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Pathways to Just Food Futures in Brussels: A Multidimensional Assessment of Justice in Urban Food Systems Governance

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Summary

Food systems are central to many contemporary sustainability challenges, and the way they are designed and governed has a significant impact on who benefits, who is burdened and whose voice is heard. In cities, these justice concerns become most visible: they are consumption-oriented, concentrate a wide range of social, environmental, and spatial inequalities, but also offer potential for transformation. Yet much of the existing literature on just food transitions treats justice narrowly, focusing mainly on the fair distribution of resources and burdens while leaving other dimensions - such as capacity, cosmopolitan and ecological justice -underdeveloped. Existing multidimensional frameworks remain largely conceptual and offer few tools for evaluating policy documents in practice.

This thesis addresses that gap through two research questions: (i) which dimensions and criteria matter when assessing justice in the governance of food system transitions, and (ii) using these criteria, how just is the policy-making process and the resulting policy of the Brussels Good Food Strategy 2022–2030 (GFS 2.0)?

To answer these questions, this thesis develops the Food Justice Index (FJI), a multidimensional evaluation framework for justice in urban food system governance. Building on Kaljonen et al. (2024) and Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022), it integrates six justice dimensions: recognitional, distributive, procedural, capacity, cosmopolitan, and ecological and non-human justice, disaggregated into 31 criteria. Each criterion is scored on an ordinal scale from 0 to 3, using a rubric-based approach inspired by Juhola et al. (2022). The FJI was then applied to the Brussels Good Food Strategy 2022–2030. Capacity justice scored highest (2.67/3), cosmopolitan justice lowest (0.33/3), and a striking gap emerged between food system actors and consumers, which is the most pronounced on procedural justice (1.83/3 versus 0.33/3).

This thesis concludes that the FJI offers a structured, transferable, and adaptable tool for assessing justice in urban food governance, capable of identifying both deficits and integration across dimensions, while remaining a first iteration in need of further refinement and validation.

List of Abbreviations used

AFN	Alternative Food Networks
BCR	Brussels-Capital Region
BEW	Brussels Economy and Employment (*Brussel Economie en Werkgelegenheid)*
COCOF	French Community Commission (*Commission communautaire française)*
CPAS	Public Welfare Centre (*Centre Public d'Action Sociale*)
EEA	European Environment Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FJI	Food Justice Index
FSA	Food System Actors
GFS	Good Food Strategy
GFS 2.0	Good Food Strategy 2.0 (2022–2030)
GGC	Common Community Commission
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HoReCa	Hotel, Restaurant, Café
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JUSTRA	Just Sustainability Transitions
MUFPP	Milan Urban Food Policy Pact
NBB	National Bank of Belgium
OCMW	Public Welfare Centre (*Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn)*
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
VGC	Flemish Community Commission (*Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie*)

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1. Introduction

1.1. Setting the scene: why justice matters in urban food transitions

What does it mean for an urban food system to be just? When a city promises healthy, sustainable food "for all", who does "all" include, and who makes this decision? And how can we tell whether a new policy is moving us closer to justice, or quietly creating new exclusions? These are some of the questions that sit at the heart of this thesis.

With injustices present throughout the current food system and rising demands across around the globe for change in the conventional agri-food system, food-system transitions have become widely debated. The question of how justice can be meaningfully integrated into these transitions has become urgent.

Justice itself is a long-standing philosophical concept that has shaped the work of many thinkers and continues to influence how societies are organised and governed. Each major shift in society, industrialisation, globalisation, and the current climate crisis, has brought new forms of injustice to the surface. Today, as sustainability transitions accelerate, greater attention is needed to how justice is incorporated into these processes (EEA, 2024).

This issue is especially evident in the agri-food sector. Food systems can be understood, following FAO (2018) as "*The entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded."* They therefore reach far beyond what ends up on a plate: they shape labour conditions, land use, trade relations, governance structures, and access to healthy and affordable food (de Bruin et al., 2024; Hebinck et al., 2021). The concept of *food justice* draws heavily on broader movements for social and environmental justice (Coulson & Milbourne, 2021).

Current food systems are marked by deep structural injustices, such as uneven access to healthy food and environmental harms that fall disproportionately on marginalised groups, and exploitative labour conditions (López Cifuentes et al., 2025). When societies undergo major transformations, trade-offs are unavoidable. Some people gain while others lose, and unforeseen effects often fall hardest on already marginalised places and groups. This can intensify inequality and fuel pushback against the transition. (EEA, 2024; de Bruin et al., 2024; Hebinck et al., 2021). This is why it is essential to consider justice from the very start of designing transition policies to developing and implementing them (Heidenreich et al., 2024).

These injustices are especially sharp in cities. Urban areas concentrate consumption, governance power and economic activity, but also poverty, food insecurity, diet-related health inequalities and environmental exposure (Bedore, 2010; FAO, 2020; Moragues-Faus et al., 2024). Urban food systems depend heavily on food imports and are shaped by interactions between governance levels ranging from global to municipal (Moragues-Faus et al., 2024). At the same time, cities function as hubs of experimentation and innovation through the clustering of know-how, resources, institutions and political power (Chou et al., 2024). Together, these features underscore the need for just transitions in urban food systems, often pursued through participatory and transdisciplinary approaches that co-produce knowledge and co-design pathways with policymakers, practitioners, and civil society (Rigolot et al., 2023). The ambition is to shape transitions that “leave no one behind.”

Yet, much of the transition literature still relies on a narrow view of justice, focusing mainly on distributive, procedural, and recognitional justice (de Bruin et al., 2024; Sustainability Transition Research Network, 2025), often giving limited attention to the latter two dimensions (Kaljonen et al., 2023). Multidimensional frameworks are increasingly proposed, but they often remain conceptual rather than practical, and important dimensions such as capabilities, ecological justice, and global-scale inequities are still not sufficiently integrated. Such narrow frameworks risk overlooking key injustices and may fail to support the systemic transformations needed (Ciplet, 2022).

In response, this thesis adopts and operationalises a six-dimensional framework for evaluating justice in urban food system governance, building on Kaljonen et al. (2024) and Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022). It combines the foundational triad of recognitional, distributive and procedural justice with three further dimensions: capacity justice (people's differing abilities to participate and benefit), cosmopolitan justice (justice across borders and generations), and ecological and non-human justice (the intrinsic value of ecosystems and non-human beings). Under each dimension, several criteria were defined. To move from theory to operationalisation, an ordinal scoring mechanism adopted from the rubrics methodology allows policy documents to be assessed systematically.

The framework is then applied to the Brussels-Capital Region's *Good Food Strategy 2022–2030* (GFS 2.0). Brussels offers a particularly interesting case: a small, dense, multilingual and socio-economically polarised city where roughly a third of households is at risk of falling below the poverty line, and the food supply is almost entirely dependent on import from other regions. To date, no systematic evaluation of justice in the Brussels food system has been carried out, making this research a novel contribution both to the literature on just food transitions and to ongoing policy debate in the city.

1.2. Research questions

From this context, two central research questions emerge:

1. Which dimensions and criteria matter when assessing justice in food system transitions governance?
2. Using these criteria, how just is the policy-making process and the resulting policy of the Brussels ‘Good Food Strategy 2022-2030’?

To answer these questions, the research unfolds in two steps. First, existing justice literature is reviewed to develop an evaluation framework tailored to transformative urban food governance. This framework includes multiple justice dimensions and evaluates transition pathways through a structured, ordinal scoring approach. Second, the framework is applied to the Good Food Strategy 2.0 of the Brussels-Capital Region (BCR). The analysis offers insights into how justice is

currently integrated and provides input for more just food policy development in Brussels.

1.3. Aim of the study

The aim of this research is to create a clear and coherent framework to evaluate how justice is understood, expressed, and put into practice in the strategic pathways of urban food governance. By exploring the relationships between different justice dimensions, the study seeks to understand how food justice is shaped and operationalised in practice and how this translates into the Brussels context. The main focus is therefore on understanding the *process* of justice within food system transitions.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on justice theory, food systems, and the Brussels context. Chapter 3 sets out the two-stage methodology through which the Food Justice Index (FJI) was developed and applied to the Good Food Strategy 2022–2030. Chapter 4 presents the FJI and the results of its application, which Chapter 5 then discusses. Chapter 6 concludes by summarising the main findings and the contribution of the thesis, and by identifying directions for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1. The evolution of justice as a multidimensional concept

Justice is a central idea in human society. Even young children intuitively express concerns about fairness, yet the concept extends far beyond everyday experiences to questions about how societies should be organised. In its current form, justice refers to the social, economic, political, and ecological conditions (Heidenreich et al., 2024; Schlosberg, 2007) under which people can live dignified lives, take part in decisions that affect them (Parzonko et al., 2025; Schlosberg, 2007), and share fairly in the benefits and burdens of societal change (Coulson & Milbourne, 2021; Kaljonen et al., 2023; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). Increasingly, justice is understood as crossing both spatial and temporal boundaries, acknowledging global interdependencies, responsibilities toward future generations (Coulson & Milbourne, 2021; de Bruin et al., 2024), and the moral relevance of non-human nature (Schlosberg, 2007).

This multidimensional understanding of justice did not appear all at once. It is the result of a long line of thinkers who refined, challenged, and extended each other's ideas about what individuals owe one another and what makes a society just. Section 2.1.1 follows the line from classical philosophy to the recognition and capabilities turns of the late twentieth century. Section 2.1.2 then turns to the more recent extension of justice into environmental and cosmopolitan domains.

2.1.1. From classical to contemporary justice theory

Classical debates about justice date back nearly 2,500 years. In *The Republic*, Plato framed justice as harmony within the individual and society (Jackson, 2005; Barry, 1989). Aristotle, by contrast, conceptualised justice as a moral virtue grounded in fairness and proportional equality in his book *Nicomachean Ethics.* His distinction between distributive and corrective justice became foundational for later theories: distributive justice, for Aristotle, meant the fair allocation of goods such as wealth, honours, and political power according to merit rather than strict equality (Jackson, 2005). For him, justice is proportional and equal distribution does not mean identical shares for everyone, but fair shares in relation to a person's worth and contribution (Johnston, 2011). These early ideas laid the groundwork for modern Western political

philosophy, which for a long time centered around distributive justice, meaning the allocation of society's benefits and burdens (Coulson & Milbourne, 2021).

A major turning point came in the twentieth century with John Rawls. Writing in the aftermath of the Second World War (Ackerly, 2006) and reacting to utilitarianism, Rawls argued that justice must be grounded in fairness, not in maximising overall welfare (Höffe, 2013). His book *A Theory of Justice* (1971) became one of the most influential texts in political philosophy (Maboloc, 2015). Rawls proposed two principles. *The Principle of Liberty* says that everyone should enjoy the same fundamental political and civil rights, such as freedom of thought, speech, conscience, and political participation. *The Difference Principle* allows social and economic inequalities only when they benefit the least advantaged and when positions are open under fair equality of opportunity (Höffe, 2013). Rawls gave absolute priority to the first principle, considering liberty the highest human good. According to him, sacrificing basic rights and freedoms for individual or collective economic advantages is in all cases unjust (Höffe, 2013).

From the 1980s onward, Rawls's framework faced significant critique, though these engagements largely refined rather than rejected his ideas (Maboloc, 2015). Iris Young argued that "justice as fairness" does not sufficiently address the real-world social structures and processes that produce and reproduce inequality (Ackerly, 2006). She emphasised the need to consider historical context, structural oppression, and the experiences of marginalised groups (Maboloc, 2015). Nancy Fraser expanded justice debates by highlighting the importance of recognition. Rawls's focus on distribution, she argued, overlooks cultural and symbolic injustices. According to Fraser, neither recognition nor redistribution alone can address contemporary injustices; the two are intertwined. Her concept of *bivalent collectivities*, such as gender, shows how groups can experience both economic disadvantage and cultural misrecognition at the same time (Robeyns, 2003). So, while Rawls' distributive framework provides the ethical grounding for fair allocation, Young and Fraser extend this perspective by exposing how structural and cultural hierarchies produce these distributions in the first place. According to them, justice also needs to address the processes that create these maldistributions (Schlosberg, 2007).

Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum further broadened justice debates by developing the capabilities approach. Rather than focusing on the distribution of primary goods, they shifted attention to the actual capacities individuals possess to pursue well-being. Access to resources does not automatically result in a good life: what matters is whether people can convert material goods and opportunities into the real ability to live a flourishing life (Schlosberg, 2007).

Together, these different contributions established a multidimensional understanding of justice, encompassing distributive, recognitional, procedural, and capabilities-oriented dimensions, that goes well beyond the Rawlsian frame. More recent scholarship has extended this lineage even further, into environmental, ecological, and cosmopolitan domains.

2.1.2. Extending justice to sustainability and environment

One of the authors taking this multidimensional understanding a step further is Schlosberg (2007), who extends justice to the environment and to ecological systems themselves. He argues that justice is not only a concern of human societies but also applies to ecosystems, including the protection of natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystem integrity. Schlosberg also stresses that environmental and social justice are deeply interconnected: environmental harms tend to disproportionately affect already marginalised and vulnerable groups. This creates a combined social–ecological dimension of justice, in which ecological degradation and social inequality reinforce one another. In line with Sen and Nussbaum, Schlosberg also argues that justice should not be understood solely in terms of access to resources, but in terms of people's real capabilities and opportunities to live healthy and meaningful lives.

This integration of environmental and social concerns is reflected in the way sustainability itself has been defined. As early as 1987, the Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as "*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (United Nations, 1987). This definition embeds a justice dimension at its core: it foregrounds both the distributive question of whose needs are met today, and a cosmopolitan and intergenerational responsibility to safeguard the well-being of those who will live with

the consequences of present-day decisions (Kaljonen et al., 2024). Building on this, Agyeman et al. (2002) argue that a truly sustainable society links social needs, welfare and economic opportunities to the ecological limits imposed by supporting ecosystems. From this perspective, environmental quality is inseparable from social justice: environmental degradation is almost always intertwined with questions of equity, rights, and overall quality of life.

These insights have changed the way sustainability transitions are understood. Transitions in energy, food, and climate systems aim to address environmental challenges (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022; Williams & Doyon, 2019), but they also redistribute costs, benefits, and responsibilities across society (EEA, 2024; Stevis & Felli, 2020). Without explicit attention to justice, such transitions risk creating new forms of injustice or exacerbating existing inequalities (EEA, 2024; Kaljonen et al., 2024). Sustainable energy measures or urban greening initiatives, for example, can drive up housing costs and lead to displacement when vulnerable groups cannot afford the rent any longer. Sustainable food policies may improve environmental outcomes but reduce affordability for low-income households (de Bruin et al., 2024). Avelino et al. (2025, P.520) define just sustainability transitions (JUSTRA) as "*Processes of transformative change that aim to enable present and future generations, both human and more-than-human, to survive and flourish and eliminate and prevent injustices that are produced and exacerbated by unsustainability and its underlying causes.*" In this interpretation, justice is not only about surviving but about thriving and flourishing (Avelino et al., 2025).

This evolution shows that justice has moved from a peripheral concern to a core principle of sustainability governance. It also shows that justice is neither static nor universal but evolving: understandings depend on political environments and on the dominant values and norms of a given place and time (Coulson & Milbourne, 2021). Any analytical framework for justice is therefore normative and context-dependent rather than value-neutral (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). Integrating diverse perspectives and multiple dimensions helps capture the complexity of justice claims and reduces blind spots when evaluating transition strategies in complex systems such as food systems.

2.2. Application of justice in urban food systems

This thesis focuses on food systems, a domain where questions of justice become particularly visible and contested. The previous section established that justice is multidimensional and that sustainability transitions can create new injustices if justice is not explicitly addressed. Food systems exemplify this dynamic: they sit at the intersection of social, ecological and economic challenges and affect every person's daily life. The following subsections define what a food system is (2.2.1), examine why food systems are a sustainability and justice concern (2.2.2), introduce the main concepts in just food systems scholarship (2.2.3), and explain why the urban scale is a particularly relevant focal point for justice analysis (2.2.4–2.2.6).

2.2.1. Defining food systems

The FAO (2018) defines a food system as "*The entire range of actors and their interlinked value- adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded."* Following Gottlieb and Joshi (2010), the food system can be understood as "*the entire set of activities and relationships that make up the various food pathways from seed to table and influence the how and why and what we eat*". These definitions highlights that the whole food system extends beyond production and consumption and is also about labour conditions, land use, trade relations, governance structures and access to healthy and affordable food (de Bruin et al., 2024; Hebinck et al., 2021).

Food systems play a fundamental role in human wellbeing and health, ecological integrity, geopolitics, and social relations across local and global scales (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). They are simultaneously a basic human need, a major economic sector, a significant driver of environmental change, and a site of cultural identity (Cabral et al., 2025; Mbow et al., 2019).

2.2.2. Relevance of food systems in justice and sustainability

Over the past two decades, the conventional agri-food system has been the subject of substantial rethinking. Scholars and practitioners have highlighted its unsustainable

use of natural resources and its significant environmental and social impacts, which cannot be justified from either a sustainability or justice perspective (Hebinck et al., 2021). In response, alternative initiatives and practices emerged all over the world to guide food systems towards more sustainable alternatives (Rigolot et al., 2023). Despite this growing alternative landscape, transitions in food systems have so far received limited attention within the field of sustainability transitions, and their justice relevance remains underexamined (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022).

Environmentally, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that 21 to 37 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to the food system, including emissions from crop and livestock activities, land-use change such as deforestation and peatland degradation, and supply chain activities such as transport, processing, packaging, and retail. If current trends continue, food-system emissions are likely to increase by a further 30–40% by 2050, driven by population growth, rising incomes, and shifts towards more emission-intensive diets (Mbow et al., 2019). Intensive agricultural practices such as monocultures, heavy pesticide and fertiliser use and overexploitation of land and freshwater resources drive biodiversity loss, soil degradation, water pollution, deforestation and habitat fragmentation (IPBES, 2019; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). Food systems are therefore both a cause and a victim of climate and environmental change: agricultural production depends on the same foundations (biodiversity, soil fertility, freshwater availability etc.) that intensive agricultural production destroys. This dual role makes food systems particularly vulnerable to climate change, with low-income producers and consumers most exposed because they have fewer resources to invest in adaptation and risk-spreading measures (Mbow et al., 2019).

Socially, food systems are sites where injustices are produced, reproduced and made visible. Despite a global food supply that has risen by more than 30% per capita since 1961, around 821 million people face undernourishment, 151 million young children are affected by stunting, 613 million women and girls live with iron deficiency, and 2 billion adults are overweight or obese (Mbow et al., 2019). This co-existence of hunger and overconsumption reflects deep inequalities in access to safe, nutritious food. Labour conditions across the food chain are themselves a central injustice, often disproportionately affecting migrant workers and women (Coulson & Milbourne, 2021;

de Bruin et al., 2024; López Cifuentes et al., 2025). Climate change intensifies these vulnerabilities: in regions where agricultural production still relies on manual labour, heat stress is expected to reduce the hours workers can work safely and to increase their health risks (Mbow et al., 2019). Women bear a disproportionate burden through their roles in food production, preparation, and household food security, while the elderly and children are more exposed to the health effects of heat stress and food shortages (Mbow et al., 2019).

These environmental and social challenges are entangled rather than separate. Environmental degradation tends to fall most heavily on those who are least responsible for causing it, and food system transitions designed with only environmental goals in mind risk exacerbating social inequalities (EEA, 2024; de Bruin et al., 2024; Hebinck et al., 2021). Together, these dynamics make justice an essential lens through which to understand and evaluate food system transitions and food system governance.

2.2.3. Food movements

The expansion of the Green Revolution from the mid-twentieth century transformed agriculture into an intensive industrial model, eroding peasant-based farming and shifting power to large landowners and agribusinesses. In response, peasant communities and rural workers organised around land redistribution, fair access to credit and markets, and the recognition of dignified rural livelihoods (Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). Out of these struggles, a wide range of food movements has taken shape at local, national, and international levels, all challenging the dominant industrial food system and seeking more just and sustainable alternatives. The accompanying scholarship has produced several related but distinct concepts, each capturing a particular dimension of justice in food systems. The following section briefly clarifies five of them: food justice, alternative food networks, food democracy, food sovereignty, and food security.

To start, food justice is a normative concept centred on fairness in the relationships and transactions in the food system (Cabral et al., 2025). A widely cited definition is that of Gottlieb and Joshi (2010, P.6), who describe food justice as "*ensuring that the*

benefits and risks of where, what and how food is grown & produced, transported and distributed, accessed and eaten are shared fairly." Another classic formulation by Lang & Heasman (2015) highlights food injustices as "*the maldistribution of food, poor access to a good diet, inequities in the labour process and unfair returns for key suppliers along the food chain".* Alkon and Norgaard (2009) argue that food justice is about how class and race are situated in the food system and define food justice as having "*access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food in the contexts of institutional racism, racial formation, and racialized geographies*". In practice, food justice scholarship brings together questions of equity and access with attention to the differing experiences of food among groups defined by class, race, gender, and culture.

Alternative food networks (AFNs) designate the practical initiatives that have emerged to offer concrete alternatives to the conventional agro-industrial food system (Cabral et al., 2025). They share intellectual ground with food justice, but it's more about the organisational aspect: they are alternative food distribution systems that drive the food transition towards more sustainability (Lohest et al., 2019). Common examples include community-supported agriculture schemes, farmers' markets, food cooperatives, and short-chain distribution platforms.

Food democracy, a concept introduced by Lang (1999), shifts attention towards the more participatory and procedural dimensions of food systems and food governance. It rests on the idea that all actors in the food chain and citizens should have a meaningful say in how the food system is organised, in opposition to the current system which is predominantly shaped by big corporations and the agricultural agenda (Lohest et al., 2019). Hassanein (2003) contributes to this by framing food democracy as the capacity of citizens to determine agro-food policies and practices on different scales. The concept is strongly related to the procedural justice dimension used in this thesis.

Food sovereignty did not develop from policy, academia, corporations or governments but from the experience and analysis of small-scale farmers (AFSA, 2011) and places questions of land, power and autonomy at its core. Menezes (2001) describes food sovereignty as "*the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce the staple foods of its peoples, respecting their productive and cultural*

diversity", including the right of people to define which foods they wish to produce and consume. In terms of food sovereignty, justice is closely tied to the right of communities to access land for securing their own subsistence and to decide about their own food and agricultural practices (Bedore, 2010).

Food security, finally, is a concept developed at the 1996 World Food Summit and defined as existing "when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 2006). This definition is structured around the four pillars of food security: availability, access, utilisation and stability. Menezes (2001) framing food security as guaranteed access to quality food without compromising people's ability to meet other essential needs or the long-term viability of the food system itself.

2.2.4. Urban food systems: why cities matter for food systems

Urban areas play a central role in contemporary food systems. Today, more than half of the world's population lives in cities, and by 2050 the urban populations are expected to grow with an additional 2.5 billion people, meaning that nearly two-third of the global population will live in urban areas (FAO, 2020). Cities concentrate not only people, but also economic activities, consumption and governance power while at the same time bringing together a wide range of social, environmental, and spatial inequalities (Bedore, 2010; Moragues-Faus et al., 2024). Consequently, cities have become key areas where the contradictions and pressures of today's agri-food systems are the most visible (Bedore, 2010; Rigolot et al., 2023).

A defining feature of urban food systems is their structural dependency on external production territories. Cities consume far more food than they produce: even in countries where most inhabitants live in rural areas, urban populations account for up to 70% of total food consumption (FAO, 2020). Because the physical capacity for primary food production within urban boundaries is limited, urban food systems are largely oriented towards consumption rather than production, and they rely on complex supply chains that extend across regional, national, and global scales (FAO, 2020). Agricultural industrialisation, long and complex supply chains, and rapid urbanisation

have widened the geographic, economic, cognitive, and political distance between consumers and food production (Bedore, 2010). For many urban residents, food production has become largely invisible, they are no longer aware of where their food comes from, how it is produced, or under what social and environmental conditions.

This consumption orientation also shapes how food is experienced and accessed in the city. Food expenditures can amount to 2/3 of the total household income in low-income countries (FAO, 2020), leaving little room for other essential expenses. Cities frequently face a double burden: on the one hand, high levels of malnourishment or (micro)nutrient deficiencies persist, on the other hand, overweight, obesity and other diet-related diseases are common (FAO, 2020). This paradox is driven by sedentary lifestyles, limited cooking facilities, time and knowledge constraints, and the easy and affordable access to processed foods and ready-to-eat meals that are high in sugar, salts and fat. The food habits in cities are constantly transforming and combined with a failing health care system and social security net, these problems increasingly affect the most vulnerable groups (FAO, 2020).

A growing concern are the so-called food deserts: areas or communities with poor access to healthy, affordable food and where the population is characterised by deprivation and social exclusion (Wrigley et al., 2003; Bedore et al., 2010). Changes in urban retail food geographies have reinforced these patterns, creating accessibility challenges for low-income residents, those without personal vehicles, and others facing barriers to physical access (Bedore et al., 2010). Additionally, around 1/3 of total food produced for human consumption is wasted (FAO, 2020).

These features mean that cities are sites where social, environmental, and global injustices in the food system intersect. Socially, access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food in cities depends largely on purchasing power, since opportunities for food self-production are limited; this market dependence creates vulnerabilities for low-income and marginalised communities. Beyond access, food security in cities is further constrained by limited transport options, unstable food prices, the concentration of power in global food trade, climate-related shocks, and the failure of social safety nets to adequately protect vulnerable urban residents during crises (FAO, 2020). Environmentally, the dominant production and distribution systems that supply cities

contribute substantially to soil degradation, biodiversity loss, water pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions (IPBES, 2019). As a result, many urban residents struggle to secure healthy food, while citizens hold increasingly limited influence over how food systems are governed (Rigolot et al., 2023). These dynamics make urban agri-food systems ecologically and socioeconomically vulnerable and highlight the need for governance approaches rooted in food justice (Rigolot et al., 2023).

2.2.5. Cities as sites of transformative food governance

The same features that make cities key sites of food system injustice also make them strategic sites for food system transformation. Cities and their governments hold the political, institutional and symbolic power to address food-system challenges (Chou et al., 2024; Moragues-Faus et al., 2024) and have been identified as the most promising governance unit for food system interventions (Säumel et al., 2022). Cities function as hubs of experimentation and innovation, clustering diverse experiences, perspectives, know-how and stakeholders to tackle complex food-system challenges in a holistic and integrated way (Chou et al., 2024; Hebinck et al., 2021). This diversity also enables transdisciplinary and participatory research that combines different forms of knowledge (Rigolot et al., 2023). Cities are therefore well placed to develop transformative participatory governance with citizens, the public sector, and the private sector (Moragues-Faus et al., 2024). According to FAO (2020), the most innovative collaborations between diverse actors and previously unconnected policy domains are emerging precisely at the urban governance level.

The food sector itself is also a significant source of urban employment, spanning production, storage, processing, retail, distribution, and hospitality (FAO, 2020). This means that food system transitions designed at the urban scale can simultaneously address environmental sustainability, labour conditions, and social inclusion.

2.3. State-of-the-Art in Just Food systems

The field of just food systems is gaining momentum, with a rapidly growing body of research. However, distributive justice, seen as the allocation of environmental burdens, economic benefits and access to resources, continues to dominate. As Loo et al. (2014) note, many influential definitions of food justice have been centred on

distributional inequalities, and more recent work extends this tradition. For instance, Lehtonen et al. (2022) show that dietary change alone does not sufficiently reduce greenhouse gas emissions without parallel changes in land use, and that such transitions will affect regions unevenly: livestock-intensive areas and peatland regions bear disproportionate costs and would require targeted support to be considered just.

Alongside distributional analyses, a growing body of work examines recognitional justice in food systems. This literature emphasises whose identities, knowledges, and lived experiences are acknowledged, respected, or marginalised in transition processes, particularly the experiences of marginalised groups, Indigenous communities, racialised populations and women. Cabral et al. (2025) illustrate this through a comparative analysis of local food system actors in Brazil, Sierra Leone, the UK and Zambia, revealing substantial contextual diversity: respondents emphasised, respectively, food insecurity and family farming, the fragility of local food chains, gender inequality and women's exclusion from land ownership, and the erosion of Indigenous knowledge. Ortiz Valverde et al. (2022) show in a case study of Guatemala how persistent gender biases and structural barriers within farmer organisations sustain inequality in family farms, while initiatives such as "Coffee with women's hands" demonstrate how agroecological innovation can help recognise the roles and agency of women farmers.

A third strand addresses procedural justice. Although its importance is widely recognised, persistent power imbalances often prevent the meaningful participation of marginalised actors in food system governance (Loo, 2014; López Cifuentes et al., 2025; Maluf et al., 2022). Loo et al. (2014) argued early on that distributive inequalities are frequently downstream consequences of uneven participation and exclusion from decision-making, and that including marginalised groups in advocacy and governance is key to a more just food system. Parzonko et al. (2025) attempted to address the the limited knowledge about systematic ways to evaluate procedural justice considerations, while analysing stakeholder participation, by developing a framework to systematically assess procedural justice across three dimensions: the spaces where participation occurs, the people who participate and the discourses of participation. Tanzer et al. (2022) applied a procedural lens to the 2021 United Nations (UN) Food Systems Summit, arguing that multilateral institutions must undergo

internal change if they are to meaningfully contribute to just sustainability transitions. Their analysis is valuable for understanding whether, and to what extent, global governance bodies such as the UN or FAO are capable of supporting system change in procedurally just ways. Maluf et al. (2022) offer a parallel analysis for Brazil, showing how power asymmetries and competing narratives shape who participates in, influences, or is excluded from food system transformations. One of the strongest recent analyses is offered by López Cifuentes et al. (2025) examine all three classical dimensions within Food Policy Networks and conclude that distributive justice often remains aspirational, while recognitional and procedural justice are constrained by institutional cultures and local power relations, with participation typically stopping at consultation rather than reaching co-decision-making.

Beyond these three classical dimensions, only a few scholars have introduced additional justice lenses. Capabilities, understood as the substantive freedoms and capacities that actors need to participate in transitions, have received comparatively little attention, yet they are essential for understanding whether individuals and groups can respond in transformation processes. Kuhmonen & Siltaoja (2022), studying Finnish farmers, argue that real transformation requires addressing the power imbalances that constrain farmers' options, particularly for marginal farms with limited production potential, and call for transition pathways accessible to all. Some studies, including Lehtonen et al. (2022) indirectly address ecological justice by showing how ecological burdens are unevenly distributed. Others, such as de Bruin et al. (2024) explicitly argue that nonhumans should be considered subjects of justice within food systems. Cosmopolitan justice, which concerns global and intergenerational fairness, appears more frequently in policy discussions, for instance within FAO debates on intergenerational food justice (FAO, 2020), but empirical applications remain limited.

Growing dissatisfaction with the limitations of single-dimension analyses has led to the rise of multidimensional approaches. De Bruin et al. (2024) synthesises the diverse conceptualisations of food justice used by justice researchers. They critique the framework of Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022) to have ideal principles that are hard to translate to real life practice and that increase the risk of forgetting principles or (re) generating new injustices. De Bruin (2024) also refers to Coulson & Milbourne’s (2021) concept of “justice multiple”, which calls for recognising plural, operating across scales

and timeframes, and inclusive of non-human life (Coulson & Milbourne, 2021). Nonetheless, most of the frameworks still revolve around the classical distributive, recognition and procedural dimensions.

As showed, several tools and frameworks have been developed to assess justice in food systems. Conti et al. (2025) made the JUSTRA framework building on 4 dimensions: distributive, procedural, recognition and universal justice, aiming to move justice from an *outcome* to an inherent component of transformation processes, make power asymmetries explicit, and guide multi-stakeholder strategy, implementation, and monitoring in context-specific ways. Others are the important frameworks of Kaljonen et al. (2024) and Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022).

2.4. A six-dimensional framework for evaluating justice in urban food system governance

Justice is an evolving and multidimensional concept that remains central to contemporary sustainability debates. Urban food systems sit at the junction of socio-economic and environmental challenges: while they contribute significantly to sustainability problems, they can also become part of the solution if transition strategies are designed and implemented justly.

Now that the theoretical foundation of justice has been established, the focus shifts beyond the work of the thinkers and turns to the application of evaluating justice in food system governance. To capture the multidimensional nature of justice in urban food system transitions, this thesis adopts a framework built around six dimensions: distributive, recognitional, procedural, capacity, cosmopolitan and ecological and non-human justice. The selection of these dimensions builds primarily on the work and Kaljonen et al. (2024) and Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022), two recent contributions that bring these dimensions together into integrated frameworks for analysing justice in food system transitions.

Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022) developed a three-leveled framework consisting of foundational justice principles (A-level), drawn from philosophy and social justice research; mid-level just transitions principles (B-level) that serve as an analytical lens

for transitions across sectors; and food system-specific evaluation criteria. Their framework was tested in workshops with food system stakeholders, with the aim of providing normative guidance for evaluating just food system transitions and check for saturation of the framework. Kaljonen et al. (2024) adopted the same six dimensions but integrated them into a holistic policy evaluation framework that also incorporates policy intervention points for sustainability transitions. Their framework was tested in a policy dialogue with Finnish food system actors and is designed to support the planning, evaluation, and implementation of policy mixes for just food system transitions. While Tribaldos and Kortetmäki (2022) provide the normative foundation, Kaljonen et al. (2024) operationalise it for policy analysis.

Of these six dimensions, the first three, recognition, distributive and procedural justice, are generally accepted in the literature as the foundational triad of contemporary justice scholarship (Juhola et al., 2022; Schlosberg, 2007). Environmental justice movements have further emphasised the need to acknowledge the differing capabilities of people to engage in transitions (Schlosberg, 2007). The remaining two dimensions - cosmopolitan justice and ecological and non-human justice - are more recent extensions, addressing global and intergenerational responsibilities and the moral consideration of ecological integrity and non-human nature (Kaljonen et al., 2024; Schlosberg, 2007; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022).

2.4.1. Overview of the six dimensions for justice in food systems

Distributive justice

Distributive justice concerns the fair allocation of burden and benefits, rights, resources and opportunities across society. It requires that the outcomes of social, environmental, or climate-related transitions do not disproportionately disadvantage particular groups, and that access to benefits and opportunities is structured fairly (EEA, 2024; Juhola et al., 2022; Kaljonen et al., 2024; Kivimaa et al., 2023; López Cifuentes et al., 2025). Chu and Cannon (2021) note that distributive justice is often equated with equity in environmental justice, emphasising that all individuals should share in the impacts and benefits of transitions on an equal basis, independent of their social, cultural, or economic background. Within food systems, distributive justice primarily concerns the distribution of food security, environmental burdens associated

with industrial or intensive agricultural practices and labour-related injustices such as low incomes, precarious working conditions, or employer exploitation (de Bruin et al., 2024). Studies that have applied a justice lens to food system transitions confirm that the costs and burdens of the transition processes are not equally distributed: certain groups, such as agricultural workers, small-scale farmers or low-income consumers, often bearing a disproportionate share of the burdens (de Bruin et al., 2024; Kaljonen et al., 2021; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022).

Recognition justice

Recognition justice refers to acknowledging and valuing diverse socio-cultural values, identities and needs, which shape how policies impact different communities (Hughes & Hoffmann, 2020; Kaljonen et al., 2024). It requires recognising the often-invisible power dynamics and structural vulnerabilities that produce unequal representation, and that privilege some actors over others (Juhola et al., 2022; Moragues-Faus et al., 2024; Parzonko et al., 2025). This dimension also includes recognising intersecting identities and intergenerational disadvantages faced by minority groups in terms of their cultural, socioeconomic and political rights (Chu & Cannon, 2021; Parzonko et al., 2025).

Recognition justice is particularly important in food systems because food values and eating practices are inherently socio-cultural (Kaljonen et al., 2024): how and what people eat, and what counts as 'culturally appropriate'. Food system transitions risk overlooking diverse food values and dietary traditions, and policy interventions can unintentionally marginalise existing food habits (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). This is especially relevant in public institutions such as schools and hospitals, where standardised food provision may fail to reflect cultural diversity (Kaljonen et al., 2021, 2024; Morgan & Sonnino, 2010). Recognition justice is also closely linked to racial and gender equity: transition policies affect food access and affordability differently across ethnic groups, and food labour markets remain highly gendered, with women overrepresented in processing, serving, and catering while farming and primary production remain male-dominated (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022).

Procedural justice

Procedural justice concerns fairness, transparency and inclusiveness of public decision-making processes, recognising that ‘how’ decisions are made significantly influences ‘what’ decisions are made (Parzonko et al., 2025). A key element is the equality of participatory opportunities, meaning that diverse stakeholders, including minority and vulnerable groups, must have equal access, influence, necessary information and capacities to participate (Juhola et al., 2022; Kaljonen et al., 2024; Loo, 2014; Parzonko et al., 2025). Procedural justice also means ensuring that governance processes are transparent, impartial and accountable and include diverse voices, values and viewpoints (Chu & Cannon, 2021; Kaljonen et al., 2024; Schlosberg, 2007). Loo et al. (2014) notes that procedural concerns have historically been less developed in food justice scholarship than other justice dimensions, even though participatory injustices often underpin distributive ones.

Parzonko et al. (2025) develop a more detailed interpretation of procedural justice around three underlying themes. The first, *participants,* concerns which actors are included in decision-making, how they are selected, what roles they occupy, and whether marginalised groups can meaningfully influence outcomes. The second, *structural design,* refer to the rules, norms and processes that shape how participation actually happens. It includes arrangements of deliberating spaces, the fairness and transparency of decision-making procedures and the power dynamics embedded in agenda setting processes. The third theme addresses the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of participation: how issues are framed, whose knowledge and interests are valued, and what the motivations underpin participation (Parzonko et al., 2025).

In food systems, procedural justice is particularly challenging because of the strong concentration of power among a small number of agri-food actors and the influence of vested interests in shaping agricultural and food policies (de Bruin et al., 2024). Marginalised people, communities, and countries — whether due to race, gender, class, income, migrant status, or position within the food system — are frequently excluded from decision-making in food system transitions (de Bruin et al., 2024). Unequal power dynamics are, in addition to the exclusion of participation, a risk for ensuring that all actors have a voice and can influence the outcomes (Turnhout et al., 2020). Together, these elements highlight that procedural justice is not only about involving a wide range of actors, but about creating fair, empowering, and coherent

governance processes that address unequal power dynamics and enable genuine influence within complex, multi-level food-system transitions (Kivimaa et al., 2023; Parzonko et al., 2025).

Capacity justice

Capacity justice concerns the fair acknowledgment and support of people's differing abilities and opportunities to respond to societal and environmental transitions. It emphasises that justice requires more than equal distribution or recognition: it also entails ensuring that individuals and groups have the material and immaterial capacities, resources, and capabilities they need to act, adapt, and live dignified and meaningful lives in the face of change (Kaljonen et al., 2024; Moragues-Faus et al., 2024; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022).

In the context of food systems, capacity justice concerns, among other things, the differing abilities of households to access fresh, affordable, and sustainable food. Engaging with healthier or more sustainable diets typically requires financial resources, time, food literacy, and access to reliable information. Insecure financial circumstances and limited time can significantly constrain people's capacity to consider, let alone act on, the nutritional quality or sustainability of the food they're consuming (Kaljonen et al., 2021). At the producer end of the food chain, capacity justice equally calls for support to differently sized food system actors to engage in transitions: small and medium-sized farms, processors, and food businesses often lack the resources to adopt new technologies, standards, or business models on the same terms as larger actors (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022).

Cosmopolitan justice

Early discussions of justice in sustainability and transition research largely focused on the impacts of environmental policies on local workers and communities (Morena et al. 2020), and tended to be framed within national boundaries. Insights from climate and environmental justice have broadened this perspective, demonstrating that the consequences of transitions reach far beyond nation-states and affect diverse populations across the globe (Kaljonen et al., 2024; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). Cosmopolitan justice captures this expanded understanding by emphasising that all individuals, regardless of where they live or when they are born, possess equal moral

worth and share responsibilities for one another's wellbeing. This perspective calls attention to global interdependencies, to historically unequal contributions to environmental harm, and to the disproportionate burdens carried by those least responsible (Kivimaa et al., 2023).

The cosmopolitan dimension also includes intergenerational responsibility. The definition of sustainable development of the UN (United Nations, 1987), already embeds a justice dimension at its core: it highlights the distributive question of whose needs are met today and stresses a cosmopolitan and intergenerational responsibility to safeguard the well-being of future generations. Kaljonen et al. (2024) highlight that this entails protecting the long-term wellbeing and opportunities of those who will live with the consequences of present-day decisions. Cosmopolitan justice further foregrounds the role and responsibilities of transnational corporations, whose practices significantly shape global justice outcomes (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). Crucially, what appears just within a local or national context can produce unjust effects elsewhere, and vice versa, illustrating the complex relationship between scales of justice (Stevis & Felli, 2020). Taken together, cosmopolitan justice shifts the focus from justice confined to national communities to an approach that recognises global inequalities, intergenerational responsibilities, and the far-reaching impacts of local actions. This dimension helps ensure that sustainability transitions do not benefit current populations at the expense of distant or future ones.

Ecological and non-human beings' justice

Ecological and non-human animal justice expands the scope of justice beyond humans to include the moral consideration and fair treatment of ecosystems, species and the broader natural world (Schlosberg, 2007). Kaljonen et al. (2024) argue that transitions should not only mitigate climate impacts but also address wider ecological consequences, including effects on biodiversity and non-human animals. Tribaldos et Kortetmäki (2022) further stress that this dimension must encompass both the instrumental value of nature; its contribution to people wellbeing through ecosystem services (IPBES, 2019), and its intrinsic value meaning that nature deserves respect and protection irrespective of its usefulness to humans.

This dimension is particularly relevant for food systems. Food systems are one of the major drivers of environmental degradation (Manzoni et al., 2024), accounting for almost 21-37% of the total greenhouse gasses (GHG) emissions, which makes them one of the biggest emitters. They contribute significantly to biodiversity loss, soil degradation, water pollution, and habitat fragmentation through intensive practices such as monocultures, heavy pesticide and fertiliser use, and overexploitation of land and freshwater resources (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). Recognising ecological and non-human justice therefore implies that food system transitions must safeguard biodiversity, ecosystem health, and the wellbeing of non-human animals, treating these as essential conditions for genuinely just and sustainable transitions, rather than as secondary or instrumental considerations (Kaljonen et al., 2024; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022).

2.4.2. Synthesis: justice across dimensions

Taken together, these six dimensions provide a holistic understanding of justice in food system transitions. Such multidimensionality is essential because injustice is rarely one-dimensional or isolated. In food systems in particular, justice spans social, economic, cultural, political, global, and ecological spheres, and these are all deeply entangled. A low-income household, for instance, may face limited access to fresh, affordable, and culturally appropriate food (distributive injustice), see its dietary traditions overlooked in school meal provision or public health campaigns (recognitional), be absent from the policy arenas where food strategies are designed (procedural), lack the time, financial means, or food literacy to engage with healthier or more sustainable diets even when these are formally available (capacity), depend on global supply chains where the environmental and labour costs of producing their food are externalised to distant regions and workers (cosmopolitan), and live in neighbourhoods where intensive agricultural practices upstream have degraded soil, water, and biodiversity (ecological). No single theory of justice can adequately capture all these dynamics. Because the components of food systems are deeply interconnected, transitions generate impacts across multiple domains and evaluating justice through only one lens risks overlooking these interdependencies. A multidimensional framework therefore enables a more comprehensive assessment

that considers not only outcomes, but also the processes, power relations, and structural conditions shaping just and unjust food system transitions.

2.5. Contextualization of the case study: the Brussels food system

The application of the developed framework will be on the Good Food Strategy 2.0, which is the policy document for Food System Governance in Brussels. The following section explores the specific characteristics and complexities of the Brussels food system in greater depth.

2.5.1. Socio-demographic characteristics

A young and diverse population in Brussels

After a period of population decline from 1970 until the mid-1990s, the population of the Brussels-Capital Region has grown steadily since the late 1990s, at a faster pace than Flanders, Wallonia, and the other major Belgian cities (Observatorium voor Gezondheid en Welzijn van Brussel-Hoofdstad, 2020). With an average age of 37.9 years, Brussels is also markedly younger than Flanders (43.2) and Wallonia (42.1) (Hermia & Tennstedt, 2024). Brussels is also one of the most cosmopolitan and multicultural cities in the world. In 2024, the city holds 1,249,597 inhabitants, representing 180 nationalities with 37,2% non-Belgian citizens (Hermia & Tennstedt, 2024; Statbel, 2025a). 22.0% of the population of the Brussels-Capital Region consisted of Belgian nationals with a Belgian background and 40.8% were Belgian nationals with a foreign background (BISA, 2025a; Statbel, 2025a). Among non-Belgian residents, French citizens currently form the largest nationality group in Brussels, followed by Romanian and Italian nationals. Non-European populations are also strongly represented, including Ukrainians (2.8%) and Syrians (2.2%), alongside the long-established Moroccan community, which accounts for 7.3% of the population (BISA, 2025a).

The Brussels paradox: economic wealth and social vulnerability

The Brussels-Capital Region is characterised by deep and persistent socio-economic inequalities, often described as the “Brussels paradox” (Observatorium voor Gezondheid en Welzijn van Brussel-Hoofdstad, 2020). Thanks to its highly developed financial and administrative services sector, Brussels produces significant added

value to the national economy and has the most favourable trade balance of the three regions, supplying services to Flanders and Wallonia. However, much of this locally generated wealth leaves the Region: around €20 billion in labour income is transferred each year to commuters from Flanders and Wallonia (NBB, 2025), who also hold half of the jobs contributing to the Brussels GDP (Observatorium voor Gezondheid en Welzijn van Brussel-Hoofdstad, 2020) . As a result, the disposable income in Brussels is 33% lower than the regional GDP (NBB, 2025), and the actual residents of Brussels cannot profit from this economic wealth nor the employment availabilities.

A large share of Brussels residents remain socially and economically vulnerable. Approximately one third of Brussels' population lives below the poverty threshold, compared to 8% in Flanders, and 18% in Wallonia (Observatorium voor Gezondheid en Welzijn van Brussel-Hoofdstad, 2024). Income inequalities within the region are particularly pronounced: median annual incomes range from as little as €15,633 in Sint-Joost-ten-Node to over €26,197 in Sint-Pieters-Woluwe, reflecting stark socio-spatial disparities. Lower-income households are largely concentrated in the most deprived neighbourhoods of the Region, particularly along the canal area (Observatorium voor Gezondheid en Welzijn van Brussel-Hoofdstad, 2020). Figure 1 depicts this socio-spatial inequality.

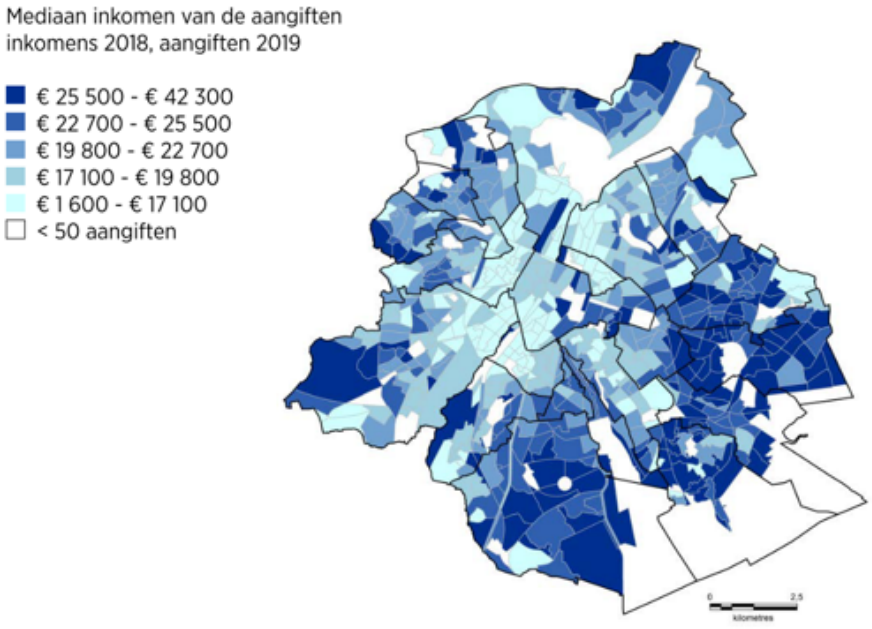


Figure 1: Median taxable income of tax returns per statistical sector. Source:(Observatorium voor Gezondheid en Welzijn van Brussel-Hoofdstad, 2020)

These inequalities are further illustrated by the sharp rise in homelessness. Between 2022 and 2024, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Brussels increased by 25%, reaching 9,777 individuals, of whom 1,991 women and 1,678 minors This represents a substantial increase compared to the 2022 count, which identified 7,134 homeless persons, including 977 minors (BISA, 2025; Bruss'help, 2024). The COVID-19 crisis further deepened these inequalities. Vulnerable households faced income losses, mounting debt, rent arrears and difficulties paying for energy, water and healthcare. By contrast, part of the more affluent population did not experience any loss of income and, in some cases, even accumulated substantial savings due to reduced spending on leisure activities. The BCR was particularly severely affected by the crisis, not only because of its economic structure but, above all, due to the vulnerable social conditions of a large share of its population. While the measures put in place largely mitigated the social impacts for those who could access them, many Brussels residents nonetheless fell through the gaps of the social safety net (Observatorium voor Gezondheid en Welzijn van Brussel-Hoofdstad, 2020).

Food affordability and the role of food aid in Brussels

In the Brussels-Capital Region, access to adequate and nutritious food is increasingly shaped by limited financial resources. By 2020, food had become the second-largest household expense after housing (BISA, 2025), with food expenditures rising from 12.5% of household income in 2016 to 14.8% in 2020 (BruFo, 2025; Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest, 2022). This burden is felt unevenly across the population. While households at both ends of the income distribution allocate a comparable proportion of their budget to food, the consequences differ sharply. For low-income households this expenditure represents a much heavier constraint, leaving little room for other essential expenses such as housing, energy, or healthcare (BruFo, 2025; Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest, 2022), increasing economic stress and vulnerability. Consequently, reliance on food aid has increased substantially in recent years.

For 2022, it was estimated that approximately 70,000 residents of the Brussels-Capital Region depended on food aid services, a 20 to 30% increase compared to 2019 following the COVID-19 crisis. This trend has continued, with an estimated 90,000 people (7% of the population) relying on food aid in 2024 (FdSS, 2024). Food aid provision in Brussels relies on two main pillars: the informal recovery of unsold food

from supermarkets and the organised distribution of European food aid through the European Social Fund Plus. While this system enables food aid organisations to respond to growing needs, it also creates structural vulnerabilities. The strong dependence on surplus food from large retailers means that both food availability and distribution volumes are largely shaped by commercial decisions outside the control of food aid actors, rendering the system fragile, unstable, and difficult to anticipate (BruFo2050, 2025).

2.5.2. Dietary and consumption characteristics

This section summarizes the consumption habits and behaviours of BCR residents A more in-depth analysis can be found in the recent food consumption surveys by Sciensano (Vermeire et al., 2025).

The diet of the BCR is characterised by higher intakes of wholegrain cereals, vegetables, fruits and legumes compared with the Belgian average, with 70% of residents reporting daily vegetable consumption. While overall meat consumption and processed red meat intake are lower than the national average, the consumption of unprocessed red meat is somewhat higher, and both remain above recommended levels (Bel et al., 2023; Vermeire et al., 2025). Brussels also has the highest proportion of non-meat eaters in Belgium, accounting for 21% of the population, and shows a growing openness to plant-based proteins (Stevens, 2022). In addition, the Region leads Belgium in organic food consumption, with 68% of residents reporting regular purchases of organic products. Organic food sales reached €166 million, representing 13% of national turnover (VLAM, 2025). Despite these trends, overall adherence to dietary recommendations remains low. Fewer than one in four adults in the Brussels-Capital Region meet the recommended intake levels across major food groups, including whole grains, fruits and vegetables, dairy products, nuts and seeds, and unprocessed red meat (Vermeire et al., 2025).

2.5.3. Economical context and key food system actors

Starting, it is important to note that Brussels has an extremely low food self-sufficiency: only 0.3% of local demand for fruits, vegetables, potatoes, eggs, and dairy is produced within the region itself (Riera et al., 2020). As a result, the BCR food system is largely

oriented towards consumption rather than local production. This consumption-oriented nature is reflected in the structure of its urban food economy, where actors at the end of the value chain dominate: HoReCa accounts for 50.2% of food-related actors, while retail represents 22.2% (BruFo, 2025). As a result, wholesale, processing and logistics play a pivotal role in connecting external production territories with Brussels' consumer market (BruFo, 2025).

The food sector is nonetheless a substantial employer in Brussels. HoReCa alone comprised around 6,700 enterprises in 2024 and represents 20.6% of all HoReCa employment in Belgium (Statbel, 2025b). In addition, the wholesale sector counts around 850 food-related enterprises (Statbel, 2025b), and food processing, although it is the largest industrial sector of the region, is largely made up of small-scale firms, with 85% of enterprises employing fewer than ten workers and around 2,500 people employed in agri-food processing and manufacturing in 2022 (perspective.brussels & citydev.brussels, 2024). Given the region's strong reliance on imported food, logistics plays a central role in connecting external production territories to the Brussels consumer market, with road transport currently handling around 90% of food flows and alternative modes such as inland waterways and rail remaining marginal (Brussel Mobiliteit, 2019; BruFo, 2025). The Brussels food economy is further characterised by a high diversity of formats, ranging from large supermarket chains, which account for around 95% of all food purchases in the region (BruFo, 2025), to a dense network of independent, ethnic and specialised shops, weekly markets, and a growing number of innovative initiatives such as cooperative supermarkets (e.g. BEEScoop), short-chain distributors (e.g., Linked.Farm, Terroirist and Mabio), and socially or environmentally oriented businesses (e.g., Atelier Groot Eiland & Cassonade) (BruFo, 2025). In addition, many eateries have been awarded the Good Food label, reflecting broader efforts within the sector to promote sustainability and social inclusion (BruFo, 2025).

2.5.4. Political context: legal and strategic frameworks

Food policy in the Brussels-Capital Region sits within a complex multi-level governance structure spanning the European Union, the Belgian federal state, the regional level (BCR), the community level, and the municipal level. Understanding this multi-layered system is essential to grasp how the Brussels food system operates and

within which legal and strategic context it is developed and implemented. Competences are fragmented across these levels: the EU is responsible for protecting internal market competitiveness, market harmonisation, consumer protection, and food labelling, in part together with the Belgian federal state. The federal level holds competences such as product standardisation, fiscal policy, consumer protection, food labelling, and key aspects of labour law and social security.

At the regional level, the BCR is responsible for land-related matters, including spatial planning, agriculture, the environment, food promotion, economic policy, and scientific research. Unlike Flanders and Wallonia, the BCR has no provinces; as a result, competences normally exercised by provinces are shared between the regional government and the three community commissions: the Common Community Commission (GGC), the French Community Commission (COCOF), and the Flemish Community Commission (VGC). They cover community matters such as health and education. Municipalities in Brussels have no legislative decision-making power over food policy but shape the local food environment through spatial planning and fiscal tools. Through urban planning regulations, permits, fees, concessions, and local taxes, municipalities can shape where and how food-related activities take place and support the local implementation of higher-level policy objectives.

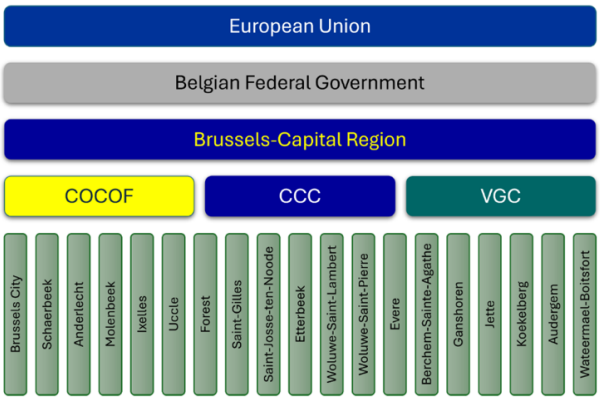


Figure 2: Overview of governance structure in BCR. Source: BruFo, 2025

Legal and Strategic policy frameworks

At the level of broader strategic frameworks, food system governance is situated in the fertile soil of the overarching United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). At the European level the main strategic framework is currently the Vision for Agriculture & Food (European Commission, 2025). It focuses on transforming

Europe's agri-food sectors so that they are sustainable, resilient, competitive and fair, while ensuring food security and viable livelihoods for farmers. This strategy builds further on the farm to fork strategy, a part of the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2025). At the federal level, no dedicated food strategy has been adopted since the 2016 Food and Health Plan, leaving sustainability ambitions largely dispersed across related initiatives (BruFo, 2025). In this context, cities have increasingly become key sites for integrated food governance. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), launched in 2015 at the initiative of the Mayor of Milan and signed by more than 100 cities worldwide, formalises this shift by bringing cities together around a shared commitment to sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban food systems (MUFPP, 2015). The Pact is structured around a Framework for Action with 37 recommended actions grouped in six categories: governance, sustainable diets and nutrition, social and economic equity, food production, food supply and distribution, and food waste. Seven Belgian cities have signed the Pact, including Brussels (MUFPP, 2015).

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That said, the focus of this thesis is mostly on governance at regional level. The BCR developed its own regional food governance on the initiative of the regional government. The first Good Food Strategy (GFS) was adopted in 2016 and ran until 2020. Building on its ambitions, the Brussels-Capital Region launched the Good Food Strategy 2.0 in 2022, covering the period 2022–2030 and aligned with the Regional Policy Statement 2019–2024, which had called for the strategy to be strengthened. GFS 2.0 was co-constructed over the course of one year with around 300 stakeholders from across the food system (BEW, n.d.). The strategy pursues a structural shift of the Brussels food system towards sustainability by 2030. It wants to reshape the system, from production to consumption, into one that respects humans and other species, regenerates biodiversity, and generates high-quality employment, consistent with the regional Shifting Economy strategy. In practice, the strategy aims to ensure that all Brussels residents have access to Good Food products suited to their needs, while producers are paid a fair price (Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest 2022).

GFS 2.0 is structured around five action lines and four transversal principles. The five action lines broadly cover agro-ecological production; sustainable food processing and

distribution; food access; and the reduction of food loss and waste. Each line is further broken down into sub action lines, operational objectives and associated concrete measures. They are displayed in Table C1-C5 in Appendix C. The four transversal principles run through the entire strategy: (i) a participatory, open-ended and co-supported governance system, integrating the food transition across policy domains such as economy, employment, education, health, spatial planning and transport (ii) a systematic application of social inclusion, health and food sovereignty, anchored in a "One World, One Health" approach and in the right of people to culturally appropriate, sustainably produced food; (iii) a focus on climate change mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity protection; and (iv) an attention to the multi-faceted urban character of the BCR, tailoring action to the specific ecological, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of its different neighbourhoods and scales (Brussel Hoofdstedelijk Gewest, 2022). The GFS 2.0 is the policy document on which the Food Justice Index developed in this thesis is applied.

Taken together, the literature review and the contextualisation of the Brussels food system set the stage for the analytical work of this thesis. The justice literature shows that assessing justice in food system transitions requires moving beyond the classical triad of recognition, distribution and procedural justice, and engaging with additional dimensions such as capacity, cosmopolitan, and ecological or non-human justice. Existing frameworks, however, remain largely conceptual, are rarely operationalised for policy evaluation, and have not yet been applied to the Brussels context. At the same time, Brussels offers a case that makes the question of justice particularly salient: a young, highly diverse and economically polarised population, a consumption-oriented food economy that is structurally dependent on external production territories, and a fragmented multi-level governance landscape in which the Good Food Strategy 2.0 stands out as the regional government's integrated policy response.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This research adopts a theory-driven, qualitative evaluative approach of a single policy document supported by a structured, criterion-based scoring instrument: the Food Justice Index (FJI). Unlike frameworks that map justice concerns across multiple policy intervention points or transition pathways to guide how systemic change should occur (Kaljonen et al., 2024), the FJI applies justice dimensions to a single governance document at a single point in time. It is therefore designed as an evaluative rather than a normative instrument: it does not prescribe how change should be made just, but produces a structured, evidence-based assessment of for whom and in what ways justice is currently addressed in a given policy. The research follows a two-stage design. In the first stage, the evaluative framework is developed based on a structured literature review of existing justice and just-transition scholarship. In the second stage, the framework is applied to a specific policy document, the Good Food Strategy 2.0 of the BCR, through qualitative content analysis combining full-text coding and measure-by-measure assessment (see section 3.3). The study falls under theoretically and conceptually oriented just transition research (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022), which aims to develop normative principles and criteria to guide transition processes (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). In line with this orientation, the thesis adopts an ex-ante approach [1] to the evaluation of GFS 2.0: rather than assessing observed outcomes, it evaluates how the strategy addresses justice on the basis of its design and stated commitments. This orientation is particularly relevant for food system transitions, where different policy choices carry distinct social implications that need to be anticipated from the outset if the transition is to be effectively just (Kortetmäki & Järvelä, 2021).

[1] Ex-ante evaluation assesses how a policy document is designed to address certain issues, whereas ex-post evaluation examines the observed impacts of a policy after it has been implemented (Juhola et al., 2022). Since this thesis does not evaluate observed effects but rather the design and stated commitments of the strategy, it constitutes an ex-ante evaluation, even though the strategy was adopted in 2022 and covers the period until 2030.

3.2. Development of evaluative framework: the Food Justice Index

3.2.1. Initial development of the dimensions and criteria

The development of the FJI started with a structured literature review focused on justice in sustainability transitions and food systems. Literature was gathered and organised into four thematic collections: *justice and just transitions*, *food systems*, *evaluative frameworks*, and *Brussels*. Foundational theoretical contributions on justice were reviewed first, followed by more applied and recent literature on environmental justice, food systems, and just transitions (de Bruin et al., 2024; Juhola et al., 2022; Kaljonen et al., 2024; López Cifuentes et al., 2025; Schlosberg, 2007; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022 etc.). Reading continued until conceptual saturation was reached, meaning that additional sources no longer introduced new justice concerns. This literature is presented in detail in chapter 2.

From this body of literature, the justice dimensions of the FJI were derived by examining how different sources conceptualise relevant justice concerns (Williams & Doyon, 2019). Dimensions that recurred across the literature were identified first, and complemented with additional dimensions where necessary to adequately capture justice concerns specific to urban food system transitions. This process resulted in the selection of six justice dimensions, consistent with the recent just-transition frameworks of Kaljonen et al. (2024) and Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022).

Each dimension was then broken down into a set of analytical criteria that guide the assessment of the strategic pathways. These criteria translate the dimension into concrete issues. In developing these criteria, several existing frameworks to evaluate justice were examined (de Bruin, 2024; Juhola et al., 2022; Kaljonen et al., 2024; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). Criteria were first formulated at the general level of just-transition evaluation and subsequently adapted to the specific context of urban food system transitions. The full set of justice dimensions and criteria, as refined through the application of the FJI, is presented in chapter 4.

3.2.2. Scoring methodology: a rubric-based approach

To assess the extent to which the policy document addresses each criterion of the FJI, a structured ordinal scoring scheme was developed. The form of this scoring scheme

draws on the methodological approach of rubrics. A rubric is a simple assessment tool that combines three elements: a set of evaluative criteria, a scoring scale and quality definitions that describe what each level of performance looks like for each criterion (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Perlman, 2003). Rubrics originate in educational assessment, where they are used to make the evaluation of complex performances of students more transparent, consistent and grounded in explicit standards (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). There are 2 types of rubrics: analytical and holistic. Analytical rubrics assign a score to each criteria designed to assess the performance, rather than looking holistically at the quality of the performance. Analytical rubrics are often used to define the strengths and learning needs of students (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). The criteria should be designed and ordered in such a way that different raters would generally achieve a similar score when applying the assessment tool (Perlman, 2003).

Although rubrics originate in educational contexts, the methodological form can be productively transposed to policy evaluation, where the same needs exists for systematic, transparent, and criterion-based assessment of complex subjects. An example of literature that has used this methodology to assess a policy document is Juhola et al. (2022), on which framework this thesis is therefore also based. They applied an analogous ordinal scoring approach to evaluate justice considerations in climate adaptation policies. The FJI takes the form of an analytic, descriptive rubric: analytic, because each criterion is scored separately rather than aggregated into a single holistic judgement, and descriptive, because each level of the scoring scale is anchored in a qualitative descriptor rather than reduced to a number alone, the scoring descriptions.

The general scoring scheme of the FJI ranges from 0 to 3. Each score corresponds to a qualitative description of how the policy document addresses the criterion in question: A score of 0 was assigned when the criterion was not addressed in the strategy, with no acknowledgement of the issue and no related actions or responsibilities described. A score of 1 was assigned when the criterion was mentioned or partially acknowledged, but without concrete actions, measures, or operational plans, so that the reference to the issue remained descriptive. A score of 2 indicated that the strategy included concrete measures or responsibilities related to the criterion, but that implementation was incomplete, not systematically applied, or

lacked follow-up mechanisms. Finally, a score of 3 was assigned when the criterion was fully addressed in the strategy through clear objectives, long-term commitments and measurable actions.

In a second step, this general scoring scheme was tailored to each individual criterion. The descriptions of the four levels were rewritten to reflect what each criterion specifically requires, in order to minimise interpretive bias during coding and to make the scoring as transparent as possible. The tailored scoring descriptions for each criterion are provided in Tables 7-12.

It is worth noting that, although the FJI produces numerical scores, these numbers are shorthand labels for qualitatively defined categories rather than quantitative measurements. The analytical work (coding, interpretation and scoring) is qualitative throughout, and the ordinal scores serve as a structured representation of these qualitative judgements to allow for systematic comparison across criteria, dimensions and actor groups.

3.2.3. Constructing the FJI: key design decisions

During the development of the framework, several deliberate choices were made about which dimensions to include and which to integrate in other dimensions. This section first justifies the inclusion of two dimensions, present in other literature; cosmopolitan justice and ecological and non-human animal justice. Subsequently, it explains why a number of other dimensions present in the literature were not adopted as standalone categories. It concludes with a brief reflection on the choice to assign equal weighting to all six dimensions.

Governance strategies and policies are often implicitly designed on the assumption that future conditions will resemble the present (Hartley et al., 2019). Cosmopolitan justice has become increasingly relevant in transition research, particularly in light of climate change, global interdependencies, and the long-term and cross-border effects of policy choices (Moragues-Faus et al., 2024). As climate change continues to alter living environments and challenge societies, transition processes must strive to ensure that future generations have equal opportunities for wellbeing, security, and prosperity

as those alive today. For these reasons, the FJI integrates a cosmopolitan justice dimension, following the approaches of Kaljonen et al. (2024) and Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022). This dimension extends justice considerations across spatial and temporal boundaries, recognising global interdependencies, intergenerational equity, and shared responsibilities in food system transitions.

The inclusion of an ecological and non-human beings' justice dimension was equally subject to reflection. While the primary focus of this research is on the social impacts of food system transitions, excluding ecological justice would risk reinforcing an anthropocentric perspective that separates human wellbeing from ecological integrity. A holistic justice approach therefore acknowledges both the intrinsic value of non-human beings and the fundamental interdependence between human and ecological systems, recognising that social justice cannot be achieved independently of ecological sustainability. At the same time, given the social focus of this study, the ecological justice dimension is not explored in depth. Rather, it serves as a conceptual, normative anchor that emphasises the interconnectedness of social justice outcomes and environmental conditions within urban food system transitions.

Several other justice dimensions present in the broader literature were considered but ultimately not adopted as standalone dimensions in the FJI. This was not because their concerns are unimportant, but because each is already encompassed within one of the six dimensions as defined.

The most significant of these is restorative justice, which appears in frameworks such as Juhola et al. (2022). In transition research, restorative justice is concerned with rectifying historical injustices and restoring what has been damaged (Heidenreich et al., 2024). While this logic is very relevant, restorative justice is inherently backward-looking, concerned with acknowledging and compensating for past harm. Cosmopolitan justice, by contrast, operates across both time and space. It encompasses the reparative logic of restorative justice by asking what responsibilities arise from historical injustices (see criteria 5.2), but extends further by also addressing the forward-looking question of how to ensure fair opportunities for future generations (see criteria 5.4), and the spatial question of how local actions affect distant populations (see criteria 5.1 & 5.3). Including restorative justice as a standalone

dimension would therefore have introduced a partial and temporally narrow lens where cosmopolitan justice already provides a more comprehensive one.

The same logic applies to three further dimensions. Spatial justice, which examines how justice concerns are distributed and experienced unevenly across geographical scales and governance levels (Gürtler 2023), is captured within the cosmopolitan justice dimension's criteria 5.1 & 5.3. Intergenerational justice, the principle that present generations have a responsibility not to compromise the opportunities, wellbeing, and environmental conditions available to future generations (United Nations, 1987), is similarly integrated into the cosmopolitan dimension through criterion 5.4. Postcolonial justice, which recognises that the legacies of colonisation continue to shape contemporary power relations and structural inequalities and challenges the dominance of Western knowledge systems (Sovacool et al. 2023), has also been placed under cosmopolitan justice through criteria 5.2 and 5.3. Finally, multispecies justice, which emphasises equity for non-human beings and the inherent value of biodiversity and nature (Winter, 2022), was incorporated within the ecological and non-human beings' justice dimension rather than treated as a separate category.

A final design choice concerns the weighting assigned to each dimension in the score model. All six dimensions were given equal weight, meaning that each contributes equally to the overall justice profile of a strategy. In principle, differential weighting could be justified. A strategy evaluated in a context of acute food insecurity might prioritise distributive justice, while one in a biodiversity-sensitive region might weight ecological justice more heavily. Equal weighting was chosen here because there is no strong theoretical or empirical basis for systematically prioritising one dimension over another in the context of Brussels's food governance, and because introducing differential weights could complicate rather than clarify the results. The FJI is nonetheless designed to be adaptable: while the six dimensions and their criteria remain fixed across applications, both the weighting and the scoring descriptions can be adjusted by future users to reflect the specific priorities and governance context in which the framework is applied.

3.2.4. Refinements to the framework during application

During the second stage of the research, the application of the FJI prompted several concrete revisions to specific criteria, made during the first scoring round.

The original criteria 2.1 which assessed whether the strategy identifies and protects vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, was removed due to substantial overlap with criterion 1.1, which evaluates whether the strategy recognises and ensures the visibility of marginalised or underrepresented groups. Although the criterion belongs to both dimensions, recognition and distributive, they made use of the same data and would produce almost an identical score. The content was used to score the strategy for criterion 1.1.

Next, Criterion 4.1 was expanded to include financial support alongside the capacity-building initiatives already covered. During the evaluation it became clear that financial support for food system actors such as subsidies, funding mechanisms, and stable legal frameworks for investment etc. are a distinct and important form of capacity building that the original criterion did not capture. Governments have a specific role to play in providing financial infrastructure for transitions, and this is qualitatively different from providing information, training, or peer learning opportunities. The revised criterion reads: *the strategy aims to support capacity-building initiatives, such as learning hubs, that enable urban residents and food system actors to engage in collective action, while also providing all food system actors with financial support, guidance, training, and access to information to contribute to the food system transition.* Criterion 2.4, which originally concerned only consumer access to nutritious and safe food, was expanded to include producer access to land and organic resources.

Criterion 4.3 assessing inequalities in access to knowledge, education, and resources needed to participate in food system transitions was removed after the first scoring round, as it relied on the same data and produced the same scores as criterion 4.2, which addresses differences in people's capacities and opportunities to respond to transitions. Finally, several criteria were deleted or clustered under the procedural justice dimension.

With the final FJI established, the second stage of the research consisted of applying the framework to the Good Food Strategy 2.0 of the Brussels-Capital Region.

3.3. Evaluating the Good Food Strategy 2.0

3.3.1. Source material

The primary object of analysis is the Dutch-language version of the Good Food Strategy 2022–2030, a 61-page policy document. Given its limited length, the coding and evaluation were carried out manually rather than through dedicated qualitative analysis software. For the evaluation of procedural justice, the strategy document alone was insufficient, as procedural justice concerns how the strategy was developed rather than what it contains. Additional documents from the website of Good Food Strategy on the co-construction process were therefore consulted, including the *notes de cadrage* of the different working groups, workshop slides, meeting notes, and summary reports of the committee '*Governance*'[2]. To support the interpretation of the results, this analysis additionally draws on an interview with a representative of the Good Food Strategy 2.0, conducted by H. De Schaapmeester on 26/01/2026. The interview was not used to assign scores but provided contextual insights that informed the discussion of the findings.

3.3.2. Two folded coding and evaluating process

The strategy was evaluated through a two-stage coding approach, combining breadth (screening the entire document) with systematicity (checking each operational measure against the framework). In the first stage, the full document was read line by line, and every sentence that appeared relevant to one or more dimensions or criteria of the FJI was underlined. Relevant sentences were copied into a working document, organised by criterion, and accompanied by the corresponding page number in the policy document. During this initial pass, observations were also made on what was *absent* or incomplete, both in the strategy and in the FJI itself. These reflections feed into the first part of the discussion (see section 5.1). On the basis of this first body of evidence and guided by the scoring descriptions developed earlier (see Table 7-12), a preliminary score was assigned to each criterion.

[2] https://goodfood.brussels/nl/content/de-co-constructie-van-de-good-food-strategie-2?domain=cit

In the second stage, a more systematic evaluation was performed. As described in section 2.4.4, the strategy is built around four transversal principles and five action lines. Each action line is further broken down into two sub-action lines, each associated with specific operational objectives and measures. In this second stage, each operational measure was reviewed individually and assessed against the criteria of the FJI to determine whether, and under which criterion or multiple criteria, it fell. This measure-by-measure approach ensured that the evaluation was not only restricted to the promises the strategy makes in its preface and objectives, but also captured what the strategy concretely commits to. Combining the two stages therefore made it possible to compare the ambitions of the strategy with operational commitment, what the strategy actually will do and to identify cases in which a dimension was strongly present in the framing but weakly translated into concrete measures, or vice versa. Once the data/evidence from both stages was combined for each criterion and translated from French & Dutch to English, the preliminary scores were refined and finalised on the basis of the scoring descriptions presented in Table 7-12.

3.3.3. Scoring for Consumers and Food System Actors (FSA)

Scores were assigned separately for two distinct groups: consumers and Food System Actors (FSA). This distinction was made because justice considerations can carry different meanings for each group, and a measure that strengthens justice for one does not necessarily do so for the other. For some criteria, only one of the two groups was relevant. For example, criterion 1.6 "*The strategy recognises all different sectors that are involved in the food system*" applies to food system actors but not to consumers. In such cases, the criterion was marked as "not applicable" for the non-relevant group and excluded from the denominator when calculating averages. This is an important distinction from a score of 0: a score of 0 indicates that the criterion is relevant but not addressed by the strategy, and is therefore included in the calculation, whereas "not applicable" removes the criterion from the calculation altogether. Treating the two cases differently prevents the strategy from being unfairly scored low on criteria that do not really apply to one group.

Once the score had been assigned to each criterion for each relevant group, average scores were calculated per group and an overall average was calculated per justice

dimension. To visualise the results and allow for a direct comparison across dimensions, the dimension-level averages were plotted in a spider chart using R (R Core Team, 2023), displayed in Figure 3.

4. Results

4.1. Evaluative framework: Food Justice Index (FJI)

This section presents the FJI itself as the primary output of this thesis. It consists of six justice dimensions, their associated criteria, and revised scoring descriptions. A critical reflection on the FJI and the scores of the strategic pathways follows in the discussion chapter.

4.1.1. Recognition justice

How are diverse actors, identities, values, and forms of knowledge within the Brussels food system acknowledged and respected? These are some of the questions we aimed to answer through this dimension. In the context of urban food justice, recognition concerns relate to the visibility and inclusion of both food system actors and different groups of consumers, with particular attention to marginalised or underrepresented groups such as women, Indigenous communities, immigrants, and people who have had experience with food insecurity (Parzonko et al., 2025). Another key recognition-related concern is how diverse socio-cultural perspectives on food, traditional and Indigenous knowledge can be valued alongside western food perspectives and traditional scientific knowledge. These concerns are operationalised through six criteria (Table 1), covering the visibility of marginalised and underrepresented groups (1.1), non-discrimination (1.2), respect for worldviews and cultural food practices (1.3), gender equality (1.4), recognition and integration of Indigenous, local, and traditional knowledge (1.5), and, finally, recognition of the full diversity of roles and sectors across the food system (1.6). The associated scorings descriptions for each criterion are presented in table 7.

Table 1: criteria of the recognition justice dimension

Criterion	Reference
1.1 The strategy recognises and ensures visibility of marginalised or underrepresented groups	(Conti et al., 2025; Kaljonen et al., 2024; Meerow et al., 2019; Schlosberg, 2007)
1.2 the strategy doesn't discriminate based on ethnicity, social class, gender, age, religion, ...	(Conti et al., 2025; Kaljonen et al., 2024; Kivimaa et al., 2023; Meerow et al., 2019)
1.3 The strategy respects diverse worldviews and cultural values around food (e.g. cultural diets, religious practices,...)	(Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
1.4 The strategy recognises and values gender equality in all food system domains and acknowledges contributions of all genders.	(Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
1.5 The strategy recognises and respects traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge.	(Conti et al., 2025; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
1.6 The strategy recognises all different sectors that are involved in the Food system.	

4.1.2. Distributive justice

Key elements for distributive justice concerns in the food system relate to the distribution of costs and benefits arising from possible measures taken, and whether the strategies safeguard working conditions, livelihoods and access to essential resources such as safe, nutritious and adequate food. These concerns are translated into 5 criteria in the FJI (Table 2), covering the distribution of benefits across populations and food system actors (2.1), the distribution of costs and negative impacts of the measures (2.2), equitable access to safe, nutritious, and adequate food for all residents and consumers, as well as equitable access to land and organic resources for farmers and producers (2.3), fair working conditions and the livelihood viability of jobs across food system-related sectors (2.4), and the resilience of the food supply chain to economic, environmental, or social shocks (2.5). An overview of the scoring descriptions is provided in Table 8.

Table 2: criteria of the distributive justice dimension

Criterion	Reference
2.1 The strategy analyses how the benefits of the food system measure (e.g. access, economic opportunities, health outcomes) are distributed across populations and food system actors.	(Chu & Cannon, 2021; Conti et al., 2025; Juhola et al., 2022; Kaljonen et al., 2024; Kivimaa et al., 2023)
2.2 The strategy analyses how the costs and negative impacts of food system measures (e.g. increasing prices, environmental burdens etc.) are distributed across populations and food system actors.	(Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
2.3 The strategy ensures that the whole population can get access to nutritious, qualitative, safe food at all times and that farmers have access to land and organic resources.	(Conti et al., 2025; Kaljonen et al., 2025; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
2.4 the strategy ensures that jobs in different food sectors (e.g. horeca, retail, logistics) have fair payments and working conditions.	(Kaljonen et al., 2025; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)

2.5 The strategy improves the resilience of food supply chain to shocks (e.g. extreme climate events, pandemics, economic insecurities etc.)	(Kaljonen et al., 2025; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)

4.1.3. Procedural justice

The procedural justice dimension of the FJI addresses whether food system transitions provide equal opportunities for participation in the decision-making processes. This concerns not only who is included, but also under what conditions actors engage with one another, how power dynamics are managed, and how transparency and feedback are organised throughout the process. These concerns are operationalise through six criteria (Table 3), covering transparency regarding who participated and in which phases of the decision-making process (3.1), the clarity of selection and recruitment logic (3.2), the consideration of different power positions, interests and dynamics during the process (3.3), equal access to reliable information about food systems and diets and their impacts on humans and nature for all participants (3.4), transparency about measures, implementation and monitoring towards all involved actors (3.5), and the presence of feedback mechanisms that can adjust the strategy according to evaluation of participants (3.6). An overview of the criteria and their adapted scoring descriptions is provided in Table 9.

Table 3: criteria of the procedural justice dimension

Criterion	Reference
3.1 The strategy is transparent about who participated in the strategy process and their involvement across process phases.	(Conti et al., 2025; Juhola et al., 2022; Kaljonen et al., 2025; Kivimaa et al., 2023; Parzonko et al., 2025; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
3.2 The strategy has a clear, transparent selection and recruitment logic.	(Parzonko et al., 2025)
3.3 The strategy has considered power positions, interests, and power dynamics during the participation process.	(Juhola et al., 2022; Parzonko et al., 2025)
3.4 The strategy ensures that reliable information on food system and diet impacts on humans and nature is accessible to all participants.	(Conti et al., 2025; Kaljonen et al., 2025; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
3.5 The strategy is transparent about its measures, implementation steps, monitoring and evaluation processes towards all involved participators and food system actors.	(Kivimaa et al., 2023)
3.6 The strategy allows feedback from participants and has mechanisms to adjust the strategy.	(Juhola et al., 2022)

4.1.4. Capacity justice

Key elements concerning capacity justice in food systems relate to the differing abilities of actors and consumers to respond to the demands of a food system transition. Daily life already requires substantial time and energy, leaving limited space to maintain a healthy diet, purchase sustainable and responsibly produced food products, or engage with food-related learning and decision-making processes. Financial, physical, geographical, and language barriers further compound these inequalities. Capacity-building initiatives such as learning hubs are identified in the literature as an important means of addressing such inequalities, by providing shared knowledge, technical support, and capacity enhancement to small-scale food system actors and other stakeholders (FAO, 2020; Parzonko et al., 2025). These concerns are operationalised through three criteria (Table 4), covering the strategy's support for such capacity-building initiatives, and accompanying mechanisms such as financial support, guidance, training and providing access to information (4.1), the acknowledgment of differences in capacities and opportunities among food system actors and consumers, and the inclusion of measures to reduce these inequalities (4.2), and, finally, whether the innovations and opportunities created through the strategy benefit all actors and consumers, rather than only those with higher existing capacities (4.3). The associated scoring descriptions for each criterion are presented in Table 10.

Table 4: criteria of the capacity justice dimension

Criterion	Reference
4.1 The strategy aims to support capacity-building initiatives,such as learning "hubs" that enable urban residents and food system actors to engage in collective action, while also providing all food system actors with financial support, guidance, training, and access to information to contribute to the food system transition.	(FAO, 2020; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
4.2 The strategy acknowledges the difference in capacities and opportunities to respond to transitions and includes measures to reduce these inequalities.	(Kaljonen et al., 2024)
4.3 The strategy ensures that innovations and opportunities created by urban food system transitions benefit all actors, especially those in vulnerable or marginalised positions.	(Kaljonen et al., 2025; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)

4.1.5. Cosmopolitan justice

The cosmopolitan dimension of the FJI extends justice considerations beyond the boundaries of the city, addressing both spatial and temporal interdependencies. Food products are often sourced in one region, processed in another, transported across borders, and ultimately sold and consumed elsewhere (FAO, 2017; Lang & Heasman, 2015), which means that local or national transition strategies can generate unintended social or environmental impacts in other parts of the world. This is evaluated through several criteria. Cosmopolitan justice is also temporal: actions taken today shape the conditions under which future generations will live. These concerns are operationalised through four criteria (Table 5), covering the acknowledgment of global interconnectedness of food systems and whether certain actions in the strategies create food insecurity in places elsewhere (5.1), the recognition of historical contributions to global environmental and social problems and the inclusion of compensatory measures (5.2), the avoidance of negative impacts on the livelihoods of food system actors in other regions (5.3), the consideration of fair opportunities for all future generation in terms of the wellbeing, access to nutritious and adequate food, and the quality of the environment (5.4). An overview of the adapted scoring descriptions is provided in Table 11.

Table 5: criteria of the cosmopolitan justice dimension

Criterion	Reference
5.1 The strategy acknowledges global interconnectedness of food systems and avoids that local/national decarbonizing actions cause food insecurity somewhere else.	(Kaljonen et al., 2025; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
5.2 The strategy acknowledges historical contributions to global environmental and social problems and tries to compensate.	(Conti et al., 2025; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
5.3 The strategy actively tries to avoid that decarbonizing actions undermine fair livelihood opportunities for actors elsewhere.	(Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
5.4 The transition strategy considers fair opportunities for all future generations. Current actions do not limit the wellbeing, access to safe, nutritious and adequate food or the quality of environment of future populations.	(Kaljonen et al., 2025; Kivimaa et al., 2023; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)

4.1.6. Ecological and non-human justice

The ecological and non-human being dimension of the FJI extends justice considerations beyond human actors to include ecosystems and the non-human beings. It addresses both the impacts of food production, distribution, and waste flows on the natural environment, and the recognition of non-human beings as bearers of

intrinsic value rather than mere resources for human use. These concerns are operationalised through five criteria (Table 6), covering the acknowledgment of the impacts of the food system on local and regional ecosystems and biodiversity, including measures to protect or enhance ecosystem health and resilience (6.1), the recognition of the intrinsic value of non-human beings (6.2), the constraint on resource use to within planetary boundaries (6.3), the maintenance or improvement of soil, water, and air quality through the transition process (6.4), and the acknowledgment of interdependencies between human and ecological systems, including the availability of ecosystem services for future generations (6.5). An overview of the associated scorings descriptions of the 5 criteria is provided in Table 12.

Table 6: criteria of the ecological and non-human beings' justice dimension

Criterion	Reference
6.1 The strategy acknowledges the impacts of food production, distribution, and waste flows on local and regional ecosystems and biodiversity (e.g. soils, waterways, green spaces), and tries to protect and improve their health and resilience.	(kaljonen et al;, 2024; Tribaldos& kortetmaki, 2022; Schlosberg, 2007)
6.2 The strategy recognises the intrinsic value of non-human beings (animals, plants, ecosystems).	(Kaljonen et al., 2025; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
6.3 The strategy ensures that the urban food system resource use (land, water, nutrients, energy, biomass) stays within planetary boundaries.	(Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
6.4 The strategy ensures that soil, water, and air health/quality are maintained or improved through the transition process.	(Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)
6.5 The strategy acknowledges the interdependence between human and ecosystems and ensures that ecosystem services remain available for future generations.	(Schlosberg, 2007; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022)

4.2. Evaluating the Good Food Strategy 2.0

This section presents the application of the FJI to the Good Food Strategy 2.0, which constitutes the framework's first empirical application. Each of the six justice dimensions is examined in turn (sections 4.2.1–4.2.6), and the scores are synthesised in section 4.2.7. For each dimension, the scores per criterion are reported separately for food system actors and consumers where applicable, accompanied by a brief interpretation of the overall pattern. The detailed justification of each score, including the specific passages from the strategy on which it is based, is provided in Appendix 1 (Table 14). Direct quotations from the strategy are accompanied by a page number; observations drawn from the document as a whole are reported without one.

4.2.1. Recognition justice

Overall, the strategy scored 1.083/3 on recognition justice. It acknowledges the socio-cultural diversity in Brussels, but only partially translates this recognition into structural inclusion across all recognition criteria. The score is somewhat higher for food system actors (1.167/3) then for consumers (1.00/3).

Table 7: Criteria, scoring descriptions and scores of the Recognition justice dimension applied to GFS2.0.

Criteria	Description	Scale	Scores	
			FSA	Consumers
1.1 The strategy recognises and ensures visibility of marginalised or underrepresented groups	No mentioning of marginalised groups	**0**	2	2
	Diverse groups or social inequalities are mentioned, but without concrete actions or mechanisms for inclusion.	**1**		
	The strategy recognises marginalised groups, but inclusion efforts are limited or not systematically implemented.	**2**		
	The strategy systematically ensures inclusion and representation of diverse socio-cultural groups.	**3**		
1.2 the strategy doesn't discriminate based on ethnicity, social class, gender, age, religion, ...	No mentioning of discrimination	**0**	0	0
	The strategy refers anti-discrimination, without concrete actions or mechanisms.	**1**		
	The strategy refers to anti-discrimination, with partial measures or guidelines.	**2**		
	the strategy has explicit equality actions, frameworks or tools to fully account for discrimination.	**3**		
1.3 The strategy respects diverse worldviews and cultural values around food (e.g. cultural diets, religious practices,...)	No mentioning of different world visions or values around food.	**0**	0	3
	Diverse visions around food are mentioned but treated as marginal or inferior.	**1**		
	Diverse visions are recognised as equal, but no measures to integrate them in the strategy.	**2**		
	The strategy explicitly integrates plural visions and practices, supporting their co-existence.	**3**		
1.4 The strategy recognises and values gender equality in all food system domains and acknowledges contributions of all genders.	No mentioning of gender equality.	**0**	0	0
	Gender equality or women's roles in food sector are mentioned but treated as inferior.	**1**		
	The strategy values gender equality, but scope is limited.	**2**		
	The strategy fully integrates gender equality and recognises contributions of all genders.	**3**		
1.5 The strategy recognises and respects traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge.	No recognition of Indigenous, traditional or local knowledge; the strategy is purely technical and scientific.	**0**	2	0
	Indigenous, traditional or local knowledge is mentioned, but treated as inferior or symbolic.	**1**		
	The strategy acknowledges Indigenous, traditional, and local knowledge, but integration is partial or inconsistent.	**2**		
	The strategy explicitly integrates traditional, local, and Indigenous knowledge into decision-making and values it equally with scientific knowledge.	**3**		
1.6 The strategy recognises all different sectors that are involved in the Food system.	No mentioning of different involved sectors.	**0**	3	/
	Few different sectors are mentioned, but not every sector is recognised as equal.	**1**		
	Big sectors are recognised as equal, but no measures to integrate the smaller sectors.	**2**		
	Every sector involved in the food system is recognised as equal, even the small ones.	**3**		

1.1 The strategy recognises and ensures visibility of marginalised or underrepresented groups

The strategy explicitly acknowledges social inequalities in Brussels, noting that one third of households live below the poverty line (P.26), and includes measures aimed at improving access to Good Food in collaboration with municipalities and The Public Welfare Centre (OCMW-CPAS). For consumers, these references and project-based measures are limited in scope and not systematically implemented, justifying a score of 2. For FSA, the strategy explicitly refers to the creation of non-relocatable jobs that provide opportunities for both low-skilled and highly skilled workers (P.21); support for farmers operating in the Brussels territory, particularly those applying agro-ecological practices (P.41); efforts to ensure that different profiles within target groups are representative (P.25); and the creation of an ecosystem of services adapted to different types of audiences (P.41). However, inclusion remains conditional on actors' willingness to contribute to the agro-ecological transition, which limits the score to 2.

1.2 the strategy doesn't discriminate based on ethnicity, social class, gender, age, religion, ...

Beyond the general recognition of socio-cultural inequality and the aim to provide culturally appropriate food, the strategy contains no explicit references to discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, age, or religion, and no discrimination measures or mechanisms. The strategy scores 0 for both groups.

1.3 The strategy respects diverse worldviews and cultural values around food (e.g. cultural diets, religious practices,…)

The strategy explicitly defines access to Good Food for every consumer as cultural access, alongside geographical and financial access (P.21, P.24, P.25, P.51), and includes concrete measures to adapt food supply to different cultures and diets, justifying a score of 3. For FSA, however, the strategy does not explicitly identify or target culturally diverse food system actors as such, nor does it establish clear objectives or mechanisms to integrate plural producer worldviews into governance structures or production planning, resulting in a score of 0 for FSA.

1.4 The strategy recognises and values gender equality in all food system domains and acknowledges contributions of all genders.

The strategy makes no reference to gender equality within food system domains, food access, or to the contributions of different genders, resulting in a score of 0 for both groups.

1.5 The strategy recognises and respects traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge.

The strategy does not explicitly say anything about traditional, local or Indigenous knowledge, but by supporting the agro-ecological production of residents and applying a "neighbourhood-based food approach that is as close to the citizens as possible" (P.2), it values local knowledge implicitly and aims to integrate it into practice. This justifies a score of 2 for food system actors and 0 for consumers.

1.6 The strategy recognises all different sectors that are involved in the Food system

In its preface, the GFS 2.0 explicitly acknowledges all sectors involved in the food system as equal and expresses the ambition for the entire supply chain to evolve collectively (P.2). The strategy refers to all links in the food system, from farmers and processors to retailers and restaurateurs (P.2), and emphasises the importance of connecting these actors through exchanges, networking, and partnerships. It further specifies the intention to support the transition of all traditional, new, large and small actors, with realistic objectives adapted to each (P.24). Concrete measures support smaller actors specifically, including targeted instruments for the scale-up phase of small-scale Good Food processors such as economic support, access to land, and access to capital (P.24) The strategy scores 3 for food system actors; this criterion is not applicable for consumers.

4.2.2. Distributive justice

The strategy scores 1.2 out of 3 on distributive justice. The score is somewhat higher for FSA (1.4/3) than for consumers (1.0/3) (Table 13).

Table 8: Criteria, scoring descriptions and scores of the distributive justice dimension applied to GFS2.0.

Criteria	Description	Scale	Scores FSA	Scores Consumers
2.1 The strategy analyses how the benefits of the food system measure (e.g. access, economic	No mentioning how the benefits are distributed. The strategy mentions how the benefits are distributed but doesn't consider equity. The strategy analyses how the benefits are distributed, with limited or inconsistent measures to ensure fair distribution.	**0** **1** **2**	1	0

opportunities, health outcomes) are distributed across populations and food system actors.	the strategy explicitly analyses and ensures fair distribution of benefits across the whole population and actors.	**3**		
2.2 The strategy analyses how the costs and negative impacts of food system measures (e.g. increasing prices, environmental burdens etc.) are distributed across populations and food system actors.	No mentioning how the disadvantages and costs are distributed. The strategy mentions how the disadvantages and costs are distributed but doesn't consider equity. The strategy analyses how the disadvantages and costs are distributed, with limited or inconsistent measures to prevent or compensate unequal burdens. The strategy ensures fair distribution of costs and disadvantages and includes mechanisms to prevent or compensate unequal burdens.	**0** **1** **2** **3**	1	0
2.3 The strategy ensures that the whole population can get access to nutritious, qualitative, safe food at all times and that farmers have access to land and organic resources.	No mentioning of access to safe, nutritious food or may worsen the existing access inequalities. The strategy mentions acces to safe, nutritious food but only for certain groups or geographical areas. The strategy ensures access to nutritious, safe food for most of the population and areas, but gaps and exclusions remain. The strategy ensures inclusive, reliable access to nutritious, high-quality, and safe food for the entire population, including vulnerable groups.	**0** **1** **2** **3**	2	3
2.4 the strategy ensures that jobs in different food sectors (e.g. horeca, retail, logistics) have fair payments and working conditions.	The strategy doesn't consider fair prices and working conditions, or they may even worsen. The strategy mentions labour conditions, but without clear measurements. The strategy explicitly aims to improve pay and/or working conditions in some food sectors or for specific groups. The strategy ensures fair prices and good working conditions for all individuals in all sectors involved in the food system.	**0** **1** **2** **3**	1	/
2.5 The strategy improves the resilience of food supply chain to shocks (e.g. extreme climate events, pandemics, economic insecurities etc.)	The strategy doesn't consider resilience against shocks. The strategy mentions resilience, but without clear measurements. The strategy aims to improve the resilience of food supply chains against certain shocks, not everything. The strategy improves the resilience of food supply chains to multiple shocks in clear ways.	**0** **1** **2** **3**	2	/

2.1 The strategy analyses how the benefits of the food system measures are distributed across the population and FSA. & 2.2 The strategy analyses how the costs and negative impacts of food system measures are distributed across population and FSA.

These two criteria are discussed together, as they both concern the distributional analysis of food system measures and rely on the same evidence from the strategy. The strategy includes a monitoring instrument that tracks actions, follows up on criteria

and objectives, and enables the strategy to be evaluated and adjusted (P.28), and it states that it will identify promising value chains for the region and monitor the transition pathways of food businesses (P.45). However, this framework does not analyse how benefits or costs are distributed across different groups. For consumers, there is no disaggregation across social groups or vulnerable populations, and the strategy does not analyse which residents benefit from increased food access, improved health outcomes, or affordability, nor does it examine who bears potential costs such as food price increases or reduced affordability. For food system actors, there is no comparison between small and large producers or between vulnerable and well-resourced businesses, and no assessment of which actors may bear disproportionate costs. such as investment burdens, compliance costs, or unequal exposure to economic or environmental pressures. The strategy's neighbourhood-based approach (P.2) does address distributional inequalities in access to Good Food across the city, justifying a score of 1 for food system actors. For consumers, the absence of any distributional analysis results in a score of 0 on both criteria.

2.3 The strategy ensures that the whole population can get access to nutritious, qualitative, safe food at all times and that farmers have access to land and organic resources.

This is the strongest criterion of the distributive justice dimension. For consumers, the strategy demonstrates consistent commitment to ensuring access to Good Food for the entire population, repeatedly stating the objective that all Brussels residents should have access in their neighbourhoods to Good Food products adapted to their needs, with access defined in geographical, financial, and cultural terms (P.21, P.24, P.25, P.51). This is supported by concrete measures, including the development of neighbourhood-level dynamics to improve food accessibility (P.54), targeted project calls aimed at making Good Food accessible to everyone (P.54), and initiatives specifically designed to improve access for vulnerable populations alongside an explicit commitment to transparent communication ensuring the transition does not result in higher costs for consumers (P.50). The strategy scores 3 for consumers. For FSA, the strategy acknowledges the scarcity of land in Brussels and its surroundings and states the ambition to introduce legal mechanisms to facilitate access to land for food production, alongside measures to improve access to urban organic materials and promote circular use of organic resources. This orientation is reinforced by the strategy’s definition of agro-ecology, which frames it as a multidimensional approach

to managing natural and human resources while preserving social integrity and sustainability (P.34). However, the strategy remains relatively vague on how access to land and organic resources will be operationalised in practice, justifying a score of 2.

2.4 The strategy ensures that jobs in different food sectors such as horeca, retail or logistic sector have fair payments and working conditions.

The strategy refers in its preface to a *"fair price for their work"* (P.2, P.20, P.21) and expresses an ambition to achieve fair wages and decent working conditions in the food system (P.22). However, these commitments are not translated into concrete measures, and there is no indication of how fair wages or working conditions will be ensured in practice for workers in HoReCa, retail, or logistics. Labour conditions are mentioned but without implementation mechanisms, justifying a score of 1 for food system actors. This criterion is not applicable for consumers.

2.5 The strategy improves the resilience of the food supply chains to shocks such as climate events, pandemics, economic insecurities…

Again, the strategy makes strong commitments in the preface regarding resilience, such as ensuring that producers have the necessary tools to adapt production systems to climate change and reducing dependence on raw materials from outside the European market (P.21), promoting circular models (P.21), supporting climate adaptation, and encouraging agro-ecological practices. These objectives are reinforced by the strategy's definition of agro-ecology, which emphasises resilience and sustainability (P.34). However, no concrete measure clearly aims to reduce reliance on external raw material supply chains. As a result, the strategy does aim to improve resilience against certain shocks, but the measures remain partial and do not comprehensively address all the resilience dimensions mentioned in the strategy's ambitions, resulting in a score 2 for FSA. This criterion is not applicable for consumers.

4.2.3. Procedural justice

Overall, the strategy scored 1,083/3 on procedural justice. The gap between food system actors (1.83/3) and consumers (0.33/3) is the largest of any dimension, a striking pattern that is examined further in the discussion (Figure 3).

Table 9: Criteria, scoring descriptions and scores of the procedural justice dimension applied to GFS2.0.

Criteria	Description	Scale FSA	Score Consumers	
3.1 The strategy is transparent about who participated in the strategy process and their involvement across process phases.	No mentioning who participates.	**0**	2	0
	The strategy mentions participation but doesn't say who the participators are and in which phase they participated.	**1**		
	The strategy lists all the participators but doesn't say in which phase they were involved.	**2**		
	The strategy provides clear and relevant information of the participants (e.g. about their profession, socio-economic status), and is transparent about the phases they were involved.	**3**		
3.2 The strategy has a clear, transparent selection and recruitment logic.	No mentioning of selection or recruitment methods.	**0**	1	/
	Selection or recruitment is mentioned, but criteria or procedures are unclear.	**1**		
	Selection or recruitment criteria or procedures are described but remain untransparent or inconsistent.	**2**		
	Selection and recruitment criteria are clearly defined, transparent, and designed to be inclusive.	**3**		
3.3 The strategy has considered power positions, interests, and power dynamics during the participation process.	No mentioning who participates.	**0**	2	/
	The strategy mentions participation but is limited in diversity of power positions and interests and only in one or a few phases of the process.	**1**		
	The strategy has multiple groups or participation in different phases of the process, but the continuity is limited or disrupted.	**2**		
	The strategy ensures broad and diverse participation, including actors with different power positions and interests, across all the phases.	**3**		
3.4 The strategy ensures that reliable information on food system and diet impacts on humans and nature is accessible to all participants.	No mentioning of available information.	**0**	1	/
	The strategy refers to information that is provided to actors, but doesn't mention equal access or that all information is evidence-based and reliable.	**1**		
	The strategy includes measures to give all actors equal access to reliable information, but lacks systematic approach.	**2**		
	The strategy ensures that all actors have equal access to clear, reliable, and evidence-based information throughout planning and implementation.	**3**		
3.5 The strategy is transparent about its measures, implementation steps, monitoring and evaluation processes towards all involved participators and food system actors.	No transparency, and no information about the processes.	**0**	2	1
	The strategy mentions measures, monitoring or evaluation but lacks clarity or transparency. The results are not accessible for everyone.	**1**		
	The strategy includes some transparancy and the results are only accessible for certain groups.	**2**		
	The strategy ensures full transparency of measures, monitoring, and evaluation, and available for all participators.	**3**		
3.6 The strategy allows feedback from participants and has mechanisms to adjust the strategy.	No feedback allowed and no revision mechanisms.	**0**	3	0
	Feedback from participants allowed but it is not connected to strategy adjustments.	**1**		
	The strategy allows feedback, but it lacks clear, consistent mechanisms to integrate the feedback.	**2**		
	the strategy includes mechanisms to collect feedback and reflections from participants and systematically integrates them to adjust the strategy.	**3**		

3.1 The strategy is transparent about who participated in the strategy process and their involvement across process phases.

The strategy explicitly states it was co-constructed with a wide range of actors, identified by their professional roles, organisational names, and functions in the food chain. Administrative bodies and federations are named specifically and supporting documentation names individual representatives. The strategy includes a detailed timeline of the co-construction process from March 2021 until June 2022 (P.19), indicating for each date which working groups, the Participatory Council, or focus groups met. However, while the strategy critiques the lack of social and cultural diversity in the previous GFS, it does not provide the socio-economic profile of its current participants as a standard element of its reporting. The strategy scores 2 for food system actors and 0 for consumers.

3.2 The strategy has a clear, transparent selection and recruitment logic.

The governance scheme clearly illustrates the functions of the various bodies involved in the implementation phase: steering committee, coordination committee, thematic poles, and participatory council. Focus groups and targeted consultations are used for actors (such as producers) who, due to time or resource constraints, cannot participate in long meetings, ensuring that their perspectives still inform decision-making. The participatory council is limited to a maximum number of members to maintain operational efficiency, but this also creates a barrier for new or alternative actors who are not affiliated with federations. The strategy scores 1 for food system actors. This criterion is not applicable for consumers.

3.3 The strategy has considered power positions, interests, and power dynamics during the participation process.

The strategy acknowledges that previous iterations were too “centred on the administration.” To manage competing interests, it mandates a balanced composition of the participatory council, ensuring representation from both established industry actors and emerging sustainable movements. It refers to mechanisms designed to manage potential conflicts and recognises that time and financial constraints pose barriers for non-governmental actors and proposes structural funding measures to help level the playing field. However, the decision-making process does not formally include the voices of citizens or marginalised groups to ensure equitable outcomes.

Although co-creation is presented as a central principle, the government ultimately retains the formal decision-making authority. This is translated in a score 2 for FSA, as the strategy considers different power positions, interests and the power dynamics, but in the end the measures to prevent it are limited. For consumers, this criterion is not applicable.

3.4 The strategy ensures equal access to clear, reliable and evidence-based information about the impact of food systems and diets on humans and nature to all participants.

The strategy explicitly highlights its web portal as a transparent source for all documents related to the working groups and the participatory council (P.18, P.32), and one of its stated goals is the development of a shared platform that will enable real-time tracking of actions. Specific *notes de cadrage* were prepared for the different working groups to structure meetings and clarify their objectives. However, despite the stated ambition of a bilingual process, documents on the platform are predominantly available in French. While all documents are formally accessible through the web portal, the platform requires considerable time and effort to navigate. The strategy does not include evidence-based information on the impacts of food systems on human health or the natural environment. The strategy scores 1 for food system actors. This criterion is not applicable for consumers.

3.5 The strategy is transparent about its measures, implementation steps, monitoring and evaluation processes towards all involved participators and food system actors.

The strategy explicitly states that all documents produced by the working groups and the participatory council are publicly available through the web portal (P.18, P.32), and information on resources, budgets, and timelines is publicly accessible. The strategy includes a monitoring instrument that is updated at least every six months by the managers of the measures, supported by an external coordination service (P.31), as well as a mechanism for annual baseline evaluation and a more in-depth mid-term evaluation, enabling the strategy to be adjusted over time (P.28). However, documents are predominantly available in French and are technical in nature, limiting accessibility for a broader audience. The strategy scores 2 for food system actors and 1 for consumers.

3.6 strategy allows feedback from participants and has mechanisms to adjust the strategy.

The strategy explicitly defines itself as an evolving document with built-in adjustment cycles. It grants the participatory council a formal role that obliges the government to respond to its feedback. Feedback is generated through ongoing discussions and through the monitoring of data gathered via a collaborative platform, which is then fed into the governance bodies. A clear date is set for the first major revision, based on participant input and monitoring data. The GFS2.0 adopts a co-portage model, in which participating actors have a legitimised influence on the evaluation and future direction of the strategy. However, the strategy does not include mechanisms through which citizens, non-selected interest groups, or marginalised populations can provide feedback on or influence the evaluation process. The strategy receives a score of 3 for food system actors and 0 for consumers.

4.2.4. Capacity justice

The strategy scores 2.67/3 on capacity justice — its highest score across all six dimensions. Consumers score 3/3 and food system actors score 2.33/3. This is also the only dimension where consumers score higher than food system actors.

Table 10: Criteria, scoring descriptions and scores of the capacity justice dimension applied to GFS2.0.

Criteria	Description	Scale	Score FSA	Score Consumers
4.1 The strategy aims to support capacity-building initiatives, such as learning "hubs" that enable urban residents and food system actors to engage in collective action, while also providing all food system actors with financial support, guidance, training, and access to information to contribute to the food system transition.	The strategy doesn't mention capacity-building initiatives.	**0**	3	3
	The strategy mentions capacity-building, but no specific initiatives, measures or goals.	**1**		
	The strategy includes certain initiatives to build capacity or motivate collective engagement, but without systematically integration.	**2**		
	The strategy integrates capacity-building initiatives that motivate and empower people to engage in collective action and contribute to transition processes, with dedicated structures or resources.	**3**		
4.2 The strategy acknowledges the difference in capacities and opportunities to respond to transitions and includes measures to reduce these inequalities.	the strategy doesn't recognise that actors differ in their capacities or opportunities to response to transition.	**0**	2	3
	The strategy acknowledges the difference but there are no measures to address or reduce them.	**1**		
	The strategy acknowledges the difference and includes limited or group-specific measures but no systematic approach.	**2**		
	The strategy explicitly recognises different capacities and opportunities and includes measures to reduce the inequalities and strengthen the opportunities to adapt for all groups.	**3**		

4.3 The strategy ensures that innovations and opportunities created by urban food system transitions benefit all actors, especially those in vulnerable or marginalised positions.	The strategy doesn't mention how vulnerable or disadvantaged groups can benefit from transition innovations or opportunities.	**0**	2	3
	The strategy mentions benefits from innovations and opportunities but doesn't mention the inclusion of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups in these benefits.	**1**		
	The strategy includes partial or group-specific measures to help vulnerable actors access transition benefits and opportunities, but they lack a systematic approach.	**2**		
	The strategy ensures that all actors - especially those in disadvantaged or vulnerable positions- can benefit equal from transitionary innovations.	**3**		

4.1 The strategy aims to support capacity-building initiatives, such as learning "hubs" that enable urban residents and food system actors to engage in collective action, while also providing all food system actors with financial support, guidance, training, and access to information to contribute to the food system transition.

For food system actors, the strategy provides guidance and advisory ecosystems, training, helpdesks, tools, labels, and facilitators for producers, canteens, restaurants, food businesses, and retailers. It includes project calls and targeted support mechanisms encouraging collective production and innovation, logistics hubs, networks, partnerships, and regular interregional exchanges, and financial support embedded in a stable legal framework for professional producers. For consumers and citizens, the strategy includes educational and social agricultural activities accessible to the entire Brussels population, support for associations that continuously inform and educate citizens on the food transition, neighbourhood-based initiatives such as community kitchens and collective projects, support for social spaces and accessible distribution models, targeted programmes for schools, children, and young people between 16 and 25 years, and education, training, and awareness-raising on food and climate issues. The strategy receives a score of 3/3 for both food system actors and consumers.

4.2 The strategy acknowledges the difference in capacities and opportunities to respond to transitions and includes measures to reduce these inequalities.

The strategy recognises that not everyone has equal access to healthy and sustainable food and explicitly links consumption patterns to social inequalities (P.11). For consumers, the strategy includes measures to reduce these inequalities, including prioritising neighbourhoods with fewer actions and vulnerable target groups, increasing the Good Food offer in supermarkets and areas where it is currently scarce, supporting Neighbourhood Kitchens, and establishing collaborations with social housing actors. For food system actors, the strategy includes agreements with

supermarkets in neighbourhoods with fewer actions, support for collective and small-scale projects, and collaboration with social housing providers and local authorities. However, these measures remain group-specific rather than forming a comprehensive system covering all types of food system actors. The strategy receives a score of 3 for consumers and 2 for food system actors.

4.3 The strategy ensures that innovations and opportunities created by urban food system transitions benefit all actors, especially those in vulnerable or marginalised positions.

For consumers, the strategy again includes strong measures specifically aimed at people in vulnerable or marginalised positions, largely overlapping with those identified under criterion 4.2: improving the financial, geographical, and cultural accessibility of the Good Food offer; prioritising areas and neighbourhoods where Good Food is scarce; concluding agreements with supermarkets to increase accessibility and visibility; establishing neighbourhood-level dynamics favourable to Good Food; collaborating with social housing providers, municipalities, and OCMW/CPAS; and financing Neighbourhood Kitchens (e.g., Cuisines de Quartier) as inclusive, community-based initiatives. This shows that the strategy is explicitly designed to ensure that consumers in disadvantaged positions can benefit from food system innovations. Taken together, these measures form a systematic and integrated approach rather than isolated actions, justifying a score of 3. For food system actors, the strategy also includes clear measures aimed at improving access to transition opportunities, including ensuring that 100% of producers active in Brussels are informed about and have access to adapted guidance services (P.40), facilitating access to land for agro-ecological projects (including support for land transfer and awareness-raising among landowners), supporting collective and small-scale production projects, and structuring and interconnecting Good Food producers to improve their integration into supply chains. However, these measures remain group-specific and project-based, justifying a score of 2.

4.2.5. Cosmopolitan justice

The strategy scores 0.33/3 on cosmopolitan justice, the lowest score across all six dimensions. Food system actors and consumers receive an equal overall score.

Table 11: Criteria, scoring descriptions and scores of the cosmopolitan justice dimension applied to GFS2.0.

Criteria	Description	Scale	Score	
		FSA	Consumers	
5.1 The strategy acknowledges global interconnectedness of food systems and avoids that local/national decarbonizing actions cause food insecurity somewhere else.	The strategy doesn't mention global interconnectedness between global food systems.	**0**	1	0
	The strategy acknowledges global interconnectedness of food systems but doesn't mention implications or certain actions to avoid or reduce these consequences.	**1**		
	The strategy discusses global interconnectedness of food systems and includes measures, but they are limited in scope or not systematically integrated.	**2**		
	The strategy explicitly addresses global interconnectedness and systematically includes clear measures, actions or cooperations to ensure fairness and sustainability across national borders.	**3**		
5.2 The strategy acknowledges historical contributions to global environmental and social problems and tries to compensate.	The strategy doesn't acknowledge historical contributions to global environmental or social problems.	**0**	0	0
	The strategy mentions historical contributions in general, but without actions or commitments.	**1**		
	The strategy acknowledges historical contributions and partially includes measures or actions to compensate for them.	**2**		
	The strategy explicitly acknowledges historical contributions to global problems and includes measures, mechanisms or actions to repair, compensate these legacies.	**3**		
5.3 The strategy actively tries to avoid that decarbonizing actions undermine fair livelihood opportunities for actors elsewhere.	The strategy doesn't acknowledge cross-border effects.	**0**	0	/
	The strategy acknowledges that decarbonizing actions may impact the livelihood opportunities of food system actors across national borders but doesn't include measures to address them.	**1**		
	The strategy acknowledges the potential transboundary impacts of decarbonizing actions and includes partial measures or actions to reduce or compensate for these externalized harms.	**2**		
	The strategy systematically evaluates and mitigates potential undermining of livelihood opportunities for actors across national borders.	**3**		
5.4 The transition strategy considers fair opportunities for all future generations. Current actions do not limit the wellbeing, access to safe, nutritious and adequate food or the quality of environment of future populations.	the strategy doesn't mention future generations or long-term fairness.	**0**	/	1
	The strategy mentions future generations but doesn't include actions or measures to ensure equal opportunities for them.	**1**		
	The strategy includes partial measures to ensure the same access to food, wellbeing and environmental quality for future generations but lacks systematic integration.	**2**		
	the strategy systematically ensures intergenerational fairness, integrates long-term actions, mechanisms and commitments that protects the rights and opportunities of future generations.	**3**		

5.1 The strategy acknowledges global interconnectedness of food systems and avoids that local/national decarbonizing actions cause food insecurity somewhere else.

The strategy acknowledges that a significant share of emissions linked to Brussels' activities originates outside its territory (P.10) and highlights dependencies on food systems in Flanders, Wallonia (P.21), and non-European raw material markets (P.21). However, it does not specify the implications of these interconnections for food insecurity elsewhere, nor does it define actions to prevent or mitigate negative cross-

border impacts of local decarbonisation efforts. Action line 1 includes measures to strengthen agro-ecological production in Brussels and its surrounding area, but these are not framed in terms of cosmopolitan justice. The strategy receives a score of 1 for food system actors and 0 for consumers.

5.2 The strategy acknowledges historical contributions to global environmental and social problems and tries to compensate.

The reference to “historical farmers” in one of the measures of sub-action line 1.1 (P.41) is the only such mention in the strategy and does not acknowledge historical contributions to global environmental or social problems. The strategy contains no indication of responsibility, compensation, or reparative action related to past global injustices. The strategy scores therefore 0 for both food system actors and consumers.

5.3 The strategy actively tries to avoid that decarbonizing actions undermine fair livelihood opportunities for actors elsewhere.

Although the strategy acknowledges that a significant share of emissions linked to Brussels' activities originates outside its territory (P.10) and highlights dependencies on food systems in Flanders, Wallonia (P.21), and non-European raw material markets (P.21), it does not include measures or commitments to ensure fair livelihood opportunities for food system actors outside Brussels. The measures addressing food system actors focus on farmers active in the Brussels territory. This criterion is not applicable to consumers. The strategy scores 0 for food system actors.

5.4 The transition strategy considers fair opportunities for all future generations. Current actions do not limit the wellbeing, access to safe, nutritious and adequate food or the quality of environment of future populations.

The strategy frames dietary patterns as beneficial for the health and development of both current and future generations (P.20). However, it does not include specific measures, behavioural incentives, or long-term safeguards aimed at ensuring that current food system actions do not limit the wellbeing, food access, or environmental quality of future generations. The strategy scores 1 for consumers. This criterion is not applicable for food system actors.

4.2.6. Ecological and non-human beings' justice

The GFS2.0 receives a total average score of 1.8/3 on ecological and non-human beings' justice. This dimension is assessed through a single combined score for each criterion, since the distinction between consumers and food system actors is not analytically meaningful here.

Table 12: Criteria, scoring descriptions and scores of the ecology and non-human beings' justice dimension applied to GFS2.0.

Criteria	Description	Scale	Score
6.1 The strategy acknowledges the impacts of food production, distribution, and waste flows on local and regional ecosystems and biodiversity (e.g. soils, waterways, green spaces), and tries to protect and improve their health and resilience.	The strategy doesn't mention potential impacts of food systems on ecosystems and biodiversity.	**0**	3
	The strategy mentions impacts of food systems on biodiversity and ecosystems, but there are no clear measures or actions.	**1**	
	the strategy includes partial measures to protect or improve ecosystems and biodiversity, but there is no systematic integration.	**2**	
	The strategy systematically includes long-term actions and measures to restore, protect or improve the health and resilience of ecosystems and biodiversity.	**3**	
6.2 The strategy recognises the intrinsic value of non-human beings (animals, plants, ecosystems).	The strategy doesn't mention non-human beings.	**0**	3
	The strategy mentions non-human beings' welfare but only in terms of human benefits.	**1**	
	The strategy recognises the intrinsic value of non-human beings but has no measures to protect it.	**2**	
	The strategy recognises the intrinsic value of non-human beings and has systematically included measures and monitoring mechanism to protect it.	**3**	
6.3 The strategy ensures that the urban food system resource use (land, water, nutrients, energy, biomass) stays within planetary boundaries.	The strategy doesn't mention natural resource use or planetary boundaries.	**0**	2
	The strategy discusses natural resource use but doesn't include measures or actions to ensure it stays within planetary boundaries.	**1**	
	The strategy includes measures to reduce or regulate the use of natural resources but there is no clear link with planetary boundaries.	**2**	
	The strategy explicitly ensures that the use of natural resources stays within planetary boundaries and has supporting mechanisms to ensure this.	**3**	
6.4 The strategy ensures that soil, water, and air health/quality are maintained or improved through the transition process.	The strategy doesn't mention soil, water and air health or quality.	**0**	1
	The strategy mentions soil, water and air health/quality but doesn't include measures or actions to improve them.	**1**	
	The strategy includes actions to improve the soil, water and air health/ quality but they are not systematically applied or lack monitoring.	**2**	
	The strategy systematically protects and improves the soil, water and air health/quality through actions, monitoring mechanisms or long-term commitments.	**3**	
6.5 The strategy acknowledges the interdependence between human and ecosystems and ensures that ecosystem services remain available for future generations.	The strategy doesn't mention an interdependency between human wellbeing and ecosystems.	**0**	0
	The strategy acknowledges an interdependency between humans and ecosystems, but there are no measures.	**1**	
	The strategy acknowledges the interdependency and includes some actions to maintain ES but lacks long-term commitments.	**2**	
	The strategy explicitly acknowledges the interdependence between human and non-human wellbeing and ensures the	**3**	

	continuity of ecosystem services for future generations through long-term commitments and monitoring mechanisms.	

6.1 The strategy acknowledges the impacts of food production, distribution, and waste flows on local and regional ecosystems and biodiversity (e.g. soils, waterways, green spaces), and tries to protect and improve their health and resilience.

The strategy recognises that food systems have significant impacts on climate, biodiversity, and ecosystems, and aims to create a food system that takes into account the health of the planet, humans, and animals (P.26). It focuses on enhancing agro-ecological practices and making them more common across the Brussels food system. Action line 4 includes a measure focused on motivating behavioural change towards more plant-based diets and action line 5 addresses the reduction of food waste flows. The strategy scores 3.

6.2 The strategy recognises the intrinsic value of non-human beings (animals, plants, ecosystems).

The strategy aims for a transition towards a food system that respects humans and other species (P.4). The strategy includes measures for the continuous adaptation of Good Food labels for canteens, restaurants, and retail to incorporate animal welfare criteria. The strategy receives a score of 3.

6.3 The strategy ensures that the urban food system resource use (land, water, nutrients, energy, biomass) stays within planetary boundaries.

The strategy acknowledges that the use of fossil fuels in the food system exceeds planetary boundaries (P.9) and expresses the intention to reduce these pressures. It promotes agro-ecological practices, aims to protect agricultural land, and aims to facilitate access to organic resources with a view to circularity. However, the strategy does not include explicit targets, thresholds, criterions, or enforcement mechanisms to ensure that resource use is maintained within planetary boundaries over time. The strategy scores 2.

6.4 The strategy ensures that soil, water, and air health/quality are maintained or improved through the transition process.

The strategy refers to living soils being valorised and restored (P.20), and sub action line 1.1 includes a measure referring to the protection of land with agricultural potential for agro-ecological projects (P.41). However, the strategy does not address water or air health or quality, and does not include systematic actions, monitoring mechanisms, or long-term commitments to improve soil, water, or air health. The strategy scores 1.

6.5 The strategy acknowledges the interdependence between human and ecosystems and ensures that ecosystem services remain available for future generations.

The strategy includes no reference to ecosystem services or their availability for future generations. The strategy receives a score of 0.

4.2.7. Synthesis of the average scores

Table 13 and Figure 3 present the average scores for each justice dimension, both as a total and disaggregated by food system actors and consumers. Some patterns arise from this synthesis. First, the strategy's engagement with justice is highly uneven across dimensions. Capacity justice (2.67/3) and ecological and non-human justice (1.8/3) score substantially higher than the others. Recognition (1.083/3), distributive (1.2/3), and procedural justice (1.083/3) cluster in the middle, all scoring close to one out of three. Cosmopolitan justice (0.33/3) is markedly lower than any other dimension. The strategy thus engages most strongly with concerns that can be addressed through institutional support and ecological commitments within the Brussels territory, while concerns extending beyond regional borders, particularly across space and time, remain largely absent. Second, food system actors consistently receive higher scores than consumers across most dimensions, but the size of this gap varies considerably. On recognition (1.167/3 versus 1/3) and distributive justice (1.4/3 versus 1/3), the difference is modest. On procedural justice, however, the gap is dramatic: 1.83/3 for food system actors compared with 0.33/3 for consumers. This is also visible in Figure 3 as the most asymmetric profile of any dimension. Half of the procedural criteria are not applicable to consumers, and on the other half, consumers score consistently lower. Third, capacity justice inverts this pattern. Consumers score higher than food system actors (3/3 versus 2.33/3), the only dimension where this occurs. The

strategy's capacity-building measures for consumers (neighbourhood kitchens, educational programmes, accessibility initiatives, and targeted support for vulnerable groups etc.) form a more comprehensive system than the corresponding measures for food system actors, which remain group-specific and project-based. Cosmopolitan justice deserves particular attention as the dimension where both groups score equally low. The strategy acknowledges Brussels' embeddedness in wider regional and global food flows but does not translate this acknowledgement into measures addressing food insecurity, livelihoods, or environmental burdens elsewhere, nor into reflections on historical responsibility or intergenerational fairness. For a strategy developed by a city structurally dependent on food imports and situated in a wealthy country with significant historical environmental footprint, this absence is a substantive finding rather than a minor gap. The implications of these findings for the strategy and for the FJI itself are examined in the discussion.

Table 13: Total average scores of all dimensions

Justice Dimension	*Average FSA*	*Average Consumers*	*Total Average*
Recognition	1.167/3	1/3	1.083/3
Distributive	1.4/3	1/3	1.2/3
Procedural	1.83/3	0.33/3	1.083/3
Capacity	2.33/3	3/3	2.67/3
Cosmopolitan	0.33/3	0.33/3	0.33/3
Ecological and non-human being	/	/	1.8/3

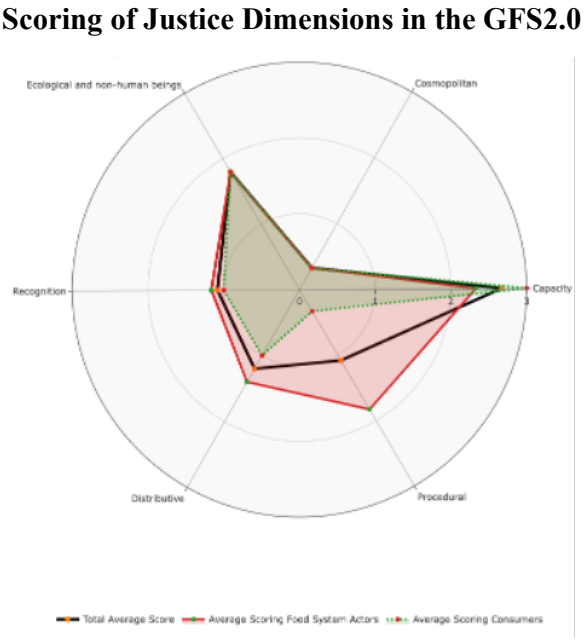


Figure 3: Spider chart of average scores for Food System Actors, Consumers and a final total average score.

5. Discussion: Evaluating justice in food systems governance in theory and practice

This first part of the discussion reflects on the Food Justice Index as a methodological contribution. It positions the FJI in relation to existing food justice frameworks, identifies what is shared and what is distinctive about its design, and reflects on the conceptual gaps and tensions that became visible when applying it to the Good Food Strategy 2.0. In the second part, insights from the scoring of the GFS2.0 are unravelled. Strengths and weaknesses of the strategy are investigated and suggestions to make it an even better strategy are proposed.

5.1. From Theory to Framework: building and evaluating the FJI

5.1.1. Positioning the FJI within justice theory and existing frameworks

The FJI shares its six-dimensional architecture most directly with the framework of Kaljonen et al. (2024) and Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022), both of which argue that justice in food systems cannot be captured by the classical triad of distributive, recognition, and procedural justice alone. The FJI adopts the same six dimensions including the cosmopolitan and ecological justice. The JUSTRA framework of Conti et al. (2025), which builds on four dimensions, and de Bruin et al.'s (2024) synthesis of food justice conceptualisations are also reflected in the FJI's design, particularly in the operationalisation of criteria within each dimension. In this sense, the FJI does not claim to introduce entirely new justice dimensions. Rather, it consolidates and builds upon what the field has collectively developed.

Where the FJI diverges from these frameworks, however, is significant. As set out in section 3.1, the FJI is designed as an evaluative rather than a normative instrument: it assesses how justice is expressed in a single governance document at a single point in time, rather than mapping how systemic change should unfold across intervention points. This places the FJI in a complementary rather than competing relationship with frameworks such as Kaljonen et al. (2024). Where their framework asks *how* a transition can be made just by identifying entry points for intervention, the FJI asks *for whom* and *in what ways* justice is currently addressed in a given policy. Both questions are necessary for a full account of justice in food system transitions, but they call for

different tools, and the absence of structured evaluative instruments in the existing literature is what motivated the development of the FJI.

This evaluative orientation is operationalised through the FJI's most distinctive methodological contribution: an ordinal scoring mechanism adapted from Juhola et al. (2022). Each criterion within each justice dimension is scored on a scale of 0 to 3, ranging from no acknowledgement of a justice concern to full integration with clear objectives, long-term commitments, and measurable actions. However, justice in practice always extends only as far as the capacities, context, and political will of those responsible for implementing it. Applying the FJI to a governance document from a low-income country, or to a national rather than regional strategy, the same criteria would likely yield very different scores. Not necessarily because those policies are less committed to justice, but because the capacities, resources, and political conditions available to policymakers differ fundamentally. For this reason, the FJI is designed with a degree of built-in flexibility. The dimensions and their associated criteria are intended to remain fixed across applications, as they represent core justice concerns that are relevant regardless of context. What can and should be adapted are the scoring descriptions: the qualitative benchmarks that define what a score of 0, 1, 2, or 3 looks like in practice. Calibrating these benchmarks to the local context ensures that the given scores actually reflect what is genuinely achievable and ambitious within that specific governance setting, rather than an abstract ideal imported from elsewhere. This contextual calibration is essential for ensuring that the FJI produces meaningful and fair assessments across different settings and represents one of the key design features that makes the framework adaptable for future use beyond Brussels.

To the best of my knowledge, no existing multidimensional food justice framework combines this level of dimensional breadth with a structured ordinal scoring system. Most frameworks reviewed in this thesis remain at the level of conceptual principles, which are valuable for normative guidance but difficult to apply systematically to concrete policy documents. The FJI bridges that gap, offering a tool that is both theoretically grounded and practically applicable to the detailed evaluation of justice in food system governance.

5.1.2. Re-evaluating the FJI: insights from application

Applying the FJI to the GFS2.0 revealed some gaps and tensions in the FJI that were not fully visible during its design: a missing conceptual area (health and diet), an unresolved boundary between recognitional and distributional justice, and an underspecified calibration (the appropriate scale of cosmopolitan responsibility). Each is discussed below.

Conceptual gaps and overlaps

The most significant gap that became apparent during the evaluation is the absence of a criterion on human health and diet. Throughout the GFS2.0, healthy food and nutritious diets came up repeatedly as central concerns. Yet when scoring the strategy, it became apparent that the FJI contains no dimension or criterion that addresses health and diet as a justice concern in its own right. Importantly, this is not a gap unique to the FJI. None of the comparable food governance justice frameworks reviewed in this thesis (Kaljonen et al. (2024), Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022), Conti et al. (2025), De Bruin et al. (2024) etc.) include health and diet as a standalone dimension or criterion. It is genuinely unclear under which dimension health belongs. Unequal health outcomes could fall under distributive justice, the ability to make healthy dietary choices sits within capacity justice, and access to culturally appropriate food connects to recognition justice. In the FJI, health concerns are partially captured through criterion 2.4, which evaluates whether all populations can access nutritious and safe food, but this criterion addresses other concerns as well and does not treat health as a justice issue in its own right.

A second tension concerns the boundary between recognition justice and distributive justice. In theory, these dimensions are distinct: recognition justice addresses whether identities, values, and experiences are acknowledged, while distributive justice concerns the fair allocation of costs and benefits. In practice during the assessment, the boundary proved difficult to maintain, and the criteria of the two dimensions tended to overlap. When searching the strategy for passages relevant to specific criteria, many sentences turned out to be relevant for both recognition and distributive criteria simultaneously. A clear example is the strategy's commitment that *"all Brussels residents have access in their neighbourhood to a selection of Good Food products adapted to their needs (by access we mean geographical, financial, and cultural*

access". This single passage was relevant to criterion 1.3 (respect for diverse worldviews and cultural values around food) through its explicit inclusion of cultural access, and to criterion 2.3 (equitable access to nutritious food) through its overall framing of inclusive access. Kaljonen et al. (2024) similarly observed this difficulty after testing their framework, and the tension reflects a well-documented theoretical tension in justice scholarship, most clearly articulated in Fraser's concept of bivalent collectivities, which describes precisely this entanglement of recognition and distribution. Trying to distinguish them more, could prevent the risk of amplifying certain measures of a strategy in the justice profile by counting it double.

A third tension concerns the scale of cosmopolitan justice. The cosmopolitan dimension as defined in the FJI evaluates whether a strategy considers the cross-border and intergenerational implications of its actions. In practice, however, the appropriate scale of cosmopolitan reasoning was not always self-evident: should a regional food strategy be expected to address national, supranational, or global implications? Holding a regional government accountable for global supply chain effects raises questions about what is reasonably within its scope of action. The current scoring descriptions of the cosmopolitan dimension do not fully resolve this tension, and clarifying the appropriate scale of cosmopolitan responsibility for different levels of governance is an open question for future refinement of the framework.

5.2. The Good Food Strategy through a justice lens

5.2.1. Strengths and weaknesses of the strategy

Before discussing the results of the evaluation, it is important to recall what kind of evaluation this is. This thesis assessed how justice is integrated into the intentions and text of a governance strategy. It cannot evaluate whether these intentions/aims/goals have been realised in practice. The scores therefore reflect what the GFS2.0 commits to, acknowledges, and operationalises on paper. With that framing in mind, the discussion below moves beyond the strategy document itself to connect the score patterns to the structural conditions, governance constraints, and political realities within which the strategy was produced and implemented.

Structural constraints across dimensions

The most striking feature of the score profile is the spread between dimensions. Capacity justice scores 2.67/3, close to a full score, while cosmopolitan justice scores only 0.33/3. Recognition, distributive, and procedural justice cluster around 1/3, with ecological justice in between at 1.8/3. This range is not random: it reflects what kinds of justice concerns are controllable for a regional government working under specific institutional and political constraints.

Capacity justice concerns the support of people's real abilities to respond to transition demands, through guidance, training, financial support, and the creation of enabling conditions. These are precisely the instruments that a regional government can deploy most directly and systematically, and the GFS2.0 does so extensively: through training programmes, learning hubs, financial support mechanisms for producers and consumers, neighbourhood kitchens, and targeted outreach to vulnerable groups and underrepresented areas. This finding is consistent with insights from an interview conducted with a representative of the Good Food Strategy team[3]. When asked what the strategy can realistically achieve given its available budget, the interviewee noted that the primary tools available to the regional government are the creation of regulatory frameworks, the support of existing initiatives, and the development of a shared language between different governance levels and actors in the food system. As budgets have decreased year on year since the launch of the first Good Food Strategy, the government has increasingly been forced to focus on its most powerful remaining lever: regulation. This could mean imposing sustainability criteria on canteens, schools, administrations, and companies through ordinances rather than incentives. This helps explain why capacity justice scores so consistently high across both consumers and food system actors: it is not simply that the strategy is ambitious, but that capacity-building instruments are structurally the most accessible tools available to a regional governance body operating under resource constraints.

However, even this strong score must be contextualised. The Brussels-Capital Region operated without a functioning regional government for over 600 days following the June 2024 elections. This is one of the longest government formation crises in the region's history, with a new government only formed in February 2026. During this

[3] GFS representative, personal communication, interviewed by De Schaepmeester, H., [26/01/2026].

period, the actual implementation of capacity-building initiatives depended on pre-existing commitments and ongoing programmes, but new funding agreements and the continuation of budget and support for projects were all at risk. The strategy's strong commitments on capacity justice may therefore overstate what was deliverable in practice during this period of governmental uncertainty.

At the opposite end of the score spectrum, cosmopolitan justice scores only 0.33/3, and the contrast with capacity justice is striking.

Cosmopolitan justice means looking outwards, across borders and across generations, to acknowledge cross-border food dependencies, historical contributions to global environmental harm, and obligations toward future populations. These are commitments difficult for a regional government to make credibly when it does not know what budget it will have in the next year, let alone the next decade. They are also difficult to make accurately: tracking the global footprint of a regional food system — emissions embedded in imports, labour conditions in distant supply chains, historical contributions to environmental harm — requires data infrastructure that regional governments typically lack. The prolonged government formation crisis compounds this further. As argued in section 5.1.2, justice in practice extends only as far as the capacities, context, and political will of those responsible for implementing it. When both political will and institutional continuity are absent, cosmopolitan justice becomes the first victim of the uncertainty. This may also help explain the 0-score of criterion 5.4 “ensuring fair opportunities for future generations”.

Beyond these external constraints, an internal tension within the strategy’s own design also reflects the low cosmopolitan score. The GFS2.0 places strong emphasis on local food production, agro-ecological practices, and short supply chains. This focus has clear justice merits of its own: supporting regional producers, reducing transport-related emissions, strengthening food sovereignty, but it leaves the global food print of the actual Brussels food system largely invisible. The many diaspora-community shops across the city sell ‘global’ food products with their own significant implications for climate, environmental impact, power dynamics within global supply chains, and labour conditions in producing regions. The strategy remains silent on these. This is a trade-off built into the strategy’s design: a governance strategy cannot focus on everything at once. When local, seasonal, and short-chain food becomes the central

frame, the global supply chains on which much of the city's actual consumption depends fall outside the field of attention. The localist orientation of the strategy may itself be in partial tension with a cosmopolitan perspective: a vision built around proximity, regional self-reliance, and short chains has limited conceptual space for engaging with the global flows on which much of the city's actual food consumption depends.

A final explanation concerns justice across geospatial borders. The BCR imports approximately 99.7% of its food products (Riera et al., 2022), making it an import-dependent urban region. As a consumption city with minimal agricultural land and almost no domestic food production, Brussels's food system has deep cross-border implications for the environmental conditions of producing regions, for the livelihoods of workers in distant supply chains, and for the emissions embedded in global trade flows. Yet the GFS2.0 barely acknowledges these implications, let alone acts on them. It could be explained by the structural limitation of regional food governance. They operate at a scale that makes it structurally difficult to address the global dimensions of a food system that extends far beyond its borders. This finding aligns with Kaljonen et al. (2024), who similarly found that cosmopolitan and ecological justice concerns received considerably less attention from Finnish food system actors than social and procedural dimensions. This could rather reflect a more general pattern in how food governance engages with global responsibilities.

Ecological justice illustrates a related but distinct constraint. The strategy scores strongly on the recognition of ecological principles and the intrinsic value of non-human beings. Its agro-ecological framing is a substantive ecological contribution, aiming for a food system that respects humans and other species and continuously adapting Good Food labels to incorporate animal welfare criteria. However, operational measures remain partial. While the strategy acknowledges that fossil fuel use in the food system exceeds planetary boundaries, it does not establish explicit targets, thresholds, or enforcement mechanisms to ensure that resource use is maintained within planetary boundaries over time. Soil quality receives limited attention and is addressed only indirectly, while water and air quality are absent entirely. A key structural explanation for these gaps is the fragmented distribution of competences related to food governance. Food policy in Brussels is a transversal competence spread across the regional government, the three community

commissions, the federal level, and the European Union. Environmental quality dimensions such as soil health, water management, and air quality are addressed through separate regulatory frameworks – some at other governance levels – and are not explicitly integrated into or cross-referenced within the GFS2.0. The strategy therefore does not neglect these concerns because they are unimportant, but because they fall under the mandate of other governance actors and instruments. This competence fragmentation remains a structural constraint on what a single regional food strategy can achieve across the full scope of ecological justice.

The actors – consumers gap

The second major pattern is the systematic gap between food system actors and consumers, most extreme on procedural justice (1.83/3 versus 0.33/3).

The strong performance for food system actors is best understood in the context of the GFS1.0, which covered the period 2016–2020. The 2021 end evaluation of the first strategy identified the participatory dimension as one of the most significant weaknesses of the strategy and explicitly called for a shift from a consultative toward a genuinely participatory approach, with non-administrative stakeholders being given real co-responsibility (Leefmilieu Brussel & BEW, 2021). They already changed the consultative council to a real participatory council during the midterm evaluation of the first strategy and introduced committees open to everyone. The GFS2.0 responded visibly: the participatory council was retained and strengthened, producing a formal policy note to government and moving from consultation toward co-construction. Ten thematic working groups were established, organised by sector and topic, and carefully selecting the participators, allowing meaningful engagement with specific areas of the food system. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were institutionalised with mandatory updates. As López Cifuentes et al. (2025) note, participation in food policy networks typically stops at consultation or collaboration rather than extending to genuine co-governance of outcomes, the GFS2.0 moves meaningfully further along this spectrum for food system actors.

For consumers, however, the scoring remains weak. The strategy reaches residents primarily through intermediary non-profit organisations working on the ground rather than through direct contact with citizens. The GFS makers operate at a level one step

“higher” away from the communities they aim to reach and help[4]. While this intermediary model is pragmatically efficient given the scale and diversity of Brussels, it means that marginalised groups are reached and served but are not meaningfully included in co-decision making.

A further practical limitation in terms of procedural justice concerns language. The strategy's documentation is predominantly in French, and documents on the strategy's platform are frequently only available in French. Even if the documents are bilingual, the complex and technical content (e.g. about agriculture or urban farming) requires a good knowledge of both languages, which disadvantages non-native residents (Leefmilieu Brussel & BEW, 2021). As a result, Dutch-speaking actors and the many non-native residents of Brussels face structural disadvantages in accessing and engaging with the strategy's content. This barrier was flagged in the GFS1.0 evaluation and remains unresolved in the GFS2.0 (Leefmilieu Brussel & BEW, 2021), representing a persistent procedural gap in a formally bilingual region.

The same governance structure shapes recognition justice for consumers, which scores 1.2/3 overall and lower for consumers (1.0/3) than for food system actors (1.4/3). Given the extraordinary cultural diversity of Brussels, home to 180 nationalities with 37.2% non-Belgian residents, a score this low for consumer recognition is particularly striking. The low salience of consumer recognition in the documents also means that the strategy tends to lean toward a distributive framing: vulnerable groups are identified primarily in terms of their unequal access to resources rather than in terms of their cultural identities, food traditions, or ways of knowing. The strategy makes limited reference to culturally diverse dietary practices and does not explicitly address how its Good Food vision intersects with the food cultures of its many migrant communities. This is a significant gap in a city where food is deeply embedded in cultural identity. As Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022) note, transition processes can unintentionally marginalise existing food habits, particularly in contexts of high cultural diversity, making explicit recognition a matter of justice.

[4] Information from the interview with GFS representative, personal communication, interviewed by De Schaepmeester, H., [26/01/2026].

Within recognition justice, one absence stands out for its significance: gender. The strategy does not address gender equality within food system domains, does not acknowledge gendered contributions to food labour, and does not consider how transition measures may affect men and women differently. The IPCC (2019) highlights that food security and climate change are deeply gendered issues, that women play a central role in food security globally, and that their meaningful inclusion in food-related decision-making can create co-benefits among household food security, adaptation, and mitigation (Mbow et al., 2019). Tribaldos & Kortetmäki (2022) similarly emphasise that women are disproportionately affected by unequal working conditions and pay even though they dominate processing, serving, and catering occupations. The absence of any gender lens in the GFS2.0 is therefore a structural blind spot rather than a minor omission.

Integrated justice: the neighbourhood approach

The discussion so far has emphasised structural constraints that limit the GFS 2.0 justice profile. The score patterns also reveal that the strategy systematically engages more with food system actors than with consumers across most dimensions, and that concerns extending beyond regional borders remain largely outside the strategy's frame. One feature of the GFS2.0 stands out as evidence that integrated justice is achievable within these conditions: the neighbourhood-based approach. The first strategy was criticised for clustering its initiatives in wealthier, better-resourced areas of Brussels while failing to reach communities with the greatest need. It said that only 20% of the projects reached vulnerable people or with a diverse cultural background (Leefmilieu Brussel & BEW, 2021). The GFS2.0 responds by explicitly prioritising areas where Good Food is scarce, targeting neighbourhoods with higher concentrations of poverty and food insecurity, and establishing partnerships with social housing providers, OCMW/CPAS, and municipalities to embed food transition initiatives in the social fabric of disadvantaged communities. This approach has positive effects across multiple justice dimensions simultaneously; distributive justice (more equitable access to resources and food), recognition justice (acknowledgement of diverse community needs), capacity justice (targeted support for groups with limited means), and procedural justice (neighbourhood-level engagement with citizens through intermediary organisations). That this approach emerged from a documented

evaluation process rather than being present from the start also illustrates the value of iterative, learning-based governance for justice outcomes over time.

5.3. Study limitations and future research

Although the FJI was developed through a structured review of existing justice literature, no analytical framework can claim to be fully comprehensive or entirely objective. As discussed in section 5.1.2, some criteria overlap, and certain justice concerns, most notably human health and diet, are not yet adequately captured as standalone dimensions. The framework should therefore be understood as a first and iterative version rather than a definitive instrument. Refining it to the point where the criteria are truly all-encompassing would require repeated application across multiple case studies, as well as systematic feedback from experts in just transitions, food governance, and justice scholarship. Expert validation was originally planned as part of this research but could not be realised within the available timeframe. Incorporating such validation in future iterations would considerably strengthen the framework's credibility and transferability. A related limitation concerns the scoring descriptions. The current four-point ordinal scale (0–3), while functional and adapted from Juhola et al. (2022), remains relatively coarse. A score of 2, for instance, covers a broad range of situations, from strategies that include concrete measures with limited follow-up to those that are close to full implementation but lack monitoring. A more detailed scale could improve the precision and nuance of future assessments.

Beyond the framework itself, the application of the FJI to GFS2.0 carries inherent limitations. Scoring a governance document against justice criteria inevitably involves interpretive judgement, regardless of how carefully the scoring descriptions are calibrated. Assigning a score of 1 versus 2 for a given criterion requires a contextual reading of the strategy document that another analyst might reasonably interpret differently. Ideally, the scoring would be conducted by multiple analysts independently, with inter-rater agreement tested and discussed.

A further limitation concerns the scope of the data. This thesis evaluated the GFS2.0 as a single governance document, adopting an approach that assesses intentions rather than outcomes. It cannot assess whether the strategy's commitments have been implemented in practice, whether they have reached marginalised groups as

intended, or how the justice profile of this strategy has evolved over time. Supplementing the document analysis with interviews with a broader range of stakeholders such as residents, grassroots organisations, and food system actors, would have provided a richer and more grounded picture of how justice within this strategy is experienced in practice. The single interview drawn upon in this thesis, conducted with a GFS representative by the thesis supervisor, offered valuable contextual insight but represents only one perspective within a complex governance landscape.

A final scope limitation concerns the relationship between evaluation and recommendation. This thesis identifies justice gaps in the GFS2.0 and offers analytical interpretations of why those gaps exist, but it does not aim to translate these findings into specific policy recommendations for how the strategy could be improved. Doing so would require methodological tools beyond those used here, including stakeholder consultation and policy-design expertise, and falls outside the scope of this thesis. Several directions for future research follow from the limitations described above. The most immediate priority is the iterative refinement of the FJI. The framework should be applied to governance documents from other cities and countries where the levels of resources, political structures and cultural compositions are different, to test whether the criteria are sufficiently all-encompassing and whether the scoring descriptions need to be recalibrated for different settings. A second priority is expert validation. Having the FJI reviewed by specialists in just transitions, food justice, and governance evaluation would help identify remaining blind spots, resolve ambiguities in the criteria, and increase confidence in the framework's validity. A formal Delphi process or expert panel could be a structured way to achieve this.

6. Conclusion

This thesis addressed two connected research questions: (i) Which dimensions and criteria are needed to evaluate justice in urban food system governance? (ii) Applying these criteria, how just is the policy-making process and the resulting policy of the Brussels *Good Food Strategy 2022–2030* (GFS 2.0)? To answer them, the research unfolded in two parts: the development of an evaluation framework, the Food Justice Index (FJI), and its application to the GFS 2.0 as a test case.

In response to the first research question, this thesis developed the FJI, the central contribution of this thesis. It addresses the gap that existing evaluating frameworks for food system governance often remain normative and conceptual and do not offer a structured way to evaluate single policy documents. The FJI answers to these gaps through three specific design choices: First of all, it adopted a six-dimensional justice architecture. Where other studies on just food systems often used only 3 or 4 dimensions (often the classic triad distributive, recognitional, procedural), this framework adopted the six-dimensional structure of Kaljonen et al. (2024) and Tribaldos &Kortetmäki (2022), which was the most encompassing to capture the full meaning of justice within urban food systems. The definitions of the six dimensions are presented in section 2.4.

Second, each dimension was disaggregated into a set of concrete criteria drawn from a structured review of the just transitions and food governance literature, conducted until thematic saturation. The framework comprises 31 criteria in total (Table 1-6). Third, to allow more systematic and precise assessment, an ordinal scoring system with a rubric-like approach, inspired by Juhola et al. (2022), was adopted. Policy documents and strategies receive a score between 0 and 3 for each criterion, depending on how well that criteria are integrated in their strategy. As such, the FJI consists of six dimensions, 31 criteria, and four tailored scoring descriptions per criterion, offering a structured framework to assess justice in food system governance as this thesis set out to do. The FJI aims to bridge the gap between normative principles and applicable evaluation. It operates on two layers: a stable core of dimensions and criteria that remains constant across applications, and a flexible outer

layer of scoring descriptions that can be recalibrated to reflect different governance contexts.

The second part of the thesis applied the FJI to Brussels 'Good Food Strategy 2022-2030 (GFS 2.0). The application proceeded on two levels. A high-level evaluation captured the overall strategy, while a more detailed, systematic assessment was applied to its concrete measures, together ensuring a thorough analysis. Brussels was chosen as case study because of the interesting aspects of the Brussels Capital region (BCR): its multilingual character, its socio-economic polarisation, its fragmented governance across linguistic communities and policy levels, and its near-total dependence on food imports. The application revealed how justice is incorporated in the strategy through a clear scoring pattern. The strategy scored highest on capacity justice, supporting both food system actors and consumers through training, financial mechanisms and targeted outreach, reflecting both genuine ambition and the structural reality that capacity-building tools are the most accessible levers available to a resource-constrained regional government. The strategy scores lowest on cosmopolitan justice, likely reflecting the budgetary uncertainty and a limited political time horizon, particularly during the prolonged government formation crisis that affected Brussels between June 2024 and February 2026. It is also incredibly difficult for a regional strategy to gain an accurate overview, or to measure the global impact of its food system. An internal tension also helps explain this score: the strategy's strong focus on local production and short supply chains leaves the global supply chains on which much of Brussels' actual consumption depends largely outside its frame. Procedural justice shows a striking internal asymmetry: an almost perfect score for food system actors and a much weaker score for consumers. This reflects the strategy's substantial progress in the co-construction process with organised actors, and its continued reliance on intermediary organisations rather than direct engagement with citizens. Within recognition justice, the most notable pattern is the complete absence of any acknowledgment of gender inequality. This is a significant gap, given that women are concentrated in the processing, serving, and catering occupations, while bearing a disproportionate number of burdens and being more affected by unfair payment and working conditions (Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). The ecological and environmental dimension was also relatively underdeveloped: the GFS 2.0 could go beyond motivating farmers and citizens to engage in the agro-

ecological transition, and take more concrete measures to improve soil, air and water quality and to restore biodiversity. Against these gaps, the strategy's neighbourhood-based approach stood out as a positive example of integrated justice, generating cross-cutting effects on distributive, recognition, capacity, and procedural justice through a single design choice.

Beyond these specific findings, the application of the FJI surfaced two broader insights. First, the boundary between recognition and distributive justice is harder to maintain in practice than in theory. Second, and more importantly, justice dimensions are not separate compartments but deeply intertwined. Procedural justice in particular emerged as foundational, since uneven participation tends to generate downstream distributive and recognitional inequalities (Loo, 2014). This reinforces the argument made throughout the thesis that justice must be embedded from the very start of strategy design, rather than retrofitted afterwards.

Although the GFS 2.0 offered an interesting and demanding case study, the most important purpose of this thesis was not to deliver a Brussels-specific verdict, but to develop a more general framework capable of assessing justice in any urban food strategy. The application also tested whether the framework was comprehensive in covering all aspects of justice, and whether some criteria needed to be added, changed or removed, based on the findings from the BCR case. The framework should therefore be understood as a first and iterative version rather than a definitive instrument. This is also why the scorings descriptions are flexible and adaptable. Future work should refine it through application to governance documents in other cities and countries, through expert validation, and ideally through scoring by multiple analysts to test inter-rater reliability. The FJI is a step toward making justice in food governance not only a normative aspiration but an evaluable and comparable concern. It is not a final answer but a structured starting point: a framework that turns broad commitments to justice into concrete questions that can be asked of any food strategy.

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8. Appendix

8.1. Appendix 1: Exact data from GFS2.0 and justification of scores for each criterion

Table 14:Evidence from GFS2.0 and justification of the score assigned to each criterion.

Criterion	Exact data GFS2.0	Justification of Score
1.1	Non-relocatable jobs are being created which, with the support of appropriate training pathways, offer high-quality opportunities to both low-skilled and highly skilled workers; setting up accessible Good Food production projects in collaboration with local intermediary figures, in which vulnerable groups are also involved (in cooperation with the social housing sector and municipalities/OCMWs); ensuring that different profiles within the target groups are representative; to support development, Good Food will need to establish close links with the Integrated Welfare and Health Plan (IWHP) and the Brussels Health Promotion Plan (BHPP) […] supporting projects that aim to improve access to Good Food; GFS takes into account that the Brussels population is cosmopolitan, with unequal incomes and that the income of 1/3 of households is below the poverty line; […] contributing to improving access to food for the most vulnerable; to all farmers operating in the Brussels territory who support their agro-ecological practices and promote the development of the sector **(1.1.b**); Creating an ecosystem of services […] for the different types of audiences and providing clear information to the different types of target groups **(1.1.b.1). ;** encouraging collective production projects "Vooruit met de wijk", prioritising neighbourhoods with few actions, vulnerable target groups, and ambitious projects **(1.2.b.3 and 4.1.a.2).**	The strategy explicitly acknowledges social inequalities and vulnerable groups within the Brussels food system. The strategy recognises that the Brussels population is cosmopolitan, characterised by unequal incomes, and explicitly mentions that one third of households live below the poverty line. This indicates an awareness of structural social inequality. The strategy mentions several projects aimed at improving access to Good Food and collaborations with municipalities and OCMWs. However, these actions focus primarily on improving access rather than ensuring structural representation. For food system actors, the strategy clearly recognises diversity and inequalities within the food system workforce. The strategy explicitly refers to the creation of non-relocatable jobs that provide opportunities for both low-skilled and highly skilled workers; support for farmers operating in the Brussels territory, particularly those applying agro-ecological practices; efforts to ensure that different profiles within target groups are representative; and the creation of an ecosystem of services adapted to different types of audiences. However, while some food system actors are clearly recognised and targeted through multiple actions, the strategy does not establish explicit, formal structures to guarantee long-term representation of marginalised actors.
1.2		

1.3	All Brussels residents have access in their neighbourhood to a selection of Good Food products that are adapted to their needs (by access we mean geographic, financial and cultural); improving the accessibility of the commercial Good Food offer in shops […] ensuring a diversity of sales models that respond to the socio-cultural accessibility needs of different consumer profiles; promoting production types through communication actions that provide added value in terms of […] integration into cultures and diets. **(1.2.d.1)**	The strategy explicitly defines access to Good Food as including cultural access, alongside geographical and financial access. This framing treats cultural food preferences and dietary practices as a legitimate and equal dimension of food access. By explicitly aiming to adapt food supply and communication to different cultures and diets, the strategy promotes the co-existence of diverse food practices within the Brussels food system. However, the strategy does not explicitly identify or target culturally diverse food system actors as such, nor does it establish clear objectives or mechanisms to integrate plural producer worldviews into governance structures or production planning.
1.4		
1.5	Ondersteunen van de uitbouw van een netwerk van vrijwillige Moestuinmeesters om de burger-producenten te begeleiden **(1.2.b.2)**	
1.6	On the professional side, we want to see the entire supply chain evolve, from the farmer to the processor and on to the restaurateur or the retailer; all links in the food system are considered and connected with one another […] in other words, the intention is to work on the transition of all traditional, new, large, small … actors, with realistic objectives for each; supporting the scale-up phase of small-scale Good Food processors (via the instruments of Be.circular, economic support, access to land, access to capital, etc.); strengthening exchanges between the Brussels-Capital Region (BCR) and other Belgian cities in the field of primary food production, organising meetings and partnerships **(1.1.d.1);** stimulating the development of Good Food supply chains: structuring, organising and connecting […] Good Food producers **(2.1.a.2);** supporting all restaurants in the implementation of Good Food practices **(3.1.b.1).**	In the preface, the Good Food Strategy explicitly acknowledges all sectors involved in the food system as equal and expresses the ambition for the entire supply chain to evolve collectively. The strategy refers to all links in the food system, from farmers and processors to retailers and restaurateurs, and emphasises the importance of connecting these actors through exchanges, networking, and partnerships. It further specifies the intention to support the transition of all traditional, new, large and small actors, with realistic objectives adapted to each. In addition to this discursive recognition, the strategy includes concrete measures aimed at integrating smaller sectors. Notably, it explicitly supports the scale-up phase of small-scale Good Food processors through targeted instruments such as economic support, access to land and access to capital. The strategy includes several measures aimed at strengthening relationships between sectors, such as organising meetings, fostering partnerships, and structuring Good Food supply chains.

2.1	neighbourhood-based food approach that is as close to the citizens as possible; The monitoring of actions and the evolution of the strategy are ensured […]. This monitoring instrument will be updated at least every six months by the managers of the measures, with the support of the external coordination support service; GFS2 includes a mechanism that makes its evolution possible through a transparent monitoring instrument, the follow-up of criterions and objectives, enabling the strategy to be evaluated and adjusted (annual baseline evaluation, more in-depth mid-term evaluation). Identifying promising value chains for the Region and studying their potential development in terms of economy and employment **(2.1.a.1);** monitoring the transition pathways of food businesses **(2.1.b.4).**	The strategy does not analyse which consumers benefit from increased food access, improved health outcomes, or affordability. It does not disaggregate impacts across consumer groups. There is no explicit reference to the distribution of benefits among consumers, differences between social groups, or equity in consumer outcomes within the monitoring framework. The strategy does mention that it will identify "promising value chains" for the region and study their economic and employment impacts. Additionally, the strategy will monitor the transition pathways of food businesses. This implies that benefits for food system actors (economic opportunities and employment) are being observed at a general level. However, there is no equity lens, no comparison between different types of actors (e.g. small versus large, vulnerable versus well-resourced), and no assessment of who benefits most or least. The monitoring therefore remains solely descriptive.
2.2	The monitoring of actions and the evolution of the strategy are ensured […]. This monitoring instrument will be updated at least every six months by the managers of the measures, with the support of the external coordination support service; GFS2 includes a mechanism that makes its evolution possible through a transparent monitoring instrument, the follow-up of criterions and objectives, enabling the strategy to be evaluated and adjusted (annual baseline evaluation, more in-depth mid-term evaluation). Identifying promising value chains for the Region and studying their potential development in terms of economy and employment **(2.1.a.1);** monitoring the transition pathways of food businesses **(2.1.b.4).**	The strategy does not analyse how the costs or negative impacts of food system measures are distributed among consumers. It does not examine who bears potential costs such as food price increases, reduced affordability, or other negative impacts associated with the transition. There is no disaggregation of impacts across consumer groups, nor is there any explicit reference to differences between social groups, vulnerable populations, or equity in the distribution of negative effects. For food system actors, the strategy similarly does not analyse how costs or burdens are distributed. While it discusses transition pathways, economic development, and employment opportunities for food businesses, it does not assess the potential costs or risks associated with the transition, such as investment burdens, compliance costs, or unequal exposure to environmental or economic pressures. There is no comparison between different types of actors (e.g. small versus large actors, vulnerable versus well-resourced

		actors), and no assessment of which actors may bear disproportionate costs. As a result, the strategy does not provide an analysis of the distribution of costs or negative impacts across food system actors.
2.3	All Brussels residents have access in their neighbourhood to a selection of Good Food products adapted to their needs (by access we mean geographical, financial, and cultural access); developing and supporting food production by citizens (or mixed forms) […] in order to contribute […] to the accessibility of food for the most vulnerable; providing clear information on access to urban organic materials **(1.1.b.1);** facilitating access to organic raw materials with a view to circularity **(1.2.b.4);** developing information and communication tools […] in particular ensuring information about a transition without higher costs for the consumer **(3.1.a.1);** establishing neighbourhood-level dynamics favourable to Good Food […] in order to promote food accessibility **(4.1.a.1);** supporting projects through project calls […] with the aim of making Good Food accessible to everyone, targeted at specific actors **(4.1.c.2**). Definition Agro-Ecology: "Agroecology is primarily a set of principles and practices that improve the resilience and sustainability of food and agricultural systems while preserving social integrity. [...] It develops a multidimensional approach to the management of natural and human resources. It offers an alternative to the dominant agricultural model, which is based on the exploitation of natural elements and people."	By emphasising multiple times, across several action lines and measures, that every citizen should have access to Good Food, the strategy clearly aims to ensure inclusive access to nutritious, high-quality, and safe food. This objective is further strengthened by concrete actions to increase the availability of Good Food in neighbourhoods where it is currently limited and where many vulnerable communities live. Together, these measures demonstrate a clear and consistent effort to improve access to Good Food for the entire population, including vulnerable groups. For food system actors, the strategy explicitly states that it wants to implement legal mechanisms to facilitate access to land, which is very scarce in Brussels and its surrounding areas, as well as access to organic natural resources. Through the definition of Agro-Ecology, the strategy aims to "develop a multidimensional approach to the management of natural and human resources." However, while the intention is clearly stated, the strategy does not specify how access to organic resources will be improved in practice.
2.4	Producers receive a fair price for their work and, where applicable, for the ecosystem services they provide.; The Good Food Strategy strives for fair wages and decent working conditions for all workers in the food system.; Identifying the promising value chains for the Region and studying their potential development in terms of economy and employment **(2.1.a.1).**	This is a case where the strategy refers in its preface to the idea of a “fair price for their work” and expresses an ambition to achieve fair wages and decent working conditions in the food system. However, these commitments are not translated into concrete measures or actions within the strategy. There is no indication of how fair wages or good working conditions will be ensured in practice for workers in sectors such as horeca, retail, or logistics. As a result, labour conditions are mentioned, but without clear implementation mechanisms.

2.5	Dependence on raw materials from outside the European market is strongly reduced and/or the use of circular business models makes them more resilient to crises.; Producers have the necessary tools to adapt production systems to climate change.; The entire food chain is less dependent on fossil resources. No chemical (synthetic) pesticides, fertilisers, or synthetic substrates are used.; Definition Agro-Ecology: "Agroecology is primarily a set of principles and practices that improve the resilience and sustainability of food and agricultural systems while preserving social integrity.; Protecting and mobilising land with agricultural potential for agro-ecological projects **(1.1.a.1).**	Again, the strategy makes strong promises in the preface regarding resilience, such as ensuring that producers have the necessary tools to adapt production systems to climate change and reducing dependence on raw materials from outside the European market. However, the actual measure identified (protecting and mobilising land with agricultural potential for agro-ecological projects) does not directly ensure access to such adaptation tools, nor does it clearly reduce reliance on external raw material supply chains. That said, increasing agro-ecological practices does contribute to resilience by reducing the use of chemical and synthetic pesticides, fertilisers, and substrates, which can lower vulnerability to input price shocks and supply disruptions. As a result, the strategy does aim to improve resilience against certain shocks, but the measures remain partial and do not comprehensively address all the resilience dimensions mentioned in the strategy's ambitions.
3.1	The strategy was therefore developed together with more than one hundred actors. These actors will continue to contribute to its implementation through a process of participatory governance: citizens, farmers, processors, transporters, chefs, retailers, academics, public authorities, etc.; The co-construction process was mainly based on the work of the participatory Good Food Council (four times per year) and numerous working groups (13 different ones) and groups of experts, as well as bilateral meetings between all types of stakeholders.; In total, nearly 300 people were involved in the reflection process, including associations, federations, businesses, universities, municipal authorities, as well as representatives of various regional institutions and the associated ministerial cabinets (HorecaBePro, Perspective.brussels, BGHM (and the OVMs), Citydev.brussels, Hub.brussels, Visit.brussels, LB and BEW), and community bodies (COCOM, COCOF, VGC), as well as services of other levels of government (SPW, ONE).	The strategy explicitly states it was co-constructed with a wide range of actors identified by their professional roles, organisational names, and functions in the food chain. Administrative bodies and federations are named specifically in the GF 2.0 Strategy, and detailed documentation (like meeting minutes) exists naming individual representatives. The strategy includes a detailed timeline of the co-construction process (March 2021 – June 2022), indicating for each date which working groups, the Participatory Council, or focus groups met. While the strategy evaluates the lack of social and cultural diversity in the previous GF Strategy, it does not yet provide the specific socio-economic status of its current participants as a standard part of its reporting.

3.2	Steering Committee of the Government: has […] as its task to steer, support, and orient the implementation of the strategy […]; Coordination Committee: […] has as its role to give impetus; to organise the implementation of the strategy […], and to ensure coherence; Thematic pillars: have the task of ensuring the operationalisation, progress, and coherence […]; The Council will consist of representatives of the operational pillar and three types of members, including actors from federations, networks, associations, the academic world, employers, trade unions, whereby preference is given as much as possible to people who are familiar with the on-the-ground reality of the Brussels food system, and to both traditional and emerging actors of this system (in order to ensure balanced representation of actors in the field): representatives of the economic sector, representatives of the social and health sector, representatives of the environmental sector; The existing Participatory Council proposes organisations that meet these criteria for the composition of the next Council. Brussels Environment is tasked with guiding new members.	The governance scheme clearly illustrates the functions of the various bodies involved in the implementation phase, such as the steering committee, coordination committee, thematic poles, and participatory council. Focus groups and targeted consultations are used for actors (such as producers) who, due to time or resource constraints, cannot participate in long meetings, ensuring that their perspectives still inform decision-making. The participatory council is limited to a maximum number of members to maintain operational efficiency, but this also creates a barrier for new or alternative actors who are not affiliated with federations.
3.3	The Council will consist of representatives of the operational pillar and three types of members, including actors from federations, networks, associations, the academic world, employers, and trade unions, whereby preference is given as much as possible to people who are familiar with the on-the-ground reality of the Brussels food system, and to both traditional and emerging actors of this system (in order to ensure a balanced representation of actors in the field): representatives of the economic sector, representatives of the social and health sector, representatives of the environmental sector; The composition of the Council must also ensure that potential conflicts of interest with the bearers of the measures are avoided; The Council requires neutral leadership capable of accommodating diverse interests, and a dynamic and well-equipped secretariat; A structural and proportionate funding arrangement for members is introduced, which varies according to the actors and	The strategy acknowledges that previous iterations were too “centered on the administration.” To manage competing interests, it mandates a balanced composition of the participatory council, ensuring representation from both established industry actors and emerging sustainable movements. It also refers to mechanisms designed to manage potential conflicts. The strategy recognises that time and financial constraints pose barriers for non-governmental actors and proposes structural funding measures to help level the playing field. However, the decision-making process does not formally include the voices of citizens or marginalised groups to ensure equitable outcomes. While co-creation is presented as a central principle, the government ultimately retains the formal decision-making authority.

	their needs; The Council issues non-decision-making advisory opinions (but whether or not they are followed up must be justified); responsibility remains in the hands of the relevant ministers and the government.	
3.4	All documents related to the co-construction process are available on the Good Food web portal, including the work of the working groups and the Good Food Participatory Council; The objective is to set up transparent and systematic monitoring tools through a collaborative platform. The members of the various governance and participation bodies have permanent access to the platform.	The strategy explicitly highlights its web portal as a transparent source for all documents related to the working groups and the participatory council. One of the goals of the new strategy is the development of a shared platform that will enable real-time tracking of actions. It is a positive element that specific "notes de cadrag" were prepared for the different working groups that helps to structure the meetings and clarify their objectives. Despite the ambition of a bilingual process, the documents are mainly available in French. Although all documents are theoretically accessible through the web portal, the platform is not very user-friendly and requires time and effort to navigate and fully understand. Moreover, there is limited evidence-based information available on food systems and their urban/nature impacts.
3.5	All documents related to the co-construction process are available on the Good Food web portal, including the work of the working groups and the Good Food Participatory Council; the objective is to set up transparent and systematic monitoring tools through a collaborative platform. The members of the various governance and participation bodies have permanent access to the platform.	The strategy explicitly states that all documents produced by the working groups and the participatory council are publicly available. The SWOT analysis acknowledges that the strategy has historically struggled to maintain a systematic and stable dashboard. Previously, the complexity of the data and language barriers also prevented information from being accessible to everyone. Information on resources, budgets (such as the €8.6 million in subsidies), and timelines is available to the public.While the outcomes are technically made public, it remains unclear whether users actually find the portal accessible. The results and outputs are difficult for citizens and field actors to locate or use. Furthermore, many documents are available only in one language (French), and the technical nature of the data makes it challenging for a broad audience to understand without significant time investment.

3.6	The objective is to ensure an efficient multi-stakeholder participatory process throughout the entire life cycle of the strategy, in order to work across sectors by integrating the challenges of a Good Food food system into policies on the economy, employment, training and education, social policy and public health, spatial planning, and freight transport. This integration of public policies and participation takes the form of joint efforts for the implementation of the strategy; GFS2 includes a mechanism that allows its evolution through a transparent monitoring instrument, the follow-up of criterions and objectives, enabling the strategy to be evaluated and adjusted (annual baseline evaluation, more in-depth mid-term evaluation); To guarantee this participatory process, the participatory council must be transformed into an advisory body for support, exchange, and advice. This council is not autonomous but is linked to the operational pillar and the thematic pillars (see diagram); The council issues non-decision-making advisory opinions (but whether or not they are followed up must be justified), while responsibility remains in the hands of the relevant ministers and the government. The opinions include at least a common position of the members, reached by consensus. This opinion is complemented by other arguments, not necessarily aligned with one another; The objective is to set up transparent and systematic monitoring tools via a collaborative platform. The members of the various governance and participation bodies have permanent access to the platform. This monitoring instrument will be updated at least every six months by the managers of the measures, with the support of the external coordination support service. The data are transmitted to the participatory council and then to the Strategic Coordination Committee for discussion of progress, bottlenecks, and the orientations of annual budgets and work programmes. Midway through the period (2025), following the evaluations/revisions, a more comprehensive evaluation report will be provided as a basis for discussions on	The strategy explicitly defines itself as an evolving document with built-in adjustment cycles. It grants the participatory council a formal role that obliges the government to respond to its feedback. Feedback is generated through ongoing discussions and through the monitoring of data gathered via a collaborative platform, which is then fed into the governance bodies. The strategy also sets a clear date for its first major revision, based on participant input and monitoring data.The Good Food strategy adopts a co-portage model, in which participating actors have a legitimised influence on the evaluation and future direction of the strategy. However, other stakeholders, such as non-involved or non-selected interest groups, citizens, or marginalised populations, do not have opportunities to influence the evaluation process.

	the adjustment of the strategy and for detailed planning for the next programming period.	
4.1	There is local access to agricultural activities that offer social and educational services for the entire Brussels population.; education, training and awareness-raising on climate and food issues are part of the GFS; social spaces related to food are created to strengthen social ties, particularly in the catering sector; creating an ecosystem of services including efficient, effective, coordinated and targeted guidance for the different types of audiences and at the different stages of an agricultural project, as well as providing accessible, coordinated and clear information to the various types of target groups ([…] guidance in organic farming (maintenance + conversion), etc.) **(1.1.b.1);** creating a clear and stable legal framework for financial support for professional producers, which contributes to the agro-ecological transition of the entire Brussels agricultural production **(1.1.c.1);** strengthening exchanges between the Brussels Capital Region and other Belgian cities in the field of primary food production […] organising regular meetings and building partnerships **(1.1.d.1);** mobilising (potential) producers and providing support and guidance, adapting information to all target groups, facilitating access to technical and practical information, etc**. (1.2.b.1);** continuing to encourage collective production projects and providing guidance through the project call "Vooruit met de wijk**" (1.2.b.3)** and **(4.1.a.2);** supporting and guiding the implementation of Good Food production projects **(1.2.c);** activating the Facilitator Service for Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) **(2.1.a.3);** developing an efficient and multifunctional logistics network (processing, distribution, meeting spaces) that is necessary for the development of the Good Food supply chains, notably through logistics hubs **(2.1.a.4**); supporting the	The strategy integrates capacity-building initiatives in a systematic and structured manner for food system actors. It provides dedicated guidance and advisory ecosystems; training, helpdesks, tools, labels, and facilitators for producers, canteens, restaurants, food businesses, and retailers; project calls and targeted support mechanisms encouraging collective production and innovation; logistics hubs, networks, partnerships, and regular interregional exchanges; and financial support embedded in a stable legal framework for professional producers. These measures are explicitly designed to empower food system actors to engage in collective action and contribute to the agro-ecological transition. While support is conditional on actors' willingness to transition to agro-ecological practices, the initiatives are long-term, institutionalised, and resource-backed, satisfying the criteria for systematic capacity building. The strategy also systematically supports capacity building for consumers and citizens through a broad set of dedicated initiatives. These include educational and social agricultural activities accessible to the entire Brussels population; support for associations that continuously inform and educate citizens on the food transition; neighbourhood-based initiatives such as community kitchens and collective projects; support for social spaces and accessible distribution models; targeted programmes for schools, children, and young people (16–25 years); and education, training, and awareness-raising on food and climate issues. Together, these measures aim to actively engage citizens in collective action and empower them to contribute to food system transition processes.

	establishment/transition of Good Food food businesses **(2.1.b**); supporting canteens in transition through training courses, a helpdesk, tools and a Good Food Canteen label **(3.1.a.2);** guiding all restaurants in the implementation of Good Food practices **(3.1.b.1);** support during the transition, creating a network **(3.1.b.2);** organising awareness-raising campaigns for food retailers **(3.2.a.2);** supporting alternative models for accessible distribution […] through dissemination of projects **(3.2.a.6);** supporting projects through project calls […] with the aim of accessibility of Good Food for everyone, targeted at specific actors **(4.1.c.2);** financing the network of Neighbourhood Kitchens (Cuisines de Quartier) **(4.1.c.4);** supporting associations in the Region in their contribution to the continuous informing/training of citizens […] regarding the food transition and Good Food concepts **(4.1.d.2);** guiding schools in the implementation and consolidation of concrete projects **(4.2.a.1);** organising concrete projects for young people (16–25 years) around Good Food, according to the reality of their neighbourhood **(4.2.b.1**); continuing to support educational farms (through subsidies to farms) **(4.2.b.2);** supporting innovative projects around the processing of unsold food products **(5.2.a.1).**	
4.2	Belgians consume half of what is recommended […] due to significant social inequalities: information, education, cooking skills, storage, affordability, perception, taste preferences, etc."; the objective is to improve the financial, geographical, and cultural accessibility of the commercial Good Food offer in Brussels shops, so that more Brussels residents can start changing their eating habits in a consumption environment that maximally encourages this. This includes in particular: […] a diversity of sales models that respond to the socio-cultural accessibility needs of different consumer profiles; continuing to encourage collective production projects and providing guidance through the project call "Vooruit met de wijk", prioritising neighbourhoods with few actions, vulnerable target groups, and	For consumers, the strategy clearly recognises that not everyone has equal access to healthy and sustainable food and explicitly links consumption patterns to social inequalities. It includes clear and targeted measures to reduce these inequalities, such as prioritising neighbourhoods with fewer actions and vulnerable target groups, increasing the Good Food offer in supermarkets and areas where it is currently scarce, and supporting initiatives such as Neighbourhood Kitchens and collaborations with social housing actors. Together, these measures form a systematic approach aimed at reducing inequalities and strengthening adaptive capacity across different consumer groups.For food system actors, the acknowledgement of differing

	ambitious projects **(1.2.b.3 and 4.1.a.2);** supporting and guiding the implementation of production projects, in collaboration with social housing and municipalities/CPAS (Public Centres for Social Welfare) **(1.2.c.2 & 3);** stimulating the development of the Good Food offer in retail shops, first and foremost in areas where Good Food is scarcely present **(3.2.a.1);** signing a commitment agreement […] with supermarkets regarding the implementation of actions to increase the accessibility/visibility of Good Food **(3.2.a.3);** enhancing the perception of the Good Food offer among the general public and professionals through the Good Food guide **(3.2.a.5);** establishing neighbourhood-level dynamics that are favourable to Good Food, in cooperation with the actors concerned and in areas where the Good Food offer and projects are less present **(4.1.a.1);** financing the network of Neighbourhood Kitchens (Cuisines de Quartier) **(4.1.c.4);** organising concrete projects for young people (16–25 years) around Good Food, according to the reality of their neighbourhood **(4.2.b.1).**	capacities and opportunities is less explicit but still present. Measures such as agreements with supermarkets in neighbourhoods with fewer actions, support for collective and small-scale projects, and collaboration with social housing and local authorities indicate recognition of unequal starting positions. However, while these measures aim to address existing inequalities, they remain targeted and context-specific and are not framed as a fully comprehensive or universal system covering all types of food system actors across the transition.
4.3	Belgians consume half of what is recommended […] due to significant social inequalities: information, education, cooking skills, storage, affordability, perception, taste preferences, etc."; the objective is to improve the financial, geographical, and cultural accessibility of the commercial Good Food offer in Brussels shops, so that more Brussels residents can start changing their eating habits in a consumption environment that maximally encourages this. This includes in particular: […] a diversity of sales models that respond to the socio-cultural accessibility needs of different consumer profiles; 100% of agricultural producers active on Brussels territory are informed about and have access to guidance services adapted to their needs and to those of the agro-ecological transition.; guidance for the transfer of land with agricultural potential for agro-ecological projects, awareness-raising among public and private landowners, etc**. (1.1.a.1);** making regional tools operational in order to promote access to land	For consumers, the strategy again includes strong measures specifically aimed at people in vulnerable or marginalised positions, largely overlapping with those identified under criterion 4.2. By improving the financial, geographical, and cultural accessibility of the Good Food offer; prioritising areas and neighbourhoods where Good Food is scarce; concluding agreements with supermarkets to increase accessibility and visibility; establishing neighbourhood-level dynamics favourable to Good Food; collaborating with social housing providers, municipalities, and OCMW's; and financing Neighbourhood Kitchens (Cuisines de Quartier) as inclusive, community-based initiatives, the strategy is explicitly designed to ensure that consumers in disadvantaged positions can benefit from food system innovations. Taken together, these measures form a systematic and integrated approach rather than isolated actions. For food

	(1.1.a.4); supporting public authorities (municipalities / OCMW) **(1.2.a.2);** adapting information to all target groups **(1.2.b.1);** continuing to encourage collective production projects and providing guidance through the project call “Vooruit met de wijk” **(1.2.b.3 and 4.1.a.2);** supporting and guiding the implementation of production projects, in collaboration with social housing and municipalities/OCMW **(1.2.c.2 & 3);** stimulating the development of Good Food chains: structuring, organising, and interconnecting […] Good Food producers **(2.1.a.2);** stimulating the development of the Good Food offer in retail shops, first and foremost in areas where Good Food is scarcely present **(3.2.a.1);** signing a commitment agreement […] with supermarkets regarding the implementation of actions to increase the accessibility/visibility of Good Food **(3.2.a.3);** enhancing the Good Food offer in the eyes of the general public and professionals through the Good Food guide **(3.2.a.5);** establishing neighbourhood-level dynamics favourable to Good Food, in cooperation with the actors involved and in areas where the Good Food offer and Good Food projects are less present **(4.1.a.1);** financing the network of Neighbourhood Kitchens (Cuisines de Quartier) **(4.1.c.4)**	system actors, the strategy also includes clear measures aimed at improving access to transition opportunities. These include ensuring that 100% of producers active in Brussels are informed about and have access to adapted guidance services, facilitating access to land for agro-ecological projects (including support for land transfer and awareness-raising among landowners), supporting collective and small-scale production projects, and structuring and interconnecting Good Food producers to improve their integration into supply chains. While these measures address existing inequalities, they remain group-specific and project-based rather than forming a fully comprehensive system ensuring equal benefits for all food system actors across the transition.
5.1	A significant share of the emissions resulting from the activities of the Region, however, originates outside our territory.; The Brussels Capital Region is connected to the Walloon Region and the Flemish Region through the food system: it is an urban region embedded in a larger territory in which food chains are organised.; Dependence on raw materials from outside the European market is strongly reduced and/or the use of circular business models makes them more resilient to crises. ;Strengthening agro-ecological production and providing support in Brussels and its surrounding area **(action line 1)**.	The strategy acknowledges the global interconnectedness of food systems by recognising that a significant share of emissions linked to Brussels’ activities originates outside its territory and by highlighting dependencies on food systems in Flanders, Wallonia, and non-European raw material markets. However, it does not specify the implications of these interconnections for food insecurity elsewhere, nor does it define clear actions to prevent or mitigate negative cross-border impacts of local decarbonisation efforts. Measures such as strengthening agro-ecological production in Brussels and surrounding area (action line 1) are only implicitly related to reducing external dependency and are not explicitly framed within a cosmopolitan justice perspective.

5.2	providing clear information to the different types of target groups ([…] partnerships with historical farmers**). (1.1.b.1)**	The reference to “historical farmers” does not acknowledge historical contributions to global environmental or social problems, such as colonial exploitation, unequal trade relations, or historical emissions. There is also no indication of responsibility, compensation, or reparative action related to past global injustices.
5.3		
5.4	Under ‘Good Food dietary patterns’, ‘Good Food plate’, ‘Good Food’, etc., we understand dietary patterns with a high nutritional quality and health benefits. They enable the optimal development of all individuals […] for current and future generations.	Consumers are implicitly included through the framing of “dietary patterns” that benefit health and development for current and future generations. However, the strategy does not define specific measures, behavioural incentives, or long-term safeguards aimed at ensuring that consumer choices today do not limit the wellbeing, food access, or environmental quality of future generations.
6.1	Under “Good Food dietary patterns” / “Good Food plate” / “Good Food”, etc., we understand […] dietary patterns that reduce environmental impacts in the areas of climate change and biodiversity and that take animal welfare into account; Brussels food production contributes to the conservation, valorisation and restoration of ecosystems. Living soils are valorised and restored, biodiversity is increased; likewise, our food depends on biodiversity and our food practices have an impact on this biodiversity […] ; GFS2 offers the opportunity to apply the WHO “One Health” approach […] which takes into account the health of the planet, humans and animals; developing and supporting food production by citizens […] in order to contribute […] to ecosystem services;By 2030, Brussels food production contributes to the conservation, valorization, and restoration of ecosystems. Living soils are valorized and restored. Biodiversity is increased. Natural resources are preserved. Agro-ecological practices for both open-field and surface farming are becoming increasingly common.; Definition of agro-ecology: “Agroecology is primarily a set of principles and practices that improve the resilience and sustainability of food and agricultural systems while preserving social integrity. Agroecology is also a socio-	The Good Food Strategy strongly recognises that food systems have significant impacts on climate, biodiversity and ecosystems. It aims to create a food system that “takes into account the health of the planet, humans and animals”. Focusing on enhancing agro-ecological practices and making agro-ecological practices more common, creates a framework of principles and practices that litteraly aims to improve the resilience and sustainability of food production. In terms of the operational measures, action 4.1.e.1 focuses solely on motivating behavioural change towards more plant-based diets, rather than on structural, binding or ecosystem-restoration measures. Action line 5 is contributed to reducing the food waste flow, which acknowledges the impacts of the waste flow on ecosystems and biodiversity. As a result, ecological concerns are clearly acknowledged, and by implementing more agro-ecological practices, the strategy includes a long-term commitment to improve the resilience and sustainability of the food system.

	political and scientific movement that reconciles human activity with the conservation of natural ecosystems.[..] It offers an alternative to the dominant agricultural model, which is based on the exploitation of natural elements and people. “Encouraging a gradual shift towards more plant-based food […] products of animal origin from farming methods with a smaller impact (on the climate, animal welfare, etc.) **(4.1.e.1).**	
6.2	GFS2 aims for a more structural shift of the food system […] towards a model that respects humans and other species; dietary patterns that reduce environmental impacts in the areas of climate change and biodiversity and that take animal welfare into account; ensuring that the criteria of the Good Food Canteen label are continuously adapted to […] issues related to animal welfare **(3.1.a.3);** ensuring that the criteria of the Good Food Restaurant label are continuously adapted to […] issues related to animal welfare **(3.1.b.3);** ensuring that the criteria of the Good Food retail outlets in the guide are continuously adapted to […] issues related to animal welfare **(3.2.a.4);** encouraging a gradual shift towards more plant-based food […] products of animal origin from farming methods with a smaller impact (on the climate, animal welfare, etc.) **(4.1.e.1).**	The strategy explicitly aims for a transition towards a food system that “respects humans and other species”, which directly recognises non-human beings as moral subjects rather than only as resources. This phrasing indicates recognition of intrinsic value, not merely instrumental utility. In addition, the strategy includes concrete and ongoing measures that affect consumption contexts, such as the continuous adaptation of Good Food labels (canteens, restaurants and retail) to include animal welfare criteria. While explicit monitoring criterions are not always detailed, the continuous adaptation of standards and labels suggests an ongoing protective mechanism rather than isolated or symbolic actions.
6.3	The food system depends on the extraction of fossil resources […] which exceed our planetary boundaries; protecting and mobilising land with agricultural potential for agro-ecological projects **(1.1.a.1);** making regional tools operational to protect agricultural land (in particular from an environmental perspective) **(1.1.a.4);** facilitating access to organic raw materials with a view to circularity **(1.2.b.4).**	The strategy acknowledges that the use of fossil fuels in the food system exceeds planetary boundaries and expresses the intention to reduce these pressures. It promotes agro-ecological practices, protects agricultural land, and facilitates access to organic resources with a view to circularity. These measures indicate an intention to regulate and reduce resource use, particularly land and material inputs, through agro-ecology, land protection and circular resource flows.However, the strategy does not establish a clear operational framework linking these measures to staying within quantified or monitored planetary limits. There are no explicit targets, thresholds, criterions or enforcement mechanisms that ensure resource use is maintained within planetary boundaries over time. As a result, while the strategy includes

		measures to reduce environmental pressure, it does not explicitly ensure that resource use remains within planetary boundaries.
6.4	Brussels food production contributes to the conservation, valorisation and restoration of ecosystems. Living soils are valorised and restored, biodiversity is increased; protecting and mobilising land with agricultural potential for agro-ecological projects **(1.1.a.1).**	the strategy mentions soil quality by referring to living soils being valorised and restored, but it does not address water or air health or quality. While it refers to protecting land with agricultural potential for agro-ecological projects, this remains an indirect and limited measure related to soil quality only. The strategy does not clearly define systematic actions, monitoring mechanisms, or long-term commitments to improve soil, water, and air health.
6.5		There is absolutely no mentioning about ecosystem services for future generations.

8.2. Appendix 2: Action lines and measures of GFS2.0, with numbering.

Table 15: Action line 1 with accompanying measures of GFS2.0

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">ACTIELIJN 1: VERSTERKEN VAN DE AGRO-ECOLOGISCHE PRODUCTIE EN ONDERSTEUNEN</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">SUBACTIELIJN 1.1: professionele agro-eco productie</td><td colspan="2">SUBACTIELIJN 1.2 : agro-ecolo prod door burgers</td></tr>
<tr><td>DOELSTELLING</td><td>MAATREGEL</td><td>DOELSTELLING</td><td>MAATREGEL</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">1.1a) Behouden van landbouwgrond, en de toegang tot de plaatsen voor professionele landbouw-productie in het BHG bevorderen en beveiligen</td><td>1.1.a.1) Beschermen en mobiliseren van gronden met landbouwpotentieel voor agro-ecologische projecten (herziening van het GBP, begeleiding bij de overdracht van gronden, bewustmaking van de publieke en private eigenaars enz.)</td><td rowspan="3">1.2.a) Behouden en uitbreiden van de ruimten voor productie door burgers</td><td>1.2.a.1) Behouden en ontwikkelen van productiegebieden in de groene ruimten van het gewest, die worden beheerd door LB; de productiefunctie uitbouwen in de groene ruimten van het gewest, ten opzichte van de andere functies</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.1.a.2) Mobiliseren van bovengrondse productiesites met stadslandbouwpotentieel en ze ter beschikking stellen voor projecten die positief bijdragen aan de voeding-stransitie naar een agro-ecologisch model (verdui-delijking van de behoeften van de sector op het vlak van ruimte, bewustmaking van de publieke en private eigenaars enz.)</td><td>1.2.a.2) Ondersteunen van de overheden (gemeenten/ OCMW's) om productieruimten te behouden en te creëren in de lokale groene ruimten en in de (semi-) openbare ruimte</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.1.a.3) Operationeel maken van een juridisch en stedenbouwkundig kader door de toegang tot productiesites in volle grond en bovengronds te bevorderen om zo te voldoen aan de voorwaarden voor agro-ecologische productie (hervorming van pachtovereenkomsten, verduidelijking van het kader voor de terbeschikking- stelling van openbare productieoppervlakken enz.)</td><td>1.2.a.3) Aangrijpen van mogelijkheden om nieuwe productieruimten te creëren</td></tr>
</table>

	1.1.a.4) Operationeel maken van regionale tools om landbouwgrond te beschermen (met name op het vlak van leefmilieu en tegen speculatie) en om de toegang tot gronden te bevorderen. Denk hierbij bijvoorbeeld aan een informatiedienst en/of gemeenschappelijke beheerstools (recht van voorkoop, informatiedienst, denkoefening over de tools die nodig zijn om de markt van de landbouwgronden te reguleren enz.) (GSTE)	**1.2.b) Mobiliseren** van de (potentiële) producenten en ondersteuning en begeleiding bieden	1.2.b.1) Aanpassen **van de informatie** aan alle doelgroepen; de toegang tot technische en praktische informatie bevorderen; een reeks tools ontwikkelen en verspreiden; de productie door burgers zichtbaar maken
1.1.b) Verschaffen van een reeks blijvende en gestructureerde **diensten en tools aan** alle landbouwers die werken op het Brusselse grondgebied die hun agro-ecologische praktijken ondersteunen en de ontwikkeling van de sector bevorderen	1.1.b.1) Creëren van een ecosysteem van diensten met inbegrip van **efficiënte, doeltreffende, gecoördineerde en gerichte begeleiding** voor de **verschillende soorten publiek** en bij de verschillende stappen van een landbouwproject, alsook toegankelijke, gecoördineerde en **duidelijke informatie** geven aan de verschillende soorten doelgroepen (proces van voortdurende verbetering samen met de begeleidingsactoren, partnerships met de historische landbouwers, **toegang tot de stedelijke organische stoffen**, begeleiding bij de biologische landbouw (behoud + omschakeling) enz.)		1.2.b.2) Ondersteunen van de uitbouw van een netwerk van vrijwillige **Moestuinmeesters** om de burger- producenten te begeleiden
	1.1.b.2) Ontwikkelen van tools om te begeleiden, (zelf) te beoordelen en te innoveren in de agro-ecologische praktijken en deze tools verspreiden		1.2.b.3) Blijven aanmoedigen van collectieve productie-projecten en begeleiden via de projectoproep **'Vooruit met de wijk'** (prioriteiten in de eerste kroon, kwetsbare doelgroepen, projecten met een grotere impact op het milieu en de betrokkenen)

1.1.c) Beveiligen en organiseren in de tijd van de financiële steun voor alle landbouwers die werken op het Brusselse grondgebied en voldoen aan of evolueren naar agro-eco-logische praktijken	1.1.c.1) Creëren van een duidelijk en stabiel wettelijk kader voor **financiële steun** voor de professionele producenten, dat bijdraagt aan de agro-ecologische transitie van de volledige Brusselse landbouwproductie (ordonnantie voor steun aan de landbouw in het BHG – die aansluit bij de steun van het Gemeenschappelijk Landbouwbeleid, gerichte projectoproepen en facultatieve subsidies, steun aan de biologische landbouw enz.)		1.2.b.4) Vergemakkelijken van de toegang tot organische **grondstoffen** met het oog op **circulariteit**
1.1.d)Versterken van de uitwisselingen tussen het BHG en de andere Belgische steden op het gebied van de primaire voedselproductie en partnerschappen aanknopen met actoren uit de rand om zo de landbouwgronden te beschermen en de toegang tot productieplaatsen te bevorderen en te beveiligen voor agro-ecologische-grootstedelijke landbouw	1.1.d.1) Organiseren van regelmatige **ontmoetingen** met de betrokken actoren en **partnerschappen** uitbouwen op basis van de opportuniteiten die zich voordoen	1.2.c) Ontwikkelen van **toegankelijke projecten** inzake Good Food-productie in samenwerking met de lokale aanspreekpunten en door de **kwetsbare doelgroepen te betrekken**	1.2.c.1) Bijbrengen van de basisprincipes van stadslandbouw en de actiemethodologie aan de lokale aanspreekpunten (onder meer OVM's, PSC's, gemeenten, buurthuizen enz.) – link met actielijn 4, OD2
			1.2.c.2) Ondersteunen en begeleiden van de verwezenlijking van productieprojecten, in samenwerking met de **sociale huisvesting** – link met actielijn 4, OD1

	1.2.c.3) Ondersteunen en begeleiden van de verwezenlijking van productieprojecten, in samenwerking met **de gemeenten en OCMW's** – link met actie- lijn 4, OD1
1.2.d) Zorgen voor diversificatie in de productie met een toegevoegde waarde, waaronder het promoten van **fruitbomen**	1.2.d.1) Promoten van de productietypes via communicatieacties die een meerwaarde bieden op kwantitatief vlak, op het vlak van voedingswaarde, smaak, kostprijs, kweekgemak en/of **inpassing in de culturen en diëten:** onder meer fruit (klein fruit, fruitbomen, gedroogd fruit), plantaardige eiwitten, eieren, teelt in bakken enz.
	1.2.d.2) Opleiden van fruitcoaches om burgers en publieke/particuliere eigenaars te begeleiden bij het planten en beheren van fruit(bomen)
	1.2.d.3) Uitbouwen van de **fruitproductie** in publieke en privéruimten (inclusief gedroogde vruchten) op basis vande resultaten en modellen aanbevolen door het ARBRES-onderzoeksproject
	1.2.d.4) Aanmoedigen van de overheden om het goede voorbeeld te geven door fruitbomen in de openbare ruimte te plaatsen

Table 16: Action line 2 with accompanying measures of GFS2.0

ACTIELIJN 2: ONTWIKKELEN VAN GF-KETENS OM BRUSSEL TE BEVOORRADEN			
SUBACTIELIJN 2.1: GF-keten structureren & versterken		SUBACTIELIJN 2.2 : ontwikkelen GF verwerkingssector	
DOELSTELLING	MAATREGEL	DOELSTELLING	MAATREGEL

2.1.a) Stimuleren van de ontwikkeling van Good Food-ketens	2.1.a.1) Identificeren van de veelbelovende ketens voor het gewest en hun mogelijke ontwikkeling op het vlak van economie en werkgelegenheid bestuderen (GSET)	2.2.a) Ontwikkelen van een ecosysteem dat gunstig is voor de ontwik-keling van de verwerkingssector	2.2.a.1) Ontwikkelen/ondersteunen van een Good Food-incubator (Termonde site). In de tussentijd een tijdelijke testfase op een andere ruimte plannen
	2.1.a.2) Structureren, organiseren en met elkaar in verband brengen van vraag en aanbod (in en rond de stad) van Good Food-producten via een dienst Ketenfacilitator (Good Food B2B)		2.2.a.2) Ondersteunen van de huisvesting van verwerkingsbedrijven en aangepaste infrastructuren ter beschikking stellen
	2.1.a.3) Activeren van de dienst Facilitator duurzame overheidsopdrachten (DOO) in het kader van het prioritaire thema voeding		2.2.a.3) Ondersteunen van de scale-up van de verwerkingsbedrijven en de omvangrijke voedselverwerkingsactiviteit en of de transitie van de bestaande verwerkers zodat voldoende volumes kunnen worden verwerkt om de kantines te bevoorraden
	2.1.a.4)Uitbouwen van een doeltreffend en multifunctioneel logistiek netwerk (transformatie, distributie, ontmoeting) dat noodzakelijk is voor de ontwikkeling van de Good Food- ketens, met name via logistieke hubs		2.2.a.4) Anticiperen op de behoeften aan arbeidskrachten en via opleidingen de omscholing van werknemers en de integratie van werkzoekenden bevorderen
2.1.b) Begeleiden van de oprichting/ transitie van Good Food-voe-dingsbedrijven	2.1.b.1) Ontwikkelen van een sectorluik rond Good Food voor het gewestelijke aanbod van ondernemersbegeleiding en -opleidingen bestemd voor verwerkers, restaurants, handelszaken en traiteurs (GSET)		
	2.1.b.2)Uitbouwen van een netwerk van Good Food-bedrijven		

	2.1.b.3) Verbeteren van de competenties van de begeleidingsactoren inzake de Good Food-transitie (GSET)
	2.1.b.4) Monitoren van de transitietrajecten van voedingsbedrijven (GSET)
	2.1.b.5)Helpen van de bedrijven met een Good Food-aanpak te voldoen aan de regelgeving rond voedselveiligheid
	2.1.b.6) Opnemen van Good Food-criteria in de checklist die wordt gebruikt om klanten van BRUCEFO (kmo's, start-ups) te begeleiden vóór ze hun voedingsproducten op de markt brengen en bestuderen of het haal-baar is om de etikettering van voeding aan te vullen met een etiket van het type 'ecoscore'. De klanten begeleiden bij hun overstap naar Good Food
	2.1.b.7) Verduidelijken van de steun voor voedingsbedrijven via de bestaande tools en indien nodig via de oprichting van een loket als uniek aanspreekpunt voor dergelijke vragen.
2.1.c) Ondersteunen van de oprichting/ transitie van Good Food-voedingsbedrijven en werken aan het voortbestaan van de bestaande economische Good Food-actoren	2.1.c.1) Opnemen van de Good Food-criteria in de strategische tools van de organisaties die instaan voor de ondersteuning van de bedrijven (GSET)
	2.1.c.2) Ondersteunen van innovatieve projecten rond voeding (GSET)
	2.1.c.3) Ondersteunen van de biocertificering van Brusselse handelszaken, restaurants en verwerkers

	2.1.c.4) Mobiliseren van de actoren die betrokken zijn bij het onthaal van bedrijven om de Good Food- transitie van de economische actoren te bevorderen (GSET)
	2.1.c.5) Specifieke steun bieden aan de bestaande economische Good Food actoren om het voortbestaan van hun activiteit te begeleiden en te ondersteunen
	2.1.c.6) Beperken, identificeren en wijzigen/ elimineren van de dominante en specifieke elementen in het gewestelijk en gemeentelijk beleid die de instandhouding/ontwikkeling van bedrijven in het Brussels voedselsysteem, in aanvulling op de GSET-strategie
2.1.d) Opleidingen geven rond Good Food-praktijken aan (toe- komstige) professionals en werkzoekenden in de voedingssector	2.1.d.1) Good Food-opleidingen voor horecaberoepen: Ervoor zorgen dat de Good Food-praktijken worden opgenomen in de horecaopleidingen bestemd voor professionals en werkzoekenden
	2.1.d.2) Uitbreiden van de opleidingsvoor- zieningen naar de voedingsberoepen buiten de horeca door ervoor te zorgen dat de Good Food-praktijken worden opgenomen in de bestaande of te ontwikkelen opleidingen, alsook in de opleiding van de lesgevers

Table 17: Action line 3 with accompanying measures of GFS2.0

ACTIELIJN 3: VERZEKEREN VAN DE DISTRIBUTIE VAN EEN 'COMMERCIEEL GOOD FOOD-AANBOD'	
SUBACTIELIJN 3.1: in de restaurants	SUBACTIELIJN 3.2 : in de handelszaken

DOELSTELLING	MAATREGEL	DOELSTELLING	MAATREGEL
3.1.a) Begeleiden van alle betrokken partijen van de **kantines** bij de uitvoering van de Good Food-praktijken en de toegang tot het Good Food-label	3.1.a.1) Ontwikkelen van informatie- en communicatietools zodat meer beheerders van collectieve keukens en hun klanten de Good Food-praktijken toepassen. Met name zorgen voor **informatie over een transitie zonder hogere kosten voor de consument.**	3.2.a)Verzekeren van de **toegang** tot Good Food-handelszaken voor iedereen en overal in Brussel	3.2.a.1) Stimuleren van de ontwikkeling van het Good Food-aanbod in de handelszaken, eerst en vooral in de **gebieden waar GF weinig aan- wezig** is, in samenwerking met de instellingen die belast zijn met deze bevoegdheden
	3.1.a.2) Ontwikkelen van een aantrekkelijk programma om de kantines te ondersteunen bij hun transitie via **opleidingen, een helpdesk, tools en een Good Food Kantine-label** en Good Food Centrale keuken-label NB: kwalificerende horeca-opleidingen: zie actielijn 2		3.2.a.2) Organiseren van **bewustmakingscampagnes** voor de voedingshandelaars Fase 1: het concurrentievoordeel van een Good Food-transitie objectiveren (studie, panelanalyse) en een overtuigende argu- mentatie opstellen om een brede waaier van profielen te overtuigen (communicatietools) Fase 2: de handelszaken informeren en bewustmaken door succesverhalen te delen (bewustmaking door collega's) (GSET)
	3.1.a.3) Ervoor zorgen dat de criteria van het Good Food Kantine-label voortdurend worden aangepast aan de evolutie van de markt, de sociale en gezondheidskwesties (zout, vetten, suikers), de kwesties rond **dierenwelzijn** en de samenhang met de gewestelijke plannen		3.2.a.3) Ondertekenen van een verbintenisovereenkomst, binnen de 6 maanden na de goedkeuring van de strategie, met de supermarkten rond de uitvoering van acties om de **toegankelijkheid/visibiliteit van Good Food** te verhogen en de voedselverliezen te verminderen, herverdelen en heropwaarderen(GSET)

	3.1.a.4) Invoeren van een wetgevend instrument waardoor er meer rekening wordt gehouden met de GF-criteria in alle kantines en bestuderen of het haalbaar is om gezondheidscriteria op te nemen in verband met het gezondheidspromotieplan		3.2.a.4)Ervoor zorgen dat de criteria van de GF-handelszaken uit de gids voortdurend worden aangepast aan de evolutie van de markt, de sociale en gezondheidskwesties (zout, vetten, suikers), de kwesties rond **dieren- welzijn** en de samenhang met de gewestelijke plannen
	3.1.a.5) Verzekeren van de voorbeeldfunctie van de kantines van overheden en scholen, inclusief de transitie van De Brusselse Keukens		3.2.a.5) Opwaarderen van het GF-aanbod in de ogen van het grote publiek en de professionelen via de **Good Food-gids** en lokale communicatiepartnerships (GSET)
3.1.b) Begeleiden van alle betrokken partijen van de restaurants bij de uitvoering van de Good Food-praktijken en de toegang tot het Good Food-label	3.1.b.1) **Begeleiden** van alle restaurants bij de toepassing van de Good Food-praktijken *NB: kwalificerende horeca-opleidingen: zie actielijn 2*		3.2.a.6) **Ondersteunen van alternatieve modellen** voor toegankelijke distributie (coöperaties, gedifferentieerde prijs, vrije prijs enz.) via de verspreiding van veelbelovende en pilootprojecten (GSET)
	3.1.b.2) Blijven inzetten op een Good Food-erkenningssysteem, **ondersteuning bij de transitie**, het creëren van een **netwerk** en de valorisatie van gelabelde restaurants. Het type betrokken restaurants verbreden (onder meer snacks) en de kwestie van smaak integreren		
	3.1.b.3) Ervoor zorgen dat de criteria van het Good Food Resto-label voortdurend worden aangepast aan de evolutie van de markt, de sociale en gezondheidskwesties (zout, vetten, suikers), de kwesties rond **dierenwel- zijn** en de samenhang met de gewestelijke plannen		

	3.1.b.4) Versterken van de GF-dimensie van de incubator kokotte en deze tool opnemen in het geheel van GF-tools voor de horeca

Table 18: Action line 4 with accompanying measures of GFS2.0

ACTIELIJN 4: VERZEKEREN VAN GOOD FOOD-VOEDING VOOR IEDEREEN			
SUBACTIELIJN 4.1: Burgers		SUBACTIELIJN 4.2 : In de scholen en met jongeren	
DOELSTELLING	MAATREGEL	DOELSTELLING	MAATREGEL
4.1.a) Ontwikkelen van niet-commerciele, lokale projecten rond voedseltoegankelijkheid, op basis van de behoeften van een **wijk** en in nauwe samenwerking met de actoren van de wijk (verenigingen, burgers, sociale en gezondheids- sector enz.)	4.1.a.1) Tot stand brengen van een wijkdynamiek die gunstig is voor Good Food-voeding, in **samenwerking met de betrokken actoren** en in **gebieden waar het Good Food-aanbod en de Good Food-projecten minder aanwezig** zijn. Fase 1: Drie proefprojecten financieren en organiseren inzake de ontwikkeling van een wijkdynamiek om de **voedseltoegankelijk- heid te bevorderen** in samenwerking met de bestaande actoren en dynamieken Fase 2: Verspreiden en veralgemenen op basis van de resultaten van fase 1 en op basis van de lessen uit het GWGP, de RAQ, de logica van de leefomgeving enz.	4.2.a) Bevorderen van de integratie van GF in de **voedingspraktijken** van de scholen	4.2.a.1) Begeleiden van de scholen bij de invoering en bestendiging van concrete projecten rond het voedingsaanbod buiten de kantines en rond productie (moestuinen en boomgaarden in scholen, met name via het project Recreatie) – prioriteit voor de basisscholen
	4.1.a.2) Blijven aanmoedigen van de ontwikkeling van collectieve burgerprojecten en **ondersteunen** (projectoproep Vooruit met de wijk): wijkprioriteiten met weinig acties + **kwetsbare doelgroepen** + ambitieuze projecten	4.2.b) Betrekken van jongeren bij de **projecten** rond voedseltransitie in de **wijk**	4.2.b.1) Organiseren van concrete projecten voor jongeren (16-25 jaar) rond Good Food, naargelang de realiteit in hun wijk FASE 1: verzamelen, analyseren en samenbrengen van ervaringen en projecten waarbij jongeren betrokken zijn en met een GF-

			dimensie, in hun wijk en in Brussel FASE 2: op basis van de ervaringen van fase 1 jongerenprojecten organiseren rond Good Food en smaak en ze met elkaar in verband brengen.
4.1.b) Bevorderen van de organisatie van initiatieven door schakelfiguren waardoor een **betere toegankelijkheid van Good Food-voeding voor iedereen** op het niveau van het gewest mogelijk wordt gemaakt	4.1.b.1) Creëren van een **opleiding** op basis van de beginselen van permanente opleiding in verband met het thema Good Food-voeding en deze elk jaar aanbieden aan **de schakelfiguren in de eerste lijn (in de eerste plaats de sociale en gezondheidsactoren**, en indien mogelijk ook andere (cultuur, sport enz.)), om hen te informeren en te begeleiden bij de integratie van dit thema in hun eigen tools/bij hun eigen publiek		4.2.b.2) Blijven ondersteunen van de **animatieboerderijen** (via subsidies aan de boerderijen)
4.1.c) Ondersteunen en begeleiden van projecten met het oog op de toegankelijkheid van Good Food-voeding voor iedereen	4.1.c.1) Systematisch een luik toevoegen in de **projectoproepen** voor de Brusselse gemeenten en OCMW's rond de ontwikkeling van projecten met het oog op een betere toegankelijkheid van Good Food-voeding		
	4.1.c.2) Ondersteunen van projecten via project-oproepen – d**ie mee worden gefinancierd** door de milieu-, sociale en gezondheids-actoren –met het oog op de toegankelijk- heid van Good Food-voeding voor iedereen, gericht op specifieke actoren. Aanmoedigen/ organiseren van samenwerking in plaats van concurrentie, zorgen voor de uitwisseling van projecten (in beide richtingen)		
	4.1.c.3) Toevoegen van ondersteuning aan het sociale/ gezondheidsluik van de **multifunctionaliteit** van de Good Food-stadslandbouw in bepaalde projectoproepen die mee worden gefinancierd door de bevoegdheden inzake		

	leefmilieu en de sociale/gezondheidsbevoegdheden
	4.1.c.4) Financieren van het netwerk van de **Cuisines de Quartier** en het integreren in de logica van de leefomgeving (financiering communicatie en coördinatie)
4.1.d) Verder ontwikkelen van de toegankelijkheid van het **concept** Good Food voor iedereen	4.1.d.1) Ontwikkelen en verspreiden van gemeenschappelijke **communicatietools** voor de milieu- en sociale- en gezondheidssector- rond het thema voeding (definiëren, aanpassen en vulgariseren, afstemmen op het publiek) en van het concept Good Food voor iedereen; duidelijke argumenten opstellen die zijn aangepast aan het doelpubliek (waaronder studenten) en die de geloofwaardigheid van de aanpak bevestigen, alsook een **vertrouwensrelatie uitbouwen met de meest terughoudende doelgroepen**
	4.1.d.2) Ondersteunen van verenigingen in het gewest bij hun bijdrage aan het permanent informe- ren/**opleiden** van de burgers, met name inzake de begrijpelijkheid en toegankelijkheid van de systemische uitdagingen van de voedseltran- sitie en de Good Food-concepten
4.1.e) Bevorderen van de transitie naar **voeding** met een kleinere impact op mens, dier en milieu	4.1.e.1) Aanmoedigen van geleidelijk **meer plantaardige voeding** op het bord van de Brusse- laars, door het evenwicht tussen dierlijke en plantaardige eiwitten in onze eetgewoonten te herbekijken en tegelijkertijd te zorgen voor evenwichtig eten en diversiteit in de voedselopname; de voorkeur geven aan producten van dierlijke

	oorsprong uit kweekmethoden met een **kleinere impact (op het klimaat, het dierenwelzijn enz.)**

Table 19: Action line 5 with accompanying measures of GFS2.0

ACTIELIJN 5: VERMINDEREN VAN VOEDSELVERLIES EN -VERSPILLING			
SUBACTIELIJN 5.1: Preventie aan de bron		SUBACTIELIJN 5.2 : Verwerking van onverkochte goederen	
DOELSTELLING	MAATREGEL	DOELSTELLING	MAATREGEL
5.1.a) Invoeren van een monitoring van **cijfergegevens** en de opvolging, meting en melding van voed-selverspilling in alle sectoren verbeteren	5.1.a.1) Samenwerken met het Vlaamse en het Waalse Gewest om te komen tot een nationale **rapportering** van de cijfers over verliezen en voedselverspilling in alle sectoren (eetbare stromen). Bredere conclusies trekken op basis van steekproeven uitgevoerd in overleg met het Vlaamse en Waalse Gewest in het kader van de Europese monitoring	5.2.a) Stimuleren van de ontwikkeling van projecten rond de verwerking van onverkochte voedingswaren voor menselijke consumptie	5.2.a.1) Ondersteunen van innovatieve projecten rond de verwerking van onverkochte voedingswaren om zo een nieuw product op de Brusselse markt te brengen (GSET) als aanvulling op de ondersteuning van een verwerkingshub (plaats, zie actielijn 2)
	5.1.a.2) Organiseren van de verzameling van specifieke **gegevens** voor het BHG		5.2.a.2) in contact brengen van de schenkers met de actoren die de onverkochte voedingswaren verwerken tot hulpbronnen voor professionele projecten, via de begeleiding van de Ketenfacilitator

5.1.b) Verminderen van voedselvers-pilling **aan de bron** via gerichte acties en via verschillende benaderingen en tools voor de **gezinnen**	5.1.b.1) Organiseren van grootschalige acties over verschillende jaren om minder te verspillen, enerzijds door **in te zetten op communicatie**: - de individuele bewustwording bevorderen en de negatieve impact benadrukken - informeren, bewustmaken en promoten van preventieve handelingen anderzijds door samen te werken met de betrokken partijen (producenten, verdelers) om de preventieve acties inzake aankoop en opslag te verbeteren	
	5.1.b.2) Opnemen van de preventie van verspilling in gezinnen in de communicatieacties rond het sorteren van bioafval in het kader van de uitvoering van het HABP	
5.1.c) Verminderen van voedselvers-pilling **aan de bron** via gerichte acties en via verschillende benaderingen en tools voor de **professionals**, restaurants en handelszaken	5.1.c.1) Ondersteunen van de professionals bij de invoering van doeltreffende maatregelen om voedselverliezen te verminderen, via de **Bioafval Facilitator** die werd opgericht in het kader van het HABP	
	5.1.c.2) Objectiveren van de verliezen en hun finan- ciële impact in verschillende sectoren en de actoren informeren/bewustma ken	

	5.1.c.3) Identificeren, valoriseren en uitgebreid bekendmaken (wedstrijd) van de Good practices
	5.1.c.4) Transversaal opnemen in de strategie van de specifieke criteria/maatregelen rond de preventie van verspilling aan de bron en voed-selverliezen: via de kantine- en restolabels, via opleidingen

8.3. Appendix 3: Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Student name: VERSCHRAEGEN Lena
Student number: r0857054

This form is related to my master's thesis.
Title master's thesis: Pathways to Just Food Futures in Brussels: A Multidimensional Assessment of Justice in Urban Food Systems Governance
Promoter: Prof. Erik Mathijs, Dr. Michiel de Bauw

Please indicate with "X":

- o I did not use GenAI tools.
- X I did use GenAI tools. In this case specify which one (e.g. ChatGPT/GPT4/...): ChatGPT, ChatGPT4, Microsoft Copilot

Please indicate with "X" (possibly multiple times) in which way you were using it:

- X **As a language assistant for reviewing or improving texts you wrote yourself, provided that the model does not add new content.** In this case, the use of GenAI is similar to the spelling and grammar check tools we already have today, so you do not need to explicitly mention using GenAI for this).
- X **As a search engine to get initial information on a topic or to make an initial search for existing research on the topic.** (This way of gathering information is similar to using an ordinary search engine when working on an assignment. As a student, you are responsible for checking and verifying the absence and correctness of references. Therefore, after this initial search, look for scientific sources and conduct your own analysis of the source documents. Interpret, analyse and process the information you obtained; don't just copy-paste it. If you then write your own text based on this information, you do not have to mention you used GenAI.)
- o **To generate text blocks.** (If you do copy-paste text blocks of GenAI output, you have to cite your GenAI sources and quote them, i.e. you clearly state that the item was created via GenAI by citation/reference.)
- o **To generate graphs or figures.** (If you do copy-paste graphs/figures of GenAI output, you have to cite the GenAI sources and quote them, i.e. you clearly state that the item was created via GenAI by citation/reference.)
- o **To generate some code as part of a larger assignment.** (Watch out, this can only be done if the teacher/promotor explicitly allows it.)
- o **Other** (Contact the teacher of the course or the supervisor of the thesis or BIG project. Explain how you comply with article 84 of the examination regulations. Explain the usefulness or added value of using GenAI.)

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