

Yukon Food System Design and Planning Project: Enhancing Agriculture and Food Self-Reliance in Canada's North

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Introduction and Rationale

Yukon agriculture accounts for less than 2% of Territorial food expenditures, and Yukon community, government, and agriculture sector leaders are increasingly concerned about the inherent vulnerability of their food system that this indicates. Yukoners see great potential in working together toward creating a more substantial Territorial Food System which will improve food self-reliance while creating jobs and enhancing the regional economy. Disparate efforts to this end have been made, but while these important pieces are informative, none in and of themselves constitute the comprehensive, integrated food system design and plan required to accomplish the afore mentioned objectives.

To address this gap, the *Yukon Agricultural Association* has partnered with the *Institute for Sustainable Food Systems at Kwantlen Polytechnic University* on a three year project which will fully engage Yukon communities in the development of a realistic and practical Yukon Food System Design and Implementation Plan. This design and plan will constitute a vision and roadmap consisting of prioritized, sequential steps that can be taken by farmers, food-sector entrepreneurs (suppliers, processors, contractors, etc.), consumers, and community, Government, and First Nations leaders to create a Territorial Food System that reflects aspirations for increased sustainability and self-reliance.

Core Elements of the Methodology

Food System Objectives

Broad statements that describe desired conditions to be achieved as a result of activities taking place in the food system. These guide evaluation of the current food system and design of the 2050 food system. Developed based on an extensive literature review and in keeping with the project platform of sustainability.

Food System Indicators

Qualitative or quantitative instruments that provide specific information on the state or condition of some element of the food system. Used to measure current and future status of Food System Objectives.

Community Consultation / Engagement

Consultation with and engagement of Yukon residents is considered critical to ensuring that project results are appropriate and useful. Community Engagement commenced summer 2013 and is planned to continue through all phases.

Project Advisory and Monitoring

Monitoring and Advisory Committees comprised of representatives from the agriculture and post-production/supply sectors, community health sector, First Nations, and Yukon government, provide ongoing methodological and technical advice, and monitor project progress towards deliverables.

The Project's Three Phases

Phase One (2012—2013): Evaluation of the Current Food System

- Develop Food System Objectives and Indicators to describe the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural dimensions of Yukon's food system; collect baseline data to measure the current status of these Indicators,
- Engage with Yukon residents to assess their values and concerns as they relate to a future food system for the Territory.

Phase Two (2013—2014): Food System Design for 2050

Through ongoing community consultation and evidence-based modeling, design a Yukon food system for 2050 that:

- Reflects Yukon residents' values and concerns about their food system and,
- Improves upon measured baseline performance on key indicators of the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural dimensions of a food system. Examples of these indicators include:
 - Level of Territorial food self-reliance,
 - Eco-footprint and impact of the food system on soil, water, and air quality,
 - Economic viability of Yukon farms and ancillary businesses,
 - Economic contribution of the agri-food industry to Yukon's local economy, including income generation and job creation.

Phase Three (2014—2015): Planning for 2050 Food System

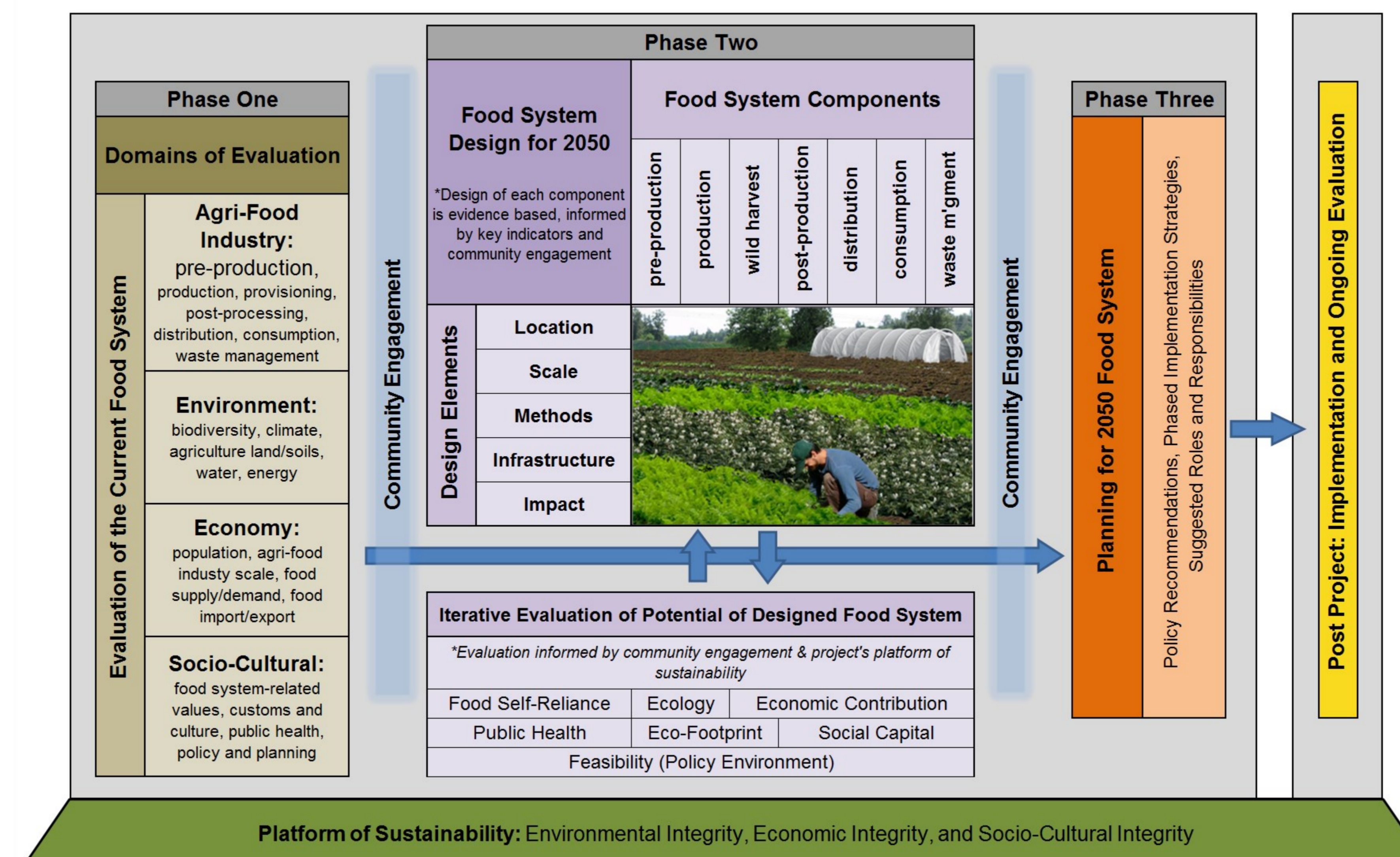
Work with community and government leaders to develop a realistic plan for the incremental implementation of the designed Yukon Food System. Components of this plan will include:

- Policy recommendations,
- Phased implementation strategies,
- Suggested roles and responsibilities.

Progress to Date

- Established Food System Objectives and Indicators to guide Phase One (Evaluation of the Current Food System) and Phase Two (Food System Design for 2050),
- Established Research Agreements with six Yukon First Nations Governments to facilitate engaging them and their citizens in the design and planning process,
- Building effective working relations with government, industry and community,
- Starting broad community engagement and communication processes and mechanisms,
- Engaged in collection of primary and secondary data for evaluation of the current food system, including a Territory-wide survey of Yukon farmers.

Overview of the Project's Three Phases



Funders



Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada
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Research Team

