

Cherwell District Food Action Plan





Contents



1.	The Oxfordshire Food Strategy	2
2.	Developing Local Food Action Plans	3
3.	Tracking Progress	4
4.	Food Strategy Theory of Change and Metrics	5
5.	The Cherwell Food Action Plans	6
6.	Conclusion	14
7.	Glossary of Terms	15

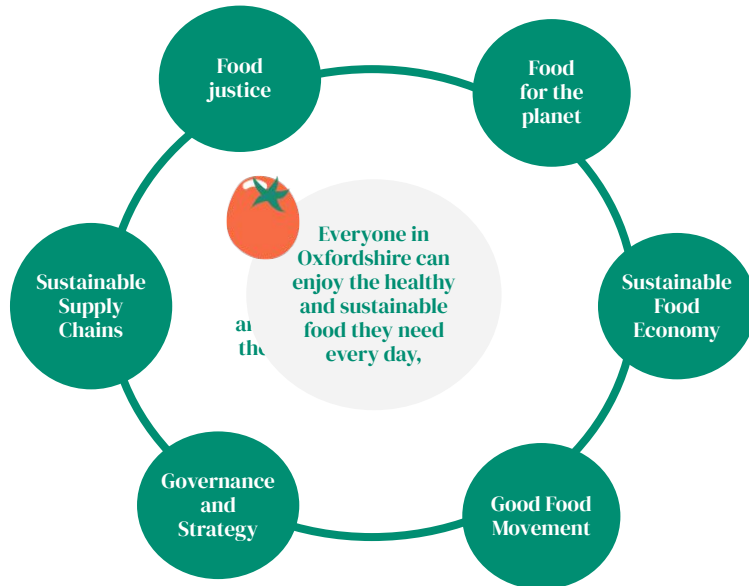


1. The Oxfordshire Food Strategy



The Oxfordshire Food Strategy sets out a vision where everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need every day.

Ambitions to achieve this vision



Five priority areas for action

Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill-health

Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together

Grow the local good food economy through enterprise, local jobs, local wealth generation

Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains

Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering

2. Developing local Food Action Plans

A critical part of implementing this strategy has been the development of local Food Action Plans for each district, to ensure that the Food Strategy reflects local priorities and reflects the unique nature of the City and each of the Districts. These have been led by the Food Action Working Groups (FAWGs) which include representatives from across the food system.

This document presents the Food Action Plan for Cherwell district, however there are additional actions which sit at county-level and are therefore included in the Oxfordshire Country-level plan.

This food action plan is a multi stakeholder plan, with a range of organisations taking responsibility for action. Through this 'collective action' approach we can achieve more, working collaboratively towards a vision for a better food system for Cherwell.



Food Action Working Groups include representatives from across the local food system

3. Tracking progress

The plan identifies initial actions spanning 2024 – 2027. The plans have been developed following a Theory of Change to ensure that the actions will deliver the intended outcomes and impacts.

Throughout this period, we will review progress against targets and metrics and refine the actions recognising that the issues we face are complex and happen within a context in which action owners do not always control over externalities.

We will take an iterative learning approach both to actions and metrics and whilst maintaining the integrity of our ambitions, be pragmatic about the most effective way to achieve these.



The plans have been underpinned by the Food Strategy Theory of Change and Metrics

Everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food that they need everyday



Impacts	Outcomes	Outputs	Oxfordshire-wide activities to achieve these	SDGs
People are healthier and health and wellbeing disparities between areas reduce as a result of better diets	Fewer people experience food poverty and diet-related ill-health and levels of food poverty/diet related ill-health are less severe	<p>Incidence and severity of food insecurity as measured by the PPFI* reduces. The disparity between areas reduces</p> <p>Incidence (new cases) and prevalence (total number) of diet-related ill-health conditions reduces. The disparity between areas reduces</p>	<p>Cash and in-kind support targeted at people experiencing food insecurity e.g., community larders, foodbanks, sharing schemes</p> <p>Healthy eating support available in priority areas e.g., cooking and growing programmes</p> <p>Planning and business support for affordable healthy options in local shops in priority areas</p> <p>Promote existing schemes to improve uptake e.g., Healthy Start, HAF</p>	<p>No Poverty</p> <p>Good Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Reduced inequality</p>
Community connection and cohesion are supported through a vibrant food culture	Oxfordshire is home to vibrant food communities where the growing, preparation, celebration and enjoyment of good food is central to community life	<p>Communities access cooking and growing opportunities tailored to local needs and preferences</p> <p>More community volunteering linked to food</p> <p>Communities celebrate and enjoy food together through events, festivals and campaigns</p>	<p>Support for communities and individuals to find, set up and run cooking activities and growing spaces.</p> <p>Sharing of volunteering opportunities across a wide range of networks</p> <p>Sharing of food-related events and campaigns and support for communities to engage with these</p>	<p>Good Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Sustainable Cities and Communities</p>
Better jobs, livelihoods and places supported by the Good Food Economy	Local good food economy contributes more value to Oxfordshire - measured by economic, health, social, and environmental metrics	<p>More people are employed in locally owned food businesses</p> <p>More food businesses pay wages that are reflective of local living costs</p>	<p>Anchor institutions use their procurement power to support local food enterprises</p> <p>Planning and economy teams support local food enterprises including social enterprises</p>	<p>Decent work and economic growth</p> <p>No poverty</p> <p>Reduced inequality</p>
The food that we produce and consume has less negative impact on the planet, and supports local livelihoods	Sustainable farming practices, a circular economy and local food resilience are supported via short, transparent local food supply chains	More sustainably produced food is produced, bought and consumed locally	<p>Support for and investment in infrastructure for local sustainable producers and short local supply chains</p> <p>Anchor institutions commit to procurement via short local supply chains</p>	<p>Decent work and economic growth</p> <p>Responsible production and consumption</p> <p>Life on Land; Climate Action</p>
Institutions lead the way using their buying power to support healthy and sustainable production and consumption that is accessible to more people and becomes the 'norm'	More people can access healthy and sustainable food through institutional catering benefitting health, the planet and the local economy	<p>More institutions serve healthy and sustainable food and measure their progress e.g., via accreditation schemes</p> <p>More institutions support the local food economy</p>	Institutions set and achieve sustainability targets around food	<p>Good Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Responsible production and consumption</p>

4. The Cherwell Food Action Plan



In Cherwell the FAWG have met on 8 occasions to debate priorities, and develop, refine and test the local action plan. 12 FAWG members represent a wider range of stakeholders including The Hill Community Centre, Oxford Food Hub, Cherwell Collective, Banbury Mosque, Banbury CAG, Bicester Food Bank, North Aston Farm, Cherwell District Council and Good Food Oxfordshire.

Alongside monthly FAWG meetings, members consulted with a wider group of 27 community stakeholders at the Cherwell Food Summit event.

For the purposes of this plan we have only included primary lead and support organisations involved in the development of these plans, however the named lead and support organisations for each action may be working with a range of delivery partners.



Priority Area: Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill-health



- Fewer people experience food poverty and diet-related ill-health
- Levels of food poverty and diet-related ill-health are less severe

Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Organisation/Group
Use Priority Place Food Index to target support at areas most affected by food poverty and diet-related ill-health across the district.	Identified target areas, existing food provision and gaps.	Enhanced understanding of target areas, demographics and existing provision and identified gaps for targeted support.	Year 1: identify priority areas Year 2 = support targeted to priority areas increases as % of total support (£) available. Set year 3 target Year 3 = support to priority areas increases in line with target	Lead: CDC Support: GFO, Cherwell Community Food Network
Development of a fully functional Food Hub in Cherwell, for surplus food distribution and the infrastructure and resources required for this.	Roadmap of Food Hub developed with defined funding, timescales, ownership and potential sites.	Food Hub is more accessible for CDC community groups, better serves their needs, and has more direct access to surplus food in CDC.	Year 1: scoping project of Food Hub complete Year 2: Food hub established Year 3: Review project	Lead: CDC Support: OFH, Banbury Food For Charities
Identify the location of processing units or commercial kitchen spaces available for hire.	Database of processing units and / or commercial kitchen spaces available for hire.	Locally grown surplus food is able to be processed and preserved, to enable longer shelf life and distribution throughout the year.	Year 1: Amount of surplus food processed via kitchens for redistribution Year 2: 10% increase on baseline Year 3: 20% increase on baseline	Lead: WISH Support: CDC, OFH
Identify priority schools in areas of highest food poverty and enhance their food education curriculum offer based on individual school needs.	Needs analysis and implementation plan co-created with school. Model for implementation in schools.	Integration of healthy food and nutrition education within schools.	Number of schools implementing healthy food and nutrition education Year 1: establish baseline Year 2: 3 additional schools Year 3: 3 additional schools	Lead: CDC
Expand sources of food surplus by linking farmers, growers and food producers with surplus to CFNs.	CFNs are accessing more surplus food.	More access to healthy food for users of CFNs.	Weight of food Number of volunteers	Lead: GFO, Cherwell Collective via WISH Support: Oxford Food Hub

Priority Area: Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together

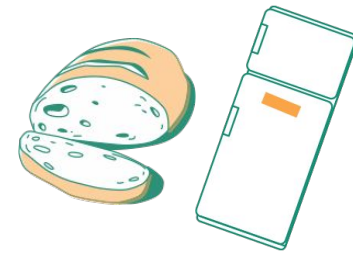
- Stronger communities through sharing and participation in food-related activities
- More people can access knowledge and skills to support growing, cooking and better nutrition
- People have better options to eat healthy and sustainable food



Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Organisation/Group
<p>Clear signposting plan to share GFO's online directory of cooking, growing, and community food activities and facilities across Cherwell District, to ensure the map is widely utilised.</p> <p>Clear plan for maintenance and expansion of map to ensure correct details.</p> <p>Expand on map categories and profiles to include community kitchens, community growing spaces, gleaning activities, veg box schemes, neighbourhood surplus schemes, village fairs and events across the district.</p>	<p>Plan to promote and share the map widely</p> <p>Comprehensive online map and directory of cooking and growing activities and facilities.</p>	<p>More people can access cooking and growing activities.</p>	<p>Year 1: establish baseline of online views of the cooking and growing map and set year 2 & 3 targets ; year 2 = achieve target and review year 3 targets; year 3 =achieve targets</p> <p>Year 1: Establish baseline for community cooking and growing activity mapped, and shared; set target for year 2 and year 3 Year 2 = achieve target and review year 3 target Year 3 = achieve target</p>	<p>Lead: GFO Support: CDC, Cherwell Collective (Harvest at Home), WISH, Oxford Food Hub</p>
<p>Encourage and support new and existing cooking opportunities, through promotion, resources, and signposting.</p>	<p>More people participate in cooking activities</p>	<p>More people have greater knowledge, skills and confidence to cook and eat healthy and sustainable diets.</p>	<p>Year 1: baseline number of people participating in cooking activities in district and set year 2 and 3 targets. Year 2: achieve target and review year 3 targets Year 3: achieve targets</p> <p>Storytelling/ case studies of lived experiences community cooking and growing , shared as part of the signposting plan</p>	<p>Lead: CDC Support: Cherwell Collective, GFO</p>
<p>Create Supplementary Planning Document/good practice guidelines for planning teams to ensure that growing spaces (allotments/ community gardens) are considered in all new developments.</p>	<p>SPD/Good practice guide aimed at planning teams to ensure growing spaces are built into new developments.</p>	<p>All new developments have growing spaces as part of plans.</p>	<p>Year 1: establish baseline and set targets for years 2 and 3 Year 2: achieve targets and review year 3 targets Year 3: achieve targets</p>	<p>Lead: CDC</p>

Priority Area: Grow the local good food economy through enterprise, local jobs, local wealth generation

- More locally owned food enterprises flourish
- People working in food-related organisations have decent livelihoods



Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Organisation/Group
<p>Business support – for start-ups and existing businesses.</p> <p>Small and micro rural food businesses and rural businesses seeking to diversify into the food industry encouraged to apply for Rural England Prosperity Fund small business grant scheme (2024/25).</p> <p>Responding to the CDC Employers’ Needs Survey (Dec 2023), support existing food businesses and inward investors to recruit and retain staff locally.</p>	<p>Assistance with marketing, increasing customer engagement, developing local supply chains, diversification planning for rural food businesses.</p> <p>Grants awarded to eligible rural businesses to support diversification into food industry or growth and innovation of an existing food business.</p> <p>Account management support to larger employers, including recruitment assistance.</p>	<p>Increased number of jobs and enterprises, served by enhanced supply chains, providing more affordable and sustainable food options.</p>	<p>30 businesses receive financial or non-financial support.</p>	<p>Lead: CDC Econ Dev team</p>
<p>Implement a communication campaign on waste reduction, transparency on waste and keeping surplus local.</p>	<p>Communications and resources to promote waste reduction, transparency on waste and keeping surplus local.</p>	<p>Consumers engage with campaigns that demand waste reduction, transparency on waste and keeping surplus local.</p>	<p>Year 1: Establish baseline data on average reach and engagement</p> <p>Year 2: Increase engagement by 20%</p> <p>Year 3: Increase engagement by 30%</p>	<p>Lead: GFO, WISH</p> <p>Support: CDC Recycle Team</p>
<p>Ensure food enterprise is explored as a priority area in the Banbury Vision 2050 consultation</p>	<p>Priorities for local food enterprises are included in Banbury Vision 2050.</p>	<p>More local food enterprises established.</p>	<p>Year 1: baseline</p> <p>Year 2: 10% increase on baseline</p> <p>Year 3: 20% increase on baseline</p>	<p>Lead: CDC</p>

Priority Area: Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains

- More sustainable food is produced and processed locally for local consumption
- Net zero goals are supported through local sustainable food production
- Consumers are more engaged and connect



Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Organisation/Group
<p>Research project to identify farmers and growers across Cherwell District, interested in joining a short local supply chain. Identify a farming cluster?</p> <p>Assess database of contacts to buy into local procurement project.</p>	<p>Database of engaged farmers and growers with produce types and quantities available throughout the year.</p>	<p>Data on farmers and production capacity supports countywide work on short local food supply chains.</p>	<p>Year 1: 10 farms added to database Year 2: 10 additional farms added to database Year 3: 10 additional farms added to database</p>	<p>Lead: GFO Support: Cherwell Collective</p>
<p>Pilot project to determine food-related carbon sequestration working in the district and also with countywide partners including Oxford City Farm</p> <p>Work with CDC to explore how sustainable produced food can offset carbon from local development</p> <p>Case study shared as best practice.</p>	<p>Food-related carbon sequestration best practice defined.</p>	<p>Sustainable agriculture is promoted and production expands as a vehicle for carbon sequestration.</p>	<p>Year 1: Pilot defined Year 2: Sequestration metrics developed over 12 sites Year 3: Case study and outputs shared</p>	<p>Lead: Cherwell Collective (WISH)</p>

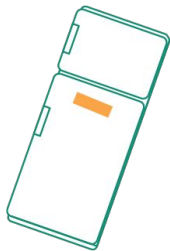
Priority Area: Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering

- More people have access to healthy and sustainable food via local institutions
 - The local food economy is supported by institutional procurement
- Institutions climate and sustainability targets a



Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Organisation/Group
Work with Public Health School Food Advisor to work with priority schools to identify areas of improvement for school catering and nutrition education.	Priority schools identified and plan in place	More children have access to healthy and sustainable food and food-related learning.	Year 1 - 2 schools Year 2 - 5 schools Year 3 - 10 schools	Lead: CDC Contact: Dean Woodham (Oxfordshire School Sports Partnerships)
Support institutional settings (schools, nurseries, care homes and residential settings) to participate in campaigns to encourage more plant-based options and healthy, sustainable eating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat Them to Defeat Them • Switch Up Your Lunch • Sugar Smart • Veg Power • Healthy Start 	Year on year increase in the number of children involved in campaigns to increase healthy and sustainable eating	More children eat healthy and sustainable food.	Year 1 - 2 schools Year 2 - 5 schools Year 3 - 10 schools	Lead: GFO Support: CDC, Public Health

5. Conclusion



Good Food Oxfordshire would like to recognise the huge commitment of each FAWG member; their experience and contributions were essential to the development of this plan. The actions contained in this plan set out a roadmap for how we will continue working together on food systems change across Cherwell District, and the metrics determine how we will review and monitor progress.

The process of working collaboratively and iteratively, and across sectors, has been instrumental in bringing a wealth of voices, and experiences together. The Food Action Working Group engaged with a wider stakeholder group to share draft plans and test our thinking with those engaged in the food system, to ensure a wider variety of voices are reflected.

We hope this plan will catalyse the incredible work of all the many organisations who are working to change the food system across Oxfordshire. We look forward to continue to work with Cherwell District Council and other lead organisations to deliver these actions and help achieve the vision set out in the Oxfordshire Food Strategy; for everyone in Oxfordshire to enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need everyday.



Glossary of terms

Term	Definition	Source
Accredited Living Wage Schemes	Promote liveable earnings for all workers recognising cost of living. Schemes and rates for 2023 include: The Oxford Living Wage (£11.35/ hour); Living Wage foundation (£10.90 outside of London); National Living Wage (£10.43)	
Community Food Services	Refers to all services providing free or subsidised food support to communities in Oxfordshire. These include Community Larders, Fridges, Foodbanks, Cafes and meal delivery services	https://goodfoodoxford.org/food-support/community-food-services-map/
Community Wealth Building	Community wealth building is a new people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people	https://cles.org.uk/community-wealth-building/what-is-community-wealth-building/#:~:text=Community%20wealth%20building%20is%20a%20new%20people-centred%20approach,and%20benefits%20into%20the%20hands%20of%20local%20people.
Emergency Food Services	Emergency food services include food banks that provide food support to those experiencing acute or chronic food insecurity. Reference to emergency food services does not include community larders or fridges which provide more affordable food options and help to reduce food waste	GFO
Food security/ insecurity	When all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'. Food insecurity exists when people do not have adequate physical, social or economic access to food as defined above	World Food Summit in 1996, FAO, Trade reforms and food security, Conceptualizing the Linkages, 2003, Chapter 2. Food security: concepts and measurement. https://www.fao.org/3/y4671e/y4671e06.htm
Food Supply Chain	The food supply chain consists of the activities and actors that take food from production to consumption and to the disposal of its waste. The steps of the food supply chain include: production; storage and distribution; processing and packaging; retail and markets. At each step, food supply chains involve many large- to small-scale actors, both public and private, that are influenced by biophysical and environmental; innovation, technology and infrastructure; political and economic; socio-cultural; and demographic drivers drivers. The decisions made by one group of actors at one stage of the chain have implications for the others.	HLPE, 2017, Nutrition and food systems. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome

Food system	All elements and activities that relate to production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food.	EAT-Lancet Commission Summary Report.pdf (eatforum.org)
Healthy Eating/ Diets	A healthy diet is the right amount and variety of different foods that provide all the calories (energy) and nutrients to meet the particular needs of your body. This will allow it to grow and develop normally during childhood, and to maintain normal function in adulthood, so as to reach old age with minimal disease and disability. [IARC] Consuming a healthy diet throughout the life-course helps to prevent malnutrition in all its forms as well as a range of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and conditions. The exact make-up of a diversified, balanced and healthy diet will vary depending on individual characteristics (e.g. age, gender, lifestyle and degree of physical activity), cultural context, locally available foods and dietary customs. However, the basic principles of what constitutes a healthy diet remain the same. [WHO] : eat plenty of whole grains, pulses, vegetables and fruits; limit high-calorie foods (foods high in sugar or fat)and avoid sugary drinks; avoid processed meat, and limit red meat and foods high in salt. [IARC]	[WHO]
Healthy Start (HS)	Healthy Start provides support to to buy healthy food like fruit and vegetables and unsweetened dairy products to people who are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4 . Free vitamins are also provided. Eligibility is linked to certain benefits. If under 18 and pregnant you are eligible regardless of benefit status.	Get help to buy food and milk (Healthy Start)
Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF)	The Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) is a Department for Education funded programme that provides free holiday clubs for Reception to year 11 pupils in receipt of benefits-related free school meals. The camps will take place across Oxfordshire over the long summer, winter and spring holidays.	https://coordinate.cloud/haf-oxfordshire-county-council/
Local food	An equitable and meaningful definition of local food should consider both where food is produced and how it is produced. It should prioritise business practices that share power and wealth more equally, and ensure that local communities growing and producing food experience a fairer and more sustainable food system. Supporting local food doesn't necessarily mean buying what is produced closest to you, but sourcing in a way which builds wealth, power and resources within communities. Food zones can be a helpful way to think about how urban areas can plan where their food comes from.	https://www.sustajnwelb.org/climatechange/making_the_case_for_local_food/
Food zones	Food zones aim to show what we could be eating, how it should be produced and where it might come from, if we are to meet the challenges of climate change and resource depletion and make our food and farming system fit for the future. The percentage figures are there to stimulate and inspire – they're not specific targets in the sense that we have proved it is possible to meet them. They are, however, based roughly on what has been achieved in best practice examples.	https://growingcommunities.org/food-zones
Priority Places for Food Index	The Priority Places for Food Index is a composite index formed of data compiled across seven different dimensions relating to food insecurity for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Its goal is to identify neighbourhoods that are most vulnerable to increases in the cost of living and which have a lack of accessibility to cheap, healthy, and sustainable sources of food.	https://priorityplacesforfood.which.co.uk/

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise	The UK government definition of SMEs encompasses micro (less than 10 employees and an annual turnover under €2 million), small (less than 50 employees and an annual turnover under €10 million) and medium-sized (less than 250 employees and an annual turnover under €50 million) businesses.	
Regenerative agriculture	Regenerative agriculture is an approach to food and farming systems that aims to reverse climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter and soil biodiversity ¹² . It also focuses on enhancing ecosystem services, improving the water cycle, and increasing resilience to climate change ¹³ . Regenerative agriculture is not a specific practice, but a combination of various sustainable techniques that respect farmer wisdom, indigenous knowledge, modern research, and adaptive learning ¹⁴ . Regenerative agriculture is based on outcomes and takes advantage of the natural tendencies of ecosystems to regenerate when disturbed ⁴⁵ .	https://regenerationinternational.org/2017/02/24/what-is-regenerative-agriculture/ https://regenerativeagriculturefoundation.org/about/what-is-regenerative-agriculture/ https://www.overstovalliance.org/library/regenerative-agriculture/ https://www.csuchico.edu/regenerative-agriculture/ra101-section/ra101-definition.shtml
Sustainable Agriculture	Sustainable agriculture must nurture healthy ecosystems and support the sustainable management of land, water and natural resources, while ensuring food security. To be sustainable, agriculture must meet the needs of present and future generations for its products and services, while ensuring profitability, environmental health and social and economic equity. [FAO]	FAO
Sustainable Eating Diets	Sustainable diets are those with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources. [FAO]	[FAO]
Sustainable Food	Sustainable food: refers to the food produced and consumed through sustainable processes minimizing the impact on the use of resources and on the environment.	FEAST

Sustainable Healthy Diets	"Sustainable healthy diets: Sustainable Healthy Diets are dietary patterns that promote all dimensions of individuals' health and wellbeing; have low environmental pressure and impact; are accessible, affordable, safe and equitable; and are culturally acceptable (FAO WHO, 2019)."	FEAST
Ultra Processed Food	Ultra-processed foods usually contain ingredients that you wouldn't add when cooking homemade food. They most likely have many added ingredients such as sugar, salt, fat, and artificial colors or preservatives. You may not recognise the names of these ingredients as many will be chemicals, colourings, sweeteners and preservatives. Ultra-processed foods are made mostly from substances extracted from foods, such as fats, starches, added sugars, and hydrogenated fats. Examples of these foods are frozen meals, soft drinks, hot dogs and cold cuts, fast food, packaged cookies, cakes, and salty snacks.	What is ultra-processed food? – BBC Food
Vulnerable Groups	Dependent on the context these groups may include children, pregnant or lactating women, indigenous communities, elderly population, people with lower socio-economic status based on education levels and/or income, and people living in remote areas. Conceptually, vulnerable groups can be characterized as those with high risk and low resilience. With regard to food, vulnerable groups can be divided in three groups: 1) People that don't have access to food (both, no access to food at all and no access to healthy food) 2) People that do have access to food, but not enough knowledge or skills to eat healthy and sustainable food 3) People that do have access to food and enough knowledge and skills but don't make healthy choices In this definition, vulnerability is more open and it is not only related to pay (except the first group). dimensions of individuals' health and wellbeing; have low environmental pressure and impact; are accessible, affordable, safe and equitable; and are culturally acceptable (FAO WHO, 2019).	Adapted from FEAST Wiki. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0301421515302445 Source: Interview with Dirk Masquillier, director of SAAMO Vlaams-Brabant

