FOOD TRAILS

MILAN URBAN FOOD POLICY PACT

Sharing innovations for urban food system transitions

A practical handbook



The Food Trails project has received fundings from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme, under grant agreement n. 101000812.

Colophon

This handbook represents a synthesis of insights and experiences shared by members of the Food Trails community over the past four years.
We extend our gratitude to all those who contributed to the Food Trails activities, including speakers, organizers, and participants.

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This handbook would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of our partner cities – Municipality of Bergamo, Municipality of Birmingham, Bordeaux Metropole, Municipality of Copenhagen, Municipality of Funchal, Grenoble Alpes Metropole, Municipality of Groningen, Municipality of Milan, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Municipality of Tirana, and Municipality of Warsaw.

We would like to thank the reviewers for critical comments and constructive suggestions. The document has been reviewed by the City of Groningen and Bordeaux Metropole

The handbook has been designed by Hearts and Minds, Brussels.

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Date: 28 June 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION



1.1 HOW TO USE THE FOOD TRAILS HANDBOOK

The *Food Trails Handbook for Cities* is designed to be a helpful, supportive source of information and inspiration for anyone working on food systems in their city, who wishes to learn from Food Trails and adopt a similar approach in their work. It provides the crucial elements for cities looking for examples of best practices to inspire and inform innovations in their city's food system – the network of all individuals and organisations involved in producing, processing, distributing and consuming food. These elements are described in the Handbook's *QuickScan Lens for Replication (QSLR)* tool. The QSLR's building blocks can be used to replicate successful initiatives – to broaden the scale and impact of interventions, or to develop similar interventions in other places. The handbook provides information on replication methodologies and accessible tools, including stakeholder mapping, data collection, theory of change, and peer learning. These can support systemic change – changes which impact multiple points within the food system, and lead to significant transformation of the food system.

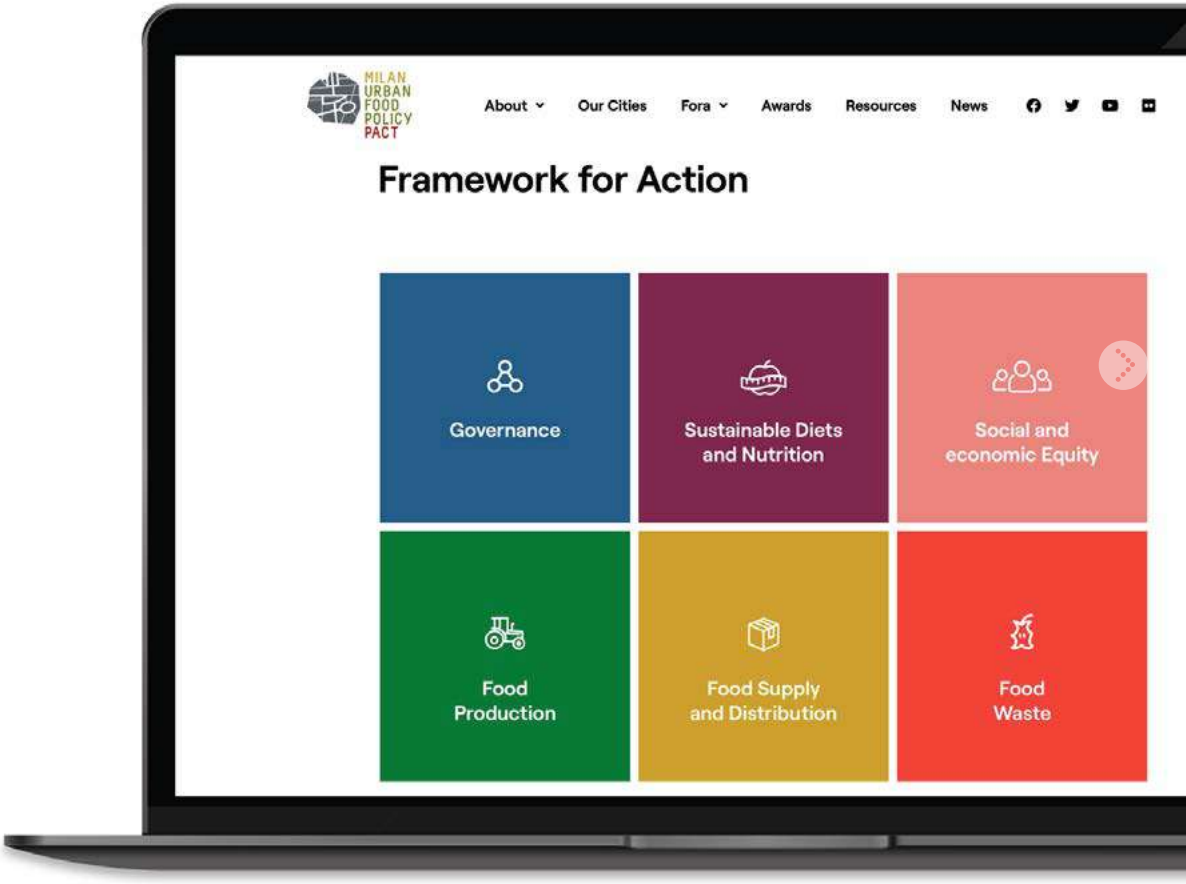
It is important to note that when we say cities, we mean any form of local government in an urban area, such as districts, boroughs, municipalities and metropolitan areas. The tools provided in this handbook can be used in any local government structure.

Central to the handbook are the practical and inspiring examples of how the Food Trails cities addressed challenges around the *Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP)* categories for action: Governance, Sustainable Diets & Nutrition, Social & Economic Equity, Food Production, Food Supply & Distribution, Food Waste. It is important to remember that many food system interventions deal with multiple categories simultaneously. It can be helpful for cities to think about how they can address numerous urban challenges through their food system interventions. Finally, lessons learned and recommendations from partnering cities and researchers are summarised.

The MUFPP categories underpin the work done by cities at all stages, including the QSLR, and the choice and application of tools to plan, assess and deliver interventions. Throughout this handbook, you will see how cities have embedded every stage of their work in these six areas of recommended actions.

1.2 THE MILAN URBAN FOOD POLICY PACT

The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) is the first and foremost international agreement among cities from all over the world, committed to developing sustainable, inclusive, and resilient urban food systems. Since its launch in 2015 during EXPO Milan "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life", it has been supporting cities by stimulating the exchange of practices and learning between them and by organising capacity building activities. To ensure a holistic and systemic approach towards food system transformation within cities, the Milan Pact promotes a "Framework for Action" which features 6 categories (Governance, Sustainable Diets & Nutrition, Social & Economic Equity, Food Production, Food Supply & Distribution, Food Waste) and a Monitoring Framework, developed together with Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (RUAF) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN FAO), to support cities in better structuring and assessing the impact of their food policies.



1. Introduction > **1.2 The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact**

All Food Trails cities are part of the MUFPP and leverage its tools to achieve future-proof transitions. In 2024, the Milan Pact signatories include more than 280 cities, representing a total of 490 million inhabitants across the 6 MUFPP regions: Africa, Europe, Eurasia & South West Asia, North & Central America, South America, and Asia Pacific. The participation of cities is particularly significant in Europe, where the Milan Pact counts 106 signatory cities. Among the various activities that the MUFPP promotes, the most significant one is the Milan Pact Awards, launched in 2016 together with the Cariplo Foundation. Year after year, the Pact gathered 621 practices, creating a unique library of food policies officially approved by city mayors.



1.3 FOOD 2030 STRATEGY

Food Trails is part of the EU Horizon-funded Food 2030 Project Family: a series of projects guided by the Food 2030 research and innovation framework, which is designed to support cities in developing resilient and sustainable food systems (FoodSHIFT 2030, FoodE, Food Trails, Cities 2030 and FUSILLI). It is aligned with the European Commission's Food 2030 and Farm to Fork strategy, as well as the European Green Deal. Food 2030 addresses four thematic priorities: (1) nutrition, (2) climate and environment, (3) circularity and resource efficiency, and (4) innovation and community empowerment. All cities in Food Trails have identified a priority theme for their context but are also encouraged to think about how they can address multiple themes throughout their interventions. Many Food Trails cities' pilot actions have combined thematic priorities. For example, a community food waste composting scheme links circularity and community empowerment, while procurement schemes can address nutrition, climate and circularity at the same time.



1.4 THE FOOD TRAILS PROJECT

The way we produce, distribute and consume food – our food systems – affect the environment, our health, and so much more. Urban food systems have unique challenges and strengths, as they require interventions that relate to public health, poverty, social inclusion and the environment. One of the key challenges of the 21st century is how we can design and create urban food systems that promote the accessibility, availability and affordability of sustainable diets. Cities play a pivotal role in transforming food systems. With this challenge in mind, the Food Trails project translates the shared vision and collective commitment of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact into measurable and long-term progress towards sustainable food systems. The goal of the project is to develop best practices that provide guidance for other cities looking to transform their food systems.

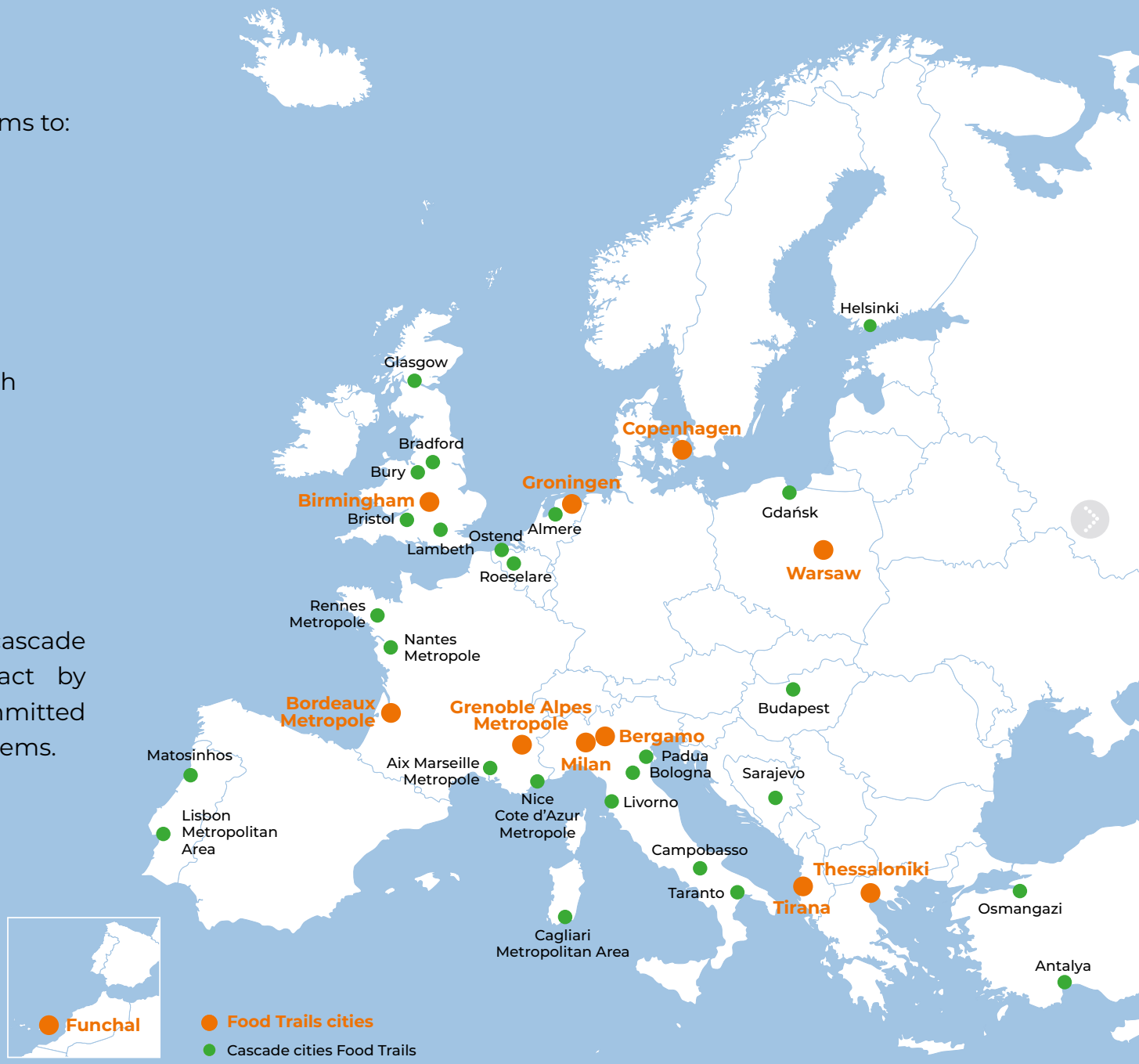
Food Trails is a four-year EU-funded Horizon 2020 project, bringing together a consortium of 19 European partners. This includes 11 Food Trails cities - European city regions with a combined population of almost eight million: Bergamo (IT), Birmingham (UK), Bordeaux Metropole (FR), Copenhagen (DK), Funchal (PT), Grenoble Alpes Metropole (FR), Groningen (NL), Milan (IT), Thessaloniki (GR), Tirana (AL) and Warsaw (PL). These 11 European cities, together with partners from the project, co-designed pilot actions in participatory Living Labs, where collaboration between citizens and their city / metropole was fostered as a lever for sustainable urban food policies and actions related to the 4 priorities identified in the Food 2030 strategy: nutrition, climate, circularity, and communities. The unique collaboration of municipalities, citizens and researchers is an important feature of the Food Trails project. Researchers played a central role in the Living Labs by helping cities to collect, analyse and store data, measuring impact and providing information on specific issues.

1. Introduction > **1.4 The Food Trails project**

Together, the consortium of Food Trails aims to:

- **ENHANCE** understanding of innovative urban food strategies and their potential to transform the food system
- **ENGAGE** and **EMPOWER** communities
- **ENSURE** long-term sustainability through funding opportunities
- **REPLICATE** best practice food policies
- **COLLABORATE** with local authorities to build political commitment

The Food Trails project involves 26 cascade cities significantly increasing its impact by strengthening the network of cities committed to developing sustainable urban food systems.



2. ASSESSING YOUR CITY'S FOOD SYSTEM



QuickScan Lens for Replication (QSLR)

The QuickScan Lens for Replication (QSLR) tool provides guidance for city officers working to transform their cities' food system. The following elements are crucial:

- policy organisation
- a shared vision and agenda
- stakeholder involvement
- efficient use of resources
- transformative activities
- continuous learning

Every city is different. Actors in one city might decide their first task is to develop a shared vision and agenda. In another city, they may dive straight into exploring and implementing different activities.

How do I use the QSLR to assess my city's food system?

Although we recommended you start with your policy organisation, you can go through the QSLR from start to finish or from finish to start to gain insight into your food system transformation process. The QSLR can also serve as a guide when designing interventions or when you encounter difficulties in understanding your city's food system during your activities. For more information about the QSLR, see deliverable 6.2 in Resources.



BUILDING BLOCKS

POLICY ORGANISATION

Creating a more sustainable urban food system requires the active participation of various policy makers. This means improving the understanding of your city's political framework: which departments, actors and initiatives deal with food-related issues and how they can work together to improve the system as a whole.

VISION & AGENDA

A clear and shared vision outlining the future food scenario of your city provides the basis for creating effective strategies and guiding actions that promote food system innovation.

STAKEHOLDERS

Many stakeholders with different interests and needs are involved in the urban food system. The challenge is to integrate all views to ensure active participation of all and, ultimately, system innovation.

RESOURCES

Short and long-term financial support, qualified and enthusiastic people and time to devote to the project, and the land and water available to the city for food production are essential to consider. Some resources will already be available, while others might need to be sourced from elsewhere.

ACTIVITIES

Activities require careful planning, visioning, implementation, and monitoring. This ensures that initiatives are aligned with the goals set by the city and make progress towards a more sustainable food system.

LEARNING

Cities can learn a lot from other cities, contexts, and organisational structures to improve their own system. Knowledge and examples from outside can be fundamental drivers and resources for their context.

2.1 POLICY ORGANISATION

Establishing a sustainable food system requires a robust policy framework and the active involvement of different policy makers. As food is a fundamentally cross-cutting issue, policies affecting food systems may be dealt with by numerous departments – for example, public health, education, environment, and waste management.

It is helpful to see what departments are working on food-related topics, and how they could work together.

A comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach is essential for policy-making that integrates health, inclusivity, and sustainability.

The following four key elements for navigating the political and organisational framework of your city or region are identified:

1. **Regulatory framework:** Understanding the multi-level regulatory framework in your policy landscape
2. **Food system governance:** Understanding the responsibilities, competencies and players involved in your city's food system
3. **Food council:** Establishing a food council to transform your urban food system
4. **Food policy:** Establishing an effective and comprehensive urban food policy

1 Understanding the multi-level regulatory framework in your food policy landscape

Mapping regulations and understanding the current legislative framework can guide you in finding the right legislation to support your work on transforming the food system. Regulations create the policy environment in which the city operates. National and international rules about food can provide a starting point for intervening in the urban food sector. Laws can sometimes be complicated to follow and implement, especially when it comes to issues with complex organisational structures, like food waste management.

Jurisdiction over food is not always well defined, as food relates to multiple areas of legislation. This can create confusion and difficulties in planning actions to improve your city's food system. If a robust legislative framework is not available at the national level, it may be useful to join an international agreement, such as the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), to have guidelines to improve operations.

In addition, a legal barrier or legislative gap can lead to cultural resistance: even if the law changes, a buffer time for adaptation must be considered, as people may be worried about breaking the old law and may take a while to be informed and confident about new laws.

The Food Trails cities faced a number of legislative barriers: obtaining permits for land for urban food production; procurement regulations that focused on low prices rather than organic and local food; regulations on food donations in some cases hindering donations for safety reasons; and stringent hygiene regulations that complicate food distribution. There can also be regulations that support interventions. Nutritional requirements dictated by regulations can serve as guidelines for interventions in schools. These are sometimes provided by the government but can also be set with the help of an expert or nutritionist, to ensure healthy and tasty food for the students.

Map the regulatory framework to understand which national or regional policies may hinder or support food system innovation.

2 Understanding the responsibilities, competencies and players involved in your city's food system

Everyone can play an important role in a food system, but it can be difficult to grasp where responsibilities and competencies lie, as the food system is complex. Municipalities rarely have jurisdiction in all areas relevant to food, which makes it necessary to widen the power network and receive input from other levels of governance. A fragmented governance structure can lead to coordination problems and can generate confusion and additional effort in organising and implementing activities. Different structures and responsibilities at different scales (such as national, regional or local) can complicate things further.

Many governmental entities work in silos, which prevents cooperation between departments. The challenge is to get different departments to coordinate their food-related work and recognise how their department can contribute to shared overall objectives. It is a good idea to clarify the roles and responsibilities of various actors; consultants or researchers can support the initial set-up of the internal governance of the food system. The lack of clear definition of roles and boundaries at senior policy level can lead to political pressure on the operations team and delays in the implementation of activities. It is recommended good practice to map initiatives and actors before planning any interventions, to prevent representatives from organising their activities in conflict with others.

Elected representatives play an important role in making food system initiatives possible. Allied political representatives help smooth the implementation of activities and they can take on the role as interpreters of the needs of stakeholders (e.g., citizens or farmers) and the legislative framework. However, you should consider that elections can alter previously established governance relationships. Developing support for planned interventions from members of all political parties can avoid disruption to plans if elections lead to changes in power. Maintaining alignment with higher levels of governance, such as the European level, is crucial, but demands an additional effort that must be taken into account.

Organise regular meetings to improve communication between different departments and administrative bodies to facilitate the implementation of new activities.

3 Establishing a food council to transform your urban food system

When a city embarks on a transition towards a sustainable food system, establishing a food council can be a crucial step in fostering consensus and effective decision-making. A food council (or 'food policy council' or 'food partnership') can change how a city's food system operates. Since food issues cut across various domains, addressing them requires efforts from multiple departments and diverse stakeholders. The food council provides a platform for breaking down silos between topics and people, and helps develop effective coordination and collaboration. The structure of the council can differ, ranging from more flexible and informal, to more rigid and formal. Each city can choose the form that best suits its needs, but what matters most is establishing a network of stakeholders who are committed to working together towards shared goals for their city's food system.

The food council holds meetings, roundtables, presentations, workshops, and focus groups on specific themes. These events provide a platform to discuss issues from diverse perspectives, expressing their needs and giving suggestions to find solutions together. The council should aspire to involve a wide range of stakeholders, including businesses, farmers, politicians, citizen representatives, and NGOs.

The participation of key politicians in the food council can enhance its effectiveness. Policy engagement facilitates the smooth establishment of the food council, while a clearly defined governance structure ensures transparency and accountability. This helps to build connections between people and policy makers and ensures that the different needs of groups are heard.

The council plays a pivotal role in shaping the city's strategic vision for food-related matters, allowing for the definition of short and long-term goals and priorities. Active participation is fostered by not only discussing high-level issues (e.g. food policy development) but dealing with actions and concrete initiatives, strengthening the sense of involvement. Additionally, participation can be bolstered by establishing the roles of various stakeholders within the council, whether through electing representatives or forming strategic groups. Once stakeholders commit to being part of the food council, they help to spread its activities and promote its values.

Use the food council to not only discuss high-level issues or strategies, but practical issues as well, for example through focus groups. This can ensure that diverse groups of people are interested in engaging.

4. Establishing an effective and comprehensive urban food policy

Establishing a food policy encapsulating all the city's primary objectives in terms of food and system innovation emerged as a key step in the Food Trails project. Food policies can encompass various aspects of food, such as agriculture, food waste, food security, healthy and sustainable diets, and food production. When objectives on all food-related topics are consolidated into a coherent policy document, gaining acceptance from citizens and other stakeholders becomes easier. The formulation of a food policy demonstrates policy makers' dedication and prompts discussions and concrete actions at the political level. Given its close ties to electoral cycles, elections can always influence the policy. However, there may be supportive politicians of all parties interested in the topic.

Involving the right stakeholders is crucial, necessitating effective means of engagement. One approach is to create a preliminary version of the policy, outlining its key goals and values for stakeholders to review and comment on.

Balancing the diverse and sometimes conflicting needs of stakeholders—such as farmers, policy makers, retailers, and citizens—poses a challenge, but it is essential to ensure that all voices are heard, even if certain stakeholder categories initially seem disinterested in the food policy debate.

Food policies can be designed to be visually appealing and easily comprehensible, enhancing accessibility for different stakeholders. Encouraging participation requires setting the policy at a level that fosters engagement, avoiding high level discussions. During formulation, reliance on specialised experts can aid in drafting the policy text. Additionally, ensuring alignment between municipal food policies and higher-level governance, such as regional or national policies, is essential.

If food policy is not a priority in your city's administration, create a forum to gather different stakeholders' interests and goals to demonstrate wide concern and stimulate political commitment.

2.2 VISION AND AGENDA

A clear vision that outlines the future food scenario for your city can support you in developing a sustainable and healthy food system at the community level. This vision provides the basis for creating effective plans and strategies guiding actions to promote sustainability, accessibility and waste disposal within the local food system.

A joint vision of the desired situation is of key importance, keeping the collective activities of stakeholders on track.

The following crucial elements are identified in this step:

1. **Shared vision and communication:** Establishing a common vision among stakeholders for food system intervention

2. **Strategic planning:** Establishing efficient planning that incorporates the vision of short- and long-term objectives

3. **Healthy eating habits dissemination:** Developing an urban strategy to ensure sustainable, healthy and safe food

1 Establishing a common vision among stakeholders for food system intervention

Establishing a unified vision among the diverse stakeholders engaged in the urban food system is crucial for attaining meaningful outcomes, particularly in cities that do not have a food policy yet. The different stakeholders, retailers, NGOs, farmers, municipalities, etc., may have very different objectives and interests. It is therefore essential to establish a vision that reflects the needs of all.

In the initial stages, it is preferable to prioritise broad representation and consensus on clear, shared issues, even if they are less ambitious. The lack of a common vision on the urban food system can make it difficult to solve problems, especially in large-scale administrative contexts. Spending time and energy in getting people involved and building commitment at the early stages fosters a comprehensive understanding of the needs and challenges of the city's food system. It is crucial to involve decision-makers in initiatives and align objectives with them.

Activities must be intertwined with stakeholder involvement to ensure their participation and involvement in the food transition process. Planning activities that have advantages for multiple parties can strengthen commitment, and result in lasting benefits for everyone (win-win collaborations). Finally, it is essential to adopt a holistic approach encompassing not only food, which is a comprehensive topic, but also areas such as climate neutrality, food security and social inequalities. The Food Trails project used the CLIC framework, which has four elements that lead to systemic change: through **Connecting** across categories, **Linking** municipal efforts, and encouraging **Innovation**, cities experience **Co-benefits** across multiple urban challenges, such as public health, environment and others.

For more information about the CLIC framework, see Resources: Report food system actions (Deliverable 1.2)

Put in extra effort to engage stakeholders that may initially seem disinterested to ensure your vision reflects diverse views and needs.

2. Establishing efficient planning that incorporates the vision of short- and long-term objectives

A tangible agenda for delivering urban food system transformation when you have limited resources requires thorough planning to achieve established goals. It is not always easy or possible to address the many different needs, so it is important to learn how to prioritise and build a good balance between short-term and long-term goals. When an initiative looks complex to implement, it can be useful to start with a pilot. If the results of the pilot look promising, it will be easier to attract more people and expand the initiative.

You could consider getting support from consultants or researchers to help understand the initial policy framework in which the city operates, and how to plan, and deliver, appropriate interventions. It is important to have a clear map of the stakeholders, existing policies and related initiatives in the area that can serve as a bridge to the creation of a new and more inclusive food system.

Collaboration with researchers and universities in the Food Trails project led to positive results by establishing a scientific approach for vision setting. Tools such as the Theory of Change can help to define and visualise a complete overview of the desired changes.

A sound strategy is a significant factor in attracting new funding and enabling the expansion of initiatives. Your strategy should demonstrate the effectiveness of resource allocation and organisation of the proposed initiatives. Furthermore, a good strategy and a broad overview of internal needs and what is expected from the community helps use human and financial resources efficiently.

Use a step-by-step approach to achieve incremental changes: results will not come all at once.

3 Developing an urban strategy to promote and enable consumption of sustainable, healthy and safe food

To truly transform the food system and embed lasting change, it is imperative to shift consumption behaviours. This is a complicated process that takes time and only shows results in the long term. It can therefore be challenging to monitor whether your approach is successful. For change to happen, it is necessary to invest in education, both in schools and in the community. For this type of intervention, the engagement of citizens in activities and initiatives is crucial, so that they feel part of the change and are willing to take personal action when possible. Investing in behavioural change mechanisms is a way to spread good practices over time. This is why much attention has been given within Food Trails to students and children, with the consideration that as they grow up, they may develop healthy dietary behaviours.

It is also important to understand and address the barriers limiting peoples' positive dietary choices, such as low income, a lack of skills, or a lack of cooking space and equipment. Given the need to adopt a holistic approach to achieve profound change, you should consider including other goals to improve eating habits and a healthy relationship with food. The focus can be on organic food production, procurement and use of organic food in municipal entities, waste reduction and embedding food-related interventions within social support. Different food system transformation goals can align by improving food redistribution systems, reducing food waste and providing food to those in need. Some Food Trails cities are working to ensure that such schemes focus on fresh fruit and vegetables, which are often inaccessible to people on low incomes. Healthy and sustainable nutrition must be accessible to all and not leave anyone behind.

Working with children and students is one of the best ways to establish long-term good habits, with an added benefit that they will likely spread good practices within their families.

2.3 STAKEHOLDERS

The development of the urban food system involves many stakeholders with different interests. It is crucial to make them feel part of the change by ensuring they are heard and welcomed. The positions and commitment of stakeholders in the city's food system network have a significant impact on the success of proposed initiatives. That is why it is important to map active stakeholders, their roles and interests, so that it will be easier to cooperate to achieve common goals. The stakeholders who played key roles during the Food Trails project are municipality officers, politicians, entrepreneurs (e.g., farmers, transporters, food processing industry, supermarkets, restaurants), NGOs and citizens.

The following elements are crucial:

1. **Engaging stakeholders:** Fostering collaboration and engagement of multiple stakeholders in urban food systems for effective change

2. **Effective communication:** Promoting trust-based networking through transparent communication

3. **The role of the municipality:** Defining how the municipality should contribute to the food system transition

1 Fostering collaboration and engagement of multiple stakeholders in urban food systems for effective change

Collaboration with diverse stakeholders is crucial for achieving objectives within the municipality's food system. The composition of the stakeholder group may vary depending on the activities, but fostering transparent representation and collaboration between them is essential. To help develop a sense of ownership and promote responsibility that goes beyond participation in meetings, it is necessary to support and encourage active involvement. Stakeholders' insights and experiences can inspire new initiatives and enable their contribution to the transition process.

Involving stakeholders in tasks aligned with their interests or current activities is an efficient way to support planned initiatives and interventions. Examples include establishing collaborations with NGOs for increasing visibility or working with the tourism sector for the organisation of events. Collaboration with research institutes and universities can help to visualise results and collect data, amplifying the impact and progress of actions. Working with local NGOs offers bottom-up perspectives, ensuring practical and impactful interventions.

Furthermore, including farmers and other relevant actors in food policy decisions is crucial, given their key role in food production and the importance of agriculture in many regions. Building strong connections with them and providing support strengthens urban food systems. This is particularly important in areas such as food waste management and food procurement, where collaboration between the various stakeholders along the chain is essential for successful implementation.

A potential milestone in promoting engagement and collaboration is the establishment of a food council, where different stakeholders come together to build relationships and guide action. The formation of working groups around specific topics can increase stakeholder engagement in food council participation. Informal networks of relevant stakeholders can also help support your goals, if a food council is difficult to develop in your city. A clear delineation of objectives and intended involvement from the outset is essential to manage expectations, especially given the often-limited availability and time of stakeholders.

Build ownership among stakeholders so they can act as the ambassador of the shared values and vision in their own activity.

2 Promoting trust-based networking through transparent communication

Establishing a transparent communication channel is a decisive factor, especially during the formulation of food policies. Open dialogue fosters connections and cohesion among stakeholders, enhancing awareness and willingness to participate. This connects different personal and professional experiences, expanding the network for collective action. Building relationships of trust and respect with key stakeholders accelerates initiatives. Likewise, a well-defined communication strategy with policy makers is important to align initiatives to the regulatory framework. Engaging citizens and raising awareness on healthy food choices is achievable through effective communication efforts such as workshops, focus groups, cooking shows and events. Regular meetings keep the focus on the group's priorities and provide a platform to monitor progress in advancing the food system.

Communication between different stakeholder groups, such as businesses, farmers, NGOs and citizens, can be complex when there are conflicting needs: stakeholders can sometimes feel unheard. Some groups may not be confident communicating with official representatives and might need encouragement to participate.

To address this issue, it is essential to create an open and safe environment where everyone can express their concerns and find common ground. Improving discussions and understanding the needs of others fosters acceptance, tolerance and stronger ties. For example, timely communication can address parents' concerns when changing school menus, alleviating resistance to certain choices such as increasing plant-based meals.

Certain stakeholders may be harder to reach initially. For example, since farmers may be too busy at certain times of the year, it can help to define in advance the date and timing of meetings taking into account their needs. Furthermore, tailored workshops addressing their specific interests, such as novel production techniques or support for applying for subsidies, can encourage participation based on information that is relevant and concrete for them. Creating guidelines or newsletters to disseminate food strategies further enhances communication. In essence, effective communication and trust is the cornerstone for cohesive collaboration in the food system.

Effective and timely communication of expectations, objectives and a clear definition of responsibilities fosters stakeholder participation.

3. Defining how the municipality should contribute to the food system transition

Municipalities have a key role in promoting urban food systems that are healthy, sustainable, and inclusive. The role of municipalities in improving their food system goes beyond the financial support of actions: they may include organising workshops, training programmes and the management of legal issues related to the initiatives. When municipal departments collaborate effectively, they can develop sound food policies that cross several domains. Combining various thematic elements and areas of interventions allows municipalities to implement a holistic approach to improving the food system. By intervening in areas such as climate, nutrition and agriculture, municipalities can have a positive impact on the urban food system and promote transformation. In addition, municipal employees often possess specialised skills and experience that can be utilised to drive initiatives and avoid reliance on external agencies.

However, food does not always have priority on municipal agendas, often due to political motivations. Changes in elected leadership can significantly influence the emphasis placed on food-related initiatives.

Furthermore, elections have the potential to shift the dynamics of collaboration and support, with certain elected officials favouring particular initiatives over others. A sound food policy can help maintain political commitment, which can also be sustained through the development of a basic culture within various departments and by fostering internal connections with other municipal policies such as health, waste management, nature protection, and more.

Moreover, it is essential to acknowledge that municipalities may encounter resistance from specific segments of the population, potentially impeding the advancement and dissemination of certain initiatives. While municipalities may not always possess decision-making power in matters concerning food, they should leverage their role as a catalyst to foster a network of stakeholders within the food sector, facilitating connections and mapping initiatives undertaken by various actors.

Developing a comprehensive food policy and a food council ensures the continuation of activities even in the event of political changes due to new elections.

2.4 RESOURCES

Improving your city's food system demands a range of different resources. Not all elements have the same starting resources, but careful planning and vision can support efficient system transformation even in a context of scarce resources.

Short- and long-term financial support, qualified and enthusiastic people, knowledge, land availability and dedicated time for planning and implementation are essential.

Only a balance of these resources can effectively help develop the envisioned food system.

The following elements are crucial to consider when evaluating resources at your disposal:

1. **Securing long-term funds:** Securing funds in the medium to long term to enable an effective food transition

2. **Human resources and time allocation:** Defining the key role of human resources in the implementation of initiatives for improving the food system

3. **Knowledge and expertise in food:** Bridging skills and knowledge gaps in food system innovation through collaboration with experts

1 Securing funds in the medium to long term to enable an effective food transition

Cities often encounter financial challenges when planning activities to enhance their food systems. Securing budgets can be difficult, as the availability of funds often depends on political priorities, and food may not be among them. Hence, proactive efforts to raise awareness about the importance of food system initiatives are crucial. In a city with a comprehensive food policy, applying for and obtaining funds is easier, because the objectives are clearly stated, and a budget corresponds to these objectives. Furthermore, the system of funding management in a country also significantly influences the availability of resources and the flexibility of their utilisation. Long-term funds can also support the creation of new permanent job positions that provide stability and continuity to the food actions implemented.

Effective planning becomes imperative when dealing with limited funds.

This requires careful selection of priorities. Particularly when there are limited resources, effective management is essential to ensure a favourable return on investment and continued support from stakeholders and politics. International funds, such as those provided by the European Union, offer opportunities for structured and resilient initiatives, but are often limited in their timespan. Stable funding mechanisms, such as structural funds from the municipality, are vital for embedding initiatives and fostering long-term change.

Collaboration with diverse stakeholders can facilitate access to new funding streams. However, caution is necessary when engaging with the private sector to avoid potential greenwashing practices. Diversifying funding sources such as public, private, and crowdfunding can improve long term sustainability of projects. Finally, using food policy as a framework to link different projects and share resources can help cities tackle financial challenges and effectively progress their programmes.

Link activities to long-term impacts and develop monitoring methods to present to investors and secure funding.

2. Defining the key role of human resources in the implementation of initiatives for improving the food system

Human resources are crucial for organising activities, engaging stakeholders, and driving initiatives forward. Recruiting skilled and passionate individuals is essential to catalyse the transition toward a sustainable food system. The workload and availability of people working in food matters at the municipal level is often a challenge. In many cases, the team dealing with these issues is small. Moreover, very few municipalities have a department entirely dedicated to food. This leads to people being scattered in different divisions such as environment, agriculture, and health. On the one hand, this can be considered in a positive light, as food-related initiatives require a holistic perspective, and this horizontal approach brings together different knowledge, visions and insights that can be beneficial. On the other hand, this fragmentation poses further hurdles to be overcome, such as lack of communication, extra time, difficulties in coordination, and the lack of a systemic approach.

Creating a dedicated 'food team' in the municipality, composed of enthusiastic and competent members, can greatly enhance effectiveness in addressing specific problems. In cases where staffing capacity is limited, it becomes necessary to delineate areas of intervention within the broader food system context, based on the skills and competencies available in the team. Prioritisation becomes crucial in cases of staff shortages. It is also possible to network with existing activities to foster synergy and improve resource sharing. Collaboration with external organisations, universities and communities can ease the burden by sharing the workload, increasing the team's capacity to achieve its goals. Uncertainties in employment contracting frameworks, including short-term contracts, can impede long-term planning and stability.

Identify and connect with existing initiatives. This will save you time by avoiding duplication of efforts and will provide opportunities to connect and learn from other experiences.

3. Bridging skills and knowledge gaps in food system innovation through collaboration with experts

Skilled and knowledgeable staff members working on urban food transitions can significantly benefit plans and processes. Building competences within the team through workshops, training and peer-learning offers numerous advantages. However, some cities face challenges in recruiting suitable personnel, particularly in the specialised field of food environments, which requires a unique combination of knowledge and expertise.

To address this, it is essential to assess the team's composition and identify areas where expertise may be lacking. This allows you to understand which actions can be prioritised and carried out within the municipality and which are better outsourced. Where expertise is limited, external experts specialised in issues such as contracts, regulations, communication, nutrition, procurement, governance, etc. must be called in.

Added to this is the possibility of collaborating with research institutes and universities that can support the municipal team with scientific knowledge. This can be crucial in the early stages of planning and measuring impacts by collecting and analysing data from activities.

Moreover, investing in training is pivotal for cultivating new skilled and permanent employees. This not only fosters knowledge sharing but also ensures team stability, reducing reliance on individual specialists. Horizontal knowledge transfer and skill enhancement within the team emerge as invaluable resources for sustained progress.

Form collaborative relationships with professionals to compensate for the absence of expertise in the municipality, saving both time and energy.

2.5 ACTIVITIES

The foundation for communal food systems lies in the activities undertaken, which require careful planning, visioning, implementation, and monitoring.

Because the food system comprises several areas, potential interventions and actions can vary widely.

It is fundamental to always approach the food system holistically with your actions.

The following elements for transitioning towards a more sustainable food system are crucial:

1. **Education initiatives:** Improving food awareness among citizens through educational activities
2. **Food waste reduction:** Implementing measures for effective food waste management at the municipal level
3. **Local food production:** Fostering a more sustainable and local food production system
4. **Food donation and redistribution:** Enhancing the food donation system to promote inclusiveness

1 Improving food awareness among citizens through educational activities

Many cities recognise the important role of education and food awareness to achieve results in their urban food systems. Establishing educational activities in schools is an effective way to highlight the fundamental connection between food, climate, environment and health to young people and facilitate its transmission across generations. To promote good practices beyond school walls, cities can engage students with the aim of shaping different dietary behaviour in families. The ultimate objective is to raise awareness not only among children, but also throughout the broader community. By implementing activities in schools and particularly in school canteens, cities ensure that children are provided with healthy and nutritious food, thus ensuring that all students receive at least one complete and balanced meal a day.

Schools are particularly conducive to introducing new eating habits, such as increasing vegetarian options, although they may face resistance from parents and the meat industry. Effective communication, including guidance from experts such as nutritionists, is crucial in overcoming these challenges.

Many Food Trails cities implemented interventions in school canteens by revising menus to promote vegetable consumption and reduce food waste. Other initiatives include the participation of children in cooking activities in school canteens (Copenhagen), the creation of school gardens (Bergamo), the provision of breakfasts in kindergartens (Tirana) and the provision of cooking courses and recipe books (Groningen). These examples underline the cities' commitment to promoting healthier eating habits and fostering sustainability in their communities starting with the younger generation.

Involve parents and the wider community in educational activities, not only students, to achieve broader and lasting impact.

2. Implementing measures for effective food waste management at the municipal level

Managing food waste has emerged as a crucial pillar in many Food Trails cities, as it is essential for mitigating its environmental impact in urban areas. While efforts often focus on improving food redistribution, equally important is the prevention of waste generation. Not all donated food can be redistributed—especially damaged or spoiled items. For this reason, cities must explore alternative solutions, such as using waste for energy production through bio-digesters or composting. Collaboration with the private sector, including businesses, supermarkets, and restaurants, is essential for effective waste collection and reduction: the municipality can support them to develop improved waste management strategies.

Management of food waste requires detailed knowledge of the extent of the issue. You could collaborate with expert organisations or conduct periodic weighing campaigns to evaluate the city's waste output.

This is particularly important at the start of an initiative. Additionally, lack of prioritisation by city administrations and inadequate regulations can hinder effective waste management efforts. Organising workshops can improve household waste collection, while creating an overarching platform that connects food producers with those in need facilitates redistribution efforts. In addition, creating food waste hubs that serve as collection centres, distribution points, and biodigesters improves the waste management in the city.

Positive initiatives on waste reduction, prevention and management during the Food Trails project include menu revisions and nudge techniques in school canteens and establishment of food surplus collection and redistribution hubs (Milan), portion size reductions at schools (Copenhagen), education for the catering industry on the legal framework and simplifying procedures surrounding food surplus donations (Warsaw), and community supported compost creation using household food waste (Birmingham).

Map the roles of all actors involved in municipal waste management.

3 Fostering more sustainable and local food production and distribution

Local food chains can play a key role in shaping a city's urban food system. Prioritising local products not only reduces the emissions of food production and logistic, but also boosts the local economy, strengthening connections between multiple actors in the supply chain. Limited land availability is a challenge. Cities can explore innovative farming techniques, such as aquaponics, hydroponic and vertical farming, as well as collective gardens, small farms and urban farming. Engage producers in local food policy discussions to encourage innovation and increase awareness of the related opportunities.

The municipality must understand the reality and needs of this sector, and then act as a facilitator to improve producers' knowledge around innovation. For example, in addition to offering subsidies, one possibility is to organise workshops on organic farming and innovative cultivation techniques.

The municipality should also support the creation of distribution networks to facilitate the logistics of local produce and provide legal and financial assistance to incentivise farmers to participate in new projects or innovation programmes, ensuring a thriving local food system.

In addition to promoting local production, cities should prioritise sustainable urban and peri-urban agriculture. In Food Trails, several cities have either created urban gardens for citizens and students, such as Bergamo and Funchal, or actively supported community sustainable food production initiatives, such as Groningen. It is important to support producers who implement innovative agro-ecological methods and leverage sustainable public food procurement practices to support urban agriculture and local supply chains, such as in Bordeaux Metropole, and Milan. Finally, developing and supporting local production and distribution systems can strengthen urban-urban co-operation relations between consumers and producers, such as in Grenoble Alpes Metropole.

Make sure you engage farmers in every step of the transition process.

4 Enhancing the food donation system to promote inclusiveness

Revising the redistribution system of food donations was an important activity for cities involved in the Food Trails project, as it combines the objectives of reducing food waste and providing support to vulnerable people. This must be seen in the context of providing access to healthy and nutritious food to all, without leaving anyone behind. Political commitment and supportive regulations significantly influence the effectiveness of such initiatives. Establishing a robust donation network involving restaurants, supermarkets, canteens, and companies is essential for improving collaboration and obtaining food donations that are in acceptable better condition for redistribution. Communication campaigns can raise awareness and encourage more companies and individuals to participate in food inclusivity, fostering a cultural change towards a more sustainable food system for all.

Given the redistribution system's strong reliance on volunteers, continuous training is crucial to ensure stability within the system and ensure that people can fulfil their roles effectively.

While the municipality may play a role in designing distribution strategies, implementation is typically the responsibility of third-sector organisations and NGOs. Cooperation with such organisations is essential for creating a robust and self-sustaining system which also affects the management of the city's food banks. Additionally, establishing a network of organisations with the capacity to effectively collect and redistribute food efficiently is crucial, particularly due to variability of supplies and the importance of timing in food distribution.

Several cities focused on food redistribution systems during Food Trails: Warsaw saw an influx of Ukrainian refugees due to the war and had to develop an efficient, pragmatic and replicable system; Tirana worked to make healthy food more accessible especially for the most vulnerable; and Funchal collaborated closely with social neighbourhoods, distributing leftover food bags along with guidance and instructions for preparing nutritious meals with few ingredients.

Set clear guidelines for food donations to ensure they are safe, nutritious, and suitable for redistribution and make sure they are well understood by food businesses.

2.6 LEARNING

A city's journey towards an improved urban food system includes engaging in dynamic learning activities. To make innovations work on a larger scale, it is important to share knowledge and practices and apply them in different contexts, incentivising peer learning and collaboration.

The following elements are crucial for effective peer learning and knowledge transfer:

1. **Knowledge exchange:** Facilitating the exchange of knowledge and information to stimulate the replication of positive experiences

2. **Gaining inspiration:** learning from other cities' experiences to develop and expand similar initiatives

1 Facilitating the exchange of knowledge and information to stimulate the replication of positive experiences

During Food Trails, cities frequently met with each other to exchange experiences. Transferring knowledge on food system innovations can be valuable for other cities in the process of starting similar journeys. Joint learning can occur in various shapes and forms, such as presentations, workshops, visits, discussions and events. Participating cities in the Food Trails project emphasised the advantages of face-to-face exchanges, noting more opportunities for networking.

Sharing information is the basis for replicability of good practices. First, you understand and gather information from other contexts, then you consider how to adapt the acquired experience to your own city.

Joint learning facilitates knowledge exchange on specific topics, which can save resources in initial phases of food system transformation processes. Through engaging with others, you might better understand your own priorities and assess the resources available in your context.

A basic common culture and shared interests helps to connect. In fact, exchanges are more effective when cities share common ground, such as similar objectives, legal frameworks, or activities. Having input from others helps, especially for cities that just embarked on a transformation process. During discussions, it may be simpler to concentrate on the operational aspects of transformation, whereas sharing systemic issues like governance can be more complex. Finally, the information received can be shared and disseminated at a higher level in the city, to scale up knowledge.

Sharing knowledge and experiences increases the chance of successful replication of activities.

2 Learning from other cities' experiences to develop and expand similar initiatives

Interactions spark inspiration for novel ideas that can be adapted to different contexts. Even if these ideas are not immediately put into action, they can serve as valuable sources of inspiration for the future, even if the eventual application may differ from the original concept. For instance, Groningen developed a cookbook for children and families inspired by Birmingham's work on their food policy, while Bergamo established school gardens inspired by Funchal's work on this topic. Drawing insights from these interactions can enhance existing initiatives and prompt the exploration of new models.

The process of sharing insights is not limited to interactions between cities; it can also occur between different departments within a city or be sparked by activities initiated by organisations.

Naturally, any idea must be adapted to the specific context. Adaptation depends on many factors, including governance structures, legal frameworks, availability of resources, cultural contexts, levels of community involvement and funding opportunities.

Exchanges help show how similar challenges are being addressed in other contexts, albeit with different circumstances. This can lead to reflection about how to address these challenges within one's own food system, particularly when learning from a city that has successfully overcome obstacles. Drawing inspiration from their experiences can simplify the search for solutions. Having access to the guidance of someone who has already traversed similar terrain can be immensely valuable in dealing with these challenges.

Use the experiences of others as inspiration for future activities. Even if resources and time are currently insufficient to implement them, these ideas can be kept until conditions change.

3. INSPIRING EXAMPLES



The examples included in this handbook are some of the ways Food Trails cities have worked on the priority topics of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. Every example is scored across the Food 2030 categories they address:

climate, nutrition, circularity, and community. However, it is important to remember that most food system interventions deal with multiple priority topics and categories simultaneously.



GOVERNANCE

Improving urban food systems requires changing how municipalities make decisions, organise themselves and work with other stakeholders. This includes better collaboration across city agencies and departments, co-creating or revising food policies, developing an inclusive, representative food policy council, and identifying, mapping and supporting local and grassroots initiatives.



FOOD WASTE

Municipalities can support public dining spaces and their wholesale suppliers in monitoring and decreasing food waste. City-wide efforts can include public education and opportunities for creating and using composted food waste, and ensuring legislation and guidance on food use do not encourage unnecessary food waste.



FOOD PRODUCTION

Cities can strengthen sustainable food production by promoting rural-urban linkages, using an ecosystem approach to guide land use planning and management, ensuring secure access to land for sustainable food production, and providing urban and peri-urban food producers with material and logistical support.



SUSTAINABLE DIETS AND NUTRITION

Sustainable diets are good for public health, wellbeing, and for the environment. Cities can promote sustainable dietary education and cooking skills for the general public and those working in the food sector, and explore regulatory and voluntary instructments to promote affordable, culturally appropriate sustainable diets.



FOOD SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION

Cities can promote sustainability through improving links and transport between urban, peri-urban and nearby food-producing areas. Procurement systems can promote agroecological food production and market opportunities for regional producers. Supporting municipal markets directly links producers and consumers through short supply chains.



SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY

Urban food system problems are often linked to social and economic inequality. Cities should embed food initiatives within social and solidarity activities. Promoting and supporting grassroots and innovative approaches helps ensure equal access to healthy food for all.

3.1 GOVERNANCE

Improving urban food systems requires changing how municipalities make decisions, organise themselves and work with other stakeholders. This includes better collaboration across city agencies and departments, co-creating or revising food policies, developing an inclusive, representative food council, and identifying, mapping and supporting local and grassroots initiatives.

Food Trails cities have worked on the following questions around governance:

1. **How can my city involve as many stakeholders as possible in addressing food system challenges?**
   Bordeaux Metropole

2. **How can my city ensure our food policy is connected to its wider political and economic context?**
   Birmingham

3. **How can my city get representatives from multiple municipal departments as well as external organisations to work together?**
   Thessaloniki

How can my city involve as many stakeholders as possible in addressing food system challenges?





Bordeaux Metropole reminds other cities to invest time and energy in building relationships with stakeholders

A city's food policy, or other actions on food, should represent the diverse stakeholders in that city's food system. All Food Trails cities have experienced the importance of involving different types of stakeholders – municipality staff members, small-scale producers, agroecological farmers, local businesses, health authorities, consumer groups, third sector and charity organisations and more. Bordeaux Metropole's food council currently has over 300 members. This broad range of support enabled the Metropole to develop a strong and ambitious food policy, and action plans for a sustainable regional food system that protects the needs of producers, consumers and the wider agri-environment.

Bordeaux Metropole has 814,000 inhabitants in its metropolitan area, encompassing 28 municipalities. The municipalities are in charge of collective catering for schools and elderly people; in Bordeaux Metropole, 65 000 meals per day are produced for schools and other organisations. Bordeaux Metropole signed the MUFPP in 2015 and launched its Food Policy Council in 2017. During Food Trails, the Metropole implemented a shared and ambitious food policy that includes actions to improve canteens' procurement to access to healthy, sustainable, and local food. Bordeaux Metropole also worked to strengthen the local networks and shared vision of their food policy council.

3. Examples > 3.1 Governance > **Bordeaux Metropole**

Thanks to its earlier work on developing its food policy council, Bordeaux Metropole was able to achieve its goal to develop, and implement, a comprehensive food policy. A series of thematic workshops allowed people to present their ideas of how to reach their shared goal. The Metropole's representatives found that it was difficult to get some important stakeholders involved: many people did not trust the local government and did not feel heard or represented by them. Overcoming this sentiment took time and many repeated engagements with stakeholders, eventually ensuring that people's views and suggestions were included in the development of regional food policy plans. The Metropole's food policy council is now the official governing body for the Metropole's food policy. Members work together according to their primary competency, such as public services, farming, or processing. Working groups are organised around topics such as food chains, equal access to sustainable quality food, and food waste. Bringing together individuals with differing competencies but shared concerns ensure the council is responsive, democratic and maintains the confidence of members and the community. Maintaining dialogue and being transparent about all actions and decisions helps ensure people support the food policy council, and the food policy they have developed.



Bordeaux Metropole has encountered challenges in working with their food policy council on food policy and other issues. The main challenge was to balance time for discussion with concrete actions, as human resources are limited. Nurturing and developing relationships for inclusive governance takes time. And although the council has wide representation, there are significant stakeholders in the local agrifood system, such as viniculture, that are not very involved. The Metropole's food policy council work is driven by the dynamism and enthusiasm of local stakeholders who work together on shared objectives. Workshops are held with key stakeholders who work together on delivering the Metropole's Food Policy Action Plan.

Use the experiences of others as inspiration for future activities. Even if resources and time are currently insufficient to implement them, these ideas can be kept until conditions change.

How can my city ensure our food policy is connected to its wider political and economic context?





Birmingham's food system strategy reflects the social, cultural and economic strengths and challenges of the city

Food policies are more effective if they are developed with the support of politicians from all political parties, as well as local stakeholders, such as NGOs, voluntary organisations, community groups and local businesses. They also need to recognise and engage with the wider factors affecting a city's food system, such as socioeconomic inequality, advertising of unhealthy foods, and lack of access to land. Birmingham is a large, culturally diverse city with many economic and public health challenges. The city consistently works on food-related issues with its citizens at all levels: the city council has strong links to businesses, public services and community groups.

Birmingham is a very culturally diverse city with 1.2 million inhabitants. The city is a steering committee member of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and adopted its own Food System Strategy in 2022. In the past, Birmingham was part of a nationwide programme to tackle childhood obesity. Their pilot actions focus on raising public awareness of the fight against food waste, promoting local food production for food security, and encouraging young people to eat a healthy diet that includes beans and pulses.

3. Examples > 3.1 Governance > **Birmingham**

Through a series of public outreach events when developing their food system strategy, city officials realised the importance of embedding food-related actions in the wider political and economic context that affects city residents' capacity to access healthy food. This led to a strategy where food is positioned within wider objectives designed to reinvigorate the economy and physical environment. Birmingham developed its Food System Strategy in partnership with businesses, activists, citizens, public health officials and others. Their strategy highlights the need for a regenerative food system that recognises and removes barriers and unsustainable practices that damage the environment, communities and the economy. Projects to address these challenges take place at multiple levels: local community organisations that tackle poverty, research partnerships working on public and planetary health, and international partnerships, such as Food Trails and the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), that support cities in sharing best practice and recognising cultural factors driving food practices. Birmingham has developed a Food Action Decision-Making and Prioritisation (FADMaP) tool, which allows it to prioritise actions that are citizen-supported, celebrate the city's diversity, and address poverty and inequalities.



Additionally, the city promotes a circular food economy that supports small businesses and reimagines food waste as a valuable resource that can reinvigorate depleted soils and support local food production.

Birmingham's Food System Strategy is ambitious, and reflects the experience, knowledge and views of city residents. By actively engaging with individuals and organisations who previously felt left out of political processes, the strategy brought people together and has broad support. An unexpected benefit from this inclusive process was a renewed faith and energy in participatory governance. This has also been the experience of in Bordeaux Metropole, in their work on developing an inclusive food policy council and food policy.

Birmingham's Food System Strategy acknowledges barriers and unsustainable practices that damage the environment, communities and the economy.

How can my city get representatives from multiple municipal departments as well as external organisations to work together?



Thessaloniki co-designed its food policy through participatory workshops with different municipal departments and external stakeholders

The Food Trails cities were at very different stages of their journey in developing food-related policies and action. One of the main goals for some cities was to develop a food council, which would then develop a food policy for the city. This was the case for Thessaloniki.

Thessaloniki already had some measures in place that supported its efforts to develop a food council and food policy. It is a UNESCO City of Gastronomy and has networks of interested stakeholders. It has also been working on Net Zero initiatives, and several municipal departments are working on food waste.



Thessaloniki, with 300,000 residents and over 1 million in its metropolitan area, is a port city with a diverse multicultural heritage. It is proudly part of the UNESCO Gastronomy Cities network and hosts an annual food festival. Thessaloniki has been a signatory of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) since its launch in 2015 and developed the Thessaloniki 2030 Strategy for local resilience. Their pilot actions focus on creating a supportive local stakeholder network and urban farming activities.

3. Examples > 3.1 Governance > **Thessaloniki**

The city's Living Labs brought together diverse stakeholders from food-related organisations, government representatives, and NGOs. Different departments of the municipality were involved, including those overseeing economic development, tourism, green spaces, social affairs and more. The council specifically noted the importance of including vulnerable groups who are often overlooked in governance. This is important, as other cities have found there are further benefits to local and regional governance by developing participatory systems that encourage a wide range of individuals to take part. Thessaloniki then co-designed its food policy through a series of participatory workshops, focusing on themes that relate to the MUFPP's key areas. This gave structure to the participatory process. The city worked with Mamagaia, an environmental organisation with experience in designing participatory processes for social and environmental initiatives.

While Thessaloniki has recognised the importance of bringing different municipal departments into their food council and policy development, they have found that it is sometimes easier to communicate with external partners than with internal municipal departments, due to siloed patterns of working in local government.



Overcoming this type of governance style has been a common challenge for most of the Food Trails cities. Thessaloniki also encountered a gap between developing a policy and implementing recommended actions, due to a lack of a wider understanding and commitment to this type of work, which is very new in Greece. This is an issue that many Food Trails cities experienced, and an important lesson for all cities: developing a food council and food policy is part of the journey of urban food system transformation – but it is not the final destination!

Developing a food council and food policy is part of the journey of urban food system transformation – but it is not the final destination!

3.2 FOOD WASTE

Municipalities can support public dining spaces and their wholesale suppliers in monitoring and decreasing food waste.

City-wide efforts can include public education and opportunities for creating and using composted food waste, and ensuring legislation and guidance on food use do not encourage unnecessary food waste.

Food Trails cities have addressed some of the following questions on food waste:

1. **My city has restrictive legislation and regulations on handling food waste that increase the amount of food wasted in the catering industry. What should we do?**
Warsaw

2. **How can my city be more efficient in redistributing food surplus, so it is not wasted and goes to people in need?**
Milan

3. **How can my city support the development of citizen's knowledge and skills about food waste, food storage and composting?**
Birmingham

My city has restrictive legislation and regulations on handling food waste that increase the amount of food wasted in the catering industry. What should we do?

Warsaw worked with lawyers and industry representatives to improve understanding of relevant legislation

Cities' experiences and academic research both confirm that a major driver of food waste is the often-confusing legislation around food handling and redistribution. Educating consumers about 'best before' and 'use by' dates is one of the efforts that has been taken in this regard. Guidelines and legislation can be particularly challenging for businesses who may be at risk of legal penalties for not handling food correctly. This is a particularly serious issue for hotels, restaurants and catering businesses, who generate a high level of food waste but are often overlooked in research and interventions on decreasing food waste.





Warsaw has almost 1.8 million residents, of which more than 220,000 are students. It has been recognised as a leading European city for business development support. It boasts an important agribusiness industry with strong peri-urban agricultural activities, complemented by the support of agribusiness research units. Their pilot initiatives target the development of an efficient food donation and distribution system, emphasising collaboration with local businesses to foster a sustainable food system.

Through Food Trails, Warsaw developed a Food Lab which has been working on reducing food waste in restaurants. The Food Lab is a coalition of academics, food lawyers, restaurant owners and staff, who work together on decreasing food waste at all stages in food businesses. It quickly became clear that all food businesses in the city were afraid to take part in food surplus redistribution schemes due to their fear of breaking laws related to appropriate food handling or tax laws around donations. This also highlighted the fact that food waste in these businesses happens at many stages: in kitchens, before and after serving food to customers.

Donation of food after its 'best before' date is permitted in the European Union, as long as the product is still safe and edible. Different countries have their own national legislation that supports or limits this redistribution of surplus food to individuals or charitable organisations. They have found that different food control institutions can, and do, issue their own interpretations of food safety regulations. This causes confusion amongst businesses who are afraid to make mistakes and break laws.



Food lawyers have become important allies to Warsaw's Food Lab. They recommend clear, simple guidance for businesses, and for developing national legislation that supports and encourages redistribution of surplus food. Spain is developing innovative approaches to tackle this problem, such as requiring restaurants to provide containers to customers who would like to take home uneaten portions of their meal.

Better understanding of legal frameworks, and developing laws and practices - as well as business and cultural support for food surplus redistribution, will all help decrease food waste.

Food lawyers recommend clear, simple guidance for businesses on handling food waste that supports and encourages redistribution of surplus food.

How can my city be more efficient in redistributing food surplus, so it is not wasted and goes to people in need?





Milan improved logistics, infrastructure, and partnerships with stakeholders for more efficient redistribution

Many cities in the Food Trails project are working to decrease food waste, of which much is still fit for human consumption. Milan, like other Food Trails cities, is working on collecting this food and improving its distribution. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Milan carried out extensive mapping of the city's voluntary organisations supporting communities by distributing surplus food, as well as providing physical infrastructure that was needed to carry out this work. This provided the municipality with key evidence on how food surplus was already being redistributed effectively in the city.

Milan, with 1.4 million residents and 3.5 million in its metropolitan area, serves as Italy's economic and financial capital. The city accommodates 8 universities with nearly 200,000 students. In 2014, Milan established its Food Policy, including the creation of 10 "Food Waste Reduction Hubs". Milan's pilot actions focus on improving the circularity of municipal school canteen systems, intervening on public procurement and waste reduction.

Milan recognises that food waste takes place at all stages of the food system. During Covid-19, the city developed a powerful coalition of the private sector, food banks and non-profit organisations. The coalition developed food waste hubs throughout the city: food that is still suitable for human consumption is collected from supermarkets and canteens and taken to the hubs. This food is then redistributed through soup kitchens, food parcels, and through social solidarity shops, where families can access affordable food that is donated from a variety of sources. Milan has also developed a collection hub at its main fruit and vegetable wholesale markets. A space is made available for different non-profits to collect unsold surplus at the end of each trading day. Milan embeds its food surplus redistribution within wider efforts to address citizens' barriers to a healthy diet.

Milan's mapping exercise and work on food waste and surplus has taught the city about the importance of collaborating with different private, public and voluntary sector actors throughout the food system. Infrastructure, storage space, transport and logistical barriers need to be considered when cities are developing their strategy to decrease food waste by improving redistribution of food surplus.



Milan is also aware that improving food surplus redistribution does not solve food poverty and should be considered a separate issue. Food aid needs to be considered and developed in a wider socio-economic context.

Infrastructure, storage space, transport and logistical barriers all influence cities' capacity to redistribute food surplus.

How can my city support the development of citizen's knowledge and skills about food waste, food storage and composting?





Birmingham's Community Champions changed people's ideas and behaviours around food waste

Many food waste initiatives concentrate on reducing waste and making more efficient use of food resources. However, some parts of food, such as potato peels and eggshells, are very difficult to use. It is important that people and organisations find ways of efficiently processing this waste. Composting can help decrease food waste as well as create valuable organic fertiliser for growing food. This contributes to a circular economy, which is one of the Food 2030 goals. Birmingham has a strong background in working with community initiatives and has used these relationships to promote composting and food waste education throughout the community.

Birmingham is a very culturally diverse city with 1.2 million inhabitants. The city is a steering committee member of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and adopted its own Food System Strategy in 2022. In the past, Birmingham was part of a nationwide programme to tackle childhood obesity. Their pilot actions focus on raising public awareness of the fight against food waste, promoting local food production for food security, and encouraging young people to eat a healthy diet that includes beans and pulses.

3. Examples > 3.2 Food waste > **Birmingham**

One of Birmingham's Living Labs focused on working with local community groups to decrease food waste and increase knowledge, skills and motivation around composting. Birmingham linked their final desired long-term goals to the relevant preceding steps, and the expected outcomes of actions and interventions at different stages of the Living Lab. The city worked closely with community groups who already had strong working relationships with the neighbourhood where the test pilot was planned. The project aimed to change behaviours around food waste and result in people separating food waste from general waste. It targeted three different types of housing styles, with different degrees of access to gardens or public spaces for processing compost. The project noted that residents need both green infrastructure – composting caddies and materials for bokashi fermentation or vermicomposting (with worms) – and social infrastructure – neighbourhood residents who were enthusiastic and committed to the project, and willing to promote its aims and share their practical knowledge and enthusiasm with their neighbours. These 'Community Champions' also promoted the use of compost in community growing schemes.



Like many of Birmingham's initiatives on food, their food waste composting project has been developed and delivered with the local community. It has also incorporated wider food system goals, such as promoting a healthy diet, and encouraging urban growing of fruit and vegetables. The project also focused on 'seldom heard' communities, who experience social and economic barriers to a healthy diet.

'It is Birmingham's experience that programmes delivered 'to' and not 'with' have little chance to see long term behaviour change.

3.3 FOOD PRODUCTION

Cities can strengthen sustainable food production by promoting rural-urban linkages, using an ecosystem approach to guide land use planning and management, ensuring secure access to land for sustainable food production, and providing urban and peri-urban food producers with material and logistical support.

Food Trails cities have addressed the following questions around food production:

1. **We want to make sure that people can grow more food in our city. What can we do?**
   Bergamo
2. **How can my city support producers who use agro-ecological methods for food production?**
   Bordeaux Metropole
3. **How can my city strengthen connections between producers and consumers?**
   Grenoble Alpes Metropole

We want to make sure that people can grow more food in our city. What can we do?





Bergamo's municipality owned urban and peri-urban land is used by community groups for food production

Food production in cities is a common response to ensuring urban food security. It is important to make sure that available land is protected for food production, and to ensure that vulnerable individuals and communities have access to land for food production. As part of its work in Food Trails, Bergamo has mapped urban and peri-urban growing spaces and ensured that the benefit of these growing spaces supports communities facing multiple challenges.

Bergamo collected important data on where the city's food came from, what land was available within and near to the city, and how municipal land could be best used for food production.

Bergamo has 121,000 inhabitants, including over 23,000 students. It was named a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in 2019. The city has an active Food policy council and has been hosting the "Agriculture and the Right to Food" festival since 2017. Their pilot actions address food education, sustainability of their school canteen system and procurement.

The city has new regulations on who can use municipal land for urban gardening. This is to avoid the common problem of public land being used for private benefits. In Bergamo, urban land for food production is prioritised for families with young children, and organisations working to promote social and economic benefits. Plots have been reduced in size and are assigned to individuals for three years, after which the lease can be renewed. All land must be organically cultivated to ensure a healthy environment in the gardens and the surrounding, densely populated area. These gardens provide education for lease-holders on growing fruit and vegetables organically. Bergamo is also promoting the growing of fruit trees throughout the city. The city's Botanical Gardens are committed to promoting territorial agro-biodiversity. It is expanding its educational programmes to support the cultivation of appropriate, resilient food crops in the city and the surrounding region. The surrounding province of Bergamo has many organic agricultural activities. The city is promoting business opportunities in organic agriculture for young people, as well as promoting and supporting horticultural collaborations between organic growers, and other social initiatives.



Thorough mapping of its urban and regional food system supported Bergamo's plans to promote sustainable food production, broaden access to urban and peri-urban growing spaces, and to develop material and logistical support for producers. This mapping process has provided the city with important data on the current status of its food system, the key actors involved, and what the city should prioritise to increase food system sustainability.

In Bergamo, urban land for food production is prioritised for families with young children, and organisations working to promote social and economic benefits.

How can my city support producers towards using more agro-ecological methods for food production?





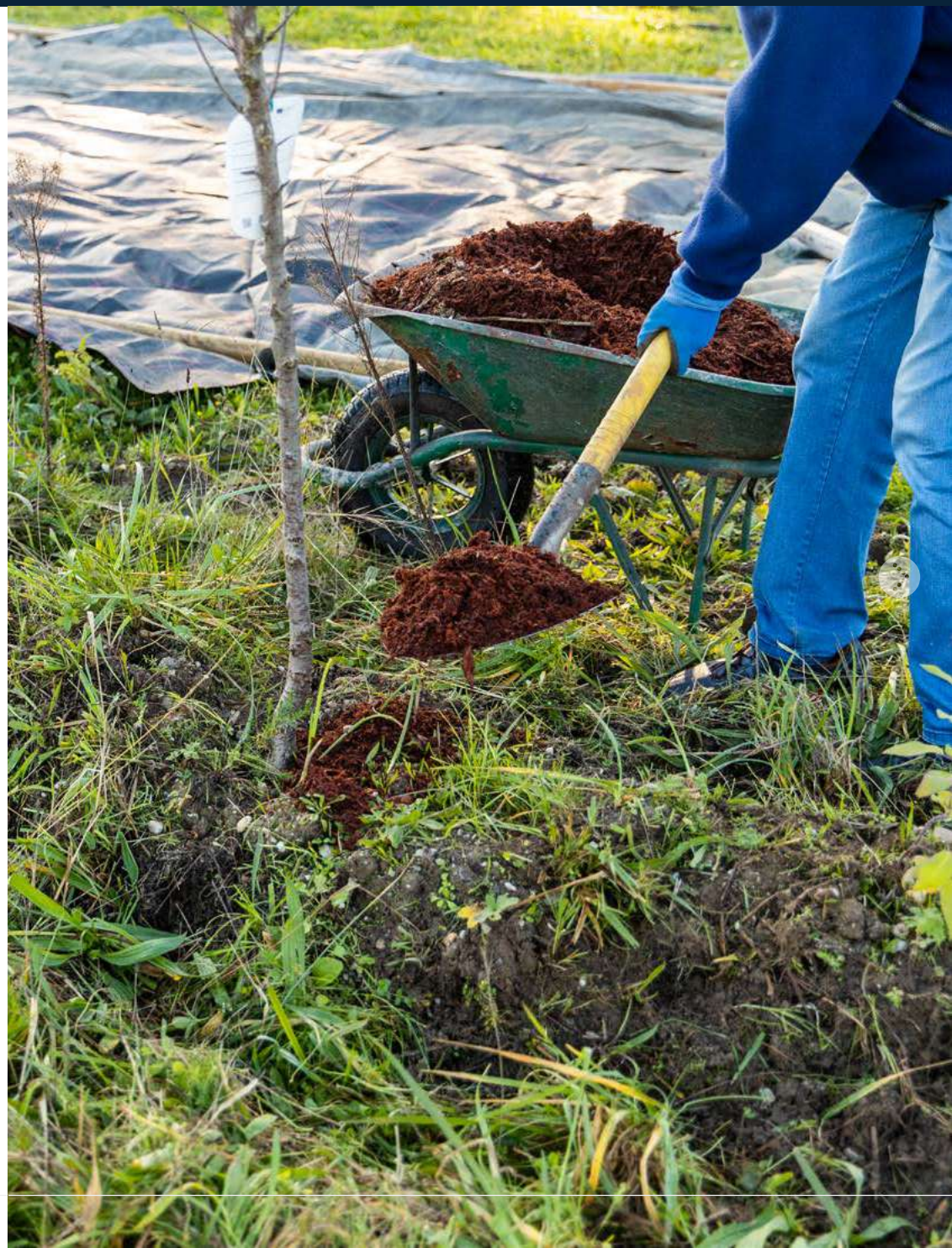
Bordeaux Metropole provides technical and financial support to producers to allow them to use more agroecological practices and supports them in developing local and remunerative market opportunities

With support from Food Trails, Bordeaux Metropole carried out a detailed analysis of its territorial food system, resulting in a thorough and ambitious agricultural and food resilience strategy. The Metropole recognises that attaining full, certified organic status can seem challenging for many producers. It therefore aims for 100% agroecological production, with 30% certified organic production by 2027 and 50% by 2050. These are ambitious political targets that require significant technical and practical measures to implement.

Bordeaux Metropole has 814,000 inhabitants in its metropolitan area, encompassing 28 municipalities. The municipalities are in charge of collective catering for schools and elderly people; in Bordeaux Metropole, 65 000 meals per day are produced for schools and other organisations. Bordeaux Metropole signed the MUFPP in 2015 and launched its Food Policy Council in 2017. During Food Trails, the Metropole implemented a shared and ambitious food policy that includes actions to improve canteens' procurement to access to healthy, sustainable, and local food. Bordeaux Metropole also worked to strengthen the local networks and shared vision of their food policy council.

These include providing training for new entrants to the farming sector, access to land, and market opportunities for agroecological producers that allow them to earn a fair price for their product.

Agroecological producers face significant economic challenges, as it is a more expensive, more labour-intensive method of food production. Accessing reliable markets for their produce, coupled with increased costs of production, can create overwhelming barriers to both new and established agroecological producers. Bordeaux Metropole has made the development of reliable markets for these producers a key aim in their territorial food system ambitions. It has established strong partnerships with local food producers, and consistently approaches all food actions within the context of a regional food strategy that balances consumers' need for healthy food with producers' need for a fair price. Farmers have a strong voice in the food council. The Metropole supports local initiatives that purchase food directly from local producers, ensuring a fair price and a reliable market for agroecological growers.



They also work with their procurement officers to help them increase the amount of locally produced food used within its collective catering system and provide financial investment for farmers who need support in changing their food production practices to agroecological methods. The Metropole also coordinates a group of experts to facilitate new entrants into farming, particularly those using agroecological practices.

Giving a strong voice to farmers in the food council helps to implement relevant actions to transform the local food system

How can my city strengthen connections between producers and consumers?





Grenoble Alpes Metropole organise events and activities that connect producers and consumers

Strengthening rural-urban linkages and directly connecting producers and consumers is an important step in ensuring sustainable food production. Many Food Trails cities have been working on developing territorial or regional food systems. Grenoble Alpes Metropole developed the Month of Food Transition to provide education and inspiration about food production and strengthen links between producers and consumers.

Grenoble Alpes Metropole is comprised of 480,000 residents and 65,000 students, spread across 49 municipalities. Recognised as the European Green Capital in 2022, the Metropole contributes to fostering a sustainable food system as members of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. Since 2020, the Metropole organises a Food Transition Month to raise awareness among citizens. The other pilot actions during Food Trails are promoting a sustainable transition in school canteens and developing an Inter-Territorial Food council with its municipalities.

The Month of Food Transition was designed to raise awareness of the central role of food in an ecological transition and the importance of local agroecological producers. Over the course of one month, the Metropole arranged cooking demonstrations, debates, talks, shared meals, farm visits, farmers' markets and more.

These activities showcased the importance of local producers and created opportunities for consumers to see – and taste – food produced locally. Events also tackled some of the more challenging elements of food production, such as ensuring that healthy food is affordable for consumers, and the role of local government in supporting agroecological producers. Public talks and debates were held about the future of food production in the Metropole, climate change, food solidarity, the impact of industrial agriculture, and decreasing food waste. Throughout the talks and events, there was an emphasis on linking rural producers and urban consumers.



While the Month of Food Transition included an impressive range and number of events, it is important for cities looking to host similar events to make sure they consider ways of monitoring the impact of public events. Cities frequently assess the number of attendees, but this does not always provide information about the impact of these events on changing behaviours or raising awareness. It is also important to ensure that such events engage new audiences who may not be familiar with the issues or may be less inclined to attend.

Grenoble Alpes Metropole's Month of Food Transition includes cooking demonstrations, debates, talks, shared meals, farm visits, farmers' markets and more.

3.4 SUSTAINABLE DIETS AND NUTRITION

Sustainable diets are good for public health, wellbeing, and for the environment. Cities can promote sustainable dietary education and cooking skills for the general public and those working in the food sector, and explore regulatory and voluntary instruments to promote affordable, culturally appropriate sustainable diets.

Food Trails cities have worked to improve sustainability of diets and nutrition by answering the following questions:

1. **What can my city do to educate students about healthy diets in schools? Copenhagen**

2. **How can my city promote and facilitate behavioural change towards sustainable diets? Funchal**

3. **What knowledge and skills do citizens and catering staff in my city need to have a better diet, and how can we support this? Groningen**

What can my city do to educate students about healthy diets in schools?





Copenhagen has developed food system education in their schools, teaching students about sustainable food and healthy diets

Developing healthy eating habits in young people is an important step towards ensuring future health and wellbeing. Many Food Trails cities are working to promote healthy diets through school menus and food education. Copenhagen is working with students, local farmers, and school chefs to ensure students are informed about the nutritional elements of a healthy diet, the environmental impact of the food system, and culturally varied and significant foods.

Copenhagen has 650,000 inhabitants, of which 65,000 are students. It was ranked the second most liveable city in the world by the Global Liveability Index in 2022. The city has an active Food Strategy for 2020-2025 and an ambitious Climate Strategy since 2019. Their pilot actions focus on sustainable public procurement, the development of educational materials for schools and awareness raising for healthy diets.

Copenhagen

The city of Copenhagen promotes climate-friendly public dining. One of the main venues for these interventions is the school system. Copenhagen's municipal kitchens prepare around 115,000 meals per day. The city's kitchen staff are changing menus to decrease meat content and promote healthier dietary choices. Within many of the city's schools, food and the food system are central to the educational curriculum. Students are involved at all stages. They learn about the food system and its environmental impact, and the history of different crops. Young people work with chefs on developing menus, preparing samples of unfamiliar dishes and encouraging their peers to try these new foods. Many of the dishes reflect the city's increasing cultural diversity. Cooking and sharing new foods is seen as a way to promote culturally appropriate sustainable diets, and embrace social change through sharing, and enjoying food. Copenhagen has also developed innovative educational relationships with local farmers, as part of the city's plans to connect children's education with the food they consume. With the support of Food Trails, Copenhagen has developed connections between students and farmers, allowing young people to learn about how potatoes are grown and the realities of farming.



This project exemplifies the city's efforts to develop innovative procurement tenders that include an educational component.

Copenhagen's efforts in promoting healthy diet education face wider challenges. Schools note that older students often choose to purchase their meals from local fast-food restaurants. The schools are working to develop menu choices that imitate fast-food menus, while incorporating healthier ingredients. Further work may need to incorporate local food system actors outside the schools. Other Food Trails cities are dealing with this issue by developing legislation restricting the sale of fast food near schools.

Copenhagen is working with local farmers and school chefs to deliver education about food systems.

What can my city do to educate students about healthy diets in schools?



Funchal is promoting sustainable dietary habits through schools, community outreach programmes, and social interventions that tackle inequality

Developing sustainable dietary habits throughout the population requires broad, innovative approaches. These can be supported and strengthened by linking efforts with other social and economic interventions. Throughout the Food Trails project, Funchal has shown creativity and commitment to changing dietary habits of the city's inhabitants. Sustainable diets are a central goal of the city's Living Labs.

In the early stages of the Covid 19-pandemic, Funchal organised the distribution of Vital Baskets. These baskets included healthy food from local producers, as well as advice and recipes to support a healthy diet.



Funchal, the capital of the island of Madeira, is a vibrant tourist hub with 105,000 residents. The city actively supports the community through initiatives such as the Funchal Vital Basket, which provides assistance to low-income families. Embracing sustainability, Funchal promotes urban gardening, prevents food waste, and encourages composting during the Food Trails project.

The city has a well-established Eco Schools programme, where children plant and grow vegetables. The gardens are used as an opportunity to teach children about organic production and the importance of a healthy diet.

Funchal also includes food education within other social initiatives which support vulnerable communities. This is important, as these groups often struggle to afford a healthy diet and are more at risk of non-communicable diseases due to a poor diet. The municipality promotes food education through community outreach programmes, creches, and activities in social neighbourhoods. Funchal has a strong history of working with individuals and communities facing socio-economic challenges and is using this experience to inform and drive its efforts to promote a healthy diet.

The city has revitalised its allotment scheme and has now allotted all municipal growing space to individuals in need. Land is prioritised for individuals experiencing poverty and food insecurity, and education is provided to ensure people can grow healthy food, sustainably, for themselves and their families.



Funchal has recognised that behaviour change needs to be supported with education, opportunities to develop new skills, and a socially supportive context that encourages new practices. By providing education in multiple, diverse contexts, as well as ensuring that people have the ingredients and cooking skills needed, Funchal is an inspiration in promoting dietary behaviour changes.

By providing education in multiple, diverse contexts, as well as ensuring that people have the ingredients and cooking skills needed, Funchal is an inspiration in promoting dietary behaviour changes.

What knowledge and skills do citizens and catering staff in my city need to have a better diet, and how can we support this?



Groningen developed a cookbook, recipe cards, workshops and professional training around healthy diets

Groningen has focused on the protein transition throughout its Food Trails Living Labs. To achieve this significant shift in people's diets, the city recognises the importance of working with local communities to ensure that people have the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare healthy meals. Through working closely with organisations supporting communities facing barriers to a healthy diet, Groningen developed a series of interventions designed to support healthy cooking and eating.

Cooking healthy meals can be particularly challenging for people with limited income.



Groningen, with its 235,000 inhabitants and 65,000 students (over 10,000 of which international students), is the largest city and economic centre of the northern Netherlands. With a majority of its population under 35, it is a youthful, energetic city boasting vibrant cultural attractions and a conducive environment for advancing sustainable food practices. Health, sustainability, social inclusion and community engagement underlie the development of the Groningen pilot actions.

The cookbook project was co-designed with organisations that work directly with people struggling to eat a healthy diet and incorporated their experience and knowledge about the barriers these groups face in following a sustainable diet. Groningen has many students, and many recent immigrants, who often lack the funds for a healthy diet.

Groningen has developed a cookbook featuring easy, inexpensive, recipes. Most of them are plant-based. The cookbook has been written in simple, straightforward language. The city has worked at embedding knowledge and familiarity about cooking throughout relevant schemes, working closely with community centres and offering training for cooking teachers. Free workshops were offered at community centres and schools, giving practical cooking lessons based on the recipes in the cookbook. Cooking lessons are also offered in schools, with a children's version of the cookbook being developed. This will also be used in community centres to offer cooking classes for children. Cooking skills are important when encouraging new, meat-free diets. Other Food Trails cities have offered training to canteen cooks so that tasty, plant-based meals can be prepared in schools and other community dining spaces.



Groningen

Groningen's efforts to encourage a transition to a healthy diet have focused on providing cooking skills to those groups who tend to suffer combined challenges to a healthy diet. The city has worked closely with community organisations when developing their interventions. All too often, nutritious meals are seen as too expensive for many people. Groningen has shown that a healthy diet can be accessible to anyone.

Cooking skills are important when encouraging healthy diets using new ingredients.

3.5 FOOD SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION

Cities can promote sustainability through improving links and transport between urban, peri-urban and nearby food-producing areas. Procurement systems can promote agroecological food production and market opportunities for regional producers. Supporting municipal markets directly links producers and consumers through short supply chains.

Food Trails cities have worked on the following questions around food supply and distribution:

1. **How can my city make our public catering system more sustainable, and use it to support local agroecological producers?**
Milan

2. **How can we use technology and Dynamic Purchasing Systems to support local producers' engagement with the city's procurement system?**
Copenhagen

3. **How can we strengthen urban-rural cooperation in our food system so that urban consumers and rural producers all get a fair deal?**
Grenoble Alpes Metropole

How can my city make our public catering system more sustainable, and use it to support local agroecological producers?





Milan invested in energy efficient kitchens and revised supplier contracts to embed sustainability at all points of supply and distribution

Municipal catering for schools, hospitals, and care home meals is an important topic for city food system interventions. Many interventions focus on procurement, looking at what types of food are purchased and how they are produced. This is important, but there is more that can be done to make public catering systems even more sustainable. Milan has used its work with the Food Trails project to carry out a thorough review of its public catering system to see how it can improve the sustainability of the city's food supply, preparation and distribution at all stages.

Milan, with 1.4 million residents and 3.5 million in its metropolitan area, serves as Italy's economic and financial capital. The city accommodates 8 universities with nearly 200,000 students. In 2014, Milan established its Food Policy, including the creation of 10 "Food Waste Reduction Hubs". Milan's pilot actions focus on improving the circularity of municipal school canteen systems, intervening on public procurement and waste reduction.

Milan has significant urban and rural land assets. The city maintains a close and mutually supportive working relationship with farmers who work on municipal land holdings, and ensured they were provided with water during the 2022 drought. Farmers have a guaranteed market for their organic produce which is used within the city's public meals. Milano Ristorazione (MiRi) is owned by the city of Milan and manages the entire supply and distribution chain for the city's procurement system. When the city's contract with MiRi was up for renewal, it gave Milan a unique and powerful opportunity to explore how it could enhance sustainability at multiple points throughout the supply and distribution system. This built on previous efforts to decrease meat, salt and sugar in public meals. Milan and MiRi worked with Food Trails to reduce plastics and packaging throughout the school canteen distribution system. The city explored how MiRi could supply over 80,000 meals a day, while minimising plastics and waste, and improving sustainability throughout its distribution system. This created a unique opportunity to go beyond common understandings of the supply and distribution system, which tend to concentrate on types of food supplied and how they are produced.



MiRi have their own logistical platform for preparing and distributing meals to public settings throughout the city. This includes refrigerated vans and kitchen centres. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the city took the opportunity to renovate one of MiRi's kitchen and distribution centres. This included installing energy efficient lighting and a heat recovery system. Water used in kitchens is filtered, with fats being sent to biodigesters. Any unavoidable food waste is sent to be processed and turned into biofuels.

Through their review of their working relationship with MiRi, and their renovation of one of their main kitchens, Milan has made significant advances in making food supply and distribution throughout its public catering system more sustainable at all points.

Milan is improving sustainability at all stages of its public catering system, including production, preparation, distribution and waste management.

How can we use technology and Dynamic Purchasing Systems to support local producers' engagement with the city's procurement system?





Copenhagen use IT to enable more suppliers to supply municipal contracts

Copenhagen has a strong reputation for high levels of organic produce used within its procurement system. However, organic food supply and distribution often favours large-scale systems, and fails to deliver wider benefits to regional economies or opportunities to smaller-scale producers who are working to also incorporate wider socio-economic transformational goals within their businesses. Similarly, organic food production can be more expensive than conventional food systems. Decision-making based solely on price can embed power discrepancies that favour large-scale producers and fail to support local economies.

Copenhagen has 650,000 inhabitants, of which 65,000 are students. It was ranked the second most liveable city in the world by the Global Liveability Index in 2022. The city has an active Food Strategy for 2020-2025 and an ambitious Climate Strategy since 2019. Their pilot actions focus on sustainable public procurement, the development of educational materials for schools and awareness raising for healthy diets.

During the Food Trails project, Copenhagen worked to strengthen shorter value chains that enable local producers to supply to the city's procurement system.

Copenhagen has over 1,000 public kitchens throughout the city. Shortening value chains required improving communication and cooperation throughout the city's food team, as well as chefs, suppliers and producers. Copenhagen is developing technological solutions to facilitate better cooperation, as well as enhanced economic opportunities for small-scale producers. Within the EU project COACH, Copenhagen has worked on developing a Dynamic Purchasing System. By developing easy to use, transparent technology, the city aims to strengthen the agricultural productivity of small-scale producers, and their ability to directly supply kitchens and schools. Through Food Trails, the city has also developed an easy-to-use App that minimises the gap between the central procurement office and the kitchens, giving the contract owners a better understanding of what happens when the goods are delivered.

Copenhagen worked to strengthen shorter value chains that enable local producers to supply the city's procurement system.

How can we strengthen urban-rural cooperation in our food system so that urban consumers and rural producers all get a fair deal?





Grenoble Alpes Metropole's Inter-Territorial Food Project links municipalities and local businesses

Many Food Trails partners have worked to strengthen the relationship between municipalities and local businesses whose work impacts the sustainability of the regional food system. Grenoble Alpes Metropole has developed the Inter-Territorial Food Project (PAIT) which works with a broad range of government and private sector actors. The aim of the PAIT is to ensure that farmers are paid well and have market opportunities for their sustainably-produced foods. The Metropole works across different sectors, and has incorporated these goals into their collective catering.

Grenoble Alpes Metropole is comprised of 480,000 residents and 65,000 students, spread across 49 municipalities. Recognised as the European Green Capital in 2022, the Metropole contributes to fostering a sustainable food system as members of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. Since 2020, the Metropole organises a Food Transition Month to raise awareness among citizens. The other pilot actions during Food Trails are promoting a sustainable transition in school canteens and developing an Inter-Territorial Food council with its municipalities.

Grenoble Alpes Metropole

While France now has the Egalim law, presenting municipalities with ambitious targets on using locally produced food in the public procurement system as well as decreasing plastic use and food waste, many found that implementing these laws can be quite challenging. Grenoble Alpes Metropole is working with the private sector to develop a strong local food economy. Its Agricultural and Food Strategy Action Plan highlights the role of production, processing and distribution businesses, and the importance of the Metropole's investment in supporting these sectors. The Metropole is committed to supporting regional food businesses and supporting restaurants to obtain sustainability certification that rewards their efforts to decrease food waste and use agroecological produce in their menus. They are also working with local farms to ensure that agricultural land stays in production. This is a common challenge for Food Trails cities, as the average age of farmers is relatively high and many lack succession plans for a new generation to take on the farm. Grenoble Alpes Metropole is supporting farms in developing direct sales channels to consumers. This supports farmers in maintaining the maximum economic benefit from their produce.



The Metropole has also supported the development of the IsHère brand, which markets local, quality products, aims to double the number of producers involved, and triple annual sales. There will be a particular focus on marketing local organic produce.

Grenoble Alpes Metropole's detailed assessment of their territorial agricultural system and its economic and demographic position, have enabled it to develop a municipal support system for local sustainable food businesses. This is in addition to the Metropole's work on procurement for school catering, through which a healthy, climate-friendly diet is prioritised alongside sourcing from local producers.

Grenoble Alpes Metropole is supporting farms in developing direct sales channels to consumers.

3.6 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY

Urban food system problems are often linked to social and economic inequality. Cities should embed food initiatives within social and solidarity activities. Promoting and supporting grassroots and innovative approaches helps ensure equal access to healthy food for all. Social and economic equity is a big challenge for many cities.

Food Trails cities have worked on the following questions around this issue:

1. **How can my city connect food initiatives with wider social and economic initiatives?**
Groningen

2. **What information do my local politicians need to understand inequality in the food system, and what can they do to support changes?**
Bergamo

3. **How can my city make sure that vulnerable citizens, including children, people on a low income, and those experiencing homelessness have healthy meals?**
Tirana

What knowledge and skills do citizens and catering staff in my city need to have a better diet, and how can we support this?



Groningen's work on food puts people, community and justice at the heart of their initiatives

Difficulties in accessing a healthy diet are often connected to wider social and economic challenges people experience. Many Food Trails cities are working to address food insecurity by connecting food initiatives to wider social programmes. These programmes have often been established by community organisations, who have excellent knowledge of the difficulties local people experience.

Groningen has strong working relationships with many third sector initiatives in the city. By building strategic alliances with these groups, the municipality has developed a series of projects that address peoples' barriers to a healthy diet as part of wider difficulties they experience.



Groningen, with its 235,000 inhabitants and 65,000 students (over 10,000 of which international students), is the largest city and economic centre of the northern Netherlands. With a majority of its population under 35, it is a youthful, energetic city boasting vibrant cultural attractions and a conducive environment for advancing sustainable food practices. Health, sustainability, social inclusion and community engagement underlie the development of the Groningen pilot actions.

The municipality also supports projects that have been initiated by citizens who understand the needs of the local community, and that have a clear, transformative vision of how to promote sustainability. Many of these projects are located in the Westpark area, which is the site of several social initiatives. This includes the *Tuin in de Stad* initiative, which works on different levels: its social restaurant hosts weekly dinners, a community garden is cultivated by individuals who are out of work and experiencing poverty and other social challenges, and green spaces offer opportunities for children and others to relax and enjoy being outside. Westpark's Food Forest has an educational purpose, showcasing low-impact food production that is embedded within a public space where nature and food production are linked, and a shared resource for all. Volunteers are invited to work in Westpark's *Blije Bodem* (Happy Soil) garden and be inspired by its peaceful environment, as well as share its produce.



Many cities are home to communities who are at risk of poverty, social isolation and poor health. This includes the elderly, lone parent families, new arrivals to the city, and people with chronic health problems. By linking food initiatives to programmes that also address other challenges, cities can effectively address multiple challenges simultaneously.

By building strategic alliances with community groups, Groningen has developed a series of projects that tackle peoples' barriers to a healthy diet as well as addressing the wider difficulties they experience.

What information do my local politicians need to understand inequality in the food system, and what can they do to support changes?





Bergamo's mapping exercise highlighted socially transformative food system innovations

For cities to successfully act on social and economic equity and its impact on their food system, politicians must be informed on the relationship between inequality, public health and food insecurity. They also need to be aware of the many grassroots organisations that are working to address these challenges, to support building effective alliances between local governance and projects working on food within a wider social context. Groups like these are often small, with limited resources, and not widely known outside their immediate community.

Bergamo has 121,000 inhabitants, including over 23,000 students. It was named a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in 2019. The city has an active Food policy council and has been hosting the "Agriculture and the Right to Food" festival since 2017. Their pilot actions address food education, sustainability of their school canteen system and procurement.

By highlighting local initiatives, the municipality can support them more effectively, and better understand local needs.

As part of the Food Trails project, Bergamo carried out a detailed assessment of its city's food system. This provided politicians with information on the scale of the challenges the city faced, such as the number of households experiencing food insecurity, and where in the city people most needed support. Bergamo also collected information on creative solutions to social and economic equity in the food system which were already taking place. For example - Bergamo's urban agriculture projects are positioned within wider social initiatives. Municipal land for growing food is assigned to associations that have stated social purposes, such as tackling poverty, and supporting inclusion of people with disabilities.



Bergamo's food system analysis also included information on projects that provide healthy affordable food for consumers and guarantee a fair price for producers. Many of these are linked to Italy's Gruppo Acquisto Solidale (GAS) network. By highlighting these alternative food networks and working to support them at the municipal level, cities can build awareness amongst politicians of the challenges citizens face, and of ways of improving their lives and access to healthy, affordable food.

By highlighting local initiatives, the municipality can support them more effectively, and better understand local needs.

How can my city make sure that vulnerable citizens, including children, people on a low-income, and those experiencing homelessness have healthy meals?





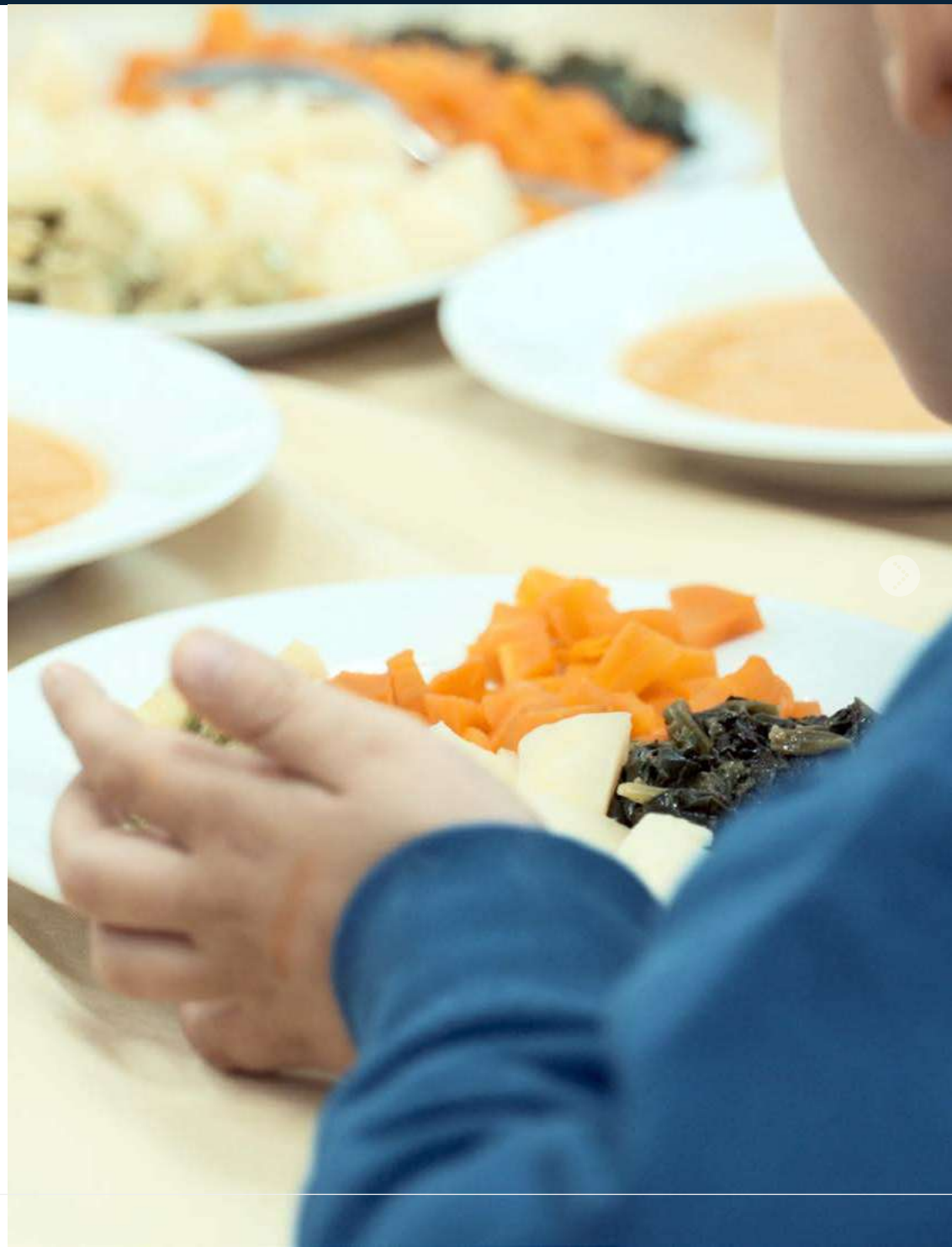
Tirana provides nutritious food in schools and social centres

Many cities in Food Trails and beyond face the challenge of ensuring that all citizens have access to healthy food. Tirana has made the provision of healthy food to young people one of its key Living Lab goals. The city has high levels of poverty, with associated levels of food insecurity and poor nutrition. To address this problem, the city has developed a series of interventions in and around schools to improve the health and wellbeing of children. The municipality works with nutritionists who have designed balanced menus that meet the particular needs of young children aged up to 6 years old.

Tirana, with its 500,000 residents, constitutes 20% of Albania's total population. The city enforces national zoning regulations for fast food establishments and is home to the 'New Bazaar'Bazar' urban renewal project, which supports local farmers and restaurants. Tirana also hosts seven social, multidisciplinary community centres. Their pilot actions aim to raise awareness about healthy diets and urban food waste reduction.

Healthy food is procured and served in kindergartens, ensuring that all children have access to a healthy meal. Tirana also provides affordable, healthy meals through a network of social centres that support vulnerable groups, including homeless people, low-income individuals, and street children.

Tirana is also working to improve the content of the meals provided at schools and social centres. Nutritionists are involved in planning the menus to ensure they meet basic nutritional standards. But one of the most important lessons learned by many Food Trails cities is the potential to combine multiple ambitions within various interventions. It is possible to ensure social and economic equity and access to healthy food for consumers, while also supporting local producers. Tirana is working to develop its regional agricultural sector. There are further opportunities to incorporate produce from local farmers within the food prepared for kindergartens and social centres.



This would deliver further social and economic benefits across the local food system. There have also been discussions about ensuring food surplus from supermarkets is collected and redistributed to those in need. This would help Tirana decrease its food waste while providing food for those experiencing barriers to a healthy diet.

There are opportunities to incorporate produce from local farmers within the food prepared for kindergartens and social centres.

4. TOOLS


FOOD
TRAILS
Pilots
core
group
stakeholders
MAP OF
DOXA PA
Living Labs
II
Co-creation

Tools have been developed and used within the Food Trails project to support cities in developing food system interventions and measuring their impact. The tools are linked to the elements in the QuickScan Lens for Replication (QSLR) and provide guidance for planning, developing and implementing transformative processes in your cities' food system.

A number of the tools are briefly introduced in this handbook. If you wish to explore the tools in more depth or apply them in your city, background material in the project's online repository will provide more guidance and examples of how the tools have been applied in Food Trails.

1. STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

To gain an understanding of current food system activities and stakeholders in your city, and develop effective stakeholder engagement strategies.

2. FOOD POLICY ACTION CANVAS

For translating food-related policy areas and vision into detailed and concrete actions and for recognising which stakeholders you need to work with to effectively address Food 2030 categories.

3. MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE MAPPING GRID

Map vertical and horizontal working relationships across different MUFPP action categories, and the relevant policies and levels of governance that impact your actions.

4. THEORY OF CHANGE

To illustrate how activities at different stages will bring about the intended changes that lead to your planned outcome.

5. DATA COLLECTION

Guidelines to understand the current situation and the result of your activities: this helps to decide what to invest further resources in and provides important information for stakeholders about the achievements.

6. ROADMAP FOR SCALING IMPACT INVESTMENT

To support the expansion and acceleration of investments to drive change in food systems, ultimately creating opportunities for long-term partnerships.

7. PEER LEARNING

To share experiences and learn from each other.

8. REFLEXIVE MONITORING

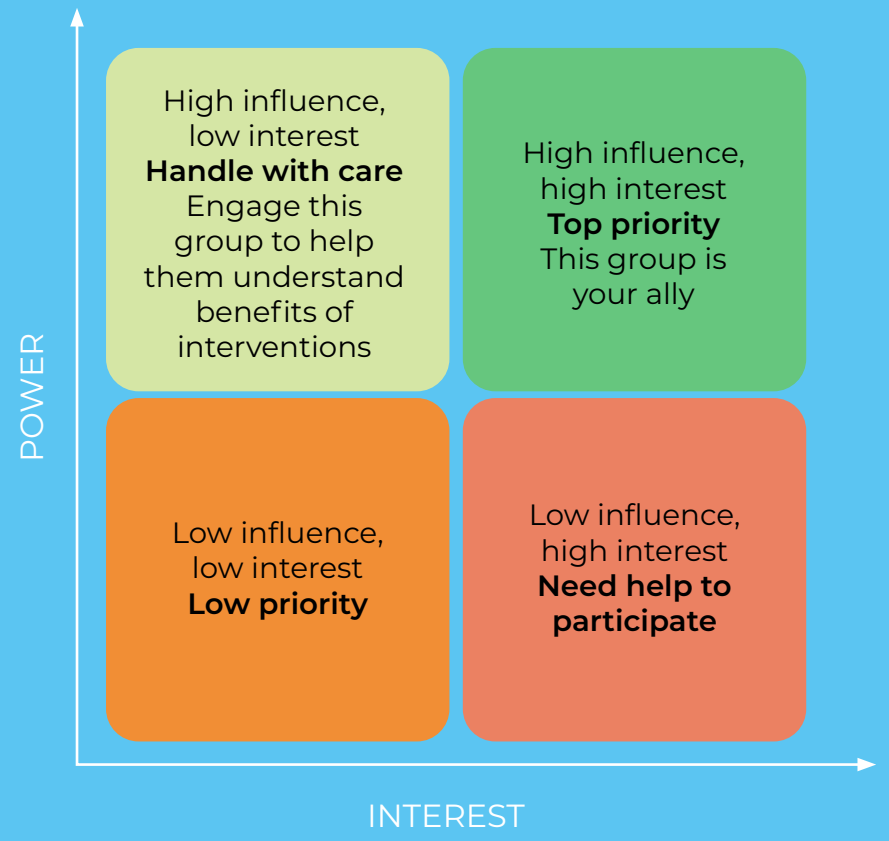
To encourage learning and adaptation to complex problems throughout a project.

4.1 STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

What is stakeholder mapping?

Stakeholder mapping is a type of stakeholder analysis. It involves identifying individuals or organisations (stakeholders) who are interested in or affected by the initiatives you will undertake. Stakeholders are often already highly active in cities' food systems. Identifying and mapping these stakeholders strengthens the capacity of cities to recognise what is already being done in their food systems, and what else needs to be done to enhance the work of local stakeholders.

Stakeholder matrix



How to do stakeholder mapping?

First, identify all relevant stakeholders: consider all potentially affected individuals and organisations, including businesses, NGOs, government bodies, and community groups. Then, categorise these stakeholders according to their level of influence (power to impact the project) and their level of interest (concern for the project's outcome). This can be done using a matrix with high/low influence and interest quadrants. Make sure to consider power dynamics: recognise that stakeholders may have varying levels of power, and some may be hesitant to participate due to this imbalance.

Tips for successful implementation

It can be challenging to identify and engage with important stakeholders. There is also a risk of working only with individuals and groups who are already well known to the municipality. Reflecting on power differentials is important. Recognising these differences and ensuring inclusion is an important part of identifying and mapping. People can be reluctant to come forward during mapping exercises, so you may need to be proactive in reaching out to potentially important stakeholders. Combining online and in-person meetings can help overcome scheduling challenges. Also make sure to ask colleagues in other departments how they think their work connects to food: they may not be aware of the links at first. By recognising and building relationships with allies, you can expand your identification and mapping of other relevant stakeholders.

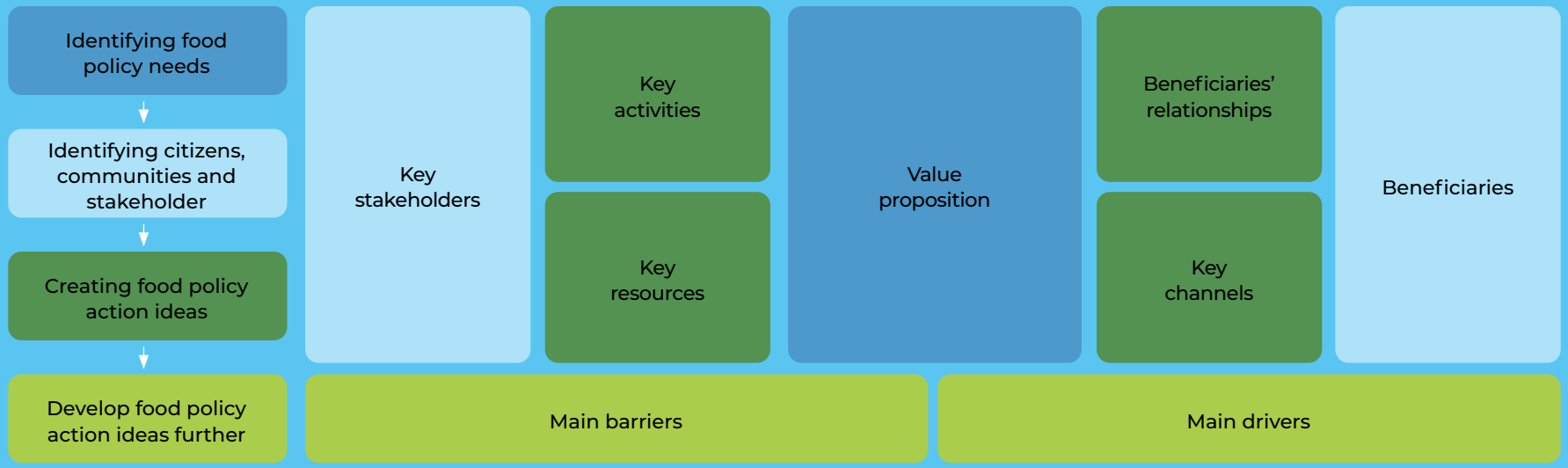
For more information, see Resources:
List of consolidated 11 FOOD 2030 Living Labs (Deliverable 2.2)

4.2 FOOD POLICY ACTION CANVAS

What is a Food Policy Action Canvas?

The Food Policy Action Canvas (FPAC) is a practical instrument to support urban policy makers to translate important food-related policy areas such as food waste and food loss reduction, or accessibility to healthy and sustainable food for all citizens, into detailed and concrete policy actions. It provides a structured approach for developing and implementing food policy actions.

Food Policy Action Canvas (FPAC)



How to use a Food Policy Action Canvas?

The FPAC consists of nine building blocks for developing food policy actions linked to the food policies. It starts with breaking down the process into manageable steps, starting with (1) identifying local food system problems and areas needing improvements; followed by (2) identifying citizens, communities and stakeholders who are the beneficiaries addressed by the action, and (3) creating food policy action ideas; and ending by (4) developing food policy action ideas further. The end result of the process is selecting the most appropriate food policy actions for your city, based on your local context and the results of the FPAC.

Tips for successful implementation

To use the FPAC effectively, it is important to engage all relevant stakeholders—from government officials to community leaders to local businesses—and work together collaboratively. This ensures that everyone's perspectives and expertise are considered, leading to more informed and inclusive decisions. Additionally, allocating the necessary resources—whether it's funding, personnel, or time—is crucial for successful implementation. Without proper support, even the best plans can falter.

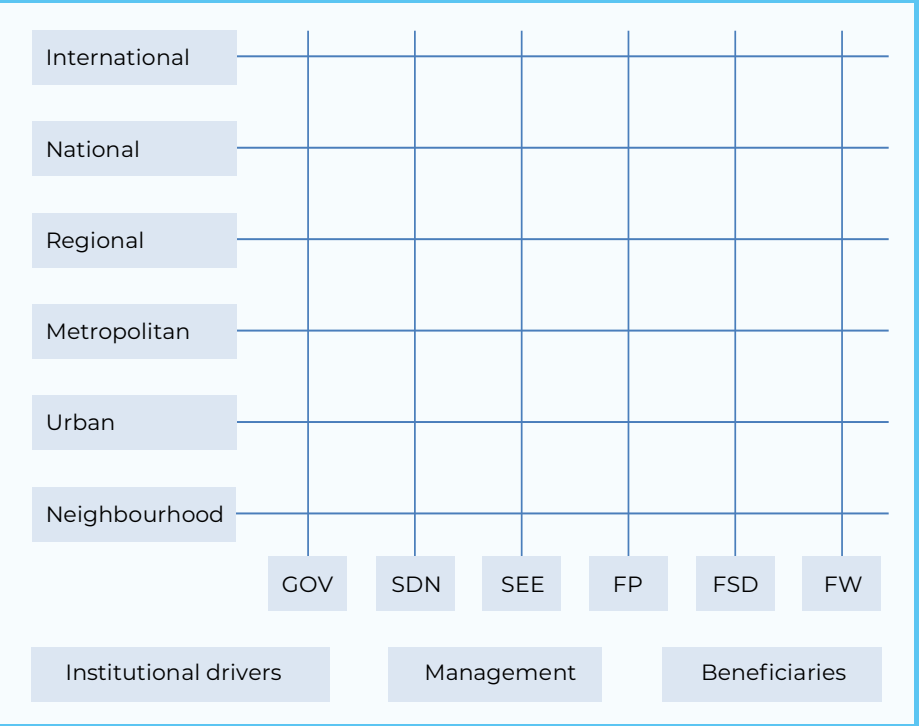
For more information, see Resources:
List of consolidated 11 FOOD 2030 Living Labs (Deliverable 2.2)

4.3 MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE MAPPING GRID

What is a Multilevel Governance Mapping Grid?

This tool provides a way to map and explore how the governance of food policies is managed at different levels, through the vertical relationships between cities and other higher institutional levels, such as national and international legislation. As part of the activities in the Horizon 2020 project CLEVERFOOD, the city of Milan developed a mapping grid. The grid is structured on two axes: the vertical axis represents the different institutional levels, while the horizontal axis represents the six areas of policy intervention of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact: Governance (GOV), Sustainable Diets and Nutrition (SDN), Social and Economic Equity (SEE), Food Production (FP), Food Supply and Distribution (FSD), and Food Waste (FW).

Multilevel Mapping Grid template



How to use a Multilevel Governance Mapping Grid?

Mapping starts at the urban level for cities and metropolitan level for metropolitan entities. Cities identify and describe the most relevant policy actions for each area. This could include free school meals and national public health and nutrition guidelines. The grid looks at four institutional drivers: normative, management, infrastructure, and funding. This helps cities to think about laws and policies that affect their actions, who is responsible for delivering and managing interventions, the buildings and other infrastructure needed, and where funding comes from. The tool also identifies beneficiaries of the services, such as citizens or private companies. Work in one category can be linked to work in other categories. Complete each theme one by one: starting from the European and international level down to the sub-local one. Once you have analysed all the drivers, you can look at who benefits. The map shows how different topics and policy actions link to each other.

Tips for successful implementation

A testing phase was organised by the City of Milan with Bordeaux Metropole, the Municipality of Barcelona and the cities of Food Trails. It is advisable to find a specific and dedicated workshop for the completion of the canvas, engaging all the key internal stakeholders to have a clear and precise overview of the themes and interventions. Secondly, a follow-up meeting is recommended in order to review and validate the data gathered. Lastly, the map has been developed to be completed mainly on an urban/ metropolitan level, but it would be advisable to integrate the information on different levels.

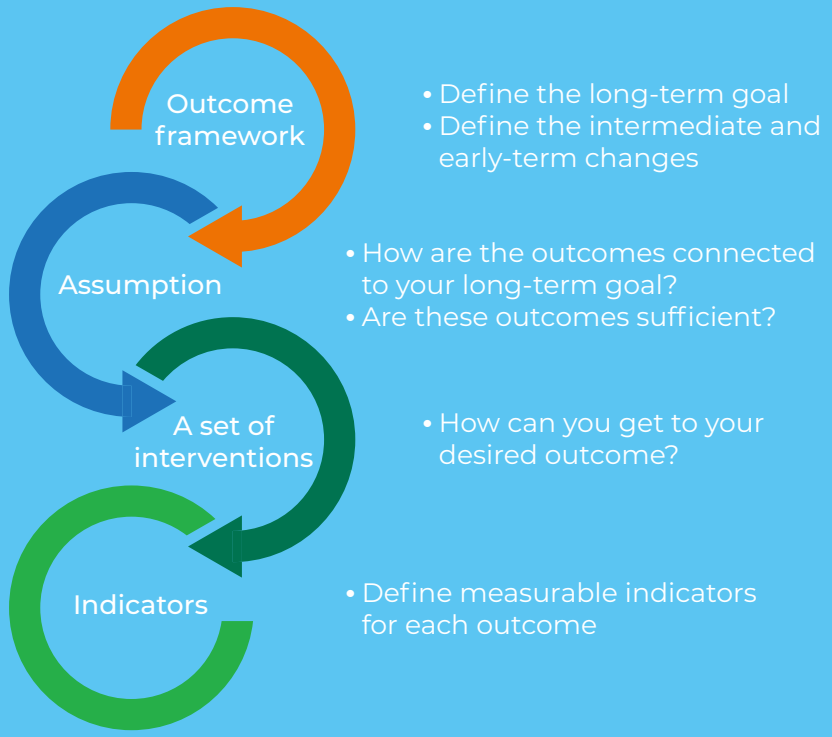
For more information, see Resources:
CLEVERFOOD - MUFPP - D2.1 Comparative analysis of existing urban food policies – multilevel governance with examples of Milan and Bordeaux Metropole

4.4 THEORY OF CHANGE

What is a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change (ToC) is a tool that clarifies how your efforts will bring about the intended change. It lays out the activities that are expected to lead to a desired outcome. This tool helps to articulate what activities you are undertaking, why you are doing them, why you assume it will work, what you aim to achieve in the short, medium, and long term, and who are the key stakeholders involved.

Steps in a Theory of Change approach



How to apply a Theory of Change?

Implementing a ToC requires a structured approach. Many Food Trails cities found it was helpful to work with an experienced facilitator or researcher who is familiar with ToC, as they can seem confusing to begin with (but make sense as you go along!). A ToC starts by defining long-term goals, intermediate goals, and the activities leading to the desired changes. This involves reverse thinking, focusing on how each step leads to the next. Aligning long-term goals with impact indicators that resonate with policy makers and investors makes progress tangible. Mid-term goals serve as key performance indicators (KPIs) for the success of the pilot initiatives you are looking to implement. Early-stage goals can be linked to KPIs that measure the initial outputs of the projects. This structured approach helps you track progress, adjust strategies as needed, and ensure your efforts are aligned with the final objectives.

Tips for successful implementation

Crucial for success is clear stakeholder consensus regarding the intended outcomes and the necessary steps to reach the shared goals. Additionally, there should be adequate resources and capacity to implement the activities outlined in the ToC. Effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders are crucial for sharing information, coordinating efforts, and addressing any challenges that arise. Flexibility is also important, as conditions may change that require adjustments to the ToC. Finally, ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that the ToC remains relevant and effective over time.

For more information, see Resources:
Report of theory of change applied each to Food Trails city (Deliverable 4.1)

4.5 ROADMAP FOR SCALING IMPACT INVESTMENT

What is the Roadmap for Scaling Impact Investment in Urban Food Systems?

The Roadmap for Scaling Impact Investment in Urban Food Systems is designed to assist municipalities, investors, innovators, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) involved in food value chains. Its purpose is to help make decisions that support the expansion and acceleration of investments to drive change in food systems. The roadmap provides an investment perspective for urban food policy and offers guidance to municipalities and other urban food systems stakeholders on integrating impact investment in food systems and policymaking. This will ultimately create opportunities for investment and establish long-term partnerships.



How to use the roadmap?

The roadmap includes eight thematic areas that represent segments of impact investing in urban food systems. These thematic areas serve as an interface for municipalities to coordinate actions with public and private investors, and to catalyse investment in food policies. To implement the roadmap, cities should discuss these eight thematic themes together with investors and other urban food system stakeholders (innovators, businesses, etc.) to determine the missing components and changes needed to attract more investment in food policies and innovations in their cities.

Tips for successful implementation

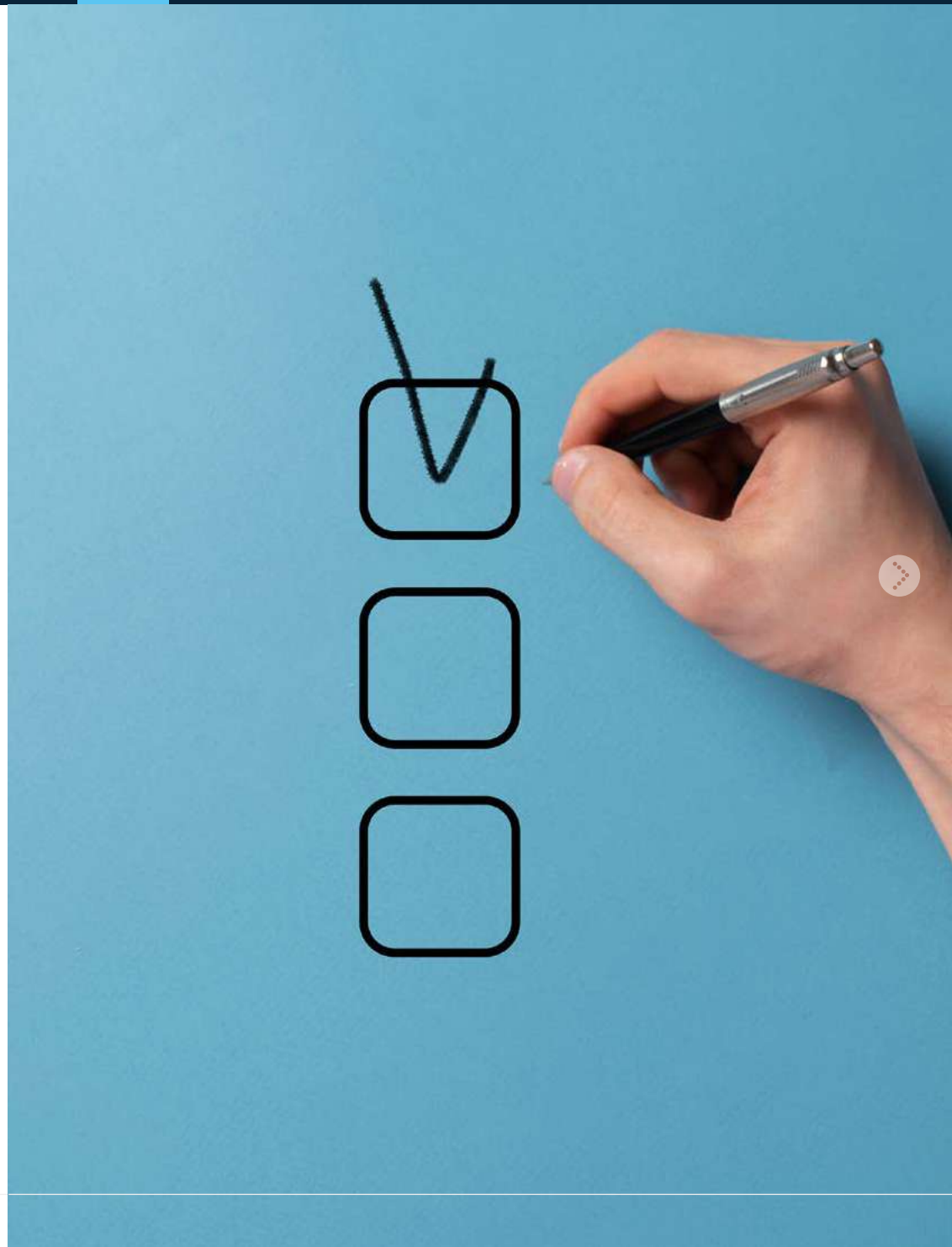
When following the roadmap, it is important to recognise the potential for impactful investment that can be achieved through coordinated efforts among key stakeholders in policy, finance, and value chains. Therefore, cities should develop inclusive stakeholder engagement processes around roadmap that represent not only well-known or large-scale innovators and businesses, but also include small-scale food systems innovators. This is crucial to ensure accessibility and affordability for all.

For more information, see Resources:
Roadmap For Scaling Impact Investment In Urban Food Systems

4.6 DATA COLLECTION

What is data collection?

Data collection is crucial in understanding your starting point (baseline) and what has been the result of your actions. The insights from data collection can help you decide what to invest further resources in and show your achievements. For example, if your city aims to decrease food waste in the school canteen system, you need to know how much is currently being wasted; at what stage (preparation or 'plate waste'); what types of food are wasted – bread, fruit, or whole meals? – and the factors that can lead to decreased waste.



How to do data collection?

The first step in data collection is to consider what you want to collect data on and how to measure this. You can use indicators or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to help you track the progress of your interventions. Suggestions for indicators can be found, for instance, in the monitoring framework of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP). The next step is to check what kind of data you need for the indicators that you selected and if you can collect that data. After that, you need to think about planning your data collection: who will collect, store and analyse the data? Finally, think about how you will use the data and the results that follow. Who is your target audience and what do you want to learn?

Tips for successful implementation

Data collection is often experienced as complex and requires knowledge and proper reflection. It can be time, capacity and budget consuming. Because of these constraints, it helps to get a professional to guide you to design and conduct the data collection process. Be creative and expand your network when facing resource constraints: universities or students might be very interested to collaborate with you.

For more information, see Resources:
Impact Measurement framework for investors to evaluate their contribution to food Policies (Deliverable 4.6)

4.7 PEER LEARNING

Peer learning is based on the idea that individuals in similar roles and dealing with similar issues learn best from each other by sharing concrete experiences and insights with the goal of transferring knowledge and ideas from one city to another. 'Peers' can include city experts, decision-makers, or local stakeholders. A facilitator invites peers to observe and discuss how processes are managed in different contexts. This exchange provides inspiration and new ideas for working methods and their application.

Peer learning is not about imposing solutions but about understanding peers' experiences with different approaches and contexts, which can be valuable and inspiring for other cities. It's important to share not only good practices and successes but also challenges and failures to discuss how to overcome difficulties and learn from these experiences. These activities are usually organised and facilitated by projects and networks. Therefore, do not miss the opportunity to join such valuable initiatives and learn from your peers!

1. **Knowledge-sharing workshops**
2. **Replication activities**
3. **Cascade learning**

1 Knowledge-sharing workshops

Knowledge-sharing workshops are designed to create a collaborative space for cities and other relevant stakeholders (such as researchers) to exchange insights, challenges, and lessons learned. In Food Trails, these workshops enabled partner cities to discuss the development and outcomes of Living Labs, tools, and specific topics useful for implementing their activities (e.g., stakeholder engagement), sharing the challenges they encountered and solutions they implemented.

These workshops can be held both online and in-person. To ensure active engagement, the number of participants should not exceed 20, and the maximum duration should be 2 hours, with breaks planned for longer sessions. Topics can be identified based on the needs of the participants. Depending on the topic and format, customised templates can be useful to guide the discussion. A moderator (e.g., a researcher or member of a civil society organisation) is needed to facilitate the workshop. Additionally, developing follow-up questionnaires with targeted questions to gather feedback is advisable. Feedback from Food Trails partner cities has been positive, with participants expressing that the workshops helped them learn about new tools and gain insights from other cities.

For more information, see Resources:
see deliverable D6.3 Knowledge sharing workshops



2 Replication activities

Replication activities aim to promote knowledge exchange between cities, facilitating the learning and replication of innovative solutions. In the Food Trails project, partner cities were matched based on cities' good practices and learning needs, and the replication activities followed these steps:

1. **Getting Started:** An online meeting to explain the methodology and roles of each partner and to introduce and discuss the good practices and learning needs.

2. **Working Together:** Online meetings to share materials and information on a deeper level and further define the agenda and objectives of the visit.

3. **Meeting-up:** A two-and-a-half-day in-person visit to exchange with peers, meet local stakeholders, and conduct field visits. Informal discussions during breaks and meals add significant value. A transferability session is held on the last day to reflect on the potential for transferring the lessons learnt and consider possible actions to replicate these insights in the local context.

4. **Follow-up:** An online meeting 3-4 months after the visit to see the impact of the replication activities.

These activities have primarily followed a **work shadowing** methodology. In this approach, a less experienced city (mentee) visits a more experienced city (mentor) to observe firsthand how things are done. This provides inspiration and new ideas, benefitting the mentee city by learning about upscaling, downscaling, and outscaling practices. These practices include implementing innovations on a larger scale, adapting them to different settings and contexts within the city, and replicating them in other cities. For example, a successful pilot project to reduce food waste in eight schools in one city may be replicable in other schools in the same city, as well as in schools in other cities, as part of their efforts to address a similar problem. The intervention might need to be adapted to fit another school or city's context, but the underlying concept and plans can serve as a useful guide.

The **expert mission** methodology was also used, involving one or more expert cities working with a mentee city to transfer knowledge, experience, and skills to achieve specific objectives related to the replication and scalability of innovations. It allows for in-depth counselling and joint problem-solving, with the expert city or cities visiting the mentee and providing support to implement actions at the local level. While work shadowing focuses on replication and the transferability of what is observed in the mentor city, with clear objectives and methodology for transferability, the expert mission is focused on providing tailored advice to the mentee and can be preferred for cities at a very early stage of their journey. During the expert mission, expert cities refer to their experiences and work to provide advice to the mentee, which can be replicated by the mentee when possible.

In both methodologies, a facilitator supports the entire collaboration, and researchers collect and analyse data by conducting interviews and participating in activities. Although local challenges can make it difficult to transfer what was observed to a different context, cities found these activities inspirational, enlightening, and helpful.

For more information, see Resources:
see deliverable D6.5 Replication visits report

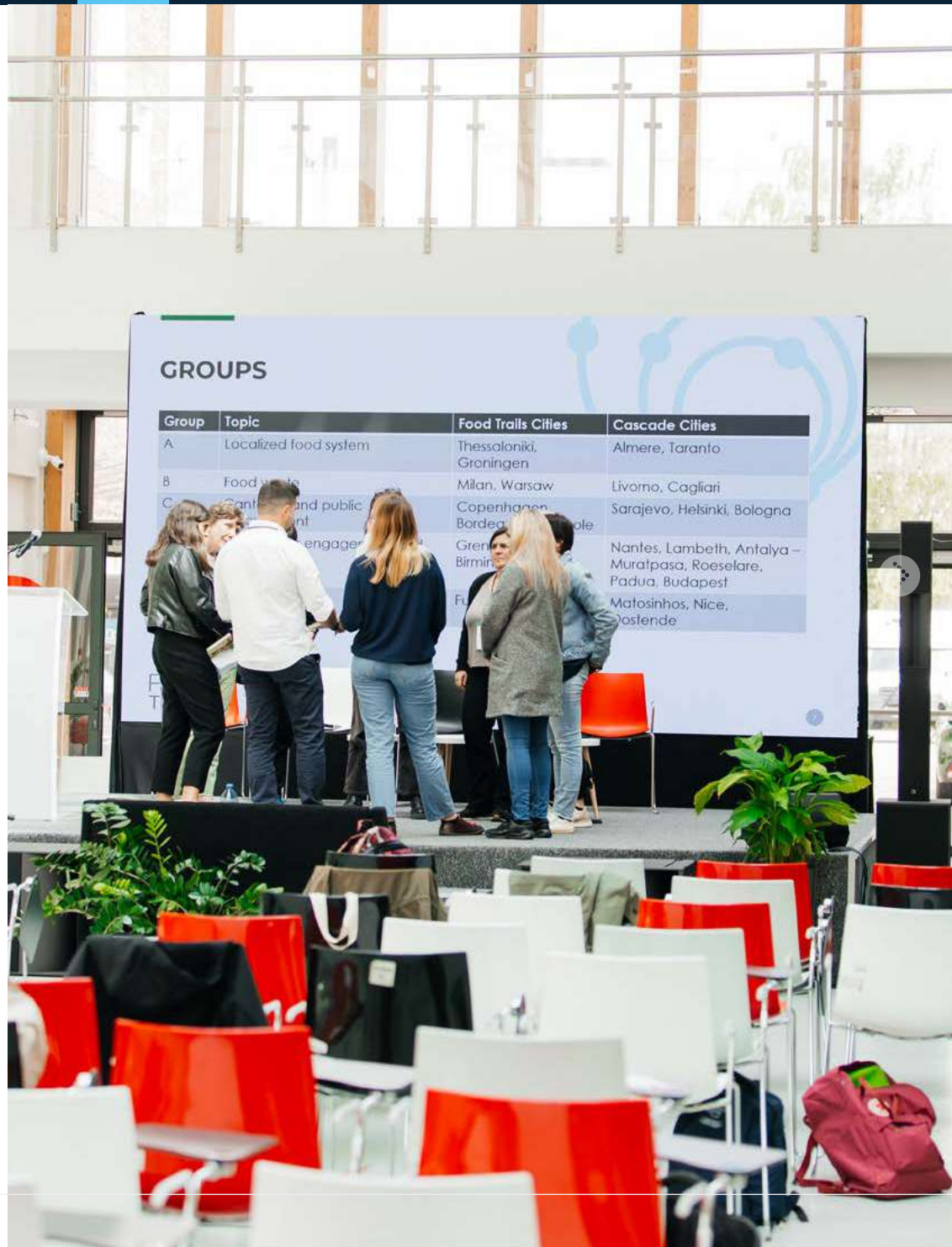


3. Cascade learning

Cascade learning facilitates the transfer of the wealth of knowledge developed within the consortium throughout the project to external stakeholders. Food Trails used three main tools to achieve this:

- **Webinars:** A series of short online webinars (one hour each) featuring presentations from Food Trails cities and experts from within and outside the project consortium. These webinars addressed specific questions related to urban food policies by sharing partner cities' experiences and project experts' insights, while also promoting discussion among speakers and participants. For more information, see the webinar sessions in Resources.

- **Cascade Learning Programme:** This programme linked cities outside the consortium with Food Trails partner cities. Learning clusters, composed of one Food Trails partner city and two or three 'Cascade cities', were formed based on matching cities' expertise and learning needs. Cascade learning, similar to work shadowing visits, included a visit to a Food Trails city to observe best practices in urban food systems firsthand.



The visit was preceded by an online collaboration, where cities shared their experiences and learning needs and co-created an agenda for the visit. Unlike replication activities, cascade learning is shorter and more intensive, involving multiple cities rather than just a mentor and a mentee. To capture the learnings from the programme, cascade cities were tasked with developing an action plan to develop or strengthen plans for transitioning to sustainable food systems.

- **Replication Workshop:** Food Trails cities were divided into four thematic groups to present their activities to cities outside the consortium, including cascade cities. This was followed by a reflection on how to replicate good practices, facilitated by Food Trails partners.

The Cascade Learning Programme proved to be an excellent opportunity for learning and exchange for both Food Trails partner cities and cascade cities. Webinars and replication workshops are valuable learning tools when time and resources are limited, as they can reach a broader audience.

For more information, see Resources:
see deliverable D6.6 Cascade learning report

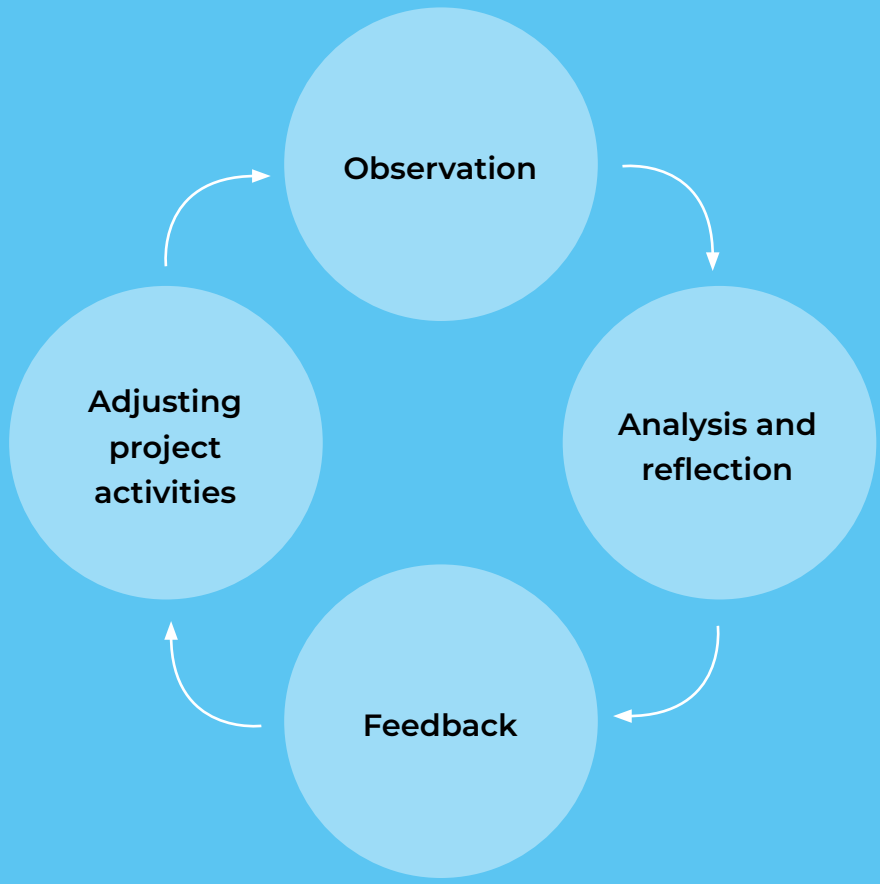


4.8 REFLEXIVE MONITORING

What is reflexive monitoring?

Reflexive Monitoring is an approach to continuous learning designed to tackle complex problems. It goes beyond simply tracking progress of your activities: reflexive monitoring encourages learning and adaptation throughout a project. It is particularly useful for projects aiming for sustainable system innovation, where solutions involve multiple actors and interconnected issues.

The reflective monitoring cycle in Food Trails



How to do reflexive monitoring?

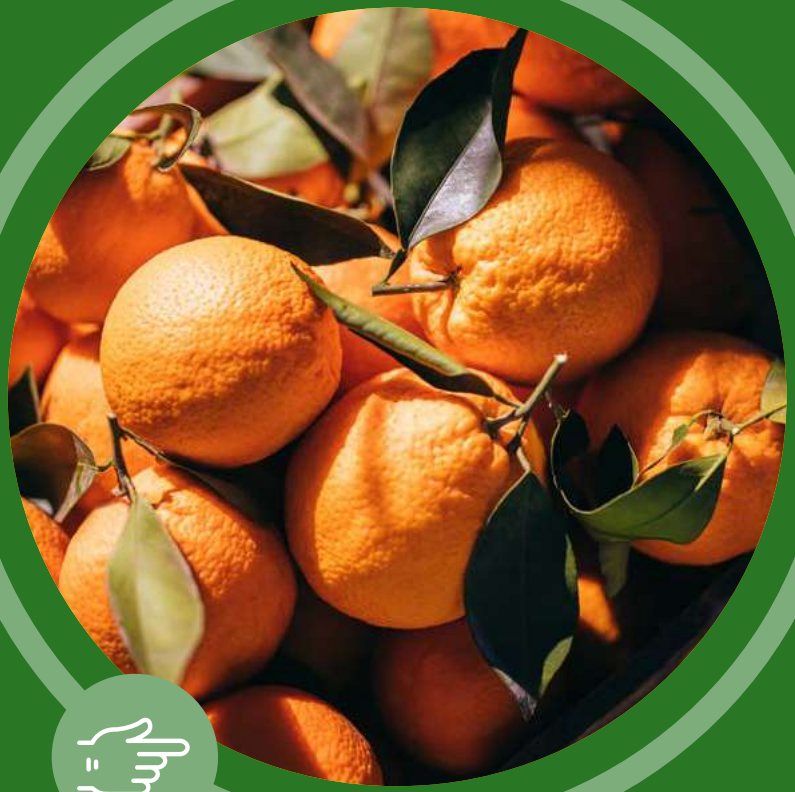
Reflexive monitoring involves a cyclical process. First, define clear goals and identify relevant actors – everyone with a stake in the project's success. Then, continuously monitor progress, not just through data collection, but also through reflection and discussion among stakeholders. This reflection allows you to identify challenges and opportunities to adapt your approach. Finally, use these insights to revise your goals and actions, ensuring they remain relevant and effective.

Tips for successful implementation

Successful reflexive monitoring hinges on open communication and collaboration. Create a safe space for stakeholders to share honest feedback and concerns. Regular meetings and workshops are crucial for fostering this dialogue. Additionally, select a diverse team of monitors who can bring different perspectives to the table. Finally, be prepared to adapt! Reflexive monitoring is an ongoing process, and flexibility is key to navigating the complexities of your project.



5. RECOMMENDATIONS



Based on the lessons learned in Food Trails, we made eight recommendations for cities to broaden the scale and impact of interventions, or to develop similar interventions. They are based on the whole Food Trails learning process, where cities, researchers and other stakeholders worked intensively and fruitfully together.

1 Align administrative departments and policies to effectively support your main goals and priorities

Reaching challenging goals for your city's local food system requires comprehensive food policies and a clear, shared vision with well-defined priorities. Streamlining or eliminating regulations that hinder a sustainable food system is essential: this requires the involvement of multiple municipal departments and experts and coordinating relevant efforts and initiatives. Establishing an active interdepartmental body that meets regularly to advise and decide on food policies, programmes, and pilots is a good starting point. While working across departments may slow the process initially, it ensures better policy implementation in the long run, resulting in better access to resources, a wider network, and a commitment to political goals across departments. This approach connects individual projects to the larger goals, ensuring everyone involved stays focused on the ultimate objective. Broad political commitment to the shared goals is necessary for the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of a thriving urban food system. Integrating food policy with other municipal priorities, strategies, and goals strengthens the overall plan and fosters wider support. Sustainable food systems can help achieve other city policy goals such as meeting public health or climate neutrality targets.

2 Facilitate the creation of food councils with representation of diverse stakeholders

Bringing together diverse viewpoints, especially including those of community members and vulnerable communities who are too often left out, is crucial to facilitate collaboration and decision-making and ensure decisions and actions are widely supported. This does not need to be a formal organisation; it can be an informal coalition of stakeholders who are committed to improving the city's food system. Make sure interventions are co-produced with key stakeholders, and that resources to deliver them are appropriate for the end users. Do not underestimate the expertise that civil society actors can bring to the table in designing truly sustainable food systems. Be mindful that much of the power and activity in urban food systems lies with actors outside public institutions. In some local contexts, the institutionalisation of a food council could be necessary to meet the needs of the municipality. The members of the council should be consulted to build the food policy.

3 Build and nurture relationships of trust and foster collaboration and learning

Collaborations require a foundation of trust and transparency. Developing a communication strategy that involves diverse stakeholders ensures that everyone impacted by changes to the food system has a voice in planning and designing interventions. Those working daily on food system issues possess valuable experiential knowledge that can guide municipalities in making necessary changes. Establishing diverse, effective communication channels between stakeholders is essential for knowledge exchange. Ensure these channels are accessible and usable for everyone involved. Facilitating knowledge sharing through workshops and forums can spark motivation and innovation. Since some individuals may not be able to attend meetings, provide alternative methods for them to contribute their insights. Testing ideas through small projects allows cities to build solid consensus and experiment new ways of collaboration. Continually seek inspiration and adapt best practices from other cities to suit your context.

4 Define the role of your local government in the food agenda

Whether you are working with a city, a district, a municipality, a metropole, or another local governance structure, an important step involves defining its role in the local food ecosystem and further processes. Is this a facilitative role, bringing stakeholders together and fostering collaboration? Or a supportive role, bringing in resources and knowledge? Or does the vision call for a more leading role by local government, actively shaping direction and actions? Have an open conversation about this with the stakeholders involved to align expectations.

5 Use food as the link to explore and create synergies between different departments and projects

Merging projects that have a common goal helps strengthen motivation and enthusiasm, especially when working with community members that are already implementing local initiatives that have broad support. For example, working in neighbourhoods and integrating food education helps to empower residents, improve people's self-esteem, and address wider social challenges. Education programmes focusing on healthy school meals can make a big difference in your strategy as children are important to involve in long-term food system transformation processes. If you are promoting and supporting local food production in the city, include food donation infrastructure to link surplus food with those in need.

6 Secure adequate and structural financial resources to implement food system initiatives

A long-term funding strategy for your work is as important as the plans themselves and may also require involvement of different departments. Keep in mind that even successful initiatives can come to an end when funding stops. Allocation of structural funding for food system activities, such as increasing staff capacity dedicated to food system planning and development, is important to ensure continuity. The combination of external funds through grant making with internal funds of the municipal body can guarantee an adequate timespan to implement medium-term objectives. Specialised staff with relevant knowledge and expertise are key to make food policies a success. Adapt your action plan to the resources available. For example, if you can only employ one expert, it may be useful to keep a strong focus instead of dealing with multiple topics simultaneously. Be mindful that when working together with other organisations or community members, coordinating efforts and managing expectations is important, as many have limited financial and human resources. This means they may be reluctant to engage in efforts that are not directly related to their primary mission.

7 Collaborate with (local) researchers or universities to collect data and monitor impact

Use learning and data from pilots to support wider food system understanding and interventions in your city. Collection of relevant quantitative and qualitative data is essential to monitor the progress of your work. Developing clear plans for data collection and assessment at the beginning of your interventions is key to an effective learning process. Working together with local researchers or universities can make a big difference here. Be clear on who is collecting data, how it is being collected, and how it will be used. Document your work, so that you can use it to develop further ideas. If resources are restricted, be creative and see what other ways there are to gain access to capacity, budget or skills.

8 Share with your peers and learn from them

Dedicate time and resources to meet and exchange with your peers. Various tools facilitate knowledge sharing with different levels of interaction. These range from less time- and resource-intensive methods (such as webinars and online workshops) to those requiring more commitment (such as in-person replication workshops, cascade learning programmes, and replication activities). These experiences consistently provide valuable insights and innovative ideas. High-commitment activities, particularly in-person meetings, are often the most inspiring. While local contexts may vary and some solutions may not be directly transferable, useful ideas can still arise even when the match is not perfect. Advocate for dedicating the necessary time and resources to these activities—they are crucial for fostering innovation and effective implementation. Joining city networks promoting peer learning (MUFPP, Eurocities, C40, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) and many more) and EU initiatives like URBACT, European Urban Initiative (EUI) and International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) can provide access to interesting and informative opportunities.



6. RESOURCES



This handbook is built on the experience of 11 cities that, as part of the four-year EU-funded Horizon 2020 Food Trails project, have reimagined, developed and implemented sustainable, healthy and inclusive food policies. Each city piloted a 'Living Lab' - a space for dialogue, collaboration and work to connect key local stakeholders, develop local food system innovations, and gather evidence to support urban food policy change. The Living Labs sought to co-design and co-implement food policies and actions that were integrated with other local sectoral work and aligned with the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy and the priorities of the EU's Food 2030 policy: nutrition, climate, circularity and communities. Food Trails facilitated collaboration between cities and researchers to promote knowledge sharing, replication and scaling up of best practices.

For more information about the project's outputs, visit the website:
www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/resources-page

On this page, you can find additional materials about the Food Trails experience and the deliverables used to create this handbook. Among the materials available, we highlight:

Crosscutting Manager's final report (Deliverable 8.6)
During the Food Trails project, four Cross-Cutting Managers (CCMs), each specialising in one of the Food2030 strategy priorities, collaborated with Food Trails cities to integrate sustainable food system principles into local policies and practices. The four priorities investigated are: I) nutrition for sustainable and healthy diets; II) food systems supporting a healthy planet; III) circularity and resource efficiency; and IV) innovation and empowering communities. This report summarises a final set of findings and recommendations related to each pillar to guide future initiatives and policy actions.

Insights of Food Trails (Deliverable D7.8)
The document provides a comprehensive overview of the project's goals, methodology, and the roles of various partners and stakeholders, including cities, researchers, and policy experts. It details food policies, pilot actions, and advocacy efforts, alongside living labs that engage key stakeholders. The publication includes sections on monitoring frameworks, replication processes, and the results of these activities. It concludes with policy recommendations, reflections, and testimonials from think tank members and local stakeholders, focusing on the FOOD2030 priorities.

REFERENCES

All reports and deliverables mentioned can be found at www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/resources-page

- **For more information about the CLIC framework, see:**

Report food system actions (Deliverable 1.2)
In this report the conceptual framework to obtain systemic innovation process that was adopted in Food Trails is described. The CLIC framework unfolds in interrelated **Co-benefits**; the (re-)establishment of **Linkages** between urban, peri-urban and rural areas and between land and sea; the active **Inclusion** of all food system actors; and the **Connectivity** between the food system and other policies.

- **For more information about Stakeholder mapping and the Food Policy Action Canvas , see:**

List of consolidated 11 FOOD 2030 Living Labs (Deliverable 2.2)
This document outlines the methodology to be employed in developing sustainable solutions for the food system. It sets out the steps to be followed in the development of sustainable solutions is the establishment of Living Labs. The methodology is presented together with the 11 Food Trails cities that have been used as examples.

- **For more information about Theory of Change, see:**

Report of Theory of Change applied each to Food Trails city (Deliverable 4.1)

This report outlines the Theory of Change tool for the 11 cities participating in the Food Trails project. The aim is to define expectations on the impacts of pilot actions, and this tool complements the methodology developed in the Food Trails project to establish an intervention roadmap to achieve innovations.

- **For more information about Data collection, see:**

Impact Measurement framework for investors to evaluate their contribution to food policies (Deliverable 4.6)
Given the need for innovation in the food system to deliver both financial returns and social and environmental outcomes, it is essential to attract impact investors to bridge the financial gap. This report presents an impact measurement framework for evaluating the contribution of investors to food policy and the development of Living Labs.

The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Monitoring Framework
Based on the experience of three pilot cities, this handbook sets out a pathway for other cities to follow a monitoring framework in five practical steps.

- **For more information about Roadmap for scaling impact investment, see:**

Roadmap For Scaling Impact Investment In Urban Food Systems
This Roadmap is a result of key findings from the Investors Lab, and also builds on discussions with global stakeholders held at other events, including at the 2022 World Economic Forum and a 2023 Eurocities event in Brussels.

- **For more information about the QuickScan Lens for Replication, see:**

The scalability of urban food systems innovations (Deliverable 6.2)
In this report the QuickScan Lens for Replication (QSLR) is presented and used to discuss drivers and barriers for scaling up and out food (policy) innovations towards a sustainable food system.

It discusses the experiences of 11 Food Trails cities and provides the backbone for the recommendations in this handbook.

- **For more information about the Multilevel Mapping Grid, see:**

CLEVERFOOD - MUFPP – Comparative analysis of existing urban food policies – multilevel governance with examples of Milan and Bordeaux Metropole (Deliverable 2.1)
The document developed by Municipality of Milan under the Horizon Europe project CLEVERFOOD presents a detailed examination of food policy governance across 59 European cities in 19 countries. It reveals that a significant majority of cities have formal political commitments to food policy, with many adopting Urban Food Policies and allocating substantial budgets. Notably, around 76% of the surveyed cities have made concrete commitments, appointing a local politician responsible for food policy.

- **For more information about Peer Learning, see:**

Knowledge sharing workshop short reports (Deliverable 6.3)

In Food Trails, learning mechanisms played a central role. In this regard, several knowledge sharing workshops were conducted to provide platforms for participating cities to exchange insights, best practices, and challenges. This report provides an overview of the workshops and outlines the methodology and results of the knowledge sharing.

Replication visits short report (Deliverable 6.5)

To learn from the experiences of other participating cities in the Food Trails programme, replication activities were conducted with the aim of fostering replication of initiatives and actions undertaken by other cities. These activities resulted in the creation of 11 reports, each detailing the mutual benefits and experiences of cities obtained during the visits.

Cascade learning report (Deliverable 6.6)

This report outlines the cascading learning process contributing to disseminating the learnings to cities beyond the initial consortium of the Food Trails. Cascade learning was organised through three main activities. First, a series of webinars covering 8 different themes and involving Food Trails experts and cities sharing experiences. Second, 11 peer-learning visits which saw the participation of 26 cascade cities. Finally, a replication workshop aiming at bringing the cascade cities together and guiding the development of strategic action plans.

- **Webinars:**

WEBINAR No. 1. Why develop urban food policies?

WEBINAR No. 2. Putting food on the local agenda: how to engage citizens and foster behavioural change?

WEBINAR No. 3. Which tools support cities in developing and implementing an urban food policy?

WEBINAR No. 4. How to work on food waste prevention and reduction?

WEBINAR No. 5. How do we use food procurement to foster more sustainable and inclusive cities?

WEBINAR No. 6. How can a city foster local and quality food production?

WEBINAR No. 7. How to finance cities' food ambitions?

WEBINAR No. 8. How to ensure access to healthy and quality food for all?

Podcasts: Food and the cities: from policy to plate

The Food Trails podcast series "Food and the cities: from policy to plate" consists of nine episodes that explore the sustainable transition of the EU food system, emphasising the EU Food 2030 agenda and the role of cities in the urban food revolution. It highlights innovative research frameworks, living labs, and the co-creation approach to foster stakeholder commitment and develop effective urban food policies. The series also covers the importance of monitoring impact, peer learning, and impact investing to accelerate the transformation of urban food systems, offering policy recommendations and strategies for upscaling innovations.

11 videos of Food Trails cities

The series of 11 videos, filmed in the 11 Food Trails cities, showcases the pilot projects where diverse solutions were tested with local stakeholders. These videos highlight 31 pilots, demonstrating innovative approaches to sustainable urban food systems. Through these pilots, the cities engaged community members, policy makers, and researchers to co-create effective and tailored actions. Each video captures the unique challenges and successes of the pilots, offering insights and inspiration for other cities looking to transform their food systems.



FOOD TRAILS

MILAN URBAN FOOD POLICY PACT

Project Coordinator:

Comune di Milano

CITY OF COPENHAGEN

Birmingham City Council

CITY OF WARSAW

CITY OF THESSALONIKI

COMUNE DI BERGAMO

BASHKIA TIRANË

Gemeente Groningen

EURO CITIES

BORDEAUX MÉTROPOLE

GRENOBLE-ALPES MÉTROPOLE

Slow Food

EAT

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

Roskilde University

Fondazione Politecnico di Milano

CARIPLO FACTORY

The project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement n. 101000812