C40 GOOD FOOD CITIES ACCELERATOR

How cities are achieving a Planetary Health Diet for all by 2030, with balanced and nutritious food, reflective of their residents

SIGNATORY CITIES

Barcelona, Copenhagen, Guadalajara, Lima, London, Los Angeles, Milan, Montréal, New York City, Oslo, Paris, Quezon City, Seoul, Stockholm, Tokyo, Toronto

COMMITMENTS

1. **Align food procurement to the Planetary Health Diet, ideally sourced from organic agriculture**
2. **Support an overall increase of healthy plant-based food consumption in cities by shifting away from unsustainable, unhealthy diets**
3. **Reduce food loss and waste by 50% from a 2015 baseline**
4. **Work with residents, businesses, public institutions, and other organisations to develop an inclusive and equitable joint food strategy, and incorporate this strategy into the City's Climate Action Plan**

SUMMARY

Action on food systems is vital to achieving global climate goals. By 2050, 80% of all food produced will be consumed in cities, up from 70% currently. In C40 cities, emissions from food consumption range from 8% to 30% depending on the region, and animal-based food represents roughly 70% of those emissions. Research shows that without significant changes to how we produce and consume food, emissions from the sector are expected to rise by 38% by 2050.

The C40 Good Food Cities Accelerator is an ambitious, science-backed effort of cities to tackle the global climate crisis through the lens of our food systems. The **16 signatory cities** are committed to work with residents to achieve a Planetary Health Diet for all by the year 2030, underpinned by concrete and actionable measures designed to transform urban food systems.

In this third reporting period since the launch of the Accelerator in 2019, cities have made significant and exciting strides in areas where they have the most direct control, including food procurement. Cities are using their purchasing power to influence supply chains and promote healthier, more sustainable options within public institutions. Cities including **Paris, Stockholm, Barcelona, Montréal,** and **Copenhagen** are recognising that consumption-based emissions, of which food is a large component, must be addressed head-on through broader climate planning to meet their climate goals.

This year, several major themes have emerged from the collective work of these cities. The first is the importance of investing in education and training for the public and municipal workers. **Copenhagen**, **New York, Milan,** and **Toronto** are upskilling their culinary and kitchen staff in order to transition to more plant-rich diets and reduce waste in their canteens and food service programmes. **Lima, Seoul, Tokyo,** and **London** are using strategic public education campaigns to shift behaviours to increase plant-based eating and reduce household food waste.

Cities are also focusing on data collection to monitor their progress. From piloting an app that helps reduce food waste in schools in **Oslo**, to utilising the World Resources Institute's Coolfood calculator to measure the climate impact of their food purchases, cities are employing digital data collection and analysis to track impact. Creating this feedback loop helps to inform and refine their strategies for implementing their procurement policies or measuring reductions in food waste with greater precision.

Transforming urban food systems cannot be accomplished by cities alone. **Quezon City, Seoul, Oslo,** and **Guadalajara** are forging stronger partnerships among diverse staff within their own governments whose work touches food, collaborating across departments to break down silos. In **Paris**, they are also building bridges with neighbouring municipalities to collaborate on common goals and build sustainable food supply chains.

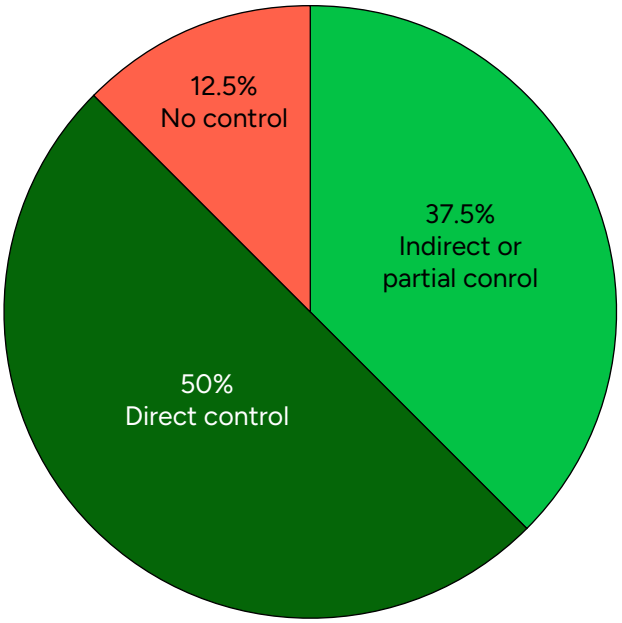
By committing to the C40 Good Food Cities Accelerator, cities are transforming their food systems to facilitate a just climate transition that supports the health and dignity of all people within planetary boundaries.

IMPACT

Aligning food procurement to the Planetary Health Diet

CITY ACTIVITY

Cities' institutional arrangements for meal provision in major public facilities



Half of signatory cities (50%) have direct control over the food served in schools, hospitals, and shelters, enabling them to implement changes to menus, tenders, and staff training more readily. A further 38% of signatory cities report indirect or partial control, meaning they influence food provision agreements with operators or through new directives and plans, rather than directly. These governance structures shape how cities are able to advance alignment of public meals with the Planetary Health Diet and underscore the importance of using every lever available to drive procurement practices that deliver healthier, more sustainable public meals.

69%

of signatory cities are aligning school feeding programmes with the Planetary Health Diet.

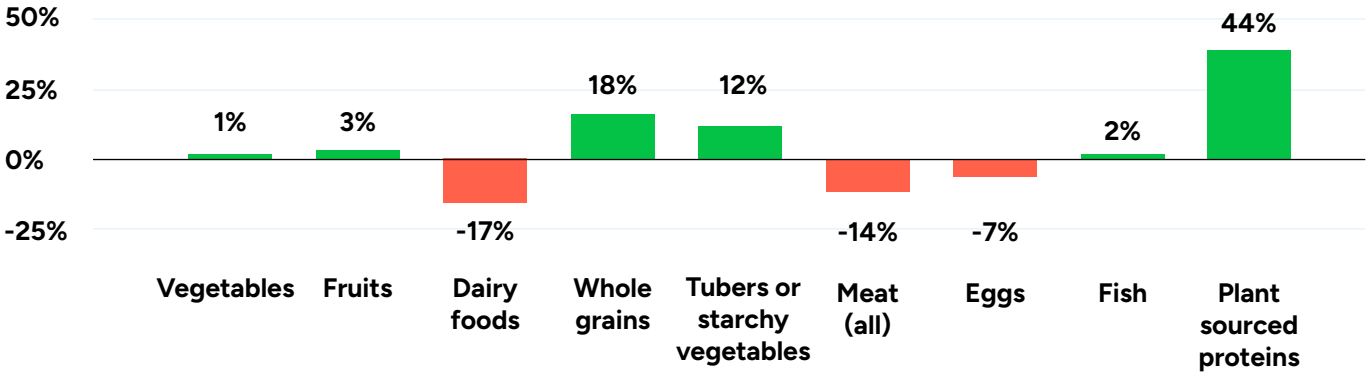
IMPACT

Assessment of signatory cities' public food procurement alignment with the Planetary Health Diet

Data from 11 cities were analysed, with 7 providing detailed breakdowns across all food groups that allow benchmarking against the Planetary Health Diet.

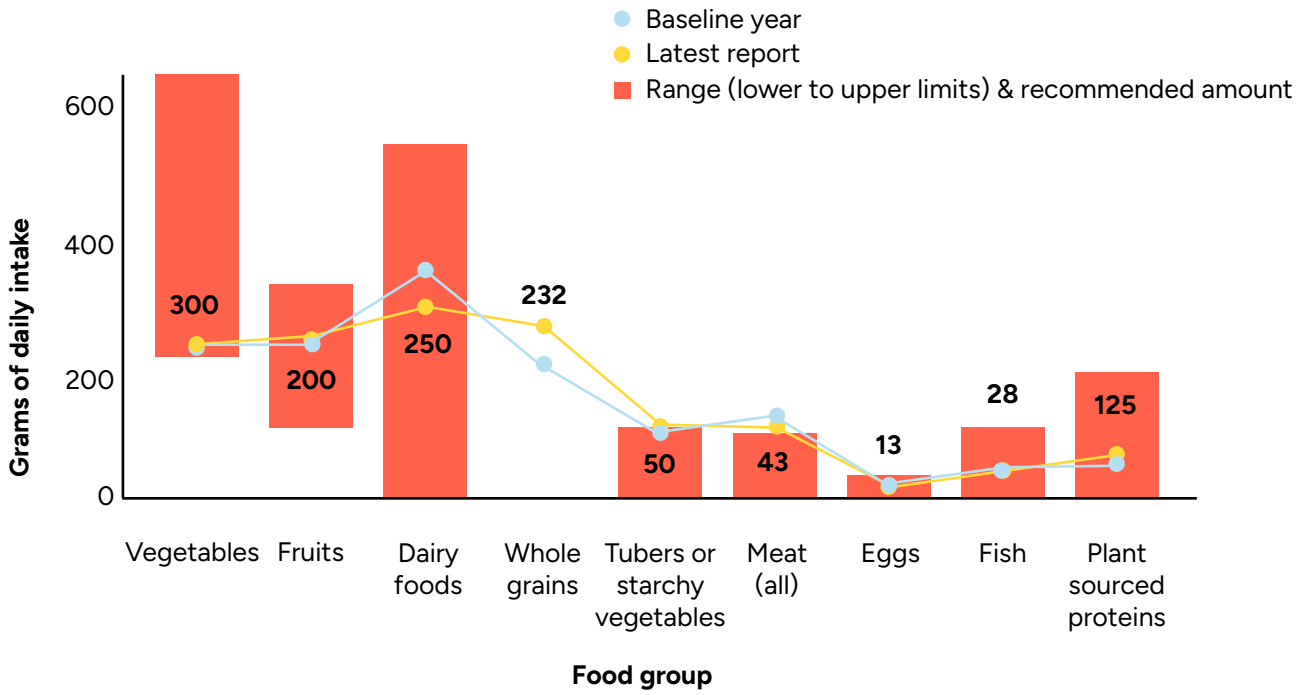
The results highlight strong momentum. Five of the cities have already achieved significant progress, with **Milan, Copenhagen,** and **New York City** achieving reductions in food-related emissions from public food procurement of 34%, 32%, and 29%, respectively. Across the full sample of 7 cities, procurement of high-emission foods has declined – meat by 14%, eggs by 7%, and dairy by 17% – while plant-based foods have increased substantially (+44%). The other increase of note is fish (+2%).

% change in annual volume of publicly procured food from baseline year to latest report



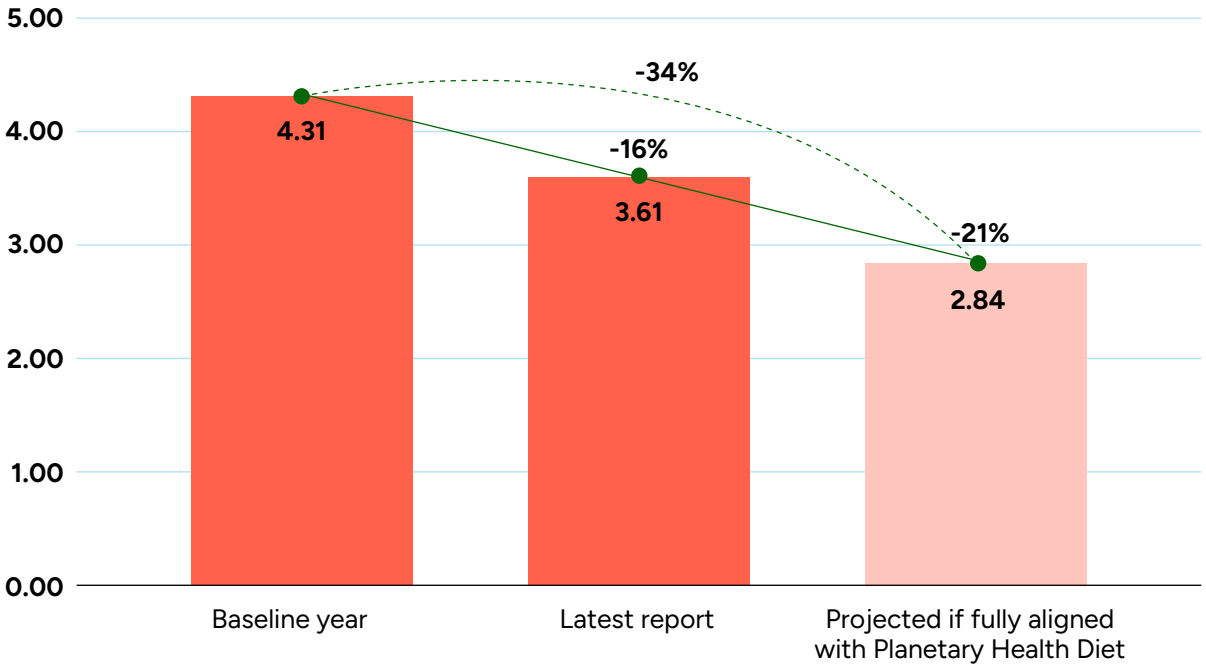
When compared to the Planetary Health Diet, cities are heading in the right direction. Meat remains at the upper end of the recommended range and plant-based proteins are still below target, but eggs, fish, and dairy are already broadly within recommended levels.

Public food procurement and PHD alignment from baseline year to latest report



Across the 7 cities, food-related emissions **have fallen by 16%**. Excluding one outlier city with particularly high volumes and slower progress, the reduction among the others is even stronger at 27%. If all cities were fully aligned with the Planetary Health Diet, the aggregate emission reduction could reach 34%.

kg CO_2e per tonne of publicly procured food from baseline year to latest report



Increase of healthy plant-based food consumption through food environment

CITY ACTIVITY

50% of signatory cities are developing programmes to support and/or engage food businesses in minimising food-related carbon emissions

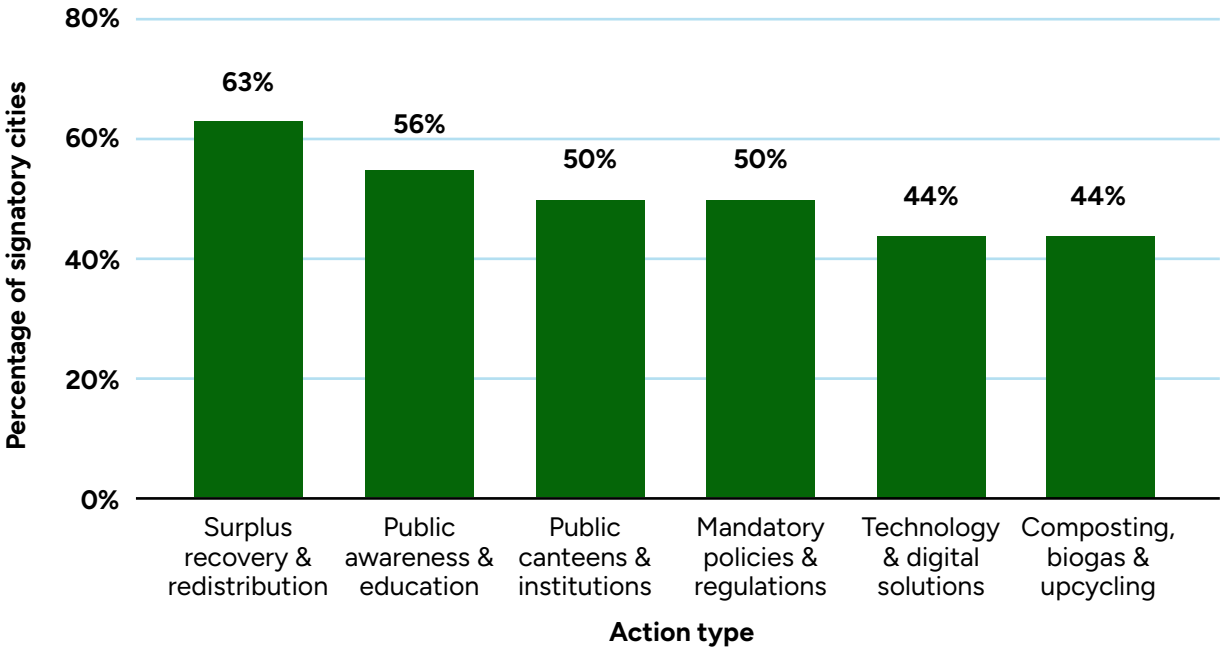
IMPACT

Impact has not been measured, as we are still in the early phase of co-developing a framework that cities can use to engage with private sector consumer-facing food businesses.

Reduce food loss and waste by 50%

CITY ACTIVITY

Cities' approaches to food loss and waste reduction.

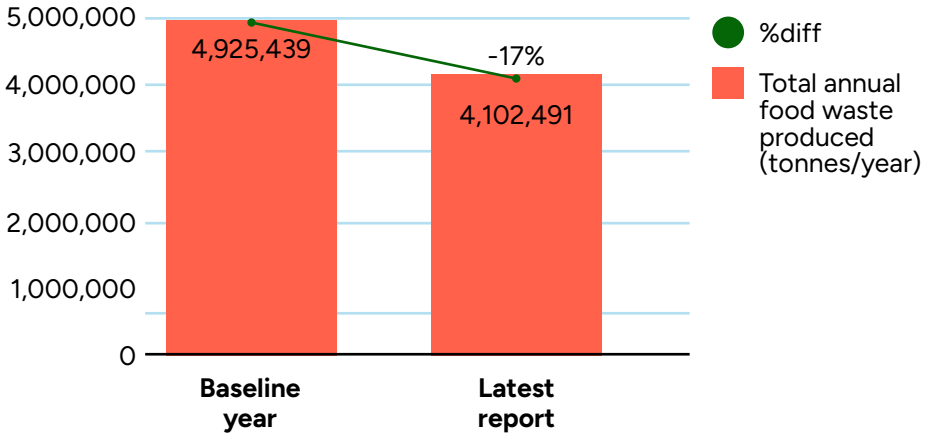


IMPACT

Assessment of signatory cities' food waste reduction

A total of 15 out of 16 cities submitted data on annual total food waste, of which 9 provided information assessed as sufficiently accurate and appropriate for analysis. Across these cities, total food waste generation has **decreased by 17%** since the baseline year.

% change in annual volume of food waste produced from baseline year to latest report



TURNING COMMITMENT INTO ACTION

Commitment 1: Align food procurement to the Planetary Health Diet, ideally sourced from organic agriculture

Paris is leveraging its purchasing power in public food procurement to drive a significant shift towards a more sustainable food system. Parisian schools, colleges, and nurseries now offer two completely vegetarian menus each week, with a daily plant-based option also being phased in. This policy has led to a remarkable reduction in the meat served in public catering, dropping to just 6kg per person per year – well below the 16kg annual target outlined in the Planetary Health Diet. This shift towards plant-based foods has resulted in a marked 14% reduction in food-related GHG emissions since 2016, putting the city on track to meet its broader climate and carbon neutrality goals.

Quezon City is using its procurement policies to create a healthier, more resilient food environment for the most vulnerable residents. Through a strategic shift in public hospital menus, the city now ensures that 60% of all food items served are whole foods. This commitment to healthier options has led to a 93.3% patient satisfaction rate. Furthermore, the city has taken bold steps by eliminating unhealthy food and beverages from public schools. Officials believe this policy has been instrumental in reducing the stunting rate among children under five-years-old to below 1%, a figure that stands in stark contrast to the national average of 21.3%.

Commitment 2: Support an overall increase of healthy plant-based food consumption in cities by shifting away from unsustainable, unhealthy diets

Barcelona is engaging small businesses and retailers through its Green Trade programme, focused on encouraging the public and market traders to adopt more sustainable products. The city has created a special label to highlight products in its 38 municipal markets that meet certain criteria, such as being local, organic, or direct from producers. To support this initiative, Barcelona is running promotional campaigns for the public and providing support for traders, including training on business strategies and networking with producers. Since 2022 the number of businesses registered has increased from 570 to 619, with many also receiving personalised advice and training.

New York City is engaging both the private sector and the next generation. The city launched the Plant-Powered Carbon Challenge, which calls on leading institutions to reduce their food-related emissions by 25% through shifts to more plant-rich menus. Already, 20 major organisations, including Columbia University and the U.S. Open, have joined the challenge. Simultaneously, NYC is investing in culinary and food education across its public schools, helping students understand the importance of healthy, sustainable eating. This includes providing grants to 190 schools for food education programmes and renovating over 90 additional cafeterias to create more welcoming spaces. These actions represent a comprehensive strategy to shift eating habits across the city.

Commitment 3: Reduce food loss and waste by 50% from a 2015 baseline

Tokyo has shown remarkable progress in food waste reduction, already achieving its 2030 target of a 50% reduction. Tokyo has set even more ambitious goals, aiming for a 60% reduction by 2030 and a 65% reduction by 2035. To achieve this, the city is strengthening its policies. Key actions include new public awareness campaigns through booklets, videos, and media partnerships, as well as providing subsidies to small and medium-sized businesses for equipment and recycling costs.

Seoul is leading in establishing innovative infrastructure to manage food waste reduction. The city is promoting the use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)-based food waste meters that enhance both convenience and waste reductions.

Milan has established three additional Food Aid Hubs to combat food loss and waste in supermarkets, canteens, and food markets, bringing the total to eight hubs in the network. These hubs annually recover over 700 tonnes of surplus food, which is then used to support approximately 4,000 vulnerable households. Since 2023, the initiative has expanded to include open-air food markets to further enhance open-air markets to further enhance their food redistribution efforts.

Quezon City is actively implementing three innovative composting strategies. This includes using 43 community biodigesters to convert over 4,200kg of food waste into biogas and soil conditioner, training hundreds of people through its Bokashi Composting programme, and utilising rapid composters at public markets to transform over 100,000kg of biodegradable waste into valuable compost.

Commitment 4: Work with residents, businesses, public institutions, and other organisations to develop an inclusive and equitable joint food strategy, and incorporate this strategy into the City's Climate Action Plan

Copenhagen is actively working to integrate its food system goals into its broader climate strategy. As the city nears the end of its first Food Strategy (2020–25), it is in the process of renewing and updating its ambitions for the next phase. This renewed strategy will continue to focus on nutrition and climate-friendly meals. In a major step, Copenhagen has initiated the development of its Climate Strategy 2035, which will address emissions from citizen consumption. To ensure this new plan is comprehensive and inclusive, the city is engaging in direct dialogue with key actors across the food value chain. Copenhagen is also hosting several citizen assemblies to involve residents in the collaborative process of developing new actions.

Guadalajara has adopted 'Raíces Comunitarias', a new social policy that guarantees the right to food for its most vulnerable populations, and centres the government's responsibility of care to its residents. This includes providing food rations that align with the Planetary Health Diet, establishing urban gardens in marginalised communities, and implementing comprehensive waste management programmes focused on organic waste and circular economy principles.

INSPIRATION

New York City has adopted a new messaging strategy around climate-friendly meals inspired by Washington, D.C. Public Schools (DCPS). During a recent C40 US Working Group meeting, DCPS shared how they successfully integrated more plant-forward meals by avoiding explicit branding. Instead of designating a specific 'plant-based' day, they opted for a non-branded approach, and added these options to their daily menus throughout the week. This has helped normalise plant-based meals for students and staff. Inspired by this successful approach, NYC plans to replace their 'Plant-Powered Fridays' with a non-branded, rotating plant-forward day starting in fall 2025.

Stockholm recently released its new Environment Programme and Climate Action Plan that sets ambitious food-related targets, including a 50% cut in consumption-based emissions by 2030 and increased procurement of organic food. To achieve these goals, Stockholm is also developing a new Food Programme in 2025. This programme will reinforce the city's climate and environmental goals while also improving public health and food security. The initiative is closely informed by the principles of the Planetary Health Diet and inspired by the work of other cities, such as **Copenhagen,** which has achieved an 88% organic food procurement rate, and has also been actively developing a new food strategy and integrating food systems into its new climate action plan.

COLLABORATION

Paris is working closely with AgriParis Seine, a regional cooperation association bringing together seven founding members, including Paris and five other municipalities, to build a low-carbon logistics chain to connect the cities with food producers in the surrounding Seine basin. This collaboration, launched in July 2023, is crucial for ensuring a stable supply of high-quality, local and organic products for Paris' collective catering, such as in schools and public institutions. It also supports farmers by ensuring fair pay, and encourages the transformation of regional agriculture.

A number of cities are working with partners on developing climate-friendly recipes. **Stockholm** is a partner on the PLATE research programme at Stockholm University developing science-backed, climate resilient meals. **Toronto** is working with culinary students from George Brown College to develop recipes that use more plant-based proteins. **Milan, New York,** and **Copenhagen** all work with external partners on culinary training and recipe development to support their public meal programmes. Developing tasty, plant-forward recipes is a key area of investment for many cities supporting a shift towards more sustainable, climate-resilient diets.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Copenhagen employs approximately 1,750 staff in its public kitchens, a workforce composed largely of women, ethnic minorities, and unskilled workers. These workers benefit from targeted training programmes to enhance their sustainable culinary skills, opening pathways for career advancement. Building on this approach, the city has launched a new contract with a culinary advisor (2025–28) to continue developing skills across its kitchens and support the implementation of Copenhagen's Food Strategy.

Quezon City's Community-Based Urban Farming Programme has helped establish 1,439 urban farms, and the number of urban farmers has more than doubled since 2023, now totalling 43,272. The programme primarily supports marginalised groups – including women, youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, and solo parents – by helping them establish urban farms that provide sustainable livelihoods and promote community food security. Complementary initiatives, led by the Public Employment Service Office, include training through the Bokashi Composting programme and support for urban farmers to sell produce at the monthly Fresh Market Programme at City Hall, further strengthening green employment and local enterprise.

CHALLENGES

Many cities have acknowledged that assessing the impact of education campaigns and messaging of interventions has been a challenge. Furthermore, despite remarkable progress, cities have also begun to document the climate-related challenges that are impacting their ability to meet these food systems goals. A primary concern is the effect of changing weather patterns, which are already affecting agricultural yields and threatening the stability of food supply chains.

This serves as a powerful reminder of the urgency of this work. It highlights that the goal of the Accelerator is not just about achieving a set of metrics by 2030, but about proactively building a resilient and climate-adapted food system that can withstand future disruptions and safeguard the wellbeing of residents for decades to come.

HOW CITIES ARE STEPPING UP THEIR ACTION

Cities are tackling a key area of opportunity to reduce emissions by addressing the nexus of food waste and food insecurity. **Toronto, Quezon City, Montréal** and **London** are all expanding their circular economy strategies to address food loss and waste through redistribution and recovery, with many of their target beneficiaries being residents experiencing food insecurity.

While cities have made significant progress in areas like public food procurement, the next frontier for transforming urban food systems is developing partnerships with the private sector. Private businesses have a huge impact on our food choices and, consequently, on a city's climate emissions. To address this critical gap, cities are expanding their focus beyond areas of direct control, building alliances with private companies and securing investment and commitments from them that contribute to more comprehensive strategies for shifting diets and addressing food waste generated throughout city boundaries.

FUTURE ACTION

Seoul plans to progressively increase the proportion of eco-friendly agricultural products delivered through the Seoul Eco-friendly Distribution Centre for meals in schools, kindergartens, and daycare centres within the next year. This expansion builds upon a system that already minimises carbon emissions by reducing the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. The city will continue the introduction of plant-based meals into its schools and other public facilities through its Good Diet programme, which emphasises the positive health benefits of a diet rich in plant-based foods. Concurrently, Seoul will enhance its waste treatment infrastructure by expanding food waste recycling facilities to boost public treatment capacity.

Oslo has streamlined the coordination of its food waste portfolio by hiring a full-time food waste coordinator to work on reducing food waste from Oslo's public kitchens. Following the completion of a pilot project testing the use of a new digital tool for measuring food waste in kindergartens, the city will work on developing and implementing a citywide food waste action plan.