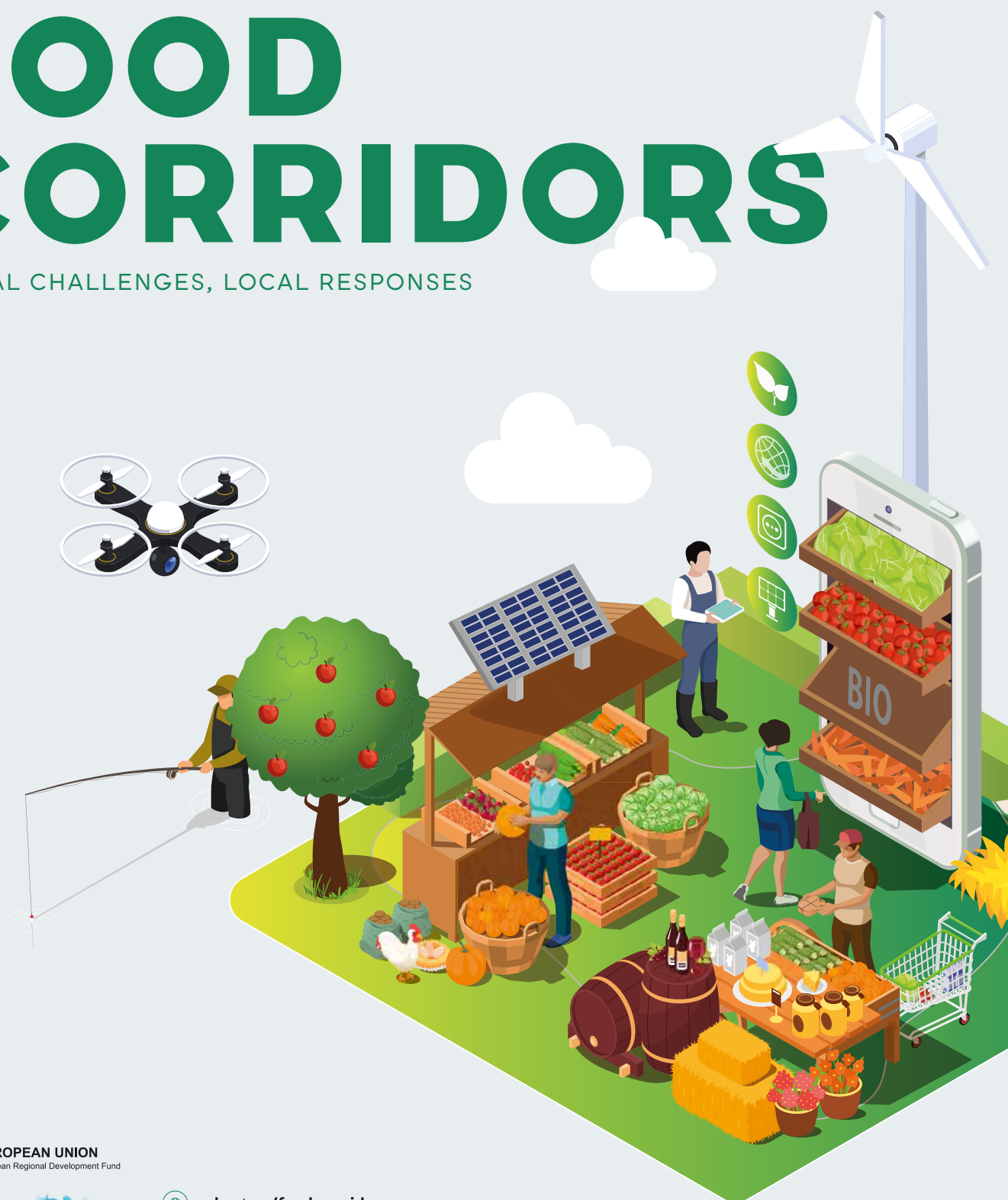


E-BOOK FOOD CORRIDORS

GLOBAL CHALLENGES, LOCAL RESPONSES



The FOOD CORRIDORS PARTNERSHIP

(URBACT III PROGRAMME)

PUBLISHER

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Foreword

The impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the extreme events linked to Climate Change, the environmental and economic crisis related to an unsustainable food system, show the need for a new orientation for food policies combining the efforts of multiple actors.

This change must undoubtedly be more local and regional, adapted to the different circumstances that articulate the geographical, social and political space in terms of density, distances, connectivity, availability of resources and decision-making capacity.

Alongside the analysis of spatial differences, we are learning about the importance of acting decisively on issues such as the increasing number of impoverished households, unable to access healthy and sufficient food, chronically dependent on social assistance.

The decline of rural areas is another problem that is spreading across much of the European Union, and these new food policies are an opportunity to stimulate measures that fix the population, improve local food production capacity, create jobs and feed the producing families, without neglecting the importance that measures to support self-consumption can play.

Furthermore, this context requires the determined deployment of principles of circularity that avoid the usual logic of over-exploitation of resources and over-generation of waste characteristic of the industrial production system, and promote an alternative food system based on a productive design that is neither wasteful nor polluting, facilitates the reuse of materials and regenerates natural systems.

Moreover, implementing this paradigm shift is a stimulus for job creation, the promotion of the local economy, an instrument of social inclusion and the articulation of an alternative form of territorial governance.

Within the framework of the EU's green policy, as well as the Farm to Fork Strategy and the European Common Agricultural Policy, it is fully in line with making intermediate geographical and territorial policy areas, as well as local production systems, the main area in which to focus on the objectives of European sustainability and food security.

It is in this scenario where the partnership of the **FOOD CORRIDORS** network has carried out its activity over the last three years, under the URBACT programme, to develop a series of Integrated Action Plans fully aligned with the approach and policies mentioned above. Their implementation will require the institutionalisation of the commitment of cities and their agglomerates to incorporate food production and consumption as a political priority, supported by all national and European public policies. It will definitely be a way to address this change, the need for which is widely recognised, and also a stimulus to strengthen the urban-rural relationship in the EU and promote integrated spatial development.

Introduction

This publication is part of the most recent experience of cities and other intermediate authorities in the European Union in promoting a transition towards sustainable food systems. Being a modest experience, within the URBACT programme, the **FOOD CORRIDORS** network wants to share some of the learning about the theme that has occupied us, divided into four chapters at the end of the journey, each containing a set of short articles.

We are convinced that we will be able to give solidity to this necessary transition through the fulfillment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We are living in a critical moment that requires a generous space for dialogue to achieve the multiple objectives this framework brings together. We hear the need for a new social contract to articulate a cohesive and coherent solution to the magnitude and complexity of the problems we are experiencing (climate change, geopolitical conflicts, increasing inequalities, crisis of democratic systems...). Hopefully, in the food area, these notes that we share will be helpful to nurture this open dialogue that will blossom into action.

Chapter I, THE FOOD CORRIDORS CONTEXT, presents a synthesis of the network itself and the project undertaken in the context of a profound global food system crisis, trapped in its weaknesses and victim of its contradictions and externalities. We add a look at the reservoir of knowledge provided by other URBACT networks around our common theme, as well as highlighting the potential of initiatives such as “The Glasgow food and climate declaration” to bring together a response from cities and intermediate authorities in the face of this unsustainable food context.

Chapter II, THE URBACT METHOD AND FOOD CORRIDORS, includes four introductory articles on the URBACT Programme, its methodology, and activity, as well as an overview of the work carried out in the **FOOD CORRIDORS** network, its results, and how it has adapted to the complex circumstances experienced since spring 2020 with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter III, ANNOTATED READINGS, RECOMMENDED PROJECTS, AND INITIATIVES, includes eight entries that touch on crucial food system issues such as re-territorialization and governance, the sustainable development goals and their scope, and the importance of public policies.

Throughout the life of **FOOD CORRIDORS** as a URBACT network, we have tried to incorporate knowledge from other experiences, expert voices, and initiatives that, connected to the thematic of our network, offered an added value in terms of knowledge, inspiration, and learning.

In some cases, we offer an introduction to one of these themes based on readings and access to documents of a more theoretical nature. In contrast, in other cases, we present initiatives with which we have connected through presentations and various collaborations.

Chapter IV, ACTING LOCALLY, combines a compendium of articles written by **FOOD CORRIDORS'** partners connected to the themes of the network, the proposals experimented as Small Scale Actions, and in general, those challenges that guide their Integrated Action Plans.

Chapter I. The Food Corridors Context

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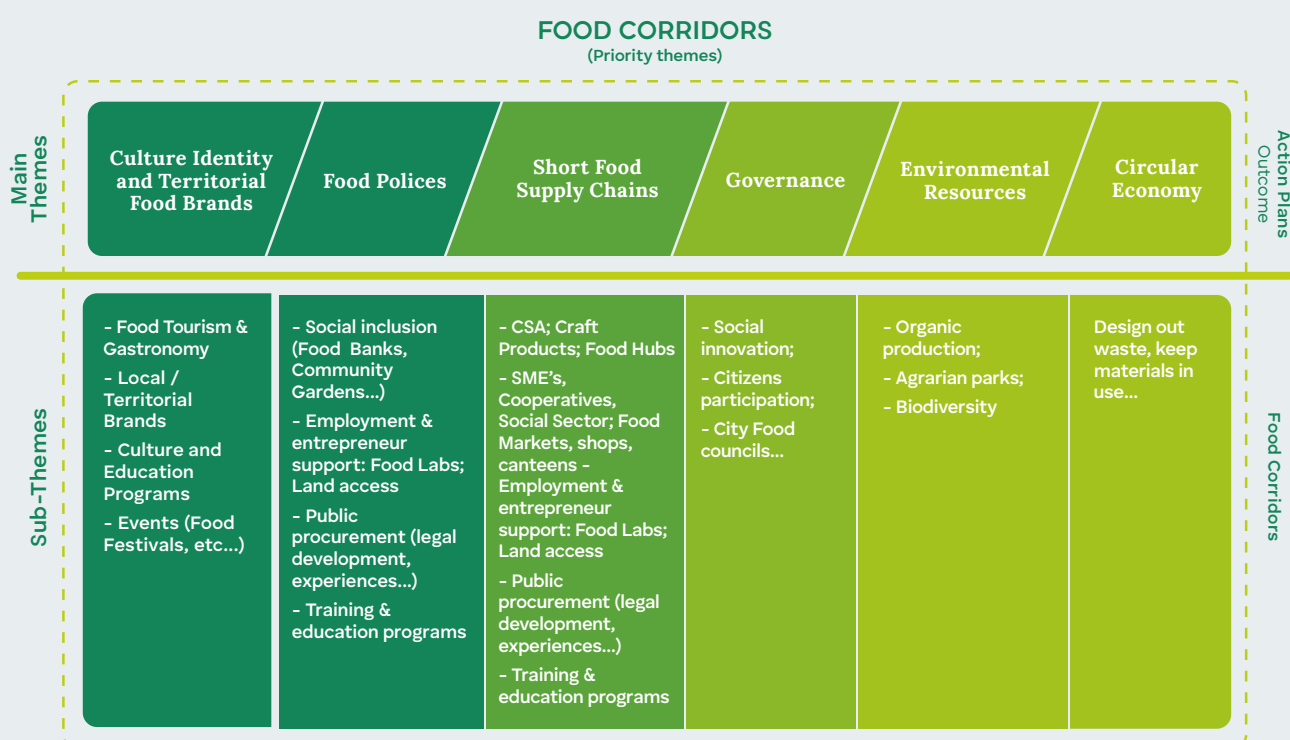
1.1. Food Corridors, the topic, the Network, the Performance

The acceleration and severity of events between 2019 and 2022, coinciding with the life cycle of the **FOOD CORRIDORS** project, have considerably affected the focus and performance of this partnership.

In the Baseline Study of the network (February 2020) we find a clear positioning of the starting point of this cooperation network: “Recent experience suggests that it is necessary to promote a transition towards regional food systems. **FOOD CORRIDORS** encourages the creation of a network

of cities committed to the design of food plans that extend from the urban and peri-urban areas through a corridor that facilitates an urban-rural connection. This approach enhances the generation of production and consumption environments founded on a base of economic, social and environmental sustainability”.

We can complement this initial statement by taking a look at the linear idea we had about the different themes of the network:



As we can see, and in the context of the intervention provided by the URBACT Programme, continuity was given to previous networks oriented towards this food issue, such as *Diet for a green planet* or *Agri-Urban*. In this process of evolution, it is true that **FOOD CORRIDORS** proposed two innovations to be highlighted. The first of these refers to the need to broaden the territorial scale of action for

these food plans, going beyond the urban space and interlinking them with rural areas. Secondly, in order to strengthen the above-mentioned idea, 4 of the 7 network partners represented different types of municipal associations as well as other types of mixed (public-private-social) entities with a regional or micro-regional scope of intervention.



However, the state of the issue to which these networks have sought to draw attention, food, has only worsened in the last two years. For example, the presence of toxic pesticides in fruit consumed in Europe¹ has risen over the last nine years to 53% of all fruit consumed in Europe. The seriousness of the situation is attested to by the intervention of the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen at the Davos Forum (May 2022)²: “The signs of a growing food crisis are obvious. We have to act urgently. But there are also solutions, today and on the horizon. This is why - again, an example of cooperation - I am working with President El-Sisi to

address the repercussions of the war with an event on food security and the solutions coming from Europe and the region. It is time to end the unhealthy dependencies. It is time to create new connections. It is

1 The Guardian (24/05/22). European fruit with traces of most toxic pesticides 'up 53% in nine years'. Available online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/may/24/european-fruit-with-traces-of-most-toxic-pesticides-up-53-in-nine-years>

2 European Commission (24/05/2022). Special Address by President von der Leyen at the World Economic Forum. Available online at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_22_3282



time to replace the old chains with new bonds. Let us overcome these huge challenges in cooperation, and that is in the Davos spirit”.

The unleashing of events has had a major influence on the selection of actions that make up the Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) developed by our partners, an aspect to which we dedicate a specific article in Chapter II of this publication. It is clear that the priority of food needs to be addressed in the EU, member states, regions and municipalities, is marked these days by two issues:

I. Food security. Ensuring resilient supply systems and access to sufficient and healthy food for the entire population.

II. Price control and the fight against inflation. If previous criticism pointed to the unsustainability of a model of low food prices that concealed negative side effects such as the permanence of subsidies, the lack of product quality, the negative consequences for health or the economic collapse of small producer families, the current scenario is characterised by inflation combined with speculative practices that make it impossible for many people to have access to diverse, healthy and sufficient food.

Together with these two challenges, the most burning issues in the IAPs created in **FOOD CORRIDORS** and possibly also in future initiatives, will focus on those policies where cities and municipalities, individually or collectively, have greater scope for action:

I. Short food supply chains. Facilitating the necessary enabling environment and stimulating relations between producers and consumers, as well as self-consumption.

II. Public procurement. Applying creative formulas to advance the introduction of organic and local food consumption in public canteens (schools, retirement homes, hospitals, etc.).

III. Food waste reduction, with emphasis on households, the production sector, the HORECA sector, distribution and commerce, applying regulations and monitoring compliance with objectives and results.

IV. Healthy diets. A change in diet, for example by increasing the production and consumption of vegetable protein, can help to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and the fight against Climate Change.

THE FRAMEWORK

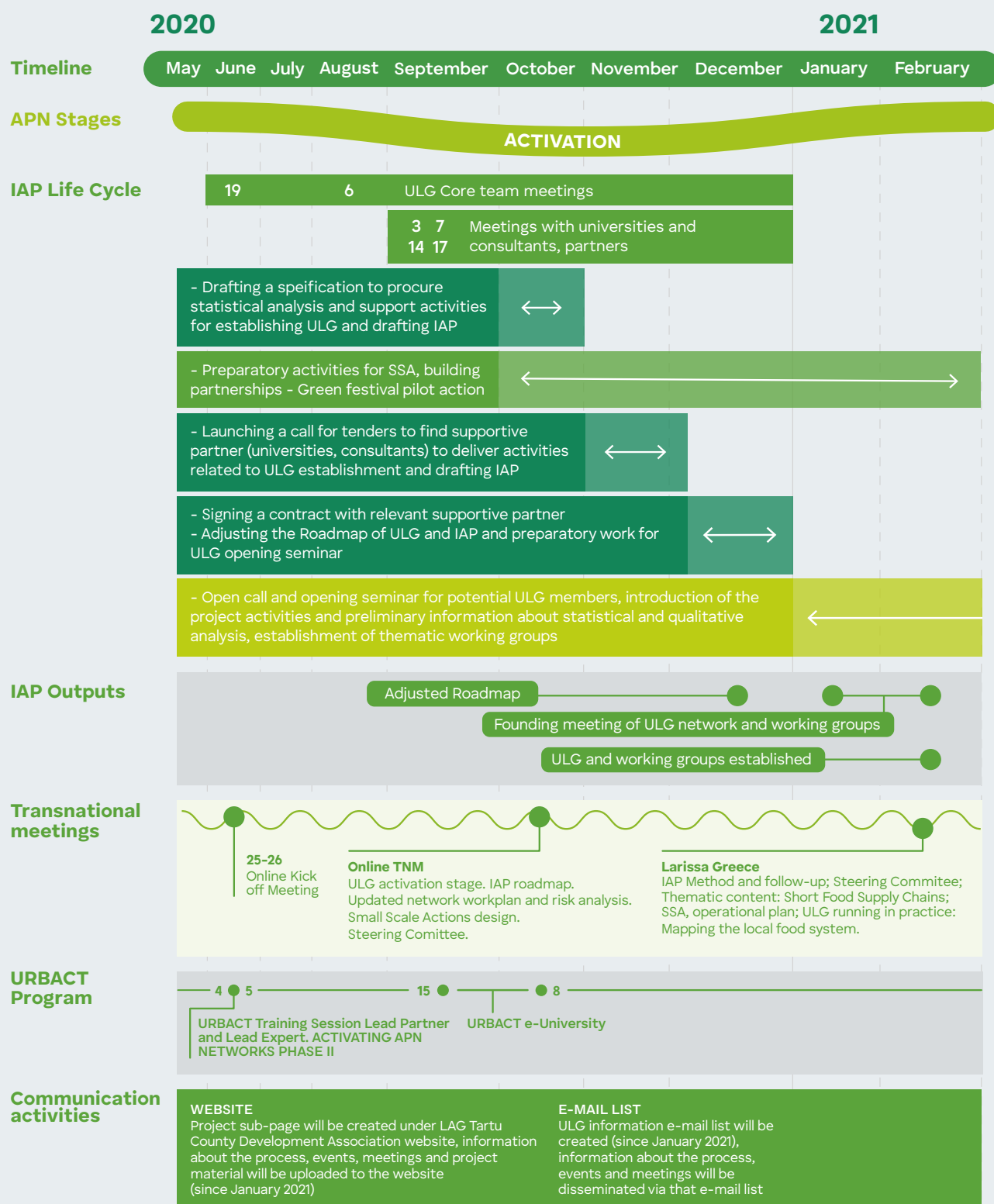
In accordance with the URBACT methodological proposal for the Action Planning Network, the process followed during two years (exceptionally extended in this occasion in three months), has been developed following successive phases:

I. Activation. After the mapping process, problem definition, setting up of the Local Group, etc., this phase concluded with the creation of IAP Roadmaps by each partner, as a useful tool to concretely and flexibly orientate the next stage.

II. Action planning. Following the methodological sequence proposed by URBACT, going from the selection of evidence, the generation of ideas and actions, identifying resources and defining responsibilities, ending - with expert advice and first revisions between partners - by shaping a first draft of the IAP. At this stage, the development of the Small Scale Action (SSA) and the Mid Term Review process have played a relevant role in adjusting the content and profile of some actions as well as in refining the work plan of the partnership in the second part of the implementation of activities by the network.

III. Planning the implementation and production of the Final IAP. The aim at this stage was to focus on the operational aspects of the IAP, introducing consultation and communication processes as well as final revisions before shaping the final version of the IAP.

As a result of the process, the seven partners have produced their respective IAPs, accessible on the URBACT website or by direct request to the technical team of each partner via the email address which can be found in the credits section of this publication.



Roadmap LAG Tartu County (I)

2021

2022

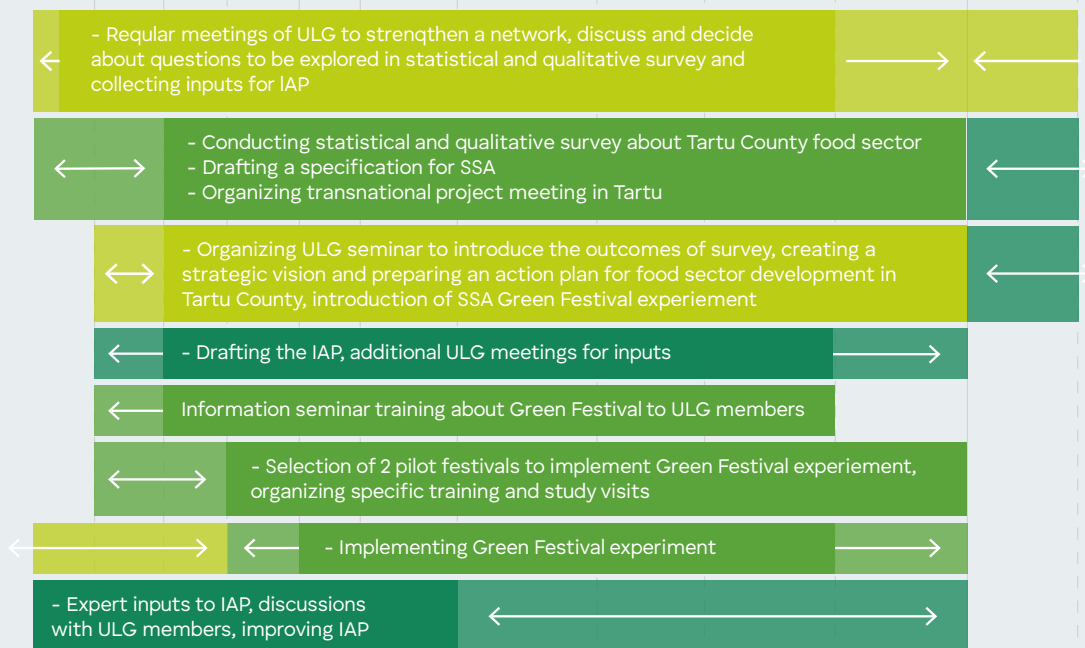
Timeline

March April May June July August September October November December January

APN Stages

PLANNING ACTIONS

IAP Life Cycle



IAP Outputs

- Statistical and qualitative survey about Tartu County food sector
- Specification for SSA
- Transnational project meeting in Tartu
- Strategic vision and action plan inputs
- Training of Green Festival
- Delivered 2 pilot SSA experiments
- Draft IAP

Transnational meetings

- Tartu County (Estonia)**
IAP Method and follow-up; Steering Committee; Thematic content: Cultural Identity & Territorial Food Brands; Sharing experiences about SSA application and impact in the action definition process; Case Study: The Onion Route; Tartu European Capital of Culture 2024.
- CIM Coimbra (Portugal)**
IAP Method and follow-up; Steering Committee & Mid Term Review session; Thematic content: Food Policies (Public Procurement) + Food and Circular Economy; Open debate: European Region of Gastronomy
- BSC Kranj (Slovenia)**
IAP Method and follow-up; Steering Committee. Thematic content: Environmental Resources & Short Food Supply Chains; Open debate: European Region of Gastronomy.

URBACT Program

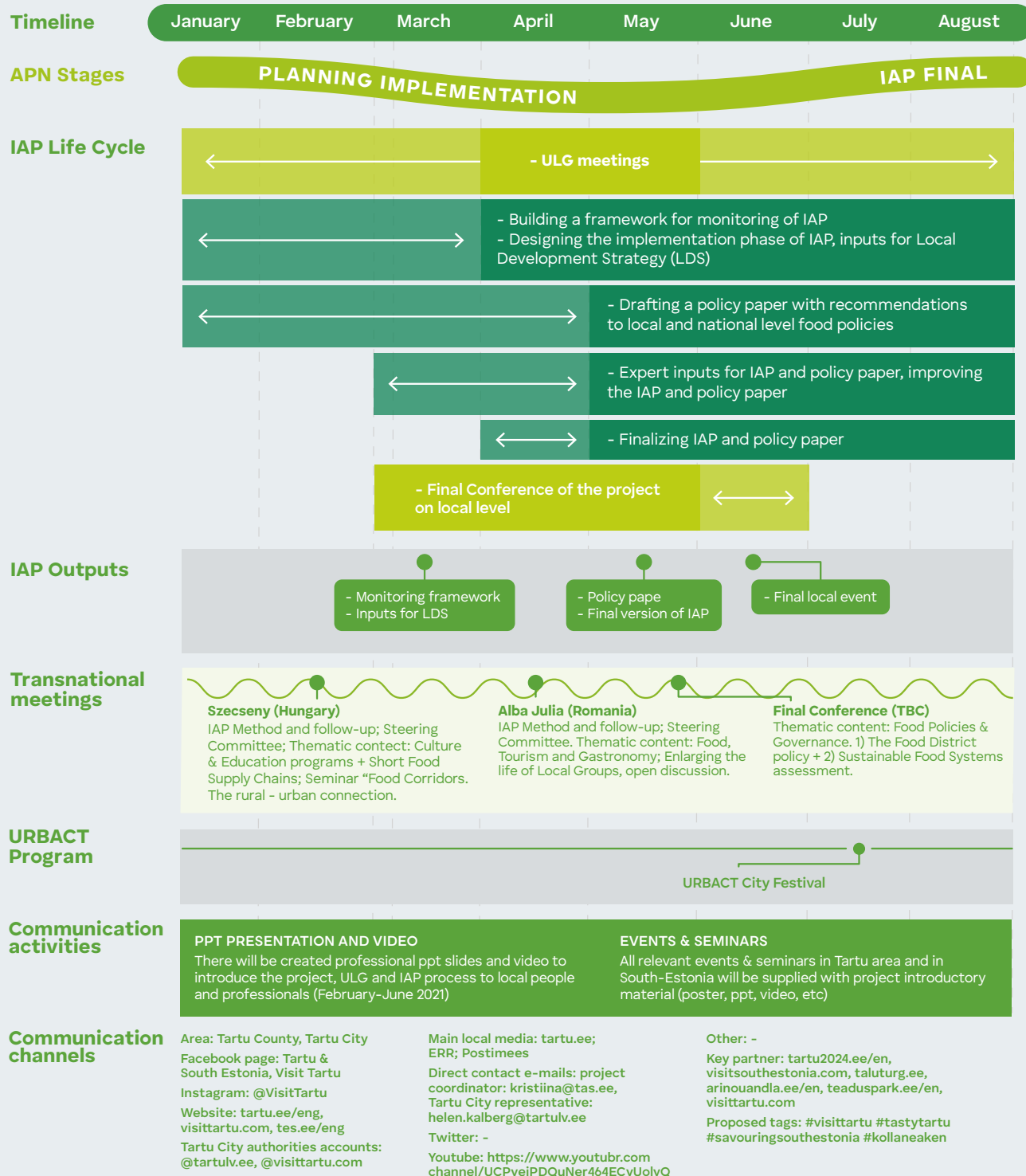
URBACT 2nd Training Session Lead Partner and Lead Expert. CONCLUSION MTR process and state of IAPs.

Communication activities

- FACEBOOK**
Information about ULG establishment, seminars, meetings, SSA, etc will be posted to LAG Tartu County Development Association Facebook group and will be shared to partners FB sites (since February 2021)
- POSTER**
ULG Roadmap will be translated and adjusted for local level and will be printed and disseminated in local municipalities and partners offices (since March 2021)

Roadmap LAG Tartu County (II)

2022



Roadmap LAG Tartu County (III)

THE PERFORMING

Despite the difficulties encountered, the work plan has been readjusted, introducing digital solutions for many of the initially planned face-to-face activities, no doubt having a negative impact on the quality of some of the results, but demonstrating an effective capacity to adapt.

The main milestones that have shaped the network's activity, as stated in the IAP Final Report prepared by the Lead Expert of the network, have been:

→ A total of 14 transnational meetings (2 in Phase I and 12 in Phase II), combining 4 face-to-face and 10 virtual meetings, enjoying a wide selection of learning visits in both formats.

→ Development of a Thematic Webinar focusing on the theme “Culture, gastronomy and territorial food brands”.

→ The seven partners have activated the participatory work of the respective Local Groups. Given the difficulties of face-to-face meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this objective has in any case been approached with unequal intensity and effective results in terms of real participation. This hampers the continuity of this participation and governance mechanism after the official end of the **FOOD CORRIDORS** project.

→ Steering Committees and bilateral sessions. These have been two very fruitful instruments in the necessary digital adaptation that the network has had to manage.

→ The first were the meetings of the Steering Committee with executive character and limited duration but more regularity. Thus, a total of nine meetings have been taken place between February 2021 and March 2022.

On the other hand, five thematic and bilateral working rounds have been scheduled between July 2020 and October 2021.

→ The seven Small Scale Actions developed - as described in a specific article in Chapter II of this publication - have represented a useful instrument for innovation and experimentation on the quality and suitability of potential actions to be considered in the IAP.

→ Finally, from different responsibilities within the network, we have produced a wide range of communication elements, in particular articles, videos, social media, as well as participating in different external events where we have been able to disseminate the work of the network. A list of these products can be found at the end of this publication.

URBACT
CITY FESTIVAL

Let's talk about Food

Bringing EU and local policies closer to each other



1.2. A shaking food system

Successive crises since the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic in the early 2020s have shaken our relationship with the food system to the point of exacerbating its undeniable presence in our lives.

Personal accounts on the web, in the media and in social studies³ have subsequently described the nature of this change, which began with the domestic accumulation of pasta and rice, and then spread to many other points and habits in the food chain. Among these alterations, some would seem to be only superficial signs, such as the eagerness of thousands of vocational bakers to take up another trade. But soon, among neighbours, astonished glances were opened, such as the discovery by consumers that behind what they were eating there was one, several or perhaps thousands of producers. In short, the desire to be self-sufficient was reborn from the very basics, a plea similar to the title of some of the guide books that in the seventies sang of the return to the countryside. And it is not surprising that in parallel a literature has awakened that is rural, but above all points to the wild side of human nature. And slowly, but visibly, the consumption of organic and local food increased, while at the same time the volume of waste and rubbish was reduced, as if certain social neurons had been put to work.

In this context, even cooking has become a discipline that offers nourishment and emotional comfort. At the same time, the box of events uncovered some hidden fears. The explosion of demand for food aid altered and increased the wandering of suspicious baskets and boxes of food across the city. Comments about shortages, questions about the resilience of the market-system, news of crops stuck in harbourless seas, oceans without ships. And here and there ideas and calls to action emerged. Citizens, consumer cooperatives, creatives, networks, short channel initiatives, proximity markets, food hubs, alternative mechanisms,

often well trained, collaborating with companies in the transport sector, supported by basic technological tools. Sometimes assisted by municipalities, cities, regions, private foundations, local associations. And so, many other changes emerged like mushrooms in the landscape.

What is described in the previous paragraph is not the fruit of an imaginative summer afternoon but the conjugation of some events that happened in the last few years and accelerated in the last few months. What impact will they have left, what place will we give them in the present future we live in?

GLOBALISATION AND FOOD SECURITY

How deep is the crack in the global food system? Will there be planning and even more public intervention in food production and supply chains as has happened in the EU electricity market⁴ or as the recent interventions of the US president in the oil market have shown⁵? At a time when many paradigms seem to be breaking down on the political scene, will the food market resist these public interventions aimed at its reorganisation?

3 WPRN (2021). COVID-19 and food: the search for food security at the heart of households. World Pandemic Research Network, Memorandum 10

4 The New York Times (22/03/22). Biden will tap oil reserve, hoping to push gasoline prices down. Available online at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/business/energy-environment/biden-oil-strategic-petroleum-reserve.html>

5 Euronews (26/04/22). Brussels agrees to 'Iberian exception' allowing Spain and Portugal to cap electricity prices. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/04/26/brussels-agrees-to-iberian-exception-allowing-spain-and-portugal-to-cap-electricity-prices>

According to Paul Krugman⁶, an embryo of globalising exchange in trade already existed between 1870 and 1913. Even if it was a simple phenomenon of exchange between primary products and manufactured goods, far removed from the complex value chains extended since the last decade of the 20th century, based on container transport and information technologies. In the same way that geopolitical issues derailed that first wave of global trade, this most recent wave is proving fragile even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a weakness that threatens the world's food supply in a number of ways.

The high cost of energy and fertilisers, breaks in the transport chain, spiralling inflation and the economic crisis accompanying the COVID-19 health crisis, together with other causes, are causing a series of chain impacts, until they take the form of a food emergency in different countries and geographical areas of the planet, triggered by what some reports have described as "another perfect storm".

Planning policies, diversification of resources, suppliers and channels, political action at state level to strengthen the food chain, are some of the facts that have come into play at the level of market organisation and public policy performance. The response from a sparsely populated country like Finland, but located in a threatening geostrategic position, is enlightening for the situation we are living in. Janne Känkänen of the National Emergency Supply Agency (ANSE⁸) reflects.

"Grain storage was the first focus of strategic supply security activity. Gradually, the extent of government action in this regard expanded. And the role of ANSE seems to be a precursor of concepts now in vogue, from strategic autonomy ... to friend-shoring".

In the Finnish political logic, as in many other countries, it is more about strengthening the construction of solid chains in an interconnected world than pursuing autarchic goals. This is not an easy task, as to a large extent it forces us to choose between dependence on global markets, with all the shortcomings they are showing, or to opt for new, more secure alternatives that are closer to home. European states are carrying out modest but interesting legislative changes in this direction of greater public intervention, as shown by the recent approval of a law to promote proximity markets in Italy⁹ or another law to reduce food waste in Spain¹⁰.

Another option is to promote intermediate pathways through a smooth transition. In any case, it is advisable to shift this political ownership from the national to the regional and local level.

ACTIVATE, ACT, LEARN, ACCELERATE

What role will cities and regions, another kind of intermediate authorities, play? What role will the inhabitants of these municipalities and territories that weave the network connecting the EU's rural and urban areas play?

The Glasgow Food And Climate Declaration signed by the FOOD CORRIDORS network is a milestone in this sense, bringing together a combination of diverse networks and entities, representing the commitment of local and regional governments to face the challenges of climate change through integrated food policies, calling on national and international authorities to join this political positioning. Just as the signatory cities of this strategic movement are expanding, it is now a matter of taking action.

Tools such as those developed by FAO and RUAF to guide the implementation of City Region Food Systems and the City Region Food System Indicator Framework should be highlighted.

The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is also playing an important role in bringing together 225 public authorities representing cities around the world committed to promoting these policies, having developed various resources, including The MUFPP Monitoring Framework Handbook and Resource Pack.

The new URBACT IV networks can be an effective way of transferring these practices and accelerating their implementation by other European cities.

6 Krugman, P. (26/04/2022). Food, fertilizer and the future. Available online on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIM6m0XieXI>

7 IPES FOOD (2022). Another perfect storm? Available online on: https://ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/AnotherPerfectStorm.pdf

8 EL PAIS (18/06/2022). Journey to the end of the West, on the great border between Finland and Russia. Available online on: <https://elpais.com/eps/2022-06-18/viaje-al-fin-de-occidente-en-la-gran-frontera-entre-finlandia-y-rusia.html>

9 Chamber of Deputies (2022). PROVVEDIMENTO Prodotti agroalimentari a km zero e a filiera corta. Available online on: https://www.camera.it/temiap/documentazione/temi/pdf/1328490.pdf?_1656513971061

10 MAPA (2022). The Government approves a pioneering law against food waste for parliamentary consideration. Available online on: https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/prensa/220607cmleydesperdicioalimentariook_tcm30-620821.pdf



1.3. The Glasgow food and climate Declaration

Local and regional governments commit to tackling the climate emergency through integrated food policies and a call on national governments to act.

As a network of seven partners, **FOOD CORRIDORS** is one of the signatories to this critical political Declaration launched on November 6, 2021, by local governments at Glasgow during COP26. It was initiated by IPES-Food and Nourish Scotland in collaboration with Glasgow City Council, ICLEI, C40, the Under2 Coalition, and URBACT, among others.

At COP26, the [Glasgow Declaration on Food and Climate](#) brought together 100 of the most advanced sub-national and local authorities with a commitment to accelerate the development of integrated food policies and call for action by national governments. To reinforce the call for action, it is planned to take the Glasgow Declaration to COP27.

The Declaration is based on the high share of food systems in global GHG emissions and the firm belief that achieving compliance with the Paris Agreement requires action in this area and in an integrated manner that engages the range of actors involved.

In an increasingly urban world - and with the consequent problems affecting rural areas -, it seems logical to emphasise the role of cities, regions, and sub-national states in the realm of integrated food policies and strategies, given the leadership role that many of these entities have begun to play in implementing concrete plans and actions. In this sense, the Glasgow Declaration is designed to amplify the voices of cities and sub-national governments in global conversations on food, climate, nature, and health.

The promoters of the Declaration encourage national governments to support it, call for action, and invite representatives of local or national governments to sign it. Non-governmental organisations, private sector entities, and civil society are also welcomed to join the Declaration as partners. For any questions about the Declaration or the signing process, which can be done [online](#), please get in touch with the promoting entities at the following email addresses: chantal.clement@ipes-food.org and nicole.pita@ipes-food.org

[URBACT](#), after the experience of having hosted a dozen networks focused on the promotion of local and regional strategies aimed at offering territorial solutions to the unsustainability of the globalised food system, is a valuable tool for developing new initiatives for experimentation and transfer in this field between cities and regions of the EU.

A commitment by local and regional governments to tackle the climate emergency through integrated food policies and a call on national governments to act.

This Declaration brings together all types and sizes of local authorities – from small and medium sized towns to mega-cities, districts and regions, territories, federal states, and provinces – to speak with a unified voice in renewing their commitments to develop sustainable food policies, promote mechanisms for joined-up action and call on national governments to put food and farming at the heart of the global response to the climate emergency. Formally presented during the UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow, this Declaration seeks to continue influencing international climate change negotiations.

1. Concerned that the COVID-19 crisis has exposed the fragility of our food systems, the vulnerabilities of large parts of urban and rural populations and the critical need for preparedness and resilience in the face of shocks;
2. Acknowledging that food systems currently account for 21-37% [1] of total GHGs, and are at the heart of many of the world's major challenges today including biodiversity loss, enduring hunger and malnutrition, and an escalating public health crisis;
3. Recognizing that unsustainable dynamics are locked in along the whole food chain, primarily stemming from industrial food and farming systems;
4. Recognizing that extreme inequalities are pervasive throughout the food system, and are disproportionately affecting communities including people living in poverty, people experiencing racism, people displaced due to climate change or conflict, people with precarious legal status, and many others; and furthermore, that many of these same groups are exploited for their labour globally;
5. Convinced, therefore, that only a food systems approach targeting all the Sustainable Development Goals can identify effective intervention points to accelerate climate action while delivering many co-benefits, including the promotion of biodiversity, ecosystem regeneration and resilience, circularity, equity, access to healthy and

sustainable diets for all, and the creation of resilient livelihoods for farm and food workers;

6. Recognizing the need to involve all food system stakeholders in decision-making for a sustainable and just transition – including food and farm workers, civil society groups, researchers, indigenous communities, women, and especially youth whose future are the most at risk from the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss;
7. Recalling that cities and regions are leading the way in pioneering integrated food policies and strategies at the local level to reduce their environmental footprint, drive positive food system change and ensure greater resilience to shocks;
8. Building on the number of commitments on sustainable urban and regional food policies already made by cities, local and regional governments over the last two decades, in particular the 2014 World Urban Forum Medellín, the 2015 Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), the 2015 Seoul Declaration, the 2016 New Urban Agenda, and the 2019 C40 Good Food Cities Declaration;
9. Recognizing that actions must be aligned horizontally (across policy areas) and vertically (between different levels of governance) to accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems;
10. Emphasizing that cross-sectoral, multi-level, and multi-actor governance of food systems is required in order for sustainable and just food systems to take root, and that this requires national governments to take a proactive and enabling role;
11. Acknowledging that cities and regions are becoming a high ambition coalition for sustainable food system development, and that the rapidly growing global movement of city and regional food partnerships provides a uniquely powerful mechanism to deliver these reforms;
12. Acknowledging that without accompanying regulatory and legislative reforms at the national level, the impact of such partnerships and policies will be limited;

13. We, the undersigned elected leaders of subnational governments, in light of the upcoming UNFCCC Conference of Parties, commit to accelerate climate action by building and facilitating sustainable food systems transformation, by:

14. Developing and implementing integrated food policies and strategies as key tools in the fight against climate change; and ensuring that these instruments adopt a food systems approach that involves actors across all parts of the food chain; include metrics to assess GHG emissions reduction targets from food systems, as well as opportunities for cooperation and best practice sharing between subnational governments.

15. Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from urban and regional food systems in accordance with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals and building sustainable food systems that are able to rebuild ecosystems and deliver safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, and sustainable diets for all.

16. Calling on national governments to establish supportive and enabling policy frameworks and multi-level and multi-actor governance mechanisms, allowing coordinated decision-making on food systems. These mechanisms will support the drafting of inclusive national food policies to be included into the revisions of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

[1] IPCC (2019). Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems* [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, E. Calvo Buendia, V. Masson-Delmotte, H.- O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, P. Zhai, R. Slade, S. Connors, R. van Diemen, M. Ferrat, E. Haughey, S. Luz, S. Neogi, M. Pathak, J. Petzold, J. Portugal Pereira, P. Vyas, E. Huntley, K. Kissick, M. Belkacemi, J. Malley, (eds.)].





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1.4. URBACT Food Knowledge Hub

by Marcelline Bonneau

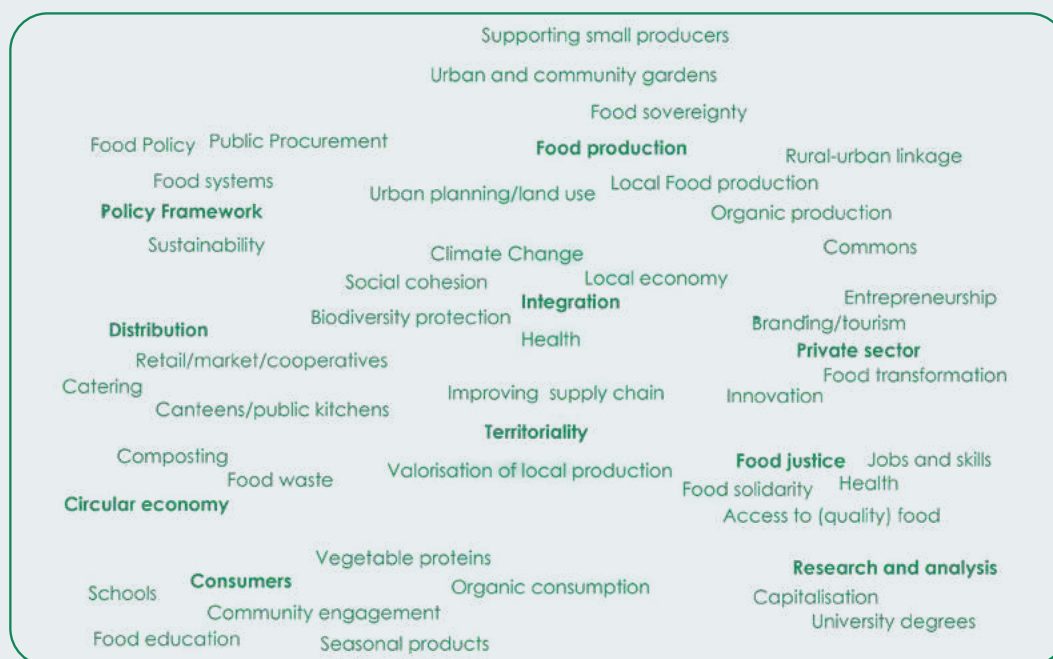
Food systems activities produce greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. They are a primary cause of environmental degradation and significantly contribute to socio-economic and health inequalities. Only a food systems approach can identify effective actions to accelerate climate impacts and reduce inequalities.

Since 2013, URBACT has supported 11 networks to learn from each other on the topics of sustainable food and urban agriculture:

- **Food Corridors** — empowering rural & urban food connections within European regions
- **BioCanteens #1 and #2** — ensuring the distribution of sustainable school meals as a lever towards an integrated local agri-food approach
- **RU:urban and RU:urban Second Wave** — transferring Rome's management model of urban gardens

- **BeePathNet and BeePathNet Reloaded** — enriching the urban jungle with bees
- **Sustainable Food in Urban Communities** — developing low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems
- **Agri-Urban** — rethinking agri-food production in small and medium-sized cities
- **Diet for a Green Planet** — addressing the environmental impact of food systems
- **Next Agri** — creating new skills for new jobs in peri-urban agriculture

Thanks to URBACT, more than 60 cities have led the transition towards more sustainable local food ecosystems.



* Marcelline Bonneau is URBACT Programme Expert

URBACT is pulling together the insights from these cities and beyond to help cities take action, via:

- Analytical insights in the form of articles on specific networks and/or transversal issues;
- Partnering with organizations such as [Eurocities](#), [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#), [Ipes-Food](#), [Nourish Scotland](#);
- Policy support via the promotion of the [Glasgow Food Declaration](#) and [UnPlusBio's Food exception in public procurement Opinion Column](#);
- Participation at various local and international events;

- Wider dissemination via social media;
- Supporting the networking of cities; and,
- Centralising the information in a single repository, the [Food Knowledge Hub website](#), around 10 ingredients: strategic policy-making, production, transformation, distribution, jobs and skills, solidarity, community-building, marketing and branding, circular food and education and awareness-raising.

More reading: [The URBACT Food Knowledge Hub](#)



Chapter II.

The URBACT Method & Food Corridors

2.1. Action planning networks
& integrated action plans.
What are they?
Pg 29

2.2. Food corridors small scale
actions
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pandemic impact
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method to better fit to local
reality of cities
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2.1. Action planning networks & integrated action plans. What are they?

FOOD CORRIDORS has been working for three years under the methodological, financial, and learning community umbrella promoted by the URBACT III Programme. In our case, we grouped seven partners from as many EU countries. In the different URBACT networks, more than six hundred cities have promoted, transferred, and innovated action plans to face the main challenges they must drive in the future.



The new scenario for a new framework of the URBACT Programme, now in its fourth edition, is underway. At first glance, this renewed version is an evolution of the previous generation of networks (URBACT III Action Planning Networks), of which **FOOD CORRIDORS** has been part. Where do we stand in July 2022 concerning the launch of the first call for URBACT IV?

According to the URBACT Secretariat, the new URBACT IV Programme – the European Territorial Cooperation Programme for cities of all sizes – was approved by the URBACT IV Programming Committee in May 2022 and has now passed to the European Commission for formal adoption.

URBACT's main objectives will still be about supporting cities to plan and implement integrated sustainable urban development strategies based on the **URBACT method of local stakeholder participation and transnational exchange**. The heart of the programme will remain city networks, supported by capacity building and the development and sharing of knowledge.

URBACT and the European Urban Initiative will complement each other in a coordinated way. URBACT IV will continue to cover all 27 EU Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland as Partner States, providing co-financing from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to support their participation in URBACT networks. The intention is that towns and cities from Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Serbia will join URBACT networks as full partners using dedicated IPA funding (rather than ERDF).



URBACT NETWORKS

In the coming years, the programme will continue to support the work of three types of city networks (with 8 to 10 members each):

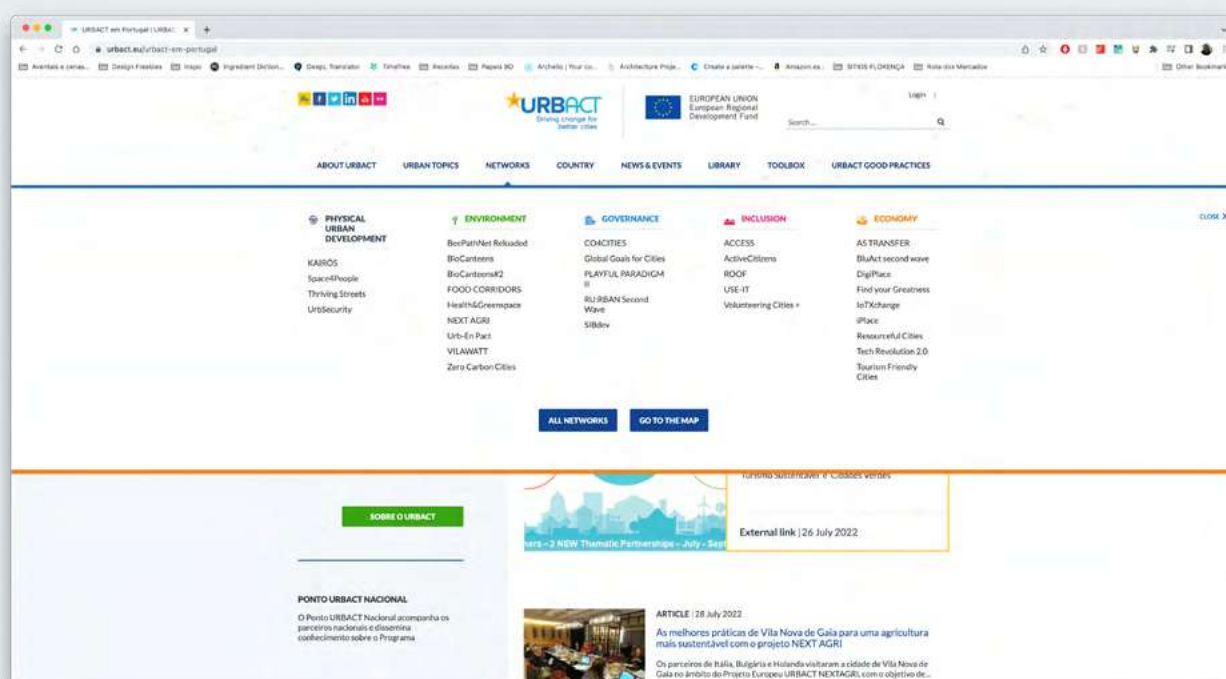
→ co-design and implement Integrated Action Plans (**Action Planning Networks**);

→ transfer established good urban practices (**Transfer Networks**); and

→ design investment plans for replicating innovation created by Urban Innovative Actions / the innovation strand of the European Urban Initiative (EUI) (**Innovation Transfer Mechanism**).

The first call for new networks is expected to open in autumn 2022 and is probably aimed at supporting a group of Action Planning Networks.

The main objective of the Action Planning Networks (APNs) is to bring together 7 to 10 European cities to exchange their experience on a specific thematic



urban development challenge and share their ideas on possible solutions over more than two years. Phase 1 (six months) is focused on developing a Baseline Study, city profiles, and the production of the Application Form for Phase 2.

Phase 2 (two years duration) focuses on exchange and learning activities using various tools and learning approaches in line with the URBACT method. Each partner city will consolidate a Local URBACT Group,

which will co-design INTEGRATED Action Plans (IAPs) for future implementation.

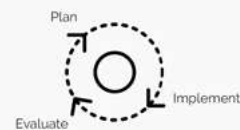
Similarly, Phase 2 offers the possibility to carry out Small Scale Actions, to experiment with new project ideas acquired in other exchanges in the network, and in line with the city network theme.

For those cities interested in participating in a potential URBACT network, it is advisable to follow

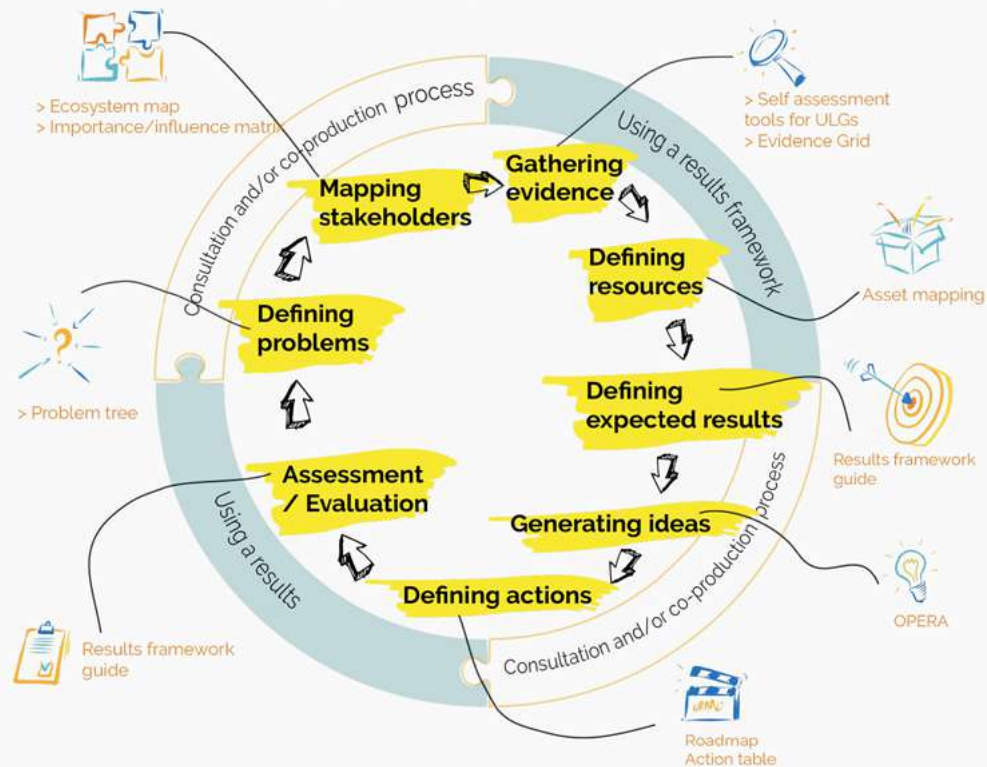
COPRODUCING AN INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

Integrated urban development and participative action-planning are at the heart of the URBACT programme. This infographic recaps the main steps to go through to develop an integrated action plan, which will analyse problems and opportunities, address specific needs by defining expected results, and prepare a set of actions in co-production with stakeholders.

GENERAL POLICY-MAKING CYCLE



ACTION-PLANNING CYCLE



COMMUNICATING YOUR ACTION PLAN

Drafting a communication strategy to share and communicate to the wider audience on your action plan is also an important task to consider. Depending on the issues tackled in your plan, you might want to focus on a particular target audience: your managing authority, potential funders, citizens and other stakeholders.

URBACT news through the [website](#) and any of the social networks in which it operates.

In order to deepen any own idea, it is equally clarifying and inspiring to read the material produced by other previous URBACT networks, especially documents such as the Baseline Study, the different IAPs, as well as many other resources generated, almost always accessible through the different [micro-sites](#) that each of the networks has accessible in the URBACT website.

It may be beneficial to consult the latest [calls for proposals](#), [management manuals](#), or [studies](#) coordinated by the Programme to analyse the performance and results of the networks by employing external expert work. It may be helpful to look at the analysis carried out after the closure of URBACT II APNs, an analysis of the APNs that have just finished their implementation, and a document that the URBACT Secretariat will also disseminate.

URBACT, A METHOD AND A ROOM FULL OF RESOURCES AND TOOLS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The range of resources available is so broad that it is a good idea to visit this open room directly to get an idea of the type of material available.

In any case, for those cities interested in applying to the new URBACT IV call, it is always helpful to have a general knowledge of the [URBACT methodology](#) and the work plan to be followed until an [Integrated Action Plan](#) is developed.

Finally, in a space that invites discovery, how about starting with a [playlist of songs](#) inspired by cities as proposed by Daniele Terzariol, URBACT ad-hoc expert and Deputy Mayor of San Donà di Piave (IT)?

INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT MEANS...



2.2. Food corridors small scale actions

Small Scale Actions (SSA) have experimented for the first time within the URBACT networks. It was a recommendation from previous Action Planning Networks. In short, they aimed to facilitate potential testing actions before consideration or final adjustment for inclusion in the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). They were to test the quality of small-scale but high-capacity actions to provide clear guidance on their suitability for subsequent implementation on a larger scale. It is about experimenting with a new idea or concept that may have been tested before but is proposed to be adapted to a different scenario or situation. Given their nature, as mentioned above, they are limited in terms of financial resources (around €10,000), time, scale, and testing space. The implementation is intended to measure the results for a possible adaptation that can either modify the scale or other aspects, or for its rejection in case it has not shown positive results.

Implementing the SSA in the mid-term phase of the project is advisable. In this way, it acts as leverage for the Local Group, gives visibility to the project, and allows the strategic and real change nature that should characterise the IAP to become evident.

In the **FOOD CORRIDORS** network, we have given great importance to this experimentation and encouraged the participation of all the cities in the network. To facilitate the process, we have followed the following steps:

I. Presentation and adaptation of the concept according to the idea launched by URBACT, the thematic and dynamics of our network, globally and individually focused. For this purpose, we actively participated in an open dialogue between experts and the URBACT Secretariat itself, as well as facilitating an internal conversation within the network.

II. Brainstorming by each partner, presentation, and selection of the SSA to be developed, with review sessions between partners and the Lead Expert. For this purpose, an outline was designed to collect the basic descriptive information of the proposal, as well as a template to assess its quality.

III. Implementation of the SSA by each partner with the support of the Lead Expert and with a basic template for monitoring the implementation process and analysing the results.

IV. Collective presentation of results, products created and impacts, shaping various communication resources and tools such as articles, videos, etc.

As a result, the seven partners have carried out seven small-scale initiatives of very different typologies:

I. Development of apps to facilitate the connection between local producers and consumers.

II. Opening pop-up shops to make the quality productions of the territory visible.

III. Testing alternatives to make festivals and cultural and social events "greener".

IV. Carrying out experimental training activities.

V. Trying to find proximity criteria to certify the quality of the productions.

VI. Promoting the relationship between the stakeholders in the **FOOD CORRIDORS theme in each geographical area.**

Experimenting during Planning The Small-Scale Actions

Coimbra Region Flavour's Shop consists in the implementation of a Pop-up shop in Coimbra's historic city centre providing a window to showcase local food products to a diverse urban public.

Larissa validated a Web App for mobiles in order to advertise stores with local products.

BSC Kranj in cooperation with development agency Sora organized Day of home made delicacies during Slovenian presidency to the EU.

Tartu organised the Green Festival pilot project in line with the Culture Capital Tartu 2024 strategy the Tartu 2024 environmentally friendly events guideline.

Alba Iulia work with local farmers to increase the skills in organic farming and better connection with the food chains at the local level, through a series of workshops (training program) organised within the Gradinescu area.

Bassa Romagna developed a digital tool that provides up-to-date information to the local community regarding food companies and producers which share common values about healthy and ethical food.

Szecsény created transparency via certifying local small scale farms in order to provide them access to top-level restaurants and hotels in Budapest.

Beside measuring their sustainability-performance they created 3 to 5-minutes videos of 3 farmers in Szecsény Municipality.



RESULTS, IMPACTS, RECOMMENDATIONS

After the implementation of seven SSA, there has been a general agreement among all partners in valuing the SSA proposal as a success for several reasons:

- I.** It is recognised as an activating element involving local stakeholders.
- II.** It is an instrument that makes it possible to test action and thus experiment with an attractive, innovative proposal.
- III.** It is a resource that nourishes the IAP to varying degrees.
- IV.** Evidences the practical and experimental character of IAPs as valuable instruments to provide solutions to real problems of the city or larger territory.

Among the positive impacts that have been produced, we can highlight:

- ➔ Green Festival SSA (Tartu Rural Development Association) has shown a positive impact in terms of adding sustainability and circularity to various typologies of festivals in South Estonia. It has attracted intense vertical, horizontal and territorial cooperation. It heralds potential collaboration and comparative improvement at national and international level.
- ➔ Gradinescu workshops for farmers SSA (Alba Iulia Municipality). The development of five workshops has served to revitalise the resource of Gradinescu as a space aimed at disseminating the practice of permaculture. It has also strengthened public-private cooperation, given new meaning to ongoing actions and launched new objectives with positive results for the municipality, the third sector and the private sector collaboration.
- ➔ Promotion of short food production and consumption channels SSA (Larisa and the Unione dei Comuni della Bassa Romagna). They have developed tools (apps) adapted to promote and experiment in the medium term, in a collective way, the connection between local producers and consumers as well as to make Km0 and differentiated quality products visible. In the short term, the results and economic impact can be evaluated, in terms of the activation of trade and local production, the promotion of employment or positioning as a territorial brand.

➔ BSC Kranj has promoted an SSA aimed at dynamising local productions by putting them in contact with each other and with end consumers. To do so, it has cleverly developed an idea, seeking collaboration with existing projects and events, generating alignment and a larger scale of dissemination. To consolidate these results will require a strengthening of these collaborative relationships between networks and operational commitment between the parties involved.

➔ The opening of a pop-up shop as an SSA by the CIM COIMBRA has been an excellent way of raising the profile of local and quality products in the heart of the city centre of Coimbra, offering a framework for cooperation between public and private entities as well as a space that will stimulate new actions thanks to the continuity and stability of the shop in the future.

➔ The certification of the quality of the productions of local farms and their connection with relevant chefs of the urban scene in Budapest, has been the SSA developed by Szecseny. This is an experimentation in its purest state that needs to fine-tune the mechanisms of certification, price adjustment, logistics, maintenance of commitments and other complex aspects that are grateful for experimentation dynamics such as the one carried out.

Finally, with a view to a more than certain continuity of the SSAs in the URBACT framework, we understand that there is room for progress in the development of instruments for monitoring and measuring results, as well as tests to demonstrate the suitability or adaptability of the actions tested.

In those strategies that for various reasons do not allow the immediate implementation of integrated plans, a good systematised experimentation with various SSAs can be a trigger that activates the optimal conditions for the implementation of the plan.

2.3. 10 Online transnational meetings to mitigate the pandemic impact

by Miguel Sousa *

The COVID 19 pandemic brought uncertainty to the FOOD CORRIDORS work plan, particularly the transnational knowledge-sharing approach between partners. There was no off-the-shelf playbook for the situation, so we followed a flexible and pragmatic approach to keep everyone on board.

Antonio Zafra, in the article published in May 2020 with the name “Changes in the Agri-food sector in times of Coronavirus,” drew attention for the need to look for “...small examples which have mutated daily and affected, in a very different way, people and societies in different economic, temporal, and spatial contexts” and for the need to “...Together with the proposals of international organizations, governments, and other institutions, the individual and collective action of each and every one of us is what can fulfill this change...”.

At that stage of project development, the article pushes the partners to go beyond the original plan and to embrace the challenge with optimism. Also, the response from the URBACT Secretariat was fast, robust, and provided resources to help projects move forward.

However, at the time, it was clear that conventional rules went out the window. There was no standard project risk management playbook for dealing with a worldwide epidemic. Everyone had to improvise and adapt on the fly.

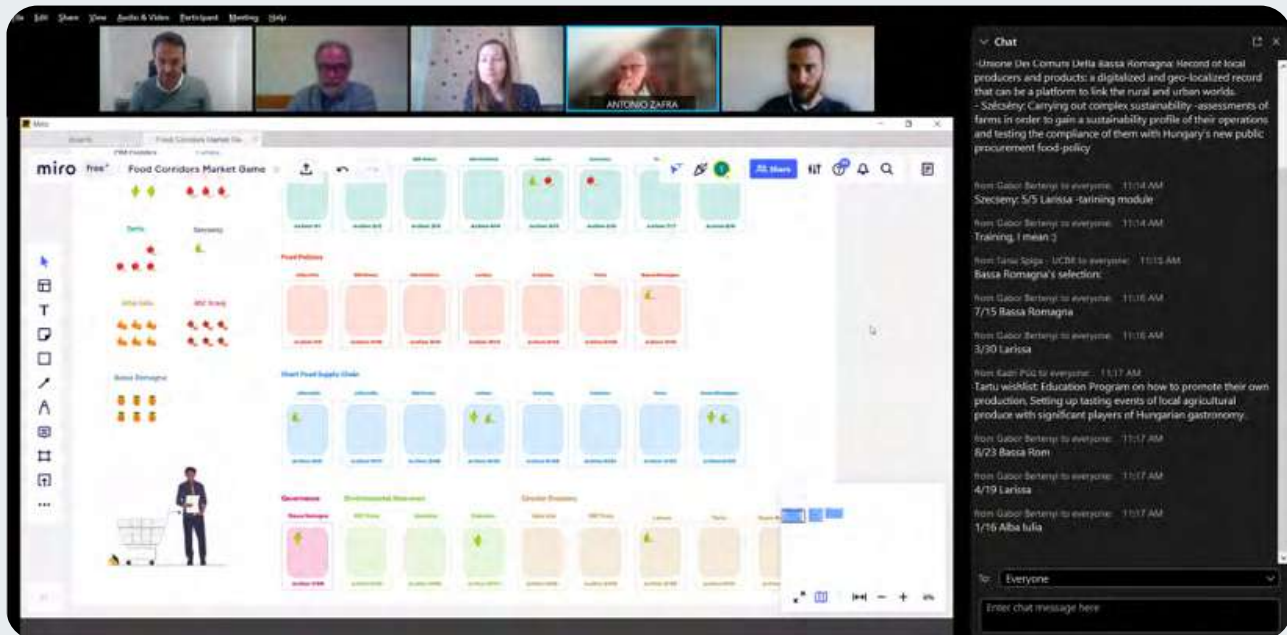
Since March 2020, with the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, the planning, actions, methodology, accompaniment, and overall performance of this work have undergone numerous changes. Thus, the Phase II Work Plan has been readjusted many times, and the transnational face-to-face meetings were readapted to online meetings. In contrast, bilateral meetings between partners and Expert’s and individual sessions have been introduced.

Right now, everything is still very fresh, but there are lessons that the FOOD CORRIDORS response can take to the lockdown.

First, it was important to keep rolling the spirit of the project created during phase I, based on a “take care of each other” approach that contributed to leaving no one behind.

Ten online TNM: June 2020; October 2020; February 2021; March 2021; May 2021; June 2021; September 2021; November 2021; February 2022, and March 2022, shows the intensity of the work developed at the transnational level.

* Miguel Sousa is FOOD CORRIDORS Ad-Hoc Expert



A few keyways based on **FOOD CORRIDORS** experience:

- ➔ **Project Organization Structure:** more from the Lead Partners, from city partners, from Lead Expert, from Ad-Hoc Expert, from ULG members, was requested. The original project structure wasn't prepared for remote work. To set up a functional structure, we worked with city partners to get more flexibility from their side and, in the end, more time dedicated to the project;
- ➔ **Set Clear Project Goals & Objectives:** in times of uncertainty, it was important to make the project goals and objectives clear to everyone. Working out the project vision in each city helped to set the individual direction during project development;
- ➔ **Adapt and update the Communication Plan** to the new context;
- ➔ **Risk** is part of life and is undoubtedly a part of any project. We prepared the network to develop

their work by keeping an eye on risks but, more importantly, to keep a positive attitude to face all the difficulties, such as the difficulties of organizing physical meetings with ULG or at transnational level. Working the individual risks at network level helped to find collective solutions for the project.

- ➔ **Focus on Value Delivery:** the main goal for each city was the Integrated Action Plan. In all the meetings, we dedicated time to move forward on the IAP and keep everyone on the same level of development to leave no one behind.

The **FOOD CORRIDORS** journey was challenging due to the change of context, but the results show that the learning and sharing were rich and will remain after the project ends.



2.4. Bending the URBACT method to better fit to local reality of cities

by Miguel Sousa *

FOOD CORRIDORS is a partnership of 7 EU cities and inter-municipal bodies working towards re-territorializing food systems. Seven local initiatives covering Europe from South to North and East to West, linked with the spirit of food corridors, engaging multidisciplinary local groups (ULGs), and committed to follow the URBACT method to develop an Integrated Action Plan (IAP).

Before diving into the theme of this article, it's crucial to describe the three key concepts that support the URBACT Method. The method is based on the combination of **Integration** (connecting solutions), **Participation** (participatory approach recognizing the voice of everyone), and **Action-Learning** (better knowledge and skills by working with peers), that enables cities to manage the policy cycle from planning resources and assigning actions, to implementing and following up policies, evaluating the impact and feeding back the lessons learnt.

Bending in this context means making it more flexible, shaping the city's context, and making each city's experience unique and sustainable.

The process of developing the IAPs was co-created by all partners, with the guidance of a Lead Expert and Ad-hoc expert. The result of this work was the **Food Corridors – IAP Cycle Dashboard**. The dashboard was vital for better decision making, sharing data, and making the process dynamic, interactive and funny.

The starting point was the Baseline Study developed by the Lead Expert, Antonio Zafra, in phase I. He set up the project thematic approach based on 5 thematic themes and 13 subthemes, which framed the project scope while marking the discussion.

To help cities navigate on themes and subthemes, the first exercise intended to create an individual

* Miguel Sousa is FOOD CORRIDORS Ad-Hoc Expert

FOOD CORRIDORS
IAP - CYCLE DASHBOARD

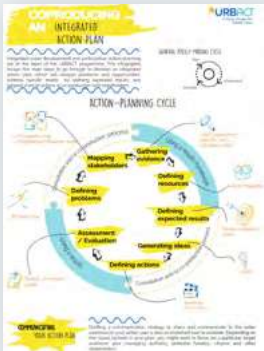


My mission was...



1) Start here

ACTION-PLANNING CYCLE



2) Vision

YOUR HEADLINE VISION HERE

Your short paragraph describing the news

Add your image here

“a quote about the situation” who said that
“a quote about the situation” who said that

3) Ideas

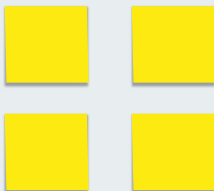
STEP 1: SEARCH BROADLY - BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming canvas

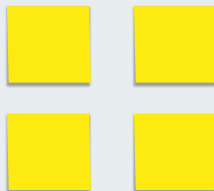
IAP Toolbox



Questions



Comments



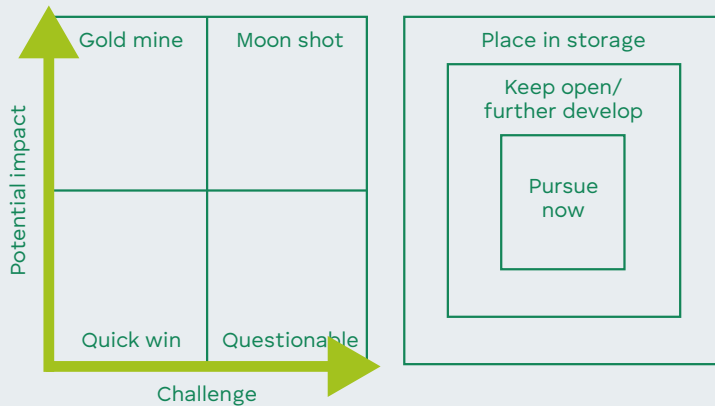
Food Corridors (priority themes)

Main Themes	Food Corridors						Action Plans Outcome
	Culture Identity and Territorial Food Brands	Food Policies	Short Food Supply Chains	Governance	Environmental Resources	Circular Economy	
Sub-Themes	- Food Tourism & Gastronomy - Local/Territorial Brands - Culture and Education Programs - Events (Food Festivals, etc...)	- Social inclusion (Food Banks, Community Gardens...) - Employment & entrepreneur support: Food Labs; Land access - Public procurement (legal development, experiences...) - Training & education programs	- CSA; Craft Products; Food Hubs - SMEs, Cooperatives, Social Sector; Food Markets, shops, canteens - Employment & entrepreneur support: Food Labs; Land access - Public procurement (legal development, experiences...) - Training & education programs	- Social innovation - Citizens participation - City Food councils...	- Organic production - Agrarian parks - Biodiversity	Design out waste, keep materials in use...	

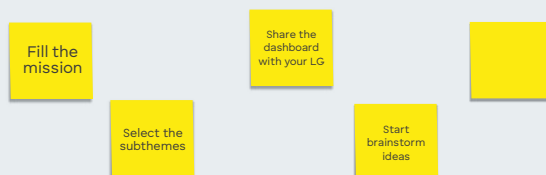
My subthemes are...

3) Ideas

STEP 2: SEARCH FOR RELEVANCE STEP 3: SEARCH FOR URGENCY



Remainders



Grab your post-its here

Sub-theme: Food Tourism and Gastronomy Idea:	Sub-theme: Food Tourism and Gastronomy Idea:	Sub-theme: Food Tourism and Gastronomy Idea:	Sub-theme: Food Tourism and Gastronomy Idea:
Sub-theme: Local/territorial brands Idea:	Sub-theme: Local/territorial brands Idea:	Sub-theme: Local/territorial brands Idea:	Sub-theme: Local/territorial brands Idea:
Sub-theme: Culture and education Idea:	Sub-theme: Culture and education Idea:	Sub-theme: Culture and education Idea:	Sub-theme: Culture and education Idea:
Sub-theme: Events (Food Festivals,...) Idea:	Sub-theme: Events (Food Festivals,...) Idea:	Sub-theme: Social Inclusion Idea:	Sub-theme: Social Inclusion Idea:
Sub-theme: Employment & entrepreneur Idea:	Sub-theme: Employment & entrepreneur Idea:	Sub-theme: Public Procurement Idea:	Sub-theme: Public Procurement Idea:
Sub-theme: Training and Education Idea:	Sub-theme: Training and Education Idea:	Sub-theme: Training and Education Idea:	Sub-theme: Training and Education Idea:
Sub-theme: CSA, Craft Products Idea:	Sub-theme: CSA, Craft Products Idea:	Sub-theme: SMEs, Cooperatives,... Idea:	Sub-theme: SMEs, Cooperatives,... Idea:
Sub-theme: Social Innovation, Citizens Participation Idea:	Sub-theme: Social Innovation, Citizens Participation Idea:	Sub-theme: Social Innovation, Citizens Participation Idea:	Sub-theme: Social Innovation, Citizens Participation Idea:
Sub-theme: Organic production, Biodiversity Idea:	Sub-theme: Organic production, Biodiversity Idea:	Sub-theme: Organic production, Biodiversity Idea:	Sub-theme: Organic production, Biodiversity Idea:
Sub-theme: Design out Waste Idea:	Sub-theme: Design out Waste Idea:	Sub-theme: Design out Waste Idea:	Sub-theme: Design out Waste Idea:

City Vision. We used the **Newspaper of Tomorrow Tool** available on the URBACT [toolbox](#).

The next step was to increase the understanding of the cities on the themes and sub-themes and push them to make options in line with their expected results for the project. The "My sub-themes are..." exercise was vital to build the city's identity on the Food Corridors project.

Framed the individual intervention of each city, the generation of ideas for actions follows a three steps approach:

- **Step 1: Search Broadly – brainstorming;**
- **Step 2 -Search for Relevance – Challenges vs. Impacts;**
- **Step 3 Search for Urgency – low/medium/long-term analysis.**

The three steps approach was implemented in 5 TNMs, involving all partners in working groups accordingly to their interest in the different project sub-themes and always using peer review to increase the learning opportunities.

Besides using tools from the URBACT Toolbox, the Lead and Ad-hoc expert developed dedicated tools for the project, such as the **"FOOD CORRIDORS MARKET GAME."**

The aim of the game was to create an open market, where sellers and visitors are invited to free exchange of goods (Actions). That should permit deep internal analysis to generous giver partners about specific and detailed features of their actions and inspirational opportunities to lucky taker partners to suitable adaptation into their IAP.

In this game, each partner was invited to carefully research the complete list of actions (32 in total) to increase their knowledge about the other cities' actions (**UNDERSTANDING PHASE**). After the analysis, each partner had six vouchers to freely select those six actions they consider most likely to be successfully transferred to their IAP after the

appropriate adaptation (**ADAPTATION AND REUSING PHASES**).

The game steps:

→ **UNDERSTAND** – the goal was to develop a deep and shared understanding of the Actions produced by the Food Corridors partners and shared on the Excel Table

→ **ADAPT** – the goal was to focus on the adaptation of a particular Action to another city context. This stage can involve bilateral meetings between the "giver" and the "taker" cities.

→ **REUSE** – the goal was to prepare the Reuse of the Action at the "taker" city context. This work should be made with the involvement of the ULG with a specific focus on future implementation.

→ **BOOK A VISIT** – an immersive visit from the "taker" city to the "giver" city as the game award.

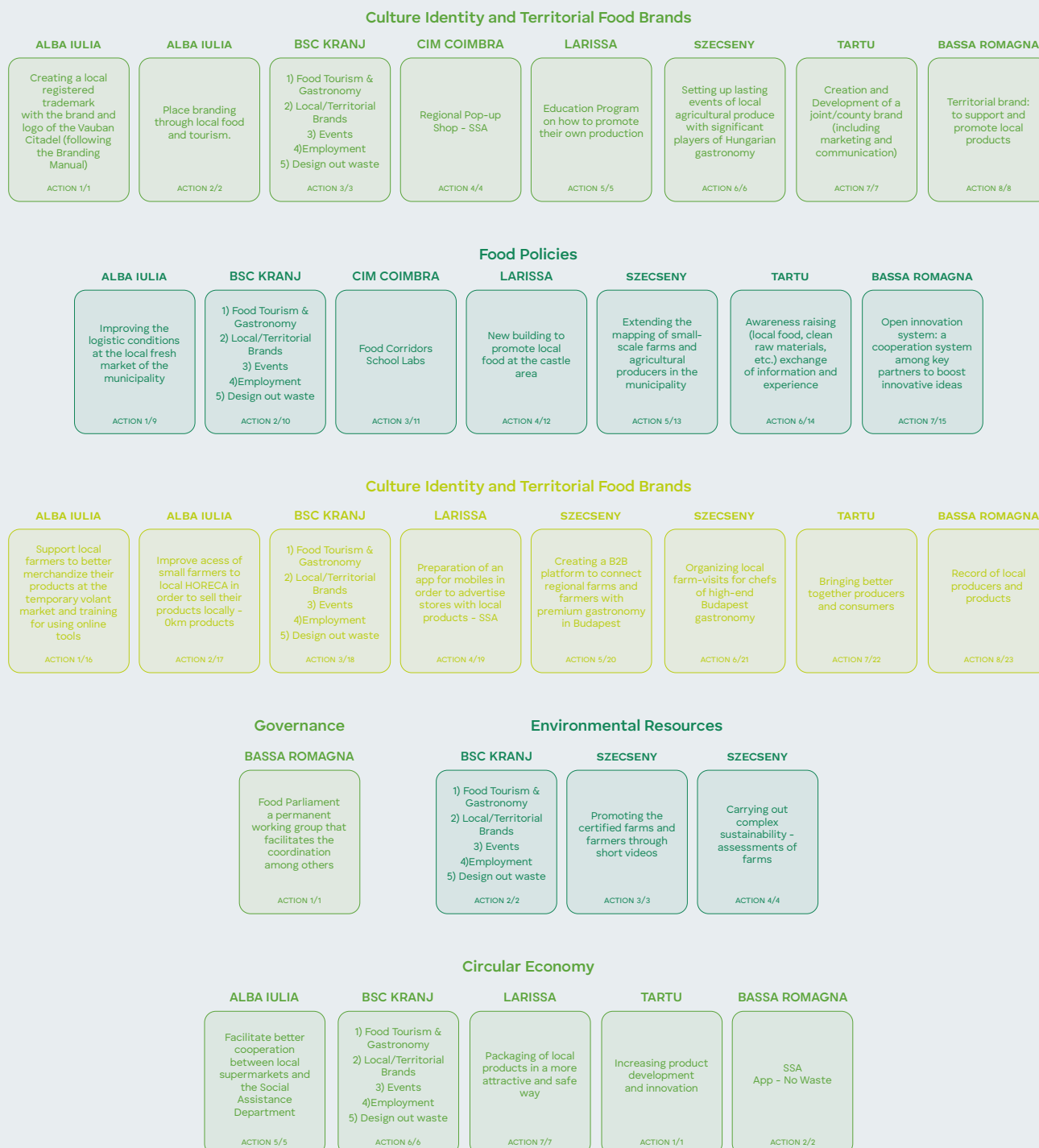
During the game, Lead Expert and Ad-hoc expert chose actions among the selected by each partner to promote a peer-to-peer discussion where the "giver" partner reflects on the precise details of its action. In contrast, the "taker" partner makes questions, investigates, and thinks about the chosen action's transfer, adaptation, and reuse.



Kallaste fish and onion market 27.08.2022, Tartu

Infographics of the FOOD CORRIDORS MARKET GAME:

THE ACTIONS GLOSSARY



SUMMARY OF THEMES

	Culture Identity and Territorial Food Brands	Food Policies	Short Food Supply Chains	Governance	Environmental Resources	Circular Economy	Overall by city
Overall by theme	8	7	8	1	3	5	32
Alba Iulia	2	1	2	0	0	1	6
BSC Kranj	1	1	1	0	1	1	5
CIM Coimbra	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Larissa	1	1	1	0	0	1	4
Szeceeny	1	1	2	0	2	0	6
Tartu County	1	1	1	0	0	1	4
Bassa Romagna	1	1	1	1	0	1	5

THE FOOD CORRIDORS MARKET GAME

YOUR FREE VOUCHERS

CIM COIMBRA



LARISSA



TARTU



SZECSENY



ALBA IULIA



BSC KRANJ



BASSA ROMAGNA



THE ACTIONS MARKET

Culture Identity and Territorial Food Brands

ALBA IULIA ACTION 1/1	ALBA IULIA ACTION 2/2	BSC KRANJ ACTION 3/3	CIM COIMBRA ACTION 4/4	LARISSA ACTION 5/5	SZECSENY ACTION 6/6	TARTU ACTION 7/7	BASSA ROMAGNA ACTION 8/8
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Food Policies

ALBA IULIA ACTION 1/9	BSC KRANJ ACTION 2/10	CIM COIMBRA ACTION 3/11	LARISSA ACTION 4/12	SZECSENY ACTION 5/13	TARTU ACTION 6/14	BASSA ROMAGNA ACTION 7/15
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Short Food Supply Chain

ALBA IULIA ACTION 1/16	ALBA IULIA ACTION 2/17	BSC KRANJ ACTION 3/18	LARISSA ACTION 4/19	SZECSENY ACTION 5/20	SZECSENY ACTION 6/21	TARTU ACTION 7/22	BASSA ROMAGNA ACTION 8/23
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Governance

BASSA ROMAGNA ACTION 1/24

Environmental Resources

BSC KRANJ ACTION 1/25	SZECSENY ACTION 2/26	SZECSENY ACTION 3/27
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Circular Economy

ALBA IULIA ACTION 1/28	BSC KRANJ ACTION 2/29	LARISSA ACTION 3/30	TARTU ACTION 4/31	BASSA ROMAGNA ACTION 5/32
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Based on this process, the Food Corridor cities develop 49 Actions on topics like: Governance (2); Food Policies (17); Re-Territorialisation (11); Food Culture (9); Circularity (5); Sustainability (4), and other (2), as can be seen in the image below.

INSIDE VIEW INTO THE IAP'S



Analysing the number and quality of the Actions developed, the expectation is high about a successful implementation of the IAPs in all the cities. The important thing is that every city has the notion that the IAP is just the beginning of the journey and not the end. **In fact, the FOOD CORRIDORS is just beginning!**

Chapter III.

Annotated

Readings

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Honey Secrets store, located next to Ljubljana's central market specialises in Slovenian honey and bee products.

3.1. Public policies to promote sustainable food systems

Recently, the idea, conceptualisation, and concrete policies to promote sustainable food systems have become more widespread. According to a study published by SAPEA (2020)¹¹, a sustainable food system is "one that: provides and promotes safe, nutritious and healthy food of low environmental impact for all current and future EU citizens in a manner that itself also protects and restores the natural environment and its ecosystem services, is

robust and resilient, economically dynamic, just and fair, and socially acceptable and inclusive. It does so without compromising the availability of nutritious and healthy food for people living outside the EU, nor impairing their natural environment" (SAM, 2019)¹². This is obviously an issue with relevant political connotations, connected to a broad set of Sustainable Development Goals, as shown in the table below:

SDG2: Zero hunger End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture		SDG12: Responsible consumption and production Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	
SDG3: Health and welfare Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	SDG13: Climate change Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts		
SDG5: Gender equity Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	 Science Advice For Policy By European Academies	SDG14: Life below water Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.	
SDG10: Reduction of inequities Reduce inequality within and among countries		SDG15: Life on land Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	

Source: SAPEA (2020)

Promoting a shift toward an alternative model that addresses the multiple deficiencies of the current globalised system requires promoting initiatives with measurable results around a set of actions, among which the study¹ mentions the following:

- the promotion of 'sustainable intensification and/or scaling up agro-ecological approaches
- reducing food loss and waste

- stimulating dietary change towards healthier, less resource-intensive, and more plant-based diets
- improving the resilience and robustness of the food system

¹¹ SAPEA, Science Advice for Policy by European Academies. (2020). A sustainable food system for the European Union. Berlin: SAPEA. Available online on: <https://doi.org/10.26356/sustainablefood>

¹² SAM. (2019b). A scoping review of major works relevant to scientific advice towards an EU sustainable food system. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/scoping-review-major-works-relevant-scientific-advice-towards-eu-sustainable-food-system_en

→ increasing the awareness, accountability, and stewardship of producers and consumers to inform their choices better

The European Union is promoting ways to address this transition to a sustainable food model in the European Green Deal framework and focused on the Farm to Fork Strategy. A wide range of legislation needs to be developed while ensuring the active participation of all stakeholders affected by this change of direction. This is not easy, given the broken relationship between production and consumers as central parts of the chain.

It seems to be attested to by a recent pan-European survey (EIT-Food, 2022¹³), concluding that less than half of consumers trust the food sector, and only one-third of more than 20,000 respondents in 18 countries believe that the food they consume is sustainable.

In this scenario, with the proper identification of the appropriate "actors of change," it is essential to define the main pillars to sustain this change in the system. Among them, analyses such as the one carried out by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission¹⁴ point to the following blocks: a sustainability assessment framework, transparency, dealing with consequences of the transition, policy coherence, multi-level governance, and international trade.

Aware of the difficulties in moving in this direction, the European Commission has launched a [survey](#) on the "Sustainable food system" (April - July 2022) aimed at gathering opinions and evidence from all relevant stakeholders, focusing on overarching issues related to the food system sustainability.

REGIONAL CONTEXT AND EU POLICY CHALLENGES

For a proper understanding of the regional food-related needs and further development of project ideas, it is crucial to understand the EU and regional policy context. Integration Action Plans designed by **FOOD CORRIDORS** partners build upon the following strategic documents:

1. The European Green Deal. It is part of the EU's largest policy initiative, aiming to transform the EU into a modern and competitive economy, ensuring no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, economic growth decoupled from resource use, and no person and no place left behind.

2. The Farm To Fork Strategy. It aims to accelerate our transition to a sustainable food system.

3. The circular economy action plan is considered one of the main building blocks of the European Green Deal.

4. The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The new CAP was approved in June 2021, and the main areas covered by the reform are a fair deal for farmers, a greener policy, and making agriculture competitive and rewarding.

5. European agricultural fund for rural development. Activities are funded by EARDF and implemented through national and regional Rural Development Programmes (RDPs).

6. The Rural Pact And Action Plan. In June of 2021, the European Commission issued a long-term vision for the EU's rural areas, proposing a Rural Pact and a Rural Action Plan.

7. The smart specialisation platform for agri-food. It is part of the Smart Specialisation Initiative at the EU level, which aims to support collaboration between regions sharing the same or similar priorities in their Smart Specialisation strategies.

In parallel to this deployment at the European level, particular attention must be paid to each country's national and regional frameworks. Through them, many strategies in the above-mentioned thematic areas are implemented, which can significantly help framing, support, and co-financing some of the actions included in the territorial Integrated Action Plans.

In this sense, analyses of the reality of national food policies, such as the one carried out in Portugal by the Public Policy Portuguese Journal¹⁵, or on a local scale, such as the one also carried out in Portugal by Professor Cecilia Delgado¹⁶, are very useful for establishing priorities and creating the concrete conditions that make it possible to move towards this new model of sustainability.

¹³ EIT Food (2022). The EIT Food Trust Report. Sustainable food choices and the role of trust in the food chain. Available online on: https://www.eitfood.eu/media/news-pdf/EIT_Food_Trust_Report_2021.pdf

¹⁴ Bock, A.K., Bontoux, L., Rudkin, J. (2022) Concepts for a sustainable EU food system. Publications Office of the European Union. Available online on: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC126575>

¹⁵ Public Policy Portuguese Journal. Volume 6, number 3 (2021). Special Issue: Need for food! Conciliating sustainable protein economy and ethical treatment of animals: A science-based social imperative. Available online on: <https://www.umpp.uevora.pt/publicacoes/Public-Policy-Portuguese-Journal>

¹⁶ Delgado, Cecilia (2020). Local food policies -their constraints and drivers: Insights from Portuguese Urban Agriculture initiatives. Moravian Geographical Reports.



Open air market, Ljubljana, Slovenia

3.2. Feeding a sustainable future

Olivier de Schutter¹⁷ recently participated in a forum organised by the Carasso Foundation and the University of Barcelona under the theme "The right to food in Europe. Alliances to guarantee access to sustainable food for all" where he argued that in the current context of multiple interlinked crises (economic, health, climate...), the growth of food poverty around the world is evidence of the inefficiency and unsustainability of the current global system. In his opinion, guaranteeing the right to sufficient and healthy food is an urgent priority at any level - local, regional, national or international - from which public policies are established. According to de Schutter, from the experience of the European Union, three contributions can be made to launch strategies to ensure access to adequate food for all people.

The third proposes the establishment of governance models aimed at guiding the transition from the current situation towards a more sustainable one based on integrated territorial strategies, in the short and medium term.

Finally, in the words of De Schutter, also co-chair of [IPES-Food](#), monitoring how the right to sufficient and healthy food is being fulfilled in each case is the best way to assess the quality of public food policies.

But what do we mean by food insecurity? According to the FAO, a person is food insecure when he or she lacks regular access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and for an active and healthy life. A recent study (Moragues-Faus & Magaña-González, 2022)¹⁷ has provided an over-

FOOD SECURITY



The first lies in guaranteeing access to adequate diets through three channels: fair remuneration for work by revaluing salaries, sufficient social protection for those who do not have the means to feed themselves, and the promotion of production for self-consumption.

The second defends the need to democratise food systems through models such as Food Policy Councils, which intervene to reduce the fragility and vulnerability of consumers and small producers in the face of large agro-industry, from a local or regional basis.

* UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Co-chair of IPESFood and Professor UCLouvain

¹⁷ Moragues-Faus, Ana y Magaña-González, Claudia R. (2022). Alimentando un futuro sostenible: Estudio sobre la inseguridad alimentaria en hogares españoles antes y durante la COVID-19. Informe del proyecto "Alimentando un futuro sostenible", Universidad de Barcelona, financiado por la Fundación Daniel y Nina Carasso. Barcelona.

AJA - BAKLAVA



OSTUS



Municipal Food Market, Tartu, Estonia

ÕUNAD, INGRID-AMIE
1 TELLISARE
2. klass 1.50
EESTI

ÕUNAD
ANTONOVKA
2. klass 2.50
EESTI

ÕUNAD
KAREI
2. klass 2.50
EESTI

MAGUSAD
TOOTE NIMI
INGRID
2. klass



Located in Tartu County (Estonia) Viinamärdi farm produces a variety of Italian delicacies from sheep's milk - pecorino toscano type cheese, ricotta , among others.

view of the extent of food insecurity in Spain, where 13.3% of households are food insecure, affecting almost 2.5 million households and therefore, around 6,235,900 people (in the period July 2020 - July 2021). The study also reports that, in Spain, severe food insecurity has doubled since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and, more recently, with the supply crisis. Moreover, soaring inflation only increases the impact of this phenomenon. This being the case, with similar situations in most EU countries, we are far from guaranteeing the right to adequate food and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2, i.e., Zero Hunger.

MONITORING AND POLICIES, FROM THE STATE TO THE SMALL TOWN LEVEL

In this regard, in some EU countries, food aid households exceed 20%. Given the seriousness of the situation, it is necessary to measure the levels of food insecurity statistically through data that allow us to check the state of fulfillment of this right and establish effective and dignified solutions. In connection with this problem of food insecurity, European cities such as Barcelona have established strategies¹⁸ to combat climate change and, at the same time, focus on more sustainable food alternatives, based on principles such as the following¹⁷:

1. Guaranteeing the right to sustainable food.
2. Facilitating local, seasonal, and organic food products.
3. Adopting healthy diets based on fresh, non-ultra-processed foods.
4. Eat less and higher quality meat and meat products
5. Reduce food waste and packaging.
6. Promote fair relations in the food chain.
7. Cultivate diversity in the field, at the table, and in the neighborhoods.
8. Creating sustainable and empowering food environments.
9. Transforming the food system with all and for all people.

Small and medium-sized cities such as those in the **FOOD CORRIDORS** network are also beginning to analyse the impact of food insecurity in the context of the pandemic and the other associated crises in order to understand the complexity of the prob-

lem and to go beyond the traditional aid channelled through social NGOs and Food Banks. It is essential to introduce these approaches in this type of cities, as our Romanian partner, Alba Iulia, has done. In a recent article¹⁹, they connected the impact of the pandemic on the agro-food sector with the social changes in household food consumption and how, in recent months, households have seen their purchasing power reduced due to runaway inflation. From this permanent monitoring of the situation, urgent measures can be taken and prevent and mitigate risks thanks to more localised, closer, and democratic planning.



¹⁷ Moragues-Faus, Ana y Magaña-González, Claudia R. (2022). Alimentando un futuro sostenible: Estudio sobre la inseguridad alimentaria en hogares españoles antes y durante la COVID-19. Informe del proyecto "Alimentando un futuro sostenible", Universidad de Barcelona, financiado por la Fundación Daniel y Nina Carasso. Barcelona.

¹⁸ The Barcelona Challenge for Good Food and Climate. Toolkit guideline. Available online on 21 of June 2022: https://toolkit.thebcnchallenge.org/docs/BarcelonaChallengeToolkitGuideline_EN.pdf

¹⁹ Alba Iulia Municipality (Food Corridors Team, April 2022). The impact of Covid-19 on the food industry in Romania. Available on: <https://urbact.eu/food-corridors>

3.3. Sustainable diets for a green planet

In 2017, Pamela Mason and Tim Lang published an excellent, well-informed, and nutritious book²⁰ about how healthy diets for people and the planet can be the key to the transition to equally sustainable food systems.

In just a few years, the situation has worsened if we look at the growing number of starving and obese people on the planet, as categorised in another fundamental analysis by writer, researcher, and activist Raj Patel²¹. In countries such as Spain, it is estimated that three out of every ten families were forced to cut their food, clothing, or footwear budgets in 2021²². In contrast, in 2022, the Spanish Federation of Food Banks estimates that the number of people seeking food aid will increase by 20%²³. A situation that is not very strange to what is happening in large part of the countries of the European Union and, to a greater extent, in other geographical areas of the planet. Meanwhile, obesity and overweight continue to manifest as a severe problem in the EU, particularly affecting children. Again, in the Spanish case, as an example, it now reaches 4 out of 10 schoolchildren²⁴.

Given this situation, the need to develop public policies based on implementing healthy diets that promote safe access to food and, at the same time, contribute to creating more sustainable food systems becomes even more critical.

This is due to the integrated and cross-cutting nature of the actions that generally underpin these policies. In this context, it is common to articulate solutions such as:

- the promotion of local and ecological supply chains;
- the reduction of waste and surpluses;
- the decentralisation of kitchens and the relocation of small school canteens;

- the implementation of diets that reduce the consumption of animal protein, sugar or ultra-processed foods;
- the recovery of local crops and varieties of cereals or legumes;
- the training and dynamisation of critical local actors for change such as cooks, teachers, and parents;
- the implementation of follow-up and monitoring mechanisms or the development of democratic governance models based on a local or regional scale.

For these reasons, the **FOOD CORRIDORS** project has looked with interest at the public policies that the Swedish municipality of Södertälje has been carrying out over the last decade. In addition to recommending the reading of the document created after its pioneering step as a URBACT network by leading the network "[Diet for a green planet](#)," also through the [Integrated Action Plan](#) produced after its renewed participation in another URBACT network, called AGRI-URBAN.

20 Mason, P. & Lang, T. (2017). *Sustainable Diets. How Ecological Nutrition Can Transform Consumption and the Food System*. Published by Routledge

21 Patel, Raj (2012). *Stuffed and Starved. The hidden battle for the world food system*. Penguin Random House

22 EL PAÍS (14/05/2022). "La inflación hace mella en los bancos de alimentos. Llegan más familias pero nos encontramos con menos comida". Available online [here](#).

23 EL PAÍS (11/05/2022). "Los bancos de alimentos prevén un repunte del 20% en la demanda de ayuda este año". Available online [here](#).

24 EL PAÍS (10/06/22). "El Gobierno quiere garantizar comedores escolares en escuelas e institutos en 2030 para luchar contra la obesidad infantil". Available online [here](#).

In this sense, "The IAP of Södertälje is a useful example of structuring and presenting an integrated action plan, including concise background information and detailed actions. It plans nine headline interventions, which it usefully breaks down into short-term implementable actions. The

plan fits clearly into a longer-term strategic approach to using food as a tool for sustainable local development and demonstrates effective transnational exchange and learning on specific transferable practices," according to an [external analysis](#) by the URBACT program.

WHY DO WE RECOMMEND SÖDERTÄLJE IAP? Based on the resource created by URBACT for selfassessment of IAP's*

1. Process of Action Plan (ULG participation, consultation meetings)

2. Content of the Action Plan (organization, coherence, evidences, problem analysis, strategic goal, actions description, measurement indicators)

3. Integrated approach (different factors considered, contribution from range of agencies, vertical partnership, ERDF and ESF actions type included)

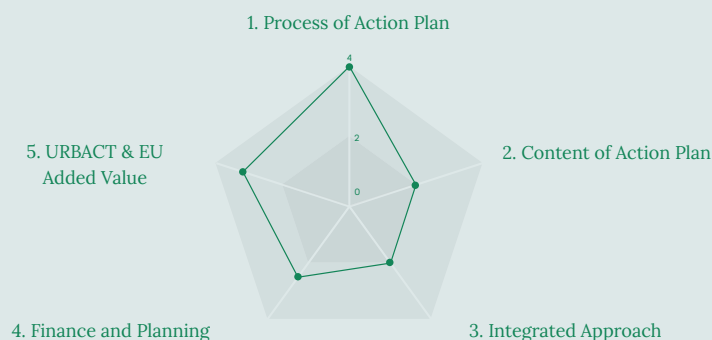
4. Finance & planning (chart with actions and timetable; detailed financial planning, specific opportunities detected in ERDF/ESF funds; financial support)

5. URBACT & EU added value (explicit link to exchange and learning activities, learning from good practices, plan peer review by other cities...)

*Self assessment tool for Integrated Action Plan: <http://urbact.eu/files/tool-self-assessment-tool-integrated-action-plan>

*IAP Case Study - Södertälje (AGRI-URBAN): <https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/casestudy-sodertalje-agriurban-final.pdf>

*Södertälje IAP: https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/agri-urban_iap_sodertalje_en_full.pdf



The [Diet For A Green Planet](#) website offers exhaustive information about the successive battery of projects through which these public policies have been developed, also sharing different tools and tips to drive a conversion process such as the one proposed. Among other resources, seasonal pyramids, local alternative to import products, critical measures, and educational videos are available there.

It seems essential to us to underline as a summary the five conceptual criteria with which they define this conversion framework:

1. Tasty and healthy food

2. Organic, preferably from Ecological Regenerative Agriculture (ERA)

3. Less animal products, more vegetables, legumes, and whole grains

4. Locally produced in season

5. Reduced waste

Here are five good pillars for initiating transformative action and good practice from which to learn, adapt and transfer knowledge for public policies that offer solutions to existing problems in EU cities and regions as promoted by URBACT.



3.4. An exception for food

A scientific article²⁵ published in 2014 by the French researcher François Collart Dutilleul, highlighted the idea, already distant in its genesis, of offering, along with other cultural products, an exceptionality to primary products:

"The recognition of a cultural exception dates from as far back as 1947 with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which constituted the first stage in the globalisation of trade founded on the principle of free trade but allowed for legal exceptions for certain cultural products, in particular for cinematographic films and national treasures. This is still the case today with the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the successor to GATT. However, GATT was in reality only a part of a fuller international treaty which also was to provide for legal exceptions to free trade for "primary commodities": those of agriculture, forestry, fishing and minerals. This treaty was the Havana Charter, signed by 53 countries in March 1948. Because of a situation extraneous to the Charter, it has never been ratified or put into effect, unlike GATT itself. The result is that "cultural exceptions" are recognised, while "exceptions for food" are not".

In all this time, this claim did not seem to have attracted much attention until March 3, 2022, when a group of authorities and citizens gathered around the initiative of the association UN PLUS BIO, published an article in the French newspaper LIBERATION, demanding "For a food exception in the public procurement code in Europe²⁶". In a context of commitment to healthy, organic and local food policies in public canteens, many European parliamentarians, regional and local authorities, citizens, leaders of local food alternatives, have been joining this declaration of intent, aware of the need to make the public procurement system more flexible in order to facilitate this transition.

It seems to us an interesting starting point to stimulate action in three ways. On the one hand, by offering all types of users of public canteens, especially schoolchildren, the possibility of accessing healthy and organic food. On the other hand, by putting public procurement at the service of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Lastly, and more transversally, by promoting healthy, local production and consumption, with all that this entails as an alternative to the current globalised food model. This is the understanding of the CIM Coimbra, Lead Partner of the **FOOD CORRIDORS** network, whose Intermunicipal Council has unanimously decided to support (June 2022) this initiative in favour of "a food exception in the public procurement code" in Europe.

Successful projects developed in the framework of URBACT, such as **BIOCANTEENS** and **BIOCANTEENS#2**, show the way forward in this transformation of school canteens and the possibility of transferring good practice. Something similar has happened in the field of innovative public procurement with projects such as **PROCURE**.

²⁵ François Collart Dutilleul. International recognition of an "exception for food" on the model of the "cultural exception". Penser une démocratie alimentaire Volume II – Proposition Lascaux entre ressources naturelles et besoins fondamentaux, 2014. Available online on 21 of June, 2022: <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01084220/document>

²⁶ LIBERATION (March, 2022). Tribune "Pour une «exception alimentaire» en Europe". Available online on 21 June, 2022: https://www.liberation.fr/idees-et-debats/tribunes/pour-une-exception-alimentaire-en-europe-20220303_AGWD7MP25BAGD-FMKQDRF5YWVGQ/

Every day, new information points to the priority of undertaking changes in the nutritional models of school canteens to tackle problems such as obesity. At the same time, we find initiatives, leaders, and cooks play a significant role here, ready to change

the rules of an unsustainable and unhealthy game creatively.

For its interest, we add the full text of the opinion column "For a food exception in the public procurement code in Europe."

FOR A FOOD EXCEPTION IN THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CODE IN EUROPE

While the relocalisation of food is in everyone's mind, for both environmental reasons and for the economic development of territories, local authorities are subject to rules of law that hinder their ability to supply collective catering with local products. But we could fix this imbalance by creating the equivalent of a cultural exception in the food area. It would be an efficient way to undergo a revolution in our rural and urban landscapes.

In the European Union, competition law applies to all sectors of economic life, including public procurement. Thus, when a local authority decides to buy a new batch of photocopiers, it has to launch a public market opened to all. Priority is given to international trade, in accordance with the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Similarly, when a local authority wants to buy organic carrots, apples or meat for its canteens, it must open the market to all European suppliers, even if farms are located on its territory that could answer to some of its criteria (environmental transition, fight against global warming, revitalization of rural areas, etc.). Unfortunately, local producers almost never respond to calls for tenders, which are administratively too heavy to manage and oriented towards large operators.

A few local authorities succeed to relocalise food, but they often do so in a perilous and time consuming contortion of public contracts. Local food projects generally demand the aid of a legal service and strong political support. Another point is that the attributions of these markets are of short duration and give poor visibility to the producers who engage in this competition.

That is why the creation of a food exception system at the European level would open the door to reducing inequalities that are widening between territories, while also providing unprecedented flexibility.

It would give a new chance to agricultural stakeholders who produce, process and develop foodstuffs that are desired by inhabitants and decision-makers. For instance, we could imagine that for each category of products (fruits and vegetables, meat, eggs, dairy products, dry products, etc.), local authorities could choose a geographical location and integrate a quota of over-the-counter purchases, to be defined: 30% or even 50%.

This food exception, called for by France just when it chairs the European Union, would benefit all member countries which are experiencing the same problem everywhere. It would have several merits: firstly, it would answer to a strong social expectation and finally make it possible to distinguish types of food or agricultural practices that we want to see reflected on our plates. Secondly, it would participate in getting local authorities moving that give up or condemn themselves to a wait-and-see policy, because of a lack of a clear and readable framework. Thirdly, it would enable elected officials to build a food landscape much more in line with the resources and needs of their territories. As the food law researcher François Collart Dutilleul writes, "in the perspective of a food democracy, the removal of obstacles to local supply would allow the design of territorial food systems by associating the political will of local authorities and the will of consumer-citizens".

Local authorities would take a fresh look at the richness and diversity of their agricultural environment as well as at food-related occupations (artisans, processors, distributors). They would have more power to improve food quality, by using labeled or organic farm productions, by supporting the installation of new virtuous farmers on their perimeter, even by reviving countless wastelands left abandoned for lack of remunerative outlets for those who no longer cultivate them. We could then bring out the notion of "food public service" which would rely on food producers with a mission of general interest, taking into account the environmental services provided to the territory.

While many French and European cities advocate and have already begun to act on

change, for their part, governments, states, the European Commission and promoters of the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) would be well advised to include this approach in their programs and to get the measure of the expectations of European citizens.

According to us, food exception is a brilliant unifying project to be shared between the 27 countries of the Union. They would discover that it is not intended to create local protectionism nor to obstruct international market rules, because it is no more no less a proposal to open up public procurement. Removing the obstacles to local development through and for the food we want, while reducing territorial inequalities, is a challenge within our reach.

3.5. A new framework for regionalising food systems

Regionalising food systems is not an easy challenge. It is a challenge that requires the interweaving of actors operating at different levels: public, private and social. Also at different scales: national, regional, intermediate, local. At the same time, it entails exercising with excellence the principles of integration territorial, vertical and horizontal. The URBACT programme emphasises so strongly in its methodology for designing Integrated Action Plans.

Taking into account the importance among **FOOD CORRIDORS** network partners of mixed political structures of intermediate spatial scale—two inter-municipalities in Portugal and Italy, two mixed entities grouping public institutions and private and social entities in Estonia and Slovenia—, we have paid attention from very early on to experiences that could offer knowledge and good practices to be transferred and analysed in the process of designing local plans by our partners. Thus, in October 2020, two initiatives were invited to a transnational meeting of the network, to share their performance in the common objective of territorialising the food systems framework at regional level.

[Pays de Condruces](#), a dynamic and experienced Local Action Group, located in Wallonie (Belgium), with proven experience in URBACT ([Agri-Urban](#) and [Biocanteens](#)) presented the main pillars of its model for building a food ecosystem. Among others, the support to producers' cooperatives, the scaling up to create a food hub, the implementation of a farm incubator... To highlight as one of the critical aspects for the success of these strategies, their necessary temporary continuity, as consolidating them requires planning and acting in the medium and long term.

The second initiative invited was the [REFRAME](#) project, operational between 2016 and 2020 under the support of the INTERREG North Sea Region programme and bringing together a partnership with partners from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. The project faced a series of challenges among which the loss of local autonomy in production, loss of employment, limited innovation, as well as the problems for health and the environment derived from the global food system. A scenario clearly connected with the Sustainable Development Goals and European policies, especially the "Farm to Fork" strategy, which focuses on solutions based on strengthening the role of short channels.

We recognised with both initiatives the importance of properly mapping the reality on which we intervene, defining the geographical area, the actors and exchange networks, the flows between the parts of the chain, as well as the added value in the socio-cultural, environmental or economic field.

Another key recommendation is to translate these ambitious objectives into concrete local actions, such as increasing the percentage of local produce in supermarkets, promoting forms of participation and governance that are flexible but are designed to consolidate, implementing appropriate forms of communication and interaction between producers and consumers, establishing links of exchange and trust, experimenting and testing new forms of marketing and distribution.



POST-COVID LESSONS FOR THE REGIONALISATION OF FOOD SYSTEMS

As we have been discussing, an immediate reflection after the impact of the interlinked crises we are experiencing is the need to foster sustainable regional food chains to create a healthy living environment and a healthy economy. In some ways, crises such as the one provoked by the pandemic suggest a re-prioritisation of geographical territory over the market. Coming from a system where regional, national and international markets overlap, situations such as the one experienced here invite us to think that these processes can be reversed in favour of short value chains, exemplified by a wide range of initiatives such as local producers, municipal markets, consumer cooperatives or food hubs.

According to a report by IPES FOOD²⁷, there are four structural weaknesses that are affecting the vulnerability of food systems in relation to price escalation and the large impact on inflation. These are import dependencies; dependencies intrinsic to production systems; market dysfunctionality and opacity; and vicious circles caused by conflict, climate change, poverty and food insecurity. The report warns of the dangers of trying to address these structural failures with short-term solutions such as suspending environmental regulations or fragmenting responses into urgent fixes. In particular, IPES FOOD is committed to global interventions that prevent speculation on the price of public goods, together with other regional measures aimed at guaranteeing strategic reserves, promoting diversified production and trade systems, as well as cutting the chain of dependencies through productive diversity and agroecology.

We can see how the response to these structural imbalances can be more coherent and viable if approached at small and medium territorial and political scales, as affirmed by a comparative study carried out in households and City_Region Food Systems, to learn about the effect of COVID-19²⁸. An important conclusion learned is that small cities are better prepared to cope with system shocks. They are cities with more balanced socio-demographic characteristics and less socio-economic fracture between richer and poorer households. The articulation of these micro-regional spaces, connecting functional groups of municipalities on a coherent scale, is the proposal that we at **FOOD CORRIDORS**

encourage. In short, it is a question of promoting the same strategy of exchange of proximity goods as proposed on an urban scale by cities such as Paris with its [15-minute city' plan](#).

After assessing the vulnerability of food systems to the impact of different crises, the solutions that academics such as Blay-Palmer and institutions such as FAO and RUAF promote with a view to making them more resilient²⁹ point in this direction. In this sense, they point out three critical points from which to reinforce this City Region Food Systems (CRFS) approach. First, focusing on multi-stakeholder engagement across rural and urban spaces, including adaptive governance models; second, providing the optimal infrastructure to make these CRFS more robust, considering transport, storage and digitisation; third, guiding systemic planning that goes beyond silos to take into account the role of policy in facilitating or thwarting the sustainability of food systems based on interconnected spatial rings of supply. In short, a response based on the consideration that all "food systems are place-based"³⁰.

27 IPES FOOD (2022). Another perfect storm? Available online at: https://ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/AnotherPerfectStorm.pdf

28 Millard, J. et al (2022). European Food Systems in a Regional Perspective: A Comparative Study of the Effect of COVID-19 on Households and City-Region Food Systems. Available online on: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsufs.2022.844170/full>

29 Blay-Palmer, A. et al (2022). City Region Food Systems: Building Resilience to COVID-19 and other shocks. Available online on: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/13/3/1325>

30 Blay-Palmer, A. et al (2018). Validating the city region food system approach: Enacting inclusive, transformational city region food systems. Available online on: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/10/5/1680>

3.6. Food Governance and city policy councils

Despite the recognition that the global food system is responsible for around 25% of global emissions, and given the role played by initiatives such as the Glasgow Declaration on Food and Climate, it is striking how little attention has been paid to this relationship at the recent COP 26 summit.

It calls for the need to boost drivers that highlight the transition alternatives within the food system's complex web under different forms of democratisation and the promotion of territorial governance initiatives.

The acceleration of this necessary transition must be based on solid and committed public policies, the changes to be implemented by the private sector,

the drive of organised society, and the support of research and innovation.

To know more about *Public policies & governance for territorial food systems*, we invite you to read [an article](#) published on our network's **FOOD CORRIDORS** website.

During the learning and exchange activity of our network, we have been able to deepen our understanding of one of the most tried instruments for testing new forms of democratic governance in the design and implementation of Integrated Food Plans, namely the Food Policy Councils (FPC). Here are a few paragraphs referring to the CPFs as they appeared in the article:

Food Policy Councils (FPC) stand out among these food governance structures. This structure promotes open discussion between actors with different points of view and interests, often relying on external advice and the cities' commitment to its implementation. However, some structures are independent of political control and, therefore, are less institutionalized and hybrid formulas. They combine the existence of assembly-based participation mechanisms with others based on specific working groups and coordination and management instruments. Several references can be cited in the EU framework, where cities such as Ghent, Amsterdam, or Milan show solid initiatives and a rich repertoire of localised initiatives in the United Kingdom. Regional federated initiatives

are launched in some regions, such as Wallonia in Belgium. The integration of several municipalities in the Luca area (Italy) is an example of this innovative scenario of food governance adapted to small towns.



Source:
[Gent en Garde](#)

A recent study (Fesenfeld, 2016) proposes a direct linkage and supervision by the Mayors' office and an organisation that combines three essential pillars. On the one hand, the collective of actors involved in the FPC avoids internal conflicts arising from the rigid administrative structures under which Food Policy Councils can be created and managed. On the other, a technical committee is in charge of the permanent mapping of the local food system, and finally, the figure of a general manager or coordinator of the food area. It seems clear that, being innovative organisational models, these initiatives in a transition towards sustainable food systems also need new governance

approaches to address the stress factors they face, such as internal growth, the decentralisation of tasks, the territorial nature, limited access to local resources and the divergence of values among the actors involved, among others.

Some authors (Manganelli et al., 2019) speak of hybrid governance characterised by patterns of interaction between actors, aligning a purpose towards interests whose common goals channel the connection between them even though they belong to different organisational and institutional spheres.

In **FOOD CORRIDORS**, we have insisted on the importance of promoting the continuity of the Local Groups created for the project, as they show their capacity to become stable mechanisms for participation and democratic governance of the food system at the territorial level. This has been demonstrated by LAG TARTU COUNTY in Estonia or CIM COIMBRA in Portugal by adapting existing working or participation groups to the needs of a new project. Similarly, other partners, such as the Unione Dei Comuni Della Bassa Romagna, have proposed the creation of a stable participatory body called Food Parliament as an essential point of their Integrated Action Plan.

To better understand the mechanisms for creating and managing Food Policy Councils, from theory to practice, we invited Alessa Heuser to participate in a transnational meeting of our **FOOD CORRIDORS** network. Alessa is the author of "[An advice module for food policy councils](#)" (World Food Institute — Institut für Welternährung e.V, 2019) and a member of the Office for International Relations in Dortmund.

The text referred to is a guide that details the steps to set up an FPC, set its objectives, define its internal organisational model and financial channels, political and administrative articulation, as well as references

to the cases of German cities such as Frankfurt, Berlin or Cologne. In Alessa Heuser's opinion, FPCs are mechanisms that revolve around people, place, and political action. On the social level, they require interaction, motivation, and an appropriate mix of voluntary and professional work. In terms of place, it is essential to have adequate knowledge of the area, that is, a baseline study that helps ground the action in a way that aligns with the particular identity, boundaries, and political aspects. It is a political structure that aims to guide control over what we eat, acting politically within the framework of power relations between civil society and municipal government.

To complement this conceptual framing of FPCs, we recommend watching a [webinar](#) held by the [FoodSHIFT2030](#) project (EU, Horizon 2020), where the perspectives of several European cities (Berlin, Ghent, and Amsterdam), with different approaches and trajectories around FPC organisation, citizen engagement and the relationship with local government, were presented.



The FoodSHIFT2030 team.

3.7. Intermunicipal food policies

What forms of governance integrate territorially but also horizontally the local administration with other cities in the same functional area and vertically with other intermediate administrations in the region and the state? How do we translate all this into organisational forms that effectively facilitate the integration of stakeholders and promote mechanisms for the design, implementation, and Management of food action plans?

These have been questions that have been at the heart of the work of a network such as **FOOD CORRIDORS**. On the one hand, because the thematic axis that articulates the network is the analysis and promotion, where appropriate, of territorial models that offer alternative solutions for reconnecting food production and consumption with suitably reasoned functional areas. In this sense, there are academic proposals and initiatives that have proposed so-called "food basins" or "bio-districts" for this purpose. In other cases, political-administrative organisations such as regions or provinces in some EU states have been justified. We believe that in each context, the spatial determination around which to mobilise a territorial food strategy has to consider aspects of a demographic, social, environmental and economic nature, as well as the way in which different stakeholders operate. In short, it can be a variable and enriching geometry of differentiated proposals.

On the other hand, these questions have been very pertinent within **FOOD CORRIDORS**, given the very nature of the network's founding partnership, where priority was given to the presence of groups of municipalities in the form of inter-municipalities of a public nature, as well as mixed formulas that integrate other private and social entities alongside public administrations. The main objective of this prioritisation is related to the need to scale up spatially and quantitatively in productive terms, in order to gain competitiveness and, on the other hand, to introduce forms of governance that facilitate the

transition and the stable formation of management instruments capable of generating adequate organisational responses and human and financial resources.

On this point, it once again seemed appropriate, as part of the **FOOD CORRIDORS** network's learning and knowledge-sharing activities, to invite a researcher who is also involved in an inter-municipal food policy initiative to share her thoughts and recommendations with our partners. Thus, Professor Sabrina Arcuri, a researcher at the University of Pisa (Italy), participated in a **FOOD CORRIDORS** online transnational meeting in spring 2022. The case study³¹ she presented concerned the first Intermunicipal Food Policy (IFP) created in Italy, *Piana del Cibo*, by bringing together five municipalities for the coordinated and participatory Management of food policy through a collaborative governance agreement that goes beyond their administrative and functional boundaries.



³¹ Arcuri, S. et al. (2022). Food policy integration in small cities: The case of intermunicipal governance in Lucca, Italy. Available online at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0743016721003661>



Lucca, Italy

It is a process initiated in 2018 with the signing of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) and the development of an initial diagnosis, followed by several public consultations, a process of analysis and formulation of politically ratified policies, and finally submitted to the open judgement of citizens and stakeholders.

The governance model combines a thematic approach (with working tables and technical coordination) with a political council and an open assembly, the latter two chaired by the same person.

The work carried out has made it possible:

- to discover the role of food as a catalyst for action in multiple other areas such as circularity, health, education, or social inclusion;
- to carry out actions to visualise, analyse and agree on shared values and ideas for intervention as well as the development of coordinated and integrated policies;
- and finally, to strengthen political commitment through accountability and participation.

The main objectives are to achieve a better understanding of the food system in this area of about 160,000 inhabitants; to make food supply and consumption more efficient through the coordination of actors and the reduction of food waste; to improve the well-being of the population through the dissemination of healthy and sustainable lifestyles; to strengthen agricultural production and facilitate access to local food for all citizens; and finally, to work on common rules.

The IFP governance model combines two distinct levels:

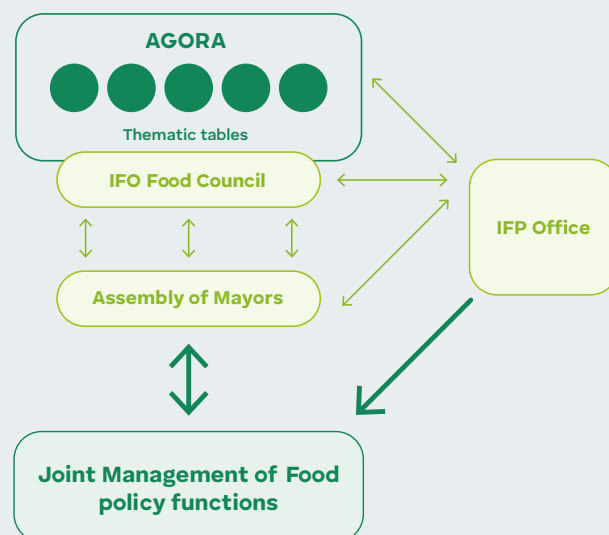
- I. Joint Management of food policy functions among 5 City Boards and,**
- II. Participatory governance ad hoc through the Agora or open assembly, the Food Council designated members, the political Assembly of Mayors and the Food Policy Office.**

Policy integration is complex and includes three interconnected levels of governance:

- I. Between departments and sectors with each municipal government**
- II. Among the five City Boards**
- III. Between citizens' and other food system stakeholders' engagement and municipal decision making.**

Professor Arcuri points out some facilitating elements as well as obstacles to be taken into account, such as the adoption of shared management through an agreement model that determines:

- the framework of representation, responsibilities, funding, etc.;
- the food policy agenda and the complex circle of participation;
- the critical and hybrid role played by the Food Policy Office.



Source: Arcuri et al. 2022

LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

There are increasing examples of cities of different sizes and regions actively promoting sustainable food systems in their respective administrative and functional areas. This has led the European Union itself, through the European Committee of the Regions, to carry out a study³² on the subject, with the dual aim of understanding the different roles played by such public actors, as well as highlighting the contribution that such action can make to the implementation of the *Farm to Fork* strategy.

The study shows this rich panorama and brings it together in an appropriate way, even if the different cases show permeable typologies. Thus, they are presented in different governance profiles, according to the leadership and space played by public administrations, third parties and citizens:

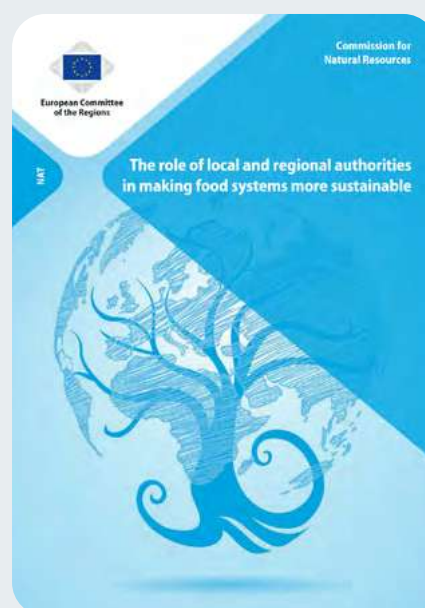
I. Public Management through the aggregation of public authorities: the Food Council managed by the Menorca Insular Council (Spain); Associations of local authorities as eco-model regions in Bavaria, Germany; Contractual partnership for short supply chains and local food awareness among the municipalities of the Heart of Slovenia.

II. Networking with third public and/or private parties: a multi-actor partnership to implement the regional food strategy of Jämtland Härjedalen, Sweden; A multi-actor district for the development of organic agriculture in the Province of Salerno, Italy.

III. Networking with third public and/or private parties and citizens: The food policy council of Bordeaux Métropole, France; Quadruple-helix based food governance for a sustainable food system in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, the Netherlands; Participatory governance for the future Territorial Food Systems of Centre-Val de Loire Region, France.

As can be seen from the list of cases mentioned above, this is a movement that extends geographically throughout the countries of the European Union, bringing together populations ranging from just over one hundred thousand to over two million inhabitants. Another essential aspect of the analysis to be taken into account in initiatives to be implemented is the degree and level of participation of the actors. Thus, there are cases where only one public administration is involved, focused on promoting horizontal integration between different departments. Others, where aggregation of municipalities is configured. Somewhere the presence of multiple public and private stakeholders is a priority. Others, finally, where the citizenry is also an active part of the process.

A universe to be explored, a cooperation methodology to be encouraged.



³² European Committee of the Regions (2020). The role of local and regional authorities in making food systems more sustainable. Available online at: https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/Sustainable_food_systems.pdf



Centrum | Korenmarkt, Gent
Food Truck Festival.

3.8. European Regions of Gastronomy and sustainable food systems

"... The great paradox of convenience food is that the 'added value' in it is all in the part (the cooking) we could easily do ourselves. The part most of us could not provide (the raw ingredients) is the one we seem most reluctant to pay for. Strange, isn't it?"

Cooking is about much more than chopping up a few vegetables and throwing them in a pan, or putting a ready-made pizza in the microwave. Because cooks control not just what goes out of a kitchen, but what comes into it, they are a vital link in the food chain – the guardians of our gastronomic know-how. Only cooks know how to source raw food, tell its quality, make it taste delicious, manage and store it, make use of leftovers. Few skills have a greater collective impact on our quality of life. People who don't cook don't use local food shops, invite their friends around for dinner, know where food comes from, realise what they're putting into their bodies, understand the impact of their diet on the planet – or educate their children in any of the above."

Carolyn Steel³³

Food is culture. Culture is a fundamental pillar of food. In its productive aspect as a compendium of a particular know-how, in its preservation and preparation, in the way access to and distribution of food is organised, the way it is served and shared, waste, forms of reuse or redistribution, and even the way it is rescued or given as a gift, are elements that create spaces of reference and characterise quality, differentiating and enriching it until it shapes one of the most fascinating complex systems created by human beings, the environment and the practices carried out.

The link with the origin, the differentiation, the quality associated with the raw material and the place, the applied knowledge, have guided the creation of brands at origin, their protection, their orientation to the market on the basis of this added value. Protected Designations of Origin, Protected Geographical Indications and organic production are

³³ Carolyn Steel. *Hungry City: How Food Shapes Our Lives*. Random House. Kindle edition.

the triad on which a [long-standing European policy](#) for the protection and promotion of food quality has been developed. In addition, the unique identity of a product, its geographical origin and cultural practices, as is the case in mountain areas, but also in specific products, sometimes linked to the know-how of producers or processors, have given rise to other quality brands and labels, which have been joined by those that promote and identify sustainability.

Many of them are subject to certification processes aimed at guaranteeing compliance with each brand's own regulations. It is true that the profusion of these instruments makes the production and marketing process more expensive, can generate some confusion, can make access to certain foods prohibitive for impoverished sectors of the population, and a series of difficulties and barriers surrounding these products, not least the small scale of production and often the extreme fragmentation of the production and processing sector.

However, these are quality brands that are recognised and valued in the market and can also have a positive influence on standardised production.

No less relevant in this colourful mosaic is the culinary and gastronomic event that revolves around food, making it a pleasure, a creative instrument, and a universe capable of adding golden lines to this strategy of differentiating between different foods according to their identity.

Therefore, also at **FOOD CORRIDORS**, this cultural foundation of food has been a prevailing objective, picked up in our conversations and exchange of experiences, developed as a communication resource in particular through a wide range of videos, and of course as a central focus of some of the Small Scale Actions developed and some of the actions finally included in the Integrated Action Plans created by our partners.

To learn more about the topic of quality marks and sustainable food systems, we invite you to read the [article](#) we dedicated to this topic in June 2021.

EUROPEAN REGIONS OF GASTRONOMY

Unfortunately, the majority of the population today is as ignorant about the origin, characteristics, real price, value chain, and impacts surrounding food production and consumption as the British were about [spaghetti production in 1957](#).

Gastronomy and cooking are a strategy to be co-producers of our food and determine a sustainable food system. Hence the importance of projects like **FOOD CORRIDORS** and initiatives like the European Region of Gastronomy to start to change direction and move towards a food system based on principles of agroecology and food sovereignty.

Since we learned when we started working on implementing the **FOOD CORRIDORS** project that both Slovenia and the Coimbra region had been awarded as [European Regions of Gastronomy](#) in 2021, we recognised that we were facing a more than fortunate coincidence. For this reason, we held a webinar in May 2021 to learn more about this initiative. And no one better than Dr. Diane Dodd, President of International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism (IGCAT), the body that promotes it, to introduce the subject.

IGCAT is a non-profit institute established in 2012, aimed at *"empowering local communities by raising awareness of the importance to protect and promote distinct regional food, culture, arts and natural assets as part of sustainable and balanced tourism and development strategies. This is essential to safeguard our planet, health, wellness and local economies"*. Its objectives include promoting healthy and sufficient food for all and good for the planet; fostering innovation, creativity and job creation; running educational programmes; stimulating urban-rural connection, as well as encouraging the practice of sustainable tourism and generally healthy lifestyles.

Its activities include the [Food Film Menu](#), [The Top Websites for Fodie Travelers Award](#), and the [European Young Chef Award](#).



European Young Chef Award 2016

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF
HOSPITALITY MANAGE
AND CULINARY ARTS
HOTEL SCHOOL SANT POL DE MAR

Satam Misomikes



European Young Chef Award

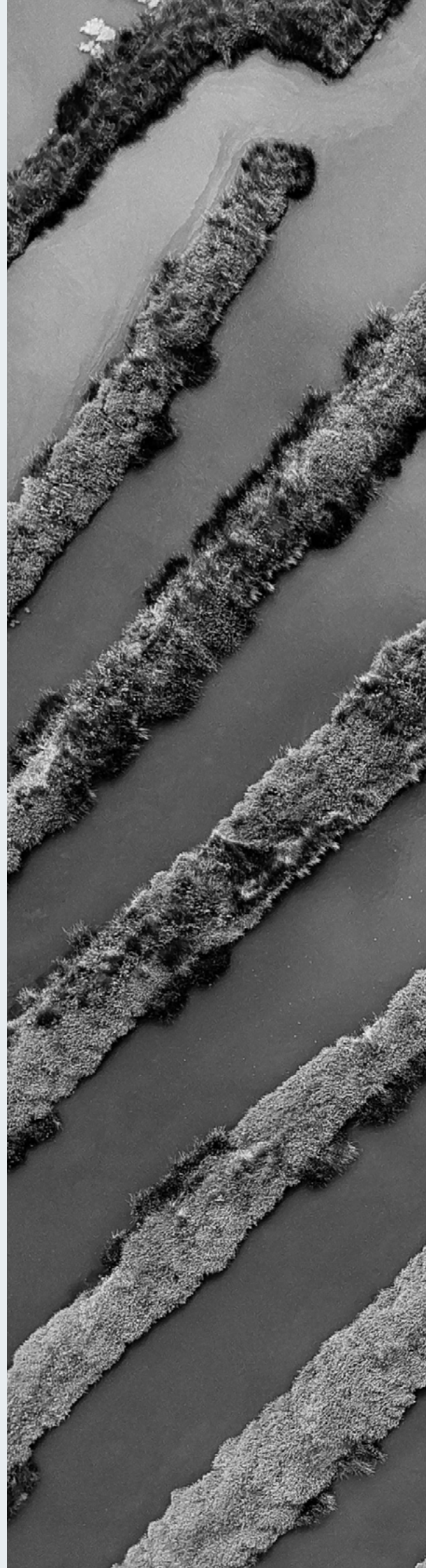
European Young Chef Award 2016 - The winner,
Satamatios Misomikes from the South Aegean Region
presented the dish Salas, the joyiness of a birth.

The main themes of **FOOD CORRIDORS** (culture identity & territorial food brands, food policies, short food supply chains, governance, environmental resources, circular economy...) are well aligned with the objectives of the IGCAT. A coincidence is confirmed when we look at the elements that underpinned the candidacy and the programme of activities with which Slovenia and the Coimbra region have celebrated their recognition as European Regions of Culture.

Slovenia's commitment to a sustainable gastronomic tourism strategy is based on three pillars - people, nature, and sustainability - and seven criteria: authenticity, efficiency, nature-oriented, waste-free, impeccable, responsible to the environment, and its employees. The Slovenian gastronomic tourism brand covers a total of 24 gastronomic regions, where more than 400 dishes, drinks, and ingredients have been characterised.

The Coimbra Region, through the CIM Coimbra, articulates its participation in **FOOD CORRIDORS**, within the URBACT Programme, and celebrates its distinction as a European Region of Gastronomy intending to support short food production and consumption channels, training the actors involved in the gastronomic sector, improving the attractiveness of the tourist offer and supporting local productions, sometimes sustained as Designations of Origin, as in the case of [Serra da Estrela Cheeses](#), producer associations such as the salt producers of the [Figueira da Foz](#) salt mines, or private companies that export their products internationally under the Portugal brand, as in the case of [Liqueur Beirao](#). Initiatives that well-articulated, together with others, can bring a coherent territorial strategy to the Coimbra Region .

We find in dynamisation, communication, or training activities such as the ones we have been discussing, key pillars for improving the challenges we face in socio-cultural, production, and consumption terms when it comes to addressing models of transition towards sustainable food systems.



Saltpans of Figueira da Foz, Portugal



Chapter IV.

The Food Corridors library

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4.1. Alba Iulia

A LIVING LAB IN THE CITY'S CENTER PROMOTES PERMACULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION



Alba Iulia Municipality is the local public administration focused on the sustainable development and well-being of its local community formed by over 74.000 inhabitants, by providing modern public services. The vision of the Municipality as a local authority is to become a more attractive city to live, work, and invest in. In achieving this vision, the Municipality is focused on four main strategic options: (SO1) Alba Iulia - a smart, accessible, and cohesive city, (SO2) Alba Iulia — a green city with efficient public services, (SO3) Alba Iulia — a competitive and creative city, and (SO4) Alba Iulia — a European cultural and tourist attraction.

The metropolitan area is essential both for the integrated development of the area as a competitive pole, but also for enhancing the connection between urban and rural areas. Taking into consideration that the local farmers live mostly in the villages near Alba Iulia (Ciugud, Sîntimbru, Ighiu, Cricău, Galda de Jos,

Întregalde and Mihalț, etc.), the existing transportation infrastructure is essential as it enables the agri-urban-rural connection.

The short distances together with the existence of a single public transport operator within the entire metropolitan area (a privately owned company that ensures the public transportation system), enable the physical connection between local farmers and the city of Alba Iulia. The main advantage of the existing public transportation system is that it provides integrated public passenger transport — interconnected transport services within a well-defined geographical area, having a single information provider service, a unique charging system, and a single transportation schedule. As a result, local farmers are encouraged to bring and sell within the city their local, organic products while the urban citizens can go to the countryside to shop locally.



One of the city's development goals is to become a European Gastronomic Destination by 2030, which will directly contribute to the Municipality's vision of becoming a more attractive city to live, work and invest in. In this regard, Alba Iulia is now trying to leverage the stage represented by the citadel Vauban Alba Carolina, with events and tourist attractions to lure tourists to visit and also to return to the city. The Vauban Citadel is unique in the world for its artistic patterns and is historically important in Romania. The entire citadel has become a stage, a diamond that needs to be discovered, and that the local community wishes to valorize.

Due to the socio-economic development during the last years, the HORECA industry flourished following the increased private investments, and visitors in the city increased too which positively impacted the local economy. Gastronomy and local wines are developing in parallel with the increase in tourists and visitors. There are local resources for food and drinks production, while environmentally friendly, ecological agriculture food and wine would get an even higher value.

In the summer of 2021, in a year of many trials and tribulations due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the municipality managed to bring a breath of “fresh air” to the citizens.

Thus, through the Food Corridors project, a series of outdoor events were organized, in the heart of the citadel, in „Gradinescu” site, an urban garden open to the community, which includes several areas: orchard, with at least 40 trees and 70 fruit bushes; an event space; a relaxation and socializing area, with shade and hammocks; an educational garden

with vegetables and herbs; the flowering meadow together with the insect habitat. <https://gradinescu.ro/project/gradina-din-cetate-alba-iulia/>

The main objective was to improve the knowledge of local farmers in Alba Iulia and neighboring localities in the field of permaculture and organic farming, sustainable agriculture and to promote a healthy living style of the local community.

Also, by organizing these events, the municipality managed to facilitate access of local farmers to expertise in the area of organic farming but also in other fields such as: selling and merchandising products, creating associations and cooperations with other farmers, increasing their visibility at local level, increasing local supply chains of agro-foods, etc; increase the access of local citizens to locally produced agro-products which are healthy and fresh; increase visibility and capacity of Gradinescu area/project which is an innovative concept through which school children learn about permaculture and organic farming, and even to make Alba Iulia the most friendly marketplace for local farmers in the county. Another objective was for the local farmers to learn about selling more efficiently and even building associations/cooperatives which would strengthen their power when selling to local supermarkets.

The events were as follows:

Introduction course in permaculture, between 5-6 June 2021, number of participants: 22

Study visit to 2 farms in Alba County, on June 26, 2021, number of participants: 20

Drying of herbs, vegetables, fruits in the plant dryer, on July 22, 2021, number of participants: 30

Compost - the richness of the Garden. What is it? How come? From what? How long?, on August 5, 2021, number of participants: 25

Free Seed Workshop, September 11, 2021, number of participants: 25.

Added value of the events organized:

→ increased capacity for local farmers in the area of permaculture and organic farming but also

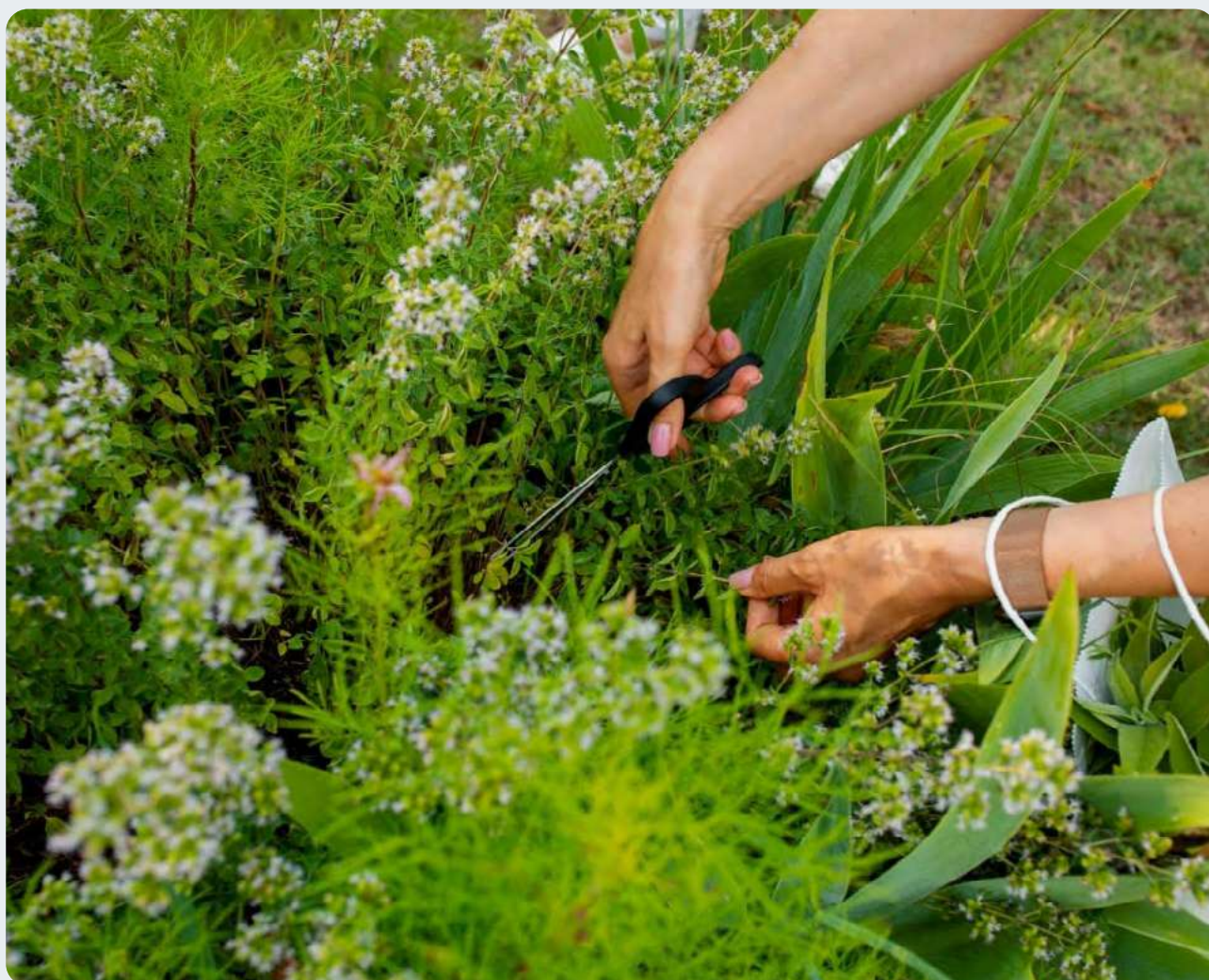
raised visibility;

→ increased cooperation amongst local farmers, increased knowledge and expertise about production methods, selling and merchandising agri-products;

→ increased access of urban citizens to locally produced agro-products that are healthy and fresh made;

→ strengthened connections between the municipality and local producers;

→ raised awareness of the Gradinescu project in the area of local school children, given the high importance of continuing the teaching process among school children regarding agriculture and permaculture.





In total, the events attracted over 61 people, working in various fields such as agriculture (farmers), education (teachers), health, economics, accounting, psychology, marketing, engineering, architecture or inactive people in the field of work such as pupils, students or retirees who are passionate about gardening, or people who are involved in farming with their families.

“In Alba Iulia and the surrounding villages we have so many ancestral resources in terms of food and food culture that our ambition and motivation to become the European gastronomic capital by 2030 are fully justified. We intend to capitalize, adapt, reinterpret and stylize the local gastronomy that for centuries has

made the Mures Valley, Sebes Valley, or Ampoi Valley famous and proud, right up to the gateway of the Apuseni Mountains. Of course, we cannot do this without the involvement of the local small farmers, HoReCa representatives, and the entire local community, but we have assumed the role of a link in this courageous approach and I have no doubt that it will be a great success. We rely, among other things, on the experience gained in the Food Corridors project, which helped us to understand more clearly the infinite possibilities of exploiting this huge Romanian treasure.”

Official declaration of Mr. Gabriel Codru Pleșa,
Mayor of Alba Iulia Municipality.



4.2. Bassa Romagna

THE EXPERIENCE OF FOOD CORRIDORS ACTING LOCALLY

“Combating food waste in Bassa Romagna: the case of Velocibo - l’Emporio solidale”

THE CONTEXT

The territory of the Union of Bassa Romagna Municipalities is located at the heart of the Province of Ravenna, in the Emilia-Romagna Region of Italy. The Union has an overall population of 101.757 inhabitants (ISTAT updated to 31/12/21) and it is characterized by urban centers of medium-little dimensions. In fact, it consists of 9 Municipalities (Alfonsine, Bagnacavallo, Bagnara di Romagna, Conselice, Cotignola, Fusignano, Lugo, Massa Lombarda and Sant’Agata sul Santerno), with the main Municipality being Lugo with 32.243 inhabitants.

The analysis of the food supply chain in Bassa Romagna highlights that low-knowledge services (personal services, catering, etc.) represent the most important share of the economy. There are some large-sized companies, but the Cooperatives are the most common company typology, with a long history and tradition in the area. For what concerns distribution, there are mainly large-scale retail stores, but markets have a big tradition too. In recent times, organic markets and producers' sales in those markets are increasing, as well as direct sales in the farms, or in a coordinated way.

Two of the main strengths of the Bassa Romagna district are therefore the potential of the agri-food chain (with a high quality of typical products), together with a substantial endowment of educational, social and health services, well balanced among the nine main towns. For these reasons, Bassa Romagna is also known as the “Terra del Buonvivere” (Land of Fine Living), a land on a human scale.

However, the economic context of the Bassa Romagna, in line with the national one, was severe-

ly hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, which showed the importance of food policy not only in terms of economic assets, but also for what concerns its social implications. On one hand the lockdown as well as the economic crisis that is accompanying the pandemic has shown that a growing number of citizens has no access to an acceptable quantity and quality of food. On the other hand, the current food chain produces a high percentage of waste, underused raw material as well as inefficient uses of natural and social resources. These contradictions have raised significant public attention: it was somehow felt that all actors in the food chain have a role to play in food waste prevention and reduction, including farmers, food manufacturers and processors, caterers and retailers.

THE CASE OF VELOCIBO - L’EMPORIO SOLIDALE: MAIN GOALS, DEPLOYMENT AND FUNDS

A very fortunate coincidence has meant that in this terrific time, Velocibo - l’Emporio solidale, was just inaugurated (September 2019) in the Municipality of Lugo. Velocibo is a place in which its many volunteers gather and reorganize food surpluses coming from supermarkets, restaurants, producers and canteens so that the families of Bassa Romagna suffering hardship can collect what they need for free. First of its kind in Bassa Romagna, it represents the optimization of the work that the Solidarity

Center along with other associations were already doing in the territory to meet the primary needs of almost 250 families in a state of necessity. During the inauguration, Mauro Bazzocchi, president of the Solidarity Center, said: "Let's go and get what others don't use to create ink with which to write, silently, stories of life".

Velocibo works at two levels:

1) Delivery: hot meals and food surpluses are picked up from Camst (an Italian company that operates in the catering sector) and from the supermarkets available to collaborate, and then distributed door-to-door;

2) In store: the families go to the emporium to collect what they need. Velocibo is the result of a teamwork between the Municipality of Lugo, the Social Services of the Union of Municipalities of Bassa Romagna, voluntary associations and private parties, including Utensileria Lughese. The project is led by the Solidarity Center, in collaboration with the Vito Montanari Table, which brings together voluntary catholic associations and with the contribution of the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio e Banca del Monte di Lugo, in collaboration with the Crédit Agricole Italia Charity Fund. The Project is

co-financed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy through the Emilia-Romagna region and the Service Center for Provincial Volunteering.

RESULTS AND ONGOING ISSUES

Velocibo grew step by step: at first the volunteers set up an office whose main goal was helping unemployed people in finding a job. But evidence showed that many of them were also having issues with food poverty: it was a prominent issue in Bassa Romagna at the point that they decided to concentrate only on that.

They started going house-to-house to deliver baskets and boxes with food to people indicated by the Union of Municipalities of Bassa Romagna Social Services. The initiative was such a success that both donors and recipients of surplus food rose significantly: it therefore became necessary to have a physical space where to stock such a large amount of food.

The Union of Municipalities of Bassa Romagna provided the place (the emporium) and gave the necessary boost to enhance Velocibo - l'Emporio



The Mayor of Lugo Davide Ranalli (at the center) with Mauro Bazzocchi (first on the right) at the inauguration, 14th of September 2019



solidale as the referent point for no waste and solidarity activities in the territory.

It now helps a large number of families and it was an essential service during the pandemic that helped the Social Services get to people in need all across Bassa Romagna, in a perfect win-win example for donors and recipients that link the war against food waste with social inclusion.

CONNECTION WITH FOOD CORRIDORS AND IAP STRATEGY

The themes of the reduction of food waste and the circular economy for food were addressed during the first two meetings of our URBACT LOCAL GROUP (ULG), which were aimed at developing initiatives that support a responsible use of food resources through an inclusive and supportive perspective of marginalized social categories or groups of citizens.

The most active among the members, as expected, was [Velocibo - l'Emporio solidale](#), who gave its fundamental contribution in terms of experience and deep knowledge of the issue.

The first meeting, focused on Social - no waste and solidarity themes, was the occasion to work together on innovative ideas in order to develop local initiatives that aimed at a responsible use of food resources. The meeting started with a case study presentation that encouraged the brainstorming activity which brought out ideas, successively selected and evaluated through four criteria: feasibility, economy, sustainability and concreteness.

The second meeting was focused on finding an operative idea and identifying an action to address that would be included in the Integration Action Plan in order to develop local initiatives aiming at achieving a responsible use of food resources. Among several ideas that emerged, the ULG identified the “Parlamento del cibo” (the Food Parliament) as the first Action to be developed within the Integrated Action Plan. Participants defined the main characteristics of the idea and the role the Parliament should have.

Accordingly, the Parliament was created to:

1. Be a permanent working group that facilitates the coordination among local stakeholders in the agri-food sector;
2. Contribute of sharing ideas and debate about measures related to the elaboration of tailored food policies;
3. Disseminate the group's approach during meetings that could take the form of “roadshows” hosted in different places of the territory.

Yet importantly, participants considered the Parliament as the way to enhance cooperation between private companies, farms, local institutions and citizens that could lead to a sharing economy. The exchange of food was identified indeed as a mechanism for achieving a sustainable city by reducing consumption, conserving resources, preventing waste and providing new forms of socio-economic relationships.



4.3. CIM Região de Coimbra

AN INTEGRATED AND MULTILEVEL APPROACH ON FOOD POLICIES IN COIMBRA REGION

Local products and sustainable food have a prominent place in Coimbra Region. In fact, gastronomy is one of the most important and distinctive sectors of this Region, a rich intangible cultural heritage, one of the most important in terms of the authenticity of this territory.

The Intermunicipal Community of Coimbra Region (CIMRC) is a public association of 19 municipalities from the Central Region of Portugal who is responsible for promoting the planning and management of the strategy of economic, social and environmental development of the covered territory, linking municipal investments of inter-municipal interest, participating in the management of programs supporting regional development, and planning the actions of local authorities. It also plays an essential role of mediator with the services of the Central Administration, in several areas like education, mobility, health, natural resources and land use planning.

Coimbra Region has food strategy at the top of its priorities and defends sustainable food production systems as key to ensuring that future generations consume safe food and follow healthy diets. It believes, therefore, that an exception at the level of the public procurement code is the solution to acquire food products in the Region in a sustainable way, as well as to foster the agricultural economy.

Our vision is to transform the Coimbra Region in a fully connected regional hub for sustainable food production, consumption, research and innovation and for that we have defined as priority actions for the Coimbra Region Food Strategy 2022-2030 which aim:

1. Coimbra Circular Region – to decrease the use of raw materials, encourage creativity and innovation, stimulate job creation and contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about bio economy and circular economy, as well as empower various agents (companies, entrepreneurs), promoting innovation and competitiveness of these sectors.
2. Coimbra Network of Local Producers – to create an effective, sustainable and long-lasting urban-rural connection, effectively activate and engage a network of producers around sustainable food approaches, generate notoriety for local food products and attract people and investment.
3. Raising Awareness on Food Consumption – to characterize and disseminate the characteristics of a healthy and sustainable ("climate-friendly") diet, raise awareness among the general population of the need to change food consumption patterns, to achieve environmental sustainability goals and public health, promote the Mediterranean diet and reduce inequalities in nutrition.
4. Framework Agreements for School Canteens with Sustainability Criteria – to give value endogenous resources, increase the quality of food provided at the level of school meals and encourage the use of environmental and social sustainability criteria in public purchases.
5. Food Corridors School Labs – to promote a set of educational actions with local schools focused on the Food Corridors main sub-themes (School Labs).
6. Regional Products Pop-up Shop – to develop innovative approaches to short distribution food channels, in the form of a regional pop-up shop and promote sustainable local food production systems.



As a signatory of the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration, Coimbra Region wants to make the transition to net-zero a just transition with people and communities at its heart. Therefore we recognize the role of local food systems and agriculture in fighting climate change, and the role of cities in achieving this goal.

We support the food exception in the European public procurement code from the French movement “Un Plus Bio” which could open the door to reducing the inequalities that are widening between territories, while providing unprecedented flexibility and give a new opportunity to agricultural actors who produce, process and develop food that is desired by inhabitants and decision-makers, allowing to propose the notion of a 'public food service' based on food producers with a mission of general interest, taking into account the environmental services provided to the territory.

As a public entity the Coimbra Region is taking steps on working together with other regional authorities on working with Portuguese Ministries responsible for these matters: Agriculture and Food, and Territorial Cohesion.

Our bet is to continue to build opportunities to support the agri-food and gastronomy sectors, with a particular focus on innovation and sustainability, promoting consumption and sustainable production of regional products, which thus enhance the economy of our territory.

This is the only way we can help protect people against the impacts of future economic shocks by safeguarding our food security. Let's do it now!





4.4. LAG Tartu

FOOD AND CULTURE AS CROSS-TOPICS TO CONNECT RURAL AND URBAN AREAS

Article compiled by Kadri Püü (LAG Tartu County)*

An important asset for the development of the entire Tartu County and its food industry is the city of Tartu – the centre of the region has approximately 100.000 inhabitants and it boasts 1.000 years of history. Tartu is a magnet for Southern Estonian regions in terms of jobs, trade and a number of services, such as health care. Internationally, Tartu is primarily known as a university town with

long-standing traditions. In 2024, Tartu is the European Capital of Culture. The city will be supported by its adjacent municipalities of about 50.000 inhabitants (the seven parishes of Tartu County) and on a broader scale, all the Southern Estonian counties (Jõgeva, Põlva, Valga, Viljandi and Võru) will provide their support. In total, the six Southern Estonian counties are home to more than



Tartu 2024 Team and Town Hall. Kiur Kaasik

300.000 people. On 27th-29th of April 2022 a transnational meeting of URBACT cooperation project “Food Corridors” took place in Estonia, in Tartu County. The main emphasis of the meeting was on introducing the tastes and food culture of

Tartu County, inspiring examples and exciting initiatives to the project partners. In addition, the transnational meeting in Tartu County was an example of how food and culture connect urban and rural areas.

* Used sources: Tartu County Food Strategy 2022-2030, websites of Tartu County food network members



Tartu Fair

Partners visited during transnational meeting local food producers in Tartu County – [Järiste Wine Farm](#) (they grow grapes, apples, currants and make wine and cider from them) and [Viinamärdi Farm](#) (they produce Italian style cheeses). Both these farms have developed close links between rural and urban areas and are a good example of how small-scale production can be a destination for agro-tourism. The products of Järiste Wine Farm and Viinamärdi Farm can be purchased from several stores in Tallinn, Tartu and elsewhere in Estonia. Their products are also used by several restaurants in Tallinn and Tartu. In addition, both farms offer tastings of their products on site and excursions for families and groups of friends. Viinamärdi Farm also offers an active learning program for kindergartens and schools.

[The Farmers' Market of Tartu Lõunakeskus](#) also sells the products of Viinamärdi Farm and Järiste Wine Farm. The Farmers' Market of Tartu Lõunakeskus offers a sales opportunity for many small local producers, as well as the opportunity for people living in the city to buy the products of local small producers. The farmers' market was established in 2010 by the South Estonian LEADER action groups and local producers as an opportunity for small producers to bring their products to the market with ease. During the years of operation, the product range of the farmers' market has grown significantly (today, about 300 small producers sell



*Transnational meeting in Tartu County, visit to Viinamärdi Farm.
Kristiina Tammets*

their products on farmers' market) and the circle of buyers has expanded. Most of the goods come from Southern Estonia, but what is not in our area reaches the farmers' market from all over Estonia. The range of products includes teas, honey, sweets, fruits and vegetables, bakery products as well as handicrafts and natural cosmetics. Every day, the bakers of the farmers' market bake real rye bread and the confectioner makes delicious cakes and pies.



Farmers' Market of Tartu Lõunakeskus. Photo archive of Tartu County Development Association

The Farmers' Market of Tartu Lõunakeskus has additional stores in Pärnu and Tallinn, farmers' market's products can be ordered also via e-shop and food courier.

In Tartu County, alongside small producers, there are also larger ones. For example, "Food Corridors" partners visited Salvest Ltd, a domestic food

producer with 200 workers operating near Tartu. Salvest values local producers – they get most of their raw materials very close, within a radius of 100 km. Salvest's product range is very broad – pickled cucumbers, sauerkraut, jarred soups, baby food, jams and sauces, smoothies. There are almost 200 different products in their range.



Transnational meeting in Tartu County, visit to Salvest Ltd. Linda Suurmets

On the second day of "Food Corridors" transnational meeting in Tartu County, a unique area by Lake Peipus was visited – the [Onion Route](#). The Onion Route is a tourism network and a chain of meandering villages on the shore of the Lake Peipus, inhabited both by Russians and Estonians living side by side, and which is famous for its rich cultural diversity. Three cultures to explore here: Russian Old Believers, manor culture of the Baltic Germans and Estonian peasant culture.

The Onion Route offers participation in various handicraft workshops and classes where one can learn to cook traditional food from locally sourced ingredients. Alternatively, active visitors can go on heritage tours, play disc golf, try to conquer the Lake Peipus by kayak or sail, or cruise villages and local landscapes on a scooter or a kicksled. Photography enthusiasts can take part in workshops or even learn to make films. Of course, summer is the best

time to enjoy the Onion Route, especially on a bicycle. In winter, however, can have fun on Peipus as a fisherman.



Onion Route Buffet Day. NGO Onion Route

“Food Corridors” partners visited the members of the Onion Route network [Alatskivi Castle](#) and the castle restaurant, which skillfully combine the local culture, history and food experience and the local small producer Flavours of [Alatskivi Manor](#), a small family business producing artisanal wines, teas and other food souvenirs.

[NGO Community Kitchen of the Lake Peipus Region](#) carries out an important work of developing the food culture of the Lake Peipus region. During the “Food Corridors” transnational meeting, they offered to partners’ delegation a lunch made on site directly on the shore of Lake Peipus.

The association was established in 2011 to develop the Lake Peipus region through regional food culture and food themes, to promote community life, to encourage community members to deal with local food and to help overcome bottlenecks. Over the past years, the association has developed into a Lake Peipus food leader in the region, having launched the Peipsi Food Network, managed to bring the food of Lake Peipus and Lake Peipus strongly into the picture, organizes quality festivals in the region (Peipsi Food Big Party, [Peipsi Food Street 175 km](#)) which gives an income as well as development opportunities for community members; and at the same time engages in the development of community members through experience sharing, training and networking. In addition to the events taking place on the Onion Route (Onion Route Buffet Day) and organized by the NGO Community Kitchen of the Lake Peipus Region, there are many other food-related events in Tartu County that directly connect rural and urban areas. Within the framework of “Food Corridors”, LAG Tartu County offered support activities to 9 events in Tartu County as a Small Scale Action to make the events more environmentally friendly by conducting a [pilot program](#)



Flavours of Alatskivi Manor. Tartu County Tourism Foundation

[of the Green Festival](#). Participation in the Green Festival pilot program was a good opportunity for event organizers to learn from the experiences of others, highlight the specifics of their events and stand out.

As a result of the trainings and mentoring that took place in the spring of 2021, the green plans of the events in Tartu County were completed, which were implemented to carry out the events. All events were based on five agreed environmental principles:

- free drinking water available on site;
- reusable dishes;
- if possible, come on foot, by bicycle, by public transport, by car sharing;
- separate collection of waste;
- local, fresh, clean food, food from Tartu County, vegetarian food on the menu.



Bringing the community together, providing local raw materials and introducing local life – Peipsi Food Street 175 km. Tiit Grihin

As a further development of the Green Festival pilot program, the Green Festival training program will be carried out in 2022, where 8 events from Tartu County from urban and rural areas will participate.

Most of the people who presented their activities at the “Food Corridors” transnational meeting also participate in the Tartu County food network – representatives of various sectors who contributed to the completion of the Tartu County Food Strategy 2022-2030 within the framework of the “Food Corridors” and who are also interested in participating in the implementation of the food strategy. In total, almost 100 people from more than 60 organizations participated in the development of the food strategy, including agricultural producers, processors and distributors, caterers, (food) event organizers, research and development institutions and support structures, as well as public and third sector organizations and networks related to food. A broad-based food network that brings together people involved in the food sector in both urban and rural areas will

also contribute to cooperation and the strengthening of links between urban and rural areas, as well as to cross-sectoral cooperation.

A good example of the broadness and cooperation of the food network is the [Tartu County Food Region Vision Seminar](#) held on 9th of September 2021, during which nearly 50 Tartu County food industry entrepreneurs and local food promoters shared their views and ideas on the future of the region's food sector to jointly contribute to further development.

Joel Ostrat, a member of the board of Gustav Cafe LLC, a visionary and chef of South Estonian food, summed up the vision seminar and the development of the Tartu County food region as follows: “There must be a big picture. As a caterer, I want the Estonian food capital to be in Tartu County. Every tourist who visits Estonia should also set foot in South Estonia, because there are many small producers and restaurants with well-thought-out concepts here.”



Tartu County food network, vision seminar in September 2021. Robi Zuts



Car-Free Avenue in Tartu participated in the Green Festival pilot program. Maanus Kullamaa



Kaufland: Food oils are becoming scarce
Frankfurt, Kaufland

4.5. Larissa

OPEN AIR MARKETS IN LARISSA

By Dr. George Ntalos and Victoria Kapetanou

WHAT'S ON THE WORLD MAP OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETS?

According to the European Council (2022)³⁴ during the first quarter of 2022 countries were gradually lifting Covid-19 containment measures, the global economic recovery already had lots of challenges to face such as the severely sudden increase in prices due to imbalances in supply and demand of inputs and agricultural commodities too. Moreover, rises in energy prices and rising inflation were pressuring the consumers' purchasing power. But before reaching a balance, another blow struck which further impacted the prospects for the whole EU economy: war.

The war in Ukraine has greatly disturbed agricultural markets on a global level resulting in high precariousness about the future global availability of grains and oilseeds and creating more instability in already tense markets. In addition, the war has caused fundamental food security concerns and systemic concerns too with regard to the EU dependency on fertilizer and feed imports, in particular from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

Of course, the availability of food, fertilizers and feed is not a primary concern for Europe for the very near future: the EU is self-sufficient regarding food, with a massive agri-food trade surplus. Also, the EU Single Market once again can be expected to prove its role in absorbing shocks, as happened during the Covid-19 pandemic when the EU did not experience any shortage of food or any risk to food safety. The effective function of Single Market reflects that supply chains are interdependent and any unjustified restriction to the Single Market could threaten the supply of safe food and have unintended consequences.

The basic concern remains the level of prices since commodity prices have skyrocketed, as a result of the war. Unfortunately, they are expected to remain high this year and will further weigh on pre-existing increasing inflation levels. Especially, the fruit

and vegetables market situation is fragile. Already there is evidence that the instability in export markets results in the re-routing of trade of perishable products to the EU market, and the combination of higher imports and lower export opportunities could add further pressure on prices as well as on producers' margins. Moreover, the rise in gas prices keeps posing a significant challenge for the EU fertilizer industry restricting the production of nitrogen fertilizers, where natural gas is largely used as feedstock in the production process. As a result fertilizers prices in March 2022 are 227% higher than in December 2019. Finally, the EU farmer's price index continues increasing at a higher rate than consumers' and processors' price indices. High farmers' prices combined with ongoing inflation pressures could continue putting upward pressure on their continued growth later this year.

After this mini-review of the short-term outlook for EU agricultural markets, one can easily realize the importance of food Open Air Markets on a local level.



Yasuyoshi Chiba

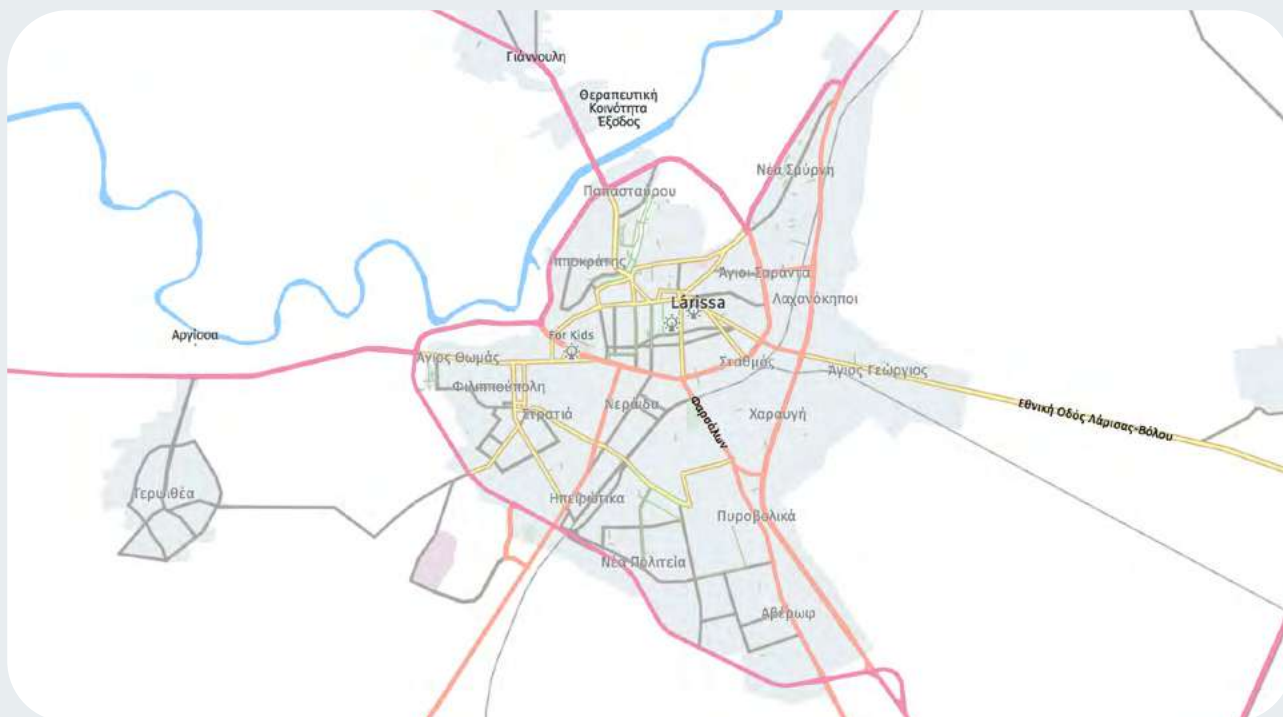
³⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/farming/facts-and-figures/markets/outlook/short-term_en

THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Larissa is the biggest city in central Greece. With a population of around 160.000 people and an area that covers 335 km² it is also the capital of the Region of Thessaly. The city is a transport hub and can be easily accessed. It is also a significant hotspot of economic, administrative, educational, cultural and commercial activities and has remarkable agricultural inland. Its economy is mainly orientated to the services sector, but additionally, it is connected to the agricultural sector. Larissa, which is located in the middle of an intensely rural area, is surrounded by the largest plains in the centre of the country and keeps the widest cultivated area (around 2.300 km²) compared to all the prefectures of Greece. In spite of the fact that employment in the primary sector reaches only 5,48%, the economy of Larissa is significantly affected by the primary sector due to the position of the city.³⁵ The Municipality of Larissa does not conduct policy-making about agro-food policies. These policies are designed by the Greek Ministry of Rural

Development and Food and the European Union, which apply the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The CAP, first implemented in 1962, includes a set of regulations related to agricultural production, aid to farmers in rural development and regulation of agricultural markets, while ensuring the environmental compatibility of agricultural activity, the movement of agricultural products, aiming to price stability, selection and high product quality, land use and employment in the agricultural sector. Pursuant to the latest regulations, the CAP³⁶ combines social, economic, and environmental approaches on the path towards achieving a sustainable system of agriculture in the EU.

According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority³⁷ vegetables and garden area in the Regional Unit of Larissa in 2019 covered around 3.200 ha. The vegetables produced are broccoli, cabbages, cauliflowers, spinach, leeks, fresh and dry onions, dry garlic, lettuce, chicories and endives, carrots, tomatoes, green beans, okras, courgettes, cucumbers, eggplants, peppers, artichokes, asparagus, strawberries



35 <http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/el/the-ministry-2/agricultural-policy/koinagrotopolitik>

36 https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/sustainability/sustainable-cap_en



The Thessalian Plain

and other. Moreover, other crops include potatoes, sweet potatoes, melons, watermelons, peas, chick-peas, lentils, broad beans, grapes and raisins, wheat, barley, oats and rye. Regarding tree production, the Regional Unity of Larissa produces mostly pears, apples, kiwis, peaches, nectarines, apricots, cherries, pomegranates, figs, olives, almonds, walnuts, chestnuts, pistachios and other.

As one can realize there is adequacy of fresh food produced in the region of Larissa, a big part of which is channeled directly to the consumers through a food purchase and sale institution: Open Air Markets (OAMs).

OPEN AIR MARKETS IN LARISSA

As Franco et al refer,³⁸ markets are thought to have appeared with the birth of settled agriculture. In Larissa the first OAM in its modern form was dated back in 1972 and took place every Wednesday at a central and busy district of the city called Fortress area. As years went by, more and more open markets would be licensed by the Municipality of Larissa.



Mrs Foti, Head of the Department of Commercial Activities Regulation of the Municipality, mentions that today in Larissa one can find 17 OAMs with products of conventional farming and 2 OAMs with products of organic farming, which -more or less- cover the entire urban fabric. According to the Greek legislation 4849/2021 the operation of the conventional OAMs lies in the domain of the Municipality of Larissa and the Region of Thessaly, whereas the organic farming OAMs are self-administered under the supervision of a five-member committee.

Each one of the markets is, as mentioned, open air, functions only once a week on a specific day and is located in the same place. The areas where the markets take place are defined by the Municipality according to the needs of the residents and the urban regulations.

The area occupied by the markets ranges from 400 meters up to 1 km and mostly regards streets of the city. The number of stalls also varies: in small markets could be from 60 up to 120, while in big markets can be 250 up to 350.

In order to be licensed, the vendors of the markets, who can be either producers or professional resellers, pay once 10-15€ and afterwards, for every time they participate in the market, they have to pay a fee depending the size of their stall (1€/m²).

The registered vendors sell various products except for bread. The product range includes vegetables, fruit, legumes, cereal, nuts, dried fruit, honey and other apiculture products, fresh fish and chickens, clothes, shoes etc. The market regulation defines the spatial differentiation of the products, in order to maintain the hygiene standards safe.

The products of the OAMs mostly originate from the prefecture of Larissa, but one can find products coming from other prefectures too. Also the vendors have the right to participate up to 6 (maximum) open markets per week and up to 2 regions.

³⁷ <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SPG06/->

³⁸ Franco, F. M., Chaw, L. L., Bakar, N., & Abas, S. N. H. (2020). Socialising over fruits and vegetables: the biocultural importance of an open-air market in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, 16(1). DOI:10.1186/s13002-020-0356-6

The number of the consumers depends on the size of the OAM and the day it takes place, and may vary from 200 up to 5000 people.

In general terms OAMs is a well-accepted constitution in the city of Larissa and for this reason they have been active for so many decades.

CONNECTION WITH THE FOOD CORRIDORS PROJECT AND IAP STRATEGY

The institution of OAMs in Larissa is inseparably connected to the scope and the philosophy of the Food Corridors project and Larissa's IAP at the same time. In this case we have a pure transition towards regional food systems, since the vast majority of the products sold at the OAMs regards local or regional production. Actually, OAMs function like corridors, which facilitate the connection between urban and rural areas. Firstly, this approach strengthens the generation of a production and consumption environment economically sustainable. As List notes (2009)³⁹ bilateral exchange represents one of the earliest forms of exchange. Today, bilateral trading in a multi-lateral setting represents the backbone of markets worldwide. In the case of OAMs the producers have the opportunity to sell their products directly to the consumers, without any mediators to benefit or without any marketing expenses. Moreover, the consumers have the opportunity to buy fresh products of excellent quality at reasonable prices, certainly lower than in other sale places. In addition, the local government, the Municipality of Larissa in this case, benefits from the revenue it receives in the

form of license, registration and participation payments (Aidis, 2003⁴⁰). Furthermore, OAMs could be a tourist attraction since tourists visit OAMs as a way of mingling with the local community and experiencing a novel local scene (Ooi, 2002⁴¹).

Respecting the environmental sustainability, the type of the OAMs in Larissa could be considered sustainable. More specifically, one could characterize them as "pop up" markets, due to their temporary character. The OAMs do not require any permanent infrastructures or building in order to be accommodated, consequently they do not require important energy supplies either. The vendors' stalls are set on the streets usually from early in the morning until early at noon and, afterwards, they are unset or packed and the streets are once again disengaged. Also, as Mr Tsiagalis, Secretary of the Association of Organic Farmers of Thessaly, underlined, the farmers of organic production make an effort through their OAMs to gain consumers' trust and to cultivate a new culture regarding environmental sustainability and healthy nutrition.

Finally, with regard to the social sustainability, as Sik & Wallace⁴² note (1999), OAMs embody the concept of the market in its most raw and direct form, namely, face-to-face interactions. These types of markets are inclusive, one could say even democratic spaces, where people of all classes interact while maintaining distinctive consumption patterns (Gvion, 2016⁴³).



³⁹ List, A. (2009). *The economics of open air markets*, Working Paper 15420, NBER Working Paper Series, National Bureau Of Economic Research

⁴⁰ Aidis, R. (2003). Officially Despised Yet Tolerated: Open-air Markets and Entrepreneurship in Post-socialist Countries, *Post-Communist Economies*, 15:3, 461-473. DOI: [10.1080/1463137032000139106](https://doi.org/10.1080/1463137032000139106)

⁴¹ Ooi, C. S. (2002). *Cultural tourism and tourism cultures: The business of mediating experiences in Copenhagen and Singapore*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Copenhagen Business School Press.

⁴² Sik, E., Wallace, C. (1999). The Development of Open-air Markets in East-Central Europe. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 23(4), 697-714. DOI: [10.1111/1468-2427.00223](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.00223)

⁴³ Gvion, L. (2016): Space, gentrification and traditional open-air markets: how do vendors in the Carmel market in Tel Aviv interpret changes?, *Community, Work & Family*, DOI: [10.1080/13668803.2015.1117420](https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2015.1117420)



Leaning Tower Szécsény Hungary

The Szécsény Fire Tower built in the 18th century and got its current shape in 1893. It has a lean of 3 degrees, 0,9° less than the famous Leaning Tower in Pisa.

4.6. Szécsény

HOW TO BECOME THE VIRTUAL HOME GARDEN OF BUDAPEST'S TOP GASTRONOMY?

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF THE GRIFFOOD-DOMAIN IN HUNGARY

Szécsény and its municipality (consisting of 14 small settlements) are located 110 km from Budapest, in the northern part of Hungary, near the Slovakian border, on 285 km², with a population of 20.000. Szécsény and its surroundings have a long tradition of agriculture and institutes of agricultural education. However, even though the agroecological conditions of the municipality are actually very favorable, the general conditions of underdevelopment and the typically low purchasing power do not provide a local market and thus opportunity for locally cultivated goods. The agrifood domain of the municipality is still dominated by primary production, with low added-value rates.

However, in the course of the last 2 years, due mostly to the Covid outbreak, public attention has turned to the importance of food-sovereignty, self-reliance and self-sufficiency – with local farms and farmers coming to the spotlight in an unprecedented manner. In that context, while Rural-Urban relations are re-negotiated on a daily basis, the premium gastronomy sector in Budapest shows rising interest in sourcing raw ingredients from clean, reliable and transparent resources within a given radius from Budapest. In light of that, **urban markets may provide a key leverage point for local primary production.**



Roundtable discussion on sustainable gastronomy at SIRHA Budapest.

Still, there are some missing links for building up these alternative routes. These are:

1. up-to-date information on urban niche markets
2. general visibility of small-scale farms
3. accessible, reliable, transparent information on its sustainability-performance

In order to address these trends, we have just created an actual Food Corridor between Budapest and the municipality to channelize certified, quality goods to the capital's premium gastronomy and – as a further potential direction – public catering services.

The primary aim of this food corridor and the vision of the municipality is to make small scale farming a viable option for family farms in- and around Szécsény, with bridging the – not merely – informational gap between Budapest and the Municipality by certifying a minimum of 30 farms by 2025, thus becoming the virtual home garden for the high-end-gastronomy of Budapest by 2030 and becoming the ultimate catalyzing factor for a green gastro-revolution.

UNDERSTANDING URBAN NICHE MARKETS

In order to achieve our goals and realize our vision, we started out by **gathering up-to-date information on urban niche markets** to explore where the products of the farmers of the municipality could be best channeled into. We performed **secondary analysis on existing data** to see how consumers' food choices and attitudes towards sustainability and sustainable, locally sourced food have changed in recent decades in Hungary and more specifically, in Budapest. We have conducted a thorough **market research, analyzing high-end-gastronomy, as well as public catering services**. The latter can be a further potential direction to where the raw products of local farmers could be delivered.

To better understand the needs and realities of the high-end gastronomy market, we organized several **roundtable discussions and focus groups** with relevant figures of the market, such as chefs, restaurant owners or gastro-influencers and gastro-journalists.



Focus group with gastro-influencers and journalists. The discussion was about consumers' food choices and the concept of a green gastro-revolution in Budapest.



Focus group with top chefs. The topics included their sourcing practices, the importance of sustainability to guests and the possible ways of cooperation with small-scale farmers.

MAKING SMALL-SCALE FARMS VISIBLE

In order for the Municipality of Szécsény to become the home garden of Budapest's gastronomy scene, small-scale farms that produce sustainable, high-quality agricultural products must be made visible to the actors of said scene. Our experience is that transparency is the key to the restaurant market: chefs find it important to look into the eyes of the farmer and to ask questions when purchasing local ingredients.

To achieve this, in the last two years we created 3 (5-minutes each) videos of 3 farmers in and around Szécsény Municipality, organized tasting events with the participation of top-chefs and farmers, as well as a pilot open farm event, where

chefs had the chance to learn about the workings of a sustainable vegetable farm. We also promoted our home garden concept at various events.

The videos' goal was to showcase local farms in an accessible way – meanwhile, we also shot other videos about other members of the Food Corridors project. All videos can be found here: <https://www.figma.com/proto/Awl2qOXNxAEZRHGGxxvgId/Szendvics%C3%A1bra?page-id=0%3A1&node-id=1%3A2&viewport=318%2C48%2C0.53&scaling=contain&starting-point-node-id=1%3A2>. In the future, creating videos of all the certified farms is an important goal, as these are an easily-accessible way of communicating about them.



Agri Kulti being present and popularizing the concepts discussed here at SIRHA Budapest.



Shooting a video at the Maszlik Family Farm.



Behind the scenes of the video at Mátra Buffalo Reserve.

We set up **tasting events of local agricultural produce** with significant players of Hungarian gastronomy and developed an assessment system where chefs and other attendants can rate the displayed products. At these events, we selected a group of vegetables according to the season (for example, tomatoes and peppers in the Summer, sweet potato, beetroot and cabbage in the Autumn), and sourced the displayed vegetables from small-scale farms of the Municipality. Chefs, restaurant owners and other actors of the gastronomy field were invited, enabling small farms to get a grip on the short food supply chain link to restaurants in Budapest. The invitees then rated the products according to our assessment system, giving points to the vegetables on the Gault Millau-scale (from 1 to 20 points) and also

evaluating different aspects (flavor, smell, color and texture) of the vegetables separately. **Incorporating the assessment of the gastronomical value of local produce is crucial** if we wish to channel these products into top restaurants: for chefs, no matter how sustainable an ingredient is, they will only use it if the taste and texture of it is just right. In the future, we plan to organize such events every season in Budapest's top gastronomical venues to give place to more and more farmers and their products to participate whilst also communicating the importance of using seasonal, local produce in restaurants. Tasting events will also be expanded to other food groups (e.g. the products of animal agriculture or fruits), not just vegetables



Chefs and restaurant owners at our tasting event where sweet potato, beetroot, cabbage and beans were in focus.



Peppers displayed at our Summer tasting event.

Aside from bringing the farmers' produce to Budapest for tasting events, we also brought the chefs to the farmers at a **pilot open farm event** we organized. The essence of such events is to **bring gastronomy closer to the source** and to allow chefs and farmers to connect. Open farm days help chefs to better understand the challenges of sustainable farming, whilst farmers can get a grasp on the

needs and demands of restaurant actors. This can make joint product development a living reality. In the future, waiters and other players can also be invited. We plan to expand the open farm concept to allow consumers, the general public to visit their farmers with the help of an interactive website and a playful questionnaire-game developed to help children understand sustainable farming.



Chefs sampling local produce and talking with the farmer at our open farm event.

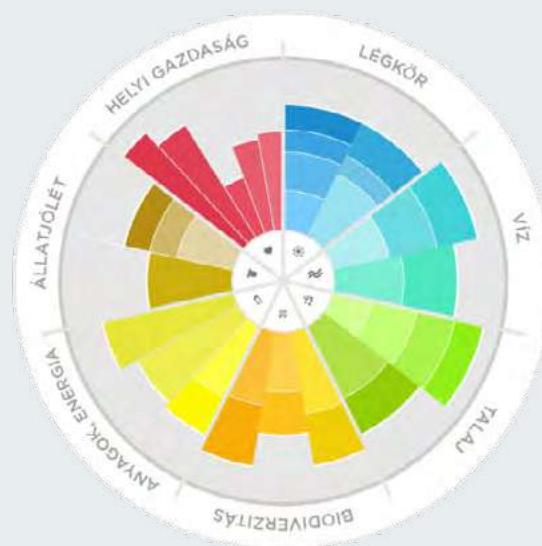


Chefs taking a tour of a vegetable farm.

SHOWCASING THE FARMS' SUSTAINABILITY-PERFORMANCE

In the last years, we found that there is a general lack of accessible, reliable and most importantly, transparent information on the farms' sustainability performance. Neither the market actors, neither the general public have a lot of information about how a sustainable farm works or about how different farms from where they buy agricultural products perform in terms of sustainability. To address this information gap, we developed a complex-but-accessible sustainability assessment system that measures the sustainability of a farm based on seven different aspects (air, water, soil, biodiversity, material- and energy usage, animal welfare and local economy). We started using this tool to create a sustainability profile of farmers in the municipality and to test their compliance with Hungary's new public procurement food policy which can be the gateway of small-scale farms to public catering services. The assessments are showcased at events where the farmers are present – such as the tasting events or the open farm days. Farms' sustainability assessments will be published on a

website so that restaurants can showcase this when communicating about their sourcing practices. In the future, we wish to make these assessments even more participatory: inviting other farmers and figures of the gastronomy scene to partake.



Our sustainability assessment system visualized.



Our colleagues touring a farm during a sustainability assessment session.

Annex. The Food Corridors library. Publications, videos, other resources...

Annex. The Food Corridors library

During the implementation of the **FOOD CORRIDORS** project, the Lead Expert associated with the project and coordinator of this e-book, Antonio Zafra, has produced a total of six articles. Two of them are oriented to introduce the theme of the project and the adaptation of the methodology of learning exchange of URBACT in times of pandemic. Moreover, four extensive thematic articles have been added, covering issues such as quality marks to sustain local production, short production and consumption channels, reduction of food waste and its efficient management, and public policies and alternative models of governance in territorial food systems. They are all accessible on the **FOOD CORRIDORS website**.

- 1. A rural-urban connection to embed food in all policies**
- 2. Quality brands and sustainable food systems**
- 3. Short food supply chains** - Relocalising production to empower actors and make territories resilient
- 4. A food waste urban approach** - To reduce the depletion of natural resources, limit environmental impacts, and make the food system more circular
- 5. Feeding a Cooperative Food Network in a Time of Pandemic**
- 6. Public policies & governance for territorial food systems**

In addition, the seven network partners have created a series of short articles reporting on the local activity of the project, often linked to the implementation of the so-called Small Scale Actions, others presenting good practices or initiatives close to the **FOOD CORRIDORS** thematic area. All these contributions have also been published on the **FOOD CORRIDORS website**. This

is the list of the articles produced.

- 1. A Million Food Stories**, by CIM Região de Coimbra
- 2. Food Corridors has joined the partnership of the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration**
- 3. The first Green Festival in Tartu County took participants to the Viking Age**
- 4. The power of short food supply chains: shortening distances to reduce uncertainty** (Bassa Romagna)
- 5. Alba Iulia Municipality officially started its Small Scale Action!**
- 6. The events in Tartu County are growing greener** (LAG Tartu)
- 7. We are looking for Europe's most "salty" dish!** (CIM Coimbra)
- 8. How PDOs and PGIs can level up Greece's primary sector** (the example of Larissa and Thessaly)
- 9. Local processing with high standards of sustainability: Funky Forest in Szécsény/Hungary**
- 10. Local food as a challenge and an opportunity for Slovenian tour-ism** (BSC Kranj)
- 11. Food Corridors contribution to the Conference on Sustainable Urban Development by the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union** (CIM Coimbra)
- 12. Food Corridors presented at Expo Dubai 2020** (CIM Coimbra)

In parallel, some of our partners have produced different micro-videos with the same objective as the small articles mentioned above. The following list contains links to them:

1. **Alba Iulia.** Small Scale Action, Permaculture courses
2. **Bassa Romagna.** Digital Study visit Campagna Amica
3. **Bassa Romagna.** Digital Study visit Emporio Solidale Velocibo
4. **Szecsény.** Funky_Forest_Hungaricool_Food_Corridors.
5. **Szecsény.** László Stayer - Major of Szécsény .
6. **Szecsény.** Barnabás Őry.
7. **Szecsény.** Anikó Juhász.
8. **Szecsény.** Zoltány Dezsény.
9. **Szecsény.** Ferenc Szalai.
10. **Szecsény.** Zoltán Maszlik.
11. **Szecsény.** Boldizsár Horváth.
12. **Szecsény.** Agritoolkit.
13. **Szecsény.** Vedd a Nógrádit! - Nógrád County.
14. **Tartu Rural Development Association.** Green Festivals

In a complementary way, the network partners have produced a series of final articles as their last contribution to this e-book:

- **Alba Iulia.** A living lab in the city's center promotes permaculture and sustainable food production and consumption.
- **CIM Coimbra.** An integrated and multilevel approach on food policies in Coimbra region.
- **LAG Tartu County.** Food and culture as cross-topics to connect rural and urban areas
- **Larissa.** Open-air markets
- **Unione Bassa Romagna.** Combating food waste in Bassa Romagna: the case of Velocibo - l'Emporio solidale”
- **Szecsény.** How to become the virtual home garden of Budapest's top gastronomy?

E-BOOK FOOD CORRIDORS

GLOBAL CHALLENGES, LOCAL RESPONSES