

Food System Strategic Assessment:

Appendix B: Methodology

This Strategic Assessment is mainly based on qualitative methods for eliciting expert insights, via three inputs, namely an online survey, in-depth interviews, and an online workshop. In addition, a literature review was carried out using academic and grey literature, government reports and web sites, including some media reporting to capture very recent events.

Survey

An online survey formed the core part of the research with seven main questions, each with several sub-questions, built around the PESTEL framework. The survey questions were sent out to 254 selected experts in academia, industry and relevant governmental departments and the third sector within the UK and internationally. Care was taken to achieve a good spread of UK and international expertise with responses from 56 experts from within the UK and 32 from outside the UK. The locations of foreign experts who participated in this study are shown in figure 13 below.

Figure 13: Locations of foreign experts consulted for this study

When selecting experts, care was taken to achieve overall a good spread of expertise while maintaining a focus on food safety. Figure 14 shows the areas of expertise of participants in this study.

Figure 14: Areas of expertise of participants in this study.

Sector affiliations of consulted experts are shown in figure 15.

Figure 15: Sector affiliations of experts consulted for this study.

A total of 88 written survey responses formed the initial body of expert inputs. Responses were subjected to automated text analysis in order to generate a graphical overview of terms and themes mentioned in the written answers in an unbiased way. The automated text analysis provided network graphs representing major impacting issues mentioned by respondents in the text corpus of all answers given within each PESTEL theme.

At the next stage of analysis all responses were subjected to researcher-led analysis by the Camrosh team. The main issues and themes were extracted from the survey by creating top-level terms that capture the same issue within the survey text even if worded slightly differently by different respondents. This enabled quantifying major themes by number of overall mentions/frequency across all respondents. These frequency-ranked topic/issues tables were used as an estimate for how important issues were perceived overall. From this ranked lists of themes and issues a selection was made for inclusion into further analysis based on relevance for the FSA remit. Themes and issues identified in the survey were further explored and expanded on in interviews and during the workshop.

Interviews

Following the survey, we invited 30 experts from among the survey respondents for in-depth interviews. Four interviewees had not filled in a survey. Given issues around availability, a total of

24 interviews were conducted. The interview questions followed up on the survey questions and focused on consolidating perceived importance of issues and trends, timelines, and adding detail and filling gaps. All interviews were transcribed from recordings and were analysed to extract themes, estimated time line to impact of issues to expand on the survey outcomes.

Workshop

An online workshop was subsequently conducted with 15 experts from industry, academia, and relevant governmental departments from the UK. The participants were presented with the trends and issues identified through the survey and interviews and participated in three rounds of discussions. The first round focused on identifying the most prevalent changes happening now in the UK food system impacting future developments, considering the presented trends and drivers. The second round of discussions looked at the gaps between the current state of the UK capabilities and what is required to create a resilient and better food system for the UK in the future. The final session focused on identifying practical, action-oriented solutions to existing capability or resource gaps.

Report

The outputs and analysis from the survey, interviews and workshop are not presented separately in this report but are woven into an integrated narrative with key findings highlighted. Top-level implications and recommendations for the FSA were derived from direct expert input, the literature review and analysis by Camrosh team, and are presented in a separate document.