

Sustainable Institutional Food Procurement: Challenges and Opportunities for Public Institutions

Sustainable Food Enterprise Network
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OVERVIEW

Sustainable procurement is an approach to purchasing that considers the environmental, societal and economic impacts associated with the life cycle of the good and services being purchased. Sustainable does not necessarily mean local, and sustainable food systems combine local products with imported fairly-traded and non-competing food products

EXAMPLES TO LEARN FROM

Food For Life, is a UK based private certification system led by national charities. It awards bronze, silver and gold awards to university catering systems. This coincides with it's Catering Mark Supplier Scheme, with over 170 members, which connects supplier that meet their standard with the universities.

Italian Elementary School Meal Procurement, is controlled by sustainable food procurement regulations. The regulations put on emphasis on organic, typical and traditional (local) products. This system, and others in Europe benefited from regular open table discussion between networks of policy makers, experts, public institutions, producers and suppliers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Advocacy and policy change should focus on the public procurement area as it is a strong tool that can harness the collective purchasing power necessary to achieve scale, thereby facilitating movement toward food system transformation.
2. The implementation food policies should be centrally coordinated by a higher authority to increase administrative capacities
3. The use of evidence-based instruments—such as the creation of a central data collection system—would increase the analytical capacity to assess the sustainable food procurement regulation.
4. The creation of a deliberate and corporatist governance mechanism would reduce the risk of procurement managers being captured by the catering firm's private interests

For an in-depth discussion of the above, please see the full research paper of the Sustainable Food Enterprise Network Research available at <http://bringfoodhome.com/bfh-papers/>.