

Working document: Mandela University Food Systems

Terms of Reference and Operational Framework

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1. Concept Note

Upscaling and coordinating our interventions on food as a key priority for Nelson Mandela University's engagement work emerged through various discussions over the year 2020. After multiple engagements with colleagues within existing food and food systems projects it became clear that there is potential to evolve a productive and collaborative transdisciplinary programme across knowledge-fields and functional areas of the University.

Established in early 2021, the Mandela University Food Systems was initiated in the office of the DVC: Engagement and Transformation Portfolio (ETP), and will organise itself around the principle of a hub of convergence, articulated across the four portfolios of the University. The hubs of convergence principles speak to be considered as philosophical and ideological demonstrable spaces of exploration and experimentation that foster harmonization between existing and emerging praxes. These hubs consciously agitate for convergence, which is the conscious effort of drawing together internal and external stakeholders to unlock the knowledge and praxis that enable us to better engage on grander issues that affect our society. The drawing together of these stakeholder-communities recognises the voice and agency of all those involved in the engagement, which forms a vital element of a Humanising Pedagogy. Through these humanising praxes, we strive for reciprocity in a way that sincerely seeks the exchanging of co-created knowledge and resources through the principles of generosity, solidarity, co-creation, responsiveness, and inclusion for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders. This collective generosity has the purpose of generating multiple forms of outputs mindful that socially engaged scholarship is best derived from an authentic process of learning with others in practice; that it embraces the uncertainty embedded in 'not knowing'; and is supportive of multiple forms of knowledge output to drive social inclusion and cohesion.

The project's¹ proposed focus is to understand, clarify, and map the various existing food systems projects and programmes active in the University space, and to explore the potential of connecting – or the convergence of – these projects and programmes

¹ It is important to note that the term 'project' does not imply that it will be stagnant, and that it could evolve into a more permanent programme or initiative in the future.

to be responsive to the challenges related to food and food systems, both locally and globally.

The purpose of the Mandela University Food Systems is to find means to strengthen, complement, and support food and food systems-related work already being done across the various University portfolios. The Mandela University Food Systems project seeks to foster transversal collaboration for a more sustainable impact in society and does not seek to displace any current work being done in this space but rather to demonstrate the work and make space for capacity-building and collaboration. Vision 2030 reaffirms the importance of the convergence of internal and external stakeholder-communities, demonstrating the University's core values in responding to the contemporary challenges faced by our society. In doing its work, the Mandela University Food Systems project will be informed by Vision 2030's vision, mission, strategic focus areas, and strategic enablers.

The project also aims to be 'locally responsive, nationally active, regionally alive, and globally aware'². This layered approach is also focused on creating 'socio-economic impact...in the interest of the public good'³. Intending to become a signature project⁴ of the University, the Mandela University Food Systems aims to become a leading 'creative and innovative engagement and transformation [project]'⁵. This would encompass a number of anticipated outputs informed both by socially-engaged work and laboratory type work, including research outputs such as the publication of academic articles, and fits with the University's aim of 'cultivating a culture of scholarship'⁶. It is important to note that food intervention is a key priority that has been recognized and acknowledged through the different sets of structures within the University beyond ETP, such as the Senate and Council. The Mandela University Food Systems will aim to advance and assist linkages amongst the sciences to further develop better interdisciplinary solidarity. In other words, to encourage the ability to embrace the different schools of thought and paradigms we adhere to when we work around questions and responses concerning food and food systems.

² ETP. 2021. *What we are working towards*. [O]. Available: <https://etp.mandela.ac.za/what-we-are-working-towards> Accessed 14 April 2021.

³ See footnote 2.

⁴ In this context, the term refers to a co-constructed project that aligns with the emerging community meta-framework.

⁵ See footnote 2.

⁶ See footnote 2.

The production, distribution, availability, and politics of food is a key marker of systemically-anchored inequalities. It thus came as no surprise that food re-emerged as a major thematic through Covid-19; central to people's daily struggle for dignified and sustainable livelihoods. The University's emerging strategic plans focus on serving society to contribute positively to the formation of a sustainable socio-economic and epistemically just world. The pandemic has forced us to adopt a sustainable, long-term approach in questioning food and food systems and thus aims to connect existing projects and initiatives to create a collaborative space in which meaningful, productive work can be achieved. We aim to create a level of priority for this work within the University through its various departments, divisions and across the different sets of networks within the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM). Furthermore, linking networks within the Eastern Cape Province will also be a priority, and this is already underway through multiple engagements.

2. Conceptual Mapping

2.1. Breakdown of Participants

Working Group	Steering Committee	Secretariat
The working group's role is to give direction and make decisions	The steering committee's role is to clarify and conceptualize	The secretariat's role is to facilitate and coordinate

See Appendix E for a list of all members.

2.2. Proposed Timeline

This output map aims to visually display what has been done to date, and is yet to be done in 2021.

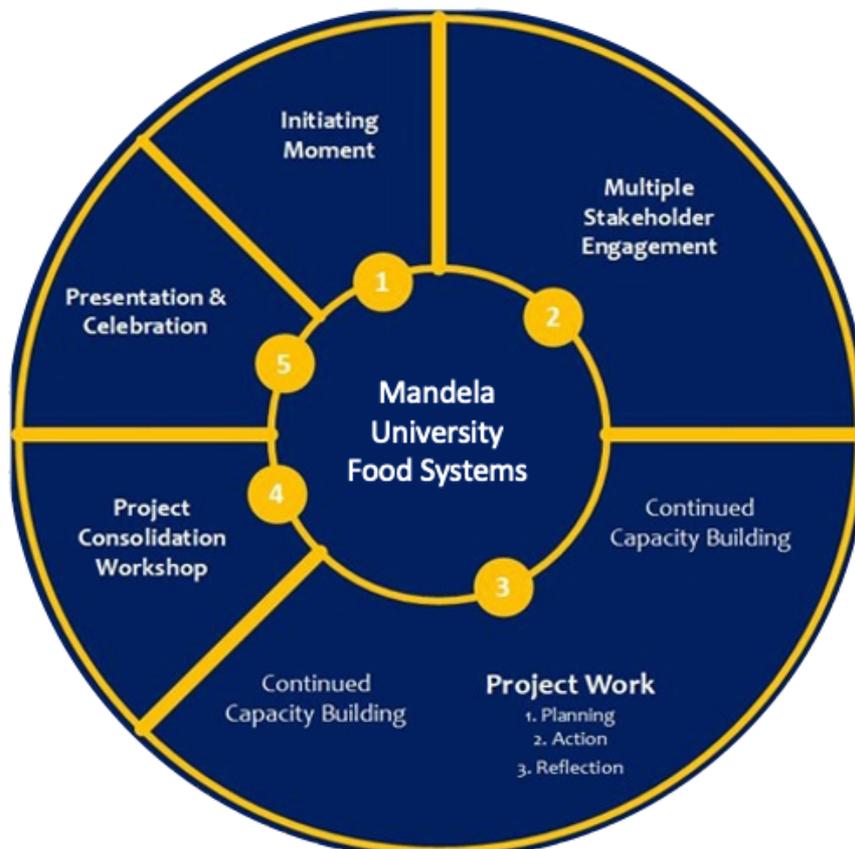
Mandela University Food Systems Output Map 2021								
January			February			March		
Date	Actiivty	Output(s)	Date	Actiivty	Output(s)	Date	Actiivty	Output(s)
27-Jan	WG Quarterly Meeting	NMUFS introduced	11-Feb	SC Meeting	ToR clarified	18-Mar	SC Workshop	ToR 1 + 2 ratified
			15-Feb	SC Meeting	ToR clarified	25-Mar	SC Workshop	ToR 3 + 4 ratified
						26-Mar	SC Workshop	ToR 5 ratified
April			May			June		
Date	Actiivty	Output(s)	Date	Actiivty	Output(s)	Date	Actiivty	Output(s)
15-Apr	SC Workshop	WD draft finalised	18-May	SM Strat Meeting	Proposal ratified	03-Jun	IT Dept Meeting	Mapping begun
28-Apr	WG Quarterly Meeting	WD draft presented	19-May	SC Meeting	WD ratified			
July			August			September		
Date	Actiivty	Output(s)	Date	Actiivty	Output(s)	Date	Actiivty	Output(s)
21-Jul	SC Meeting	Way forward ratified	03-Aug	Mandela Foundation	Connection made	09-Sep	First Convo series	
28-Jul	WG Quarterly Meeting	Way forward ratified	19-Aug	SC Meeting	Direction consolidated	23-Sep	SC Meeting	
October			November			December		
Date	Actiivty	Output(s)	Date	Actiivty	Output(s)	Date	Actiivty	Output(s)
TBC	Second Convo series		TBC	Third Convo series		TBC	Fourth Convo series	
21-Oct	SC Meeting		25-Nov	SC Meeting				
27-Oct	WG Quarterly Meeting							

2.3. Methodological Approach

A critical participatory action learning and action research method is pragmatic for the Mandela University Food Systems to establish a solid foundation for its work with both internal and external stakeholder-communities. This method offers a rigorous cyclical consultative process amongst the stakeholder-communities which enables co-learning, collaboration, and conceptualization of the work within knowledge fields related to food and food systems. This foundation allows the work to continuously reshape and manifest itself through the process and formation of grounded theory in the space, which encourages stakeholder-communities to value and take ownership of the work.

2.4. Phase Breakdown

This section intends to demonstrate the processes used in co-constructing the work within the Mandela University Food Systems. The processes have been broken down into the following five moments:



- **Phase 1 - Initiating Moment:** The need for the Mandela University Food Systems became clear as food re-emerged as a major thematic through Covid-19, and is guided by the Nelson Mandela University Vision 2030. During this phase, an initial Terms of Reference was crafted by ETP. The outcome of this phase was the identification of internal stakeholder-communities involved in food related work, who would form part of the stakeholder engagement in phase 2.

- **Phase 2 - Multi-stakeholder engagement:** This phase encompassed multiple engagements with internal stakeholder-communities involved in food and food systems related work. The primary focus of this stage included the following:
 1. The clarification and ratification of the Terms of Reference (see Appendix A).
 2. The identification of emerging concepts requiring clarification and propositioning (see Appendix B).
 3. The development of a working document, which includes a programme of action (see Appendix C), which will guide the work of the project.

Through the discussions of clarification, ratification and developing of a working document in phase 2, it was noted by the internal stakeholders that there were voices missing in the process, namely, external stakeholder-communities. Guided by the methodological approach in establishing the project, it is important that the processes are inclusive of all stakeholder-communities who have an interest in food and food systems. In short, the aim is to have a cohesive, transdisciplinary project that is rooted in collaboration across multiple stakeholder-communities and that enables learning and co-learning in the space, ultimately allowing all stakeholder-communities' voices to hold the project together and advocate as a unit in the space.

- **Phase 3 - Project Work:** This phase includes the implementation of the programme of action once all stakeholder-communities have been consulted and are in consensus regarding the presentation of the work. The conceptualization and co-learning continues in this phase as there may be other concepts emerging from the execution of the work.

- **Phase 4** - Project Consolidation Workshop: This phase is to follow, informed by the learning of the previous three phases.
- **Phase 5** - Presentation and Celebration: This phase will be collectively decided upon by all stakeholders involved in the process.

3. Conclusion

Food is one of the identified thematic areas of the Covid-19 global pandemic, which affected society at large, and thus it is important as a social community to come together and advocate strategic pathways that offer engagement and transformation for development and sustainable livelihoods in the space of food and food systems in order to foster socio-economic benefits for society at large.

The method of this project is iterative, non-linear and uncertain, and it is this which allows for grounded empirical material to emerge which will inform a transdisciplinary signature project around food and food systems. The Mandela University Food Systems aim is to upscale and coordinate already existing food and food systems projects within Nelson Mandela University and surrounding communities in order to offer a space of engagement, reflection, learning and co-learning in relation to food and food systems.

Subsequently, the project will strive through the emerging new knowledge to work towards developing a signature project that can promote a transdisciplinary programme across knowledge-fields and functional areas of the University, and will supportive multiple forms of knowledge output to drive social inclusion and cohesion.

Appendix A

Phase 1: Clarification and Exploration

Terms of Reference (TOR)

No.	INITIAL TOR	REVISED TOR	MOTIVATION
1.	To upscale and coordinate our interventions on 'food' as a key priority for NMU's engagement.	To coordinate and create a level of priority for our collective approaches and interventions related to 'food' as a key component of Nelson Mandela University's engagement strategy.	The phrase 'for NMU's engagement' was reworked so that we can position the engagement as a priority area for the University. 'NMU' was replaced with the full name, 'Nelson Mandela University'. 'Upscale' was changed to 'create a level for priority' to be more specific.
2.	To clarify, explore and evolve a demonstrable and transdisciplinary programme across knowledge-fields and functional areas of the university.	To clarify, explore and nurture a demonstrable and transdisciplinary programme across knowledge-fields and functional areas of the university.	In an attempt to avoid overloading actionable words so that we can be both practical and tactical in the way we position ourselves, 'evolve' (which was too elusive), was replaced with 'nurture'.
3.	To consider - and work with - student, university, urban, township and rural food systems that are deeply connected to our broader communities.	To collaborate with multiple stakeholder-communities, both internal and external, that are food systems-oriented.	'Deeply connected to our broader communities', 'urban' and 'township' needed further clarity. The term 'connected' seemed to imply the exclusion of systems that are not yet connected, and so it was proposed that we use the term 'food systems-oriented' to capture a sense of inclusivity.

No.	INITIAL TOR	REVISED TOR	MOTIVATION
4.	To establish short term and long term goals for the project, and what we hope to accomplish within the Nelson Mandela Bay community, and beyond.	To develop strategic partnerships provincially, nationally, continentally and globally, and to reach out to diverse stakeholders for input, buy-in and programme implementation.	It was argued that this ToR should be written in a manner that is inclusive, and reflects that we will – where and when necessary – collaborate and partner with the relevant organisations, researchers and entities to be able to harness the collective capacity that we may have access to.
5.	To hold quarterly meetings with the working group in order to engage in dialogues, discuss progress made, and collaborate on new ideas moving forward.	To hold meetings of the various stakeholder-communities in order to engage in dialogues, discuss progress made, and collaborate on new ideas moving forward.	It was proposed that this ToR include the different structures of Mandela University Food Systems.

Appendix B

Clarification of Emerging Concepts

In this section we have thematically grouped twenty-six identified concepts to ensure that members are on the same page when certain terms are used. These concepts may evolve in the future, and we aim to add more concepts to this table as time progresses.

APPROACH	ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING	FOOD AND FOOD SYSTEMS	CLARIFICATION	COORDINATION
Engagement strategy: Identifying stakeholder communities to practice and implement co-learning within the space of food and food system	Bi-directional: A communication approach in Mandela University Food Systems that can transfer knowledge and learn cohesively from the initiators and receivers of Mandela University Food Systems	Food: Any substance that is consumed for bodily nutritional support	Intervention: Actions taken to assist and improve an identified problem or issue	Coordinate: To synchronize the existing body of knowledge in food, food systems and interrelated complexities within the space
External stakeholders: The surrounding Nelson Mandela University community members	Collective: Shared and joint learning amongst Mandela University Food Systems members	Food access: Rooted in consumers spatial accessibility and affordability of food - relativity to access of food price, socio-economic resources for food by consumers and healthy food	A just [world]: A hypothesis - of a world that is fair and orderly where what happens to people generally is what they deserve, such as evil is	Signature project: Brings together and harmonizes existing work and body of knowledge done in the space by nurturing and linking all science disciplines for a

APPROACH	ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING	FOOD AND FOOD SYSTEMS	CLARIFICATION	COORDINATION
			punished and good is rewarded	positive output on the project
Internal stakeholders: Constituents of an institution whose interest come through a direct relationship such as employment in that particular institution; namely, Nelson Mandela University	Epistemically just: Knowledge rationality that is nonpartisan and connects all disciplines of learning in food and food systems	Food availability: May be linked to adequate quantities of food and of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production or imports, including food aid	Sustainable: Meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs	Upscale: Creating environments that are conducive and favorable to food by linking to other food systems actors
Social partners: A group of people coming together and working towards achieving a mutually agreed-upon goal that benefits all people involved		Food basket: The economic products available for human consumption, such as the agricultural commodities from various farmers put together for nutritional requirements to ensure minimum daily food consumption		
		Food pricing: The average price level for food across the board (countries, regions and on a global scale),		

APPROACH	ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING	FOOD AND FOOD SYSTEMS	CLARIFICATION	COORDINATION
		having an impact on producers and consumers of food. Food pricing is determined by the food production process, marketing and distribution		
		Food security: "When all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. Commonly, the concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences" (World Health Organization, 2021)		
		Food sovereignty: "The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their food and agriculture systems" (Patel, 2009)		
		Food systems: the sum of actors and interactions along the food value chain.		

APPROACH	ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING	FOOD AND FOOD SYSTEMS	CLARIFICATION	COORDINATION
		<p>Food utilization: refers to safe and nutritious food which meets people's dietary needs; while people may have access to available food, the selection, conservation, preparation and absorption becomes relevant here; considering how people prepare food, the nutritional knowledge and cultural traditions.</p>		
		<p>Nutritional wellbeing: being adequately or well-nourished at all times.</p>		

Appendix C

Programme of Action

Based on the Terms of Reference and discussions held with the steering committee and working group, the following is a list of deliverables we have set out to achieve. The table indicates which Terms of Reference each deliverable is linked to, the progress of it, the priority of it, and which other deliverable(s) it depends on. The table will be updated and revised regularly.

TOR	DELIVERABLES	PROGRESS	PRIORITY	DEPENDENCY
5	1. Form Mandela University Food Systems Sub-Groups	Yet to be done	H	
2, 3, 4	2. Involve external stakeholder-communities as co-creators of the food systems project	In progress	H	Depends on 7
1, 2	3. Establish signature projects guided by the emerging stakeholder-community meta-framework	In progress	M	
5	4. Write biannual report for January – June 2021	In progress	H	
5	5. Write biannual report for July – December 2021	Yet to be done	L	Depends on 4
5	6. Develop an output map	Done	H	
5	7. Adoption of Working Document for Mandela University Food Systems by the Working Group	Done	H	
ALL	8. Develop an operational manual	In progress	H	Depends on 7
5	9. Organise conversations/webinar(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcasing/demonstration Capacity-building	Ongoing	H	Depends on 7

TOR	DELIVERABLES	PROGRESS	PRIORITY	DEPENDENCY
1, 2	10. Develop a map of all existing projects	Done	H	
2	11. Produce multiple forms of output	In progress	L, M, H	
ALL	12. Develop a project dictionary	In progress	H	
ALL	13. Develop a project timeline	In progress	H	Depends on 7
5	14. Create website page	Done	M	
5	15. Create newsletter	Done	M	Depends on 14
5	16. Establish social media presence	In progress	M	Depends on 14
5	17. Establish Working Group	Done	H	
5	18. Establish steering committee	Done	H	
5	19. Establish secretariat	Done	H	
5	20. Steering committee to 'sweep' previous discussions to identify missing deliverables.	Ongoing	H	
<p>Low priority = L Medium priority = M High priority = H* <i>*High refers to tasks that are important or urgent or both.</i></p>				

Appendix D

Working Group Members

1. Baatjes, Ivor (Mr)
2. Best, Laura (Dr)
3. Chauke, Tinyiko (Dr)
4. Cherry, Janet (Prof)
5. Coetzee, Lindi (Ms)
6. Collier-Naidoo, Nicole (Ms) – steering committee member
7. Damons, Bruce (Dr) – steering committee and secretariat member
8. De Raedt, Amy (Ms) – steering committee and secretariat member
9. Dingiswayo, Xolisile (Mr)
10. Du Preez, Karl (Mr)
11. Duker, Mary (Prof)
12. Dukwe, Sakhumzi (Mr)
13. Dungelo, Xola (Mr)
14. Erasmus, Donnie (Mr)
15. Fordjour Afriyie, Vera (Ms)
16. Foxcroft, Cheryl (Prof)
17. Franks, Oswald (Dr) – steering committee member
18. Gouws, Melissa (Dr)
19. Govindjee, Avinash (Prof)
20. Gresse, Annelie (Prof)
21. Hamilton, Louise (Ms)
22. Hands, Clive (Mr)
23. Hashatse, Lebogang (Mr)
24. Hattingh, Danie (Prof)
25. Hawkins, Althea (Mrs)
26. Hefer, Andre (Dr) – steering committee member
27. Keet, André (Prof)
28. Kota-Nyati, Phumeza (Dr)
29. Kuguyo, Trish (Ms)
30. Lloyd, Hendrik (Prof)
31. Mama, Siyabulela (Mr)

32. Mansvelt, Natalie (Mrs)
33. Manzini, Khanyisa (Mrs) – steering committee member
34. Maseko, Pamela (Prof)
35. Mawila, Kaluke (Dr) – steering committee member
36. Mbanga, Sijekula (Prof)
37. Mishi, Syden (Prof) – steering committee member
38. Mkaza, Oyamangaye (Ms) – steering committee and secretariat member
39. Mkontwana, Phumeza (Ms)
40. Morar, Tulsi (Dr)
41. Muronga, Azwinndini (Prof)
42. Ncwadi, Ronney (Prof)
43. Ndungu, Jane (Ms)
44. Palmer, Anita (Ms)
45. Phorie, Rethabile (Ms)
46. Pittaway, Tim (Dr)
47. Rubusana, Thando (Mr)
48. Senekal, Irna (Ms)
49. Storm, Elana (Miss)
50. Van Greunen, Darelle (Prof)
51. Van Niekerk, Theo (Prof)
52. Van Rooyen, Dalena (Prof)
53. Webb, Denver (Dr)