

**Brainstorm on Food Policy Engagement Summary**  
**Summary of Discussions**  
**University of Guelph**  
**March 21, 2016**

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**About the Brainstorm**

During the federal election of 2015, Maple Leaf Foods responded to the Food Secure Canada’s call to hold an Eat Think Vote event in order to discuss food policy with candidates for office. At that event, held in Maple Leaf headquarters in Mississauga, the germ of an idea was born: to create a space for ongoing dialogue on food policy issues between civil society, government, academics, and the private sector. As the commitment for a new national food policy was confirmed in the mandate letter of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, this dialogue became even more pertinent. Maple Leaf, Food Secure Canada and the new Arrell Food Institute at the University of Guelph agreed that a dialogue between sectors with a view to building a truly joined-up food policy was needed. We offered to host an informal brainstorming of ideas for public engagement just as the government was working on its own consultation plans and a meeting of some key thought leaders was quickly pulled together. The organizers are well aware that there are many voices who were not in the room, and as such, these notes from the brainstorm are not intended to be comprehensive. Next steps for this process will depend at least partially on the government’s forthcoming plans.

All people at this meeting attended in their personal capacity, and organizational affiliations are for identification purposes only. It should be noted that this summary of the session does not imply consensus by all participants.

In attendance: Lauren Baker (Global Alliance on the Future of Food), Ted Bileya (Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute), Ron Bonnett (Canadian Federation of Agriculture), Alain Brandon (Loblaws), Diana Bronson (Food Secure Canada), Lara Ellis (ALUS Canada), Evan Fraser

(University of Guelph), Hasan Hutchinson (Health Canada), Beth Hunter (J.W. McConnell Family Foundation), Mustafa Koc (Ryerson University), Beth MacNeil (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), Rod MacRae (York University), Rory McAlpine (Maple Leaf Foods), Tom Rosser (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), Pat Vanderkooy (Dietitians of Canada), Tulay Yildirim (Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute)

Chair: Deb Stark (Former Deputy Minister, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs)

Notes: Sasha McNicoll (Food Secure Canada), Sarah Stern (Maple Leaf Centre for Action on Food Security)

## Summary

Recognizing the need for multistakeholder collaboration around the development of a national food policy, a meeting was held between diverse food-system actors to find common ground around the following goals:

- To initiate a collective process to maximize the input of the best ideas from diverse interests within civil society, industry, the food harvesting and producing sector, academic, health professionals and government bodies;
- To set the stage for fruitful multi-stakeholder dialogue on systemic issues that prevent our food system from being as healthy, sustainable, just and economically vibrant as it could be; and
- To begin articulating a common vision of a national food policy, the principles that should underlie a national food policy, and explore how to achieve such a discussion over the next 18 months.

Participants felt that, while there have been several attempts to develop a national food policy, there is now a unique political window and receptive audience. Pressing issues such as climate change, chronic disease and food insecurity have created a sense of urgency around the need for more comprehensive and effective food policy-making. Participants agreed on the importance of finding commonalities, building relationships and integrating and synthesising the breadth of experience from a range of stakeholders. There was consensus around the need for a systems approach to food policy and for a governance mechanism that would facilitate ongoing cross-sectoral conversations. There was discussion regarding the tension between the need to move quickly and the need to involve everyone in the food space.

**Discussion Question 1: There have been several attempts at a national food policy in the past. None of them have achieved the collective endorsement and action hoped for by the parties who developed them. Which barriers have impeded progress? What can we learn from the past that will make this effort more successful?**

Barriers:

Past attempts faced the following barriers:

- There was a lack of federal leadership in previous rounds.
- Generally, previous attempts to establish a food policy process were not recognized as legitimate by all the players, which led to a loss of legitimacy, siloed discussions and caused contentious issues to become wedges that drove the processes apart.
- Perception that food policy champions were biased.
- Complexity of topics and priorities.
- Lack of a systems approach.
- Lack of 'skin in the game' from outside actors.

Solutions:

- A governance mechanism is needed to convene within and externally to government.
- Government should use evidence to establish opportunities, observe and quantify negative externalities so we can identify benefits of Canadian food, locally and globally.
- We must identify commonalities (e.g. low hanging fruit) and start moving on some of these issues quickly so that people don't get disillusioned with the process. This does not remove the need to establish longer-term governance.
- There is a need to identify outcomes and milestones.
- We need to clearly articulate why Canada needs a national food policy.
- Need for interaction between policy, goals, statements and on-the-ground successes

**Discussion Question 2: Why do we need a national food policy? What will be different this time? Which principles should guide the process?**

A national food policy is needed because:

- Food sits at the nexus of many pressing issues and provides an opportunity to address issues such as but not limited to climate change, health care costs, health of Canadians, food security, environmental degradation and Indigenous reconciliation.
- We need a comprehensive approach that acknowledges food production and distribution:
  - as basic human right,
  - as an engine of economic growth,
  - as a major contributor to environmental problems and therefore we need a program that minimizes negative environmental and social externalities associated with food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste
- There are huge economic opportunities associated with Canadian leadership around food, and we face a great opportunity to become a trusted global supplier of safe, sustainable food while also addressing food insecurity at home.

Discussion:

- In addition to looking at an overall framework, it is useful to identify a limited number of specific shorter-term initiatives that can be worked on to show results.

- As we develop the food policy, we should ensure that other groups with processes in place are consulted (e.g. initiative on public trust). The policy can be tied to these initiatives, but there's no need to reinvent the wheel.
- One way to look at food policy is as a group of food-related mandate commitments for different Ministers, but this would be short-sighted. It is important to develop an overarching national food policy, of which those commitments are fundamental building blocks.

Draft principles to inform the National Food Policy:

- Meet the needs of different stakeholders
- Participatory - all stakeholders, all departments
- Practical/implementable - focus on where we can make a difference/on clear outcomes
- Accountable - durable oversight, good governance critical
- Clear implementation plans, evaluation mechanisms, ability to experiment and adapt
- Transparency of process
- Takes a systems approach - everyone is interconnected/ looks at policy across several domains including but not limited to: health, economy, environment, reconciliation, food security and cultural diversity.

**Discussion Question 3: How can we ensure the richest discussion to lead to an inclusive, innovative policy development process? What models for success have you seen or been involved with?**

The following represent examples from around the world of innovative multi-stakeholder processes on contentious issues. Our hope is that the development of Canada's National Food Policy could draw on some of these processes.

- [World Commission on Dams](#): Established governance principles in order to bring together stakeholders equitably and a mediated process that was difficult but very successful in making decisions on a tough set of issues. The idea was to ensure there was a fulsome and equal decision among all stakeholders. The process included a principle of prior and informed consent and a consensus principle. A series of table discussions were held, for which the World Commission on Dams sponsored poorer groups and richer stakeholders paid their own way. There was a series of closed discussions, after which they went back to communities.
- [National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\) and the Canadian Extractive Industry in Developing Countries](#): An advisory committee made up of nine government departments, mining industry representatives and NGOs held hearings across the country, and the end result was a report signed on by everyone who was part of the process. Relationships were formed, trust was built and consensus was found.
- [Climate and Land Use Alliance](#)
- [AGree: Transforming Food & Ag Policy](#): A heavily facilitated process to bring stakeholders to consensus. They have released consensus statements around six of eight issues they are working on.
- [Toronto Food Policy Council](#): An advisory committee to government, which has played a thought leadership, advisory, coordination, research and funding role for the Toronto

government.

- [People's Food Policy Project](#): An effective process that provided tools for communities and engaged people, who were excited to organize events in their communities and contribute to an important process.
- Walkerton situation: Farming groups reached out to environmental organizations and did consultations. At the end of the day, they got legislation that understood how to address environmental concerns, while also realising that they didn't do it right, it could drag economic activity out of Ontario. The process underlined the importance of clearly articulating what we need at the start, identifying who needs to be at the table and establishing timelines so people feel things are moving ahead.
- [Social Innovation Labs](#): A process that can last for a few months to several years that involves research, sharing of experiences and communications that help the group come to a common understanding of the problem. The process involves a number of highly facilitated, highly participatory workshops, in which people try to understand each other's perspectives. Later stages involve prototypes and experimenting. Labs have been explored by the Alberta government and Natural Resources Canada. There are also precedents that were never called labs, like the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement, for which civil society, Indigenous communities, and industry came together to figure out how to achieve land conservation in parallel with economic viability, notably for Indigenous people..
- [Consea](#): Brazilian national food policy council
- [Circle process](#);

#### Discussion:

- The greatest urgency is to figure out a consultative process that's inclusive, credible and innovative. There is a longer-term question around making a food policy work.
- We must recognize differences without getting entrenched in a narrow process that could sabotage the whole thing. There is need for a conflict-resolution governance mechanism suitable for work with all people.

#### **Conclusions:**

The consensus was that it was a worthwhile day and that there could be benefit for this group and others to reconvene again. There was a feeling of hope and positivity from the group about what could be achieved and great interest in hearing back from the Government representatives on their next steps and process.

**Overall, the group expressed the need for 1) a consultative process for creating a National Food Policy and Strategy that are inclusive, credible and innovative and 2) creation of a long-term governance process to ensure diverse and inclusive input on the implementation of the policy and strategy.**

# Background Documents

## Background documents used for the meeting follow:

- Background for March 21st session
- Multi-stakeholder Partnerships Summary
- Additional Readings

## The broad challenge of food policy development in Canada

Information adapted from MacRae and Abergel (2017) and MacRae (2011)

- It is about the intersections between policy systems that are historically divided intellectually, constitutionally and departmentally; Canada has an uncoordinated framework for efficient federal, provincial, regional and municipal interactions, with many overlapping mandates.
- Governments have no obvious institutional place from which to work, and the instruments of multi-departmental policy making are in their infancy. There is no department of food.
- Supporting new approaches means extensively confronting many existing and entrenched policy traditions and policy cultures that have developed over many years
- It means adopting a more complex understanding of how Canadians feed themselves and the way food intersects with class, race, culture, income and geography.
- It means addressing the real costs of conventional food, health, economic and social systems, including accounting for environmental externalities in various aspects of the food system (production, processing, distribution and consumption).
- It means understanding food as more than a marketable commodity.
- It challenges many of the central tenets of current agricultural and economic development including Canada's role in international food trade, and its health care system that concentrates on cures rather than prevention.

### A brief history (up to the current moment)

Since the colonial period, agricultural production has been the primary driver of food policy, addressing particularly Canada's obligations to Britain (Skogstad, 1987). Agriculture was also subservient to other interests, primarily immigration, national security, and economic development (Fowke, 1946:272; Britnell and Fowke, 1946).

The basic policy infrastructure of the food system was put in place in the late 19th and early 20th century, derived from powers of criminal law (e.g., the *Food and Drugs Act*, early versions of what became the *Pest Control Products Act*) or trade and commerce (e.g., *Canadian Agricultural Products Act* and *Meat Inspection Act*). According to Hedley (2006), this approach is rooted in

the thinking of John Stuart Mill (1965), who essentially argued that there was no role for the state in shaping the purchasing choices of citizens beyond fraud and force prevention. Although Keynesian economic influences later shaped ideas on food supply, governments have remained very reluctant to intervene in food consumption issues (Hedley, 2006), a major impediment to creating a joined-up food policy.

The first food safety regulations were part of an 1875 amendment to the *Inland Revenue Act*, prohibiting the adulteration of food, drink and drugs, a significant focus of food system interventions at the time (McKinley, 1980). The link to food commerce has always complicated efforts to protect and ensure public health (for cases, see MacRae and Alden, 2002).

The Depression and Prairie drought during the 1930s had a major impact on farm and social policy as governments had to deal with hunger issues (rural as well as urban). Land management policies and programs were put in place (e.g., the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Agency (PFRA)) and the authorities of the Canadian Wheat Board were expanded. Poverty and rural outmigration gave rise to social and political movements in the West, and all these processes contributed to the birth of social welfare. It also highlighted Canada's vulnerability and dependence on commodity markets and reinforced Keynesian theories of state intervention in the economy.

The closest Canada has come to an integrated food policy was during WWII. Governments recognized, because of their experiences in WWI, that the market place would fail and put in place a wide array of programs and regulations to ensure basic population health and meet our food supply obligations to allies. As part of this, an extensive array of new governance mechanisms was created, with extensive collaborations across government and the private sector, including NGOs. Such governance mechanisms were central to the design and execution of the interventions. Unfortunately, most of them were dismantled right after the war ended (Britnell and Fowke, 1962; Mosby, 2014). However, in something of an exception to this general return to market confidence, the lack of domestic cooking oil gave rise to the development of canola, with significant state intervention producing what is now a major oilseed (Kneen, 1992).

As industrial approaches to agriculture took hold in North America and Europe after WWII, brought on by a series of technological innovations (plant and animal breeding as well as chemical fertilizers), and the number of diversified farms declined, farmers increasingly organized around the dominant crops and animals they produced. Divisions along commodity lines were created and solidified. Farm organizations evolved to dominate farm-level input into the policy apparatus (Forbes 1985; Skogstad 1987). Consequently, there were few voices speaking to the need for systems approaches to policy development, and even fewer people in policy circles to hear the message.

There was, though, in the late 1970s a brief period in which food policy and the language of food systems were considered. The federal government was influenced by: Norway's work on food policy (Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture 1975); the Nutrition Canada National Survey of 1970–1972 (Sabry, 1975); the Lalonde Report (1974) on health promotion; and the Report of the

Committee on Diet and Cardiovascular Disease (Health Canada, 1976). Financial problems for farmers and dramatic food price increases also inspired some new discussions. A food strategy was consequently developed in 1977–8. Led by Agriculture Canada and Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the effort included a Deputy Ministers' Committee on Food Policy and an Interdepartmental Steering Group on Food Policy. But their work did not significantly depart from earlier approaches to agricultural policy and was confined to seven major policy areas: income stabilization and support; trade policy and safeguards; research, information, and education; marketing and food aid; the processing, distribution, and retailing sectors; consumer concerns; and price stability, nutrition, and food safety (Interdepartmental Steering Group on Food Policy 1978).

Policy makers were concerned that national nutritional priorities should not be overridden by the economics of agriculture and asked that Nutrition Impact Statements be prepared for policy initiatives related to food. However, only one ever was, and a belief was retained that efficient operation of the marketplace was the best way to meet policy objectives. The initiative ultimately failed because of Agriculture Canada's perceptions of negative impacts on its traditional clients, the food production, processing, and distribution sectors. The ministry was unwilling to entertain broader responsibilities. Some years later, Agriculture Canada did adopt a nutrition policy statement in support of Health Canada's work on nutrition, but it reflected the primacy of production over nourishment of the population.

In 1993, the agriculture department adopted a new name, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC), and with it a resolutely more industrial and marketing approach that included food processors and distributors in the mix of clients. With it came a more export-oriented, productivity and competitive focus but this shift did little to encourage a joined-up food policy. The agriculture mandate was more tightly tied to the innovation one, especially in the agricultural biotechnology sector. There were large investments in the 1990s to develop public/private research initiatives, and closer government-research industry relations led to commercialization of publicly-funded research as well as a series of changes to seed certification, new plant variety registration and ownership rules.

Canada's Action Plan for Food Security (CAPFS), adopted on 16 October 1998, was another attempt at developing a national food policy. It was Canada's response to the 1996 World Food Summit, at which Canada's then agriculture minister, Ralph Goodale, was a star player. While the Plan used a multi-sectoral approach involving all levels of government, civil society organizations, and the private sector, and identified targets to achieve food security nationally and globally, it was a stillbirth, quickly forgotten with little public reaction to its implementation failures. CAPFS recognized that food security implied "access to adequate food and sufficient food supplies and that poverty reduction, social justice and sustainable food systems are essential conditions" (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 1998: 24). But, it was riddled with tensions and contradictions about social, economic, and environmental priorities, imbued as it was with Canada's long-standing commitment to a productivist agricultural approach (Koç and Bas, 2012).



Separate from CAPFS, in 2002, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments agreed to a new agricultural policy framework with five ‘pillars’: business risk management, environmental protection, food safety, innovation, and rural renewal. Although an important attempt to make agricultural policy-making more coherent, it did not constitute a national food policy, being particularly weak on health, social, and cultural matters beyond those related to food safety. Renewed every 5 years or so since 2003, the framework reflects an awareness that significant environmental issues need to be addressed, especially in the face of threats to Canada’s international reputation on agri-environmental performance, but the impact of programs implemented to date has only been modest. However, the agreement created many new structures and lines of communication and thus provides a potential—though partial—template for a national food policy.

Midway through the first decade of the twenty-first century, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC), Health Canada, and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) resumed discussions of a national food policy framework, but little information is publicly available on their motivation or progress. A 2005 draft document (*National Food Policy Framework: Overview 2005*) indicates that a central theme was policy coordination, that is, the need to create a system-wide approach to link agriculture, fisheries, health protection and promotion, and food inspection. However, the supply side of the food story, including food safety matters, appears to have remained the focus (Hedley 2006), with a narrow policy scope only modestly expanded from earlier food policy iterations. The commentary on the role of consumers focuses mostly on fraud prevention, building consumer confidence, and individual (rather than structural) commitments to healthy living, the historical approaches to consumer-related interventions. Interestingly, the draft refers to the CAPFS and its implementation. In fact, virtually all aspects of social development were proposed for implementation through CAPFS. On the surface, this appeared to be a way to revitalize the CAPFS, but little has transpired since 2005.

The non-governmental sector has produced food strategy documents since 2011 that are contributing to the current discussion. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (2011) developed a vision statement on the future of food. The People’s Food Policy Project (2011) of Food Secure Canada conducted a community-based process to develop a comprehensive national food policy. The Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (2011) produced a food strategy document and the Conference Board of Canada released numerous food reports, ultimately resulting in a food strategy (Bloom, 2014).

### **Constitutional dilemmas for food policy development**

The constitutional divisions, first imposed by the British North America Act of 1867, are major impediments to a unified approach.

Federal government: lead role on matters related to cross-border commerce, farm financial safety

nets, agricultural research and technology development, food and phytosanitary safety, food standards, packaging and labelling, and nutritional health.

Provincial government (and sometimes territories): supporting roles in federal areas, lead on commerce and food safety within their boundary, land use and agricultural land protection, property taxation, many areas of environmental protection, public health and agricultural extension. The federal and provincial governments often negotiate on program design.

Municipal government: powers depend on the province. Many have responsibilities for public health delivery (under the authority of the province), food inspection activities and nutritional health promotion. Zoning policies may determine food store and food company locations. Some actively promote urban agriculture. Rural municipalities can affect agriculture through zoning, and property and education tax decisions. Often lead on household and commercial waste management, typically under rules promulgated by provinces.

### **Key Principles on Which to Build Food Policy Frameworks**

- Integrated responsibilities and activities—Systems acknowledge the interconnectedness of activities in the agriculture–food–health–culture–social and economic development continuum. Professionals have expertise across these domains and work collaboratively with others having knowledge within these spheres.
- An emphasis on macro-policy—The policy-making process starts with an examination of the global questions and options and then, as appropriate, develops more specific policy tools and interventions consistent with the chosen macro-policy. This approach recognizes that policy making is about identifying what is desirable for society.
- Transdisciplinary policy development—Because food is a multidimensional endeavor, policy units must include professionals with a diverse range of training, only one of which is economics. In this system, economics and science are properly defined as tools to help society achieve identified goals.
- Policy makers are close to the diverse groups affected by problems needing resolution—A more diverse group of people are involved in policy development work, and community development principles are employed for developing policy.
- Food systems policy—The policy system is designed to work with systems and subsystems, and policy makers apply systems thinking to the analysis of problems and design of solutions, including the paradigm of the system, its goals, the system structures (including governance), the feedback mechanisms that help inform system activities and performance, and the subsystem elements (in a policy sense, this includes the actors and the policy tools). To be effective, all of these layers are interconnected.
- Demand–supply coordination—The presumption has been that the food marketplace has been able to efficiently allocate resources with minimal state intervention to ensure that food resources are equitably and efficiently distributed. However, this is not actually happening. Demand and supply must be coordinated beyond simply market functions because they have proven inadequate to the task of allocating food resources properly.

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## **Multistakeholder Partnerships Summary**

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### **What are multistakeholder partnerships?**

Multistakeholderism is a new governing tool that first gained popularity on the international level in the 1990s (Pattberg & Widerberg, 2016). Multistakeholder partnerships (MSPs) or multistakeholder initiatives (MSIs) are voluntary partnerships that cut across sectors (Pinkse & Kolk, 2012), including both public and private actors coming from government, industry, civil society, academia, and other non-state organizations or institutions (Powers & Jablonski, 2015). MSPs tend to be non-hierarchical processes that aim for shared responsibility and cooperation among those involved.

An MSP is formed when an urgent and complex issue arises which forces stakeholders to cooperate (Roloff, 2008) and pool their expertise and skills (Fransen, 2012). MSPs come in many “shapes” and “flavours” in terms of format, organization, and agenda (Epstein & Nonnecke, 2016), and so no blueprint structure for such collaboration exists. However, a common understanding in the literature is that everyone involved in an MSP is at the table to cooperate and work together with fellow stakeholders to solve a common complex issue that cannot be solved without collaboration. The purpose of MSPs is for different stakeholders affected by a common and complex issue to collaborate towards solutions that take different perspectives, priorities and sensitivities into consideration. Through “mutual value creation”, they are able to collaborate on shared creation and implementation of programmes, policies, and monitoring strategies (Bäckstrand, 2006; Rühli, Sachs, Schmitt & Schneider, 2015).

### **What are the advantages of multistakeholder partnerships?**

MSPs present opportunities to learn from different stakeholders. New knowledge can be created from these partnerships. Learning gaps can be overcome by interacting with other participants in the initiative, and by learning about new practices, rules, or technology from each other (Pinkse & Kolk, 2012). MSPs also contribute to “capacity building” between governments, the private sector, and civil society, through developing common language and vocabulary, “network building,” and “accelerated

learning” (Antonova, 2011, p. 427). Capacity building also develops new social bonds (Antonova, 2011), trust between different actors, and over time, the creation of norms, values, and goals that can overcome stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination in relationships (Rühli et al, 2015).

These partnerships are considered to be more decentralized and flexible than traditional forms of governance. They are thus more likely to be able to connect and operationalize grand scale values and norms (e.g. sustainability) with local practice and realities (Bäckstrand, 2006). MSPs are particularly beneficial for complex issues, because there is a lot of dialogue, collaboration, and inclusivity in the group that allow individuals to work through different meanings of a complicated issue (Rühli et al, 2015). They may also address deficits in governance, implementation, and participation, through the inclusion and commitment of various stakeholders (Bäckstrand, 2006). Multistakeholder initiatives are therefore generally seen as having more legitimacy than other voluntary governing actions (Fransen, 2012). Confronting complex issues within a multistakeholder framework increases the visibility of the issue among the general public, as well as influences the government agenda. Those participating in the MSP often bring back information and ideas to their respective communities stimulating more discussion, mobilizing action, financial and technical resources needed to engage with the complex policy issue (SUN, 2014).

Some successful examples of multistakeholder initiatives include: the Marine Stewardship Council that effectively implemented a voluntary sustainable fishery standard used worldwide; the Food and Agriculture Organization’s Committee on World Food Security that has brought together hundreds of stakeholders globally and created the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Land Tenure and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems; and a partnership between RUAF and the Beijing municipal government that successfully increased productive and profitable urban agriculture development in the city.

### **What creates a successful multistakeholder partnership?**

There are a few caveats that must be considered in order to develop a successful MSP:

- Convenors/facilitators and direction of MSPs

While many definitions of MSPs describe this type of collaboration as non-hierarchical and built on a level playing field, this does not mean that no facilitation or convening is involved in the process. Rühli et al (2015) argue that a successful MSP needs a reliable coordination mechanism. Beginnings of MSPs often need convenors to bring stakeholders to the table, moderate opinions, and ensure the process continues forward. Different types of leaderships are necessary throughout the partnership,

although little information is provided on how to foster and operationalize effective leadership (Pattberg & Widerberg, 2016). However, facilitators and convenors are often government actors. VanNijnatten (1998) discovered that if government provides too little or too much direction as a facilitator within an MSP, the consultation is likely to break down. It is important to note that convenors or facilitators may influence the composition of the partnership by determining who is considered a stakeholder in the issue if they themselves are developing the collaborative network (Edmunds & Wollenberg, 2001).

- Clear direction

A common vision, problem definition, and measurable goals must be set at the beginning of the partnership to avoid fragmentation and ensure success of the multistakeholder process (Pattberg & Widerberg, 2016). Stakeholders need to develop a shared understanding of the issue at hand before working in the multistakeholder group to determine how to proceed in the partnership (Rühli et al, 2015). Creating clear and common goals at the outset of the MSP is vital because it provides a well-defined and mutual vision, as well as a greater understanding of complex issues. Relational trust and cohesiveness can be developed if these goals and visions are set through a collaborative and inclusive process. This alignment must be created in direct contact between all participants involved in the MSP. Detailed and precise goals also have a stabilizing effect on the network, especially when actors are investing time and resources (Rühli et al, 2015).

- Assumed neutrality of the partnership

MSPs are never neutral zones of collaboration and should never be considered apolitical processes. It is advised that rather than trying to pave over or temporarily ignore political differences between actors during negotiation, these differences should be used to build “alliances,” to learn and “test ideas strategically,” with the purpose of giving more decision-making power to traditionally disadvantaged groups, like civil society (Edmunds & Wollenberg, 2001). Some tension between participants within the partnership will always remain (Rühli et al, 2015), given that different interests and identities are under one space (Calton & Payne, 2003). For this reason, discussions of political context and relations of power should be tabled at the beginning of partnerships (Edmunds & Wollenberg).

In addition, language is never neutral, especially scientific language. Words can be taken to mean different things to different actors depending on their experiences and previous understandings of issues. Often, consensus is an expected outcome of a partnership, however this may not always be possible. Even if it appears that consensus

has been achieved, it may continue to mean different things to different actors. For this reason, clarity is important, and should be sought at all times (Edmunds & Wollenberg, 2001).

- Process accountability and transparency

The success of an MSP is *fundamentally* dependent on a fair and transparent process. Uncertainty about how decisions are made in the partnership fosters distrust between participants. VanNijnatten (1998) found that multistakeholder consultation broke down because participants were untrusting of the process and found that decisions were made haphazardly, without formal rules guiding consensus or agreement. Secondly, outcome evaluation should be transparent, and be jointly developed to ensure that the partnership can identify successes and record progress to encourage positive performance (Pattberg & Widerberg, 2016). Lastly, conflict resolution procedures should also be considered and made part of the governance structure of the MSP (Rühli et al, 2015). These should be in place to mitigate any conflicts between participants. Transparency and accountability throughout the process will give the MSP the legitimacy necessary to continue to exist (Pattberg & Widerberg, 2016).

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## Additional Readings

This is a collection of links that you may find interesting to read.

- World Economic Forum White Paper on the Future of Global Food Systems: A Scenario Analysis <https://www.weforum.org/whitepapers/shaping-the-future-of-global-food-systems-a-scenarios-analysis>
- International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems - From Uniformity to Diversity [http://www.ipes-food.org/images/Reports/IPES\\_ExSummary02\\_1606\\_BRweb\\_pages\\_br.pdf](http://www.ipes-food.org/images/Reports/IPES_ExSummary02_1606_BRweb_pages_br.pdf)
- Barton report <http://www.budget.gc.ca/aceg-ccce/pdf/key-sectors-secteurs-cles-eng.pdf>
- CFA National Food Strategy <http://www.cfa-fca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/National-Food-Strategy.pdf>
- CAPI Food Strategy documents <http://www.capi-icpa.ca/research/food-strategy.html>
- Resetting the Table: A People's Food Policy for Canada: <https://foodsecurecanada.org/people-food-policy>
- [FAQ on national food policy](#) by Food Secure Canada