



Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework

Food at the Heart of our Society - A Prospectus for Change



Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**



Contents

Ministerial Foreword	3
1. Preface	5
2. Introduction	6
3. A Food Systems Approach	8
4. A New Way of Working	9
5. Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework	10
(a) Vision, Ambition, and Scope	10
(b) Strategic Priorities	11
(c) Decision Making Principles	20
6. Implementation Approach	21
7. Benefits to be Realised	22
Annex A - Glossary	24



Ministerial Foreword

I am delighted to bring forward this Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework - Food at the Heart of our Society - a Prospectus for Change - on behalf of the Executive. It presents a new 'whole of government' approach around food that aims to deliver better outcomes for Northern Ireland, transform our food system for future generations and help position Northern Ireland as the home of sustainable food.



The Framework recognises the interconnectedness between food, health, the economy and the environment. Co-design and collaboration are at its heart.

We share its Vision - "A transformed innovative food system that protects and enhances natural resources for future generations, is environmentally sustainable, economically ambitious and provides safe, nutritionally balanced, accessible food for all". We are committed to focusing our collective efforts to maximise the opportunities our food system offers to benefit the health, economy and environment of Northern Ireland and lay the foundations for the generations to come.

The Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework will ensure strong alignment across linked policy areas such as agriculture, environment, education, economic, social and public health, underpinned by Equality, Children's Rights, and Rural Needs Impact Assessments. It will provide an enabling environment that brings together a wide range of policy perspectives to deal with multi-faceted issues in a holistic way, adding value and delivering better outcomes.

Similar change is happening around the world. There is growing recognition of the importance of food systems and the challenges and opportunities of ensuring food security, health and nutrition for a growing population, supporting the livelihoods of farmers and others in the food supply chain, and doing so in an environmentally sustainable way. We must actively work together to ensure a food system that is sustainable and in doing so, protect it for future generations.

In Northern Ireland, our goal is to be world leaders in sustainable food. By working collaboratively, we can ensure our food system is able to adapt to current and future issues like climate change and feeding a population that is more aware than ever of where their food comes from, how it gets to their plate and its impact on their health and on the environment. I am very mindful of the need to reduce inequalities within our society. I recognise the impact that food poverty can have on our health and wellbeing and I am passionate about working collectively with others to create a food system which strives to reduce food poverty, ensuring an adequate, nutritious diet is accessible to all.



The Food Strategy Framework will align with the principles of the draft Green Growth Strategy, which aims to balance climate, environment and the economy in Northern Ireland and which I intend to bring forward for Executive consideration.

The Food Strategy Framework has been developed following extensive engagement and consultation with many stakeholders. The proposals put forward in the public consultation in September 2021 received strong endorsement and form the basis of the Framework outlined here.

Publication of the Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework is the start of the journey to transform our food system in Northern Ireland.

I would like to thank all who have contributed to and supported the development of this Food Strategy Framework so far. I look forward to the next phase, which will focus on implementation. This Framework has been developed by working together and its success will rely on our continuing engagement and joined up working.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Muir', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Muir MLA
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Thursday 14th November 2024



1. Preface

Food is a necessity for life. It is the main source of the energy we need each day and can be an important source of enjoyment, as well as a way of coming together with family and community. Food contributes significantly to our regional economic prosperity; food and drink processing is Northern Ireland's largest manufacturing sector. Food can play a crucial role in addressing many of our most significant societal challenges; from obesity, food poverty and waste, to climate change and biodiversity loss, the food we produce and eat is a major factor in some of the greatest challenges facing Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework uses an innovative food systems approach which recognises the interconnectedness between food, health, the economy and the environment. It sets a long-term vision, high-level principles and areas for strategic focus, and seeks to optimise joined-up working on food matters to deliver Programme for Government and departmental objectives.

Food cuts across the policy responsibilities of a number of Northern Ireland Ministers including Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Economy, Communities, Health, Education, Finance and Justice. Councils in Northern Ireland also have an important part to play in the delivery of local food initiatives. Although led by DAERA, the Food Strategy Framework was developed in collaboration with the other NI Departments, the Food Standards Agency and Invest NI, building upon the views of key stakeholders including the agri-food industry, health, academia, community and voluntary sectors, during a public consultation on the proposals in the autumn of 2021.

The Framework provides the mechanism through which NI departments will work collaboratively on cross-cutting matters related to food, implementing a whole of government approach and acting together as we engage with councils and a wide range of stakeholders to deliver improved health, economic, social and environmental outcomes. This strategic approach will ensure coherence across food policies that affect all our lives and help to deliver improved outcomes for Northern Ireland.

Implementation of the Framework will involve NI Departments working together and with other organisations to design and deliver a programme of work that achieves improved outcomes for Northern Ireland. Each department and local council will continue to have responsibility for their respective policy areas.



2. Introduction

As well as taking the local context into account, the Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework has been influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic and EU Exit, as well as escalating climate change concerns and global conflicts. The challenges presented by these circumstances give us a unique opportunity to reevaluate and re-shape the future direction of our food system in ways that will benefit generations to come.

The rationale for government involvement in food is clear. Food is at the heart of a healthy society. The social, health, environmental and economic components of our food system are interdependent. The relationship between how we produce and consume food and how we care for our health and our environment is complex (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Relationship between how we produce and consume food and how we care for our health and our environment.



The Food Strategy Framework provides a mechanism for all actors within the food system to collaborate and work collectively to deliver better environmental and societal outcomes. Government, local councils, industry, business, schools, voluntary and community organisations, as well as individuals, all have an important role to play. The Framework's vision signals the direction of travel, championing autonomy, while recognising the need for flexibility to adapt to changing global trends, emerging science, policy mandates and marketplace needs.

This strategic Food Framework helps to focus collective efforts to address many of Northern Ireland's significant societal challenges, which are directly or indirectly linked to food. It provides opportunities for collaborative working to improve the environment, people's health and wellbeing, and to tackle food poverty, as well as continuing to promote regional economic prosperity, making a significant contribution to achieving departmental and Programme for Government outcomes.

The Vision for the Framework is:

“A transformed innovative food system that protects and enhances natural resources for future generations, is environmentally sustainable, economically ambitious and provides safe, nutritionally balanced, accessible food for all.”

The Food Strategy Framework aligns with the draft NI Green Growth Strategy which has a timeline out to 2050. This Framework will also be long term, with initial actions to be taken between now and 2030. This timeline recognises that food systems thinking is in its infancy worldwide, and there is limited experience of practical implementation to draw upon. The Food Strategy Framework will test this innovative systems thinking approach to determine if it can work successfully in Northern Ireland, learning by doing as we build experience.

3. A Food Systems Approach

The Food Strategy Framework signals a radical change in approach to food policy for Northern Ireland. Reflecting the different strategic drivers anticipated during the coming decades, the Framework seeks to build a food system that will address economic, environmental and social sustainability. It places a major focus on the need for behavioural change to deliver the desired outcomes.

A Food Systems approach embraces all the elements and activities that are involved in feeding a population: the production, processing, distribution, supply, marketing, consumption of food and drink and handling of waste; and the consumer values and behaviours that influence these processes (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: The Food System.

Source: Parsons K, Hawkes C, Wells R. Brief 2. What is the food system? A Food policy perspective. In: Rethinking Food Policy: A Fresh Approach to Policy and Practice. London: Centre for Food Policy; 2019. Funded by the Wellcome Trust.



4. A New Way of Working

The Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework will build strong alignment across linked policy areas such as agriculture, environment, economy, circularity, education, social and public health policies. It is a mechanism that will enhance collaborative working around food to achieve better outcomes for Northern Ireland, transform our food system for future generations and help position Northern Ireland as the home of sustainable food.

Northern Ireland Departments will also work with the UK Government, other Devolved Administrations, and where appropriate on a North-South basis, and with other international institutions, to ensure that Northern Ireland's voice is heard and to learn from others.

The Food Strategy Framework will serve as a focal point for addressing policy issues that interconnect with food, such as public health, economy, food poverty, waste and also the impacts of the food system on the environment.

The policy responsibility for addressing complex issues such as obesity and diet / lifestyle / ill health, food poverty or food waste will remain within the relevant departments. The Food Strategy Framework will provide an enabling environment that brings together a wide range of policy perspectives to deal with these multi-faceted issues in a more holistic and joined-up way to deliver better outcomes.

Within DAERA, the complementary Farm Support and Development Programme is dealing with the primary production aspects of food in terms of increased productivity, environmental sustainability, improved resilience, and supply chain integration. The Farm Support and Development Programme will be closely linked to the Food Strategy Framework through its supply chain component.

This Framework will be a living document that will ensure a dynamic and responsive approach to changing strategic circumstances over the long term.





5. Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework

The Vision, Ambition and Scope at the heart of the Framework resulted from extensive stakeholder engagement, which strongly endorsed the need for an enhanced collaborative approach around food across NI Departments.

(a) Vision, Ambition, and Scope

VISION:

A transformed innovative food system that protects and enhances natural resources for future generations, is environmentally sustainable, economically ambitious and provides safe, nutritionally balanced, accessible food for all.

AMBITION:

The Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework aims to deliver a whole of government approach to address the strategic issues within which food plays an underpinning role, aspiring:

- To be a world-leading, environmentally sustainable and ethical food-producing region, recognised for the high standards of quality, nutrition, safety and integrity of our food.
- To build prosperity and competitiveness through boosting productivity, the use of science, technology, innovation and data while continuing to invest in the knowledge and skills needed to future proof our industry.
- To make a collective effort on improving the health of our people through dietary choices.
- To place climate, environmental sustainability and public health at the heart of food decision making.

SCOPE:

A holistic approach 'from Source to Society', encompassing the production, processing, distribution, supply, marketing, consumption of food* and handling of waste and the consumer values and behaviours that influence these processes.

* The term food includes food, drink, fish and marine.

The Framework recognises that the ambition and vision cannot be achieved without a whole food supply chain approach.



(b) Strategic Priorities

The Framework champions four strategic priorities which will provide focus and direction for policy makers. They will also assist in the prioritisation of resources to projects which will contribute to the achievement of the Framework's long-term vision.

The four strategic priorities are:



Figure 3: Food Strategy Framework Strategic Priorities.

There is no hierarchy, all four strategic priorities are equally important, they are interlinked rather than standalone and support a holistic, synergistic, systems approach to addressing major food related societal issues.

A number of key enabling themes underpin these connections across the strategic priorities and will be central to successful implementation. These include:

1. Lifelong education and skills.
2. Knowledge, science, technology and innovation.
3. Food safety, nutrition and quality standards.
4. Data and metrics.
5. Sustainability.
6. One Health approach.



Strategic Priority One - Enabling improved dietary related health outcomes through education and increased accessibility to healthy nutritious food

What is the focus?

Strategic Priority One will build on the connections between health, wellbeing, education and food. It will have a focus on making healthy, nutritious and sustainable food the 'food of choice'. There is broad acknowledgement that too many diets in society today are too high in saturated fat, salt or sugar, low in fibre, and lacking important vitamins and minerals. Malnutrition, whether referring to obesity or undernutrition, both of which are often amplified by poverty, impacts on people's health and wellbeing, often resulting in increased societal healthcare costs, reduced productivity and economic growth. This priority will focus on the preventative role food can play in addressing diet related ill-health. Central to this priority will be the importance of education to build knowledge, empowering people to make informed food choices which, in turn, can contribute to the delivery of improved diet-related health outcomes for Northern Ireland in the longer term.

This priority recognises the importance of a healthy, balanced diet at all stages of life. However, it is particularly critical for children and impacts their growth and development, their educational performance and attainment and long-term health and wellbeing. Therefore, a particular focus will be on children and young people, to give them the best start in life and to embed a positive relationship with food. The vital role of adult lifelong learning and skills related to food will also be championed. Priority One will strive to enhance collaboration around policy agendas such as food in schools, education, obesity prevention, healthy eating, nutritional standards and anti-poverty. It will also seek to complement and add value to the collaborative work being undertaken by local councils, charity, community and voluntary organisations.

Priority One will also maintain a spotlight on the social responsibilities of food manufacturers, retail outlets and those providing food for others, to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities in the public health matrix and play their part in tackling diet-related illness. An objective will be to influence the wider food environment to ensure provision of visible, accessible healthy food options, with accurate information to aid decision making, while also ensuring food continues to be produced to the highest quality and safety standards, underpinned by ethical decision making supporting the principles of One Health, (which recognises the interconnecting of human, animal and ecosystem health).

What success looks like?

In the long term, Northern Ireland will be a society where everyone has access to safe and nutritious food, where food insecurity and diet-related diseases are in decline, resulting in improved societal health and wellbeing.



The Northern Ireland school education system will have created a strong foundation for a healthy lifelong relationship with food, through encouraging and supporting children and young people to eat well, prepare healthy meals, understand where and how their food is produced and processed, and how food choices impact on their health and wellbeing, and the environment.

Lifelong education and skills programmes and community partnerships will continue to build on this strong foundation and promote healthy foods, nutrition and wellbeing throughout the life course.

Work will continue with the UK Government, including The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and other Devolved Administrations on reserved matters linked to this priority to advocate for the specific needs of Northern Ireland.





Strategic Priority Two - Building an environmentally sustainable and resilient agri-food supply chain

What is the focus?

Strategic Priority Two will build upon the connections between the food system and the environment. A sustainable food system involves the whole food supply chain and has environmental sustainability as one of its core elements. This priority recognises the important role of farmers/growers, processors, retailers, food service sector, government and consumers in protecting and enhancing natural resources, reducing our environmental footprint and transitioning to a more circular economy. This priority recognises the future environmental credentials of Northern Ireland food will be significantly influenced by the sustainability agenda being driven within agricultural primary production.

Areas of particular focus will include carbon reduction, reducing food waste, sustainable food packaging including plastic alternatives and opportunities to reduce, reuse or recycle where possible, and advocating for sustainable supply chains to protect natural resources and mitigate the impacts of global supply chain sourcing.

Core to Priority Two will be the development of appropriate science based environmental and climate change metrics. Evidence, data and communication of metrics will underpin the environmental sustainability messaging around NI Food and will be powerful enablers for people to make informed choices that reflect their values. Advances in science, technology, data collection and knowledge will be key enablers to deliver desired environmental outcomes across the supply chain alongside increased productivity. Capability building is critical for success. A strong focus will be knowledge transfer, ensuring all actors in the food supply chain understand their social responsibilities and the need to drive environmental sustainability and protection of natural resources, and that they are equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills to deliver improved environmental outcomes. It also recognises the critical role of social science and behavioural research as behaviour change will be fundamental to achieving the Framework Vision.

There is recognition that Supply Chain disruption due to geopolitical events, weather and impacts of climate change is increasing, and coupled with biodiversity loss, pose key threats to food security in the UK. Therefore, there will be a continued focus on contributing to food security, and the adaptation of food and farming systems to become more resilient to changes, whether predicted or unforeseen.

Critical to the success of this priority is enhanced collaboration around policy agendas such as climate change and carbon reduction, air and water quality, soil health, green metrics and data,



sustainable supply chains, food security, agriculture, fisheries, the environment, biodiversity, extended producer responsibility, the circular economy, productivity, reducing plastic use and decreasing food waste. It will also seek to add value to the collaborative work being undertaken by local councils, charity, and voluntary organisations.

What success looks like?

In the medium to long term Northern Ireland will be recognised as the home of sustainable food, as demonstrated by science-based environmental and climate change metrics. Agri-food Businesses will place environmental sustainability at the heart of decision making. There will be a strong emphasis on a circular approach, a supply chain with sustainable farming and growing practices, and opportunities to create shorter supply chains which are both profitable and resilient. Food waste will be reduced at source and surplus food efficiently distributed elsewhere within the food system. Transparent, accurate data will support informed decision making and demonstrate Northern Ireland's environmental credentials.

The industry and policy makers will be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to deliver the changes required to protect our environment and ultimately the potential of future generations.

Work will continue with the UK Government and other Devolved Administrations on reserved matters linked to this priority to advocate for the specific needs of Northern Ireland.





Strategic Priority Three - Building a prosperous food economy

What is the focus?

Strategic Priority Three will build on the connections between the economy, the environment and food. It recognises that agri-food plays an instrumental role in the Northern Ireland economy, in particular within rural and coastal economies contributing to a regionally balanced economy. Food and drink processing is NI's largest manufacturing sector and plays a significant role in providing nutrition for people at home and throughout the world. The sector makes a substantial contribution to NI's employment, external sales, and international presence, and at home to its tourism and hospitality offering.

Boosting productivity will underpin the strong foundations upon which to build prosperity and competitiveness. Priority Three acknowledges the need for the sector to continue to adapt to meet future challenges and opportunities. A key challenge will be the increasing focus on balancing future economic growth with environmental sustainability and the sector's contribution to Climate Change targets.

Central to Priority Three will be access to leading-edge science and research, knowledge and skills, together with the application of digital and technology solutions to drive innovation and improved productivity to maximise opportunities both in the home marketplace and on the global stage. This Priority recognises and values the significant role of the NI knowledge base in delivering knowledge transfer and capability development. It will enhance collaboration around policy agendas such as innovation, improving productivity, the circular economy and economic development, including City and Growth Deals, science, education and skills, as well as tourism, agriculture, fisheries, environment, carbon reduction and reducing food waste.

Maximising opportunities will be a core theme throughout this priority, for example, recognising the potential power of public procurement to create an economic stimulus and drive improved environment and health outcomes. This priority will build upon work underway across Government and Councils to use purchasing power to support the local economy and ensure positive change in the food system.

It will also seek to increase fairness and transparency in agri-food supply chains. Food supply chains are complex and often global, and this priority recognises the importance of supply chain integrity and food safety systems underpinning the trust in Northern Ireland food and the need for supply chain diligence and risk management, for example to address risks such as human trafficking and modern slavery.



Priority Three also recognises the complexities of the global food supply system and the importance of maintaining food security to mitigate risks to consumers. New and challenging risks are emerging, including climate change, global conflicts, the threat of cyber-attacks, product contamination, and unexpected shutdowns of key supply chain infrastructure. It will also have a focus on ensuring the integral parts of the Northern Ireland food system (industry, retail, wider supply chain partners, government, voluntary and community sectors) work together proactively to manage/mitigate risk along the entire food supply chain. It also recognises the significant role for industry and retailers to maintain robust contingency plans to deal with disruptions to food supplies and for government to play its part in co-ordinating the response to crises affecting the food system.

What success looks like?

In the medium to long term, Northern Ireland will have a resilient, sustainable food system, populated by successful, adaptable businesses with increased levels of productivity, circularity and innovation contributing to building prosperity and a regionally balanced economy. The thriving food processing, hospitality and tourism sectors will attract talent through delivering rewarding, secure, sustainable career opportunities. Businesses are competitive and have the capability and appropriate support mechanisms to maximise opportunities both in the NI marketplace and on the global stage. Northern Ireland Food will have an increased international presence. The industry will have a reputation for its knowledge-driven approach, with highly skilled people working in high-tech jobs producing food to the highest standards, and for its fairness and transparency in the supply chain.

Northern Ireland will be a low carbon society, where natural resources deployed in food production are responsibly managed and associated environmental costs/benefits are appropriately valued and reflected across the food supply chain. There will be strong linkages to the circular economy and nature friendly farming practices, and opportunities to create profitable and shorter supply chains, minimise food waste, and redistribute surplus where possible.

Robust contingency plans will be in place, which will effectively manage or mitigate future crises, to ensure a continued supply of safe food for all the people of Northern Ireland.





Strategic Priority Four - Building a Food Culture and Food Conscious Society

What is the focus?

Strategic Priority Four will build on connections between people, health, the economy, environment, and food, recognising that food culture is a key part of our heritage and provides a way of communicating within our families and communities and connecting with others. In other parts of the world, a rich and diverse food culture acts as a tremendous societal and economic stimulus.

Central to this priority will be the promotion of Northern Ireland food and drink. Food and drink and hospitality are key components of the Northern Ireland offering and are recognised as amongst the very best, receiving numerous awards and achieving quality standards at national and international level. Visitor attractions, food and drink experiences, trails, tours and local food markets, all offer opportunities for those visiting and living within Northern Ireland to learn more about how Northern Ireland food and drink is made and the quality and care taken to produce it. It recognises the role food tourism plays in dispersing visitors across Northern Ireland, influencing length of stay and spending while in destination and when they return home.

This priority also recognises the importance of the social value of food. A focus will therefore be creating a healthy food culture, reconnecting people with knowledge of where their food comes from, building a food citizenship movement and promoting our quality produce. It will build upon the important work being carried out at community level, growing, cooking and sharing food, building greater knowledge of the impacts of dietary choices on our health and the environment. It will champion the need to reduce food waste and recognising the vulnerable in our society, the need to distribute food surplus to help support those most in need. Core to this will be working in partnership with others to encourage corporate social governance actions to intercept and redistribute food surpluses efficiently.

Changing behaviours will be fundamental to unlocking the solutions to many societal challenges. Priority Four recognises that food consciousness has been awakened through increased media focus on the impacts of dietary choices on animal health and welfare, the environment and on human health. People have heightened awareness about impacts of the food system, including impact of dietary choices, on the environment and climate, water quality, animal welfare standards, biodiversity, potential of modern slavery, and the resulting impacts of global supply chain sourcing such as deforestation and the environmental and water footprint of food and agriculture. Education and access to transparent, accurate, credible, comparable data and information will be powerful enablers for people to make food choices that reflect their values.



This priority will enhance collaboration around policy agendas such as economic development, education, agriculture, fisheries, environment, rural communities, and tourism, together with seeking to add value to the collaborative work being undertaken by local councils, charity, community and voluntary organisations.

What success looks like?

In the short to medium term, Northern Ireland will have developed a culture of civic pride as the home of sustainable food, where the social value of food is nurtured, local food heroes and food stories are celebrated, and the credentials of Northern Ireland food are renowned at home and globally.

Food Tourism will attract visitors across Northern Ireland. Co-ordinated approaches to food promotion and the continued achievements of external recognition, including awards and relevant accreditation, will boost local, national and international demand, increasing the prosperity of our food, hospitality and tourism sectors in a way that champions sustainability and civic pride.

Through education interventions, access to transparent and accurate information, and through community networks, people will have greater knowledge of how food is produced and where it comes from, empowering them to make food choices that reflect their values. People value NI food and our children and young people have developed the life-skills to prepare and cook sustainable, healthy nutritious meals. NI society will have embedded social responsibility values around food.





(c) Decision Making Principles

Eight guiding principles will direct the development of plans for delivering collaborative actions and future policy aligned to the four strategic priorities (see Table 1).

Table 1: Food Strategy Framework Decision Making Principles

Principle One	Right to Food - everyone in society has the right to adequate, available, accessible, safe and nutritious food.
Principle Two	Sustainability - a food system where decision-making supports social, environmental and economic sustainability.
Principle Three	Collaboration and Leadership - improved integration, shared responsibility in food related policies and programmes.
Principle Four	Inclusivity and Openness - all voices of society are part of the ongoing dialogue on food issues.
Principle Five	Evidence and Accountability - food-related policies and programmes are evidence-based, transparent, accountable and results orientated.
Principle Six	Adaptability - a food system that is people-focused, knowledge and science-driven, resilient and adaptive to new innovations as priorities/ challenges emerge.
Principle Seven	Long Term Focus - a sustained, long-term strategic approach, which is flexible and measurable through short, medium and long-term milestones.
Principle Eight	Single Supply Chain - food-related policies and programmes are designed with due regard to the needs and development of a sustainable, transparent, resilient and socially responsible single supply chain.



6. Implementation Approach

Delivery of the Framework over the long term will require significant leadership, strong partnerships, a shared understanding of needs, the combining of resources, and effective governance arrangements. It is recognised that no single Northern Ireland Department has all the policy tools required. Partnership working across central and local government, the private sector, and the community and voluntary sector is fundamental to fostering sustainability and ensuring the best possible outcomes for people and Northern Ireland. Key enablers will be investment, education, knowledge, skills, science, technology, data and innovation.

The Food Strategy Framework sets a long-term strategic direction that will guide priorities and funding decisions over the coming years. This is a living Framework and the implementation approach will be adapted to reflect new and emerging structures and evidence-based policy mandates.

Northern Ireland Departments will work with other organisations to design and implement collaborative projects that align with the interlinked priority areas in the Framework including the development of associated targets, indicators and metrics.

A formal review of the first phase of the Food Strategy Framework will take place in 2030.

This retrospective evaluation of the first phase of the Framework's implementation and Action Plans will inform the development of next steps.

Governance Structures

It is envisaged that, once agreed, the Food Strategy Framework will sit within the proposed governance arrangements of the Executive's draft Green Growth Strategy, which would provide an overarching framework that brings together existing strategies and policies of government to support the delivery of a green growth approach and the economic, social, health and environmental benefits that this brings. The Chair of the Food Programme Board will be fully integrated into these Green Growth governance structures.

The Food Programme Board (the Board) will work across traditional boundaries to align responsibilities around food and deliver better outcomes. Collaboration and partnership, with a wide range of key stakeholders from across industry, business, and the community and voluntary sectors, will be key to the implementation and delivery of the Framework.

The Board will engage with stakeholders from within the food industry, the voluntary and community sector, academia and organisations representing the views of citizens. The Board will consider mechanisms for how engagement with stakeholders related to food can be best delivered, considering use of existing and emerging structures where appropriate. An early area of focus will include the development of arrangements to ensure effective working with local government and stakeholders.

Northern Ireland Food Action Plans will be developed and agreed through the Board. The Board will oversee their implementation. Topic-specific working groups will be established in line with priorities. It is acknowledged that a number of relevant working groups may already exist; such groups will not need to be dismantled and recreated. It is the intention that issues will be addressed by the combined efforts of many, rather than the individual efforts of a few.



7. Benefits to be Realised

A Food Systems approach provides an opportunity to work together to achieve health, environmental and economic goals in synergy. As it is a new approach for Northern Ireland, evidence of the benefits that the Food Strategy Framework delivers will be gathered throughout its implementation. There is the potential to achieve the following benefits:

- ✓ Improved collective responsibility, leadership & collaboration - “shared solutions to shared issues”. Achieved through:
 - Partnership working across government, with business, industry, community and voluntary sectors and citizens.
 - Actively seeking synergies to deliver better outcomes connected to food.
 - Working with existing community planning structures and processes.
 - Development of an evidence base with academic institutions.
- ✓ Agreed focus on priorities.
- ✓ Better value for money for the public purse.
- ✓ Maximising opportunities from new science, technologies, data and innovation.
- ✓ Co-ordinated repositioning of food messaging to enhance reputation.
- ✓ Greater economic, social and environmental sustainability.
- ✓ Food becoming an even bigger part of Northern Ireland’s international presence.
- ✓ Food becoming a platform for educational and economic improvement.
- ✓ Education pathways are in place to enable everyone working in the food, hospitality and food tourism sectors to reach their full potential.
- ✓ Improved societal health and wellbeing.
- ✓ Contributing to NI Programme for Government and UK commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. (Figure 4).

The potential benefits of the NI Food Strategy Framework are summarised in figure 5.



Figure 4: UN Sustainable Development Goals.

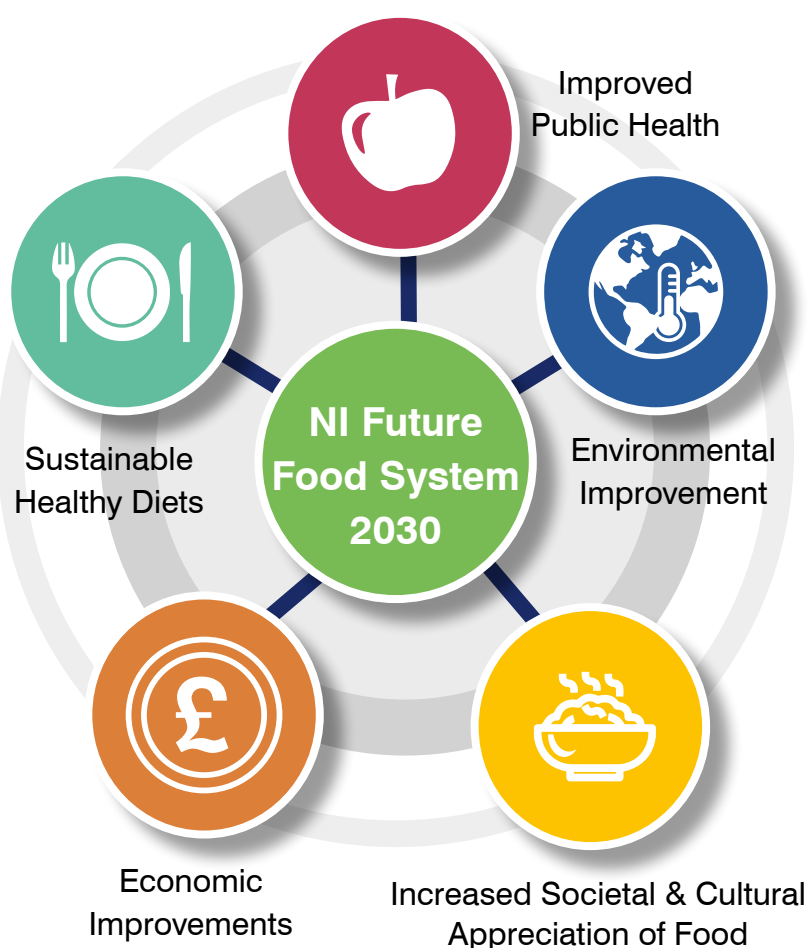


Figure 5: Future benefits.

Delivery of the key objectives within the Action Plans will detail collaborative working across NI Departments and with stakeholders, along with the development of associated targets, indicators and metrics, including the contribution to carbon reduction.



Annex A - Glossary

Agri-food Single Supply Chain - The movement of agricultural goods (includes fish and marine) from production level to final consumer - recognising the strategic interdependence of agricultural production, food processing, retail, distribution and consumption.

Circular Economy/Circularity - A circular economy is based on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems. (ellenmacarthurfoundation.org).

Education - For the purpose of this document, education means in its broadest sense and includes early years, childcare, schools, youth settings and adults.

Food - For the purpose of this document, food includes food, drink, fish and marine.

Food Citizenship - Shared belief that people want to and can shape the food system for the better, given the right conditions.

Food Culture - The attitudes, beliefs and practices that surround the production and consumption of food.

Food Poverty - The inability to have an adequate and nutritious diet due to issues of affordability and access to food, with related impacts on health, culture and social participation being felt.

Food System - The elements and activities that are involved in feeding a population: the production, processing, distribution, supply, marketing, consumption of food and handling of waste; and the consumer values and behaviours that influence these processes.

Food Security - As defined by the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security, food security means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

One Health - The collaborative efforts of multiple disciplines working locally, nationally, and globally, to attain optimal health for people, animals and our environment.

Sustainability - Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainability has three components: economic, environmental, and social.



Sustainable Food System - A food system that:

- is profitable (economic sustainability);
- is beneficial for society (social sustainability); and
- has a positive or neutral impact on the natural environment (environmental sustainability).

Sustainable Diets - Are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy, while optimising natural and human resources.

Transparency in Supply Chains - For the purpose of this document, transparency in supply chains includes the requirements on relevant businesses to report on their progress in relation to identifying and addressing modern slavery risks in both their operation and in supply chains.

Alternative Formats

You can request a copy of this document in other formats, such as:

- Paper Copy
- Large Print
- Braille
- Other languages

To get a copy of this document in another format contact:

DAERA NI Food Strategy Framework Team

Email: NIFoodStrategyFramework@daera-ni.gov.uk



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depairtment o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard