

Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10

Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13

Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17

Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22

1. Who will you be working with? p.22

2. Where do you want to go? p.23

3. What is your starting situation? p.24

4. What are your priorities? p.25

+ template needs analysis p.26

+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35

How do I get started? p.36

To measure is to know p.37

The importance of piloting p.37

+ template action plan p.38

+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50

+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53

+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

impact / effort matrix

A simple approach to prioritising work.



TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Chapter 3: **The action plan**

Introduction

Now that you have a clearer picture of where you want to go and which priorities matter most, it's time to translate this into a concrete action plan. In this chapter, we guide you through the process of shaping those ambitions into a set of realistic, achievable goals that fall within the city's sphere of influence.

An effective action plan doesn't need to be long or complicated. It simply brings together a handful of well-chosen objectives, supported by a list of actions that can be implemented in the short, medium, or long term. Some actions may require funding, while others can be carried out with existing resources. Both are valuable, and both deserve a place in your plan.

Key elements such as expected results, objectives, actions, outputs, and indicators form the backbone of any solid action plan. Agreeing on these components is an essential step, and it is highly recommended to involve your working group in this process. Their insights, roles, and responsibilities will help ensure that the plan is not only well-designed but also feasible and supported by those who will help bring it to life.

Above all, keep your action plan realistic and manageable. Start with what is possible, build momentum, and allow your plan to grow as your experience and partnerships deepen.



TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

Chapter 3: The action plan

How do I get started?

Objective
To define your goals and outline the specific steps needed to achieve each one.

Methodology
In the appendix, you'll find a template with clear instructions to guide you through the process. Take the time you need and involve as many relevant stakeholders as possible. Developing an action plan is rarely a quick exercise. It requires consultation, alignment, and shared decision-making. It is also a continuous process, as contexts and priorities evolve over time.

A well-structured action plan will save you time during implementation and ensures that every partner understands their role and responsibilities.

Don't let the different steps overwhelm you. Start small, build gradually, and adapt the template to your local reality. It is flexible by design. Make it work for you.

▶ **See template action plan**

▶ **See Example of hypothetical action plan**

Good to know
- Appoint a coordinator.
  Make sure one person is responsible for guiding the action-planning process. This person keeps an overview, asks the right questions, and ensures that everything becomes clear and concrete.
- Don't confuse goals, actions, and outcomes.
  These terms are often mixed up, so here's a simple way to keep them apart:

Goal: what you want to change

Action: what you will do to make that change happen

Outcome: what you can measure to see whether it worked

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

To measure is to know

Along with developing your action plan, you should immediately consider how you will monitor, measure, and evaluate progress and results. Monitoring your actions and results is important for various purposes. Policy makers and financiers for example like to see progress and relevant figures. Demonstrated result is also an important argument for scaling up.

Objective:

- To properly monitor the progress of your project and make timely adjustments where necessary.
- To keep stakeholders enthusiastic.
- To assess impact.

Methodology:

Good monitoring starts with setting clear goals.
If you formulate these goals using the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound), they become much easier to track and evaluate. Defining SMART goals is an essential part of the action-planning process.

Once your goals are clear, identify measurable indicators (KPI's) for each one. For example, if your aim is to increase healthier food options in schools, possible indicators could include: the number of schools offering healthier choices, the number of pupils choosing healthy food, or improvements in school performance.

You can use the template to monitor both your actions and the corresponding indicators. Select the steps that are most relevant to your situation and build a monitoring approach that works for your city.

Good to know:

- Be sure to take an initial measurement before you start. This will give you a point of comparison.
- Use indicators that you can collect yourself.
- Use indicators that are already being measured (e.g. annual school surveys, etc.)
- Don't make it too difficult or complex. Focus on a few relevant and easy to monitor indicators.
- Make sure someone within your project is responsible for this part. You don't have to do this with the entire group.
- Collaborate with a knowledge institution.

▶ **See template M and E**

The importance of piloting

If you are launching a new initiative or introducing a new measure, it's often wise to start with a few pilot projects. Pilots give you the chance to test your idea on a small scale, learn what works, and adjust where needed before rolling it out more widely.

A good example comes from the city of Antwerp. They wanted to offer soup to pupils who bring their own lunch, specifically in schools without a kitchen. Instead of implementing this city-wide right away, they first tested the idea in a handful of schools. The pilot phase revealed that schools mainly needed support with the practical side of things: heating the soup, distributing it to pupils, and cleaning up afterwards.

These insights were immediately taken up by the working group, who looked for solutions before expanding the initiative to other schools. Thanks to the pilot, the city was able to refine the approach and ensure a smoother roll-out later on.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

1. Goals

Go back to the priorities you formulated at the end of chapter 2. Translate them into realistic goals.
While formulating your goals, keep in mind the SMART criteria to create clear, attainable and meaningful goals. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

[Goal 1:]
[Goal 2:]
[Etc.]

Inspiring questions:

- Is the goal specific enough?
- Does it contribute directly to your city's overall aim for Healthy school lunches
- If so, how?

2. Stakeholders

Next to your strategy group, you will need extra support from stakeholders. Consider for every goal which stakeholders are needed.
Fill in the stakeholders matrix (see below) to see how they relate to your project and how you can cooperate with them.

[Goal 1:]
1. [stakeholder 1]
2. [stakeholder 2]
...

[Goal 2:]
1. [stakeholder 1]
2. [stakeholder 2]
...

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1
- Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2
- How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3
- The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4
- Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

3. Goal Breakdown

Fill in the Goal Breakdown for every goal. This helps you to consider all the elements you need to meet your goals.

Goal 1:

BREAKDOWN

a. Description of the Challenge

Here you describe the challenge that you are tackling with this specific goal. Why is this a challenge in your city?

[describe the challenge and why you need to accomplish this goal to solve the challenge]

b. Stakeholders

[list the stakeholders that are important for this specific goal]

Inspiring questions

- Who is directly involved in this goal? And indirectly?
- Whom do you need to inform and convince, and when?
- How will you get feedback from people directly or indirectly engaged in the action/goal?
- How will you work together?
- Is a working group necessary?

c. Actions and Resources

This part is meant as a brainstorming exercise which you should ideally do together with a few stakeholders. You do not have to put the actions in chronological order yet. You will do this in step e. When thinking about your actions, also consider the resources that you need for the related action.

Actions

[action 1]
[action 2]
[etc.]

Inspiring questions

- What actions are needed to reach this goal?
  - ▶ Do any of these actions need preparation time?
  - ▶ What might go wrong in the action? What are the risks?
    - ▷ For each of the risks you have identified how do you rate the degree of risk (high, medium or low)?
    - ▷ What will you do to address the risks you have mentioned?
- What financial resources do you need for this goal?
  - ▷ What do you need to do to have this resource available?
- What staffing and other non-financial resources will be needed?

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1
- Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2
- How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3
- The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4
- Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

d. Barriers and Solutions

Barriers are issues to counter to accomplish this goal. Solutions are factors that affect the feasibility and success of this goal. They should be considered as ways to overcome the main barriers.

Barrier	Solution
[Barrier 1]	[Solution 1]
[Etc.]	[Etc.]

Inspiring questions

- What are the barriers for reaching this goal? The barriers can be related to political, legal, economic, social, technological, environmental aspects, as well as the inability to engage different stakeholders and/or the lack of human capital, limited readiness of the municipality and a lack of political commitment.
- What are the drivers for reaching this goal? How do they help to overcome the barriers?
- What other solutions can you think of to overcome the barriers?

e. Timeline

Now it's time to make a timeline where you list the main actions identified in step c in chronological order, and add the people/parties that are responsible for this action and the start date. We also suggest you make a timeline with outcomes, expected due date of those outcomes and how you can measure if the outcome has been reached.
We advise using a backward planning method: you work from a due date back towards the present moment. In this case you know when to start certain actions to reach your goal by your set due date.

Action	Who is responsible?	Start date
[Action 1]	[Actor(s)]	[Date]
[Etc.]	[Etc.]	[Etc.]

Inspiring questions

- Who will lead the action?
- Over what period does it happen?
- What are its key stages (if there are multiple stages)?
- What preparation is needed before the action can start – and have you allowed adequate time for this set-up stage?
- What will success look like at each stage?
- What will you do if you miss an outcome?
- What scope will you have to adjust the action while it is in progress, if you see a better way to achieve its outcomes?
- To make such an adjustment, whose approval would be needed? What steps can you take at the start to allow for possible follow-up action?

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1
- Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2
- How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3
- The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4
- Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

Outcomes

Outcomes are moments or achievements when/where you can confidently say that a set of actions have been successfully implemented or executed. These outcomes are always measurable in a certain way. There are two ways to tackle this part:

1. You could start by determining the outcomes for the goal. Then you think about the actions that are necessary for this outcome.
2. You start with putting the actions in chronological order. After you have done this step, you can think of the logical moments or achievements in this timeline that could be measured. These are your outcomes.

Outcome	Outcome achievement indicator	Expected due date
[Outcome 1]	[Description of measurement]	[Date]
[Etc.]	[Etc.]	[Etc.]

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
- Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
- Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
- Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

Example of hypothetical action plan

Goal 1:
Adjusting the eating environment of the employees of the Public Health department at the Erasmus Medical Center (EMC) in 4 months, to make them enjoy their lunchtime more.

BREAKDOWN

Description of the Challenge

There has been a survey among employees of the Public Health department. They pointed out that the 'kitchen' (their eating environment in the office) is not enjoyable. Desks are still in sight so they still feel like they are in a working environment and the long table is not inviting for bigger group conversations. Making this area more enjoyable will increase the happiness of the employees resulting in more work productivity. Therefore the goal is to adjust the eating environment of the department.

Stakeholders

1. Employees of Public Health department
2. Management board EMC
3. Experts in the field of eating environments
4. Designer(s)
5. Contractor(s)
6. Head of Public Health department (or someone they gave the responsibility for this issue)

Actions and Resources

Actions

- Contact a contractor
- Get funding
- Find out the needs and wishes of the employees for the eating environment
- Consult experts in the field of eating environments or read about important aspects of an enjoyable eating environment in an office
- Discuss the needs with the management board of the EMC
- Get a design for the new eating environment
- Start renovating the 'kitchen'

Resources

Project responsible for this project (personel EMC)
Budget for

- Design eating environment
- renovation

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

Example of hypothetical action plan

BREAKDOWN

Barriers	Solutions
Disturbance caused by construction work	Planned in Christmas period so there are not many people in the office and most construction work that causes most disturbance is done in the weekend
No funding/not enough funding	Look into multiple funding opportunities and taking the amount of funding into account when designing the new eating area
No approval from management board	Involve management board from the beginning so they are aware of the challenges and needed steps to create a better atmosphere at work. Convince them that it is really important.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
- Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
- Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
- Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

Example of hypothetical action plan

TIMELINE

ACTIONS

Actions	Who is responsible?	Start date
Find out needs and wishes of the employees for the eating environment	Employees, head of department	02-09-2024
Consult researchers/papers on important aspects of an enjoyable eating environment in an office	Head of department (or someone they gave the responsibility for this issue), researchers	02-09-2024
Discuss the needs with the management board of the EMC	Head of department (or someone they gave the responsibility for this issue), management board	23-09-2024
Get funding	Head of department (or someone they gave the responsibility for this issue), management board	07-10-2024
Get a design for the eating environment	Head of department (or someone they gave the responsibility for this issue), designer	11-11-2014
Contact multiple contractors/ invoices and choose the best option	Head of department (or someone they gave the responsibility for this issue), contractor	25-11-2014
Get approval of management board or head of department to start renovations	Management board, head of department	06-12-2024
Start renovating the kitchen	contractor	23-12-2024

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Example of hypothetical action plan

TIMELINE

OUTCOMES

Outcome	Outcome achievement indicator	Expected due date
Needs and wishes from employees and results from research	Have a clear overview of the needs and wishes, and results in a document to present to the management board of the EMC	20-09-2024
Funding	Having a set number on what we can spend	31-10-2024
Approval of new design by management board	Green light from management board	13-12-2024
Start renovations	Plans are carried out	23-12-2024
New kitchen/eating environment	The work is done and there is a new kitchen	10-01-2025

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
- Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
- Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
- Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

This schema presents the four steps you can follow to monitor your actions from the very beginning and to evaluate them continuously. Working through these steps helps you stay on track, adjust where needed, and ultimately ensures a strong outcome with real impact.

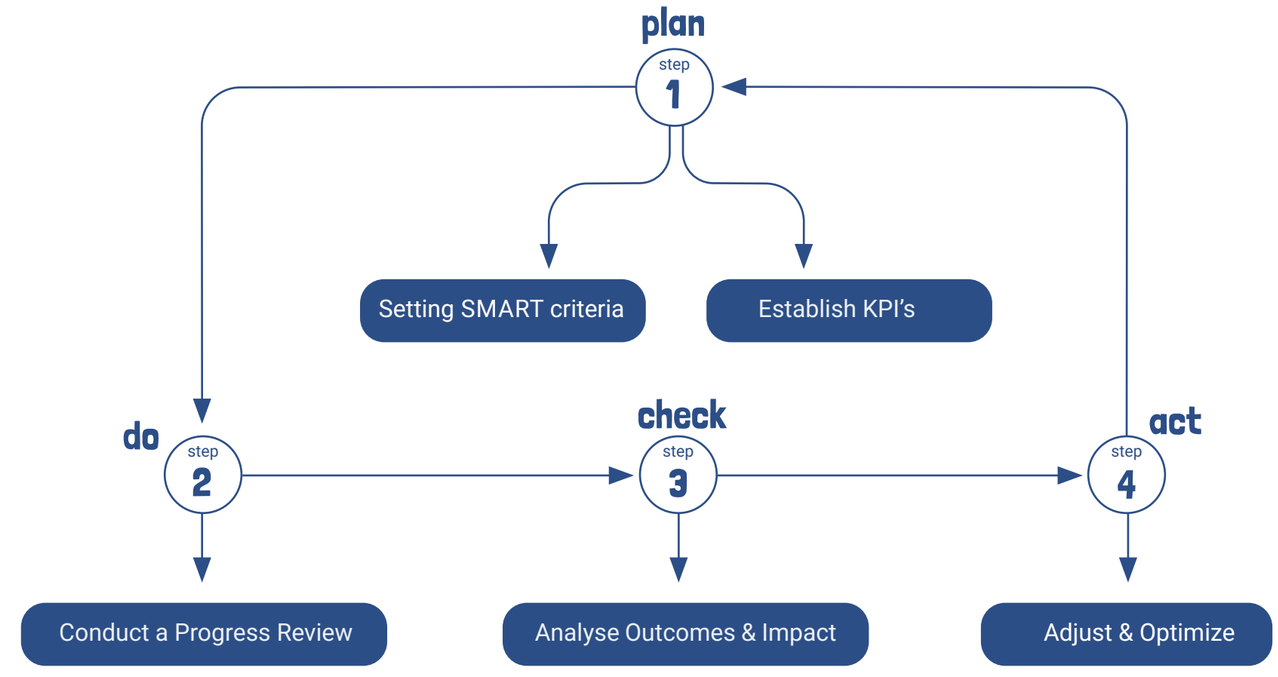


TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

step 1 plan

Set SMART goals (in action plan)

= formulate the goals in your action plan so that they are SMART= Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

- **Specific** = What do you want to achieve? Who should be involved?
- **Measurable** = How will you track your progress and determine if the goal has been reached? See KPI's
- **Acceptable** = Is the goal attainable? Does it align with your values and available resources?
- **Realistic** = Is the goal practical feasible?
- **Time-bound** = When should the goal be reached?

Establish KPIs

= KPI's (key performance indicators) measure performance and success on different levels of your process

Input KPI = measures the resources used in the process
- What are the tools, personnel, that you need to achieve the results
- What is invested in the program to achieve results

Output KPI = measures what has been produced by the process
- What activities have been completed?
- How many people have participated or benefited?

Outcome KPI = measures the results of actions
- How has the system or process changed?
- How has the performance of efficiency improved?

Impact KPI = measures long-term effects
- How has the action changed the overall system?
- How did the actions affect indirect goals?

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — **Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark** p.10

Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10

Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13

Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17

Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — **How to get started** p.22

1. Who will you be working with? p.22

2. Where do you want to go? p.23

3. What is your starting situation? p.24

4. What are your priorities? p.25

+ template needs analysis p.26

+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — **The action plan** p.35

How do I get started? p.36

To measure is to know p.37

The importance of piloting p.37

+ template action plan p.38

+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — **Background information** p.50

+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53

+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

step 2 do

Conduct a Progress Review

in progress

completed

delay

Action Progress Indicator	Status	Benchmark	Interim conclu-sion	Questions	Next Steps
Action 1					
Action 2					
Action 3					

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

step 3 check

Analyse Outcome and Impact

- low priority
- average priority
- high priority
- key priority

Outcomes/ Impact	Desired outcome/ impact achieved	Importance	What went well?	What challenges did you encounter?
Outcome 1	yes/no			
Outcome 2				
Impact 1				
Impact 2				

step 4 act

Adjust and Optimize

Revise your action plan based on progress monitoring and the outcome of your evaluation matrix

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

Chapter 4: Background information

In this chapter, we highlight several aspects of school nutrition that are particularly relevant for cities.
We take a closer look at financing, regulations, policy influence, education, and stakeholder management. These topics were selected by the participating cities in the European Healthy Wave project, based on their specific needs and challenges. Much of the background information draws on insights from the European SchoolFood4Change (SF4C) project.



1. Financing

Cost models

The European SF4C project produced an overview of existing school food systems, school food provision and procurement of food and catering services.
-> Chapter 4, section 4.3 SCHOOL FOOD PROVISION (pp. 89-94) provides an overview of various financing models and prices for daily school lunches.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Chapter 4: Background information

2. Regulations

2.1 Food Standards

Guidelines for healthy school meals that can be adapted to the local context. This SF4C publication contains guidelines for balanced school meals (page 80-85).

- What does a balanced meal look like?
- Which components should you avoid and which should you add?

This publication from the Flemish Institute for healthy living provides guidelines on healthy nutrition for children. Part 2 (page 12-24) deals with:

- Components of a healthy meal
- Portion sizes by age (page 19)
- How to adapt your existing offering
- Menu planning

The document is only available in Dutch, but you can translate it using online translation apps.

All guidelines are based on the Planetary Health Diet. You can find more information about this nutrition and climate triangle here.

2.2 Food safety regulations

These regulations are very different in every European country. Please contact your local food safety agency for more information.

2.3 Food waste legislation

The Swedish Food Agency has written a handbook specifically for school and care kitchens, full of practical tips on how to avoid food waste.

2.4. Food procurement

In this handbook you can find a baseline set of recommendations designed to be applied in all cities, and several optional criteria for procurement of sustainable & healthy schoolmeals.

Online tool STRATKIT: The Sustainable Public Meal Toolkit offers advice on how to set up innovative strategies and activities for sustainable public procurement and catering services. More than fifty tools are available for stakeholders involved in the provision of public meals.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Chapter 4: Background information

3. Advocacy/policy

Here are some tips on how to convince policymakers.

Gather the right arguments

Why do you want to provide healthy, sustainable school meals in your city?

- Make a link to European legislation such as the EU Child Guarantee: "free and effective access for children in need to at least one healthy meal each school day."
- Collect relevant statistical data. This could include figures on obesity and diabetes among children and young people, poverty rates, etc.

Organise an event

Organising an event can be a perfect occasion to bring policy makers together and convince them. At the same time, you influence public opinion and gain media attention. SF4C developed the well tested and approved concept of the Canteen Day.

Find scientific evidence

- Scientific article: The Whole School Food Approach: A European framework and implementation to promote healthy and sustainable school food systems
- 2 relevant policy briefs written within the SF4C project:
  - Tackling inequality through healthy and sustainable school food
  - Strengthening food security via food production environments in and around cities



4. Education

A wealth of high-quality material is available in various European languages on this online platform. Local contact persons are also available for certain countries.

5. Working with stakeholders

▶ See attachement 'How to work with a group of stakeholders?'
▶ See Stakeholder Matrix

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
- **Pillar 1:** Policy & Leadership p.10
- **Pillar 2:** Food & Sustainability p.13
- **Pillar 3:** Education & Learning p.17
- **Pillar 4:** Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
- 1. Who will you be working with? p.22
- 2. Where do you want to go? p.23
- 3. What is your starting situation? p.24
- 4. What are your priorities? p.25
- + template needs analysis p.26
- + impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
- How do I get started? p.36
- To measure is to know p.37
- The importance of piloting p.37
- + template action plan p.38
- + template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
- + How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
- + Stakeholder matrix p.54

How to work with a group of stakeholders?

Who are your stakeholders, in regard to healthy school meals?

A wide range of stakeholders within the Whole School Food ecosystem consisting of school principals, teachers, pupils, caterers, research institutes, NGO's, colleagues from other relevant departments within the city (youth, education, health, sustainability, ...) and other relevant stakeholders on local and national level.

Why working with stakeholders?

You stakeholders are all related to the implementation of healthy school lunches. It is a group of people/organisations you need in the successful implementation of healthy school lunches. If people do not want to contribute to this goal, they do not belong to this group.

How to work with your stakeholders?

Invest time in 'trust-building':

It takes time to build a good relationship with your stakeholders. Be **patient**, keep contacts warm and positive.

Get to know your stakeholders:

Learn more about your stakeholders' interests, needs, concerns, aspirations, knowledge gaps, capacities, incentives, assumptions, information networks, history, quality of relationships with other stakeholders, etc...

Identify common ground for collaboration:

▶ Make sure your meetings are **meaningful** for every participant: What's in it for them? What can they learn from it? Whom can they meet? How can they contribute to the goal of healthy school meals?

▶ General common ground in this project: 'We all care about the future of our kids.'

Listen carefully to your stakeholders, because they have to implement the changes of the action plan. Creating a shared vision can be an extensive process and take up a lot of time. That is totally fine, as most of the value of this work lies in the process itself, not only in the result.

▶ How do they work on a daily base?
→To fit your ideas to their practice.

▶ How do they react to the proposed changes?
→ To adapt your action plan.

▶ Are there useful ideas, additions, changes, they propose?
→ To adapt your action plan.

Be open to the suggested adaptations, changes and additions.

This is the goal of your stakeholder group. From their experience and expertise, they provide input to make the proposed actions a greater success.

Keep the group informed about the process of the project.

This keeps stakeholders engaged. Moreover, they act as ambassadors for your project, so it's important they are always up to date with the latest developments.

Start to communicate openly about the project,

via newsletters, website, (social) media, ... This gives weight to the project and motivates the stakeholders involved.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1 — Possible actions & good practices for cities, per benchmark p.10
Pillar 1: Policy & Leadership p.10
Pillar 2: Food & Sustainability p.13
Pillar 3: Education & Learning p.17
Pillar 4: Community & Partnership p.19

Chapter 2 — How to get started p.22
1. Who will you be working with? p.22
2. Where do you want to go? p.23
3. What is your starting situation? p.24
4. What are your priorities? p.25
+ template needs analysis p.26
+ impact/effort matrix p.34

Chapter 3 — The action plan p.35
How do I get started? p.36
To measure is to know p.37
The importance of piloting p.37
+ template action plan p.38
+ template M&E p.46

Chapter 4 — Background information p.50
+ How to work with your stakeholders? p.53
+ Stakeholder matrix p.54

Stakeholder matrix

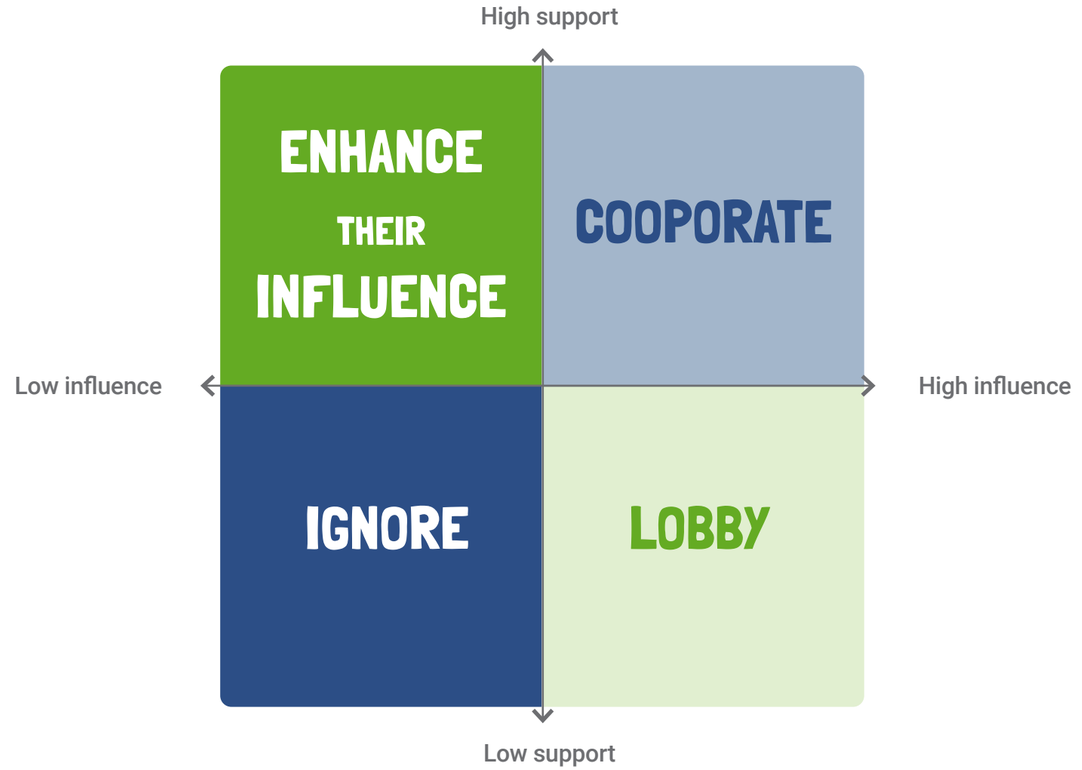
Place the stakeholders in the stakeholder matrix.

Objective: Review your stakeholders.

- Who is still missing?
- Who do we need to convince?
- What arguments should we use?

Methodology: Stakeholders relate to your project in different ways. We zoom in on two specific variables:

1. How big is their influence? Low or high?
2. How big is their support? Low or high?



Good to know

- Discuss with your strategy group how you can support the stakeholders from the 'enhance influence' block and influence those from the 'lobby' block.
- Involving stakeholders is an ongoing process.

COLOPHON

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