

Driving Change Through National Policy Dialogues & Stakeholder Mapping

Why it matters

School food is more than a meal—it's a lever for health, education, and sustainability. National policy dialogues bring together diverse voices to shape policies that make school meals healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable. By engaging the right stakeholders, these dialogues can transform food systems and deliver on climate and health goals. Whether you're a policymaker, advocate, scholar or educator, you can help create a future where every child enjoys nutritious, sustainable food at school.

What Are National Policy Dialogues?

They are structured conversations that unite policymakers, educators, farmers, caterers, NGOs, and youth around a shared vision:

better school food for all. These dialogues create momentum for systemic change by:

- Aligning national strategies with local realities.
- Bridging perspectives and building consensus across sectors.
- Highlighting knowledge and policy gaps.



Why You Should Act

- **Influence Policy:** Shape decisions that affect millions of children.
- **Advance Sustainability:** School meals can drive climate-friendly food systems and shape the future sustainable food norms of the rising generation.
- **Empower Communities:** Give a voice to those who eat, grow, and serve the food.

The Power of Stakeholder Mapping

To influence policy, you need the right people at the table. Stakeholder mapping helps identify:

- **Decision-makers:** Ministries, municipal leaders, and agencies.
- **Implementers:** School administrators, caterers, and suppliers.
- **Voices of change:** Youth, parents, NGOs, and researchers.
- **Economic actors:** Farmers, SMEs, and food industry representatives.

Mapping ensures inclusivity and highlights underrepresented groups—such as small-scale producers and students—whose perspectives are vital for lasting impact.

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How to Get Started

- 1 **Define Your Scope**
Decide if your dialogue will focus nationally, regionally, or locally.
- 2 **Map Stakeholders**
Use a simple template to list actors across policy, education, and food supply chains.
- 3 **Prioritize Diversity**
Include youth, farmers, and civil society alongside policymakers.
- 4 **Plan the Dialogue**
Prepare a brief concept note, agenda for your dialogue, and engagement tools.
- 5 **Host & Follow Up**
Facilitate an inclusive discussion, analyse and summarize, gather feedback, and share outcomes widely.

Tips for Effective Dialogues

- Facilitate multi-level engagement—urban and national partners should tailor invitees accordingly.
- Employ co-creation methods, ensuring youth and underrepresented stakeholders are actively involved and have the chance to make their voices heard during the dialogue.
- Use iterative learning: review stakeholder lists and dialogue objectives post-meeting to adjust plans for future events.
- Share lessons and tools across countries to build collective capacity and policy coherence.

Step-by-Step Implementation

Define Scope

Clarify whether the dialogue is regional, national, or municipal.

Map Stakeholders

Use SF4C template to list actors across policy, supply chain, education, and civil society.

Prioritize Delegates

Include youth, SME/farm sector, and policymakers. Develop invite lists.

Draft Dialogue Outline

Prepare concept note, action plan, engagement tools, and evaluation survey.

Execute & Evaluate

Host the dialogue, collect feedback, and refine delegate data for future events.

Curious how SF4C partners mapped their relevant stakeholders? [Click here!](#)

Find more information at schoolfood4change.eu
or contact us at info@schoolfood4change.eu

Appendix 2: Stakeholder analysis based on position and need

Steps:

1. Make a list of stakeholders in the school meals system
2. Prioritise main stakeholders (affecting/affected)
3. Classify stakeholders (sector, activity, identity, location, etc.)
4. Position stakeholders on map/circles, see appendix 1
5. Sense making and analysis. In this step, you interpret the stakeholder map by analysing each actor's needs (what is essential for them) and position (their stance towards the initiative), in order to understand patterns, tensions, and opportunities for engagement.
6. Develop a strategy plan

Blockers

Those who oppose our project because their needs are not met or they are against our desired change

Floater

Those who lack a clear stand (but could support or oppose our project if their needs are not met)

Movers

Those who share our interest in the project and can be easily engaged because their needs will be met.

→ Dividing **blockers** (break down)

→ Attracting **floaters** (bring in)

→ Aligning **movers** (build up)

