

39. MAINSTREAMING LOCAL / REGIONAL PROCUREMENT IN FOOD ASSISTANCE

ACTION AREA	UNIVERSAL FOOD ACCESS TO BUILD RESILIENCE
SOLUTION CLUSTER	ENHANCE LOCAL PRODUCTION FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION
THEMATIC AREA	PUBLIC PROCUREMENT
SUBMITTED BY	WFP, EU

PROBLEM/CHALLENGE ADDRESSED IN RELATION TO FOOD SYSTEMS RESILIENCE

Humanitarian food assistance intervenes when food systems fail, saving lives and protecting livelihoods. In this way, it helps food systems cope with and recover from shocks, and thus constitutes a key element of food systems' resilience.

Most humanitarian food assistance is still provided in-kind, and international procurement has been the traditional means to purchase food under this modality. However, the distribution of large amounts of imported food often produces disruptive effects on local food systems with, in the longer term, negative effects on food resilience. Resorting to international procurement is, moreover, a missed opportunity to boost local food systems, working along the humanitarian- development nexus.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SOLUTION PROPOSED

In recent years, **local /regional procurement** is gaining recognition as a preferable modality for food purchase in humanitarian assistance. Many donors and implementing organisations are developing policies and guidelines to favour this approach and make it the default choice for in-kind assistance whenever possible. However, international procurement is still widely used, due to institutional inertia, the perceived difficulties and risks of local purchase, and donor interests.

Implementation approach

A political commitment to make local/regional procurement the general rule for in-kind food assistance by 2030 would accelerate the transition.

Such commitment should be **complemented by an implementation roadmap with clear milestones and targets** (in terms of e.g. percentages or amounts) to which the signatories would subscribe.

This roadmap should consider the **promotion of good practices throughout the food chain**, to ensure sustainability, fairness, equal opportunities, etc. Specific guidelines should be developed for this purpose. Finally, the roadmap should foresee communication activities, evidence-gathering and a monitoring framework for the action.

The **Global Network against Food Crises**, which already brings together key actors on food security, seems the appropriate framework to steer and monitor this action.

IMPACT

Mainstreaming local/regional food purchases would allow **covering the needs of populations** in need of food assistance with local products, **adapted to local preferences** and eating habits, **without disrupting local food systems**.

Purchasing significant amounts of food would provide local producers with an additional outlet for their product, contributing to maintain the food production capacity even in times of crisis, and hence increase the **resilience of local food systems**.

Buying locally rather than shipping large amounts of food across the world would also **reduce significantly the environmental footprint of food assistance, as well as its cost**, allowing the international community to provide food assistance in more instances (& contributing in this way to SDG 2).

If coupled with actions and requirements promoting good practices, local purchases would become a **driving force for transforming food systems** across the board. They could help improve sustainability, fairness, inclusiveness, etc., having a positive impact on most UN FSS action tracks. Importantly, it would open spaces for cooperation with longer-term programmes in the food and nutrition sectors, and thus contribute to strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus.

An **appropriate monitoring framework** would help measure the impact on food prices, food production and food & nutrition security status of populations.

SUSTAINABILITY (ABILITY TO KEEP DELIVERING TO 2030 AND BEYOND)

Shifting from international to local/regional procurement constitutes a change of paradigm in humanitarian assistance. Putting in place this game-changer would produce the positive impacts mentioned above by 2030 and beyond.