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AfriFOODlinks Network Cities: Concept Note



AfriFOODlinks



Funded by
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Coordinated by
ICLEI Africa

Become an AfriFOODlinks Network City by emailing **Jokudu Guya** (jokudu.guya@iclei.org) expressing your City's interest in joining the cohort of Network Cities.

Overview

The AfriFOODlinks project seeks to transform African urban food systems. One of the objectives of this project is to support networking and learning between food systems stakeholders across cities in Africa, with Europe, and globally. This project directly engages in transforming food systems in 5 Hub Cities. The project engages with an additional 10 African and 5 European cities to share knowledge and engage, known as Sharing Cities. The outcomes and lessons learned through these engagements form the basis of wider engagement with a network of over 45 Network Cities across the world. This project runs from 2023-2026.

This concept note outlines the engagement approach for Network Cities of the AfriFOODlinks consortium.

Aims and Objectives

As an outcome of the AfriFOODlinks Peer-Peer Strategy (D6.7), the Network Cities Strategy aims to build on and bring together existing networks of cities and local governments committed to the urban food systems agenda. These networks include, but are not limited to, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), the CityFOOD Network, as well as project cities of ACRA, Rikolto and Hivos. In bringing together all these cities under the unified umbrella of AfriFOODlinks, the project can contribute to strengthening the position, and elevating the voices of cities and local governments in the global food systems agenda. Furthermore, the strategy also aims to facilitate global exchange between cities by tapping into the global networks of ICLEI and MUFPP to bring cities from South America and Asia together with African cities to develop a Global South position on food systems transformation. By achieving the above, this component of the project will facilitate the adoption, adaptation and replication of emerging project results, outcomes and lessons from AfriFOODlinks Hub and Sharing Cities.

Network Cities will be committed to engaging with the AfriFOODlinks project, and will therefore present the first opportunity for initial exploitation of upcoming project outputs. This will be achieved through a series of webinars under Task 6.2¹.

The Network Cities Strategy aims to:

1. **Expand the impact of the AfriFOODlinks project beyond the 5 Hub and 15 Sharing cities by creating a global network of an additional 45+ cities committed to food systems transformation.** This will be achieved by:
 - a. Facilitating city-to-city learning and exchange between 65+ Hub, Sharing and Network cities.
 - b. Providing a framework for unifying the efforts of AfriFOODlinks partners operating across scales and regions. These include the efforts of the African Centre For Cities, FERN, ICLEI, MUFPP and others.
2. **Strengthen the Southern discourse on urban food systems transformation by creating a global network of food systems practitioners, led by cities and their partners in the Global South.**
3. **Enable the collection and exchange of city level data on urban food systems transformation from 45+ cities** across the world in order to improve advocacy for more responsive global policies. Specific attention will be paid to the cataloguing of solutions being developed at the city level.

Through this, the AfriFOODlinks Network Cities will be able to participate in continued intra-African and cross-continental exchange and learnings, share their successes, and improve their own food systems.

¹ Task 6.2: Mutual learning with sharing cities and reinforcing networks

Approach

This Network Cities strategy provides an overview of the approach to engaging cities in the AfriFOODlinks network through virtual engagements in the form of webinars (T6.2), and where opportunities arise, in-person engagement. Network Cities will have to align with eligibility criteria and commit to a set of commitments and values as detailed below.

Eligibility:

In order to be eligible to become a Network City, the city must appoint a main focal point. Cities are also encouraged to list additional stakeholders and government officials across departments working in the food systems in their city to engage in this project.

The main focal point should:

- Be a government employee working at the local government level within the city.
- Work in a role that is actively engaged in the city's food system.
- Ideally have a systemic overview of the food system, and be connected to a range of food related activities happening across different departments.
- Have a passion for sharing their work and an active interest in learning from the experience of other cities.
- Be passionate about improving the food system in their city!

The main focal point must be willing to:

- Respond to the City Food System Survey.
- Ensure an official letter of commitment to enlist their city as an AfriFOODlinks Network City is signed by the respective authority in their city.
- Actively share insights from the city by ensuring the focal point or another city official participates in at least one digital engagement per year as a presenter or discussant.

Benefits of becoming a Network City:

The following section lists the key benefits which network cities will receive from committing to becoming a network city:

- Being part of a network of cities committed to Food System Transformation.
- Being profiled on the AfriFOODlinks website. This will include a food systems profile of the city showcased on the AfriFOODlinks website. It entails profiling and elevating the innovative ideas and solutions emerging from within Network Cities to a committed network of city officials within the AfriFOODlinks network and beyond.
- Sharing experiences and learning from the experiences of other cities in the consortium:
 - On global platforms, this includes identifying opportunities for Network Cities to share experiences and identifying opportunities to highlight network cities on ICLEI Africa and MUFPP platforms (*In alignment with deliverable 5.2 EU-AU Exchange Action Plan on Food Systems and deliverable 6.7 AfriFOODlinks Peer-Peer Strategy*).
 - This includes South-South and North-South learning and sharing opportunities.
- Access to opportunities shared by the consortium regarding new funding streams, building partnerships with other cities, and collaborating on position statements, policy briefs, or calls to action. These include messaging and engagement with various regional and global platforms such as the African Union, ECOWAS, COMESA, SADC, etc.
- Network Cities will receive invitations to ongoing global events in the Food Systems, such as COPs, Africities, and the UN Food Systems Summit, through AfriFOODlinks communications platforms and direct invitations, where applicable.
- Network Cities will also be preferentially considered for future Food Systems funding calls based on eligibility, alignment, experience, strategic needs and connections, and availability to participate.

- Invitations to contribute to AfriFOODlinks outputs and position statements on transforming food systems. This will include any communications and positions presented to, and on, platforms such as COPs, The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, The RISE Africa Action Festival, Regional Communities (including COMESA, ECOWAS, SADC etc).
- Invitations to attend and participate in Network City Events.

Commitments

In order to join the network, cities have to commit to:

- Signing the letter of commitment
- Appointing a main one focal points within the city
- Completing the [City Food System Survey](#) which will be used to create a city profile (see Annex 3). These network city profiles will be shared on the AfriFOODlinks website to promote visibility and awareness of efforts to transform food systems across the Network .
- Actively sharing insights from the city by ensuring the focal point or other city official participates in at least one digital engagement per year as a presenter panellist or discussant.

Webinars

The AfriFOODlinks Peer-to-Peer strategy (D6.7), outlines an engagement approach for the AfriFOODlinks project, to be facilitated through a range of Virtual Workshops and Webinars (D6.9) aimed at facilitating virtual knowledge exchange.

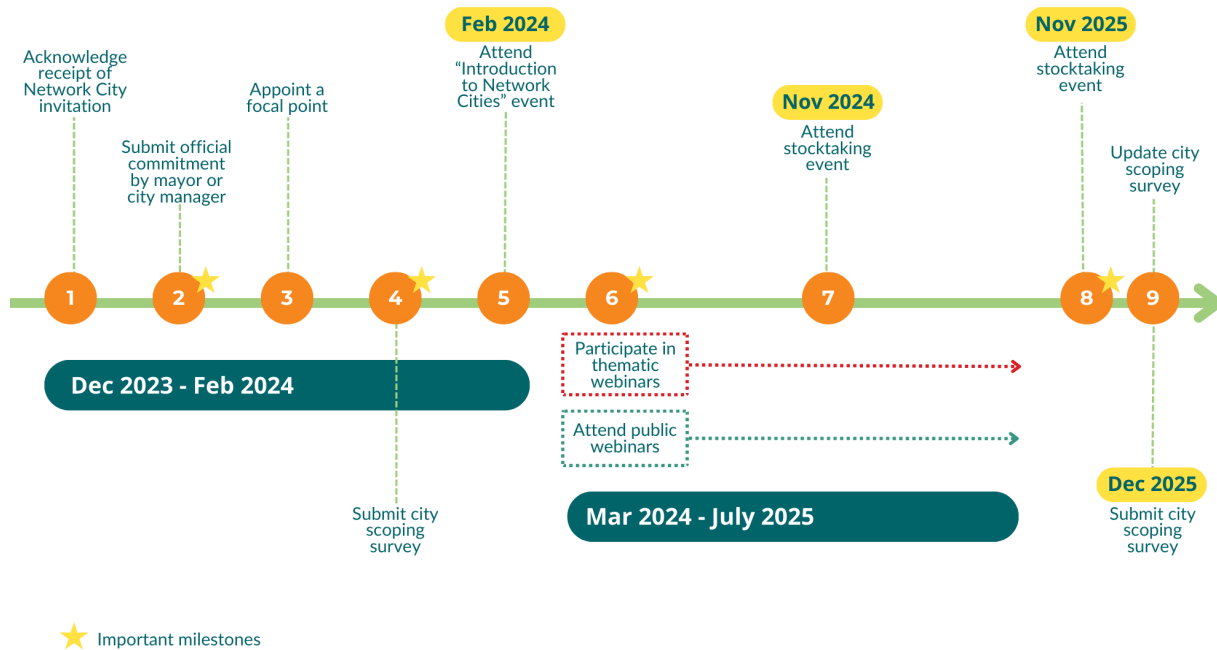
Section *D6.9: Virtual Webinars and Workshops* of the AfriFOODlinks Peer-Peer Strategy states that a minimum of 3 Network City webinars (D6.9.6 - 6.9.8) will be hosted, during which Network Cities will be invited to actively participate and network with peers. As detailed in the Peer-Peer Strategy, these webinars will be an opportunity for AfriFOODlinks Hub and Sharing Cities to showcase experiences and learnings with a wider audience. The content of these webinars will be guided by the challenges and actions identified by cities in the City Food System Survey results from Network Cities. Through the development of this strategy it is evident that additional engagements will be useful to facilitate meaningful Network City engagement. As such, 3 types of engagements are proposed. These include an introduction to network cities, a series of thematic webinars, and stocktaking events. Each are explained below:

- **Network Cities Introduction:** The first webinar aims to introduce the Network Cities community, with the objective of presenting the community of Network Cities to a wider audience of interested food systems practitioners, encouraging further cities to commit to becoming Network Cities, sharing the purpose of the Network Cities, and providing an outline of upcoming engagements.
- **Thematic webinars:** Drawing on the insights shared in [City Food System Surveys](#), a series of thematic webinars will be hosted over the course of the project with the objective of facilitating networking across Network Cities, encouraging learning and sharing from different contexts, and exploring solutions and new ideas in workshop-style webinars. These sessions aim to be smaller and targeted at Network Cities who identify similar challenges and experiences.
- **Stocktaking Events:** Stocktaking events offer an opportunity for collective reflection and networking amongst Network Cities. Unlike thematic webinars, stocktaking events aim to bring together the entire cohort of Network Cities to engage and share experiences observed across the majority of cities and regions. Two stocktaking events are planned after annual consortium meetings, creating the opportunity to incorporate AfriFOODlinks project updates.

Further opportunities to engage will be actively shared with Network Cities via email and on AfriFOODlinks platforms. The AfriFOODlinks Peer-Peer Strategy outlines twelve public webinars and online workshops. The public engagements will be leveraged as a key opportunity to further engage Network Cities.

Network Cities Journey

The diagram below charts the milestones which guide Network Cities' engagement over the course of the AfriFOODlinks project. It is expected that this journey diagram will be updated based on updates to scheduled activities.



Express your Interest to become an AfriFOODlinks Network City

Your city can become an AfriFOODlinks Network City by:

- (1) Sending an email expressing your interest to Jokudu Guya (jokudu.guya@iclei.org) with the subject line AfriFOODlinks Network Cities. This request will be followed up with a formal invitation and supporting information.
- (2) Fill in the following [survey](#) providing information about your city's food system.