



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Alliance



STIMULATING MARKETS FOR AGROECOLOGY THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY

Summary of the session

Access to the recordings (password: ?B4cgH<0):

<https://zoom.us/rec/share/kh0TLIJ3BCKJOiVCgXCPHzCtvyJtS2k5glbRp-ctWQl8-xH4uxaLMzndIHVuaNEA.lzA-kwvaU81F4JzH>

Concept of the session

The creation of markets for agroecological products is key to facilitate the transformation of our food systems. This process is often driven by consumer movements (e.g. through campaigns) or producer groups (e.g. farmer associations). Yet, public policies can also contribute to creating an enabling environment. In this roundtable, four invited panellists discussed how public policies can enable, transform and consolidate markets for agro-ecology based on the experiences in their regions. It brought together speakers from a national government (Omar Aguilar, Director General for agricultural policy, Minister of Agriculture and Husbandry of the Republic of Nicaragua), a local government (Hugo Rojas, Director of Supply at the Secretary of Economic Development, Mayor's Office of Bogota, Colombia), a representative of private sector (Patrick Honauer co-founder Food Networks, social entrepreneur) and a representative of a producer group (Moussa Sowe, 2nd vice-president of the Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA)).

During the event, **the following questions were explored:**

- To what extent the success for the creation of markets for agroecology depend on public policy?
- What policy instruments can support markets for agroecology?
- How can public policy support agroecological markets across different scales (e.g. local level, rural-urban nexus at the national level, or global supply/value chains)?

Key messages

Agroecology is emerging in a very dynamic way in diversified nested markets. **Markets for agroecology** refer to a wide diversity of initiatives or networks that ensure that food from agroecological production is exchanged and traded between producers and consumers. It touches on the questions of how products from agroecological production systems are being valued in markets, how more direct relations between producers and consumers can better capture the value of agroecological products, how do regional integration and a diversification of market channels can increase the sustainability of food systems.

A number of **public policies can create market conditions** – including financial and regulatory mechanisms – that are favourable to rural and urban agroecological systems and their value chains by:

- **Fostering domestic demand for agroecological products.** This includes
 - Communication and education programs, building consumer awareness on healthier, safer and more sustainable products. In particular, public authorities can have a very important role to play in building consumer trust;
 - Encouraging public procurement to guarantee market access for small-scale producers and for local and healthy food;
 - Increasing commercialisation channels, mainly allowing or supporting alternative channels to emerge. They can be public farmers markets, itinerant markets or regional digital market platforms for urban consumers supported by city councils
- **Identifying products that are produced agroecologically or that have sustainable qualities.** Public authorities can directly promote specific branding, regulate mandatory or voluntary labelling schemes, including support to participatory guarantee systems. One key element in this regard is to conceive a very recognizable brand or communication strategy that speaks directly to local consumers and their needs, for instance health or safety concerns.
- **Ensuring fair competition and fair pricing for both producers and consumers.** One possibility is to include farmers, intermediaries and consumers in price-setting committees. This aspect would also require a systemic set of reforms of how different environmental and social costs are internalized.
- **Increasing the offer and availability of products from indigenous or local communities** (e.g. encouraging farmer associations, conducive policies on seed systems), while making the whole value chain more sustainable.

Lessons and conditions of success

- **Alignment between different policies and sectors** can be achieved through inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms or by putting local food systems at the core of regional development plans, which are a key instrument to harmonize regional policies. Another aspect to ensure the involvement of multiple departments or administrative levels is to highlight the commonalities between the different agencies at the onset of designing such policies. An example would be to reconcile the need of city authorities to ensure regular food supplies and the need of regional department interested in job creation. In this regards, a local food system approach is key.
- **Multistakeholder process:** Not only ensure participation and representation of key stakeholders in the different phases of the initiative but ensure the creation of concrete alliances and partnerships between cities, consumers, producers, innovators or other private sectors actors to ensure mobilization of the actors.
- **The role of networks:** Such initiatives can better achieve an economic success when linked to other similar ones, in a strategic horizontal network that would provide the consumers the access to a larger variety of products. The conditions of **economic success** for these types of initiatives rely on their ability to link up with other similar initiatives to create horizontal networks in order to provide a greater variety of products and a greater market access to consumers.
- **Partnerships** between municipalities, local entrepreneurs and public sector can create a multiplier effect that leads to the emergence of multiple businesses and diversification of products connected around local food systems. Municipalities are in particular key to facilitate the connection between different entrepreneurs and impulse territory dynamics.

Case studies

Nicaragua

By Minister Edward Centeno,
Minister of Agriculture and Husbandry of the Republic of
Nicaragua



In 2011 the national government has promulgated the Law 765, which provides the normative institutional anchoring for the promotion of agroecological products. The new initiative, *Nicaragua Saludable Sostensible Solidaria* (Nicaragua Healthy Sustainable Solidarity) constitutes a further step and more integrated policy framework to internal and external markets for differentiated agroecological products and sustainable agri-food value chains to improve the living standard of Nicaraguan families. The main strength of the initiative relies on a large communication and mobilization campaign to create a larger movement bringing together consumers, citizens, producers, governments, organizations and the private sector to promote a healthier and more sustainable diet, through increased consumption, availability of foods, preparations and products with these characteristics.

City of Bogota, Colombia

By Hugo Rojas,

Director of Supply at the Secretary of Economic Development, Mayor's Office of Bogota



The initiative *Mercados Campesinos* (Peasant Markets) emerged in Colombia in 2003 as a political-economic proposal by several peasant organisations that produce food in the Central Region surrounding the country's capital, Bogota. In 2020, the initiative was reactivated by the current mayor in response to the current pandemic. It mainly aims at increasing short value chains and regional integration, creating new market niches and valorising ancestral and healthy products. A number of normative policy instruments are supporting those objectives, including a recent district development plan entitled “A New Social and Environmental Contract for the city of Bogotá for the XXI Century”.

This programme has two key features: first, peasants had a strong impact on the design and implementation of the public policy for food security in Bogotá and on the agricultural policy in the municipalities and departments of the central region; secondly, a main impact of the initiative was for peasant families to obtain a fairer economic share by marketing their products more directly in a number of alternative market channels, with more equitable prices for both sellers and buyers.

Mértola, Portugal

By Patrick Honauer,

Co-founder of Food Networks, social entrepreneur



The association Terra Sintrópica aims at co-creating regeneration-by-use and going beyond the challenges of desertification and depopulation in the region of Mértola in Portugal. The objective of this private initiative is to contributing to healthy and more sustainable food consumption, with a view to having a municipality with 100% local, organic food. It is part of a broader initiative to regenerate degraded land and the introduction of syntropic and regenerative farming.

The municipality initially supported the initiative by offering public abandoned land, public housing, as well as a space to develop a food hub for young local entrepreneurs and volunteers. A “Food Belt” around Mértola was developed to re-functionalizing 5-7 abandoned vegetable gardens, to supply the local collective restoration canteens (schools of the Municipality, and retirement homes) and to establish a community-based-agriculture for Mértola. Entrepreneurial capacity building enables innovative product development, e.g. oak sweets, prickly-pear-jam and edible perennials. Education was a core aspect of the initiative by involving senior academies, vocational schools for farmers and primary schools.

Useful Links and materials:

- Recordings of the event (password: ?B4cgH<0; Number of online participants: 108): <https://zoom.us/rec/share/kh0TLIJ3BCKJOiVCgXCPHzCtvyJtS2k5glbRp-ctWQl8-xH4uxaLMzndIHVuaNEA.lzA-kwvaU81F4JzH>
- More information about the Food Policy Forum for Change: <https://www.agroecology-pool.org/policy-forum/>
- Agroecology Knowledge Hub: <http://www.fao.org/agroecology/home/en/>

- Family Farming Knowledge Platform: <http://www.fao.org/family-farming/home/en/>
- Family Farming & Agroecology Community of Practice: <http://www.fao.org/agroecology/communityofpractice/en/>
- FAO/INRA. 2018. Constructing markets for agroecology – An analysis of diverse options for marketing products from agroecology, by Loconto, A., Jimenez, A. & Vandecandelaere, E. Rome, Italy. <http://www.fao.org/3/i8605EN/i8605en.pdf>
- FAO 2016 Sustainable value chains for sustainable food systems, by Alexandre Meybeck, A., & Redfern, S. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6511e.pdf>