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## CHAPTER 3

# Presenting the 10 cases



## 2. Presenting the seven cases selected at sub-national level



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At sub-national level in Europe and North America, many MSMs are linked to the development and implementation of a holistic sustainable food systems policy. These groups are generally known as food policy councils (FPCs), but they also go by other names.

In contrast, such MSMs are difficult to find in the Global South. There are some cities leading the way in Latin America, but they are still at an early stage. Examples include La Paz, Quito, Lima and Medellín.

Some SFS MSMs are currently being formed in Asia and Oceania, and some of them are already engaged in the assessment of food systems and the definition of priority topics and actions. Examples include Surabaya and Melbourne.

In the case of African cities and towns, several SFS MSMs are promoted and supported by various international organizations and cooperation projects (with technical and financial support from organizations such as FAO, Rikolto, Hivos, Biovision, RUAF, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT). Levels of local ownership, government involvement and concrete achievements vary, depending on the mechanism.

The following section presents a summary of the seven SFS MSMs selected at sub-national level: London, Ghent, Los Angeles, Montreal, Quito, La Paz and Antananarivo. The most relevant features are compiled from a literature review and the results from both surveys.



## 2.2. London (UK): London Food Board (LFB)



Image credit: GLA/Caroline Teo

### 2.2.1. About the London Food Board

The London Food Board (LFB) was created in 2004. It was championed and established by the first Mayor of London, Ken Livingston, who convened several independent food-related organizations and experts from all over London with the primary objective of advising the mayor and the Greater London Authority (GLA) Food Team on the food issues affecting Londoners. These organizations and experts were also requested to participate in policy formulation processes by sharing their knowledge and expertise to help shape the London Food Strategy. The LFB is a formally institutionalized SFS MSM hosted by the GLA, which also occupies the leadership role. The process leading to its set-up took less than one year.

The LFB's objectives are focused on three main themes:

- Implementation of the London Food Strategy;
- Citywide food issues and the development of a better food system for all Londoners;
- The London Food Programme.

To date, the LFB has prioritized and addressed issues related to (but not limited to) food security and poverty, local food production, (peri-)urban agriculture, nutrition and health.

Its geographical scope of action is the city level, but it also has established connections with networks at the international, national, sub-national and borough level for policy implementation. For instance, the LFB connects with London local authorities, the Sustainable Food Places network and the C40 Cities Food Systems Network, among others. It takes the London Food Strategy as the main framework to guide its work.

The LFB relies on a minimal budget from the GLA. This budget is used to cover the costs of meeting logistics, activities to foster learning exchange, and also to launch new projects.

### 2.2.2. Structure and governance

#### Structure

The London Food Board comprises 18 members who advise the Mayor of London and the GLA. The participating stakeholders are selected following a recruitment process (including interviews). They are then appointed by the mayor, based upon recommendations by the GLA food team and relevant members of the Mayor's Office. A small number of co-opted organizations from key sectors are represented on the LFB.

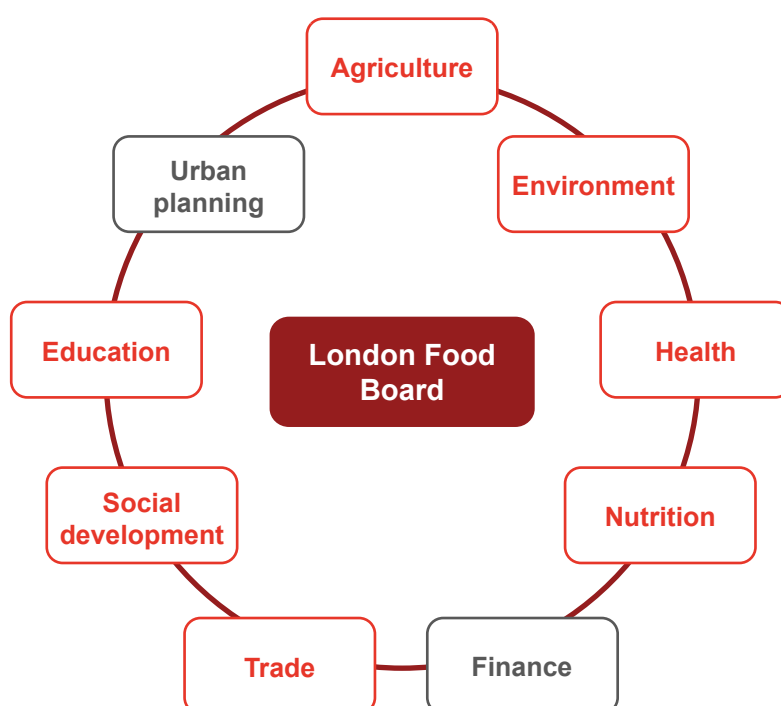
Figures 51, 52 and 53 illustrate the representativeness and inclusiveness of the LFB, showing the diversity of participating stakeholders in terms of types of organizations (constituencies), sectors and food systems activities represented.

## Governance

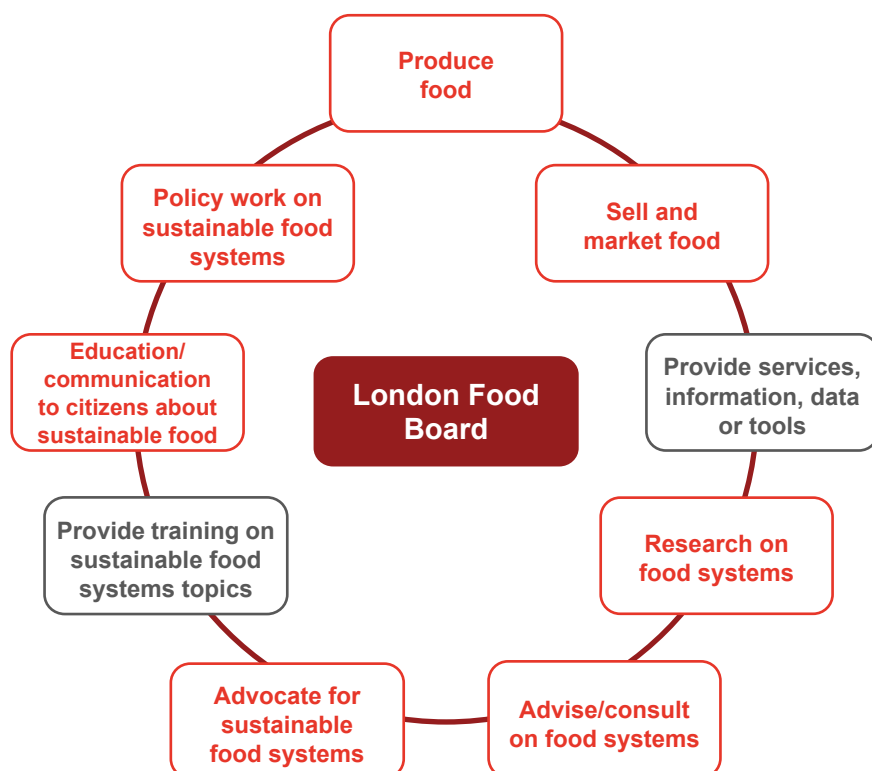
The LFB has a written document that describes its strategic direction and governance principles, which have been agreed upon by all parties and are depicted in Figure 54.



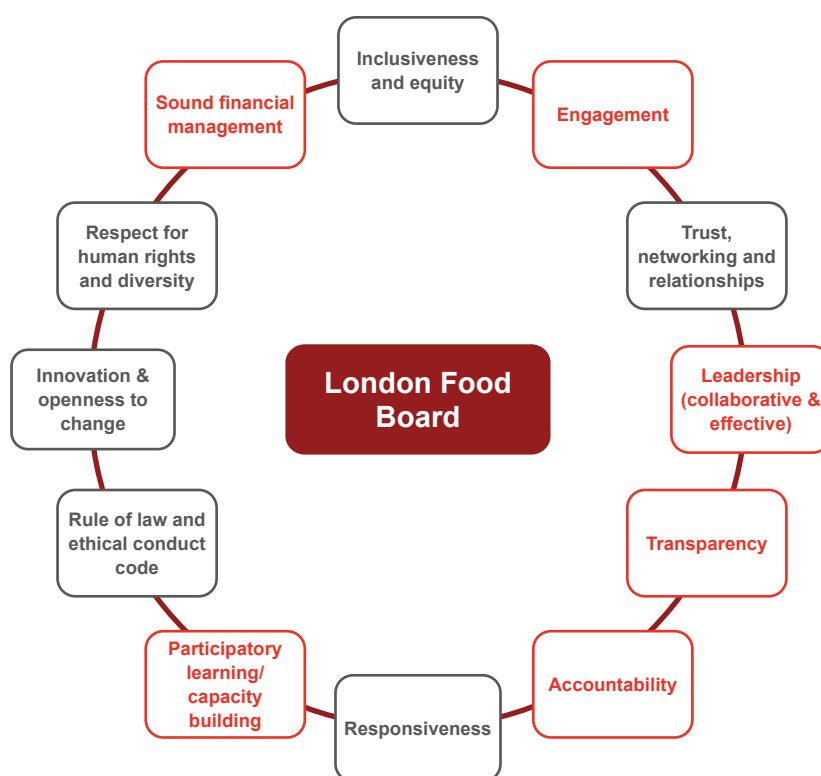
**Figure 51. Types of organizations (constituencies) represented on the London Food Board (in red)**



**Figure 52. Sectors represented on the London Food Board (in red)**



**Figure 53. Activities represented on the London Food Board (in red)**



**Figure 54. Good governance principles practised by the London Food Board (in red)**

The LFB has internal procedures to put these principles into practice, such as established mechanisms for managing conflicts of interest, capturing and taking into account all voices, ensuring effective communication, building consensus, learning collaboratively, and building capacity.

The SFS MSM usually holds quarterly scheduled meetings, and 60 per cent of the stakeholders surveyed indicated that they attend all meetings; 40 per cent dedicate more than 4 hours a month to the work of the SFS MSM, while the other 60 per cent dedicate 1 to 4 hours. In 60 per cent of the cases, members' participation is sponsored by the organizations they represent. The latter is usually in charge of setting the agenda, prioritizing urgent issues. Prior to each session, the purpose, topics and questions to be addressed are clearly defined so that stakeholders are informed prior to the meeting. A designated facilitator ensures a constructive and inclusive dialogue, and note-takers and rapporteurs are designated to take the minutes. The LFB has a mechanism to work collaboratively and include comments in the minutes.

The LFB also fosters participation through the Boroughs Food Group;<sup>89</sup> all London boroughs are invited to participate in this group. It meets quarterly (during the COVID-19 pandemic, it met fortnightly or monthly) and involves key partners representing London local authorities, national agencies and third sector organizations. LFB officers provide secretariat support to help local authorities and external partners share best practices. They support discussions on working together to address the issues facing London's food system, from childhood obesity and food waste to improving access to healthy and sustainable food, especially for disadvantaged communities. In addition to regular meetings and engagement with the Boroughs Food Group, participants also communicate periodically through emails, calls and other means.

### 2.2.3. Policy formulation and implementation

#### SFS policy formulation

The LFB conducted a joint assessment of the city's food system using a systemic approach, which provided a detailed understanding of existing challenges. This diagnosis included mappings of food systems actors and food-related policies. It provided

an overview of the potential levers for greater collective action and policy development.

In 2006, the GLA food team developed the London Food Strategy<sup>90</sup> in collaboration with the LFB on behalf of the mayor of London; a second London Food Strategy was developed in 2018. The 2006 strategy was formulated following a consultation process that gathered feedback from the general public and organizations on the draft document. This strategy proposed an overall vision for London's "food infrastructure" up to 2016. It had five main objectives, including actions to improve the health of Londoners through a better diet, and focused on increasing the choice, availability and quality of food for all, especially the most disadvantaged populations.

Similarly, the 2018 London Food Strategy had a very thorough consultation process during which a draft version of the strategy was published over an eight-week period; almost 150 organizations and thousands of members of the public provided feedback. This open consultation also comprised surveys, focus groups and the GLA Talk London platform.<sup>91</sup> The final version of the London Food Strategy took into account all the responses and was successfully integrated into the mayor's range of strategies.<sup>92</sup> The priorities and commitments of the strategy are mutually reinforcing.

In addition to the open consultation, the 2018 London Food Strategy took into consideration a preliminary diagnosis of the food system as well as input from international cooperation. The policy document proposes a series of actions to improve food in a wide range of areas, including maternity and early years, education, business, community and leisure, public environments, public institutions, community gardens and urban agriculture, at work, at home, and eating out. It also seeks to ensure that policies and commitments to action are integrated at all levels.

The London Food Strategy focuses on promoting "good food", defined in the policy document as healthy and nutritious food for all cultures and needs; food that is fair, inclusive and sustainable; skilled and profitable; planet-friendly and humane, sustainably produced; safe and celebrated (GLA, 2018). The policy aims to tackle three major food-related problems in London: child obesity, Londoners' reliance on food banks and global greenhouse gas emissions from food production,

<sup>89</sup>A subgroup of the London Food Board consisting of over 200 members with representatives covering a range of disciplines including public health, economic development, education and environmental health. Each meeting is attended by an average of 50 representatives from approximately 20 different municipalities and other key external partners.

<sup>90</sup><http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s4231/London%20Food%20Strategy%20-%20Summary.pdf>

<sup>91</sup><https://www.london.gov.uk/talk-london/>

<sup>92</sup>These strategies include the draft New London Plan, the London Health Inequalities Strategy, the mayor's Economic Development Strategy, the London Environment Strategy, the mayor's Transport Strategy, the Culture for All Londoners Strategy, the mayor's Skills for Londoners Strategy, the mayor's Vision for a Diverse and Inclusive City, a Tourism Vision for London, and a Vision for London as a 24-Hour City.



contributing to London's poor air quality. It defines concrete actions for each food environment in which Londoners get their food.

- **Good food at home and reducing food insecurity:** Promoting the London Living Wage,<sup>93</sup> ensuring that children from low-income families have access to healthy food during school holidays and developing long-term solutions to household food insecurity.
- **Good food economy, shopping and eating out:** Promoting the role that food can play in making streets healthy places, with more healthy food options and good food businesses. There is a particular focus on advertising restrictions on foods and non-alcoholic drinks that are high in fat, sugar and salt, and the development of a range of schemes to promote values-driven food businesses and social enterprises.
- **Good food in community settings and public institutions:** Through better food procurement, small businesses and local producers can help people eat healthier food with better animal welfare and environmental standards.
- **Good food for pregnancy and childhood:** Citywide action to reduce child obesity and related inequalities, for instance by reducing children's exposure to junk food including by restricting advertising. This topic also includes improving London children's health and supporting healthier habits through the Healthy Schools London and Healthy Early Years London programmes; the latter includes actions to promote breastfeeding.
- **Good food growing, community gardens and urban farming:** Supporting food growing in community gardens, allotments, schools, urban farms and other spaces in London. This has many environmental benefits. This includes adding to London's green infrastructure and providing habitat for London's biodiversity. Urban farming and food growing projects also help to create social enterprises that boost local economies and provide jobs, volunteering opportunities, training and apprenticeships.
- **Good food for the environment:** This includes actions on the production, distribution, transport and consumption sides. It also includes actions to address food waste.

In addition to the London Food Strategy, the LFB has also provided input to other statutory and non-statutory City Hall strategies, such as the London Environment Strategy, the London Spatial Development Strategy, (commonly as known the London Plan) and others.



Image credit: GLA/Caroline Teo

<sup>93</sup>The London Living Wage is an hourly rate calculated according to the basic cost of living by the Living Wage Foundation (currently GBP 10.20 (EUR 11.99) per hour). As accredited Living Wage employers, councils can help to ensure that staff employed and contracted by the local authority do not experience in-work poverty.

## SFS policy implementation

The implementation of the London Food Strategy is led by the GLA food team on behalf of the mayor. His Implementation Plan<sup>94</sup> sets out the actions to be taken and supported between 2018 and 2023 to help achieve the strategy's objectives. The plan includes timelines and a series of indicators that will be used to measure and report on progress across London. The LFB has a communications role and provides advice on the strategy's implementation efforts. Sustain<sup>95</sup> and the London Food Link network<sup>96</sup> are the London Food Board members overseeing the implementation of the London Food Strategy.

The LFB also advises the GLA on the implementation of the London Food Programme. A small team of GLA officers lead the delivery of this programme, which sits within the Communities and Social Policy Unit. The programme works with private, public and third sector partners, developing and delivering projects that use good food to improve the quality of life of Londoners.

The implementation of the London Food Strategy is supported through the London Food Programme, and colleagues from the GLA health, planning, environment<sup>97</sup> and volunteering teams work closely together. This ensures that the programme complements the work being done across the city. The LFB and GLA is a member, and Silver Award winner, of the Sustainable Food Places network (previously the Sustainable Food Cities Network),<sup>98</sup> which connects the work of food partnerships across the UK to address the social, economic and environmental challenges of their food systems.

## 2.2.4. Reported achievements and challenges

### Achievements

According to the stakeholder survey, the LFB's main achievement has been its contribution to the formulation of policies, in particular the London Food Strategy, and the contribution it has made to the promotion of these policies (indicated by 80 per cent

of respondents). In addition, respondents mentioned the successful mainstreaming of the topic of food into broader policy-making processes.

The LFB can be credited with putting in place pioneering strategies focused on reducing childhood obesity.<sup>99</sup> These actions have targeted reducing children's exposure to junk food by restricting advertising and assisting boroughs in developing plans to promote the marketing of high-quality and nutritious food. In addition, proposals have been put forward to restrict the opening of new take-away food outlets within 400 metres of schools. In addition, the Healthier Catering Commitment<sup>100</sup> aims to help food outlets make simple changes to sell healthier food.

Some of the stakeholders surveyed indicated that by working with the LFB, they have benefited from networking, learning and access to innovative ideas and partnerships. They have also recognized the importance of the role markets play in the food supply chain. In addition, they appreciate having a platform to engage and collaborate with locally, and having the opportunity to influence the GLA's thinking and collective voice.

Since 2011, the London Food Link, supported by the London Food Programme and the LFB, has published the annual Good Food for London report.<sup>101</sup> This report outlines important achievements. Some of the main ones are listed below.

- More local councils are committed to the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food<sup>102</sup> and the SUGAR SMART<sup>103</sup> complementary campaign, focused on tackling excessive sugar consumption through actions across 10 sectors. These range from reducing sugary drinks for sale in restaurants and retail to organizing public awareness campaigns. In 2018, 10 councils signed the Local Government Declaration and 12 are running SUGAR SMART campaigns. Additionally, 7 councils are in the process of signing and/or setting up a campaign.

<sup>94</sup>[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/implementation\\_plan\\_2018-2023.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/implementation_plan_2018-2023.pdf)

<sup>95</sup>Sustain is a powerful alliance of organizations and communities working together for a better system of food, farming and fishing, and cultivating the movement for change. <https://www.sustainweb.org/about/>

<sup>96</sup>London Food Link was created in 2002 as an umbrella for all Sustain initiatives in London, seeking to influence local government policy, providing practical training on food growing, organizing sessions for public sector suppliers, creating guidance for independent restaurants and food producers, running public awareness campaigns, and joining the dots between people around specific food issues. London Food Link's network of partners is open to all who grow, produce, teach, sell, promote and simply enjoy good food in London. <https://www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/policy/>

<sup>97</sup><https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment>

<sup>98</sup><https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/>

<sup>99</sup><https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/londons-child-obesity-taskforce>

<sup>100</sup><https://healthiercateringcommitment.co.uk/>

<sup>101</sup><https://www.sustainweb.org/gffi/>

<sup>102</sup>The aim of the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food is to achieve a council-led commitment to improve the availability of healthier food and to reduce the availability and promotion of unhealthy food, particularly foods and drinks that are high in sugar. [https://www.barnet.gov.uk/sites/default/files/barnet\\_boroughdeclarationsfinal.pdf](https://www.barnet.gov.uk/sites/default/files/barnet_boroughdeclarationsfinal.pdf)

<sup>103</sup><https://www.sugarsmartuk.org/>



- Capital Growth<sup>104</sup> is London's largest food growing network. A total of 31 councils are actively involved, and the network has supported over 2,900 growing spaces across all 33 boroughs since it was launched in 2008. The Capital Growth network has engaged over 150,000 volunteers in growing food and recorded a harvest of over a million portions of fruit and vegetables with an estimated value of GBP 600,000 (EUR 705,543).<sup>105</sup>
- More councils are London Living Wage Friendly Funders, and six boroughs have received top marks for being accredited London Living Wage employers or Friendly Funders and for promoting the scheme locally.
- In catering, many boroughs are committed to high food standards. Two-thirds have achieved at least Bronze Food for Life Served Here<sup>106</sup> accreditation in the majority of their schools and/or other catering under council control (care homes, workplace canteens or early years settings).
- Children's health and school food culture remain a strong focal point for action as well, with 31 boroughs having at least some schools engaged with Healthy Schools London and/or the Soil Association's Food for Life Awards.
- Eight boroughs have active local food partnerships that are members of the Sustainable Food Places network.
- Fourteen boroughs have Fairtrade status, and six are overdue in renewing their status or in the process of achieving this status.

## Challenges

The main challenge identified by all survey participants is the lack of mandatory regulation for the stakeholders engaging in the SFS MSM. Moreover, 60 per cent of stakeholders considered the lack of budget to support participation and collaboration as another important obstacle. Finally, 60 per cent of respondents indicated that the leadership's strategies for resolving disagreements between parties could be improved, showing that there is an opportunity to enhance the management of constructive dialogue, power relations and trade-offs.

## 2.2.5. Conclusion: Drivers of success for the London Food Board

London is a recognized leader in international food networks. It is a key partner in the C40 Cities Food System Network and the MUFPP. The contributions made by the GLA and the LFB have been so remarkable that they earned them a Silver Award from the Sustainable Food Cities Network (as it was) in 2017. Working through the Mayor's Office, the GLA food team and the LFB have formulated strategies and convened working groups to address the problems in London's food system, with particular attention paid to reducing childhood obesity and inequality. The city has committed to halving the percentage of primary school children who are overweight or obese by 2030, and to reducing the gap in childhood obesity rates between the richest and poorest areas of London. Together, community representatives, businesses, institutions and the government have focused on good food strategies to improve people's lives in different areas. In trying to alleviate diet-related diseases, they have also built stronger communities.

According to the study, the success and achievements of the London Food Board are attributable to a combination of factors, ranging from its representativeness and the commitment of its members to having key partnerships with initiatives such as the C40 Cities Food System Network and the MUFPP.

All the survey participants agree that the stakeholder composition of the LFB adequately reflects the diversity of sectors present in the London food system, and that the balanced representation of all stakeholders is one of the strongest drivers of collaboration.

The SFS MSM also owes its success to the engagement of its members which, according to 80 per cent of respondents, is medium to very high. Broken down by constituency, all participating stakeholders feel that the public sector is the most engaged, followed by civil society (according to 80 per cent of respondents), the private sector (according to 60 per cent) and farmers (according to 20 per cent). Some of the main reasons that motivate members to be part of the mechanism's work include advocacy and learning purposes (reported by all the respondents) and networking (reported by 80 per cent).

<sup>104</sup>Capital Growth helps community gardens, schools, allotments and home growers to gain skills and grow food in the city through training, advice and networking opportunities.

<sup>105</sup>All currency conversions were carried out on 22 July 2021.

<sup>106</sup>The Soil Association's Food for Life Served Here award is an independently awarded accreditation for caterers. The award helps organizations ensure that they are recognized for serving more local, fresh and honest food. To achieve the Bronze standard, caterers must demonstrate that they are cooking from scratch using fresh ingredients that are free from trans fats and better for animal welfare. The Silver and Gold awards recognize caterers for practices such as making healthy eating easier, championing local producers and sourcing environmentally friendly and ethically produced ingredients.

Government buy-in has been pivotal to the LFB. About 80 per cent of respondents consider the level of government buy-in to be medium to very high, including the support of high-level representatives for the mechanism.

Good governance within the LFB has certainly been a key part of its success. All the stakeholders surveyed believe that the LFB respects the code of conduct and principles of good governance agreed upon by all parties, and that its meetings are well organized, communication is transparent, clear and effective, and its structure and processes are conducive to equitable representation and participation of all its members. Furthermore, 80 per cent of respondents concur that the majority of formal members actively participate in the work of the SFS MSM and that the participatory learning processes in place are conducive to the capacity building of its members.

Another factor that has contributed to the LFB's performance is the good quality of its leadership. All the respondents indicated that the products generated by the SFS MSM adequately reflect its members' contributions. They believe that the leadership shares power in decision-making, is receptive to new ideas, encourages all members to participate, and actively welcomes new members. In addition, the vast majority of respondents (80 per cent) think that the leadership uses good strategies to manage conflicts of interest and power relations, and that it provides opportunities for members to build leadership skills within the board.

A clear, well-defined strategic vision and an understanding of key policy-related issues have been

factors in the success of the LFB. In this regard, all the stakeholders surveyed indicated that the LFB understands the general policy environment related to its priorities and has clearly articulated its vision, mission and goals among its members. Some 80 per cent also indicated that the food systems approach to policy formulation and implementation is understood by most of the stakeholders that make up the SFS MSM.

Another key element pointed out by respondents is the LFB's effectiveness in meeting the health and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable and its capacity to support effective decisions in the context of COVID-19. At the beginning of the pandemic, an additional LFB subgroup – the Food Aid Sub-Group – was established to monitor and escalate issues and risks associated with COVID-19-related food insecurity and food aid. This subgroup has been an essential part of London's response to the pandemic. Likewise, 80 per cent of respondents believe that the LFB has effectively included the food systems approach and the environmental sustainability component in its work, while the same percentage believe that the strategies to promote collaborative and coordinated action among all food system stakeholders are constructive. Meanwhile, 60 per cent of respondents think that the mechanism has fostered an inclusive and constructive dialogue among all food system stakeholders.

Looking to the future, 80 per cent of respondents believe that the issues to be prioritized by the LFB should be sustainable food production, urban agriculture and short supply chains, local markets, and food loss and waste.



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