

**STRENGTH
2FOOD**

FOOD QUALITY
FOR SUSTAINABILITY
AND HEALTH

PROMOTING LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

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**Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) Conference
“Post 2020: Local Action in a Changing World”
3-4 December, 2019, Brussels**



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 678024.

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LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS: CONCEPTS & DEFINITIONS

- No single, internationally accepted definition of 'local' food system
- Ambivalent definitions and conceptual approaches:
 - # local and regional food systems (LRFS)
 - # localised agro-food systems (LAFS)
 - # alternative food networks (AFN)
 - # short food supply chains (SFSC)
 - # direct-to-consumer (D2C)
- Local food system, here defined, as:
 - Production and services linked, by their characteristics and operations, to a specific territory
 - Geographical, and social, proximity between primary producers and end-consumers



POTENTIAL WELFARE BENEFITS OF LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

ECONOMY

- Job-creation, higher incomes, entrepreneurship opportunities
- Value-added & local multiplier effects in the territory
- Regeneration of local areas

SOCIETY

- Social cohesion, social inclusion, social capital
- Good governance & power relations
- Cultural heritage & regional identity

SMART - RESILIENT - SUSTAINABLE

ENVIRONMENT

- Green food system/ blue economy
- Natural capital & good resource management
- Circular economy

NUTRITION & HEALTH

- Food safety
- Food security
- Health & nutritional quality

Win-win approach to sustainable development?!



CONSIDERATIONS TO 'BEAR IN MIND'

- Fragmented empirical evidence, lack of systematic and comparative analysis, at different scales and contexts
 - rationale for EU H2020's Strength2food project
- Trade-offs across dimensions and indicators
- Direct and indirect effects for different agri-food supply chain actors
- Heterogeneity across localities and contexts – e.g. socio-cultural, political and regulatory framework
- Organisational governance, 'hybridity' and engagement in multiple markets (local/global, short/long)
- No 'one-size-fits-all' prescription



Impact Evaluation of Local-Short Food Systems and their Sustainability: Evidence from North-East England



Farmers' market, Hexham, UK

<https://www.hexhamfarmersmarket.co.uk/>



Fish box scheme, Amble, UK

<https://northumberlandseafood.co.uk/creel-fish-club/>

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS – *from Strength2Food*

- Value-added and creation of public goods in local territory
- Product differentiation (quality, reputation and process characteristics) – e.g. organic, PDO, PGI, TSG
- Growth and diversification of small businesses and enterprise start-ups
- Cooperation, networking and community building
- Celebration of territorial diversity, knowledge, tradition and culture



KEY CHALLENGES AND SCOPE FOR INTERVENTION – *from Strength2Food*

Supply (esp. SMEs)

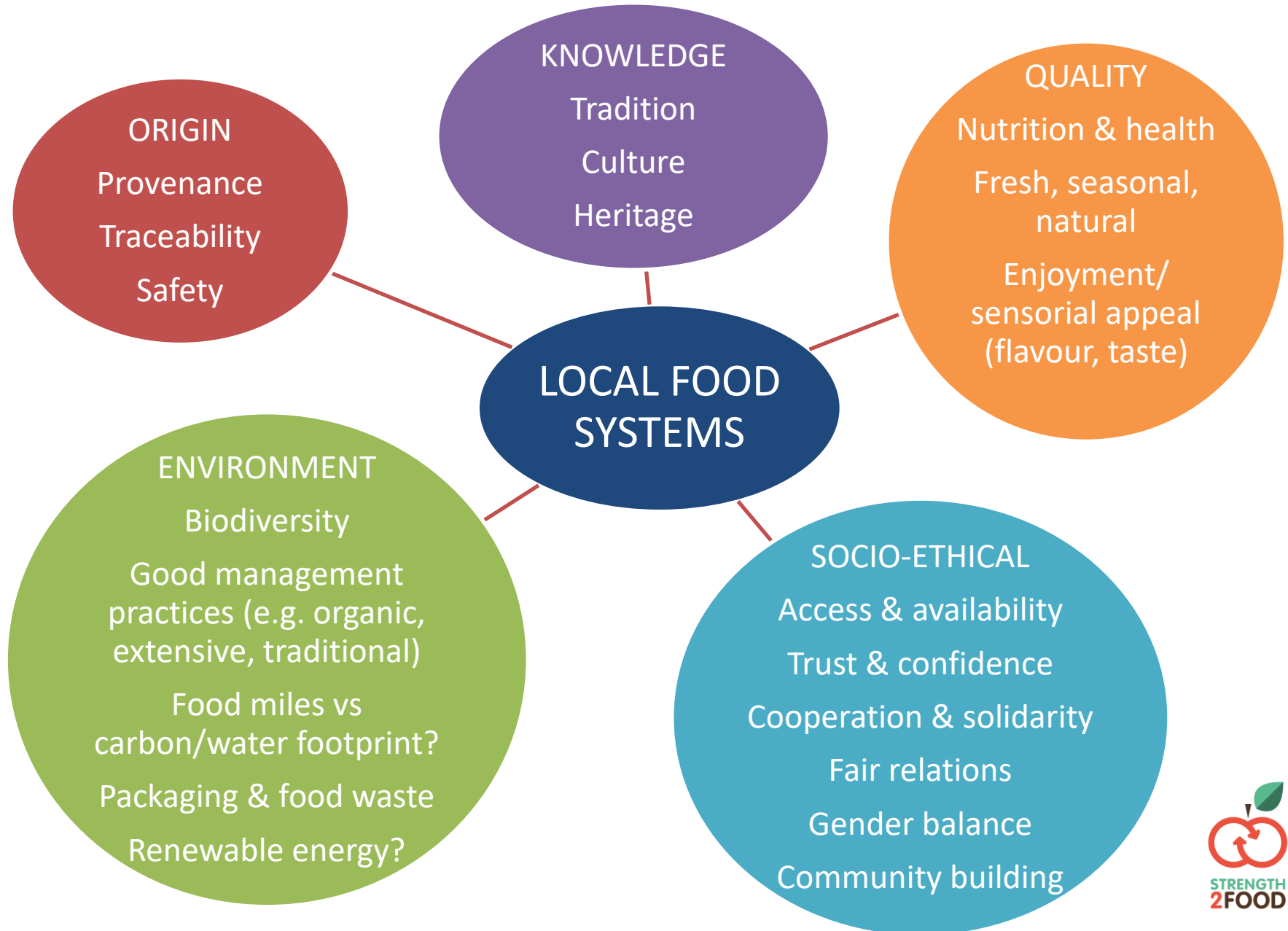
- Governance dynamics – e.g. upstream
- Competition with global/larger players (volume, price, convenience)
- Economies of scale – investments, facilities/ storage, transport and logistics
- Innovation – circular economy, waste reduction, energy recovery, etc.
- Communication and marketing skills – e.g. social media
- Legal and regulatory framework – e.g. market regulations (quotas), IPs, certifications
- Synergies and collaboration within the territory

Demand

- Consumer awareness, trust and perceptions towards quality and sustainability (e.g. organic)
- Price, convenience and time factors
- Niche customer base? (ageing, well-educated, upper-middle class, ‘adventurous’)



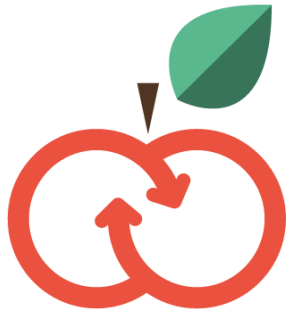
Celebrate Local Food Systems and their Landscape!



KEY QUESTIONS FOR TABLE DISCUSSIONS

1. What would make the food system more sustainable in your local area?
2. What needs to happen at the local level to transition towards a more sustainable local food system?
3. What role could your LAG/FLAG play in supporting this transition?





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Thanks for your attention!

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