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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.

2.5. Quito (Ecuador): Quito Agri-Food Pact (PAQ)¹⁴²



Image credit: Alexandra Rodríguez, ConQuito, AGRUPAR Project Manager

2.5.1. About the PAQ

The PAQ emerged from a context of persistent food insecurity in the city of Quito. Between 2015 and 2017, within the framework of a programme¹⁴³ promoted by FAO and RUAF, various actors in the Quito food system were mobilized to conduct a diagnosis of the agri-food system using a territorial approach. ConQuito, the city's economic promotion agency, played a critical leadership role in the process, mobilizing the actors, sharing the results and supporting the creation of a working group. Ultimately, the group was recognized as the multi-stakeholder food platform of Quito: the Quito Agri-Food Pact (PAQ). Signing the MUFPP in January 2016 fast-tracked its consolidation.

Although not formally institutionalized, the PAQ is backed by government authorities and ConQuito, its host agency. Over approximately two years, ConQuito

led the set-up of the PAQ, supported by RUAF and FAO. The CRFS approach¹⁴⁴ guided the process. Today, ConQuito is still the lead organization in the PAQ, and is supported by the Resilience Directorate of Quito, RUAF and Rikolto.

The PAQ functions as a citizen consultation and advisory body, stimulating collective action and new initiatives among its members. It plays a strong lobbying and advocacy role, mainly at city-region level, formulating policies and managing knowledge of food systems. To date, its priorities have been food security and poverty, sustainable diets, food diversification, food environments, and food loss and waste.

Its geographic scope of action is the city-region level. The PAQ is connected to global networks, such as the MUFPP. Through these networks, the PAQ generates knowledge and implements projects, focusing on

¹⁴²The acronym is based on the Spanish name – Pacto Agroalimentario de Quito.

¹⁴³The programme was called "Understanding the city-regional food system: Planning for a more resilient and food-secure city".

¹⁴⁴<http://www.fao.org/in-action/food-for-cities-programme/overview/crfs/en/>



Image credit: Alexandra Rodríguez, ConQuito, AGRUPAR Project Manager

sustainable and resilient food systems, such as Quito's AGRUPAR Programme.¹⁴⁵ This programme was launched in 2002 and is still a key player in the execution of the MUFPP. The SFS MSM takes MUFPP's framework for action and its indicators as a conceptual framework to guide its work.

The PAQ has no operating budget, hence stakeholders cover their own expenses when attending meetings. Occasionally, however, some project-specific funds are mobilized; these are used mainly to organize meetings and prepare studies. RUAF has been the main sponsor of the PAQ, and its financial contributions have been used for activities ranging from data collection to the production of a geographic information system.

2.5.2. Structure and governance

Structure

The PAQ brings together about 30 different stakeholder groups representing Quito's food system. Participating

actors were selected on the basis of a stakeholder mapping, produced within the framework of the food systems diagnosis. This work drew on pre-existing food-related platforms and multi-stakeholder coalitions. Participants are usually self-appointed or selected by the organization they represent.

The PAQ is a highly participatory SFS MSM that ensures broad and diverse representation. Figures 63, 64 and 65 show its composition in terms of types of organizations (constituencies), sectors and food systems activities represented.

For more information on the type of the different organizations participating in the PAQ, see Annex 9.

Governance

Even though the PAQ does not have a written strategic orientation document, the good governance principles indicated in Figure 66 have been implicitly defined and agreed upon by all participating stakeholders.

¹⁴⁵<https://www.futurepolicy.org/global/quito-agrupar/>



Figure 63. Types of organizations (constituencies) represented in the PAQ (in red)

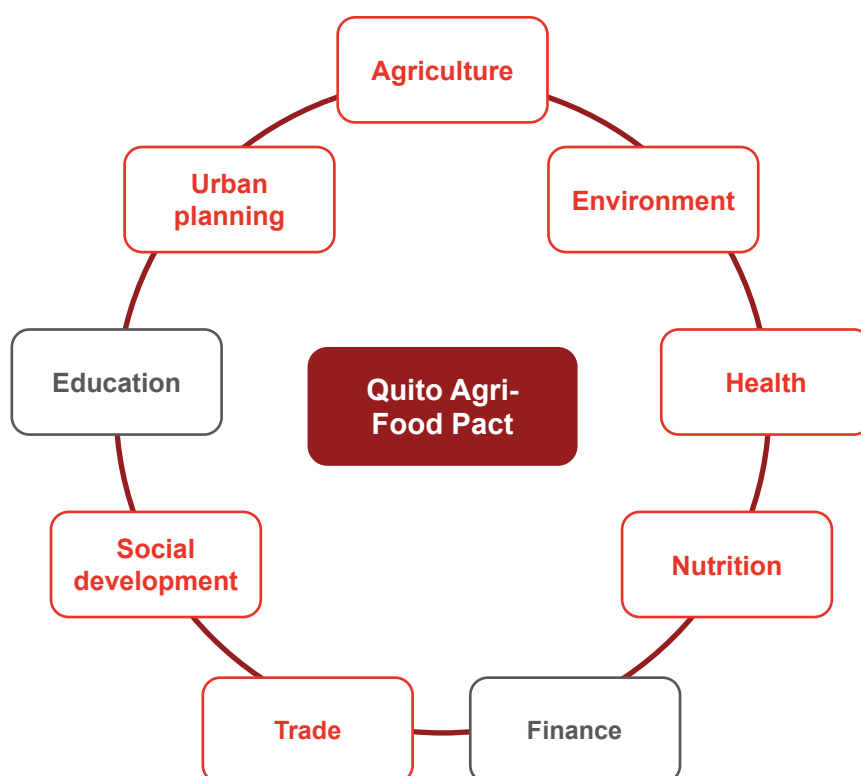


Figure 64. Sectors represented in the PAQ (in red)

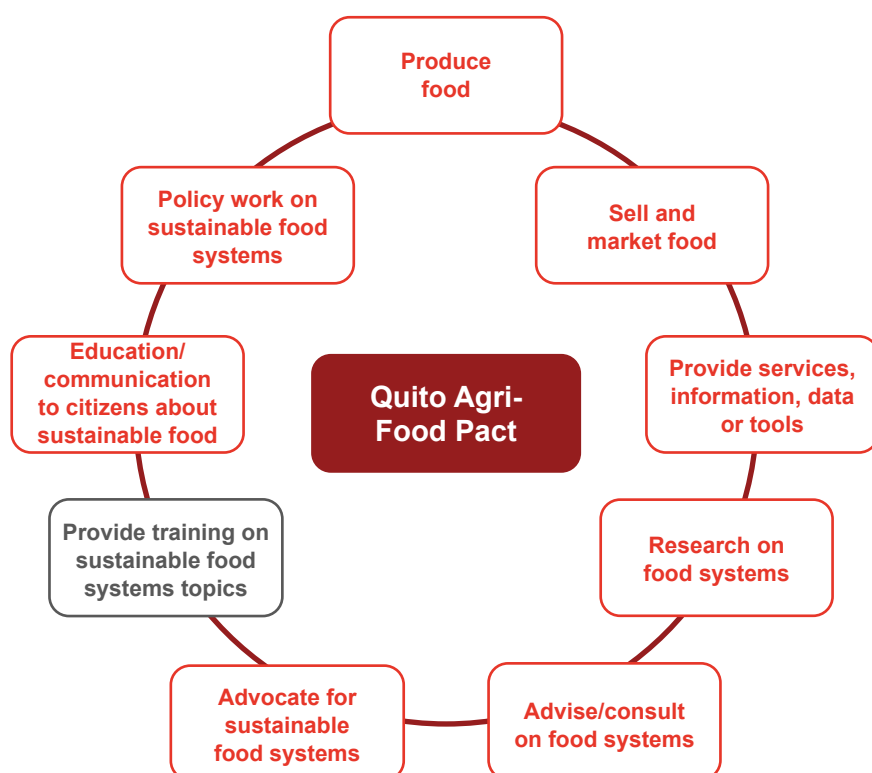


Figure 65. Types of activities represented in the PAQ (in red)

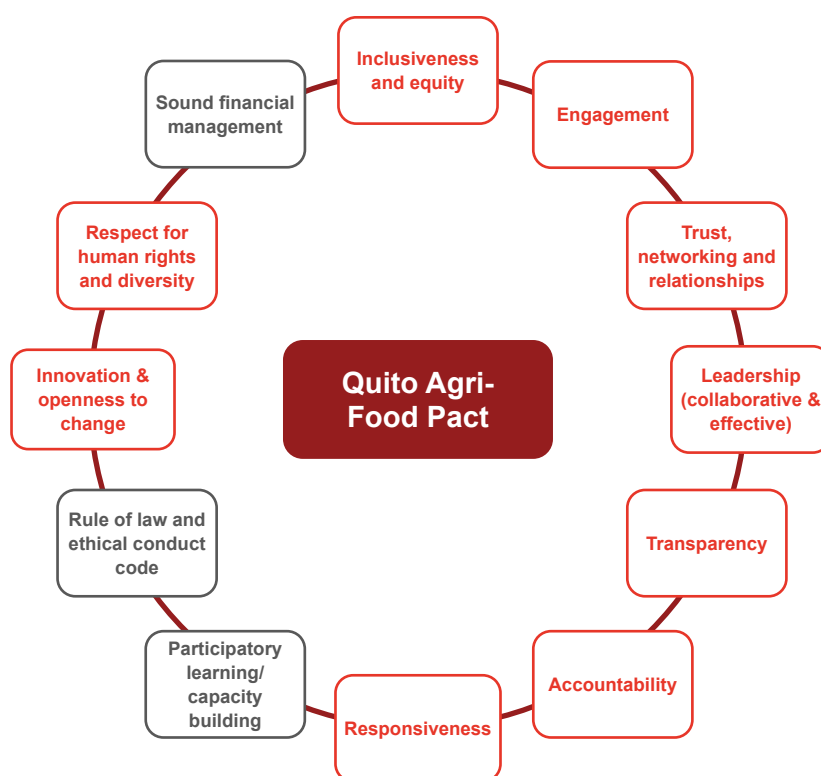


Figure 66. Principles of good governance applied in the PAQ (in red)

In order to put these principles into practice, the PAQ has established mechanisms for managing conflicts of interest, capturing and taking into account all voices (including voices that are not in the PAQ, for specific processes) and addressing or balancing power relations. It also has established mechanisms for communicating effectively, achieving consensus, learning collaboratively and building capacity.

Regular meetings are usually held biannually, following a predefined calendar, and the agenda is defined collaboratively. Initially (in 2017 and 2018), meetings were held several times a year; this subsequently changed to once a year (in 2019), and during the pandemic only certain actors have met to discuss specific issues. The majority of stakeholders surveyed (81 per cent) indicated that they attend all meetings; 62 per cent of them dedicate 1 to 4 hours a month to the work of the SFS MSM, while the other 38 per cent dedicate more than 4 hours. Half of the respondents indicated that they finance their participation from their own personal budget, while the other half is sponsored by the organizations they represent. During meetings, a designated facilitator is responsible for ensuring constructive and inclusive dialogue. Stakeholders are informed about the topics to be discussed in advance and each meeting has a clearly defined purpose, themes and questions to be addressed. During meetings, stakeholders are given an equal amount of time to participate. Participants can also give feedback on the dialogue that has taken place. In addition to regular meetings, stakeholders also communicate via email, letters or verbal consultations.

2.5.3. Policy formulation and implementation

SFS policy formulation

A food systems diagnosis¹⁴⁶ was carried out in 2016-2017 in Quito, with FAO and RUAF's support under the CRFS programme.¹⁴⁷ It adopted a highly participatory approach and applied a food systems lens. Taking into consideration the trends and challenges applicable to Quito's food system, it covered the mapping of actors and food-related policies. Moreover, it focused on socially disadvantaged and marginalized groups and provided an overview of actionable entry points for further collective action and policy development.

The food systems diagnosis resulted in the development of Quito's Food System Sustainability Plan and the Quito Food Charter¹⁴⁸ in October

2018, and later in the design of the Quito Agri-Food Strategy¹⁴⁹ in April 2019, which was formulated in alignment with pre-existing food-related policies.

The PAQ has also provided input and lobbied to include food issues in the Ecuador-Quito Climate Change Action Plan,¹⁵⁰ in the Territorial Development Plan¹⁵¹ and in the Vision of Quito 2040.¹⁵² All of these plans have been enacted by the municipality of Quito through the secretariats of Productive Development and Competitiveness and Environment and Planning (Directorate of Resilience).

During the formulation of the Quito Food Charter, the PAQ provided spaces for consultation and awareness-raising for citizens, organizations and entities in order to prioritize food on the public agenda. By doing so, the PAQ fostered a highly participatory process and strong citizen engagement and commitment, reflected in the 2,500 signatures collected. Similarly, during the formulation of the Quito Agri-Food Strategy, the PAQ supported the consultation process with citizens and other stakeholders. Throughout the consultation and formulation process, trade-offs were dealt with by trying to reach a consensus, guided by the MUFPP Framework for Action. The process also took into account pre-existing plans, programmes and related activities to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

The Quito Agri-Food Strategy takes a holistic approach and its main topics are:

- Inclusion of food in urban planning
- Food sovereignty and quality of life
- Adequate agricultural practices and food safety control
- Healthy eating and nutritional practices, more balanced diets
- Equity in access to healthy food
- Strengthening the producer-consumer relationship
- Improvement of farmers' livelihoods
- Waste management throughout the food chain
- Subsidiarity and coordination between different governance levels
- Promotion of entrepreneurship in the sustainable food sector

Monitoring mechanisms have been put in place to help assess the strategy's progress and make course

¹⁴⁶<http://www.fao.org/3/I9197ES/i9197es.pdf>

¹⁴⁷<http://www.fao.org/in-action/food-for-cities-programme/toolkit/defining-the-crfs/en/>

¹⁴⁸<http://www.conquito.org.ec/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/carta-1.pdf>

¹⁴⁹<http://gobiernoadabierto.quito.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/documentos/sistemaagro/documentos/Estrategia.pdf>

¹⁵⁰https://openei.org/wiki/Ecuador-Quito_City_Climate_Change_Action_Plan#cite_note-1

¹⁵¹<https://www.quito.gob.ec/documents/PMDOT.pdf>

¹⁵²<http://www.rniu.buap.mx/infoRNIU/nov18/2/quito-vision-2040-y-su-nuevo-modelo-de-ciudad.pdf>

corrections where necessary. Thanks to the legitimacy and inclusiveness of the whole formulation process, the Quito Agri-Food Strategy is recognized by the Mayor's Office as a city planning instrument and an official policy.

The new mayor of Quito, Jorge Yunda, signed the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration on behalf of the city in March 2021. This declaration is a pledge by cities and regions around the world to accelerate the development of integrated food policies as a key tool in combating climate change. With this endorsement, Quito seeks to uphold a vision for sustainability and resilience, which will give further meaning to the Quito Agri-Food Strategy.

SFS policy implementation

Because the Quito Agri-Food Strategy is not a municipal ordinance, no budget is assigned for its implementation. For now, therefore, implementation of the strategy relies on various initiatives carried out by a variety of food systems actors, without any formal reporting of activities that have been performed or allocation of funds with specific responsible parties.

Nevertheless, various activities and projects are conducted in alignment with the strategy. The PAQ coordinates these activities, and plays a key role regarding the communication and monitoring and evaluation components. Moreover, the strategy is constantly reviewed in collaboration with different stakeholders, by sharing information and lessons learned.

In the coming years, supported by the International Development Research Centre,¹⁵³ Rikolto and RUAF, Quito will work on implementing and localizing the PAQ and Quito Agri-Food Strategy at neighbourhood level.

2.5.4. Reported achievements and challenges

Achievements

According to 56 per cent of respondents to the stakeholder survey, one of the PAQ's main achievements is that it has been able to convene and coordinate a wide range of stakeholders that are active in the agri-food system, and to create collaborative networks between them. Additionally, half of the respondents think that the work carried out in the area of policy formulation has been successful, as exemplified by the development of the Quito Food Charter and the Quito Agri-Food Strategy. The PAQ has made visible the presence of key stakeholders usually

forgotten and excluded from policy-making. Moreover, participants concur that the PAQ has strengthened the voices of all actors, allowing them to express their concerns, strengthening social dialogue and making it possible to integrate the topic of food into municipal planning.

A major achievement highlighted by many stakeholders is the participatory formulation of a common vision for the future of Quito's food system, which lays the foundation for collaborative work on concrete programmes and paves the way for the institutionalization of the PAQ.

In addition, the occasional funding available to conduct research and deepen the knowledge of the agri-food situation in Quito has been crucial in positioning the topic on the political agenda and contributing to evidence-based decision-making.

Challenges

According to 88 per cent of respondents, the PAQ's major challenge is its limited budget, curtailing its capacity to undertake activities and consolidate as an official FPC. This is particularly important, as one major barrier identified through the survey relates to the lack of official recognition of the PAQ by municipal authorities. This translates mainly into a lack of political support, as indicated by 63 per cent of respondents. Additionally, changes in authorities have affected the implementation of actions, since the SFS MSM finds it difficult to reaffirm commitments with new local authorities that have not participated in the related process.

Not surprisingly, the level of government engagement, including support from high-level representatives, is deemed as medium by the majority of stakeholders surveyed. This represents a challenge for the PAQ as it seeks to achieve institutionalization and official recognition.

Regarding the food crisis generated by COVID-19, half of the stakeholders surveyed believe that the PAQ response has been weak, and they point in particular to the lack of connection to municipal level. In Quito, the shutdown of public spaces led to the closure of the bioferias (local markets). The main compensatory mechanism was a state food distribution measure, crucial given the level of socio-economic vulnerability of the population. As part of the CRFS project, Quito mapped these markets and vulnerable communities to identify priority groups to be targeted for emergency food distribution. The PAQ's role was instrumental in providing this information and facilitating

¹⁵³<https://www.idrc.ca/es>



Image credit: Biothailand by Shutterstock

communication and coordination activities (RUAF, 2020a).

2.5.5. Conclusion: Drivers of success for the PAQ

Since its inception, the PAQ has been instrumental in putting the topic of food at the top of the political agenda. It has helped to raise awareness among citizens, civil society organizations, businesses, academia and government authorities that food problems are not only about nutrition, but also about political, economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions. These factors must be addressed by public policy using a systemic approach; the commitment of the entire population and a sense of co-responsibility are also needed.

As of mid-2021, the PAQ is seeking official recognition as the city's official FPC. It is also aiming to go beyond the Quito Agri-Food Strategy to develop a holistic food policy document and related action plan in a participatory way and with a territorial approach, to contribute to fair and well-managed rural and urban development.

The city of Quito is recognized as one of the front-running cities in Latin America in terms of fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration to address food issues from a holistic perspective. Quito is a very active

signatory city of the MUFPP and a member of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group.

Since its inception, the PAQ has achieved significant results, thanks to a number of contributing factors. According to the stakeholder survey, an important component has been that the PAQ adequately reflects the diversity of actors in Quito's food system (according to 69 per cent of participants), and that it also promotes and supports diverse representation and participation (63 per cent).

Another aspect that has paved the way for the PAQ is the level of involvement of its stakeholders, perceived as medium to high by 88 per cent of respondents. Regarding their motivation for being part of the SFS MSM, 69 per cent of the stakeholders surveyed consider networking to be the most important, while 63 per cent are motivated by leading or being involved in a fascinating thematic area, and also attend the meetings to be informed about food issues relevant to the city.

Over the years, the PAQ has built a governance framework that is conducive to achieving good results. More than half (63 per cent) of respondents concur that the platform respects the agreed code of conduct, the rule of law and principles of good governance. They also indicated that the meetings are well organized and that the structure and processes are conducive to the equal representation and participation of all members. Moreover, 69 per cent of them agreed that

communication is transparent, clear and effective and that most formal members actively participate in the work of the SFS MSM; 56 per cent acknowledge that the structure and processes are conducive to addressing food systems commitments and agreements in a consensual and collaborative manner.

Strong leadership is another key factor in the PAQ's successes. A large majority (75 per cent) of respondents think that the leadership reflects the contributions of the members in the documents or products generated by the SFS MSM, is receptive to new ideas (81 per cent), actively welcomes new members (75 per cent), encourages all members to participate (69 per cent), provides opportunities for members to build leadership skills (63 per cent) and shares power with the members in terms of decision-making (69 per cent). In addition, more than half of the respondents indicated that the leadership uses good mechanisms to resolve disagreements (75 per cent) and to manage conflicts of interest (69 per cent) and power relations (63 per cent).

The fact that the PAQ's strategic vision is clear and understood by all stakeholders has been a factor in the results achieved so far. A large majority of respondents (81 per cent) agree that the SFS MSM has a basic understanding of its policy subject matter, which has been instrumental in getting its priorities considered in several policy processes (according to 63

per cent of respondents). Similarly, 63 per cent of the stakeholders surveyed feel that the PAQ understands the overall policy environment related to its priorities and that it clearly identifies and articulates its vision, mission and goals among its members (75 per cent). Furthermore, 75 per cent of respondents perceive that the food systems approach used for policy formulation and implementation is understood by the majority of the platform's stakeholders.

The PAQ has been effective in including an environmental focus and a holistic vision in its work. All respondents consider that the SFS MSM has adequately integrated the environmental sustainability component, and 94 per cent think the same about the inclusion of the food systems approach. Likewise, the vast majority of respondents (88 per cent) believe that the PAQ is effective in addressing the health and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable, in promoting inclusive and constructive dialogue, and in fostering collaborative and coordinated action among all food system stakeholders (94 per cent).

Finally, when asked about the sustainable food systems issues that the PAQ should prioritize in the coming years, the majority of respondents (88 per cent) indicated sustainable food production, while 69 per cent believe that the PAQ should also prioritize climate mitigation/adaptation.



Image credit: CONQUITO - AGRUPAR