FOUNDATIONS AND SCOPE REPORT

May 2021

Prepared by

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Deliverable: Agreed plan and methodologies for the project; identification of participants for surveying and emerging list of registrants for workshops.

This is a summary document and is supported by meeting notes, recordings, surveys to establish foundations and a workshop with the governing / steering group to confirm alignment of the process and evaluation.

Resilient Local Food Systems Project – Theories, Methods and Approach

Our approach synthesizes Collective Impact, Co-design, Systemic Intervention, Critical Systems Heuristics, Resilience-Based Planning and Strength-Based Community Capacity Development Approaches including Appreciative Inquiry and Asset-Based Community Development.

An important part of Collective Impact means taking a multi-actor place-based approach, and allow the framing of the project and its process to be determined by the values, priorities and preferences of the relevant stakeholders in the local context. This has framed all that follows.

We adopted a co-design process from the beginning and the project methodology has itself evolved accordingly, drawing on the theoretical and methodological frameworks listed in the first paragraph.

Systemic Intervention means that we have a transparent process of boundary critique and that we deliberately apply theoretical and methodological pluralism in our approach to triangulate our understanding systemically. Hence, the synthesis of Collective Impact, Co-design, Critical Systems Heuristics, Systemic Intervention, Resilience-Based Planning and Strength-Based Community Capacity Development Approaches including Appreciative Inquiry and Asset-Based Community Development.

Critical Systems Heuristics was adapted to food systems and applied up front in the project. This allowed the understanding of the system boundaries adopted by the project to be transparently negotiated by everyone involved. This included the understanding of constitutes "local" food systems and their environments, key drivers of change in local food systems, what is and isn't within scope, the values shaping the project, desirable outcomes, who the project serves and in what ways. Within systems thinking literature and practice this process is known as boundary critique.

Strength-based Community Capacity Development Approaches seek to identify and build on what exists locally. Therefore, after having negotiated the system boundaries for the project the next phase was to collect data and work on creating an inventory of what exists. Data is currently being collected by each council and collated by the consulting team. This will be fed into the workshop process during which system maps of what exists will also be created.

Resilience-based Planning seeks to steward systems towards locally-negotiated desirable future outcomes, and the development of a shared desirable vision of the future is an important step, following on from the scoping phase. The development of a shared vision is also an early phase in Collective Impact and Appreciative Inquiry. Accordingly, it is the first participatory activity in the workshop process.

Donella Meadows (Meadows 2014) explains why visioning is crucial for transformative action:

Vision is the most vital step in the policy process. If we don't know where we want to go, it makes little difference that we make great progress. Yet vision is not only missing almost entirely from policy discussions; it is missing from our whole culture. We talk about our fears, frustrations, and doubts endlessly, but we talk only rarely and with embarrassment about our dreams. Environmentalists have been especially ineffective in creating any shared vision of the world they are working toward — a sustainable world in which people live within nature in a way that meets human needs while not degrading natural systems. Hardly anyone can imagine that world, especially not as a world they'd actively like to live in. The process of building a responsible vision of a sustainable

world is not a rational one. It comes from values, not logic. Envisioning is a skill that can be developed, like any other human skill.

This visioning exercise used in our workshops has two parts – a "speed-date" brainstorm and a clustering of vision elements. Where there is time and resource a rich picture may be created to further enrich the vision.

Also consistent with Resilience-Based Planning and Appreciative Inquiry, a back-casting approach is used to co-design with all participants, a coherent set of steps to achieve the vision. Back-casting involves working backwards, step by step, from this future vision to the present, identifying key actions along the way. Back-casting is a systematic process for working backwards from a desirable future to identify the steps required that connect the future to the present. At each step we ask the question "if we want to attain [current step] what would we need to do/have in place for that to be possible?" This question is over and over again asked until the present situation is reached. These steps can then be implemented from where they are now successively to achieve their desired future.

People think like this all the time, for example, "if I want to be at work by 9am, I will need to catch the bus at 8:30, which means I will need to leave the house at 8am, which means I will need to finish breakfast and be packed by 8am, which means I need to be out of the shower by 7:30am" and so forth. We are all familiar with the process of stepping backwards from a desired outcome to work out what would need to happen in a step-by-step fashion. It is useful for the facilitators to give an example like this to introduce the exercise.

Back-casting is a method that focuses on the agency of people to overcome adversity and achieve their desired future, and the steps required to attain those conditions rather than taking steps that are merely a continuation of the current condition as in the case of forecasted planning. Working from the present, people are often blinded by their present difficulties and limitations. Working backwards from the future produces a huge spectrum of options people had not previously thought about.

In the local process, this is done in the following way: The vision is divided into multiple themes, and everyone votes on which themes they want to take forward for detailed elucidation and back-casting.

The elements of the theme can be further elucidated to make back-casting clearer. The group works backward from their vision elements/goals, to determine what the immediate previous step of actions and activities would look like to achieve the vision, and then the step immediately before that, and so on, until the present is reached. When participants make suggestions, they write these down and add them to the time line. No concrete dates are set yet, since the actions themselves may determine whether the time line has to be shorter or longer.

The facilitation style for this process is very active and requires the facilitator to fully understand how back-casting works so they can actively helping participants to think about options and steps. Supporting organisations are encouraged to assist the community to identify appropriate steps. The facilitator is responsible for making sure the group does not get blocked on an item such as not having enough money for something. In this case the facilitator should encourage participants to think about all of the ways they could possibly obtain the required money, not matter how many steps it takes. There is always a way, and no matter where you are, it is always possible to take a step. This is the attitude that must be used when any obstacle is encountered, we simply think through all of the ways that obstacle could possibly be overcome and never let the group get stuck.

Now that we have gotten back to the present together, the final stage in the workshop is participatory system mapping of the present. This allows us to develop a shared systemic understanding of the

current state of the food system and its main causal dynamics. From a strength-based perspective it allows us to capture what currently exists. From a Systemic Intervention perspective it allows us to better understand the entry points for systemic change and how the different interventions we have proposed ripple through the system.

The system mapping also provides the basis for system dynamics modelling. We have formed a partnership with the University of Bergen to undertake system dynamics modelling on our behalf.

We conduct these visioning, back-casting and system mapping workshops in 4 councils: Onkaparinga, Marion, Mount Barker, Alexandrina.

The schedule for the workshops is:

Onkaparinga	July
Marion	August
Mount Barker	September
Alexandrina	October

The workshops are scheduled to allow other councils to attend each other's workshops where time allows, as part of a capacity development approach.

The consulting team is working with each Council to examine their contact lists and networks to assist them where necessary to reach out to "not the usual suspects". A communications workshop is also planned for the steering group to assist them with messaging, engagement techniques to support their invitations and support in-house commitment and build the foundations internally beyond the project.

All preliminary work is fed into the workshops. For each council the workshop provides a vision, a set of coherent actions for achieving the vision, and system maps of the current food system.

By examining the results across 4 quite different council areas, we can draw out any generalizable guidelines for councils wanting to build local food system literacy and food system resilience.

Here is a sample workshop agenda prepared in consultation with Onkaparinga. Each workshop will be iterative and this is part of the process embedded into the overall project.

09:30am – 10:00am	Welcomes and introduction
10:00am – 10:40am	Visioning
10:40am – 11:00am	Ranking
11:00am – 11:15am	Tea Break (15 mins)
11:15am – 11:55am	Back-casting
11:55am – 12:15am	Roles and responsibilities
12:15pm - 12:35pm	Report back
12:35pm – 13:10pm	Lunch (45 mins)
13:10pm – 14:10pm	System mapping
14:10pm – 14:40pm	Report back and comments
14:40pm – 15:00pm	Next steps and close

Project Evaluation Framework

Key project deliverables	Improved stakeholder food literacy / (*questionnaire as a baseline data*) Local food system maps for 2-3 locations Development of vision and principles for each mapped area Development of coherent actions & priorities Development of guides and tools for local governments

Key project values (critical for guiding project & evaluating success of project)	**Key themes from the synthesis of the project questionnaire:** Inclusive / participatory / community empowerment Equitable / dignity Transparent / accountable

Overarching question for evaluation	What is the fundamental purpose of the evaluation?
	
	- **The evaluation is about both what the project has achieved** (i.e. maps, visions, priorities, tools, etc) **and the process itself** (strengths, weaknesses, etc for future projects).
	- **As part of the project and the evaluation, each council is to individually think about:**
	    o What do you want out of the project? As an individual professional? For your organisation?
	    o What is the most important thing to achieve? For you personally? For your organisation?

			o What does success look like to the stakeholders? For the individual participants – and for the organisations?

Agreed elements of evaluation

Outcome	Time Frame	Advised KPI	Elements workshopped	Evaluation of the process	Evaluation of outcome	Data Collection
Increased food systems literacy	Apr 2021 - Oct 2021	# of local government stakeholders engaged # of food system actors/stakeholders engaged # stakeholders reporting an increase in their knowledge of food systems	Levels of stakeholders: ● Governance Group ● 4 council groups – employees & councillors ● Local food system actors * ● General public* The inclusion of local food system actors and general public will be an iterative process and may differ between councils. A key element **is the quality of stakeholders engaged** – do we have the right (not the most)	How did food systems literacy increase? What were the critical success factors that enabled food systems literacy to increase? What are the barriers and obstacles to increasing food systems literacy? How can they / how were they addressed?	How many people experienced an improvement in food systems literacy and to what extent?	a) Collect data throughout (i.e. after each workshop/meeting) to understand the strengths of the process in developing food system literacy. b) Contributing to 'lessons captured' / 'learning harvest' – especially around internal engagement / conversations internally

			people in the room? This assessment should come back to the agreed values – was it equitable and participatory (i.e. was there a diverse range of participants that could represent the diversity of the local foo system. Second aspect is to capture **the extent of increase** in food systems literacy.			c) Log of participants involved in the projects. For key participants (i.e. those involved in the mapping workshop) use baseline questionnaire and similar questionnaire (*need to determine at which point). Adopt existing models / definitions from the literature to assess food systems literacy.
Local food system **visions and principles developed**	May 2021 – Oct 2021	# of stakeholders engaged in creating the vision and principles # stakeholders using their vision to build the capacity of their organisations	Agreement from steering group of the key values that underpin the project.	This links back to the values & key principles shaping the process. Did the process align with the values? For example, if inclusion and diversity is important, we would measure the diversity of	Development and agreement on shared vision and principles. Are stakeholders happy with the output?	a) Attendance at meetings and or input into vision. b) Questionnaire of participants' experience. Potential 15 min follow-up interview of some participants. Include

		and networks to act coherently.		voices/input into the plan. This might also include feedback from the participants about their experience in the process and how they feel about what was achieved.		questions that cover: • the key values – participatory, equitable & transparent and their presence in the process • participant satisfaction with outcome. • Is there alignment between council and community vision?
Coherent collective actions and priorities identified and outlined	June 2021 - Feb 2022	End of project report # of stakeholders intending to undertake action	Key elements: • It is important to get coherence within each Council and their plans • The extent of long-term coherence across councils (e.g. through council health plans) • Each council develops a shared vision supported by concrete goals and sequential actions.	Who was involved in development? An important step for implementation is buy-in from other departments. Are there critical factors to help socialise food system priorities in council - i.e. each council developing their own Food Systems Working Group to build	Assessment of priorities developed. Do these meet the steering group's definition of coherence? Do they align with vision?	a) Review of minutes from meetings, concerns raised, what was discussed, etc b) Contributing to 'lessons captured' / 'learning harvest' – especially around internal engagement / conversations internally – identify learnings by council. c) Self-assessment of the priorities &

				understanding and support for a vision.		actions and council plans to assess coherence. This can be done as an exercise within each council to identify areas of coherence and incoherence, as new actions and plans are developed d) Case study highlighting what is agreed by the group to be a good example of coherent actions and priorities
Local governments advocating and investing in local food systems	October 2021 - April 2022	# stakeholders influencing the system # of councils, stakeholders and communities using and embedding the maps, guides and tools in their work.		Are the tools practical, usable and relevant to the staff with access? How many stakeholders are using the tools? Are the tools being used to communicate with leadership?	Assessment of actions or key indicators of investments? i.e. working groups, funded staff member allocated to work, commitment to develop a strategy, motions passes etc.	a) Survey of staff members with access to the tools. b) Compilation of actions taken by council. Assessment of minutes, etc. c) Collect data throughout (i.e. after each workshop/meeting) to understand the

		Increase in investment in local food systems # of stakeholders using and embedding the maps, guides and tools in their work.				strengths of the tools and examples of how they are used.
New local governments using the project approach themselves	October 2021 - April 2022	# of NEW local governments stakeholders planning to undertake the approach in their local areas		Actions taken to involve other local government stakeholders.	Assessment of actions taken from other councils.	a) Compilation of actions taken by project stakeholders to involve other stakeholders. b) Case study – new councils taking action.
Local governments embedding food systems policy and planning	October 2021 - April 2022	# of stakeholders using and embedding the maps, guides and tools in their work.			Number of changes in council's policy or planning in respect to food systems.	a) Compilation of council policy & planning changes b) Each Council to document **now** what they really want to achieve (i.e. what does success look like?); and

					c) Each Council to document what they have achieved **at the end of the project;** and
					d) Each Council to document the **key lessons learned**

COMMENTS FROM EVALUATION WORKSHOP, 27TH APRIL 2021

General high-level comments / feedback: (CS) – like the questions that we're thinking through and the proposed elements; thought it was great (DC); comfortable with the framework as it stands (GS); framework very clear and happy with it (FT); didn't see anything that made me feel we're on different pages, reflects what the Steering Group want to get out of it (KM)

Project deliverables very clear (FT) – you can see how clear and concise it is

Values – good synthesis of how it's come together (CS) – nothing missing; captured well (LE); liked the values (DC) – question about citizen-led (GS) – maybe that is an ideal? Citizen-led is a step above 'participatory' – and not reflecting the current reality – but it could be an outcome – i.e. build capacity so that groups can pick up the baton and drive individual projects / initiatives (GS)

Interested to look at both the outcome and the process (CS) – the process is important, and that can get lost in the traditional evaluation – how do we captured the process- be good to do this – reflective evaluation would be good (CS)

Both outcomes and process are very important (LE)

Increasing food systems literacy important (MW – LE)

Goals – be good to talk to the Directors about what they want – managers to look at the outcomes and then look at resourcing – need to take it to the coordinator; agreed with this (DC) – to find out what their targets and vision is regarding the future

End game is to change, but change is slow and hard – awareness is the first step (GS) – if 3 or 4 staff and an elected member have greater awareness of food systems then that's a win and anything else is a bonus (GS) – reflects where I'm at with the internal engagement – need to broaden that (GS)

Short-term goals around food literacy; longer-term around strategy (FT)

Re Council planning and policy – don't want to make the project look like it's failing if Council don't implement all the recommendations – that's not a reflection on the project but on individual Councils (LE); DC agreed with this –actions will be led by the results, will try to embed any tools – but if we don't take it up it doesn't mean the project will be a failure

Coherence – funding important – needs to be embedded across all SA councils (LE)

What does success look like? Bottom-up pressure on existing systems that we say are unsustainable and inequitable that we'd like to see change, and promote what we'd want to see more of (GS)

KM – little bit torn between the priority between the Steering Group and participating Council – SG energies shd be put into the process and its strengths and weaknesses, and create a process that other Councils can use and has been tested; but from the Council point of view I want a good quality product from the project that we can use moving forward – Alexandrina sits in both spots – answer cd be that participating Councils recognise that further work needs to be done to fill in gaps or respond to weaknesses in the project as we've delivered it in the first iteration

Need for clarity around stakeholders – internal / external