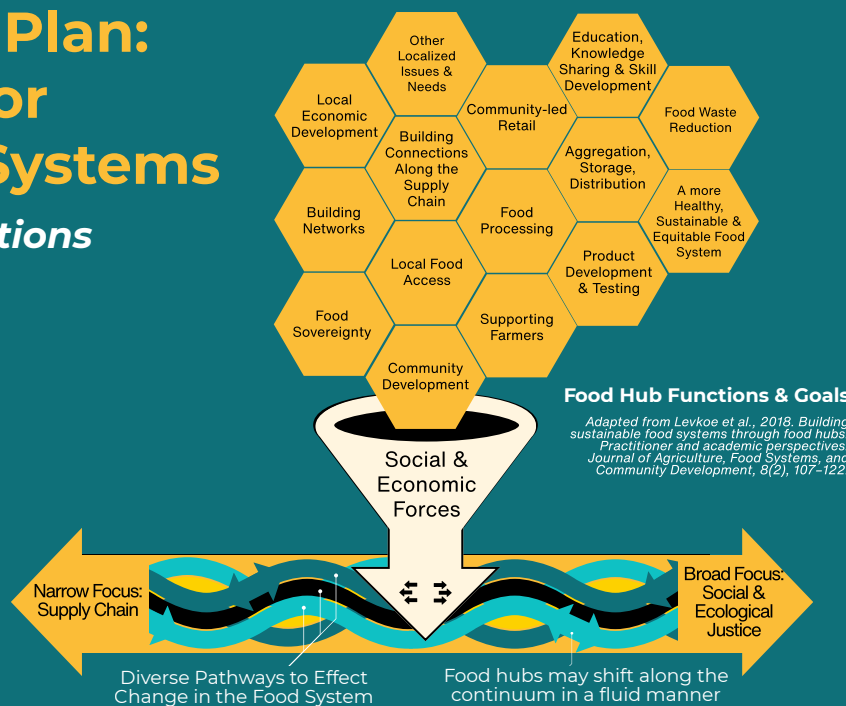


Beyond the Business Plan: Building Food Hubs for Resilient Local Food Systems

From Idea to Day-to-Day Operations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beyond the Business Plan is a resource designed for organizations that are, or want to contribute to a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable local food system. This is not a step-by-step, linear planning guide. Rather, it offers practical insights for planning, implementing, evaluating and sustaining a food hub in a way that is grounded in place and responsive to the needs of local food systems. The guide includes worksheets, case studies, and links to other resources.



OVERVIEW

PLAN

Understanding and actively engaging the people, organizations, and communities that make up your local food ecosystem in order to clarify your vision and model.

IMPLEMENT

Moving from plans into action, and building the systems that let the hub function day to day.

EVALUATE

Helping you understand your work and support decision-making.

SUSTAIN

Building a food hub that can adapt, thrive, and continue creating value over the long term.

KEY INSIGHTS

- **Build from community, not from scratch.** Build on existing efforts, connect people who are already active, and focus on meeting the biggest gaps. Acting as a connector and nurturing relationships is more important than creating flashy infrastructure. Keep your definition of a food hub focused on your community's needs and assets, without being so narrow it limits possibilities.
- **Think regionally and strategically.** Consider your hub's place in the bigger picture. Understanding what's happening in neighbouring regions can help you identify a niche or specialization that adds value, avoids duplication, and strengthens regional food system connections.
- **Strengthen local food systems.** Ensure food is grown, transformed, and sold within the region, by prioritizing supporting value-added production such as small-scale butchery, seasonal preserves, or processing tailored to local produce (including the option of the hub offering value-added processing as a service for producers that aren't able to do it themselves). Support regional distribution and logistics by collaborating with nearby distributors, storage providers, and logistics companies that already operate in the region.
- **Build the case for investment.** Strengthen your hub's long-term stability by showing how it contributes to community priorities—food security, local jobs, and resilience. Early relationships with local government and partners set the stage for ongoing support and investment.
- **Balance financial viability and operational stability.** Financial viability means having reliable, diverse revenue streams; operational stability means having the people, systems, and structures to manage the work effectively. Sustainable hubs intentionally build both.
- **It's okay to slow down and change course.** Timelines, funding requirements, and bureaucratic pressures can be negotiated or adjusted. Don't feel forced to follow systems that don't work for you—take the time needed to build a thoughtful, sustainable hub.



Click [here](#) to access the guide. Click [here](#) to access the project webpage.