**National pathway of Latvia on Food Systems**

Food systems are a complex covering different areas, inter alia agriculture, fisheries, human, animal and plant health, retail, the environment, education, research, and trade. In Latvia many measures are already being taken to improve food systems: investing in innovative technologies, providing support for environmentally friendly food production, promotion of healthy food, waste reduction measures, and raising environmental requirements.

An unprecedented degree of cooperation, information exchange and understanding between all stakeholders will be needed for further transformation.

Latvia organized its first [National Dialogue in 2021](https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/34605/) about the [Resilient rural areas for the food and future generations](http://www.laukutikls.lv/nozares/lauku-telpa-uznemejdarbiba/raksti/notika-latvija-pirmais-partikas-sistemu-dialogs), which was opened by H.E. Egils Levits, President of the Republic of Latvia.

Food system transformation constitutes a part of the [overall system for the strategic planning of the national development](https://pkc.gov.lv/index.php/en/national-development-planning), in particular [Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030](https://pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/LIAS_2030_parluks_en_0.pdf) and the [National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027](https://pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027__ENG.pdf).

One of the cornerstones of good food system’s policy is gathering of data, evidence and systematic analyses. This is based on ongoing monitoring and evaluation systems established and research activities run and funded primarily by the [Ministry of Agriculture](https://www.zm.gov.lv/en/zemkopibas-ministrija/#jump), [Ministry of Health](https://www.vm.gov.lv/lv/sabiedribas-veseliba), [Ministry of Environment protection and regional development](https://www.varam.gov.lv/en), [Ministry of Economy](https://www.em.gov.lv/en), [Ministry of Education and Science](https://www.izm.gov.lv/en), [Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies](https://www.llu.lv/), [Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics](https://www.arei.lv/lv/lauku-attistibas-novertesanas-dala), and [Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment “[BIOR](https://bior.lv/en/about-institute-bior/about-us)”](https://bior.lv/en/about-institute-bior/about-us).

Following are the main objectives of the Latvian Food system transformation:

1. safe, high quality and healthy locally produced food accessible to all consumers
2. increase the value added, inter alia by cooperation and production of competitive products for local and export markets
3. increase the incomes of farmers to the average level of income in economy
4. developed rural areas with enhanced economic activities with the provision of infrastructure and maintaining the rural population
5. strengthening economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable fishing activities, inter alia adjustment of fishing capacity to fishing opportunities
6. knowledge based and smart entrepreneurship, use of innovation and research along the whole food system
7. every producer along the food chain efficiently exploits the resources and invests in preservation of the biological diversity, protection, and renovation of ecosystem, combatting and mitigating the climate change.

These objectives are defined in number of national policies, in particular:

* [Research and Innovation strategy for smart specialization](https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/viedas-specializacijas-strategija) continues to define knowledge intensive bioeconomy as one of five areas of priority. Food system is the major cornerstone of the Latvian bioeconomy sector
* [Bioeconomy strategy](https://www.zm.gov.lv/public/files/CMS_Static_Page_Doc/00/00/01/46/58/E2758-LatvianBioeconomyStrategy2030.pdf) 2030 defines maintenance of employment, growth of value added, and export as fundamental sustainable objectives
* [Common Agriculture policy Strategic plan of Latvia](https://tapportals.mk.gov.lv/legal_acts/d3877a46-7f24-46c9-a12b-e4d3b1263c9e), including [Programme for school fruits and milk](http://piensaugliskolai.lv/lv/) which is designed to provide healthy fresh fruits, vegetables, and milk products to schools for pre-school and school aged children
* [European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund – Programme for Latvia](https://www.zm.gov.lv/zivsaimnieciba/statiskas-lapas/ricibas-programma-zivsaimniecibas-attistibai-2021-2027-gadam?id=23594#jump)
* [Public health strategy](https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/node/25742). Two new directions are foreseen in this strategy: to evaluate the possibility to introduce the front-of-pack health labelling on food products and to enhance the awareness of consumers about the high quality healthy locally produced food, inter alia to increase its share in local public procurement
* In 2022 it is envisaged to update [Guidelines for healthy diets for different groups of society](https://www.vm.gov.lv/lv/veseligs-uzturs) in relation to elderly people (over 65), home-made foods and to develop nutrition guidelines for breast feeding woman. Government [regulations on dietary norms](https://likumi.lv/ta/id/245300-noteikumi-par-uztura-normam-izglitibas-iestazu-izglitojamiem-socialas-aprupes-un-socialas-rehabilitacijas-instituciju) in schools, social and health establishments stipulate the positive and negative list of products and ingredients
* [Action plan](https://likumi.lv/ta/id/312146-par-latvijas-ricibas-planu-augu-aizsardzibas-lidzeklu-ilgtspejigai-izmantosanai) for sustainable use of plant protection products
* One Health strategy is defined by [National Action Plan on Anti-microbial Resistance](https://likumi.lv/ta/id/308758-par-antimikrobialas-rezistences-ierobezosanas-un-piesardzigas-antibiotiku-lietosanas-planu-viena-veseliba-2019-2020-gadam) and is currently being revised
* [Latvian National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change until 2030](http://tap.mk.gov.lv/mk/tap/?pid=40467308) and [Latvia's National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030](https://www.em.gov.lv/en/national-energy-and-climate-plan-2021-2030) address food production as one of the sources of emissions and adaptations necessary as well as part of a solution to contribute to the carbon capture.

Following other activities support the implementation of the national pathway:

* [System of green public procurement](https://www.iub.gov.lv/lv/zalais-publiskais-iepirkums?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F) which also includes food and catering as a major product and services group
* [Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre](http://llkc.lv/lv/latvian-rural-advisory-and-training-centre) serves as platform for all the actors of the food system to receive the advisory services in many domains and serves as a platform for the [innovation partnerships](http://www.laukutikls.lv/nozares/lauku-telpa/inovacijas/eiropas-inovaciju-partneriba) and national [networks for rural development and fisheries](http://www.laukutikls.lv/)
* Vocational education curricula are developed and monitored together with food system industries via [Council of sectoral expertise in Food and Agriculture](http://www.losp.lv/node/4770) to continuously adjust the curricula to the market demand and new challenges. In addition, some of the vocational schools are being reorganised and put under the Latvia University of Life Sciences to establish closer link between these educational establishments, higher education, research, and the food system operators
* [Latvian Federation of Food Companies](https://www.lpuf.lv/en/about-lffc) continues to enhance locally produced and processed food by administering national food quality scheme: [Green and Bordeaux Spoon labels](http://karotite.lv/sakums).
* [Latvian Rural Advisory and Training centre](http://llkc.lv/lv/latvian-rural-advisory-and-training-centre)’s run [network of producers of agriculture and food products novadagarsa.lv](https://www.novadagarsa.lv/) brings closer small and medium size food producers to the consumers and promotes the short supply chains
* [Latvian food competence centre](https://lpkc.lv/par-projektu) continues to implement Innovation projects on the ground by joint action of the food companies and research. [Latvian national food quality cluster](https://www.ppkk.lv/par-ppkk) enhances the cooperation among food producers
* [Cooperation projects](https://www.lad.gov.lv/lv/atbalsta-veidi/projekti-un-investicijas/atbalsta-pasakumi/16-2-atbalsts-jaunu-produktu-metozu-procesu-un-tehnologiju-izstradei-287) are supported in agriculture and fisheries domain to bring together many different stakeholders and implement the innovation and co-operation projects together with research and advisors
* To minimise the food waste in 2020 Government of Latvia [established the regulation](https://likumi.lv/ta/id/316725-prasibas-partikas-izplatisanai-pec-minimala-deriguma-termina-beigam) on use the products with expired “best before date” for charity
* Several food producers in Latvia have joined the [Memorandum](https://eu-central-1.protection.sophos.com?d=vm.gov.lv&u=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cudm0uZ292Lmx2L2x2L3NhZGFyYmliYXMtbWVtb3JhbmRp&i=NWZjZjllOTZmOTIxY2QwZTA1Mzk1OGMz&t=NUlQUEtKdHdqVmZCdmsvSEFQanNmcmxBZXBIVFM1ajRPN1pxSnV3eW5tOD0=&h=67f8b78ef9794fb3b1bcca7f222b6536) with the Ministry of Health to improve food composition by reducing salt, sugar and saturated fats.

Since the transformation of food systems is continuous it needs constant changes in consumer’s behaviour as well as financial incentives, tax policies, knowledge, extension, research and innovation, infrastructure, and involvement of all the food chain stakeholders.

Latvia will continue to adapt its national policies to make the food systems ever more sustainable and thus contributing to all the Sustainable Development Goals locally and globally.