



**RUAF FOUNDATION  
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2014-2020**

Leusden, the Netherlands  
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## 1. Short development history of the organisation

RUAF Foundation is a network of member organisations that create, share and use knowledge, expertise, practices and innovations, to improve action-research and practice, advise on policy, and build capacity in governments, institutions and organisations for urban and peri-urban agriculture and city-region food systems.

The initiative to create a Resource centre on Urban Agriculture and Food security (RUAF programme) was taken in 1998 by the Support Group on Urban Agriculture (SGUA) in response to the call of Southern partners to enhance information exchange, networking and capacity development on urban agriculture in the South.

In May 2004 the RUAF network was formalised as an independent organisation with its own legal status in the Netherlands and governing structure, the **RUAF Foundation**. From 2004-2011, the RUAF Foundation has functioned as a global network of 7 regional partner organisations and one international partner organisation that shared a common vision on urban development and poverty reduction, and together implemented an international programme focussed on urban agriculture and food security in 20 cities around the world. During this period all RUAF staff was employed by the member organisations participating in the RUAF network and subcontracted to RUAF Foundation for RUAF coordination of project activities at international, regional or local level. In order to better respond to the changes in development cooperation and finance

In early 2012, RUAF set up an independent international secretariat, but maintained its global member network. As per 1 April 2012, the RUAF Foundation now employs directly its director and the staff of its international secretariat in Leusden, the Netherlands. The RUAF financial administration –hitherto taken care of by RUAF member ETC Foundation- was transferred to a professional accounting firm.

In the coming years, the RUAF Foundation will seek to expand its global network with new member organisations in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, North America and Europe having complementary geographical or thematic coverage, in order to strengthen its role of leading centre of expertise in the field of (intra- and peri-) Urban Agriculture and City Region Food Strategies. In doing so, RUAF is shift from a model of regionally coordinating RUAF partners to a more flexible model with possibilities for other organisations (or clusters of organisations and cities) to become a member of the RUAF network.

## 2. Vision and mission of RUAF

RUAF was established to respond to the increasing “urbanisation” of poverty and the enormous development challenges cities are facing in ensuring food security for its population; creating sufficient employment opportunities; improving environmental management and increasing resilience to disasters and climate change. Growing dependency on imported food and the international market affect cities, and especially the urban poor.

In the vision of the RUAF Foundation, urban citizens have a right to nutritious, healthy and culturally appropriate food at affordable prices at all times. RUAF believes in food sovereignty where local producers, processors, distributors and consumers have the right to define and control their own food and agriculture systems and should be put at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and

corporations. RUAF promotes localised food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability that guarantees just income to all actors in the value chain. Environmental and food security issues have to be taken into account when designing urban development plans in order to reduce the vulnerability of the urban poor against the effects of economic crisis, volatility in international food markets and natural disasters. Stimulating participatory and multi-actor planning, strengthening urban farmer groups and the establishment of direct linkages between food producers and consumers within a city region will form the basis for the creation of more resilient, sovereign and sustainable city-region food systems.

Human settlements, specifically medium-sized cities will double in population over the next generation. Cities will need to develop policies and programmes to feed their increasing population. According to the World Bank and UN -Habitat, urban population growth is likely to result in the significant loss of non-urban land as built environments expand into their surroundings. Cities in developing countries are expected to triple their land area between 2005 and 2030. As stocks of built up land accumulate, the amount of reproductive and ecologically buffering land available for ecosystems and food production is diminished, reducing the ability of city-regions to support themselves.

The integration of urban-and peri-urban agriculture in urban spatial plans and local economic and social development programmes will not only lead to enhanced food security and poverty reduction, but also contribute to reducing the ecological foot print of the city and enhancing the resilience to climate change and disasters. This by increasing resource efficiency and making optimal use of the nutrients in organic wastes and reusing wastewater rather than expensive and scarce freshwater. Waste recovery will also reducing the methane emissions from landfills. Agroforestry and agriculture can be appropriate strategies for managing steep slopes prone to landslides and preventing floods reducing run off, facilitating infiltration of storm water and keeping low lying areas free from construction. Energy use and emissions will be reduced by producing fresh food at short distance of the consumers (less transport, cooling, packaging); while urban greening and forestry will contribute to lowering urban heat by reducing evapotranspiration and providing shade.

For this to be meaningful, it is important to consider planning at the city-region level – beyond the boundaries of the urban centre itself, including towns, semi-urban areas, and outlying rural lands. At this level, there are key opportunities to plan for landscape mosaic patterns that protect valuable ecosystems and biodiversity hotspots; preserve natural corridors that prevent flooding and landslides; optimise and expand existing transportation network infrastructure; construct a built environment that uses water and energy efficiently; and promote compact cities and planned extensions (e.g., designating low-lying areas and flood plains for agriculture to prevent construction and reduce impact of floods). In this regard, agriculture must be considered a key land-use feature in a city-region with such challenges.

Integration of food systems in city-region planning requires support from a full suite of urban management and governance measures. In terms of urban management, special attention needs to be paid to health standards, storage and processing, land zoning, secure land tenure, use of vacant land, and access to water. In terms of urban governance, it is important for vulnerable groups, particularly women, youth, and migrant workers, to have a voice in a transparent decision-making process.

Research and on-ground experiences have demonstrated that indeed urban and peri-urban agriculture and other food security measures enhancing short food supply chains and sustainable consumption are making important contributions to reduction of urban poverty and food insecurity, social inclusion and income generation of disadvantaged groups (like female headed households with children, AIDS-HIV affected families), as well as to improvement of the urban environment (urban greening, reuse of wastes, biodiversity management), climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

However, these potentials are not fully realised yet among others since many national and city authorities and urban planners lack the knowledge and capacities to design and implement adequate policies and programmes on urban agriculture and city-region food systems.

In view of the above mentioned situation, **the mission** of the RUAF Foundation seeks to contribute to the participatory development of sustainable cities and to feeding an urbanising world by facilitating and creating the right conditions to support urban and peri-urban farmers and other actors along the food chain (men and women), by for example facilitating the integration of (intra- and peri-) urban agriculture and city-region food measures in the policies and action programmes of local, regional and national governments, civic society organisations, NGOs, CBOs, research centres and private enterprises, with active involvement of the urban producers and other relevant stakeholders. In achieving its objectives, the Foundation will be guided by the following principles:

- the promotion as far as possible of the exchange of knowledge and experience between individuals and organisations operating in different parts of the world;
- the encouragement and initiation of activities in such a manner that these are carried out and given shape in interaction with the recipient society or community itself in all its social, economic and cultural aspects.

### **3. RUAF strategies, focus areas and partnerships**

RUAF is a cutting edge think-tank and strong in developing innovations. This is reinforced by the nature of the RUAF network that brings together different types of organisations; from different regions, while the network is rooted in realities and cities. RUAF is unique in four areas that we have advanced in over the past 10 years and want to further build on: (1) networking; (2) policy and planning to scale up innovative experiences and practices; (3) collective production of knowledge materials with partners and (4) multi stakeholder planning and policy formulation in over 20 cities, involving more than 100 different local partners.

#### **3.1 Strategies**

The RUAF Foundation will continue to apply its **main strategies** in all of its working areas:

**Knowledge generation and dissemination through applied action and policy-oriented research** (undertaking desk studies, case studies, action research, evaluation studies that contribute to better understanding of the role and potential and actual impacts of urban and peri-urban agriculture on a.o. urban food security, income, climate change and the sustainable development goals ; the analysis and design of resilient city-region food systems; innovative urban agriculture models; the development of municipal and national policies oriented at resource recovery; short food chains and climate change adaptation) and **systematization of experiences**

(by monitoring, periodical reviews and exchange between cities and regions in order to draw lessons learned, documentation and publication of the Urban Agriculture Magazine, guidelines, manuals, articles, books and policy papers).

**Capacity Development by building up regional and local capacity** (training of trainers; design, implementation and evaluation of technical, methodological and policy oriented training activities for various stakeholders; organisational analysis and strategic planning; strengthening their administrative and fund raising/management capacities and their planning and monitoring systems); **networking / Community of practice** (encouraging the international, regional and local exchange of information, experience and cooperation in the area of urban agriculture and city-region food systems between policy makers, researchers and practitioners).

**Policy influencing and advocacy by providing policy support and advice** and supporting partners to engage in **multi-stakeholder processes of policy dialogue, lobby, planning and formulation**, involving national and local authorities, farmers' organisations, nongovernmental in the area of urban agriculture and city-region food systems and by **influencing international fora and the public opinion**.

**Supporting development actions, project design, implementation and evaluation (technical advice and coaching)** to local organisations in the participative design, implementation and evaluation of applied research and development projects. Such advice might relate to participatory situation analysis and market research, multi stakeholder planning, design and running of urban farmer field schools, the best practices for different types of urban agriculture, etcetera).

### **3.2 Focus areas**

For the period 2014-2020, the RUAF Foundation will focus its activities on the following 5 areas of work:

#### **Resilient city-region food systems**

RUAF will assist local and regional governments and other stakeholders in the analysis, planning and development of more resilient city-region food systems by stimulating exchange between cities on this topic; providing guidelines, factsheets and toolkits; and providing staff training and technical assistance in both urban food system assessment and the design and implementation of adequate food policies and programmes, taking a multi-stakeholder, pro-poor and food sovereignty approach.

#### **Short food chains and local economy**

RUAF will enhance the capacities of local support organisations to assist groups of small-scale urban producers and other market actors in the analysis of market demand, in the establishment of direct linkages with potential buyers (e.g., consumers looking for organic food, restaurants, local government food procurement), in the creation of quality labels, and in the establishment and running of small-scale value-adding enterprises and product delivery systems.

#### **Food sovereignty and social inclusion of the urban poor**

RUAF will collaborate with municipalities, NGOs and other actors to realise food projects with urban poor and disadvantaged groups (single women with children, jobless youth, HIV/AIDS-affected households, recent migrants) to enhance their access to nutritious, culturally appropriate and affordable food and to facilitate social inclusion through home-, school- and community gardens, collective food-buying

cooperatives and the use of “low space” technologies (e.g., containers and hanging baskets) in slum areas.

#### **Productive reuse of wastes & wastewater**

RUAF will facilitate increased reuse of solid and liquid wastes in (intra- and peri-) urban agriculture through conducting applied research, developing safe reuse practices, training staff, assisting in the design of municipal resource recovery strategies and programmes, stimulating innovation in the agriculture-water-energy nexus and documenting best practices and business models that combine productivity with reduced environmental impacts.

#### **Urban agriculture and forestry and city adaptation to climate change**

RUAF will support local governments in the integration of urban and peri-urban agriculture and forestry into strategies for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction by training local staff, including food in urban vulnerability assessments and land use planning, and identifying urban agriculture and forestry models with high relevance for climate-change mitigation and adaptation (e.g., productive use of flood zones, agroforestry on landslide-prone slopes, productive rooftop gardens).

### **3.3 Partnerships**

The RUAF Foundation maintains **strategic working relations at the city, national, regional and international levels with a wide variety of partners.**

**At the local level, RUAF has** working relationships with, local and regional governments, Municipal departments and councillors, NGO's and CBO's , farmer organisations, youth and women groups, market and value chain actors and enterprises, service suppliers, Universities and research institutes, banks and financial organisations. RUAF cooperates with these organisations in the realisation of multi stakeholder policy development and action planning, design and implementation of projects, training activities, strengthening of farmer organisations, development of short market chains, influencing of local and national policies.

At the international level, RUAF is maintaining close working relations with **UN organisations** such as the FAO - Food for the Cities Group, UN Habitat - Urban Planning and Environment Branch, World Bank - Urban Planning Unit, as well as **local government organisations** such as ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

**Important regional and thematic networks** with which we cooperate include various regional urban agriculture and city food networks , the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA), and the Climate Change and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN).

RUAF collaborates with various **international NGOs** including CARE, World Vision, Welthungerhilfe, Cordaid, Practical Action, WASTE and OXFAM, as well as with various leading **research and consultancy organisations** such as the CGIAR institutes, Ryerson University, Wageningen University & Research Centre, CIRAD, University College London / DPU and Centre for Agro-ecology and Food Security Coventry University; University of Nairobi; National University of Rosario, Chinese Academy of Sciences; University of Colombo and several others.

RUAF cooperation with the **private sector** is fairly recent but is quickly growing, as demonstrated by our partnerships with agro processing and input supply firms, banks

and credit institutions, energy and water companies, and corporate organisations providing grants out of social responsibility (e.g., building companies).

### **3.4 Funding strategies**

The main funding strategies applied by RUAF Foundation up to date have been to approach funding organisations with RUAF project or programme proposals. In the last few years, RUAF Foundation has increasingly been approached and seen as a strategic partner by other organisations to take part in their programme or prepare joint proposals. RUAF also generates a small amount of funding on membership fees that help to cover some organisational costs (like Board meetings) and international visibility efforts.

## **4. Targets for period 2014-2020**

In the coming 5 year RUAF Foundation will further strengthen its position as leading **world centre of knowledge (think-tank) and expertise in the field of urban and peri-urban agriculture and city-region food systems.**

To do so the following targets have been defined for the period 2014-2020.

### **Targets for each of the focus areas:**

#### Resilient city-region food systems

- At least 5-10 city regions are supported in analysis, design and development of their city-regional food system, with enhanced direct participation of (vulnerable) actors involved in the entire food chain.
- City region food systems and urban-rural linkages have been recognised and included in local, national and international policy agendas on food security, climate change and urbanisation.
- Collaboration with government associations (ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability; UCLG and Metropolis) has resulted in local actions in the field of city region food systems being developed in their members cities.

#### Short chains and local economy

- Short value chains in urban and peri-urban agriculture are supported in at least 10 cities in developing countries as well as in Europe. New policies, processes and structures will have been developed in these cities; resulting in income and employment creation for involved food producers, processors and retail as well enhanced access to healthy and fresh food for part of the urban population.
- Exchange between Europe and cities in developing countries has been supported and resulted in development of new north-south partnerships and local programmes on short food chains and local economy.
- Collaboration with ILO has been enhanced in the field of decent labour conditions in urban and peri-urban agriculture.

#### Food sovereignty and social inclusion of the urban poor

- At least three new programmes are developed in the following areas: (a) integrated slum development; (b) youth employment through urban agriculture and (c) emergency and stabilisation agriculture; engaging and improving livelihood and food security conditions of vulnerable and poor groups of slum dwellers, youth, migrants and internally displaced people or refugees in minimum 3 countries/cities in the world.

- New strategic and operational working relations have been established with the Transition Towns movement, Slow food movement, Via Campesina, Local and national Slum/Shack Dwellers Federations, the International Alliance for Housing and other local/national civil society organisations to link up urban agriculture/food security with their struggle for land, housing, work, right to the city and food sovereignty.

#### Productive reuse of waste and wastewater

- Public-private partnerships in the field of productive reuse of waste and wastewater are facilitated and funded in at least 3 countries/cities
- A new programme on reduction of food waste has been developed.
- New projects are being developed/implemented in partnerships with IWMI, ETC, IGSNRR, Energy, RAIN, WASTE and the Food Waste Campaign.

#### Urban agriculture and forestry for climate change adaptation

- Climate change adaptation activities are implemented in at least 5 cities (focussing for example on flood management; promotion of productive green roofs and other relevant UA models) and included in local climate change and land use/city development policies and plans
- A monitoring framework for monitoring the impacts of urban and peri-urban agriculture on climate change adaptation and mitigation will have been developed and is being applied in at least 3 cities around the world
- Partnerships in this field with UN Habitat, UNCRD, UNEP and GIZ have been expanded or started in this field in the coming 4 years, resulting in further inclusion of urban and peri-urban agriculture into their climate change programmes and increased funding for local projects

#### Integral to the above:

- New awareness, knowledge, information and lobby/advocacy materials on each of the focus area will have been developed and uploaded on the RUAF website (collection of policies, manuals, working papers, evidence based policy briefs, webinars).
- Action-research is being implemented supporting the development of such materials and the development of local/national programmes, projects and policies.
- RUAF will have on-going partnerships and working relations in at least 20 cities in the global South and 10 cities in the global North.

#### **Targets in terms turn-over and organisational growth:**

- Turn over targets of the RUAF secretariat should increase in the coming 5 years to 1.5-2 million Euro/year. This excludes programmes and projects that are directly channelled through RUAF member or partner organisations. This will be done by developing closer linkages and obtaining funding from at least 3 new donor organisations; developing at least 3 new strategic cooperation / joint programmes with other non-governmental development organisations and attracting funding from private enterprises equalling 5% of its yearly turn-over.
- The RUAF secretariat will grow to about 5 permanent staff and increase the number of involved associates
- The RUAF network will grow from 7-15 networks in the coming 4 years.

## **5. The organisational structure and culture of the RUAF Foundation**

The RUAF Foundation is an international network in which optimum use is made of the relative strength of each of its member organisations. The RUAF network is oriented towards the delivery of practical and high-quality results, applying a demand-driven and participatory approach while remaining flexible and providing room for change and innovation. The RUAF research and development projects, as well as its training and advisory activities, are undertaken in response to the support needs expressed by our local partners (local and regional authorities, NGOs, universities, urban producer groups, private enterprises and other stakeholders). RUAF applies a participatory approach to project planning and implementation. Project process and results are regularly reviewed together with the local partners to improve the impact and sustainability of the projects and to enhance the partners' self-learning capacity.

Experiences gained in RUAF projects and programmes are systematised and published as RUAF working papers, policy briefs, guidelines and training manuals, and disseminated to various types of users, through channels such as the RUAF website, our Urban Agriculture Magazine and a scientific Journal on Urban and Regional Food Systems, and through publication of books and working papers reaching about 800.000 readers globally today.

RUAF Foundation members are organisations and cities that have strong international and local experience in issues dealing with urban agriculture and city-region food systems. Members comprise international research organisations and NGOs in the field of urban food security; water management in urban and peri-urban areas, agricultural innovation, urban management and land use. RUAF members are represented in the RUAF member Platform. The Platform decides on new members, membership criteria and performance assessment. The network members participate in the discussion of new RUAF joint formulation of and engagement in new projects and joint visibility and representation in strategic events. Network members engage for a minimum period of 3 years.

RUAF and its members invite and collaborate with a whole range of local and international partners to achieve the targets set above.