

SUSTAINABLE FOOD TRANSITION IN PORTUGAL: CURRENT STATE AND OPPORTUNITIES OF CITY-LEVEL DIETARY CHOICES

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INTRODUCTION

While several studies have investigated the “production side” of food security and sustainability, here we assess the current **food sourcing and resource intensity** profile of **consumption choices in Portugal and six cities**. We also do a critical assessment of **local food policy gaps** to trigger a major transformation in the Portuguese food system based on a newly proposed analytical framework.

METHODS

ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT ACCOUNTING

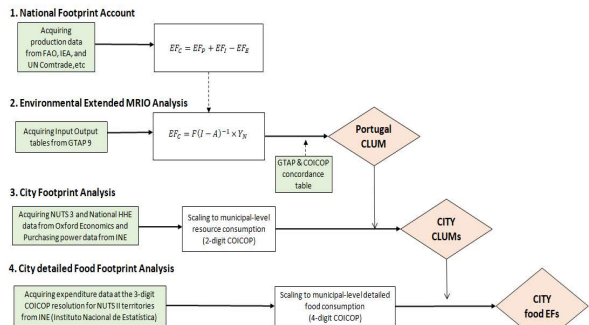


Fig. 1. Ecological Footprint of Portuguese cities: visual calculation flowchart, 2014

PROPOSED FOOD POLICY FRAMEWORK

Information and Awareness

Administrative and gov. capacity

Local government functions

Strategic policies

FOOD POLICY ASSESSMENT IN SIX PORTUGUESE CITIES [2019], through an open questionnaire sent to these cities that are partners of the Ecological Footprint of Portuguese Municipalities project (<https://www.pegadamunicipios.pt/>).

RESULTS

MULTILEVEL FOOD FOOTPRINT ANALYSIS

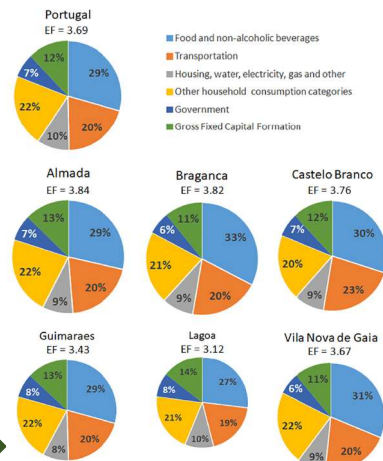


Fig. 2. Ecological Footprint results for Portugal and the six cities under study (gha per capita), in 2014. Consumption of Food and non-alcoholic beverages contributed **29%** of the total EF, with similar trends found in the six cities.

Fig. 3. Per capita Ecological Footprint of food consumption in Portugal, by COICOP 4-digit sub-categories and land-types, in 2014. Dietary choices within Portugal are unbalanced towards a **high consumption of animal-based proteins**.

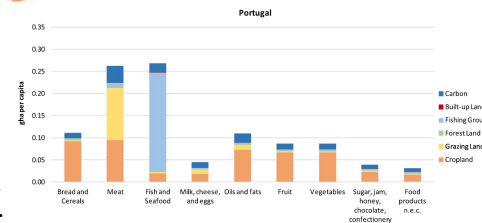
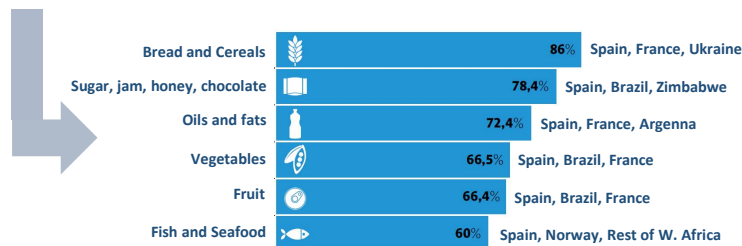


Fig. 4. Percentage of imported Portuguese national Food Footprint by COICOP 4-digit categories and top 3 country of origin (trade partners), in 2014 (some examples). Dietary choices in Portugal cause noticeable **appropriation of the biocapacity of ecosystems outside the national borders across world regions**.



FOOD POLICY ANALYSIS

Information and Awareness

- Awareness of food consumption and production patterns
- Robust data and indicators frameworks
- Education campaigns and participatory food governance

Administrative and government capacity

- Adequate human resources, equipped with the proper skills
- Trans-departmental structure/mechanisms (system thinking)
- Organizational autonomy
- Articulation with other levels of government
- Government regulations and incentives

Local government functions

- Integration of food in territorial planning
- Promotion of urban and rural linkages
- Promotion of learning with trans-local collaboration
- Enforcement of coordination among stakeholders

Strategic policies

- Strong political commitment towards healthy and sustainable diets
- Strategies to re-orient agricultural production priorities, foster Agri-food innovation as well as to promote the sustainable intensification of food production
- Plan towards food waste reduction
- Incentives for a farmers-citizen reconnection

CONCLUSION

Food consumption in Portugal is the **single largest reason** (≈30%) for **transgressing the carrying capacity** of Earth ecosystems. Despite the urgent need for changes in Portuguese food systems, **major deficiencies in local policy** implementation exist with weak policy commitment, coordination, and lacking institutional capacity as food policies are still not prioritized.

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