



## Explanation

Many food partnerships nominate a small group of people who are going to actively work to take the idea of the partnership forward. This group could be called the steering group, steering committee, secretariat, or management committee. In most instances the steering group leads on the development of the food partnership, the action plan and the food strategy and its tasks can include:

- Acting as a focal point
- Providing a forum for discussion and debate
- Motivating wider stakeholders to engage with action planning and strategy development
- Raising the profile of the Food Partnership and Action Plan
- Setting up and receiving reports from subgroups on particular themes e.g. food poverty, waste, procurement
- Helping develop more effective ways of getting things done
- Maintaining energy and enthusiasm

The SFP programme adopts a whole food system and cross-sectoral approach that aims to incorporate the range of different perspectives, issues and challenges faced by local people, organisations and businesses. The steering group should aim to take the lead on the strategy development process in a way that reflects the perspectives and experiences of the communities it represents.

## Introduction

This **Steering group workshop** guide will focus on participatory processes that can be used to facilitate the process of analysing and verifying survey and focus group outputs and developing a draft food strategy. In many SFP food partnerships this strategic planning work leads to the establishment of sub-groups or themed working groups focused on separate strategic work strands.

## Verifying Food Strategy Aims, Objectives and Actions

The early stages of developing a food strategy often involve collating a wide range of data and information. This might have been obtained from **food surveys**, **food focus groups**, **food system mapping** events or by conducting a **food policy audit**. There may also have been a **food summit** whereby stakeholders from across the area have come together and started to sketch out a vision and some possible aims. There is then the not insignificant job of turning all of this into a strategy. Having consulted extensively during the early stages it is important that stakeholders continue to be engaged and have opportunities to input as the strategy starts to take shape. This is particularly so for those stakeholders sitting on the steering group and sub-groups / working groups.

One way of doing this is to hold a **Steering Group Workshop** whereby emerging food strategy aims, objectives and actions are verified. This is essentially about sharing the progress to date and checking what stakeholders think about it. The same process of verification could happen within each sub-group of the steering group e.g. Food procurement or food poverty subgroup or with other stakeholder groups e.g. community food groups.

### What to do:

- Print out large versions of the draft aims and objectives of the strategy.
- Print out large versions of the actions linked to each aim / objective.
- Create a strategy / action plan display around the room.
- You may wish to locate each aim in a separate part of the room so that you can create a workstation where that aim / objective and actions will be discussed.
- Make sure it is clear which actions are designed to achieve which objectives and which objectives relate to which aims.
- Ask participants to go round the room to each workstation where they should:
  - Read the Aim
  - Read the Objectives
  - Read the Actions that have been suggested.
- Ask participants to consider the suggested actions and decide on whether each action is VERY IMPORTANT, QUITE IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT. Sticky dots can be used at this stage for participants to vote on this.
- Ask participants to add comments in a SAY WHY section to explain their vote.
- Ensure there is space at each workstation for additional actions to be added or additional comments.
- Allow about an hour for participants to engage with all the workstations. Ask them to start with the workstation most relevant to them and give it more time, but then to visit all the aims if they can and vote.
- **Note:** If you have additional facilitators – it is helpful to have a facilitator at each workstation who can guide participants and listen to discussions.
- Workstation facilitators (if you have them) can feedback a summary of their workstation key points to the whole group at the end.
- Finish the workshop by outlining next steps – what you will do with the information you have gathered at the workshop / time frame / future opportunities to input.

An example of a workstation grid can be seen at the end of this guide.

## Themed Working Groups

As well as the Steering Group, many food partnerships find it useful to set up working groups which might focus for example on one of the SFP key issues e.g. Food Poverty working group, Food and Climate working group. This can be particularly helpful at the point of developing the action plan, where detailed discussions on key issues are necessary. Alternatively, you may want to use each of your high level aims or outcomes as the basis for a group.

You may find it helpful to identify a lead person or chair for each group or theme. This could be a time limited role for the duration of the action planning process. Their role would be to host action planning working groups, write up and circulate draft actions to all participants and lead on the drafting of the action plan for that theme. See our guide to **Action Planning** for more information.

# EXAMPLE WORKSTATION GRID

## Aim 1: Tackle the underlying causes of food poverty

OVERALL OBJECTIVE: People in the city have an adequate income in relation to their household expenditure				
ACTION	Very important	Quite important	Not important	SAY WHY
Promote the Living Wage and encourage larger employers including national ones to sign up.				