

EAT Cities



SPRING 2022

Executive Summary

EAT Cities is a guiding framework for the period **2022–2024** focusing on the commitment and contribution of EAT to urban food systems. It creates a strong narrative for change, clearly setting out the relationship between EAT's scientific foundation and its engagement capacity, moving from an output-oriented approach to one that is more outcome and impact-oriented.

This framework is intended to help build internal coherence and understanding across the organization, identify priorities, and inform on whether and how to pursue new opportunities. We will use the framework to refine and align on the focus and scope of EAT's cities work and ambitions – i.e., viewing urban areas as systems, with local governments as an anchor; focusing on dietary shifts, while considering urban-rural linkages as the backbone of urban food systems.

EAT Cities envisions making healthy and sustainable food the default choice for all city dwellers, by advocating for the role cities play in global food systems transformation, promoting the adoption of evidence-based and multi-stakeholder approaches in urban food systems activities, and testing such approaches in a diversity of cities and urban areas. In doing so, we will work through three core functions: knowledge, action, and communication and engagement. We will also build on synergies across EAT's four strategic programs: 1) Solidify knowledge; 2) Driving Dietary Shifts Globally and Nationally; 3) Food Economics and Finance; and 4) Cities and Urban Diets (where our cities projects are grounded).

This document describes how our various cities-focused projects and approaches build on the three core functions and link to EAT's other three programs under the Food Forward Consortium umbrella. In particular, we position the City Guide to a Planetary Health Diet project as a way to translate the EAT-*Lancet* science to on-the-ground action; collaboration around the C40 Good Food Cities Declaration as a way to strengthen ambition and advocate for the role of cities in food systems transformation; and the EU-funded FoodSHIFT 2030 and Food Trails projects as ways to further develop and share good practices and mobilize multi-stakeholder communities, for example. The geographic focus is on Europe, particularly the Nordic region, for in-depth work with individual cities; our consultation, dialogue, and higher-level knowledge sharing and advocacy activities have a global scope.

Through a clear strategic framework, key partnerships, and a renewed approach to our cities work, we can effectively contribute to solving the complex and persistent challenges within the global food system.



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1. Adding an urban “lens” to food systems

EAT Cities aims to make healthy and sustainable food the default choice for all city dwellers. We work to support cities and urban areas in adopting food system solutions that will help address their most pressing challenges, while enhancing climate resilience, reducing environmental impact, and improving health equity.

Today, urban areas are home to over half the world’s population, with this number expected to increase to 68 percent by 2050.¹ City leaders, all the way from local authorities to community shakers, face the huge test of ensuring that healthy, tasty, and sustainable food is accessible to all residents.

Urban food systems are especially challenging because of the complexity of urban environments, the diversity of the populations they serve, and the uniqueness of the geographical and socio-economic characteristics that have shaped them over time. The causes and effects behind these complexities are important to address within food systems interventions and New Urban Agenda. Yet, the challenge of shifting to sustainable and healthy consumption particularly stands out, as highlighted by the EAT-*Lancet* Commission in 2019.

Why we need to address food consumption in cities	
<i>Urban diets</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities already consume more than half of all food produced in the world. By 2050, it is estimated that 80 percent of all food consumption will take place in urban areas.² • While there is greater choice and year-round availability of fresh food in cities, there is often an abundance of processed and ultra-processed foods. Also, there are diverse food outlets, e.g., supermarkets, restaurants, and fast-food takeaways. • Increasingly, undernutrition, over-nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies are simultaneously present in cities, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, as well as the consequent increase in diet-related NCDs.³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate: Food is the biggest source of consumption-based emissions in the world’s megacities, representing 13 percent of total emissions. If no action is taken, this figure could rise to 28 percent by 2050.⁴ • Environment: 40 percent of the world’s cropland is located within 20 km of cities.⁵ • Resilience: Since cities cannot produce all the food needed to sustain their populations, supplies must continually be brought in from outside. This stress increases cities’ vulnerability to supply chain shocks, as witnessed in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/423).

² Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2019). *Cities and Circular Economy for Food*

³ Global Panel (2017). Urban diets and nutrition: Trends, challenges and opportunities for policy action. Policy Brief No. 9. London, UK: Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition.

⁴ C40 Cities, Arup, and University of Leeds (2019). *The Future of Urban Consumption in a 1.5° World: Headline Report*.

⁵ Thebo, A. L., Drechsel, P., Lambin, E. F., & Nelson, K. L. (2017). A global, spatially-explicit assessment of irrigated croplands influenced by urban wastewater flows. *Environmental Research Letters*, 12(7), 074008.

2. Cities as critical agents and arenas for change

Cities and urban areas have the unique agency to spark positive transformation across the food value chain (including beyond their jurisdiction) and to demonstrate innovative leadership in areas where national governments have been less progressive – a potential further highlighted by cities’ rapid and effective response to COVID-19, as local governments and community leaders joined forces to assist the most vulnerable.⁶ Achieving global food systems transformation will depend on shaping healthy and sustainable food consumption patterns in cities and towns.

Box 1. What does EAT mean by “cities”?

Several definitions of what constitutes a city or an urban area are in use, with significant variations between countries.⁷ All cities are unique and vary considerably in terms of geography, size (land area), population (and population density), economic system, cultural characteristics, and administrative or local government arrangements.

EAT’s definition of cities includes:

- The physical environment of an urban area;
- The range of populations living in or seeking their livelihoods within that urban area, defined by age group, cultural background, vulnerability or economic status, and geographical location, among others; and
- The governing authority given the mandate to manage the affairs of the area.

As a global organization, our definition of cities considers the geographical, cultural, and administrative context of the cities we engage with. In practice, what we refer to as a city will be determined using a place-based approach to encompass all these considerations.

This framework and EAT’s cities-oriented projects are inextricably informed by and aligned with the EAT-*Lancet* Commission’s recommendations for a Planetary Health Diet. EAT’s existing cities work supports a range of activities including the global Food Systems Network, delivered in partnership with C40 Cities; high-level international engagements such as the UN Food Systems Summit; European-level projects addressing citizen-driven innovation in cities and integrated policy approaches; and city-specific science translation and technical assistance, starting in Copenhagen.

EAT envisions a comprehensive **multi-year urban food program** that will enable us to uniquely contribute to food systems transformation. The program will capitalize on synergies with Children Eating Well (CHEW), our science translation work with the Shifting Urban Diets project, and our role with the EU H2020 projects FoodSHIFT 2030 and Food Trails.

⁶ EAT (2020). *Cities Are Joining Forces in the Fight Against COVID-19*. Available at: <https://eatforum.org/learn-and-discover/cities-are-joining-forces-in-the-fight-against-covid-19/>

⁷ Moreno, E. L. (2017). *Concepts, definitions and data sources for the study of urbanization: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility and International Migration. UN Secretariat, NY.

Funding will need to be secured to sustain this portfolio, securing additional resources to create and develop added value areas identified by this framework. While offering a holistic package for investment, the multiple yet interconnected components of our cities work open possibilities for modular funding – e.g., for one specific area (or several areas) of focus rather than the entire package.

EAT fundamentally believes in the potential for cities and urban areas to help shape a healthier, more diverse, and resilient global food system. The *EAT-Lancet* brief for cities provides a series of recommended actions to produce urban food differently, change procurement and distribution practices, address food loss and waste, and strengthen food systems governance.⁸ **This document therefore sets forth three levers to support these types of local-level actions as well as to help integrate an urban “lens” into EAT’s wider programmatic work.**

3. EAT Cities: Three levers for change

EAT Cities envisions making healthy and sustainable food the default choice for all city dwellers. We aim to:

1. Advocate for the critical role cities and urban areas play in global food systems transformation.
2. Promote the adoption of evidence-based, multi-stakeholder approaches in urban food system activities, leveraging EAT’s engagement capacity with the scientific, policy, and business communities.
3. Test our approach in a diversity of cities and urban areas.

EAT Cities aligns with EAT’s dynamic three-way framework for change across knowledge, communication and engagement, and action. The levers overlap and are mutually reinforcing, i.e., how we achieve results in one lever depends on and has implications for the others. New knowledge provides direction and an evidence base for change. Innovative engagement with actors across the science, policy, and business communities amplifies messages and creates alliances. Partnerships inspired through engagement and informed by knowledge enable action, leading to change and impact at scale (see Image 1). All projects should work through at least two of the three levers.

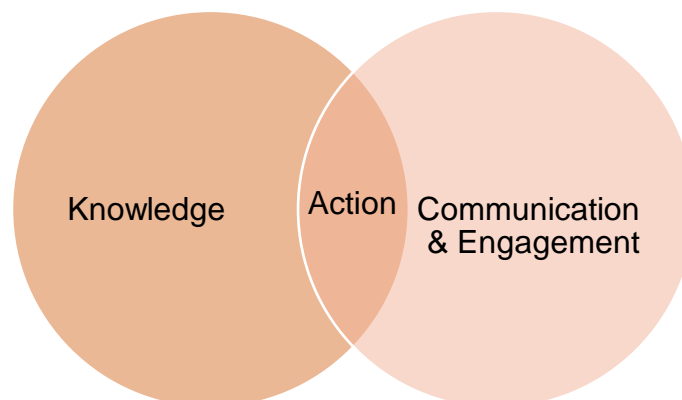


Image 1. The EAT Cities approach

⁸ See *EAT-Lancet* brief for cities: <https://eatforum.org/lancet-commission/cities/>

In implementing this framework, the knowledge and communication and engagement levers will set the foundation for activating the action lever, while remaining a constant throughout EAT’s cities work (see Image 2).

This strategic framework will be implemented over the period 2022–2024, based on global and organizational milestones that will require a review of the current direction. This includes the completion of the EU H2020 projects FoodSHIFT 2030 and Food Trails within the cities portfolio; the release of the Food Systems Economics Commission, Blue Food Assessment, and EAT-Lancet 2.0 reports, establishing a new knowledge and evidence base against which to review this framework; and the symbolic mid-point of the Agenda 2030 in 2025.

EAT Cities, 2022–2024

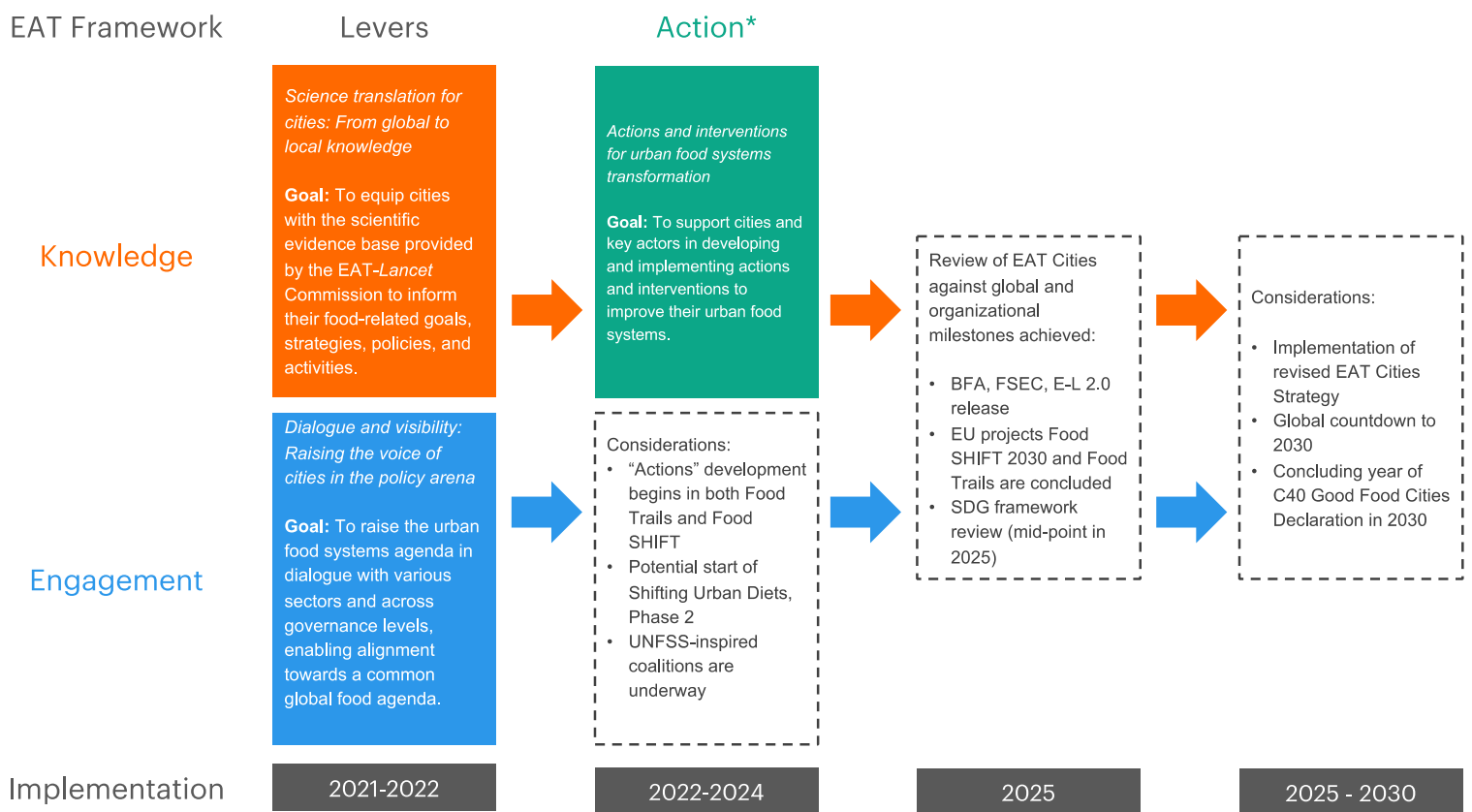


Image 2. Implementation process for EAT Cities

EAT's 4 strategic programs

1. Solidify knowledge
2. Driving Dietary Shifts Globally and Nationally
3. Shifting Food Finance / Food Economics and Finance
4. Good Food Cities / Cities and Urban Diets

Strategic program	Solidifying knowledge
Related cities work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translating EAT-<i>Lancet</i> scientific knowledge to city context & action • SBTs for cities (part of City Guide to a Planetary Health Diet) • EAT-<i>Lancet</i> 2.0 urban chapter
Anchor function	Knowledge
Strategic program	Shifting diets globally and nationally
Related cities work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Guide to a Planetary Health Diet: food environment & public kitchen interventions; scaling the impact of Shifting Urban Diets (2019-2021 predecessor) • Engagement with C40 Food Systems Network & Good Food Cities Declaration
Anchor function	Action; Communication & Engagement
Strategic program	Food economics and finance
Related cities work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Trails (work package with finance relevance) • FoodSHIFT (assessing the benefits; job creation)
Anchor function	Action; Communication & Engagement
Strategic program	Cities and urban diets
Related cities work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Guide to a Planetary Health Diet (building on Shifting Urban Diets) • C40 Food Systems Network & Good Food Cities Declaration • FoodSHIFT2030 • Food Trails • Toolkit from City Guide to a Planetary Health Diet project; tool to compare city procurement against EAT-<i>Lancet</i> Planetary Health Diet
Anchor function	Action; Communication & Engagement

Science translation for cities: From global to local knowledge

Framework area & EAT program in addition to Cities and Urban Diets	Knowledge; Solidifying Knowledge
Goal	To equip cities and urban areas with the scientific evidence provided by the EAT- <i>Lancet</i> Commission to inform their food-related goals, strategies, policies, and activities.
Level of action	City & city-region level
Stakeholders involved	Research & academia partners (PIK, WRI, and potentially the SBTN and SRC), local governments, and businesses
Identified projects	Shifting Urban Diets (SBT), City Guide to a Planetary Health Diet, C40 Food Systems Network
Implementation	2022 and beyond

This first lever focuses on enabling cities and urban areas to use the scientific evidence provided by the EAT-*Lancet* Commission to inform their food-related goals, strategies, policies, and activities. By “science translation”, we refer to a two-fold approach of 1) helping our target stakeholders understand the latest science on healthy and sustainable food systems, and 2) mobilizing our network of experts to provide the technical support needed to concretize actions – including helping to set science-based targets (SBTs) for urban food systems, grounded in policy and operationalized in interventions.

To do this, we will work with city officials (to understand the local context and priorities and identify relevant data) and the research community (to conduct the technical work and data analysis). Other potential actors that would be relevant to this work include businesses and community leaders on the ground, who can help gather local data and knowledge.

The technical translation of the EAT-*Lancet* Commission’s report should be conducted in a way that responds to context-specific priorities and contributes to progressing the city’s agenda, while considering the urban-rural interface in the context of food procurement, production, shortening supply chains, and strengthening rural livelihoods. Specifically, EAT’s role will be to:

- Add a holistic perspective to the technical landscape to ensure that both health and sustainability are taken into account when measuring the impact of current and future urban food systems.
- Connect the scientific community with local governments and other relevant actors, to enable an improved understanding of the urban context and policy landscape.
- Mobilize technical assistance to develop, implement, and share tools and methodologies for monitoring urban food systems change.

The SBT methodology developed under the Shifting Urban Diets project (2019-2021) has served as a starting point to activate this first lever while setting an example for others to follow, including the development of SBTs for cities by the Science-Based Targets Network (SBTN). EAT can mobilize its science and implementing partners to take this approach to other settings and fill remaining gaps in regards to human health and biodiversity, and this cities work can also exchange knowledge with EAT’s SBTs for business activities. More broadly, EAT will also

build on existing relationships with knowledge sharing networks, such as the C40 Food Systems Network, to disseminate and scale new knowledge generated to strategic groups.

Dialogue and visibility: Raising the voice of cities in the policy arena

Framework area & EAT program in addition to Cities and Urban Diets	Communication and Engagement; Driving Dietary Shifts Globally and Nationally
Goal	To raise the urban food systems agenda in dialogue with various sectors and across governance levels, enabling alignment towards a common global food agenda.
Level of action	Global level
Stakeholders involved	All, with a particular focus on local governments, businesses, and civil society
Identified projects	C40 Food Systems Network, City Guide to a Planetary Health Diet, FoodSHIFT 2030, Food Trails (WP7); UNICEF and Cities Changing Diabetes collaboration (potential to activate these relationships; not currently formal projects)
Implementation	2022 and beyond

EAT dialogues and convening platforms are something we do best, and where partners find particular value. As an “honest broker,” EAT has a strong track record of gathering local and national-level government representatives, academics, farmers, and business leaders around the same table. Multiple EAT Stockholm Food Forums and the virtual platform EAT@Home bear witness to this ability to convene diverse actors, make them face hard truths, and uncover underlying issues – all with a touch of flair. This lever will continue to build on EAT’s engagement capacity in order to raise the urban food systems agenda with various sectors and governance levels. Ultimately, the goal is to secure alignment towards a common global food agenda – recognizing that city-level action is key for achieving global change.

In true EAT fashion, engagements will take many shapes and forms. At the global level, featuring city-level actions at EAT Forums and high-level events will raise the visibility of cities, while helping city officials acquire the mandate and resources needed to locally drive progress and build capacity. Including city representatives in events can, for example, yield dialogue between influential mayors, agribusiness, and national government representatives – important connections that would otherwise be unlikely. EAT will continuously scope opportunities to raise the voice of cities in dialogues and multilateral processes, including in the follow-up to the UN Food Systems Summit and leading up to COP27 and COP28.

At the subnational level, EAT’s partnership with C40 and growing relationships with individual cities such as Copenhagen, Oslo, and Milan, give us an important opportunity to engage with mayors, city officials, and practitioners. The benefit of this type of engagement is the opportunity to learn and collect insights that can be amplified from the ground up across EAT’s engagements.

With a sharpened urban food systems focus, and an elevated “cities track” at all EAT Forums and other EAT-curated events, EAT can facilitate linkages between actors that, in turn, support all three levers contained within this framework. EAT’s role in engagements will be to:

- Broker interaction between stakeholders, sparking debate and enabling collaboration that can spur into action.
- Harness opportunities to promote urban-focused content in our communications and events, under the narrative of “cities as agents and arenas for change for achieving global food systems transformation”.
- Use high-profile events and other platforms to place a spotlight on local leadership (including government, business, and civil society) and generate endorsement and actions from the highest level of food systems governance.

Actions and interventions for urban food systems transformation

Framework area & EAT program in addition to Cities and Urban Diets	Action; Driving Dietary Shifts Globally and Nationally
Goal	To support cities and key actors in developing and implementing actions to improve their urban food systems.
Level of action	City & neighborhood level
Stakeholders involved	All, with a particular focus on partners with implementing capacity in-country (e.g., C40, UNICEF, Gehl, Danone, and Novo Nordisk), as well as community leaders and civil society
Identified projects	City Guide to a Planetary Health Diet (food environments, public kitchens), UNFSS follow-up, C40 Food Systems Network
Implementation	2022 - 2024

This lever aims to support cities and urban areas to design and implement tangible actions and interventions to improve food systems at the city- or neighborhood-scale. Lessons learned from the work with the C40 Food Systems Network and the Shifting Urban Diets project have revealed different types of actions that cities and urban areas can take to transform their food systems.

Deploying strategic interventions for systems transformation opens opportunities to tap into thematic issues and city priorities as *entry points*. For some cities, the emphasis might be on improving food procurement policies, while in others, there may be a need to boost urban agriculture to improve food security and nutrition. Different cities have different needs and EAT acknowledges the importance of tailored messaging and responses for strategic action.

In this space, EAT will play a convening role to:

- Enhance opportunities to pilot methods and mobilize partners and other relevant stakeholders to co-design and implement urban food system interventions, while ensuring compliance with the EAT-*Lancet* recommendations.
- Ensure representation from a diversity of stakeholders in multi-stakeholder programs, including local-level leadership, city departments, different levels of government, technical actors, business actors, and civil society organizations.
- Disseminate food systems action through urban networks, communications, and digital and in-person convenings, including actions resulting from EAT-led projects with individual cities, such as the Shifting Urban Diets project.

4. Objectives and targets of the Cities and Urban Diets program

Objectives and targets – measurable outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 100 cities have developed EAT-<i>Lancet</i> aligned science-based targets (SBTs) and created healthy and sustainable food environments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAT publishes a robust action toolkit to help urban practitioners implement the three methods developed in the Shifting Urban Diets project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban food systems are elevated in the global agenda, e.g. in climate COPs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and non-financial resources are mobilized for cities to implement food system interventions and deliver on their commitments such as the C40 Good Food Cities Declaration

5. Who do we work with?

EAT works at the intersection of science, business, policy, and community to deliver a vision for healthy and sustainable diets and food systems. Through our work, we have identified which actors influence how urban food is produced, transported, exchanged, disposed of, and consumed. This, in addition to the myriad of actors that make up urban systems, have led to the following prioritization of stakeholder groups to engage with in implementing projects and other initiatives related to EAT Cities.

HIGH INTEREST – HIGH POWER (COLLABORATE)

Research and academia – EAT’s science foundation makes research and academic institutions a top priority to engage with to support science translation efforts at the city level, including the development of science-based targets and research components for specific projects in relation to dietary shifts and food environments.

Local authorities and their associations – In addition to individual city governments, this stakeholder group comprises local government associations and international city networks. Local governments are the key actor governing urban systems. Outreach to local governments is activated by EAT’s implementing partners, specifically networks such as C40 Cities and the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, as well as through city-specific initiatives, as in the case of the Shifting Urban Diets project.

Urban practitioners and their associations – Individual professionals and urban practices, operating within a local government, academia or the business sector, have in-depth understanding of and major influence over the built environment. This group includes urban planners, public health professionals, landscape designers, and environmental scientists, among others. Their associations are also a valuable resource to mobilize the technical capacity and know-how of urban practitioners at the national, regional, and global level.

MEDIUM INTEREST – HIGH POWER (KEEP SATISFIED)

International organizations – International organizations, including UN agencies, set global standards and norms and can mobilize governments, businesses, and civil society around food systems action, most recently exemplified by the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit process.

EAT Cities will continue to draw from existing partnerships at an organizational level, such as the partnership with UNICEF, and continue to scope opportunities to enter in new collaborations.

Businesses – Businesses, particularly food retail and SMEs, are a key actor influencing the food offer and demand in urban areas. EAT Cities will tap into the capacity of the business sector and activate its potential through alliances with individual partners and business leaders and by leveraging networks, such as the SUN Business Network.

HIGH INTEREST – LOW POWER (KEEP INFORMED)

Civil society organizations and non-profits – These groups play a critical role given their technical expertise, their proximity to and representation of vulnerable communities, and their increasing presence in urban settings. EAT Cities will reach out to civil society and non-profit organizations, with particular emphasis on engaging citizens and youth as change agents, in order to build advocacy and spark debate around the development of inclusive urban food policies and interventions.

Box 2. Mapping Stakeholders

An internal stakeholder mapping exercise has been initiated to begin tracing relevant actors, as well as resources readily available to develop actions at a local and/or global scale. This ongoing exercise aims to help EAT Cities stay updated in regards to developments in the field; to navigate the wide range of institutions and other actors working in this area; and to avoid duplication in our work by having an up-to-date overview.

A related exercise is to develop a set of criteria to guide the selection of cities with which EAT works. We seek to collaborate with cities that have demonstrated commitment to food systems transformation and are aligned with EAT's vision of a Planetary Health Diet for all. The current EAT Cities framework focuses on Europe, particularly the Nordic region, for in-depth work with individual cities, though activities such as consultations and broader engagements can take on a global scope.

6. How do we do it?

A common thread across all three levers is EAT's capacity to act as a convening platform, creating dialogue and propelling collaborations among different stakeholder groups. Therefore, EAT can support its knowledge and implementation partners, including international organizations, businesses, youth advocates and urban design firms, to enrol in novel partnership models to test and scale new forms of interventions within cities.

Multi-stakeholder engagement can support alignment between different levels of policy and decision-making, i.e., between national, regional, and local governments. Locally, engaging multiple municipal departments in a single city can help improve policy coherence and align efforts across sectors. A number of cities and partners in our network have expressed interest in these types of multi-sectoral dialogues and partnerships.

Our theory of change

The theory of change for EAT Cities follows EAT’s wider objectives and distils the three framework areas to the local level. Within this framework, the three levers are illustrated as essential pathways for achieving outputs that can in turn result generate outcomes and impact.

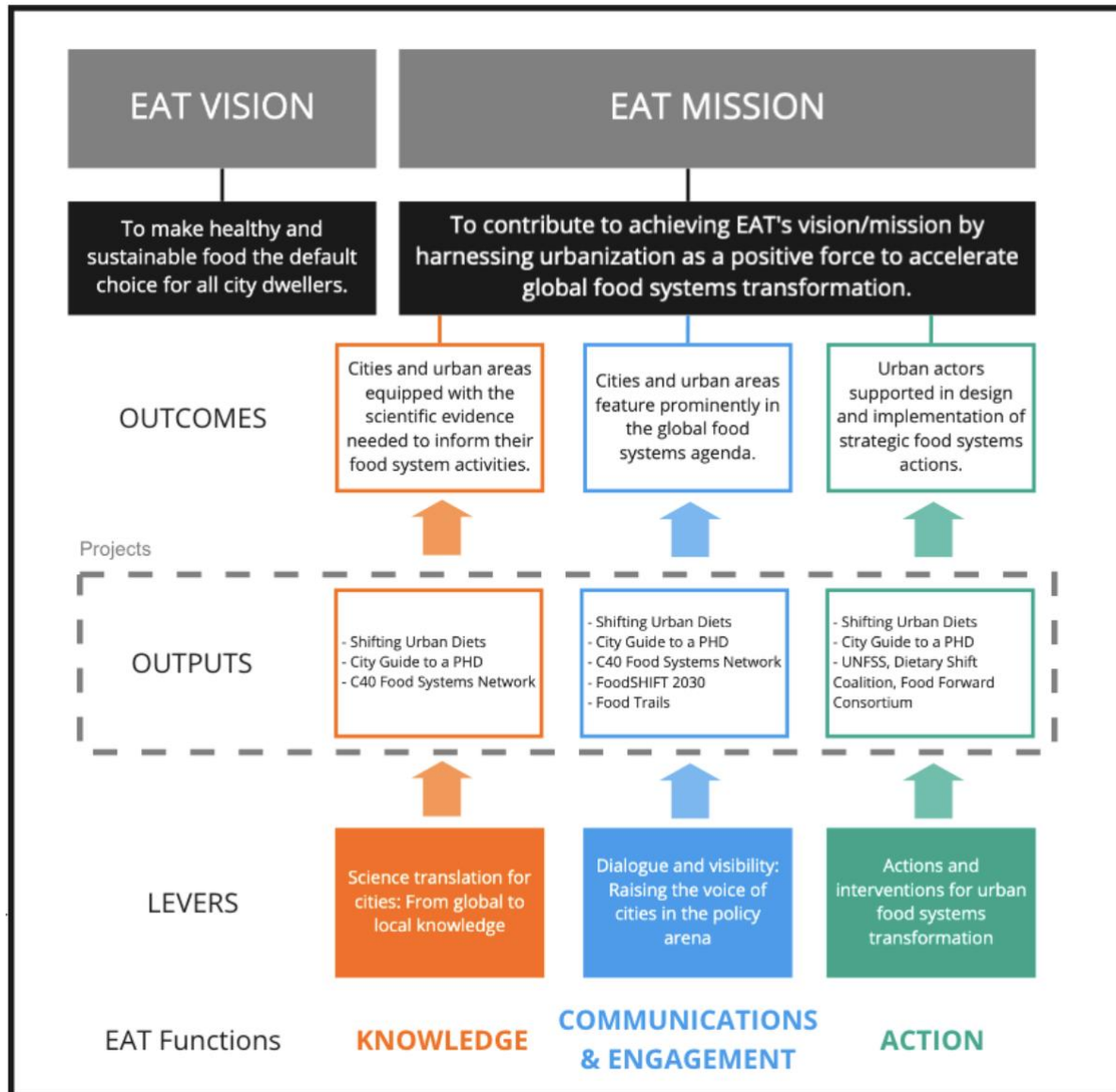


Image 3. The EAT Cities Theory of Change.

7. Conclusion & Recommendations

EAT intends to support cities and urban areas in developing integrated policies, strategies, and pilot projects, grounded in the latest science on healthy and sustainable food systems. Through cross-cutting partnerships, EAT is well-placed to offer insights and play the role of “matchmaker”, linking organizations, aligning knowledge and tools, and connecting cross-sectoral efforts. This framework will strengthen the scope of EAT Cities, in order to fill current research gaps, promote key actor involvement in high-profile events, and explore opportunities for city-level engagement in solution design.

Operationalizing this framework will require a deeper commitment to EAT’s holistic approach to partnerships – embarking on innovative collaboration models with urban practitioners, local governments, businesses, and other key stakeholders across the food value chain. It will require pilots in key cities, combined with methods and tools that allow for scaling globally. Supporting action at the local level will also have to be orchestrated to build mutually reinforcing momentum at the global level – in line with the outcomes of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.