



Policies
to Promote
Sustainable
Consumption
Patterns

Impact Assessment Paper

Requirements for public catering to serve
sustainable meals in Finland

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Impact assessment of the Requirements for public catering to serve sustainable meals, Finland

The following analysis is part of the EUPOPP project's work on evaluating European policy instruments for sustainable consumption (SC). It forms part of a series of ten in-depth impact assessment papers. All assessments have been carried out in accordance with the EUPOPP Impact Assessment Tool.

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3 Setting the scene

Public food purchasing and professional catering have a significant role in total consumption of food in Finland. One third of all Finnish meals are produced by professional caterers, amounting to a total of 850 million meals in 2009 (Taloustutkimus 2010). Public catering is provided with the use of public funds. The public sector (schools, day care centres and municipal and state agencies) uses annually about EUR 300 million to purchase food services (Ministry of Environment 2008). Thus, the promotion of sustainability in public catering – under the heading Sustainable Meals – is one key aspect in the Council of State Decision of Principle on Promoting Sustainability in Public Purchasing (VNP 2009). It stipulates that the sustainability of food services and food procurement in state food services shall be enhanced by offering organic, vegetarian or seasonal food once a week by 2010 and twice a week by 2015.

The Council of State Decision of Principle on Promoting Sustainability in Public Purchasing encourages the entire public sector (including state central and regional government and municipalities) to make sustainable purchases. The aim is for the public sector to serve as an example for other players by making purchases that mitigate climate change, reduce waste and prevent the release of harmful chemicals to the environment (VNP 2009; Kestävät julkiset hankinnat 2009).

A Council of State decision of principle is a legally binding recommendation, the implementation of which is monitored, but for which there are no sanctions for non-compliance¹. The aims are set mainly for the state government, but the same targets are also recommendations for municipalities, which provide the major bulk of public food services in the form of school lunches.

The Council of State Decision of Principle includes other requirements that have implications for food services, such as an aim give preference to energy-saving equipment. In general, it emphasizes the importance of systematic and target-oriented purchasing policies. Sustainability targets should include quantitative targets and timelines for meeting them. Targets should be monitored and reported on (VNP 2009).

However, the targets set in the Council of State Decision of Principle are less detailed and ambitious than in the proposal that preceded the Council of State Decision². For example, the Council of State Decision of Principle includes a clause on increasing the

¹ Council of State decisions of principle are the Cabinet's instructions and guidelines for the state administration to prepare measures. They are mainly political statements (such as White Papers in some other countries). They are thus preparatory decisions. The final decisions are made by the authorities processing and preparing the measures.

² The proposal included many detailed accompanying measures, such as instructions on principles of sustainable food procurement, an advice service, and environmental proficiency test (Environmental Pass), and communication campaigns. These were originally planned to be implemented in the period 2008-2010, but have been put into practice at a much slower rate.



capacity of public food service providers and purchasers through advice and instructions. However, the targets here do not entail commitment of resources. The Council of State Decision states, “The possibility of establishing a permanent state-funded helpdesk for public catering professionals on sustainable procurement and food services will be explored. Additionally, as part of the advice service, an Environmental Pass³ model will be developed, which enables food service professionals to demonstrate their proficiency in the policies and practices of environmentally responsible operations and purchasing. Instructions and advice will be used to promote recognition of a life cycle perspective, with the aim of optimising energy and water use as well as of reducing the amount of food waste and the climate change impacts of food” (VNP 2009). The Council of State Decision of Principle originally envisaged a round of monitoring the status of implementation in 2010. Due to lack of resources, this monitoring has been postponed, and many of the implementation measures have taken off more slowly than envisaged. There is thus limited material available for evaluating the impacts of the requirements set on public catering. In spite of this, the requirements are unprecedented in Europe. Hence, we deemed this instrument relevant for inclusion in the Instrument Impact Assessment, in spite of the lack of data.

Additionally, some progress in implementation has occurred on the municipal level. Most notably, the City of Helsinki decided, after a vocal debate, to decree a mandatory “vegetarian day” each week at schools. Even though the Council of State Decision of Principle was hardly mentioned, the ‘Helsinki vegetarian day’ stimulated an intense public debate on the notion of replacing meat with vegetables once a week at school canteens. City of Helsinki has also proposed to increase the amount of organic and local food to 50% of the meals served in the municipal daycare centers by 2015.

An example how the public regulation may be influencing private sector actors is Fazer Amica’s climate label for “low-carbon lunch alternatives”, which they are about to launch. Fazer Amica is a private chain of restaurants providing meals to many state agencies and ministries.⁴

This Instrument Impact Assessment case study aims to provide a preliminary estimation of the outcomes and impacts of the Finnish requirements for public catering to serve sustainable meals. Due to limited data on outcomes and impacts, we have focused on following the implementation of the instrument, identifying strong and weak points, and collecting various stakeholders’ views on the prospects for further implementation. The case study is based on the following data:

- Interviews with regulators and stakeholders, i.e., public catering service providers and ‘intermediaries’ providing training, guidelines and advice (see Annex 1)

³ This is similar to a “Hygiene Pass”, which is a hygiene proficiency test required for people working in the food sector.

⁴ It is still unsure what information the label is based on, but Fazer Amica have informed that they will take into account the whole chain of food production.

- A roundtable on sustainable public procurement organised by ICLEI in Helsinki, May 12, 2010, with 17 participants, including regulators, intermediaries and food service providers (see Annex 2).
- A focus group discussion organised with seven consumers from the National Consumer Research Centre's Consumer Panel.
- A review of the Internet discussions surrounding the 'Helsinki vegetarian day' and the notion of replacing meat with vegetables on one day of the week in public catering.

This report is structured as follows. Chapter 4 introduces the intervention logic of the instrument. It is supplemented by an annex (Annex 3) giving some background information on public catering in Finland. Chapter 5 discusses the effects and effectiveness of the instrument and attempts to estimate its current and potential sustainability impacts. Chapter 6 discusses causes for the successes and failures of the instrument. Chapter 7 presents the main conclusions of the case study.

4 Intervention Logic

The Council of State Decision of Principle Promoting Sustainability in Public Purchasing includes the following target for public food services: the sustainability of food services and food procurement in state food services shall be enhanced by offering organic, vegetarian or seasonal food once a week by 2010 and twice a week by 2015. It also includes targets for various accompanying measures, such as increasing the capacity of food service providers by providing advice and training. The requirements are binding for the state administration (also concerning contracted food services), but they are also recommendations for the municipal sector, which provides the bulk of public food services. The intervention logic of the instrument is presented in Figure 1 and analysed in more detail in the following.

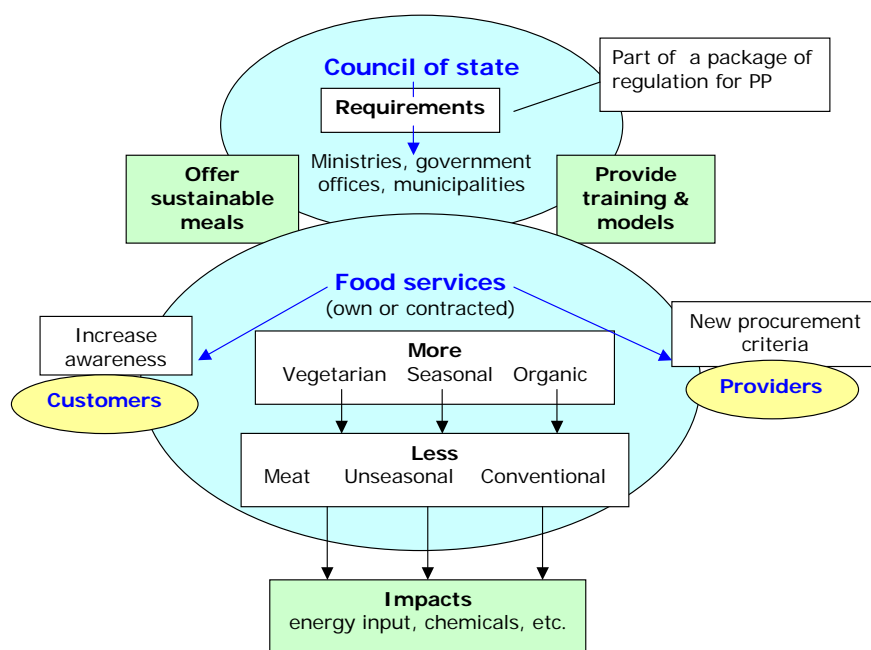


Figure 1: Intervention logic of the requirements for public catering to serve sustainable meals

The sustainability problems addressed by the instrument relate mainly to environmental sustainability, which is an aspect that has hitherto not gained much attention in public catering. In the Committee Proposal on sustainable public procurement, which preceded the Council of State Decision of Principle (Ehdotus ...2008), food was agreed to be a significant contributor to environmental problems, accounting for one-third of the greenhouse gas emissions from Finnish private consumption. However, the proposal text also shows that defining sustainable meals was not easy, and there was not much consensus on sustainability criteria⁵. In the requirements for public catering in the Council of State Decision of Principle, the sustainability of food services is operationalised in terms of three alternative criteria, one of which should be met in weekly (2010) or twice-weekly (2015) meals.

⁵ The lack of agreement on what constitutes a sustainable meal was also brought up in a number of interviews. In particular, there was lack of agreement on the environmental benefits of organic food. Some of the interviewees suggested that the final requirements – in particular, the presentation of three *alternative* ways to fulfil the requirements - constitute a compromise between different stakeholders.

- Organic food is justified in the proposal (Ehdotus... 2008) in the following way: it is stated that there are various studies pro and contra the environmental benefits of organic food, yet “A fairly common view is that organic food has a positive impact on biodiversity and requires less energy to produce”. Comments are also made on potential health effects. Additionally, it is noted that organic food is one way for customers to “encounter producers and encourage them to do a good job”.
- Vegetarian meals are presented in the proposal (Ehdotus...2008) as being justified by many studies. The main argument is that the production of animal-based foods requires more arable land and agricultural activity than that of vegetable-based food. Hence, the emissions from a kg of vegetable-based food are lower than from a kg of animal-based food.
- Seasonal foods are not discussed extensively in the proposal (Ehdotus...2008), but are mentioned in the definition of sustainable meals as “a product with as short a supply chain as possible, or a seasonal product ...”.

Our interviewees agreed that all of the sustainability criteria are relevant ways to promote the sustainability of food. The benefits of seasonal food are most visible in autumn and winter, when the use of seasonal foods can reduce storage costs and transports and promote the use of fresh foodstuffs. Seasonal meals were additionally suggested to be a way to favour local producers without compromising the equal treatment of domestic and other European providers.

The basic governance mechanisms at the centre of the analysis (output 1)

The Council of State Decision of Principle sets targets for ministries, which are expected to roll out the targets within their own administration. As stated above, it also issues recommendations to municipalities on what constitutes good practice in public procurement. However, no budget allocations are connected to the Council of State Decision.

The requirements for the public administrations are two-fold.

1. They are expected to provide or procure sustainable meals.
2. They are expected to offer training and models of best practices to food service providers

The specific characteristics of instrument design & implementation relate to putting the decision into practice within the state administration. The next step is – or would be – for these requirements to be transferred into procurement policies and administrative guidelines for food services. This entails different tasks for different parts of the public administration.

- As concerns the state central administration, only two administrations are major providers of public food services: the Defence Forces (daily meals provided for about 40 000 conscripts and military staff) and the Criminal Sanctions Agency (daily meals provided for about 4000 prison inmates and staff). Other administrations offer meals mainly for employees (total about 70 000), most often using out-

sourced private service providers and providing a small subsidy for employees to use these services (see Annex 3). Agencies using outsourced food services should apply the requirements in their service procurement policies.

- Additionally, the state administration is expected to provide training and models for food service providers. It is not defined in the decision whether they should be provided centrally or decentrally (i.e., which ministry is supposed to pay for them).
- Municipalities have an autonomous position in Finland, and operate on their own budgets and state allocations for legally binding responsibilities. Hence, the state cannot direct the actions of municipalities unless legislation is enacted. Municipalities are the main providers of public catering services, providing more than 90% of the meals offered in public food services (Annex 3). A small share of these meals, as well, is outsourced to private service providers.

According to our interviews, implementation measures are still at a preparatory stage in the state administration⁶. Some ministries have set up committees to draw up guidelines for the administration. Additionally, various players have contributed to the development of training and models for sustainable public procurement, mainly with project funding (Nikula 2010): EkoCentria, a training and development centre connected to the Savo Consortium for Education, is developing an Environmental Passport for catering professionals. They are also piloting an advisory service for sustainable catering. FCG (Finnish Consulting Group), a consultancy owned by and working for the municipalities has produced guidelines for sustainable catering. Moreover, there is a business plan for an online database for sustainable food procurement, but funding for this is still open.

The instrument has four kinds of **main intended effects on consumption patterns (outcomes)**:

1. The environmental load from food consumption in public catering establishments is directly reduced by replacing meat, conventionally grown food or unseasonable food with vegetables, organic food or seasonal food on certain days of the week.
2. The public sector sets an example for consumers and aims to change their food patterns and preferences. For example, the provision of tasty vegetarian meals instead of meat-based meals helps to familiarise consumers with more sustainable food patterns and can encourage them to try vegetarian meals at home, as well.
3. The public sector can set an example for other food service providers by demonstrating outstanding environmental responsibility. Additionally, because the

⁶ The same seems to apply to other requirements of the Council of State Decision of Principle on Promoting Sustainability in Public Purchasing. Many of the targets set for 2010 have not been met yet, according to an assessment by the State Auditor (Valtiontalouden tarkastusvirasto 2010).

major private catering companies in Finland also offer services for the public sector, the new practices may spread within these companies.

4. As large procurement units, public catering providers can also promote the supply of more sustainable food products, e.g. organic products. Public sector contracts are long-term and they can encourage food producers to make a commitment to organic production. As production increases, it is likely that prices decrease, which can also entail the provision of organic food for consumers at a more competitive price in supermarkets.

The potential **sustainability impacts** are expected to occur in diverse areas:

- Environmental impacts pertain to energy use in agriculture and food processing, greenhouse gases from the entire product life cycle, land use effects, eutrophication, release of harmful chemicals and biodiversity.
- Social sustainability impacts relate to health effects and the promotion of more local food chains
- Economic sustainability impacts are well addressed in the current frameworks for public procurement (such as the Act on Public Procurement, 30.3.2007/348). The limitations of state and municipal budgets are likely to ensure that implementation of the requirements will be done in a cost-neutral fashion.

Some of our interviewees brought up broader sustainability impacts, such as the introduction of a different food culture. The preference for vegetable-based, organic and seasonal foods was expected to run counter to the current trend of more and more cheap, industrially processed, imported food at the cost of local agricultural produce. However, this view was not shared by all interviewees, and nation-wide catering companies were not interested in disrupting their existing mode of operating. Nonetheless, many agreed that the requirements, to a small part, promote respect for food and an increased attention to the resources needed to produce food.

5 Effects & effectiveness

It is too early to judge the effects or effectiveness of the requirements for public catering in the Council of State Decision of Principle on Promoting Sustainability in Public Purchasing, as implementation has only just started. What can be noted, however, is that:

- Requirements set for 2010 will probably not be met, as most addressees are only just starting – or have not yet started – to implement the requirements. In ministries, this requires changes to procurement criteria. In agencies providing food services themselves, it requires changes to both menus and procurement criteria.
- Many of the accompanying measures envisaged in the Council of State Decision of Principle on Promoting Sustainability in Public Purchasing are still

in an initial or small-scale stage, provided with project funding or still lacking funding.

On the other hand, there are some promising signs of progress:

- EkoCentria, a training centre devoted to the topic, is doing good work with public catering providers, providing hands-on training and organisational change plans.
- The largest municipality in Finland, the City of Helsinki, has decided to introduce a vegetarian day each week. Another metropolitan region city, Vantaa, has added two vegetarian days to the 10-week menu cycle, increasing the share of vegetarian days by 30%.
- Some ministries have set up committees to specify catering and procurement requirements, an important first step in implementing the requirements in the operations of the ministries and the state agencies connected to them.

The requirements for public catering in the Council of State Decision of Principle on Promoting Sustainability in Public Purchasing are formulated in a pragmatic but ambiguous way. “Once a week” and “twice a week” are practical and easily understandable, but hardly quantitative measures of the amount of sustainable food provided. Moreover, the existence of alternative ways to fulfil the requirements creates ambiguity; some addressees interpret the requirements so that if a vegetarian option is offered, they are met. This was not the original purpose, according to our interviewees.

The formulation of the requirements has its strengths and weaknesses. As options are offered, it is easier for addressees to start implementing them, and they can take into account their own financial situation and the available options. On the other hand, a very minimal interpretation does not necessarily bring any changes to the existing situation.

Various context factors promote and hinder the effectiveness of the instrument (Table 1). Other supportive policy instruments include, e.g., the Nordic Swan requirements for restaurants, the municipalities own strategies and decisions on sustainable development. There are also institutions like FCG, a consultancy owned by the municipalities, and EkoCentria, a training centre, which offer advice and guidance (mainly with project funding by the public sector).

There are also policies that hinder, or may hinder, the effectiveness of the instrument unless they are adequately addressed. These include the multiple existing requirements placed on public catering providers and procurers, such as nutritional and hygiene requirements, the former being a potential problem for the vegetarian implementation option and the latter a potential problem for using organic or seasonal food in kitchens designed to use mainly processed food and lacking facilities for the processing of raw vegetables and fish. It is also obvious that inadequate resources have been devoted to implementation measures: there has been too little training, and the envisaged supportive measures are running on a small scale only, with project funding. The

general policy of 'downsizing' the welfare state by decreasing state and municipal budgets creates an obstacle to the implementation of ambitious policy measures.

Existing technologies could support the effectiveness of the instrument. There are plans, for example, to create a database of sustainable products and guidelines, but they still lack funding. On the other hand, existing competencies, staffing and equipment in public food services are designed largely for the use of processed food, which may create an obstacle for effectively implementing the instrument.

Similarly, the market context could, but at present does not always support the effectiveness of the instrument. Large procurement units can have a significant influence on the market, and can encourage or even force suppliers to adapt to the requirements. In particular, our interviewees agreed that public procurement can have a significant impact on the demand for organic food, hence increasing supply and decreasing prices.

Current procurement practices and competencies, however, can hinder the effectiveness of the instrument. There is a lack of competence in defining environmental aspects in calls for tenders. Similarly, long-term procurement agreements can slow down the implementation of the requirements. In particular, organic food is not likely to gain a significant share in public food services, as it is still more expensive than conventional produce and large procurement units may find it difficult to find dependable providers of sufficient amounts of organic food.

As concerns socio-cultural issues, the loose and ambiguous formulation of the requirements offers scope for experimentation and reduces opposition to the requirements. The instrument is thus likely to be implemented – in one way or another – in the Finnish context, where the cultural norm is to follow rules, regulations and guidelines. On the other hand, the opposition raised by the Helsinki school vegetarian day shows that there is a sizable number of people with prejudices toward vegetarian food and an entrenched belief in meat as the only source of protein. In another metropolitan region city, Espoo, a similar initiative to that made in Helsinki was rejected by the City Council, because vegetarian food was preferably seen as an alternative, which is already available each day (i.e., the choice is left to customers). Some interviewees also suggested that there are prejudices toward organic food and a general confusion about the environmental relevance of organic and vegetable-based foods.



Table 1. Context factors promoting and hindering the effectiveness of the requirements for sustainable public catering

	Promoting	Hindering
Other policy instruments	<p>Nordic Swan, environmental label for hotels and restaurants, and other environmental labels</p> <p>Municipal strategies and programmes for sustainable development</p> <p>Advisory material for sustainable public procurement</p>	<p>Nutritional and hygiene recommendations and food safety legislation have top priority, and may conflict with environmental considerations</p> <p>Lack of information, communication and advice</p> <p>Accompanying measures have not been rolled out as planned (Environmental Passport and product database only now under development), concrete models lacking</p>
Technology	<p>IT could be used more in communicating the instrument and in creating, e.g., databases of sustainable products and menus</p>	<p>Staffing and equipment designed for the use of processed food</p>
Market issues	<p>Large procurers can encourage suppliers to offer sustainable alternatives, in particular of long term contracts available for e.g. organic products</p>	<p>Lack of competence in addressing environmental aspects in public procurement</p> <p>Long-term contracts can slow down implementation</p> <p>Organic foods often more expensive and not available in large quantities</p>
Socio-cultural issues	<p>Flexible requirements offer room for local adaptation, reduce opposition</p> <p>Rules, recommendations and guidelines are usually followed in Finland</p> <p>Public discussion increases awareness.</p>	<p>Requirements so flexible that they may not lead to changes to the existing situation</p> <p>Meat-oriented food tradition, prejudices</p> <p>Lack of information and agreement on the environmental relevance of vegetable-based and organic food</p>

6 Discussion

The overall effects of the requirements for sustainable public catering are difficult to establish due to lack of information on how it is – or will be – implemented. Our analysis of the existing data, however, suggests that the instrument has significant potential to alter eating habits in the long term if implemented effectively. We now turn to discuss the findings in the light of the hypotheses set out in the IIA Tool (Wolff and Schönherr 2009).

Hypothesis 1: The scale of effects resulting from a SC instrument increases with the validity of the instruments' intervention logic.

Due to the initial stage of implementation, it is not possible to produce any definitive evidence concerning hypothesis 1. However, the intervention logic of the instrument appears to be sound – the open questions relate to how it is implemented.

Hypothesis 2: The involvement of stakeholders in the development and implementation of the SC instrument significantly fosters the creation of instrument effects, i.e. changes in consumption patterns and resulting sustainability gain.

Many stakeholders were involved in the development of the instrument. This does not appear to have been only positive; stakeholder involvement appears to have been one of the reasons why the requirements are formulated in an ambiguous way. This, in turn, is confusing for the stakeholders who should be implementing the instrument and seems to be leading to a diversity of interpretations of the requirements. Their engagement (e.g. training and support) is still in an initial phase. Once they are involved and interact with each other, some sort of 'standard' definition of minimum requirements is likely to emerge. Similarly, once the instrument is evaluated, there will be a clearer view of what is deemed to be 'sufficient' implementation.

Hypothesis 3: The scale of effects resulting from a SC instrument increases strongly with the degree to which the instrument acknowledges and accommodates the diversity of consumers' everyday needs and practice.

According to the dominant interpretation, the instrument requires or recommends that a vegetarian, organic or seasonal meal is offered, not as an alternative, but as the only option, once a week (2010) or twice a week (2015). This, in effect, implies a narrowing down of consumers' choice. Most of our interviewees and focus group participants did not seem to see this as a big problem, however, as it offers additional health benefits (in particular, if more vegetables are consumed). In fact, serving only one option reduces the costs. Some commentators, however, have opposed the idea of narrowing down consumer choice, e.g. by 'forcing' vegetarian meals on schoolchildren once a week.

Of course, people cannot be forced to eat, at least not in an affluent society with ample provision of alternative foods. One topic relating to diversity, however, is the concern that people (especially schoolchildren) who are not enthusiastic about vegetarian food may avoid the impact of the instrument by eating somewhere else. It is not possible to judge yet whether this is a major concern or not, and probably depends on how attractive and tasty the vegetarian meals are. One solution could be to offer two vegetarian choices on vegetarian day.

Apart from the issue of choice, however, the instrument does not require a lot from consumers – in fact, it can make it easier for consumers to reduce their environmental impact without making an effort, and can educate them on more environmentally sound foods in an effortless and effective way. Hence, it appears to be quite compatible with consumers' everyday needs and practices. However, the instrument only directly tar-



gets consumers how make use of public catering at school, work or in institutions. The impacts on other consumers are indirect, at best. The instrument would be (or may become) more effective if it spreads to other catering providers and if the effects on private consumption are realized.

This instrument is not a particularly good case to test hypothesis 3. However, it does not disconfirm it.

Hypothesis 4: The scale of effects resulting from a SC instrument increases strongly with the degree to which the instrument not only addresses consumers, but adjusts the framework conditions of consumption.

The instrument focuses on framework conditions, and only addresses consumers indirectly by influencing the available choices (within the public catering system), i.e., it is a form of ‘choice editing’. This is a potentially very effective way to influence consumer behaviour. There is not yet sufficient evidence on the impacts of the new requirements, but evidence from the health impacts of nutritional guidelines suggests that public catering has a significant impact on consumers’ food choices⁷. However, our focus group discussions and interviews suggested that it would be good to also address consumers directly, i.e., via well-designed communication and social marketing campaigns to enhance the effects of the instrument. This could also help to avoid ‘perverse effects’ such as the loss of customers to less sustainable alternatives.

Hypothesis 4 is thus supported and also extended. Instruments focusing on the framework conditions are more effective if consumers understand and support them.

Hypothesis 5: The scale of effects resulting from a SC instrument varies strongly with the (synergetic vs. antagonistic) “direction” of policy interaction between the instrument and other policies: while synergetic policy interaction will reinforce an instrument’s outcomes and impacts, antagonistic interaction is a major cause of low levels of instrument effect.

As of yet, the potential synergies between the environmental requirements on public catering and the other existing requirements have not been fully explored. As there is a long tradition of issuing nutritional guidelines, this offers an opportunity to guide catering providers in environmental aspects, as well.

However, the potential antagonistic policy requirements are fairly obvious. Existing operating models may run into conflicts with environmental requirements. Vegetarian food may require new ways of implementing nutritional and purchasing requirements, and hence new competences. Organic food conflicts with the aims to keep public sector costs as low as possible. Organic food and seasonal foods may also present hygiene problems for kitchens that operate mainly using pre-processed foods, and are not equipped to process raw foods such as vegetables straight from the field.

⁷ These research results on nutritional recommendations do not strictly speaking provide evidence on changes in private purchasing patterns, but they do show that public catering influences people’s diets.

Hence, hypothesis 5 is supported by the available evidence and the stakeholders' views. There is clearly a need to align the existing policies and requirements.

Hypothesis 6: The scale of effects resulting from a SC instrument is highly contingent upon a favourable market context.

The availability of suitable products and services is clearly a key issue for how easy or difficult it is to implement the requirements for sustainable public catering. Hence, hypothesis 6 is supported.

Hypothesis 7: The scale of effects resulting from a SC instrument will be influenced by further success factors which are additional to those mentioned in the previous hypotheses.

This case highlights the importance of implementation and the devotion of sufficient resources to implementation. The instrument itself is based on a sound logic, but is not likely to have the expected effects unless more resources are devoted to implementation, such as the development of catering and procurement specifications within the public sector, awareness-raising, training and the development of suitable models and easy-to-use information sources.

7 Conclusions

This section summarizes the most important findings and presents an overall appraisal of the instrument's performance (Table 2). It also summarizes some limitations of the case study findings and suggests open questions. It ends with some policy recommendations and considerations on the transferability of the instrument.

Table 2. Overall appraisal of the strengths, weaknesses and dependence on key context factors of the instrument 'Requirements for public catering to serve sustainable meals'

Strengths	Weaknesses	Context factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government sets a good example; does not force but encourages (hence reducing opposition) • Practical, fairly easy to monitor whether requirements have been met • Provides alternative ways for meeting requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation, no sanctions; not everyone will comply • Definitions are ambiguous, may cause confusion and inertia • May be interpreted loosely to imply that offering a vegetarian option fulfils the requirements, may not lead to any changes in some units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring system still lacking • Difficult to monitor environmental improvements as baseline data lacking • Lack of budget for accompanying measures such as training or evaluation

The limitations of the case study pertain to the early stage of implementation. Many details of implementation – which define the outcomes and impacts – cannot yet be

evaluated. There is also a lack of baseline data; hence, it will be difficult to monitor implementation even in the future. Due to the lack of evaluation data, we have had to collect 'samples' of information from various addresses; hence, the case study does not provide a full picture of the implementation or interpretations of the instrument in the different public catering units in Finland. We have, however, judged that the intervention logic of the instrument is sound, based on experiences gained from the implementation of nutritional recommendations. Even though there are shortcomings even here, public catering clearly has a positive impact on Finnish consumers' eating patterns (see Annex 3). There is no reason to doubt that a similar mechanism could work in the case of sustainability criteria, but of course there is no hard evidence to prove that it does work, either.

As concerns transferability, the instrument in its current form is unique to the Finnish context. In Sweden, there is a government recommendation to increase the share of organic food to 25% in public catering (Post et al. 2008). In Italy, there has been a sizeable movement in municipalities to promote the use of organic food at schools (Nielsen et al. 2009; Alcantud and Gueder 2010). Individual cities in Europe, such as the city of Gent, have introduced a 'vegetarian' day. However, the notion of changing eating patterns via public catering is far from mainstream in Europe, and indeed, the notion of 'public catering' is not familiar in all European countries.

The transferability of the instrument to other countries depends crucially on the existence of a sizeable public catering sector (see Annex 3 for a way to estimate the size of this sector in a given country). According to Raulio et al. (2010), free hot meals at schools or subsidized meals at workplace canteens are common only in some Western countries, like Finland and Sweden. Another country with a significant public catering sector is France, where "collective" (i.e., non-commercial) food services provide 3.1 billion meals per year, amounting to about 55 meals per inhabitant annually (SESAS 2000).

However, public discussion on school meals and workplace lunches has increased during recent years in many countries (Wanjek 2005; Harper and Wood 2008; Schönherr 2009; School Food Trust 2009; Raulio et al. 2010). It is hence possible and even probable that school and workplace catering will increase rather than decrease in the future. This is mainly because they offer a way to improve public and occupational health. At the same time, they can provide a good channel for providing information, education and positive experiences of sustainable food patterns.

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9 Annex 1: List of interviewees

Organisation	Persons interviewed	Date
Regulators		
Ministry of Environment	Taina Nikula	22.01.2010
Ministry of Employment and Economy	Johanna Lähde	10.03.2010
Addressees		
Rikosseuraamusvirasto (Criminal Sanctions Agency)	Riitta Salovaara	19.02.2010
Espoo Catering	Regina Ekroos and Johanna Andsten	10.03.2010
Fazer Amica	Sari Nikkola	18.02.2010
Unicafe	Mia Salonen	18.03.2010 (by e-mail)
Intermediaries		
Kuntaliitto (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities)	Maija Hakanen	11.02.2010
EkoCentria	Irma Kärkkäinen	19.03.2010 (by phone)
FCG Finnish Consulting Group Oy	Satu Hyrkkänen and Anne Haapanen	01.04.2010

10 Annex 2: List of participants in the roundtable discussion organised by ICLEI

Roundtable on the Potential of Green Public Procurement to Trigger Consumption of Sustainable Food

Helsinki, 12 May 2010

Johanna Mäkelä, Kuluttajatutkimuskeskus (National Consumer Research Centre)

Satu Hyrkkänen, FCG Finnish Consulting Group Oy

Johanna Rajakangas, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

Sirkka Antinluoma, Laurea University of Applied Sciences

Ilari Paananen, Laurea University of Applied Sciences (catering)

Tuula Kuivanen, Laurea University of Applied Sciences

Marja Innanen, MMM (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry)

Sari Väänänen, KestITÄ – Kestävyyttä Itä-Suomen ruokapalveluihin

Sirpa Kurppa, MTT (MTT Agrifood Research Finland)

Riitta Salovaara, Rikosseuraamusvirasto (Criminal Sanctions Agency)

Heta-Helena Heiskanen, TEM (Ministry of Employment and Economy)

Sari Mönkölä, UniCafe, University of Helsinki (catering)

Irma Kärkkäinen, EkoCentria (Training and development centre)

Eija Muukka, EkoCentria (Training and development centre)

Taina Nikula, Ympäristöministeriö (Ministry of Environment)

Perttu Pohjonen, City of Helsinki

Peter Defranceschi, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, Brussels

Amalia Ochoa, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, Freiburg

Kristiina Aalto, Kuluttajatutkimuskeskus (National Consumer Research Centre)

Eva Heiskanen, Kuluttajatutkimuskeskus (National Consumer Research Centre)

Stefan Wahlen, Helsinki University



11 Annex 3: Public catering in the Finnish context

Public catering a long tradition in Finland, dating back to factory canteens set up in the 1890s as an occupational health measure (Hasunen 1994). School lunches are a unique feature of Finnish society. Development of school lunches started in the 20th century during the wars, when food rationing raised concerns about children's nutrition (Lintukangas ym. 2007). In 1948, Finland was the first country in the world, enacted legislation on the provision of free-of-charge school meals. The Basic Education Act (628/1998), which is still in force, requires that all students participating in basic education (ages about 7 to 15) and secondary general and vocational education (students aged 16–19) shall be provided a balanced meal, designed and organised in appropriate manner, on every school day. School meals are part of the school's educational tasks (Lintukangas ym. 2007).

For many Finns, lunch provided by (public or private) catering services is the only hot meal of the day. Catering services have an impact on food choices and preferences, and are widely recognised as a means to promote healthy food habits. The State Nutritional Board provides nutritional recommendations, updated every few years, in order to promote healthy nutrition (Valtion ravitsemusneuvottelukunta 2005). These are particularly targeted to catering providers. They appear to be effective, as it has been found that people who make use of catering services eat more vegetables and fish than others (Raulio ym. 2004, Roos ym. 2004). Pre-school aged and school children have their most nutritious meals at school or at the day care centre (Hoppu ym. 2008; Kyttälä 2008), and children in day care have a more nutritionally balanced diet on weekdays than children cared for at home (Kyttälä ym. 2008).

Various parts of society place many requirements and expectations on food services. This is because food services are such a widespread phenomenon in Finnish society: even small improvements can make a big difference. For example, improvements in the nutritional value of food services can have a large impact on public health (STM 2009). Similarly, food services can also promote better environmental food choices and sustainable development.

Regular workplace and school lunches have an impact on food habits and nutritional education. The aim of food services is to ensure that everyone can eat according to nutritional recommendations. In order to reach this aim, customers should be informed of healthy meal compositions and given advice on how to put together a recommended meal⁸. The food should also be tasty and attractively presented.

⁸ However, according to a survey to municipal food service providers (Skinnari 2009), the nutritional composition of meals is not disclosed to customers in half of all outlets. Not all outlets disclose the origins of the food (not disclosed by 38 %) or environmental impacts (not disclosed by 63 %).

In addition to promoting healthy eating habits, food services also promote psychological and social wellbeing (STM 2009). In day care centres, children learn to eat and are socialised into good manners and the culture of their community. Schools emphasise the role of school lunches as an educational event and as a socialising factor. For those at work, lunch breaks offer a moment of rest and refreshment, which supports and enhances their working capacity. In service flats and old-people's homes, meals are almost invariably the most waited-for events of the day.

Finns eat 850 million meals outside the home. Finns, on an average, consumed 116 meals provided by the hospitality, restaurant and catering sector in 2009 (Taloustutkimus 2010). About one-fourth (205 mill.) of the meals were produced in outlets classified as cafes. Almost half of the meals were provided by public sector catering providers, amounting to a total of 413 million meals. A.C. Nielsen, in turn, has published data on the number of meals consumed in different sectors in 2008 (TNS Gallup 2009), which has been used in Table 3 to produce a distribution of meals, which is assumed to have remained the same in 2009.

Table 3: Distribution of meals prepared outside the home by sector in 2009

Institutions	Number of meals, millions	% of meals
Cafés	205	24,1
Restaurants, hotels	140	16,5
Canteens in work places	63	7,4
Public catering	413	48,6
Others (including army, prisons)	29	3,4
Total	850	100,0
Public catering	413	100,0
Schools	161	39,0
Vocational schools	55	13,3
Daycare centers	33	18,4
Hospitals	76	6,8
Child and elder homes	89	21,5
Others	4	1,0

Sources: Taloustutkimus 2010 (number of meals), Nielsen Finland Oy (division of public catering in 2008)

A significant share of meals provided by food services are either paid for using public funds or publicly subsidized. Such support measures can influence the availability and use of food services. Almost all segments of society can make use of food services and



a significant share of the population eat their only full meal in a food service outlet. Table 4 provides data on the number of various segments of the population and the share of those using public food services, based on various sources.

Table 4. Segments of the population in 2008 and shares of these segments making use of food services

Segment of the population	Number, persons	Share of those using food services, %
Children in municipal day care ¹	142 584	100
Pupils: basic education, upper secondary school and vocational schools ¹	888 113	90
Young people in doing military service	25 000	100
Prisoners ¹	3 526	100
Defence Forces and prison staff	16 184	90
Other government staff	72 316	33
Municipal staff	115 000	33
Employees in the private sector	2 327 500	33
Students at universities and polytechnics ¹	275 777	54
Hospitals and institutions	150 700	100
Total		Share of the population
Access to public food services	4 016 700	75
Number of those making use of public food services	1 046 800	20
Number of those making use of commercial food services	1 067 700	20

¹Source: Statistics Finland 2009. Finnish population in 2008: 5 326 314.

Number of persons in other organisations collected from the website of each organisation. Data of share of people using food services in different segments, see the text below.

Of preschool aged children, 56% attended municipal day care and 8 % in private day care in 2007. The share of children aged 1-6 attending municipal day care was 41% (Statistics Finland 2009). Day care centres offer children breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack, which are covered by the day care charges. Children and youngsters participating in compulsory basic education, as well as students in upper secondary school or vocational school (ages 7-18) are eligible for a free lunch provided by the municipality on each school day. About 90% of the students visit the school canteen daily (STM 2005, Raulio et al. 2010).

In universities and polytechnics, students are eligible for a state-subsidized lunch at their school, usually provided by a private service provider. According to a health study of higher education students, 54% ate their main meal at the student cafeteria (Kunttu & Huttunen 2009).

Easy access is an condition for making use of food services on a daily basis, as well as price, in particular in workplace canteens. Workplace canteens are available at or close to the workplace for 54% of Finnish men and 61% of Finnish women. Half of those with easy access to a canteen ate there regularly. One-third of the workforce eats their lunch in the workplace canteen (Laitinen ym. 2007). Many employers participate in their employees lunch costs either by subsidizing them or by offering lunch coupons that can be used in multiple outlets.

The largest food service providers within the state administration are the food services of the Defence Forces and the food services of the prison administration. The prisons provide all daily meals for prisoners and offer workplace lunches to staff. In 2008, 3526 ate meals in prisons (Statistics Finland 2009), as well as 570 staff members (STM 2009). The prisons offer about 4 million meals annually. The Defence Forces prepare 17 million meals annually (90 000 per day, Alimenta 2009) for about 25 000:lle young people doing their military service and for more than 15 600 staff members.

The number of other workplace meals is calculated on the basis of the share of employees having access to food services (75%) and the share of these making use of these services (more than 40 %). Thus, it can be calculated that about one Finn in five eats a meal provided by public catering (Table 4).

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