



# **SUPURBFOOD**

Towards sustainable modes of urban and peri-urban food provisioning.

## **WP2 Report**

# **National Report: Greater Riga Region (Latvia) Draft**

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Abbreviations

CoM – Cabinet of Ministers

CSB – Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

FVS – Food and Veterinary Service

LAP – Rural Development Plan of Latvia. 2014.-2020.

LBLA – Biological Farming Association of Latvia

MoA – Ministry of Agriculture

MoE – Ministry of Education and Science

MoH – Ministry of Health

MoW – Ministry of Welfare

RSS – Rural Support Service

## **Section 1 – National Context**

### *Policy*

Food policy and governance in Latvia is spread among various policy institutions and actors without a sufficient degree of mutual coordination. Institutions involved in food policy making promote different and even contrary viewpoints on how the food system should be interpreted and initiate the policies accordingly. Main observable viewpoints are somewhat similar to those Lang et al (2009, 8) term as historical – “*agriculture (primary production), nutritious aspects of human health (consumption) and economics (international trade)*”. In Latvia, the existing policy documents addressing the subject matter lack a clear connection to any wider food strategy - sustainable food has never been a political priority for any of involved state institutions. Instead, food policy has been split between different policy areas and institutions. Some of involved ministries are the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Ministry of Education and Science (MoE), the Ministry of Welfare (MoW), etc. Furthermore there are several separate state authorities that play an important role in ensuring the functioning of the food system. These are the Rural Support Service (RSS), the Food and Veterinary Service (FVS), the Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment (BIOR), etc. Furthermore, up to now food-related policy has been reactive rather than proactive.

The range of institutions addressing food issues is represented in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows governmental (and closely collaborating) actors that shape the food discourse: these are government ministries – such as the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Agriculture (blue circles); policy documents issued (beige circles), state founded services – such as the Food and Veterinary Service or the Rural Support Service (brown and purple circles) and farmer, retailer, consumer organizations (green circles).

The main agent issuing food regulations is the MoA. The Ministry and its subordinated institutions have produced or participated in the elaboration process of all main laws and regulations on food<sup>1</sup>. MoA main task is to coordinate and control agriculture; it controls food quality and licenses for farmers and producers (FVS); it is closely tied with a chain of support institutions (RSS); MoA has implemented or has supported implementation of food quality schemes (as “Zaļā karotīte”) and organized communication between the involved

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<sup>1</sup> For example, „Law on the Supervision of the Handling of Food”, regulations concerning registration of food production enterprise, ingredients allowed in production, production hygiene, regulations describing specific sectors, etc.

agents<sup>2</sup>. The MoA overall policies have been in favour of supporting agricultural modernization and development of modern farms with greater outputs.<sup>3</sup>

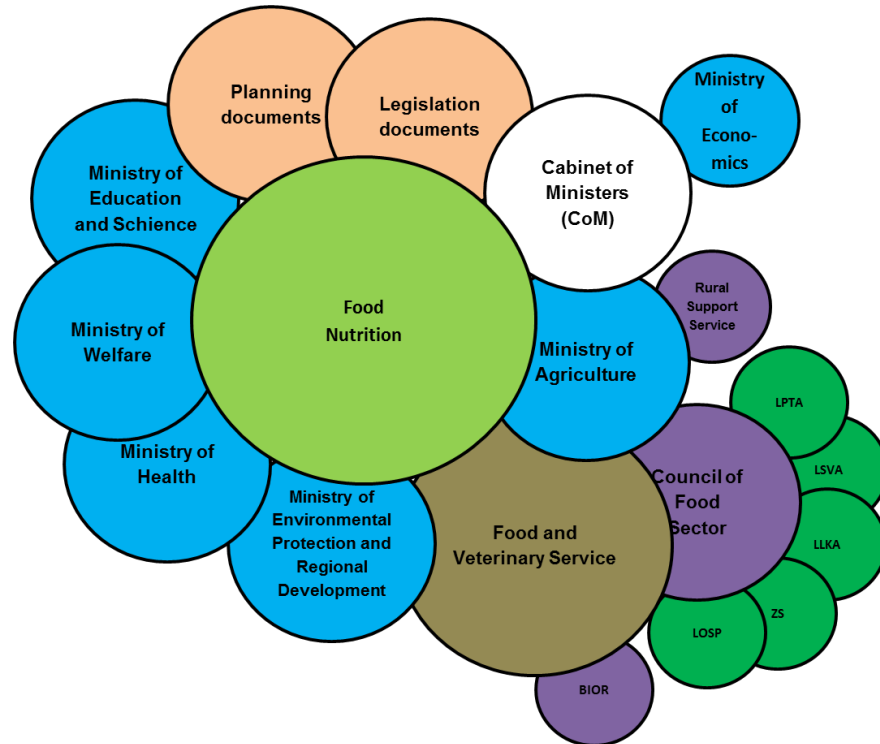


Figure 1: Institutional structures that use “food” or “nutrition” in their political communication and policy documents (state institutions participating in the making of food policy).<sup>45</sup>

Several other ministries have played an important part in shaping food-related legislation and practices. The MoH has been involved in policy making securing healthy and nutritious food. MoH serves as an entry point for health concerned groups as well. The Ministry of Welfare addresses questions concerning citizens’ right to food and a

<sup>2</sup> Several institutions can be mentioned here. The MoA collaborates with the Agricultural Marketing Council, Farmers Parliament, Latvian Agricultural Cooperatives Association, Latvian Food Retailers Association, Council of Food Sector, and many others.

<sup>3</sup> This statement is based on the data gathered in in-depth interviews and on ministry homepages content analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Data has been obtained from institution web page analysis. Institutions that are located further from the centre (for example – the Council of Food Sector) are important food related institutions that are involved in food policy making indirectly (through bigger organizations).

<sup>5</sup> Explanation of used abbreviations: LOSP – Lauksaimnieku Organizāciju Sadarbības Padome (Collaboration Council of Farmers Organizations); ZS – Zemnieku Saeima (Farmers Saeima); LLKA – Latvijas Lauksaimniecības kooperatīvu apvienība (Latvia Agricultural Cooperation Association); LSVA – Latvijas Sabiedrības Veselības Asociācija (Latvia Public Health Association); LPTA – Latvijas Pārtikas Tirgotāju Asociācija (Latvian Food retailers association); BIOR - Pārtikas drošības, dzīvnieku veselības un vides zinātniskais institūts (Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment).

wholesome, nutritious diet. The main issues discussed in different governing institutions are summarized in Figure 2.

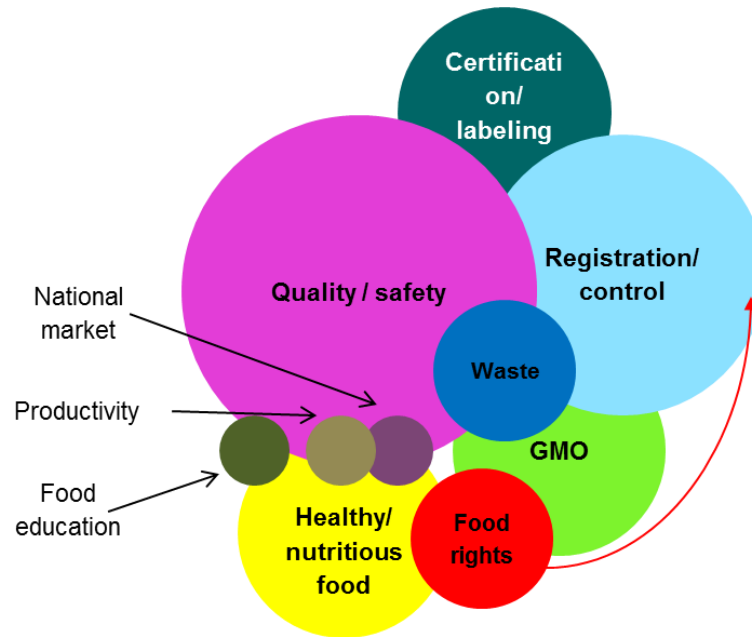


Figure 2: Relative frequency of themes covered in discussions initiated by various governing actors. Source: Coded Latvia's policy documents.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 2 illustrates the main themes that can be found in communication and policy documents of governmental institutions. The size of the circle shows relative frequency of theme use— a bigger circle indicates that several institutions address the particular theme in their produced text (Quality and safety is most often discussed theme; Registration and control is the second most popular theme). Overlapping circles indicate that one institution can be related to several themes. As can be seen from the Figure, the theme Quality / safety is in center and can be associated with almost every other theme (except Food rights). We could suggest that themes represented in the picture are forming two related clusters – one is the cluster of food control and the other is the cluster of health. At regional and local level municipalities have certain influence on food policy formation as well. Public procurement of food, territory planning, local regulations, food assistance to population in need, funding of farmers and home-producers co-ops, educational activities in schools are some of the tools that municipalities use to influence local food processes. The level to which municipalities use these instruments differs from case to case, but in

<sup>6</sup> We coded web page text of state institutions. As a result every institution was associated with several separate codes. Circles represent the main codes. The size of circle represents relative frequency - how many institutions have been coded with the specific code. Overlapping circles indicate that codes have been used by the same institution.

general the municipal involvement in food policy is fragmented and there is a huge diversity in Latvia's municipalities' approach to food awareness, food provision to public sector organizations, local food system, knowledge and regulations as well as the willingness to take a more active role in shaping local food systems.<sup>7</sup>

Multifunctional land use, shortened food chains and closing the cycles of waste are issues that could be considered relatively new in Latvia and in most cases just marginally covered by mainstream policies. Although in agricultural policies diversification of production and support to non-traditional branches of production has been mentioned since the end of 1990s, the main activities in these fields are concentrated in the hands of civic groups and some market actors. These actors constitute something that could be called the *new* food discourse (as an opposition to state-represented *historical* discourse).

### *Agriculture*

To explain the processes in Latvia's agriculture, a short historical insight is useful. During 60ies and 70ies several allotment colonies were created in Riga region (Pužulis, 2012, 68). These and other colonies served as important food access points supplementing the inefficient state food supply. Most of other agricultural land was transformed into a network of collective and state farms.

After regaining independence, de-collectivization and privatization of collective and state farms increased the number of farms and reduced the scale of their operation (Tabuns et.al, 2002).

Much of allotment land has been designated for other use<sup>8</sup> during the last decades (Pužulis, 2012). However it could be suggested that there remains a strong linkage between rural farms and urban relatives (or friends).

According to Agricultural Census 2010 "*in 2010, 83,4 thousand economically active agricultural holdings were managing 2879,1 thousand ha of land and 1796,3 thousand ha of utilized agricultural area*" (CSB, 2011). Although the number of farms has dropped since the previous census, the average size of farms has increased. Still the majority of farms

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<sup>7</sup> Although most of municipalities are slow in addressing food related issues in their local policies, there are some exceptions. One of such exceptions is Tukums municipality which is developing its own sustainable food strategy, the first one in Latvia ([www.foodlinkscommunity.net](http://www.foodlinkscommunity.net)). Meanwhile some other municipalities (as Ogre, Koknese, Aizkraukle, Jelgava, Beverīna, etc.) are exploring ways of collaboration and procurement regulations that could allow local farmers to respond to the needs of local institutions and public.

<sup>8</sup> Lack of regulation and control has promoted arbitrary construction (to build living houses, business infrastructure, etc.). Often these building spaces were coordinated with municipality only after the end of construction. This has led to the situation where municipality post-factum replanned a specific territory (Pužulis, 2012).

are operating on a small scale (ibid) and it commonly serves as an explanation for low farm productivity (LAP). Another commonly held argument is that a large part of production made in these farms never reaches the market.

3484 farms have received a certificate for organic farming. The total amount of organic farms has slowly decreased in the last years. Meanwhile, organic agriculture- covered space has increased in year 2011 occupying around 10% of utilized agricultural area (MoA, 2012, 69-72). Additionally, the amount of processing enterprises that have been certified as fit to work with organic production has increased during the last few years (LBLA, 2012). Still it is considered that there is a lack of certified processors. Due to the lack of market (significant share of customers) and processing enterprises it is assumed that a massive part of organic production is realized as conventional production. A quantitative study of organic farmers has concluded that 6% of farms produce only for personal consumption. The same research concludes that 90% of organic farmers sell some of their production, yet less than half of them sell all their production (Brila, 2011).

#### *Food retailing*

The recent economic crisis has left large-scale effect on food production and retail. Market participants were influenced by a sharp decrease in prices (MoA, 2012). However food industry is recovering (CSB, 2012). As a side effect the crisis has initiated and strengthened new food-related initiatives. Private and non-governmental sectors have secured the development of food banks and created new partnerships to distribute food. Representative survey of inhabitants of Latvia conducted in 2010 suggests that 70% of respondents most often do their everyday shopping in supermarkets. 16% go shopping in small shops, 7% in markets, while 2% produce most of consumed products themselves. Only 1% buy most of their food directly from farmers (DnB, 2010).

Latvia's food retail is dominated by retail chains covering most of Latvia's territory, there are smaller regional shop chains as well. Historically, open and farmers markets have played an important role in food retailing. Although some of the old markets are still an important place for buying groceries, more commonly they have lost both: clients and suppliers.

As an alternative to conventional consumption, new food retail channels have emerged during the previous years. The new initiatives take the form of farmers' markets, small eco food shops, roadside selling and direct selling in farms.



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Additionally, since the link between urban and rural population is strong, part of products grown never reaches official food retailing, but circulates between relatives and friends supplying these persons with home grown products.

## **Section 2 - Case Study Introduction**

### *History and conceptualisation of the city region*

Riga is the capital of Latvia, one of the metropolises in the Baltic Sea region. Together with surrounding municipalities Riga forms the Greater Riga Region with 1,1 million inhabitants (49% of the population of Latvia) and a concentration of economic activity, jobs and income. Riga is a historical Hanseatic city and a famous tourist destination in the Baltics. The economically dominant role of Riga influences the wider surrounding territory including that with agricultural activity.

The spatial diversity of Greater Riga includes different settlements and economic zones: the city net of Region is formed by 20 smaller towns; the popular tourism centres are Jūrmala and Sigulda; the regional towns of Tukums, Limbaži and Ogre are manufacturing and service centres with surrounding agricultural territories; the coastal villages are increasingly populated by second home owners; the ports of Salacgrīva and Skulte are historic ports of fishery and timber export; the rural territories on Riga outskirts are converted into new residential areas; the remote countryside near the external border of the region in the north, east and west is a place for specialized agricultural production and multifunctional farms. Each of these territories plays a distinct role in the region's spatial structure and peri-urban agriculture (for explanatory maps see Attachment 1)

### *Current social and economic situation*

The territory of Riga region has significant diversity. The capital as a main economic agent promotes push-pull migration within the region. Several Riga region municipalities close to the capital are sleeping districts. Such municipalities often provide just primary social services. Furthermore, some of the state's wealthiest municipalities are located near the Riga city. Some geographical points are closely tied to the center both physically and economically. However some territories are distant and connected to the region only by bureaucratic planning documents. This leads to a conclusion that there exist considerable integration differences between the region's municipalities.

Food production is one of the biggest industries in the region. As such the food cluster is considered to be an important part of Riga region economy. Planning documents suggest that food industry should aim at increasing production process productivity and the share of exported production in the future.

*Development of food strategies and key actors*

Riga region is the economic, social and political center of Latvia. Most of economic, social and political events are taking place in Riga.

On this spatial level food strategies are addressed by several actors: municipalities and municipal departments, as well as state authorities and additional agencies that act on the regional level. The market sector includes several important actors – some of them are important because of their influence on regional economics, others – because of their willingness to participate in food related discussions. Additional influence comes from NGOs.

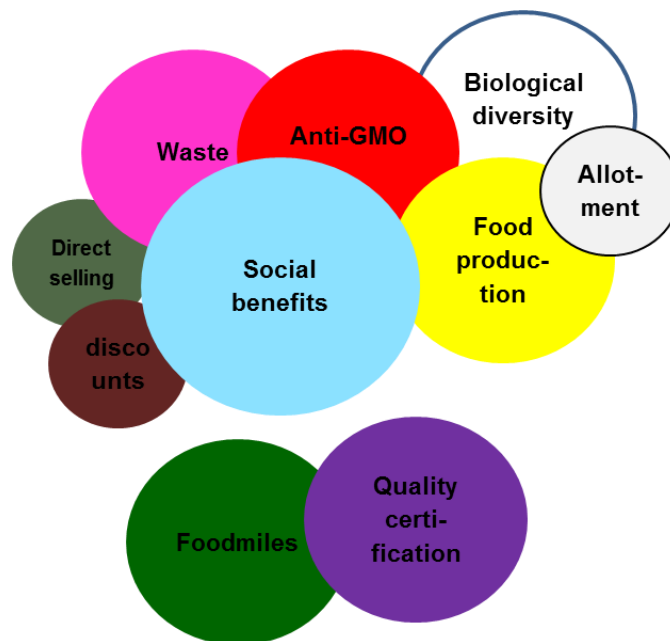


Figure 3: Relative frequency of themes covered in discussions initiated by various city region actors.<sup>9</sup>

The city region does not have a joint food strategy. Despite the lack of clear food strategies municipalities still perform specific food related activities – planning and zoning of land use, providing food assistance to population under the risk of poverty, organising school catering and food procurement for public sector organisations, distributing trade permissions, participating in government food programmes, like the School Fruit etc. Figure 3 illustrates the themes that are related to food by governing and civic organizations within Riga Planning Region. In Figure 3 we have coded major governing actors on the

<sup>9</sup> Source: Coded documents issued by the region’s governing and civic institutions. The Figure represents the number of institutions covering a specific theme and other themes addressed by the same entity.

regional level (for example a Regional Development Department, or Municipal communication) as well as policy documents that address food concerned issues (for example development plan documents, municipal policy, development overviews, etc.). We coded the actual themes and afterwards counted the frequency of actors mentioning a particular theme. As in Figure 2, the size of the circle represents the relative number of actors mentioning the particular code. Overlapping circles represent the themes that were addressed by same actor.

Whenever mentioned in planning documents, food is associated with Riga's main economic sector – food is approached as economic commodity produced by the region that constitutes an important share of its economics. Therefore, more intensive food production in planning documents is favored. The fate of public allotments is an example of consequences emerging from the lack of food planning - due to the lack of protection the city is slowly losing the remaining allotment territories. Lack of planning and concerted policy is a direct result of out-of-date food perception and decentralized responsibilities – every department is addressing their “own” issues. Some departments are participating and promoting modern practices, however these are small scale usually bottom-up initiatives. Furthermore, a closer look at these initiatives may reveal that often there are more challenges than solutions in them.

However this is not the case in all Riga region municipalities; some smaller municipalities, although lacking clear food policies, have managed to walk at least some distance towards improved food practices. Others, albeit having strong non-governmental participation have not managed to move forward at all.

A recent achievement of Riga municipality has been the approval of the city health strategy. Among other considerations it states that Riga will promote the skills needed for selecting and preparing food, and for selecting a healthy diet. Nevertheless, this strategy is still concerned just with ensuring that citizens have access to information and there are just vague plans for real action. An additional project to mention is Riga's participation in the international project *4cities4development*.

Some of the gaps that municipalities do not address have been occupied by the non-governmental sector. From civic initiatives that operate on municipal level many are small, without real influence or approach food concerned questions only vaguely (indirectly). Some agents acting on this level remain in the grey sector and could be considered semi-official. Some of initiatives take shape as official partnerships between the private sector

players. However, most of civic initiatives operate on a national level and do not consider that they should get involved in actions of municipalities.

*Pre-dominant forms of food retailing at the city-region level*

Internationally owned retail chains dominate food distribution within the city and the region. Biggest retail chains like Maxima or Rimi densely cover all territory. Additionally, shops from other sectors have stepped in food retailing. Well elaborated chains of kiosks (originally selling media) and gas stations are offering its consumers take-away food. The catering sector remains independent and prevailed by small local cafes and restaurants. Although some fast-food chains are trying to move into the market their coverage is relatively low.



Picture 1. Riga's Central market

Historically Latvia has had a strong culture of farmers' and open markets. Riga has had its Central market and several markets in the periphery of the city thus ensuring citizens have access to fresh food. Markets still remain an important part of Riga's food retailing (see Picture 1 and Picture 2). Some of those old markets have even regained their strength in the last years. In spite of this, some markets are criticized for selling produce of unknown origin and cheap low quality imported food. In the last year's several initiatives to create new farmers markets, night markets, green markets oriented towards local and ecological

food have emerged (Trenouth, Tisenkopfs, 2013). However most of these initiatives didn't have a long life - only few of these markets gained consumer trust.

Markets outside the capital have not been very successful. Most of the municipalities have some regulations concerning local market yet many of them do not have a properly functioning town market.

Beside what has already been mentioned, it is likely that some share of food relations never reaches the official economy. In some cases members of family operate with a family garden and supplement the food consumption of the rest of the family. In other cases farmers have taken the initiative to reach their customers. Recently direct buying has emerged. Overall, it can be drawn that food distribution structures that remain invisible most likely are expanding.



Picture 2. Tukums market

**Section 3 – Dynamics in the City region**

In this section we will consider blockages, opportunities and priorities in all three thematic areas: closing the cycles of organic waste, water and nutrients; shortening of food chains; and multifunctional use of land in urban and peri-urban areas. Each theme will be described in a separate section, while in interviews and other texts these themes are usually presented as united as some statements are repeated from theme to theme. This distinction should be taken into account, but in the meantime approached with caution.

Main blockages, opportunities and priorities

	Governance			Market			Civic		
	Blockages	Opportunities	Priorities	Blockages	Opportunities	Priorities	Blockages	Opportunities	Priorities
<b>Closing the cycles of organic waste, water and nutrients</b>	Institutions are unaware of the issue	Municipalities should develop more elaborate understanding of the issue	Involve waste as an additional factor taken into account when regulating procurement	Lack of competition			Lack of influence	Establish mechanisms that would offer easy ways to get rid of specific waste for free.	
	Need of new agreements / limited selection of partners	Collaboration between municipalities		Society's lack of trust and knowledge			Lack of transparency		
	Illegal dumps	Elaboration of municipal waste regulations that would support actors solving this problem					Limited capability / lack of knowledge		
<b>Shortening of food chains</b>	Lack of mutual food interpretation (and significant support to intensive farming)	Developing common food discourse and introducing food policy planning	Introduce food policy planning	Lack of collaboration and resources (as knowledge and even funding)	Enforce knowledge sharing between market actors	Encourage knowledge sharing between market actors	Organizational problems as lack of official status and lack of professional leaders	Use of Interlinked networks	Overcome insecurity
	Uncritical policy making (Governing	Generating problem solving networks	Estimate existing food structures	Bureaucratic restrictions and weak	Elaborate networks of enterprises and	Elaborating networks (co-ops) of involved	Problems to find a way to communicate with	Strengthen food ambassadors	Attract more members



	sector supports policy that is not optimal)			support from governance	governance	enterprises	governance		
	Limited selection of partners	Direct municipal support targeting missing links	Develop new communication channels with civic society and market	Distribution pressure	New interpretation of enterprise targets and tasks	Elaboration of new distribution channels		Taking the lead: “Serve-to-go” communication	Need to find an entry-point to influence policy making
<b>The multifunctional use of land in urban and peri-urban areas</b>	Lack of mutual interpretation	Introducing questions of multifunctionality in political agenda	Protecting old and new planning territories for multifunctional use	Lack of knowledge	New interpretation of enterprise targets and tasks	Develop more structured reasoning for use of multifunctionality (currently it is self-referential)	Lack of experience	Interlinked networks	Proactive involvement/initiative
	Lack of interest/knowledge	Protecting old and planning new territories for multifunctional use	Collaborate with civic initiatives	Lack of funding	Knowledge sharing	Transform it into part of business	Absent support from governance	Proactive involvement/initiative	Be realistic about goals that can be achieved
	Initiatives supported have little publicity	Trust in good intentions of the civic sector	Share resources (non-monetary)	Farmers/producers specific needs	Use of multifunctionality as marketing tool		Problems attracting resources	Solving smaller scale problems	Accumulate resources by developing new cooperations

*Closing the cycles of organic waste, water and nutrients*

*“Notions of circular economy are becoming more and more popular in urban and peri-urban agriculture thinking. Many urban farmers today are inspired by permaculture, an approach to designing farming systems based on ecosystem thinking, which includes the idea of a circular agricultural economy. The focus on circular flows is both for ecological reasons as well as economic ones: urban and peri-urban agriculture can only survive if it makes good use of urban resources otherwise unused or wasted, therefore at little or no cost to the farmer. In fact, recycling urban waste could be an ecological service, next to other ecological and social services to be performed by urban farms as a way to diversify their economic basis.”* (SUPURBFOOD proposal).

There are several examples from the Riga Region that illustrate how waste can be used in peri-urban agriculture. The most visible example is Getlini Eko.

Getlini Eko is a Riga municipality enterprise for ecological waste management and it is collecting and managing waste within the Riga waste management area. Gas from sealed waste deposits is extracted and used to produce energy. To cool down this system greenhouses are used. Greenhouses serve as radiators for energy production, while a part of produced energy is used for the greenhouse needs. With the construction of the greenhouses Getlini Eko has started ecological agriculture. All year long they are producing tomatoes, but their production is more expensive than imported or grown in other local (usually larger) territories. Therefore, Getlini Eko declared that they will not compete with prices; instead they selected a tomato variety, which differs in color and shape and isn't grown by other producers. In such a way they secured that consumer can always recognize the produce coming from a Getlini Eko greenhouse. Meanwhile, they are organizing excursions and seminars to explain the growing process and the reasons why their price differs. Getlini Eko harvested 150t tomatoes in year 2012. However the energy production process could support more greenhouses and they are planning to expand in the closest future - their plans include tripling the number of greenhouses in the following years.

An additional example that should be mentioned is Lucavsālas ekoprojekts. Authors of this project are closely tied with permaculture. They have decided to build a public farm from waste and second-hand materials only (the project will be described in detail in further paragraphs).

These ideas are new in Latvia and there are only a few examples of using waste in urban or peri-urban agriculture. However, at least in some groups the interest about these ideas

is growing. In the next paragraph a short description of blockages, opportunities and priorities that influences the different sector abilities in closing the cycles of organic waste is provided. These aspects are described from the perspective of three sectors – governance, market and civic.

#### Governance

There has been long-standing public mistrust in waste managing enterprises. Several scandals of corruption have reduced public's trust in these companies and municipality willingness to improve the existing situation. It is widely believed that more intensive competition would solve several of industry problems. To do this municipalities should reconsider their current relations with waste management enterprises and renegotiate agreements they have. Transparent competition and openness of the market would reduce prices, would improve service quality and it is likely that it would allow to regain public trust.

Another problem that municipalities need to overcome is illegal dumps. As an organized crime or as an individual irresponsible act these have become a problem in several territories.

A respondent from The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments suggests that although there is waste legislation on a national level and every municipality has some waste regulations, most of actors still do not understand questions related to waste. The first step would be to overcome this lack of knowledge: municipalities should understand the diversity of issues related to waste.

#### Market

In several municipalities special agreements with enterprises managing waste have been signed. This commonly results in there being fewer competitors and higher prices of service. Municipal protection limits the expansion of good practices. And even more – these close relations between municipality and waste management enterprises mars the perception of “good” initiatives – if relations are considered to be corrupted and unfair to others than even the best outcomes will be criticized. Therefore everyone would benefit from openness of the field.

This leads to the point the public has a skeptical attitude toward waste management enterprises. First of all it comes from lack of knowledge about what functions are performed in the waste management cycle. This is even more so because public media

finds proof that allows blaming for malpractice enterprises involved in waste management. Of course accusations cannot be generalized to all territory of Latvia, however interpretations emerging from these accusations are wide-spread.

#### Civic

Although most of organizations related to environment, health, ecology, etc. mention their interest in waste management as well, non-governmental involvement in sector could be considered as weak. There are several reasons for that. First of all as in other sectors civic participants claim that their opinion is not taken into account. This means that they consider that they do not have real influence in decision making. The second reason is limited capability of the civic sector. They are limited in their selection of activities. Furthermore biggest civic organizations in the field are funded by waste management enterprises. These organizations promote green living and a more responsible attitude towards environment. However their close relations with waste management companies make citizens to be critical about these actions. It can be concluded that civic groups do not feel that they could change anything and they lack resources to gain more influence. Additional factor to mention is lack of transparency in the field of waste management. This serves as an important barrier to civic participants. For example, during the interviews one civic group started a discussion on how they could promote closed waste cycles. Their discussion led to the conclusion that they lack knowledge that could be used for projects like these.

Urban gardening and allotment cultivation is also associated with waste. In this case waste management depends on ecological awareness of gardeners and their collaboration with municipalities and waste companies to keep garden areas clean. Sometimes there have been mutual disputes and reproaches between these actors: waste companies and municipalities accuse allotment owners that they produce too much garbage and dump it illegally, whereas gardeners blame municipalities for not providing appropriate infrastructure.

*Shortening of food chains*

*“In the last decade, sociologists, economists and geographers have provided ample evidence that short food supply chains are steadily gaining ground. As a result of increasing scholarly interest a steadily maturing body of socio-spatial food theories, concomitant with a rapid growing number of well elaborated cases, has been developed under the umbrella of the notion of shortening of food chains. Many case studies have been published about short food supply chains such as farm shops, farmers’ markets, box schemes and community supported agriculture. The analysis of various types of short food supply chains has uncovered practices of food provision characterized by a different logic, especially in relation to the redistribution of value.”* (SUPURBFOOD proposal).

There are several good examples in Latvia that should be mentioned here. The most visible is the School Fruit program. The EU facilitated program shows a good example of collaboration of involved agents leading to successful outcomes. Overall there are three main factors that triggered success – access to funding; collaboration and networking that facilitate knowledge, mutual understanding and interests; elimination of unproductive development.

Several ministries were invited to collaborate in policy making as the program was introduced. Additionally, representatives from the market were invited to participate (mainly farmers’ co-ops and organizations, who later on would be main fruit suppliers).

Agreements on conditions for collaboration that were achieved during discussions and the variety of involved participants promoted the selling of locally produced fruit to schools. This collaboration led to approving procurement of only local fruit and resulted in support of local farmers.

Another currently active process could be called development of direct buying chains. Some of core leaders of direct buying who were participating in organizing one of the first Latvia’s direct buying chain (known as “Grīziņkalna tiešās pirkšanas grupa” (“*Group of direct buying from Grizinkalns*” (park in Riga) and also KA DZI’) and later on closely assisted the emergence of next groups (as “Miera ielas tiešās pirkšanas grupa” or “Pārdaugavas tiešās pirkšanas grupa”) could be considered experts in direct buying with several years of experience. Without any support they started searching for other activists, farmers and for ways to solve organizational issues. The historical core of this group has been described as best bottom-up practice in Foodlink project by Sandra Šūmane. She writes: “KA DZI’ is an initiative of community supported agriculture. The participants present themselves as a group of direct buying. The consumer group is based in the

*capital Riga, the farmers are from Gulbene district. The initiative was started by a group of devoted consumers who wanted to consume local, ecological products and also support local farmers. The idea originated in a woman, a young mum, who was looking to switch completely her consumption to organic products. She found many like-minded people in her entourage. They established links with organic farmers from Gulbene district who are selling now them their products. Consumers organize weekly ordering and delivery of products. In difference from traditional CSA groups where consumers receive prepaid ready-made food boxes, in this one consumers can also order specific products they like (there is a weekly list circulated in which participating consumers mark their choices); still seasonality and yield of products are respected. This individual ordering demands some extra organizational efforts both from consumers and producers, as well as it may involve some irregularities in farmers' income. However, so far the system functions well. It is made possible also by (1) good communication between farmers and consumers – farmers are informed about qualities and defects of their products, and farmers keep consumers updated about their offer; (2) good self-organization among consumers. There is a strict division of duties: there is a consumers' group responsible for ordering, sorting and delivering products, another for organizing travels to farmers and, thirdly, there are collectors who collect, wash and arrange packaging.”* (Šūmane, 2012). Unfortunately the core group have found that the structure of the group was unsustainable and the leaders just could not keep all the other members motivated to participate in solving organizational issues – the group was disbanded. However after years of experience and several attempts to organize sustainable direct buying group these people have acquired knowledge that allows better understanding of the whole process. Nowadays core organizers are encouraging participants to create their own spin-off groups that would receive their full support. This means that main representatives have a well-documented overview of the best ways of managing a direct buying group and the main pitfalls that can occur. They are sharing their farmer contacts as well and by doing so encourage farmers to create their own chains that could help to satisfy the needs of the growing number of customers in the city.

During this process new leaders are educated and later on they can deal with emerging day to day issues. New leaders help to develop new groups and educate other - new - leaders.

Another example is co-op's registering in the Global G.A.P. quality scheme. The leader of farmers' co-op in search for new channels to distribute their products came to a conclusion

that the only barrier preventing the entering into a retail chain is certification for a more elaborated quality scheme. The co-op's leader was able to accomplish all the quality scheme requirements and acquired the certificate. Later on the attained knowledge along with the paperwork examples was distributed between co-op members, who could just follow the leader's instructions. The solution of this problem made co-op stronger.

Šūmane describes Straupe market of rural goods as another good example. She describes that *"This is an open-air farmer market, organized twice per month. The market was initiated by a group of local activists who decided to create a space for local producers and consumers to make them meet directly at the local area. This initiative was intended to change or provide an alternative for the practice that both local producers and consumers go regularly to towns in order to, respectively, sell and buy products. This short chain initiative:*

- *Demonstrates a collective, bottom-up, endogenous process of initiating and implementing change in food system;*
- *Involves (social) learning and innovation (organisation, marketing, production);*
- *Improves local control over production, marketing and distribution;*
- *Demonstrates synergy with local development: animation of social life and traditions (farmers market and cultural), contribution to local economy, tourism."* (Šūmane, 2012).

There is a range of other examples: farmers co-ops that are used to develop distribution channels; collaboration between home-producers and a retail chain; development of relations between farmers, caterers and schools, etc.

Shortened food chains are gaining popularity in Latvia. As a new form of food discourse it is still diverse. However with every activity unfolding we can observe clearer shapes of shared interpretations. In further paragraphs we will show blockages, opportunities and priorities that influence the implementation of shortened food chains. These aspects are described as perspectives of three sectors – governance, market and civic.

### Governance

The most obvious blockage that limits the ability of the governing sector to efficiently shorten the food chains is that various state and municipal institutions follow different understanding why and how food issues should be addressed in policy documents. This leads to fragmented policy and a lack of clear targets. Furthermore, this practice does not promote collaboration between state institutions. It creates competition between different

viewpoints. Official planning documents have avoided issues concerning food, yet have stressed the need for more intensive farming, food processing and export.

Without a clear agreement on how food concerned issues should be interpreted, a clear understanding of who should lead policy changes cannot be developed. Fragmentation between ministries impedes a willingness for collaboration with other involved agents and can be a source of conflicts. This is even more evident on the level of Riga municipality.

Suggestion that policy makers are often uncritical and just following pre-established patterns was mentioned by several market and civic society actors. Such an opinion was expressed most commonly while considering Latvia's policy makers and their implementation of EU directives. The same commentary is mentioned considering the national laws that are favoring intensive production and long market chains. Furthermore it is suggested that bureaucrats forget that there could be exceptions. Their blindness is considered to be expensive to market actors and damaging to civic participants.

Every governing institution has its preferred partners. Usually it is communication with associations and institutions that are already approved and considered to be trustworthy. This praxis limits emergence of new initiatives and partnerships. Additional treat emerges from the fact that the chosen partners may not be the ones that are really interested in the issues considered – in this case actors securing shortened food chains. Meanwhile, the representatives from NGOs complain that they are constantly forced to struggle for an opportunity to participate or even to be listened to.

For any further development governing institutions should recognize that food is a subject matter that needs unified policy. Rising awareness of policy makers can be the simplest way to facilitate change. It is seen as an important opportunity. At the moment there is a lack of common ground for discussion and often questions of shortened food chains, multifunctionality, etc., are forgotten. In general, common food interpretation that would move food to the center of discourse is needed.

Most of successful initiatives securing shortened food chains yet have been successful because they have managed to create a network of involved agents – a chain of institutions, non-governmental actors and market players that address problem comprehensively. This allows approaching problem from more than one perspective.

Producers suggest that direct municipal support to local producers is an effective opportunity. Such support can take several forms, namely: as direct financial support, as indirect financial support, as knowledge and consultation, as help with contacts.

Municipality as the closest governing institution can identify strategic points for investment



and activity. For example, several municipalities have founded co-ops to help in local producers' search for consumers and in certifying products. Often structures to shorten food chains exist, however these structures lack some important aspect preventing from using their full functional. Identifying this issue allowed to target governmental support. As was already mentioned: an important blockage is disagreement on collaboration practices between governing institutions both on municipal and state level. In addition, these agents lack general mutual understanding; however the dominating viewpoint supports intensive agriculture. Therefore, one of the first priorities would be to introduce food policy planning that would have connections to more environmentally oriented food production as well. On the national level this would divide responsibilities between the involved actors. However, on other levels this would enforce the idea that there are several levels on which one needs to think about food related processes. Such planning would strengthen common interpretation as well as secure that food policy is moving away from historical food interpretation.

An additional step would be to identify the existing food structures. Interviews demonstrate that state representatives, civic movement leaders and small producers as well as farmers talk in different languages. This has created a situation, where nobody is aware of a full range of activities that could be associated with shortened food chains. In addition, there is disagreement on evaluation of various initiatives and processes. A food system inventory focusing attention on shortened food chains would allow for governance actors to grasp actual range of issues and understand problems to be solved.

The solutions outlined above would require more intensive communication. In order to do so governance actors would have to develop communication channels with a wider range of actors.

Most of short supply chain initiatives have been developed in a bottom-up way by farmers and/ or consumers with some municipal support. Much less support for short chain development has been given at the national policy level, with the exception of the recent draft law on home production which proposed to lift up strict regulations and gave *green light* to various kinds of home producers (e.g. fruit processors, wine makers bakers, etc.) However we must stress here that although on the national level there is low support for short chain development, „*organic agriculture and artisanal production per se are quite strictly regulated.*” (Šūmane, 2012)

## Market

Although most of the interviewed market actors participate in some formal or informal organization, they still complain that representatives from the same sector more often see each other as competitors rather than collaborators. Furthermore, there is a competition between conventional and sustainable farming and production. Market actor organizations try to participate in the decision making process and indeed manage to influence the policy. Still, inner disagreements hinder more thorough use of collaboration capacity. One of the most often mentioned barriers is lack of knowledge. Of course, every market participant is lacking a different kind of information, nevertheless, in all sectors is the same feeling – there is a lack of information. Respondents suggest that lack of information is a part of a larger issue – collaboration in general.

Some of interviewed market participants mention problems in attracting resources. Both of two producers, who have applied for funding were rejected and felt that rejection was poorly motivated without really evaluating their cases. Nevertheless, they attracted funding somewhere else afterwards. Most often respondents indicate a need for larger state support to those farmers who want to certify their farm/production and to producers, who try to involve in a national quality scheme etc. The industry expects the state to take a greater interest in market agents, who have shown willingness to support local market and to be more involved in educating potential consumers and creating demand for sustainable production.

All interviewed market actors indicate perceived problems with bureaucracy. The most common accusation stresses that state representatives are not treating every case individually, and are applying the same approach to everyone instead. Common policy is more favouring intensive farming and marketing the products through conventional extended chains. Another accusation states that bureaucrats are keener on fining than on explaining and consulting. Market participants have managed to solve the problem without help from governing institutions. It has been time and money consuming.

In the meantime, municipalities are described as an opposite to state - respondents describe them as helpful and willing to participate. However, municipality influence is rather small and most of respondents do not expect much help from their municipality.

Local producers complain about their limited access to customers. Although local producers know who could be their customers they still have problems of reaching them. The reasons, of course, differ, as for some it is a result of retailing chain pressure, yet for others it is the lack of resources that prevents to organize the needed logistics.

One of the blockages that market participants experience is a lack of knowledge/ information. A natural way to overcome this has been stockpiling information. Market actors have started to gather information needed on their own account. This is not the most efficient way to solve the problem. However, commonly this results in emergence of new information channels. Models developed do not have one clear structure and are not concerned with just one subject matter. Communication channels result in a stronger sector with higher quality production and often bigger potential market. Ways of sharing information and possible gains from this process differ from case to case. Nevertheless, it is clear that openness and collaboration within the market can serve as a factor that strengthens local producers.

The previously described initiative on information sharing suggests an additional kind of opportunity. Market participants elaborate new networks allowing participating in market activities more efficiently. Additionally this means that there is a search for new – sometimes unconventional collaborations. Producers and farmers have become more open and creative in search for consumers.

Interviews show that the having a state agency as an actor within a collaboration network can increase the possibility of success. Several bigger enterprises have suggested that when they see a clear problem they ask for a state agency help and it can result in changes in legislation. In the meantime, some producers feel that state is not listening to them. This again shows that the state works with a limited selection of partners.

In some interviews respondents suggest that in a search for a new market they have started to interpret their goals more broadly. Since local producer production is more expensive and often different from familiar, food producers realize that they have to create and work with the potential market. Therefore, new tasks are adopted: to educate people about the ecological and sustainable production process and to inform potential customers on reasons of product price differences (Bojare, Zusa (2012)).

Problems faced by market actors (in this case farmers, processors, retailers) are somewhat similar to those of the governing sector. Lack of information slows down these actors or stops them entirely. However, information they are searching usually is somewhat similar (where to search for partners, how to attract funding, how to adapt their specific situation to existing regulations, etc.). For that reason, it is important that involved actors share accessible information and their experiences. One of the ways how to ensure this practice could be creation of networks of involved enterprises. Such networks would allow overcoming difficulties within a sector and give involved agents more strength.

However, it would be wrong to suggest that such networks should exist only within the borders of one sector. Respondents mention that such networks can evolve in small rural village when producers and farmers realize that they are not able to reach a market on their own. Therefore, the network can emerge between home-producers and a retail chain when both realize the existence of common issues. Additionally, the network in the form of co-op can shape to institutionalize communication with governance actors. The most important gain is that an entrepreneur facing an issue to solve knows how to activate the network, which could help him solving it.

An additional priority focus should be on creating new distribution channels. Most of producers and farmers interviewed were in a constant search for distribution channels. They were exchanging information, trying new solutions, building their own distribution chains. However, most of them were not sure will they be able to arrange for their produce to be reachable for customers.

#### Civic

Groups that could be described as civic society are extremely diverse and just a few of them have an official status. Most of civic groups, in spite of the activities, which help them to be recognized as a group, still do not have clear boundaries and frequently are not registered. Some spin-offs of official NGOs have a strong connection to registered organizations. However some do not have any formal status.

Most of existing initiatives can be traced to a core few civic activists. These people are deeply involved taking important positions in several activities at the same time. Firstly, it is clear that more of such participants would guarantee more successful projects. Secondly, the loss of any current leader would have a significant effect on civic initiatives. In some interviews leaders mention funding of group activities from their personal resources, while applying only to halftime jobs so that they could manage to participate in both. Such persons are commonly tired or close to burning out.

Most of civic groups have problems in communicating with governance actors. Some of policy makers are hard to reach. And even if one manages to approach them, civic group participants feel that often they just refer you to the next department. The process of searching for a manner to communicate may be long and unproductive.

Several other initiatives (for example direct buying) do not have any official status and have not tried to protect their interests due to the potentially uncertain outcome of communication with the governing sector. Participants are afraid that state will translate

their activities as illegal and instead of anticipated support they will be fined. Unclear situation and fear forces such groups into the grey sector.

Latvia is a small country and there are just a few visible and effective food related civic initiatives. Some of these initiatives have never been officially registered; they function just as organized spin-off groups concerned with a specific issue. This situation has created separated initiatives, which are strongly linked together – followers' are supporting several causes simultaneously and know most of other participants. This could be described as a network of participants that can be used to support a range of aims. The network serves as a tool for fast mobilisation of various resources – experience, professionals, supporters, access points to resources, etc. This structure accelerates information flow.

Another strong opportunity for civic initiatives could be called food ambassadors. Often the same key persons are mentioned in interviews and in public events. These food ambassadors are public faces of emerging food discourse and with their actions they represent the importance of the subject matter. Their work and participation encourages a specific food interpretation. As strong and visible persons they frequently become an entry point for new members.

One of the most successful mechanisms used by the non-governmental sector could be called "serve to-go communication". It is a direct, focused and well prepared communication – participants in such activities share instructions for all possible actions and templates for documents that may be needed. This means that before communication the non-governmental sector actors have elaborated a critique, have produced possible suggestions on improving the issues criticized, and have described how these suggestions could be worked into legislation and what side effects it will promote. In practice this means that an NGO in order to convince governance does all the preparation work with possible involved groups that should be done by representatives of official institutions.

The first priority in helping to activate civic groups is to find a way how they could overcome insecurity in communication with governance actors. Inability of small groups to explain their legal status and how their actions would be interpreted from legislation point of view push them into the grey sector. First of all, this means that they become invisible to governing structures. Additionally it means they lose any legal representation and with that any hope for their status change in the future. The complex web of reasons for these groups to feel threatened cannot be fully understood without direct communication with them. For that reason, a trustful communication based on their needs should be developed even before any legal acts are drafted.

Both in the case of grey sector actors and considering larger and more visible civic groups it is important to create a trajectory that would allow them to participate in policy making. In many cases the identification of gate keepers who would maintain communication with civic groups is needed. Creating a clear entrance point would encourage more frequent interaction and would strengthen civic initiatives.

And finally there is a need to cultivate civic activity in this field as such. Several respondents argue that although public interest in healthy food is high, there is a lack in civic participation and real knowledge of what should and can be done. Some leaders complain that public involvement is low and all the pressure is left just on some activists. In other cases respondents demonstrate examples, when at first it seems that activity is high, but over a time members grow tired and leave the initiative. Overall, the need to attract new members is important to secure civic group capability.

*The multifunctional use of land in urban and peri-urban areas*

*“Multifunctional agriculture concerns those agricultural activities that go beyond the role of producing food and fiber by offering other functions such as renewable natural resources management, landscape and biodiversity conservation and contribution to the socio-economic viability of the area. This has been stimulated by, on the one hand, the greater societal demand for on-farm services and non marketable aspects in urbanized and peri-urban areas. This demand is very diverse and asks from regular farmers to adapt their farm practices and develop new activities, from ‘new’ farmers to create alternative farm initiatives in or around cities, from self-subsistence farmers and citizens to still produce food at a small scale for home consumption, supply to small shops or food ‘distribution’ within informal networks, from other types of networks to produce food for example school gardens managed by consulting companies, and consumer initiatives such as ‘collective’ gardening.” (SUPURBFOOD proposal).*

Although respondents did not use the term *multifunctional land use*, some of them were describing activities that can be characterized as multifunctional. For example Ikskiles Parmainu iniciativa collaboration with Ikskiles charter school. After a failed attempt to create a public garden that would serve educational purposes activists approached the nearby private charter school. They judged that the preceding project failed because of the lack of municipal and public support. Participants came to a conclusion that it will not happen, if they collaborated with somebody who is willing to act, has resources, and has some interest in their cause. The local private school was a fitting partner. The school was founded as parents’ initiative and as such has proved that it can execute complicated projects. School teachers were already giving some lessons outdoors so a new garden would just support what they were already practicing. Furthermore, some of the school’s founders were already deeply involved in food concerning civic activities.

Collaboration between these two institutions was quickly approved. Now both institutions collaborate to develop the plan of the first educational garden.

Somewhere similar is Lucavsālas ekoprojekts. After Riga municipality approved that one of allotment territories will be used as a building plot civic activists started to protest. Their aim was to erect a public farm that would serve for educating purposes for both: beginners and professionals. Currently their project is developing slowly. They are learning from every encounter with the municipality and are using several more competent NGOs to collect tips and supporters. After the first encounter with the municipality civic activists understood that they will need an organization. After the second encounter they realized

that the municipality will not approve their claims, if they are not able to submit a plan of actions. Meanwhile, civic consultants have suggested that the municipality will have much more difficulties to ignore their voice if they raised at least a temporary building on the territory. The organization is working on all challenges simultaneously and on the one hand they are already creating a garden and a public club house in the territory, on the other hand - they are trying to negotiate with the municipality.

An additional interesting characteristic of the project is the decision to reuse non organic materials for the construction. This is done for the reason that the project does not have any funding. In the meantime, project participants have decided that the use of specific building materials would serve as an example and would educate about the ways of reusing certain materials.

Kalnciema Quarter is an example of new multifunctional urban space which provides a platform for diverse economic and cultural activities. Weekly farmers' markets bring together producers and consumers in a festive environment and atmosphere. The originality of the farmers' market concept and the nature of innovation builds on associating short chain delivery with other cultural and economic activities and new urban social movements.

The quarter is an ensemble of wooden architecture heritage and the gateway to Riga City centre. The location and the unique multifunctional business concept have provided an additional opportunity for effective awareness-raising about the relationship between consumers and farmers, the importance of sustainable food provision. Slow Food Riga also became involved in the organisation of weekly markets. The Kalnciema Quarter hosts a series of cultural and business activities – festivals, concerts, cinema, exhibitions, design shops, a restaurant, an architect's studio, farmers and artisan markets and is becoming increasingly popular among city dwellers.

In further paragraphs we will show the blockages, opportunities and priorities that influence multifunctional use of land. These aspects are described as perspectives of three sectors – governance, market and civic.

#### Governance

A lack of mutual interpretation can again be mentioned as the main blockage. In some respect this blockage is similar to the one described in the previous chapter. However, in this case it seems that there is no common interpretation because of a lack of interest/ knowledge about the specific question at all. Policy makers do not think in categories



related to multifunctional land use – especially this is true in the case of municipalities. As one of respondents suggested – Riga region territory planning is reactive rather than proactive. This means that land use is an issue that is solved through an ad-hoc approach following events that are suggested from other actors. The same respondent suggests that most of Riga's green territories are considered as reserves that can be used in case of need. Even if somebody builds something in a territory that was not planned for construction, policy makers are willing to re-plan such territory. For that reason, it can be concluded that industrial development gets more support than sustainable development. Furthermore, people are not motivated to use these territories because of uncertain prospects - the land they are using for farming might be taken away from them. This just shows that governance representatives are not considering these possibilities. Despite this critique there are a few initiatives that have been supported by governance (for example to create flower gardens in some yards of apartment houses). However these are just isolated and small initiatives without a clear focus on land use multifunctionality.

Multifunctional land use issues are not addressed on a political level. This could be explained with a governance perspective that multifunctional land use is not considered to be a solution to any of the issues that they are concerned with. To overcome this situation multifunctional land use should be introduced within the political agenda. It does not mean that multifunctional land use should automatically result in laws or regulations. More likely this would mean multifunctional land use introduction to be considered as a factor when making decisions. However this policy should reduce its emphasis on intensiveness of agriculture and move to ecological agriculture interpretation. An example of disinterest is the ruination of public allotments in the city. Despite a lack of policy some of allotment territories are still being cultivated by urban farmers, they are continuing to protect remaining territories not knowing whether they will have the ability to work in this territory next year as well. Municipalities should find a way to protect these already cultivated territories.

Some of civic initiatives have already tried to create spaces combining farming, education and recreation. Nevertheless, the organizers of such places complain about communication with municipality representatives as they facing distrust and have not received any assistance. Trust in the good intentions of the civic sector could be a factor promoting multifunctional land use in the future.

For state representatives and municipalities the easiest way to start organized support is to protect territories that already serve for peri-urban agriculture and recreation. Most likely

the main initiative should come from municipalities. Historically several of Riga's and its surrounding territories have been used for urban agriculture and some of them still are. As interviews show these are places, where it is most likely that civic initiatives will emerge. Furthermore, usually there are already some social groups that are associated with these territories that have been farming there for decades. Some of them are already organized in well-functioning farmer co-ops. This statement leads to the second priority – municipalities should collaborate with civic initiatives. Collaboration could involve sharing of non-monetary (and in some cases monetary) resources. As previously mentioned, in some cases civic initiatives lack professional leadership or legal knowledge. In some other cases they lack tools that could be used for farming. All this is accessible for municipality.

### Market

The main blockage for the market is the lack of knowledge / information about multifunctional land use. During the interviews several producers suggested that they are having excursions to their farm. However this form of multifunctionality was not intended at the beginning of their activities and was adopted only recently after coming to interpretation that this could be helpful for their business. Respondents suggest that to open their farms or production sites to visitors from the outside they had to solve some problems that required knowledge and sometimes - funding. In some cases farmers found it difficult to protect their farm as such protection requires a specific adaptation of farm, greenhouse or production space and is expensive. Furthermore, for most respondents multifunctionality is not a priority, and they admit that they have not finished everything they intended, because it is time-, money- and other resources- consuming. Multifunctional land use just as a part of hobby may become too expensive. And since most of respondents do not make any income from excursions (or the income made is just a small share of total) multifunctional land use could be interpreted as a hobby. In interviews those in favor of multifunctionality usually are smaller enterprises, supporting ecological farming and local food chains. The reason for this is simple – it is the way to obtain direct communication with customers and possible partners. Multifunctionality has become a tool that allows explaining differences of specific production to the customer.

While describing the main reasons for organizing the excursions, respondents indicate that it is a way to talk to a customer, to advertise a product and to sell it. Commonly enterprise goals match wider social goals, for instance, a belief that society in general should be educated about local produce. Or the interpretation that other farmers are not competitors,

but should be interpreted as collaborators. All together they help to strengthen the market, cooperation and knowledge exchange, which again have improved the quality of the product. These could be interpreted as goals that serve common good. Therefore, redefinition of market's structure and personal goals can result in wider land functionality interpretation. A clear understanding of why they do it could motivate farmers to do it more. Respondents tended to associate multifunctional land use with marketing – the ability to communicate with the customer, and for small scale producers this is an important factor. In some cases excursions are not for free, in some other – farms have started to run a guest house business as well. These practices generate some share of the total income. The last point to mention here is knowledge sharing. Open-minded farmers engage in information sharing with other farmers. They are suggesting that information exchange encourages farmers to become more open to new experiences. Multifunctionality partly serves common goals therefore farmers' support strengthens a particular sector. The main reason why most of respondents who practice multifunctional use of land do it is because they feel this is good for their business. In the meantime many of them do not get anything in return (or returns are comparatively small), but they hope it will pay off in the future. That sort of activities could be interpreted as a socially responsible approach – educating people about production of healthy food. However it does not motivate farmers and producers to direct more resources toward these issues. Therefore, the main priority would be to develop more structured reasoning that would explain benefits of multifunctional land use (this means to explain farmers the benefits they have already observed). Additional priority would be to develop and modify multifunctionality to the level where it produces revenues or helps to operate the current farming more efficiently. Multifunctional land use for those who already practice it should be transformed into a type of business.

#### Civic

Some civic initiatives have tried to initiate projects that would allow citizens to participate in farming (create public-educational farms). However up to now they have not succeeded and all plans have failed. In interviews representatives explain various problems: firstly they are lacking support from their municipality. Although the municipality is not hostile to these initiatives it definitely is not lenient. The municipality prefers to stand aside from this type of initiatives and it could be explained with the lack of any examples or understanding of the reasons why such farms would be needed. An additional explanation is that groups

that come with the initiative to create such farms usually could be described as marginal and supporting unconventional world-views. Collaboration with these groups could end up in support to ideas that a municipality does not want to support. Such a situation for civic groups results in a lack of basic resources. From outsiders' point of view it seems that all these issues emerge from their lack of experience with the specific problems. Since these people are mainly involved in farming they do not have any knowledge on managing issues that require communication between several institutions. There are usually no leaders that could solve the emerging problems.

Up to now most of civic initiatives have failed. None of the cases the respondents tell about have been proposed by the municipality. According to the activists, everything that has been achieved was just because of proactive civic involvement. Activists themselves selected a plot of land to work on, searched for instruments, and tried to get permits that would allow creating a public-educational farm. Now they have gone a step further and in at least one case they started to operate without having a permit hoping that their activities would gain support. However participants who are involved in this project have doubts suggesting that maybe the project they are working on is too ambitious. They just would not have the resources needed to execute it. This leads to a slightly different approach taken by another group of activists. After failing the first project they realized that it has been too big for them and they started everything again on a smaller one. They managed to estimate their own strengths and chose a task accordingly.

Although unsuccessful these actions were possible just because the most involved persons had some relations to other organizations. In one case, when the municipality refused its help, the respondent turned to more institutionalized organization nearby and came to an agreement on collaboration. In the other case, activists from friendly organizations helped with professional advice.

The first priority to achieve better results is that civic participants should be more realistic of what they can achieve. Interviews reveal that several of the initiatives were abandoned because of lack of resources, time, followers, etc. More realistic evaluation at the beginning would have led to more successful outcomes. Nevertheless, resources should be accumulated all the time and the easiest way to fulfill the task is to develop new cooperation links with other civic initiatives, market and governance. Collaboration has been the main ingredient in the cases of successful civic activities. Furthermore, most likely civic activists will have to be proactive - they will have to come with the initiative due to the fact that other actors do not think in the same categories.

*Overview of synergies*

Blockages

Lack of a shared understanding is the main blockage observed in all sectors. As a result there is a situation where main actors are pulling activities towards a direction they feel comfortable in. This may be the reason why involved agents feel they are not listened to and the governing sector does not care about their interpretation. To some extent such conclusion is accurate – the governing sector in policy making does not address several food related and multifunctional land use concerned questions and for that reason they have difficulties to communicate with other sectors (market and civic). Mutual understanding can be achieved only when involved groups are collaborating. Although there are collaboration networks, groups that interact to exchange information, these groups involve only a part of involved actors. On the one hand such collaboration would be an approach to unify understanding. On the other hand it represents the need to overcome blockages that the market and civic sector face daily.

Both mentioned shared blockages are clearly related to the same issue – a need for and a lack of information. Most of interviews conducted with market and civic representatives discussed various forms of the lack of information and the need for it. Overall, previously mentioned lack of information is represented throughout interviews and expressed in various forms.

Priorities

Questions of multifunctional land use, shortened food chains and closing the cycles of waste are new and in most cases just marginally covered by policy in Latvia. Main activities within these fields are concentrated in the hands of some civic groups and a few market actors. Respondents often approach all three questions as one; therefore it is hard to find clearly conflicting suggestions. The only antagonistic relations that can be identified are the opposition between the governing sector and other involved actors.

A joint priority in all three themes is to work to achieve mutual understanding. First of all, it means to elaborate common goals that all agents could follow (actors suggest that they would expect bigger state support). Second, this means to elaborate communication structures that would allow communication between actors of various sectors. The need for communication is stressed from both sides: the market and the civic sector. These actors feel the need to communicate within the sector and cross-sectorally.

## Opportunities

In all interviews the respondents indicated that there is not enough information. Information is needed on all possible stages – consumers should get more information about products and production, producers and farmers - about production, non-governmental sector - about draft laws and regulations, and possibilities to influence these discussions etc. Most of agents involved have tried to deal with these issues on their own; however, this is a broader issue to be considered together - obviously it is related to a general change of food discourse in Latvia. Additionally, lots of professional information needs to be shared between the participants.

In several interviews respondents mentioned the need to get direct consultations from legislators. Some of them have found such consultation point in the municipality, some other - in the Rural Support Service, while other respondents were searching in even more different (and distant from the issue) institutions. As a representative of a retail chain explained – such a consultation point would allow solving problems with legislation and later on could serve as a basis to establish new solutions.

Government should consider ways to ensure that there are long-term relations between policy makers and non-governmental initiatives, since there are initiatives concerned with uncommon questions. While there are examples of food related associations and professional organizations managing long-term relations, they do not approach a more modern interpretation of food.

## Examples of best practice.

### NGO communication structure

Close collaboration of NGOs and personal connections of participants have created a web of easily accessible resources. Most of active representatives of non-governmental sector simultaneously represent more than one institution and support several additional initiatives, which have not taken an institutional form. Participants have managed to transform close relationships into a pool of resources. It is not only that knowledge and experience is able to flow between various groups, it is the groups' ability to borrow resources, communication channels and experts as well. Furthermore, a particular collaboration structure has prospered in a situation where supported ideas are not shadowed by huge non-governmental organizations- it is vice versa – ideas shadow the organizations.



#### **Section 4 – Conclusions**

Analysis shows that food interpretation is dominated by two discourses. The first discourse is that of the governing sector and could be described as historical. As was mentioned before, Lang et al (2009, 8) describe historical discourse as one that includes the following: – “*agriculture (primary production), nutritious aspects of human health (consumption) and economics (international trade)*”. This viewpoint interprets nature as subordinate to human problem solving. In terms of Dryzek’s environmental discourses this historical viewpoint generates a discourse of administrative rationalism that is used by the governing sector, the main share of market sector and some civic participants. In opposition to this approach there is a mix of ideas that could be described as postmodern discourse. This collection of ideas - mainly supported by the civic and the market sector - in some points might even be controversial. More elaborated and united in the civic sector it joins as an opposition to the historical viewpoint. In terms of Dryzek’s discourses postmodern viewpoint covers several of his suggested environmental discourses, such as: green romanticism and ecological modernization can be related to most of civic initiatives, while representatives from the market sector combine their own form of discourse. Although here a reference to environmental discourses is made, it is not always the only approach to describe the observed opinions. Interviews with most radical civic activists allowed observing what seemed to be environmental discourses, but they appeared to be just a part of a wider world view. Religious interpretation or pronounced nationalism could be mentioned as an example here. To these cases none of the environmental discourses can be attributed. However, activists, who follow motivation remote from environmental concerns constitute an important share of civic initiatives.

There are even other characteristics that distinguish different groups supporting multifunctional land use, shortened food chains and closed systems of organic waste. After interviews it seems that the gap between civic groups is even wider – those using “ecological modernism” seem to be more educated, wealthier, more organized, with more elaborated argumentation. Those using “green romanticism” as a group seemed to be a complete opposition to the first one. However these groups were acting together. Although they were aware of mutual differences they kept these aside because of a mutual need. This partly could be explained by the fact that Latvia is small and partly by strong public food ambassadors who create strong connections between different initiatives. This allows quick mobilization of resources, participants and knowledge. Relations and characteristics of these two discourses are represented in figure 4.



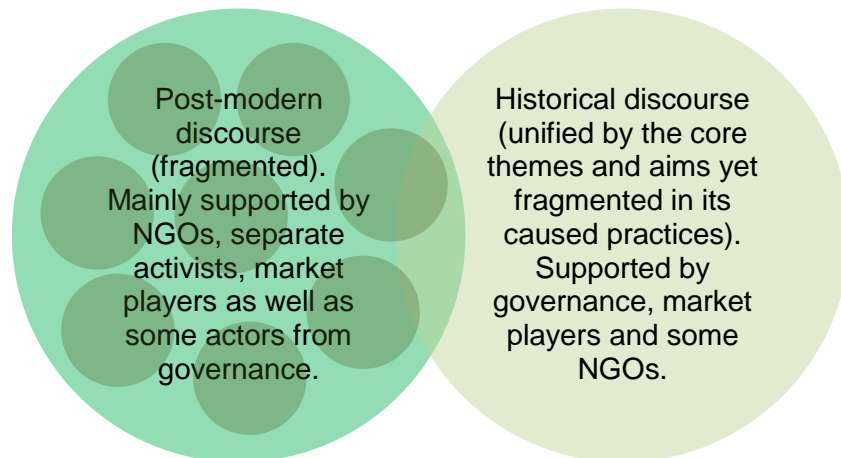


Figure 4. Illustration of discourse relations.

Post-modern discourse can form itself only because it exists as a network opposing the dominating historical discourse. Otherwise it disbands. However the unifying oppositional stand comes with a price – a need to correspond to the arguments used in the historical discourse.

Historical discourse is perceived as common-sense. As such it underlays several fields of actions and often traces of it can be found in the post-modern discourse. As a common sense it covers fields that post-modern discourse has forgotten.

Relations of the discourses change even more when discourse generated practices are taken into account (see Figure 5). Post-modern discourse, although fragmented underneath creates unified practices. Various views that are gathered under this discourse can generate common practices of opposition. Historical discourse, although built around same themes and aims, generates practices that contradict each other.

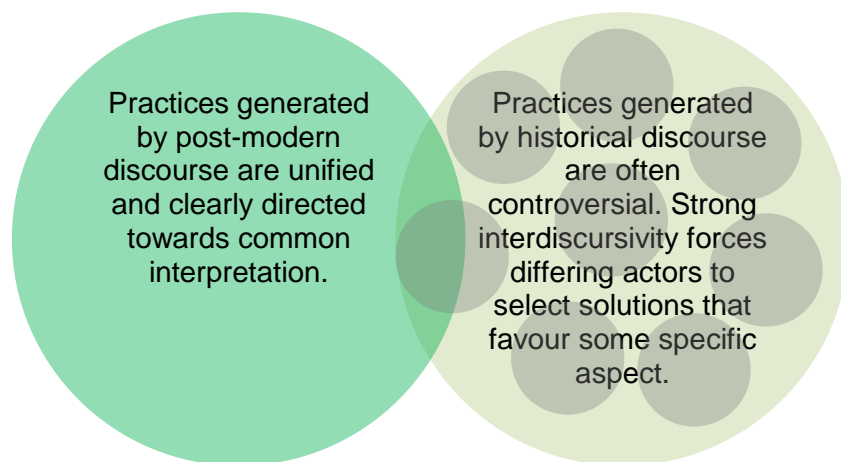


Figure 5. Discourse generated practices

Environmental concern could be described as a comparatively new phenomenon for Latvia. And most of civic activists are still searching for the ways to transmit their message most efficiently. Meanwhile, the society is struggling to interpret the ontradicting discourses that are penetrating public space. Public media is overwhelmed with food related commentaries made by professionals - self-proclaimed food ambassadors (doctors, dietologists, nutritionists, nationalists, ecologists, etc.) who suggest new interpretations to approach diets and what aspects of food should be taken into account when doing groceries.

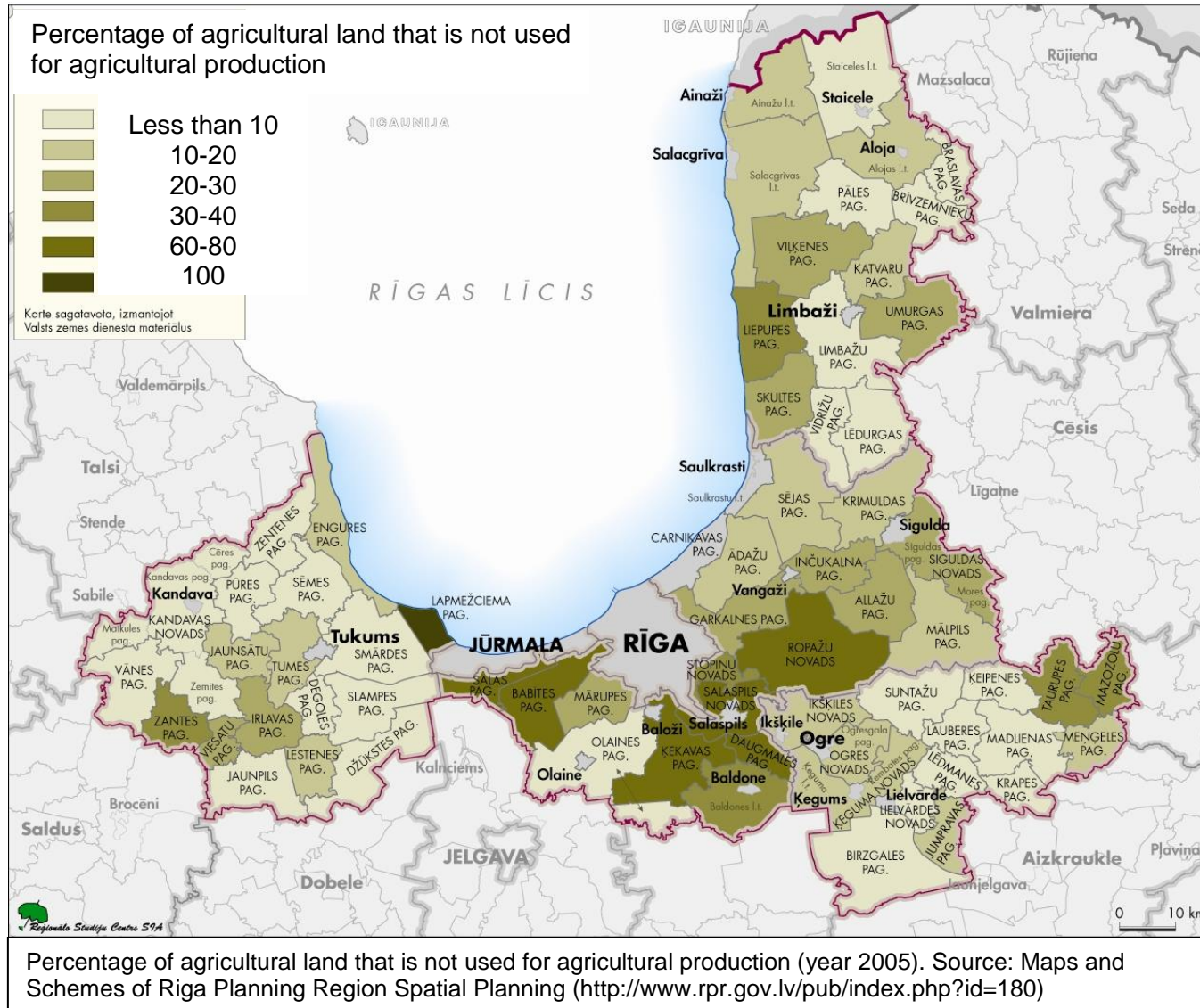
Furthermore, when considering Latvia's case, it should be remember that the Soviet regime has left important consequences on local food systems that can be felt up to date. This means that most of citizens either have family farms, or some other access to fresh vegetables and fruits. Despite of the lack of governance support there are still allotment sites serving as plots for urban farming, in public institutions food is made on-site, people are spending summer days picking berries and etc. To some extent this could be considered a post-modern condition. However it is possible just because the society has not reached the modern condition. Therefore, it is in the same time pre and post-modern. The governing sector with its historical interpretation and support to more intensive farming directs development into the modernity. Meantime, the civic sector sensing new ideas is jumping a step ahead from pre to post-modernity. And this then forces to ask a question of whether such a jump can be made. Also the question of whether such a jump can be made without support from the governance sector.

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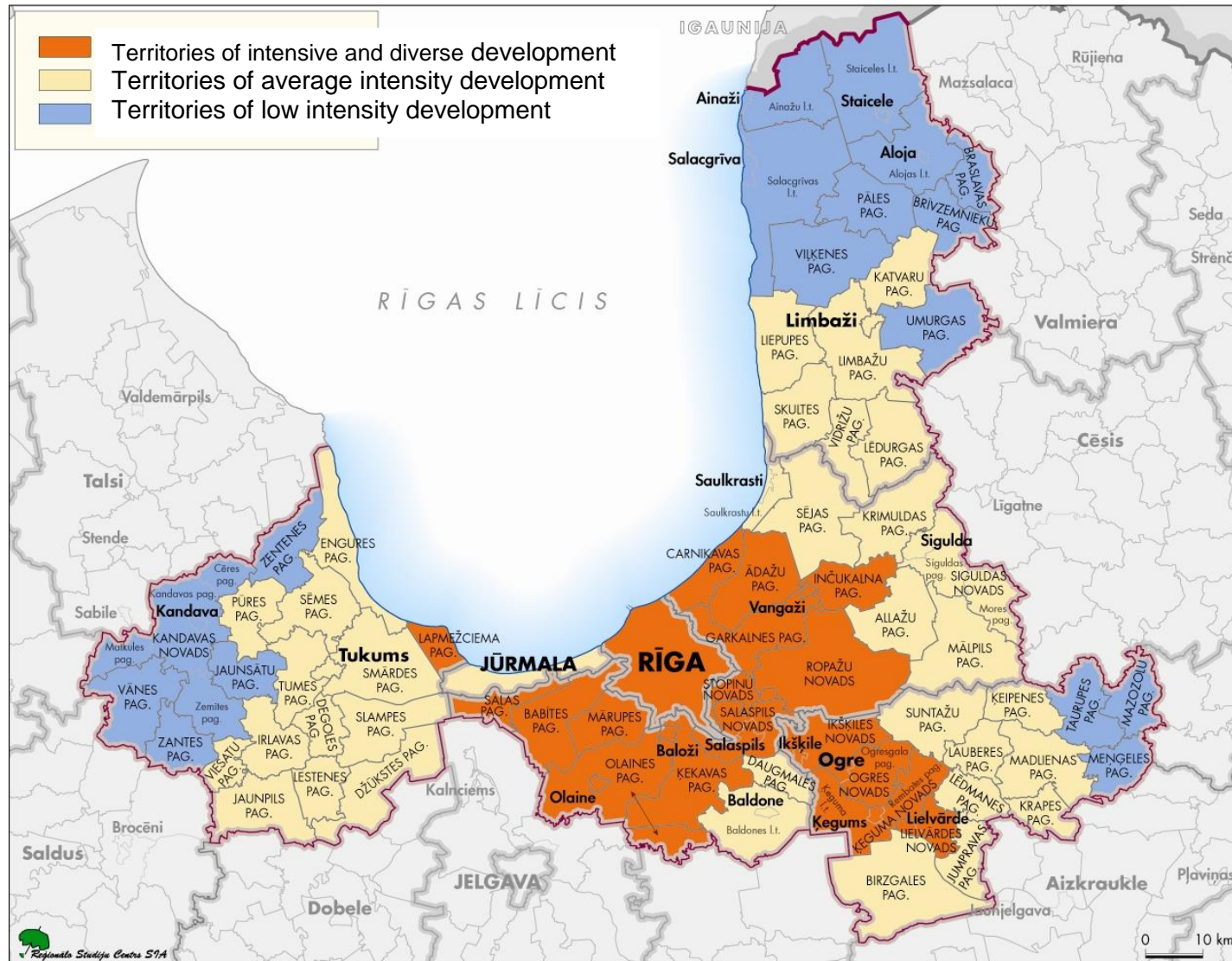
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**Attachments**

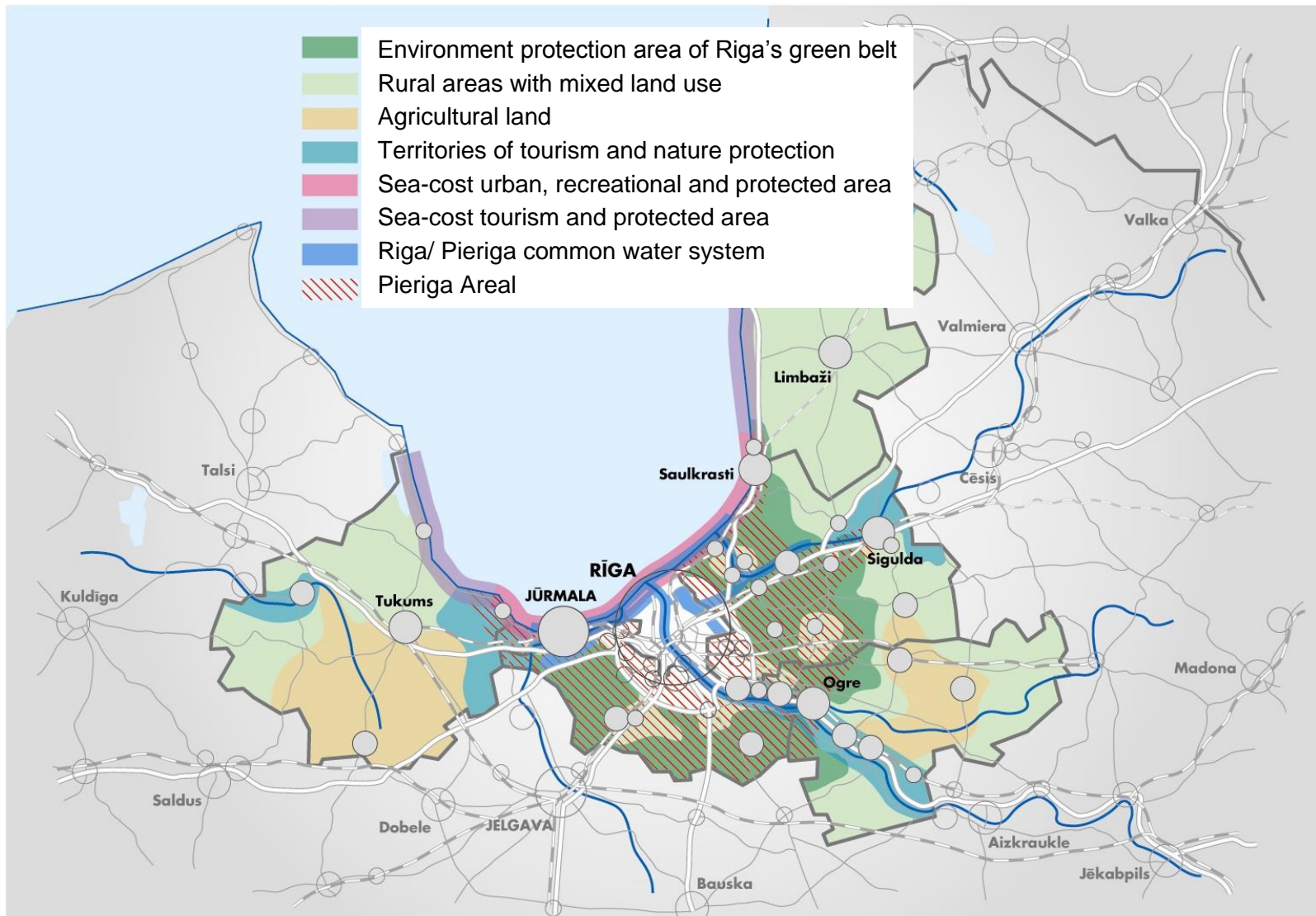
Attachment 1 – Maps





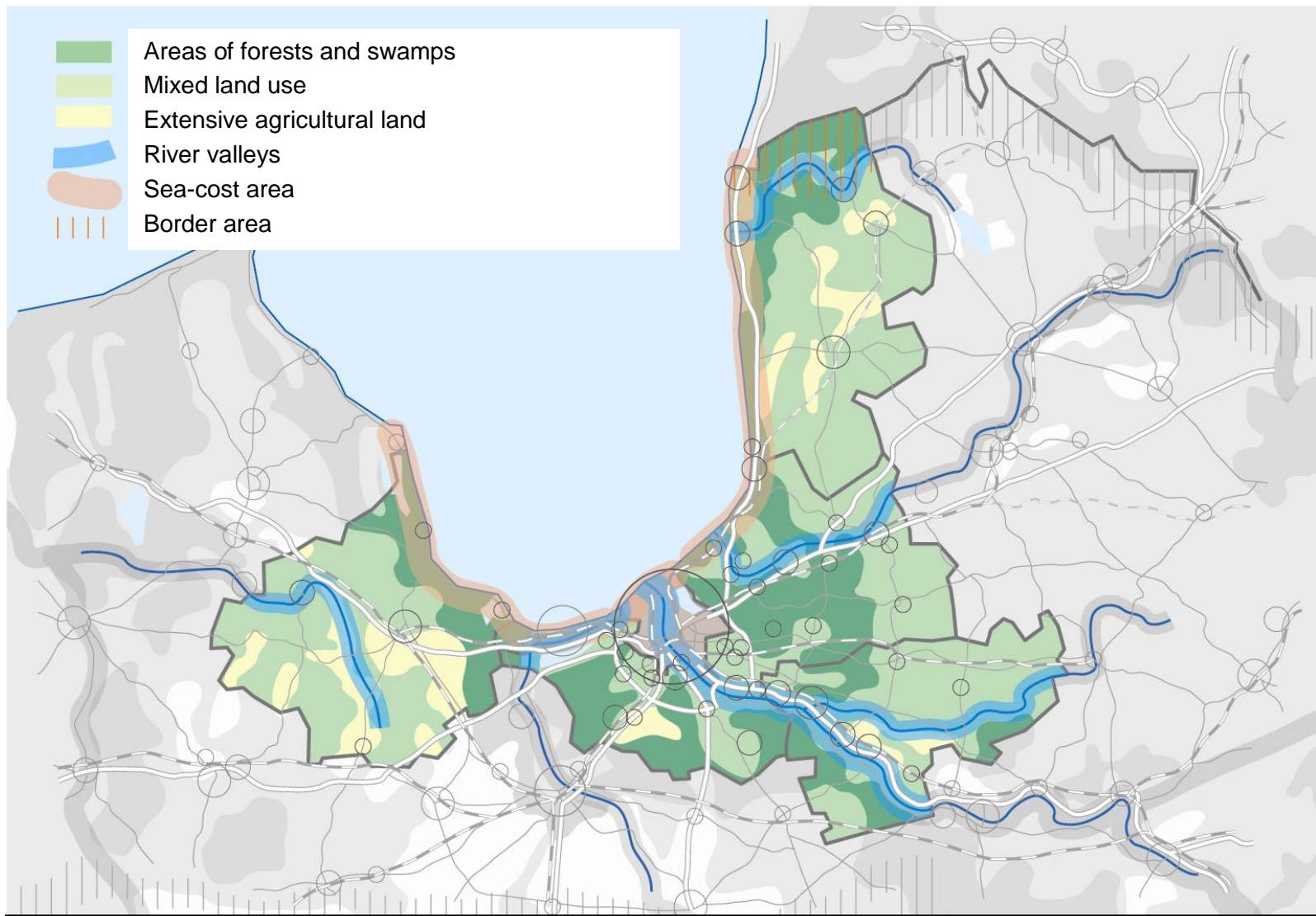


Intensity and diversity of territories development. Source: Maps and Schemes of Riga Planning Region Spatial Planning (<http://www.rpr.gov.lv/pub/index.php?id=180>)



Prospect of rural spatial structure. Source: Maps and Schemes of Riga Planning Region Spatial Planning (<http://www.rpr.gov.lv/pub/index.php?id=180>)





Current rural spatial structure. Source: Maps and Schemes of Riga Planning Region Spatial Planning (<http://www.rpr.gov.lv/pub/index.php?id=180>)

*Attachment 2 – Summary of social media analysis*

For social media analysis 29 web sites were selected. The main selection criteria were as follows: firstly, published texts on food related questions within the site. Secondly, the site held at least some amount of text and pictures useful for analysis. Several sites held just product photos and descriptions - these were not analyzed.

For the purpose of analysis the selected sites were categorized in four groups: NGOs, Media, Market, Activists (Bloggers). Published texts were classified within these groups according to author's affiliation. Later on, the same categories were used to classify discursive differences.

Two main tables of findings are presented below. The first table represents themes that each group covers in their texts as well as on what kind of constructions these themes are based upon. Second table illustrates actors that are mentioned in discursive constructions of each group (NGOs, Media, Market, Activists (Bloggers)). The first column of the table shows the author of analyzed text. The third column identifies actors that are mentioned in the text. The second column combines the first and the third describing how actors are represented. To illustrate linkages between columns, colors are used. Links between the first and the second column and the second and the third column are illustrated by the same color boxes.

Author

Market actors

Themes

**Health & Products:** Health mainly is associated with ecological products. These products are healthy partly because of their physical characteristics and partly because of their origins. Traceability of product’s geographical and social origins becomes one of product’s key values. However this does not mean that this has to be local product (although in some cases it is important).

**Personalized story:** Story of enterprise selling ecological production. As a part of traceability it is important that enterprise owners become visible and traceable. Often this part is supplemented with a description of values and hints at spirituality.

**Personalized relations:** Personalized suppliers indicate very personal relations between all involved actors - market players and their customers; ecological food and person who eat it, etc. Mentioning of individuals allows personalizing every experience – therefore often names of farms, farmers and even farm animals are given. With this interpretation market actors name the farms they are collaborating with and refer to the need to consume local products.

NGO

**Nature & Environment:** For NGOs nature and environment is something that needs to be perceived in critical way and is in a need of protection. Humans are superior to nature and therefore land is the humans’ resource. However it will not last if humans will not take more responsible stand toward unsustainable practices. Sustainability is in conflict with economic interests of several groups (especially global cooperations). To many actors nature is "lost" and they need to be taught, educated in values of nature.

**Health & Treats:** Health is not one of the central themes for NGOs. It is rather a part of economical, ecological and social arguments. However, nutrition can be a source of health or sickness. NGO's more often describes unknown characteristics of food that can lead to new diseases. Rash and greedy agriculture today can lead to consequences that we will notice just in the next generations.

**Oppositional economics:** Two opposite interpretations are represented - global industries that profit from their dominant position, consumers lack of knowledge, resource exploitation, and from forcing their costs on others. Other agents are local farmers. NGO texts suggest that they are positioned in a disadvantageous position. It is suggested that support of the second group would be more beneficial to state. NGOs give a significant importance to economic argumentation.

**Main threat:** GMOs are a tool of global corporations to gain control over local farmers. NGOs count a long list of possible treats. However the main factor is that GMOs are unnatural (As a split between natural nature (that is good no matter what) and unnatural nature (that is always bad). Corporations manipulate information and use international organizations to force their interpretations over local markets. NGOs consider themselves as the main opposition in this battle.

**Agent of change:** NGOs identifies the need to change - individuals need to be educated and afterwards they have to change their habits, attitudes. Global corporations cannot change and NGOs are fighting them. However they need the help of individual who are willing to change.

**Sustainable living:** Land and land fertility are resources that we mistakenly consider inexhaustible. Humans as only actors that both can protect and are dependent on the earth should take a more active stand. Agriculture in such interpretation becomes a part of sustainable resource use. Sustainability is not limited to the ecological interpretation but incorporates various fields (for example, social, economic, health, etc.). NGOs oppose unsustainable practices.

**Call to collaboration:** All topics are supplemented with a suggestion that more collaboration is needed. Collaboration here is used in the

broadest sense: it means mutual understanding, knowledge, help, involvement, support, etc.

Activists  
(bloggers)

**Diets & Health:** is one of the central themes bloggers recognize. Healthy diet (food) is a central element that allows securing personal health. In this interpretation health is used in a really broad sense - it means feeling and looking good, having enough energy, etc. Frequently diets are equated with health and even symptoms of sickness are described as part of pure health. Sticking to a diet is hard yet it will be rewarded. Several other topics are associated with health - culture, religion, globalism, etc.

**Personalized relations** between customer and person selling products. Activists share their knowledge about products and shopping experience. This leads to frequent mentioning of local products, enterprises. However it would be a mistake to consider this as a support to short food chains. Rather this is a part of diet interpretation – the need to point to precise origins of a product.

**Individual struggle:** Individual struggle against groups' pressure to follow selected eating habits.

Media

**Diets & Treats:** Mainly two types of food related topics are covered. Media addresses questions of diets that are healthy and recommended by specialists. As opposition to this media represents the lurking threats of dangerous food.

**Continuous treat:** GMOs are a source of various threats.

**Prices and economics:** Prices that customers have to pay is an issue media is constantly analyzing. It is a common suggestion that Latvia's consumer is forced to pay more than the consumer from other European states. An additional way in which prices are mentioned is as a conflict between producers and retailers. Retailers accuse producers of greed and suggest that retailers are the actor that can force producers to lower their prices. However producers accuse retailers in destroying a healthy market. They are suggesting that retailers are eliminating local producers.

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*Attachment 3 – Examples of interview synopses*

**Interview with Maira Dzelzkalēja and Zanda Krūklīte, Zemnieku Saeima, Farmers Saeima, 29.01.2013**

Main issues discussed: the shortening of food supply chains and the focus of the organisation

ZS projects / activities:

- Local product marketing – a project to teach farmers to introduce their product in the market in cooperation with agricultural colleges;
- Legislative initiative in support of artisanal (home) producers in cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture; this initiative created legal conditions for market access to small artisanal producers;
- Introduction of farmers product stands in supermarkets in collaboration with agricultural cooperatives;
- Organisation of farmers markets at parking lots of shopping malls in Riga in cooperation with the shopping centre Galactico. FS considered this a social initiative to support small producers;
- “Green spoon” and other quality schemes (in biological and vegetable production)

Objectives of ZS:

- Competitiveness of Latvian agricultural producers
- Recently also renewable energy, sustainability and environment, short supply chains
- In medium-longer run ZS would like to improve legislation and initiate law on sustainable use of land resources that would regulate the land lease market

Partners:

Cooperatives, Latvian Association of Agricultural Cooperatives

MoA

Latvian Federation of Food Enterprises (represents mainly major processors)

FVS

VAA dienests (State Plant Protection Service)

Agricultural colleges and schools

LRATC (Latvia Rural Advisory and Training Centre)

Retailers Rimi and Maxima

Riga Central market

Main achievements:

Legislation in support of home producers, lobbying this legislation in collaboration with other parties, including MoA.

School Fruit Programme and procurement regulations that included requirements and quality standards of integrated production thus promoting local fruit growers; the success factor was a coalition with cooperatives, MoA and MoH (Ministry of Health).

What are the pending / trouble issues still to be solved?

Food procurement procedures in municipalities are not well regulated either in legislation or in practice.

Collaboration with Riga municipality:

It is growing, mainly in the area of development of farmers markets. There are some plans which ZS didn't want to disclose.

In summer of 2013 an agricultural event / fair is planned at the embankment of Daugava River in Riga which is organised together with municipality (Rihards Krastiņš – editor of [saimnieks.lv](http://saimnieks.lv)).

Observations about interest of municipalities to collaborate with FS or in sustainable food issues:

This depends on municipalities and people there, for example in Straupe there is a famous farmers' market that was supported by the municipality.

Observations about civic initiatives to shorten food chains:

Miera iela – a consumer driven collective purchase initiative

Further strategic vision of ZS:

The organisation is aware of two tier development – rural development aimed at environment, employment, social wellbeing and agricultural development aimed at

competitiveness of producers achieved through technological modernisation. The organization has to balance itself among these objectives.

Characterisation of food policies in Latvia:

There is insufficient consumer education and information about domestically produced (Latvian) food. Information campaigns and development of product labelling would help to improve the situation.

**Interview with Ilze Straume and Solvita Kļaviņa, Public Health Department of Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs, MoH, 29.01.2013**

Main issues discussed: healthy nutrition (veselīgs uzturs); healthy nutrition policy and legislative initiatives; public information and education about healthy food.

Activities of PHD:

- PHD (before reorganisation when it was a part of MoH) elaborated norms of healthy nutrition for schools and other public institutions. These norms were elaborated in cooperation with Association of dietary physicians and municipalities, and some of them were included in legislation (e.g. on use of processed meats in school canteens).
- As a result of this initiative processors adjusted some of their products to new norms and marked them respectively for information of consumers.
- This initiative drew media attention and had an effect on public awareness about healthy food.
- The story of trans-fats when a Danish researcher raised the issue of excessive amount of trans-fats in products of some local producers; PHD took up this issue and as a result producers changed their technologies and substituted harmful-fats with good-ones.
- PHD wants to initiate the reduction of salt in industrial food products and organises seminars for producers, few of them are currently interested and responsive.
- In 2011 (before reorganisation in 2012) PHD implemented public information campaigns for children about healthy nutrition, organised educational activities at children summer camps and excursions to biological farms.



- Veselības valsts aģentūra had their coordinators in municipalities (municipal servants financed by VVA) for some time, and they carried out educational activities as well as tried to influence municipal policies in food procurement to include more sustainable and healthy foods in procurement regulations. Now these positions of public health coordinators are discontinued.
- PHD has contributed to elaboration of Public Health Strategy until 2017. Within the framework of this strategy certain activities have been implemented, like “School education about healthy food”.
- For municipal servants PHD organises seminars about sustainable procurement; procurement specialists from municipalities participate in these seminars.
- In collaboration with the retailer Maxima and juice producer Cido PHD organised consumer awareness campaign “Fruit 5-times a day”.

Partners:

Physicians and their associations

Food producers and their associations, e.g. Latvian Federation of Food Producers

Association of public catering enterprises ( Sabiedriskās ēdināšanas uzņēmumu asociācija)

Retailer Maxima in certain projects

Relations with municipalities:

Most of them are quite passive, and there is a lack of reciprocal relationship between PHD and municipalities. Recently PHD circulated a questionnaire among municipalities to inquire about collaboration and results are in progress. Ogre and Sigulda municipalities are the most active ones in the Riga region with respect to healthy nutrition. In Ogre there is an active Centre for youth health. Riga city has its Health Strategy, it is a positive example, and Irēna Kondrāte from Riga Health Department is an active personality. Tukums was active for some time but now there is impression of a loss of interest.

It is an observation that municipal food policies are dependent on municipal priorities and the interest of civil servants.

Achievements of PHD:

Awareness of the population about healthy food

Producers implement criteria of healthy food in production

Adoption of Cabinet of Ministers regulation to ban trade of soft drinks and unhealthy foods in schools

Elaboration of Guidelines for promotion of healthy nutrition in collaboration with municipalities. These guidelines are not compulsory but can be used by municipalities in their school catering programmes, procurement etc.

School Fruit and School Milk programmes with both benefit for health of children and promotion of local producers (300 km transportation distance limit and requirement of integrated production were included in procurement rules).

Certain media scandals (e.g. trans-fats scandal) urged producers to change production practices.

Organisational objectives:

Public health

Promotion of local producers

Priority for 2013 – Heart health and a campaign about healthy food

What are the pending issues still to be solved? What is missing?

Producers are reluctant to voluntarily improve technologies and increase the production of healthier foods

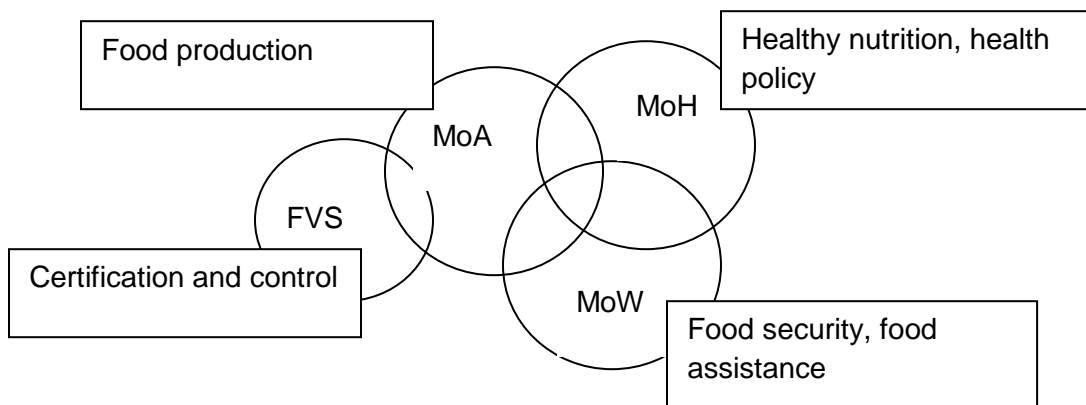
The Latvian Federation of Food Producers is not sufficiently interested in collaboration with PHD

It is difficult to collaborate with smaller food enterprises which are not united in associations

It is difficult to reach out to artisanal producers

Legislative initiative to ban sales of energy drinks to children is blocked in Saeima

Who shapes food policies in Latvia?



#### **Attachment 4 – Description of data**

This report has been based on several data sources:

- Secondary data (policy documents, planning documents research, sector reports, etc.)
- Participatory observations
- In-depth interviews with stakeholders
- Analysis of social media and web pages.

##### Secondary data

A variety of documents and public communication has been used. Most of documents concerning food we did know before we started this research. Still we searched web pages of all the main institutions in all sectors (governing, market and civic) to verify that we have not missed some important documents. Additionally we asked respondents in in-depth interviews to suggest important documents concerning food. Last but not least we used the google.com function that allows searching words in specific web pages. We used this function to systematically check homepages of all governmental institutions.

##### Participatory observation.

During research our interest in sustainable food chains quickly got the attention of civic activists. This allowed us to participate in seminars, informal meetings and even some planning meetings. We recorded these meetings and used this data to improve the interpretation we are giving in this report.

##### In-depth interviews

We have conducted 20 interviews.

- 5 of these interviews were conducted with representatives of governmental sector. 2 interviewees represented national level (health and agriculture); 1 interviewee represented regional level (regional planning); and 2 represented municipal level (development and health).
- 3 of these interviews were conducted with representatives of professional associations and co-ops: 1 interviewee represented a farmers' association; 1 interviewee represented a municipal association; 1 interviewee represented farmers 'co-op (respondent was a farmer as well).

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- 6 of these interviews were conducted with market actors: 1 interviewee was the owner of small scale factory; 1 interviewee was a personal nutrition consultant (who additionally voluntary was giving free lectures to elderly people about healthy nutrition); 1 interviewee represented Riga Central Market; 1 respondent represented a major retail chain; 1 respondent was introducing GetliniEko; and 1 is a home producer.
- 4 of these respondents were representatives of NGOs: 1 of respondents was trying to change local municipality policy and to attract more followers; 2 of civic participants were involved in various food related issues; and 1 of respondents was organizing a direct buying group.
- 2 respondents were civic activists (close standing to NGOs yet without a clear affiliation to any of them): 1 activist, highly educated, supported NGOs with knowledge; 1 activist a highly motivated farmer who voluntary pursued various ecological aims.

### Analysis of social media and web pages

For social media analysis 29 web sites were selected. The main selection criteria were: firstly, published texts on food related questions within the site. Secondly, the site held at least some amount of text and pictures useful for analysis. Several sites held just product photos and descriptions - these were not analyzed.

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