

Guiding Principles of Internal Functioning

*Network of Intermediary Cities and
Agri-Food Systems*

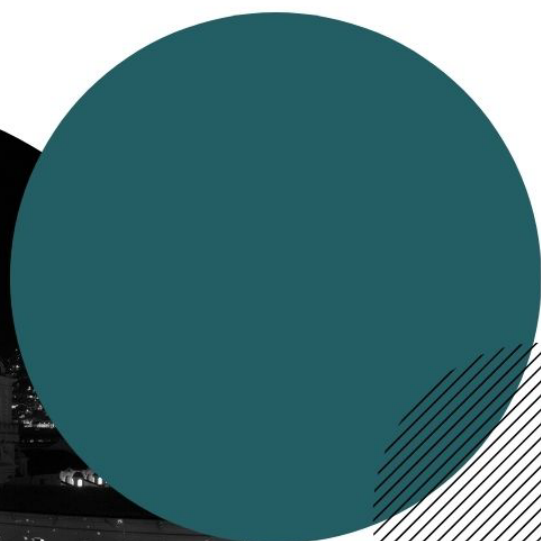


Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



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Presentation

Intermediary cities are home to 20% of the world's population and one third of the total urban population and are a key buffer against the challenges faced by large metropolises. The Covid pandemic¹⁹ highlighted the problems surrounding human development, logistics, transport, food production and the link between cities and green spaces.

There is an urgent need to understand the root causes of existing vulnerability and to promote policies, planning and action to mobilise local, national and international resources around these challenges. Taking into consideration the approaches of municipalities and other local actors, aiming to establish coordination mechanisms between the different parts and links of the food system.

In this sense, the role of intermediary cities as a buffer between rural and urban areas is fundamental, in the understanding that they are spaces and territories of coordination that provide facilities, logistics centres and basic services for sustainable food production and the circular economy.

It is in this context that a group of intermediary cities from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay have formed the Network of Intermediary Cities and Food Systems that seeks to advance in the construction of an Urban Food Agenda with the perspective of linking the food production system with territorial policy.

These regulations seek to guide the mechanisms for the functioning and sustainability of the Network of Intermediary Cities and Agrifood Systems, based on the definition of objectives, structure and areas of work.



Object

The purpose of the present document is to order and guide the functioning of the Network of Intermediary Cities and Agri-Food Systems, as well as the links, obligations and duties of the institutions that comprise it.

Nature and Composition

1. The Network of Intermediary Cities and Agrifood Systems is an initiative of cities, territories and regions of Latin American countries in conjunction with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
2. The Network is made up of representatives of Intermediary Cities from Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Guiding Principles

The Network will base its actions on twelve principles:

Cooperation: The Network favours the use of experiences and lessons learned in the countries of the Region and how these can be useful to other countries.

Solidarity: The Network will provide timely support to all its members when the situation warrants it and may offer humanitarian cooperation.

Commitment: The members of the Network make their contributions only in the interest of collaborating in the management of the potential and integration of the Intermediary Cities of the region.

Inclusiveness: The Network includes representatives of cities with different productive realities and encourages countries to join in the implementation of a regional strategy for sustainable development, with a special focus on historically vulnerable populations such as indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, among others.

Gender Equality: The Network considers gender equality as a central principle to achieve its objectives, recognising the different roles that women play in the functioning, progress and resilience of Intermediary Cities. Women's empowerment will be a key factor in the work of the Network, and its promotion will be permanent in all its actions.

Human Rights Approach: The Network, within the framework of its work, will consider the characteristics and diversity of the populations that inhabit the Latin American territory, focusing on the groups that are subject to greater exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation, with the objective that its actions promote and defend human rights in the region.

Guiding Principles

Transparency: All of the Network's activities and recommendations are known to all stakeholders, and it is accountable for its actions and decisions.

Neutrality: The Network does not take a position for any particular entity, but only provides evidence and collaborates when requested.

Independence: The Network does not obey the indications of any particular entity in its work in relation to the definition of technical guidelines.

Sustainability: The Network will advance in the promotion of economic, social and environmental sustainability of its member cities.

Sustainable development: All the Network's actions will respect the right to a balanced environment in the construction of sustainable and ecosystem-friendly agricultural production.

Equity: The Network's actions will be based on the development of socially just and economically viable food livelihoods for its inhabitants.

Objective and purpose of the Network

The objective of the Network is to promote dialogue and exchange of experiences between the Intermediary Cities of the countries of the region, with a view to strengthening the capacities of the Local Governments that are members of the Network, facilitating the establishment of alliances, developing joint strategies for regional integration and technical cooperation projects.

The Network has the following aims:

- A. Generate a space for knowledge, learning, relationships and solutions at the local level that generates the opportunity to share experiences, reflections and lessons learned on municipal management and agri-food systems in the Post Pandemic context of Covid19.
- B. Strengthen the capacities of the intermediate cities that make up the Network.
- C. Promote access and technical cooperation.

The Network will have the following lines of action:

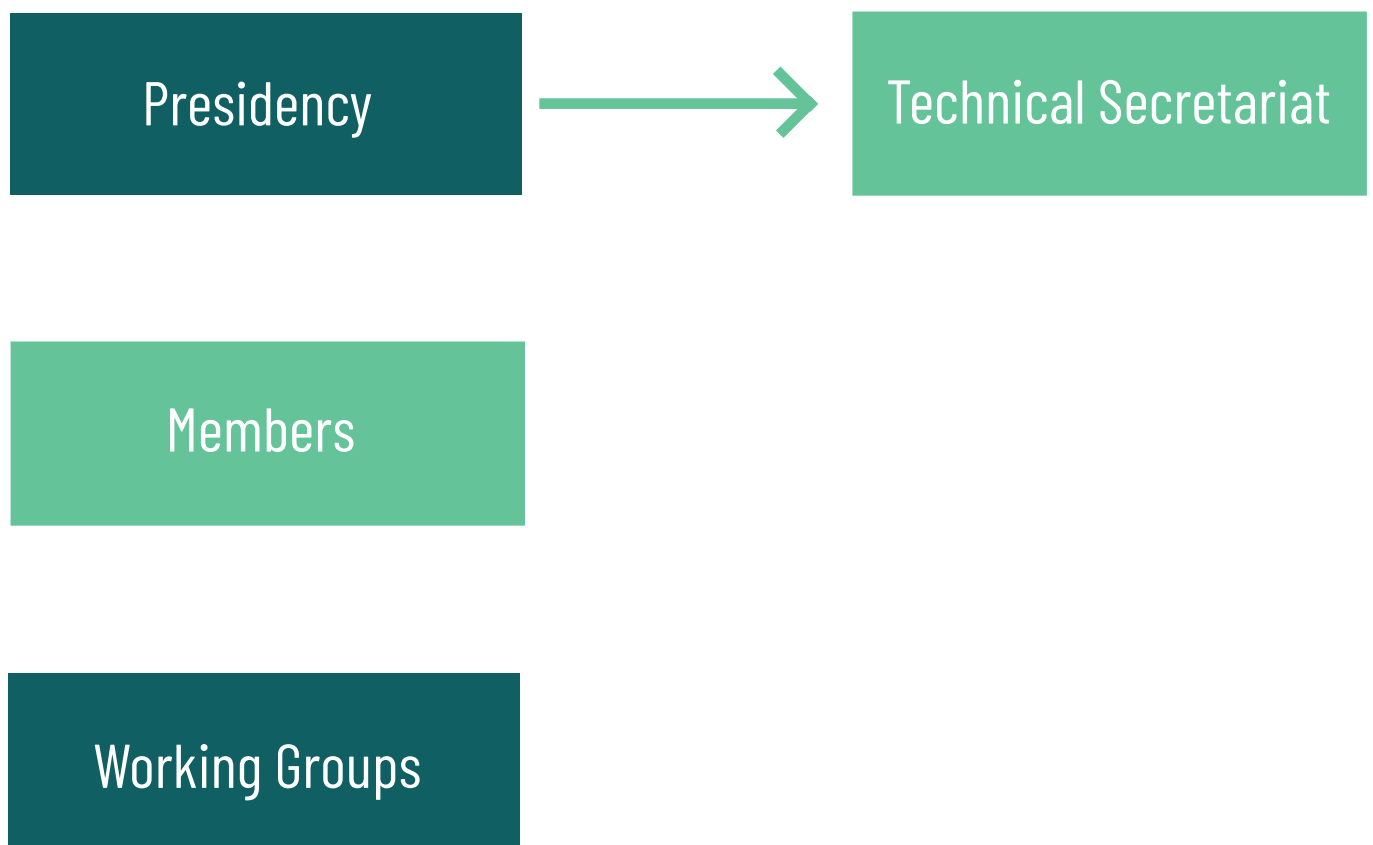
- A. Food and Nutrition Security.
- B. Food transformation (Digitalisation/ Incorporation of technology in the governance of the food system).
- C. Resilience and the role of intermediary cities in economic and social recovery/ exchange of experiences.
- D. Participate in the UN Food Systems Summit (FSS) and other spaces of the international agenda relevant to its lines of action.
- E. Agricultural infrastructure to strengthen food systems.
- F. Infrastructure for the sustainable development of cities.
- G. Strategies for articulation between local and national governments.
- H. Generation of indicators to measure food security.
- I. Research and generation of a database with successful experiences of Agrifood Systems in intermediate cities.
- J. Fair and responsible trade to strengthen agrifood systems.
- K. Exchange of best practices on strategies that protect producers and cooperatives, while attracting investment.
- L. Valorisation of knowledge based on the systematisation and consolidation of traditional knowledge and practices of food production and sustainable agriculture.

Scope of Action

The Intermediary Cities Network is circumscribed within the regional framework of the countries that make up Latin America and the Caribbean.

Organizational Structure

The organisational structure of the Network shall consist of the following bodies:



Presidency

The Presidency is responsible for making technical and institutional decisions related to the Network, promotes spaces for discussion and analysis among its members, ensures the proper functioning of the Network and monitors the fulfilment of commitments established among the members of the Network.

It will be exercised for a term of one year, which may be renewable for the same period, with a new election, without the right to renewal (when it has completed two consecutive terms).

The seat of the Presidency shall be in the country of domicile of the presiding City.

The election of the President of the Network shall be carried out by an absolute majority of votes of the members or delegates designated by their respective competent authorities. Only one vote shall be counted for each city. The vote shall be called by the Technical Secretariat one month in advance.

The candidate cities for the election of the President must submit their nominations to the Technical Secretariat 60 (sixty) days before the date fixed for the election.

In order to be eligible to run for the Presidency, Cities must have at least two more years in office.

If no applications are submitted by the deadline, the Technical Secretariat would assume the Presidency on an interim basis and within 90 (ninety) days and call for a new election.

Technical Secretariat

The Secretariat will be responsible for providing technical support to the Presidency, members and working groups of the Network, in tasks of dissemination, drafting of strategic lines, contents and proposals for activities.

It will act as secretary in the regional meetings of the Network.

The Technical Secretariat of the Network will be in charge of FAO and will coordinate with the City that is holding the Presidency of the Network.

Functions:

- Facilitate the articulation of the members of the Network and the development of its activities.
- To facilitate meeting spaces among the members of the Network, such as exchanges of experiences, workshops and work meetings.
- Facilitate technical advice.
- To provide accompaniment in the activities considered in the Network's work plan.
- Facilitate technical and triangular cooperation among the members of the Network.
- Generate reports on the progress made by the network.
- Disseminate among the member countries of the Network, studies and technical documents prepared by similar institutions in the countries of the region and beyond.

In order to fulfil its functions, the Technical Secretariat will carry out the following:

- Virtual meetings with members of the Network.
- One meeting per year with all members of the network for the evaluation of results.
- Elaboration and dissemination of reports of the work meetings held both with the presidency and with the representatives of the member countries.

Working Groups

The Network will have the Working Groups it deems appropriate under the lines of action established in these regulations.

Members of the Network

The Network is composed of the following members:

- **Ordinary Members:** All Intermediary Cities that apply for membership of the Network and have been accepted as such.
- **Observer Members:** All Intermediary Cities that participate in different instances of the Network but are not part of the Network.

Requirements to become a Member of the Network

To be a City or a territory with jurisdictional unit of an Intermediate region of a country located in Latin America and the Caribbean. An Intermediate City is defined as a city or jurisdictional unit with a population of between 50,000 and 1,000,000 people.

To have institutional policies that are in accordance with the objectives and aims of the Network.

Designate a representative and an alternate representative of the City.

Interested cities must send an official application to the Network's presidency, indicating the city's characteristics, strengths and expectations to join the Network.

Likewise, the founding cities of the Network may submit applications from cities with which they have working links and propose their integration into the Network.

Once the application has been received, the Technical Secretariat will take note of it and inform the Presidency, with the objective of consulting the member cities within a maximum period of 60 (sixty) days.

Once the city has been approved to join the Network, it must sign a letter of commitment, in which it expressly indicates its acceptance of the Network's commitments and regulations.

Periodic meetings of the Network

The Network will meet virtually every four months, where the progress of the activities prioritised by the Network will be evaluated and the four-monthly work will be planned.

The meetings will be convened by the Presidency of the Network with the support of the Technical Secretariat, with due notice.

The Presidency and the Technical Secretariat shall maintain permanent contact with the members of the Network by electronic means in order to coordinate logistical, administrative and technical research activities and other tasks related to the proper development of the Network.

The Technical Secretariat will prepare a prior agenda that will be sent to all members for their knowledge and observations.

At each meeting, summary minutes will be drawn up reflecting the issues addressed and the agreements reached during the exchange of information.

Resignation from the network

Any city wishing to resign from the Network must submit an official letter of resignation, addressed to the Presidency, which will be circulated by the Technical Secretariat to the other members of the Network.

Funding

The Presidency, with the support of the Technical Secretariat, will take steps within the framework of bilateral, triangular and multilateral cooperation to locate funds to finance the operation of the Network.

Projects will be developed to seek funds.

Financial and in-kind contributions from Network members will be considered.

Communications and Public Relations

The valid interlocutor to represent the Network communicatively will be the Presidency.

The dissemination of information generated by the work of the Network and/or its members shall be publicised in all media available to the Presidency, the Technical Secretariat and the member countries.

Observers

The Presidency and the member cities of the Network (with prior notice to the Presidency) may invite any city, academy, international and regional organisation or institutions interested in the activities of the Network to attend its meetings as observers.

The Presidency and the Technical Secretariat may receive requests from interested cities, international and/or regional organisations and institutions to participate in the activities of the Network.

Without prejudice to its role of Technical Assistance in the implementation and consolidation of the Intermediary Cities Network, the FAO will have the status of Observer of the Network.

Final Provisions

The Intermediary Cities and Agri-Food Systems Network may amend these regulations if it deems it necessary for the fulfilment of its functions.

The Presidency or the Technical Secretariat may resolve, mediate and clarify situations not foreseen in the present regulations requested by some of the member cities, in case of not being resolved, it will be considered as an agenda item in the next meeting of the Network.