

SHARECITY BRIEFING NOTE 4

SHARE IT

Sustainability Impact Assessment Toolkit



Toolshed



Talent Garden



Greenhouse



Introduction

This briefing note provides a high level summary of SHARE IT, an innovative output from the SHARECITY research project, that delivers multidimensional sustainability impact assessment products and services to help initiatives, local authorities and food retailers identify the impacts of collaborative acts around food (food sharing for brevity) that they support.

WHAT IS SHARECITY?

SHARECITY is a five-year research project funded by the European Research Council, which identifies and examines the diverse practices of urban food sharing that use **information and communication technologies** to mediate their sharing.

SHARECITY has four objectives:

1. To advance theoretical understanding of contemporary food sharing.
2. To generate a significant body of comparative and novel international empirical knowledge about urban food sharing initiatives and their governance.
3. To design and test an assessment framework for establishing the impact of urban food sharing economies.
4. To co-design scenarios for sustainable urban food sharing futures with stakeholders.

WHAT IS FOOD SHARING?

As there is no agreed definition of what counts as food sharing, we extend a dictionary definition of sharing:

“having a portion [of food] with another or others; **giving** a portion [of food] to others; **using, occupying** or **enjoying** [food and food related spaces to include the **growing, cooking** and/or **eating** of food] jointly; possessing an **interest** [in food] in common; or **telling** someone about [food]”.

(Adapted from Oxford University Press, 2014)

This definition emphasises the practices and experiences of **having things in common** and **doing things together** around food, including but moving beyond commensality; the practice of eating or drinking together. Such a definition includes attention to what is shared, from raw materials (e.g. crops) to products (e.g. processed food products or tools and cooking utensils) and services, as well as capabilities (knowledge and skills) and spaces (e.g. fields, allotments, gardens, and kitchens).

WHY IS SHARECITY NECESSARY?



Planetary urbanisation and unsustainable cities

The majority of the world's population now live in cities, a figure that is predicted to rise to 70 per cent by 2050. Not only does this have implications for those living in urban areas, it also has implications for those beyond these sites who are inevitably involved in providing for an urban future. Urban areas already account for 80 per cent of the world's resource consumption and most of the world's waste.



Sustainable Development Goals

Following disappointing action on the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Development Agenda has been framed around 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which include ending hunger (Goal 2), creating sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11) and ensuring responsible production and consumption (Goal 12). These are not discrete goals and attention to their intersection is needed.



Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

At the second meeting of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact in 2016, the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) José Graziano da Silva, called for cities, big and small, to help construct urban food systems that will be sustainable and resilient in the face of changing climates. By the beginning of 2017 there were 138 cities from around the world who had signed the Pact.



Innovative cities

Cities are complex networks of political, economic and socio-spatial processes that are both intimately local and also globally connected. They provide sites where diverse human and non-human resources intersect on cultural, material and technological levels. As a result, cities are also hotbeds of innovation, including the development of innovations for urban food systems.



ICT-mediated sharing economies

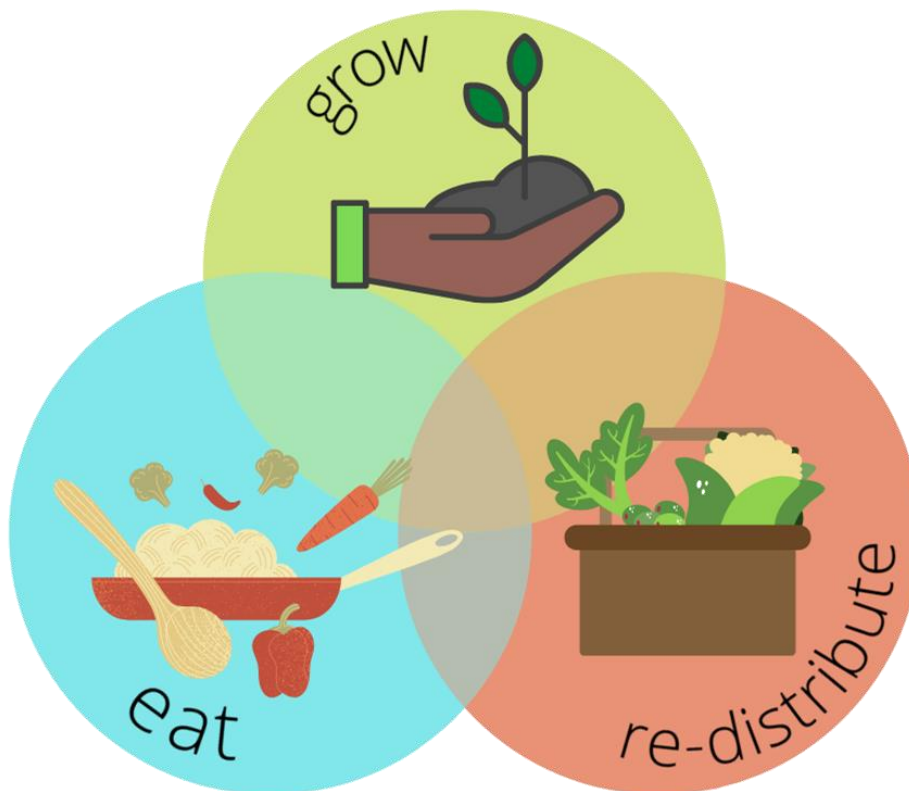
Sharing, including food sharing, is increasingly being identified as a potentially transformative mechanism for sustainable cities, by reducing consumption, conserving resources, preventing waste, and providing new forms of socio-economic relations. Research into contemporary practices of ICT-mediated food sharing is currently lacking.



SHARECITY will progress understanding of meta-societal issues by generating extensive and comparable data of the practices and impacts of ICT-mediated food sharing.

SUSTAINABILITY & SHARE IT

SHARECITY has already shown that food sharing practices have significant sustainability potential¹, but we have found that food sharing initiatives struggle to identify, demonstrate and communicate the impact of their work². The reasons for this are multifaceted. It is sometimes due to a lack of reporting capacity internally, sometimes it is the high cost of purchasing external consultancy, but it is also because mainstream impact assessment tools have not been designed with food sharing initiatives in mind. We designed the SHARE IT toolkit and supporting services to respond directly to these barriers.



This briefing note:

- Outlines the **need** for SHARE IT
- Explains the **functionality** of the SHARE IT tool
- Illustrates **outputs** of engagement with the tool to date
- Outlines **opportunities for engagement** with the SHARE IT tool

NEED: SIA FOR URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS



Practices of food sharing are increasing internationally, primarily as community-led responses to environmental, economic and social challenges. The SHARECITY 100 database of food sharing initiatives has identified over 4000 initiatives in 100 urban areas around the world. This is only a fraction of the true size of the food sharing sector in urban areas globally. In addition, peri-urban and rural food sharing initiatives also need to be mapped. The cumulative impact of food sharing initiatives is, however, currently invisible for the initiatives, for public authorities and wider citizens. If we are to move forward with evidence-based transitions to sustainable urban food systems this impact needs to be made visible. SHARE IT was designed with this goal in mind. As such, SHARE IT forms part of international developments in this area, particularly the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDGs & SHARE IT

The 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted in 2015, demonstrating a global commitment to sustainable development with a 15 year action plan to secure a sustainable, resilient future for all people by 2030. SHARE IT aligns its metrics and indicators with these goals. As we approach 2030, identifying contributions to the SDGs is going to become increasingly important for all stakeholders, from retailers to local authorities. Mandatory sustainability reporting for public and private bodies has doubled between 2016 and 2020, with the highest number of provisions being in Europe¹. Meanwhile business leaders are recognising their importance for future success².



SHARE IT Solutions

SHARE IT provides **comprehensive sustainability reporting** tools and services to capture and demonstrate the social, environmental and economic impacts of food sharing. SHARE IT meets the growing need for **sustainability impact visibility amongst:**

- **Food sharing initiatives:** who would like detailed, professional, and comparable reports on their sustainability impacts to ensure they are achieving their goals
- **Local authorities:** who would benefit from more data on the sustainability impacts created by the activities they support
- **Food retailers:** who are keen to receive clear, detailed feedback on the downstream impacts of the surplus food they donate

¹ van der Lugt, Cornis, Peter Paul van de Wijs, and Daniel Petrovics. (2020) "Carrots & Sticks: Sustainability Reporting Policy: Global trends in disclosure as the ESG agenda goes mainstream."

² The United Nations Global Compact and Accenture Strategy (2019) "The decade to deliver a call to business action CEO Study on Sustainability 2019"

FUNCTIONALITY: THREE INNOVATIVE FEATURES

SHARE IT offers a holistic multi-dimensional online platform that is free at point of use. It is organised into three features enabling sustainability impact assessment that is **affordable, accessible, bespoke and research based**



An SIA tool that gathers data using 34 novel indicators of impact specific to food sharing, auto-generating detailed and summary reports on social, environmental and economic impacts while also linking the food sharing initiative's work to the Sustainable Development Goals

Toolshed



An online space that provides an innovative way to capture alternative, qualitative evidence of impact that is typically excluded from commercial SIAs. It achieves this by enabling food sharing initiatives to demonstrate sustainability with narrative, stories and images.

Talent Garden



A networking portal through which food sharing initiatives can connect with other food sharing initiatives to share knowledge and experiences with each other to inspire and maximise their sustainability impacts from partaking in a community of practice.

Greenhouse

SHARE IT OUTPUTS

SHARE IT's **Toolshed** feature allows food sharing initiatives to **self-generate** sustainability reports that demonstrate the **social, economic and environmental** impacts of their work. The Toolshed auto-generates **visual summary reports** and **detailed technical reports** based on users' answers to **34 indicator questions**.

The Toolshed was co-designed with initiatives and specifically captures both qualitative and quantitative evidence of sustainability impacts. In addition, the Toolshed will auto-connect impact data to specific progress towards the **Sustainability Development Goals**.

The **Talent Garden** feature offers a unique platform to present **alternative forms of evidence** not captured by the Toolshed indicators, by allowing users to share impact **data in diverse** textual, visual and audio formats



SHARE IT
Sustainability Impact Reports

- [Download an example summary report](#)
- [See other food sharing initiative's published reports in the Talent Garden](#)
- [See alternative evidence of impacts in the Talent Garden](#)



How to use the Toolshed

[User Guide](#)

[User Tutorial Video](#)

Additional support available via sharecity.shareit@gmail.com

8060
portions of fruit & vegetables distributed to participants

Join Our Community of Practice: [Sign up to the Greenhouse here](#)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Local Authorities

Local authorities have a crucial role in delivering sustainability on the ground for people in communities. They need appropriate data of impacts to know whether they are on a sustainable path. SHARE IT provides local authorities with the tools to do this for food sharing initiatives

Challenge:



The food system is unsustainable due to issues such as supply chain insecurity, high waste and social injustice



Food sharing initiatives are actively responding to these challenges through communal eating, growing and re-distribution of food within your jurisdiction



Local authorities need to understand the nuanced sustainability impacts of these initiatives

Supporting food sharing initiatives

Policy tools, public land provision and community funding are just some of the ways local authorities can support sustainable food sharing. Engaging with SHARE IT provides local authorities with vital data and information to ensure they are optimising their sustainability supports for food sharing activities.

The SHARE IT Solution:



Provides a clear picture of sustainability impacts of sharing food in localities, supporting decision making with evidence in an easy to read format.



Enables groups to increase their impacts in local areas



Provides accessible information for non-experts on how to improve sustainability impacts in local area



Produces visual content that is easy to understand and can be shared with the general public, as well as different government departments and many other stakeholders

How SHARE IT adds value

- ✓ Better understanding of, and confidence in, the role of food sharing groups in supporting the social, environmental and economic goals of the local authority
- ✓ Clearer strategic direction on how to support sustainable food sharing
- ✓ Increased communication and understanding between community led groups and local authorities
- ✓ Easy to compare impacts of different groups and to see areas that are doing well and areas that need more support

Food Retailers

Sustainability is an increasing priority for continued business success. Supermarkets and food retailers are facing growing regulatory pressures to reduce food waste and to operate responsibly, not least with respect to the common goals of achieving the SDGs.

Challenge



Supermarkets, cafes and other food outlets are already collaborating with food sharing initiatives to redirect their surplus food away from waste streams



There is minimal data reporting on what happens to this food post-donation and what are the downstream social and environmental impacts



Retailers have little information on how to maximise the impacts of their relationships with their food donation

Supporting food sharing initiatives

Food retailers are increasingly looking to donate their surplus food to re-distribution initiatives that keep the food in productive circulation by sharing food through food banks, community groups and community kitchens. This has dual benefits, diverting food from waste streams whilst also supporting community groups to provide food as part of their activities.

The SHARE IT Solution:



Enables data collection, through bespoke indicator questions and impact story sharing, of the environmental, social and economic impacts of charities and groups using supermarket surplus donations



Delivers easy to understand reports on the sustainability impacts and outcomes of engagement with food sharing initiatives



Facilitates evidence-based communication of the contribution food retailers are making to transitions for food systems in their local community

How SHARE IT adds value

- ✓ Evidence-based feedback to inform decision making around corporate social responsibility and waste management goals
- ✓ Increased communication and understanding between supermarket donors and their charity partners
- ✓ Empowerment of community food sharing initiatives with strategic insights to maximise their positive impacts
- ✓ Enable transparent, accessible communication of the impacts of food donations in the local community

SUMMARY

SHARECITY has co-designed, built and launched an open access online toolkit, SHARE IT, to offer sustainability impact assessment solutions to food sharing initiatives and their public and private partners and stakeholders. SHARE IT was created with and for food sharing initiatives; to holistically capture data and create evidence-based material for communicating their social, environmental and economic impacts. This is achieved through three features;

1. **The Toolshed:** with its comprehensive suite of easy to understand indicator questions, which allows non-experts to collect qualitative and quantitative data and auto-generate a visual, accessible Sustainability Impact Report
2. **The Talent Garden:** which provides a virtual space to share alternative formats of impact evidence (e.g. audio, visual, narratives etc.) that cannot be demonstrated in the Toolshed

3. **The Greenhouse:** which provides a virtual networking hub for knowledge transfer and support

In addition to supporting initiatives to achieve their sustainability goals, SHARE IT can inform strategic decision making by local authorities and retailers on how to best support sustainable food sharing.

Try SHARE IT:
[Register here](#)

Or get in touch
sharecity@tcd.ie

FURTHER RESOURCES:

www.shareit.sharecity.ie

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www.shareit.sharecity.ie



www.sharecity.ie



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