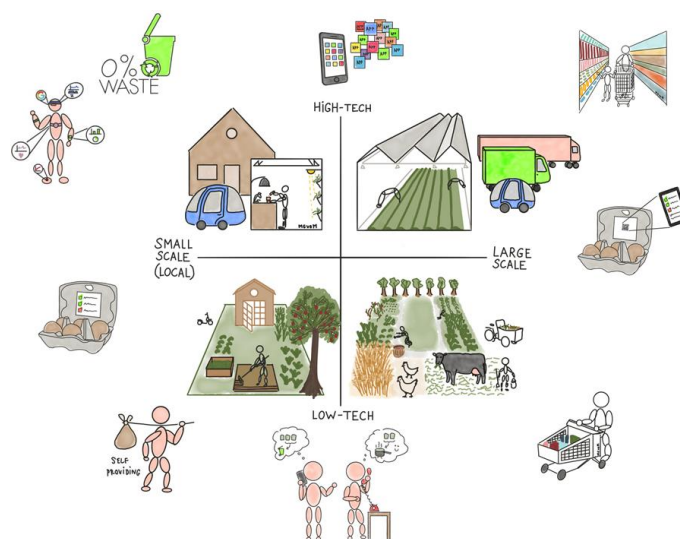**SHORT EXERCISE**

Visioning on future-proof food systems

In a nutshell

The aim of the short exercise is to encourage you to think about your desired future-proof food system.

What for?

- To explore and understand the food system.

How long?

60-90 minutes

For whom?

Policy Makers, Farmers, Students, Businesses, Researchers, Funders, NGOs, Educators

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Something to share?

Leave us a comment about this tool on the platform. You can also contact fit4food2030.beta@vu.nl .

This tool was developed as part of FIT4FOOD2030 project. See this tool and others on the FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub.

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How to cite?

EXERCISE on future-proof food systems.
60 - 90 minutes

A. Example exercise #1 on future-proof systems.

1. **Facilitator introduces the exercise with a (meditative) story (5 minutes)**
   To spark participants' imagination and thinking about future-proof food systems, start with a (meditative) story. You can try, to spark their imagination with the future food pillars including the concepts of *Sustainable, Resilient, Responsible, Diverse, Competitive and Inclusive (*Appendix A*).* Probably all stakeholders will find these concepts important, although to different extents. Therefore, it is particularly interesting to investigate the **how** of the vision; how do participants think we can reach such a future-proof food system?

   ''Please close your eyes. Imagine it is the year … [chose your own year, for example ten years from now]. It is a beautiful day. You sit down with some friends and you would like to eat something that is healthy and sustainable. What kind of food is it? What does it look like? Where does it come from? How was your meal produced? Where did you buy it? Who was / were connected to the production and distribution of your food? What role did you play?''

2. **Ask participants to reflect on the questions on a paper (5 minutes)**
   Hand out papers (e.g. A6 format) and ask participants to draw what they imagined and add keywords where necessary. Emphasize that they can use stick figures or other low threshold techniques in their drawing. Everything is fine (and possible).

3. **Ask participants to divide in subgroups (2 minutes)**

4. **Give a brief introduction and ask participants to discuss their drawings in the subgroup (10 minutes)**
   To incite the group discussions, explain that there are different visions/discourses/perspectives on **how** we can realize a food system that is sustainable and healthy. For instance, mention that there are perspectives in which technology plays the main role, perspectives in which there is a mere focus on an increase of production, perspectives in which there is more focus on local production and alternative food networks, etc.). You can show the matrix of the Appendix B on the screen, or a similar kind of matrix or drawings based on different dimensions.

   Alternatively: use the matrix (with the high-tech/low tech large-scale/small-scale, or any other dimensions) as part of your exercise, by asking participants within the subgroups to place their drawings in the matrix to spark the discussion.

5. **Ask participants to write down characteristics of their vision on post-its (5 minutes)**
   Ask participants to write down at least five characteristics based on (1) their own vision of the future (healthy and sustainable) food system and (2), if relevant, the discussion they had in subgroups.

6. **Ask subgroups to cluster their characteristics (10 minutes)**
   One of the participants in each subgroup starts with sharing one of his/her characteristics. Explore whether people have the same characteristics. Cluster them as a group together on a flipchart. Put a circle around the group of post-its and together decide on a name for that cluster and write it next to the circle. Then go to a next person to mention one of his/her characteristics. Again, cluster with others

that are similar. Keep going until all post-it's are gathered and cluster names are written down (cluster-naming can also happen after all post-it's have been placed in groups, as the wrap-up of this exercise). Ask them to write these cluster names down on new post-its.

7. **Plenary: gather everyone's attention and ask subgroups to reflect on what they discussed (15 minutes)**
   The aim of this step is to 'cluster the clusters' and to prompt the plenary reflection in step 8 of this exercise.

   Start with asking one of the subgroups to mention and explain one of their clusters. Place the post-it with cluster-name on a flipchart/white board. Ask the subgroup to briefly mention which characteristics are within this cluster. Explore if there are different or conflicting characteristics within the cluster. Ask other groups to reflect on the cluster as well as if they do have similar clusters. Group similar post-it's with cluster names together. Go on with this process until all clusters are mentioned and placed on the flipchart/whiteboard. Are there any other characteristics that are important to mention, but do not fit within one of the clusters?

8. **Plenary: take the last ten minutes to plenary reflect on the outcomes of the exercise (15 minutes)**
   One could choose to find out to what extent there is a shared vision for a future-proof food system among participants (i.e. clusters characteristics that all people agree on) and what the main differences are. However, another option is to choose that this exercise is meant to explore the variation in perspectives, rather than to build consensus. Different participants will have different perspectives; it is this diversity that is actually interesting. Whichever choice on the aim is made (vision-consensus or vision-diversity), try to be transparent about it to the participants in this last plenary step.

   Take three coloured markers (put a legend on the flipchart, e.g. red = shared, green = less important, blue = disagreement). Start with the shared clusters (i.e. those that have many post-its) and check whether indeed this would be a characteristic of a shared vision according to participants. Why? Why not? Mark the shared clusters with red. Then move to the smaller groups and ask whether they are smaller because they are less important, or because people don't agree on them? Ask for explanation (ask multiple people to remark) and mark with green or blue, until all is covered.

B. Example exercise #2 on future-proof systems.

This exercise is a variation on the exercise above.

<u>In advance:</u> Take a range of <u>photographs/pictures depicting elements of the food system and its challenges and opportunities.</u> Alternatively, ask people to bring photographs / pictures of food system elements, challenges and opportunities to a meeting (preferred picture size: ± 4 pictures on an A4).

1. **Facilitator introduces the exercise (5 minutes)**
The exercise below allows people to intuitively analyse the food system, its challenges and its opportunities, and the required transformation. It will also spark their own ideas about how a future-proof food-system looks like and how we can contribute to the transition towards a future-proof food-system.

2. **Ask participants to cluster the photos/pictures (10 minutes)**

3. **Ask the following questions to participants (10 minutes)**
- What are the relations between the different elements?
- Is anything missing or underrepresented?
- Where (in) do you see the current food system 'dying'? Use the pictures/photos of challenges in food systems to collectively depict the answer.
- Where (in) do you see 'new seeds' being planted, which (would) result in a rebirth of the food system?

🔍 TIPS & TRICKS

Note: The visioning is not necessarily about 'positioning pictures on a table and clustering them', but more about the conversation and exchange of ideas that arise while doing the exercise. So frequently ask one another WHY particular pictures are positioned in a particular spot, and what the picture means to everybody. Ask a rapporteur to take notes of this exercise to report on the main thoughts that are being shared.
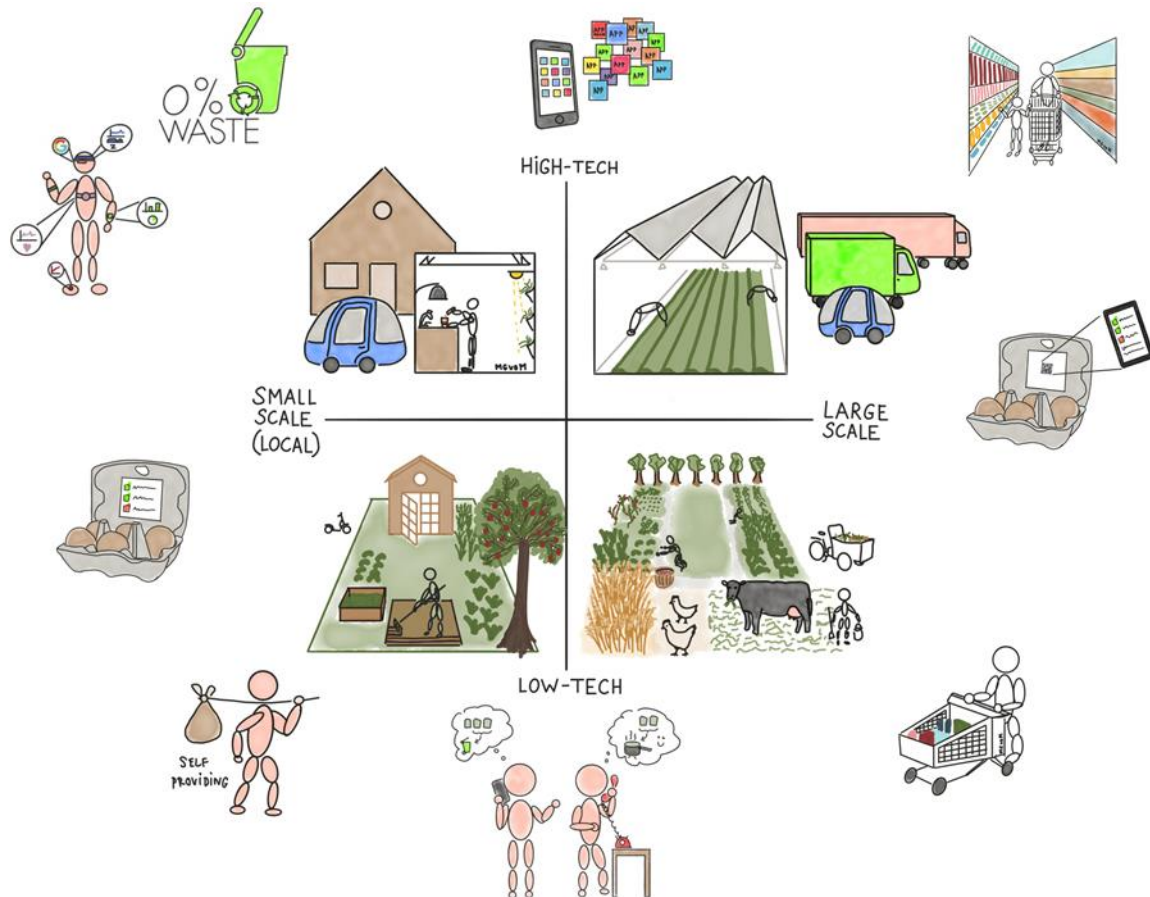

Use the pictures/photos of challenges in food systems to collectively depict the answer.

4. **Once done, go on with steps 5 – 9 of the exercise described above.**

APPENDIX A: FUTURE FOOD PILLARS

Characteristic	Explanation
Sustainable	With respect to natural resource scarcity and in respect of planetary boundaries.
Resilient	With respect to adapting to climate and global change, including extreme events and migration.
Responsible	With respect to being ethical, transparent and accountable.
Diverse	With respect to being open to a wide range of technologies, practices, approaches, cultures and business models.
Competitive	With respect to providing jobs and growth.
Inclusive	With respect to engaging all food system actors, including civil society, fighting food poverty, and providing healthy food for all.

APPENDIX B: MATRIX ABOUT POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS FOR A FUTURE PROOF SYSTEM (FOR VISIONING EXCERCISES) [7].

Coordinated by:

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