



## Explanation

**Food system mapping** is a tool for gathering information about what's happening where in the local food system. This can include (for example) the location of shops selling sustainable or local produce, farmers and growers in the area, projects focused on food issues and major consumers or providers of food. The mapping process is participatory, visual and interactive encouraging people to share and remember useful food-related information.

This tool describes a food system map that can be developed by a partnership steering group, management group or a group of active and interested individuals from the partnership. The map can also be produced by participants at a food event or [Food Summit](#) (see tool) where the process needs to be facilitated in a different way (see the **FOOD SYSTEM MAP – for events** section below).

For any information about the relationships and connections between different stakeholders and food-related issues a **FOOD SYSTEM MIND MAP** (see below) will be more useful.

## Introduction

- This mapping exercise will help you to explore what you already know about the people and places that are important in the local food sector
- Either write directly on the map or use post-it notes and draw lines to the relevant location on the map.
- You will need:
  - flip-chart paper,
  - post-it notes,
  - thick and thin coloured felt-tip pens,
  - sticky dots and
  - a large-scale map of your area, town, city etc.  
(if you can't get a map make your own – see **Tips** below)

## What to do

- It's important to ensure that all those participating in the mapping process can be involved as much as they want to
- Facilitate the process by gathering the group around the map or flip-chart paper in a way that – as much as possible – allows everyone to see the map the same way up and contribute equally to annotating the map.
- Provide enough pens and post-its for everyone to have their own

- Encourage discussion whilst the map is being developed – in many ways the process of drawing the map is as important and valuable as the finished map itself
- Record key discussion points and comments – either on the map or on a separate flip-chart
- Encourage exploration of activity across the whole food sector and across different sectors by asking prompt questions
- Before beginning the map, it is important to agree that the focus of the map is to understand current activity contributing to a sustainable food system and to clarify what this means

- **Definitions:**

### FOOD SYSTEM

The inter-connections between how we: produce, process, transport, buy, consume & dispose of the food we eat and the way this affects us as individuals and communities.

### SUSTAINABLE FOOD

Food that is produced, processed, traded and disposed of in ways that:

- contribute to thriving local economies and sustain the livelihoods of people working in the food sector (**ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**)
- protect the diversity of both plants and animals and avoid damaging natural resources and contributing to climate change (**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**)
- provide social benefits, such as good quality food, safe and healthy products and educational opportunities (**SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**)

- **Mapping prompt questions:**

- **Which places do you know that sell sustainable food and drink?**  
Think about shops, markets, cafés, restaurants, pubs.  
What's good/less good about these outlets?
- **Which institutions provide prepared food (schools, hospitals etc.)**  
Which could or do already source their ingredients sustainably?
- **Where else might you get sustainable food?**  
Think about box schemes, farm shops, delivery schemes
- **Which places do you know that grow, produce, catch or forage for local food?**  
Think about farms, growing projects, food processing businesses, fish farms and fishing fleets
- **Which local organisations or individuals do you know of that are involved in supporting, promoting or raising awareness about issues related to sustainable food?**  
Think about statutory/public sector, businesses or third sector food organisations

- Work as a group to decide what to include on the map and how to annotate the map
- The map can be an on-going 'living' tool to use and add to at different meetings/events
- It is also a useful tool to illustrate the breadth and energy of your food system and can be used to demonstrate different components of your food system at stakeholder meetings
- The map can be kept as an analogue, hand-completed resource or – if the expertise is available – it can be turned into a digital version so that it can be shared and stored easily

## Tips

- If you don't have a map, make your own on a flip-chart or large piece of paper.
- Start by mapping where you are meeting or the centre of your town, add on your homes, then food-related places of interest and how they are connected.
- This is often more interesting than annotating a printed map and helps share different perspectives on the food system.
- When mapping use different colours to distinguish between the different sectors/stakeholder categories:

**RED** = statutory/public sector

**BLUE** = business/private sector

**GREEN** = third/community and voluntary sector

**ORANGE** = active individuals

- Use different coloured post-its or sticky location dots or pens for map annotations and comments. This makes the map easier to visually analyse.
- An alternative colour coding could show different types of food-related activity:

**RED** = producers/processors

**BLUE** = wholesalers/distributors

**ORANGE** = retailers/caterers (including shops, markets, cafés, etc.)

**PURPLE** = procuring institutions (hospitals, schools, prisons etc.)

**GREEN** = surplus recycling/repurposing/redistributing and food banks

- The maps can be added to at different events and used at presentations to illustrate the range of different food activities

# FOOD SYSTEM MAPPING FOR EVENTS

## Explanation

This tool describes a food system map developed by participants at a food event or FOOD SUMMIT. The tool requires written instructions as it will not be directly facilitated.

## Introduction

- This mapping exercise helps event participants share what they already know about the people and places that are important in the local food system
- Participants can either write directly on the map or use post-it notes and draw lines to the relevant location on the map.
- You will need:
  - flip-chart paper,
  - post-it notes,
  - thick and thin coloured felt-tip pens,
  - sticky dots and
  - a large-scale map of your area, town, city etc.

## What to do

- Display the map with its instructions prominently in the event venue (on a stand/wall if possible)
- Attach the map to a larger piece of paper to allow information the added around the outside of the map and linked to locating sticky dots on the map itself
- Encourage participants to engage with the map before the event (as they arrive and settle), during refreshment or lunch breaks, and after the event (before they leave)
- Display the title and instructions next to the map and explain them if necessary

### Food activity in and around e.g. Leeds (insert your place, town, city, area) WHO is doing WHAT, WHERE and WHY?

- Add coloured sticky dots to the map to locate where the activity is
- Add comments to post-it notes around the map, and
- link the comments to the relevant dot by drawing a line between them
- Use the colour coding for the sticky dots (and/or for post-it notes):

**RED** = statutory/public sector activity

**BLUE** = business/private sector activity

**GREEN** = third/community and voluntary sector activity

**ORANGE** = active individuals

- Encourage participants at the event to read what others have written on the map as this helps raise awareness of activity in the food sector as well as encouraging connections and relationships to develop between different stakeholders
- After the event make sure you stick down any post-it notes with clear tape and record the name of the event, venue and date when it was produced

# FOOD SYSTEM MIND MAPPING

## Explanation

**Mind maps** (also called 'spider charts' and similar to 'rich pictures') are used to stimulate discussion between participants and uncover useful information the group may have. A key question is asked for the group to consider. Initially, each participant considers the question alone, then the group shares individual perspectives, identifies common themes, explores how they are connected, digs deeper into the themes, prioritises and looks for consensus and disagreement (both of which are valid and useful), recording it all on the mind map.

For any geographical information about where people, businesses or places are located use a **FOOD SYSTEM MAP** (see above).

## Introduction

- This tool will help you to build understanding of the local food sector by finding out what you think and what you already know about our what's going on
- Mind maps will help to address key questions and capture discussion and outputs
- You will need:
  - flip-chart paper,
  - post-it notes,
  - thick and thin coloured felt-tip pens,
  - sticky dots

## What to do

### Question 1

**What are the most important local food issues?** (in your town, city, area)

- Write the question in the centre of the flip-chart laid flat on the table or stuck up on a wall where all participants can see it
- Each participant writes their own individual responses on post-it notes.

**IMPORTANT:** write each separate response on a separate post-it

- When everyone has finished writing, go around the group and each person in turn sticks one of their post-its on the flip-chart and explains the issue and why it's important

### Group discussion

- As a group, cluster similar issues together into groups of post-its (use a separate flip-chart if necessary)
- When the clusters are agreed upon, draw a circle around each one, give the cluster a summary heading and link it to the central question with a line using different colours and to other clusters if they are related/linked in any way

### Discussion prompts

- Which issues do you agree are important? Why?
  - Which do you think are the most/least important? Why?
- Add useful comments from the discussion about the issues to the mind map and link to the issues with coloured line

### Question 2

#### Who is doing what in your local food system?

- Write the question in the centre of a new flip-chart

### Question prompts

- Who are the main stakeholders –people/groups/businesses/organisations who:
    - are most involved in the food system?
    - have most influence on the food system?
    - are likely to be most affected by changes in the local food system?
  - Which people, groups, businesses and organisations are actively involved in local food issues, or who produce, sell or provide local food?
- Each participant writes their responses on post-it notes.
  - **IMPORTANT**: write each separate response on a separate post-it
  - When everyone has finished writing, go around the group and each person in turn sticks one of their post-its on the flip-chart and explains who it is and what they are doing

### Group discussion

- As a group, cluster similar stakeholders together into groups of post-its.
- When the clusters are agreed upon, draw a circle around each one, give the cluster a summary heading and link it to the central question with a line using different colours

### Discussion prompts

- Who are the most important stakeholders? Why?
  - Are there any that you don't think are important? Why?
  - How are the different stakeholders connected?
  - What role could different stakeholders take in the Food Partnership?
  - Which specific individuals could be contacted and approached as potential Steering Group participants?
- Add useful comments from the discussion about the issues to the mind map and link to the issues with coloured lines.

## Tips

- Use different coloured lines to distinguish different themes and make the chart easier to understand and visually engaging
- To begin with, use post-it notes for comments as you may need to move comments around the chart during clustering of similar comments.
- After completing the clustering, the chart can be annotated in any way you wish (writing directly on the flip-chart is best) to clarify relationships, comments and add additional information
- A simple way to prioritise issues or stakeholders is to use sticky dots to vote for your TOP 3 and then discuss the score. (The number of votes you can have will depend on how many items you are choosing from. Usually allow participants to vote for half or just under a half of the total number of items).