



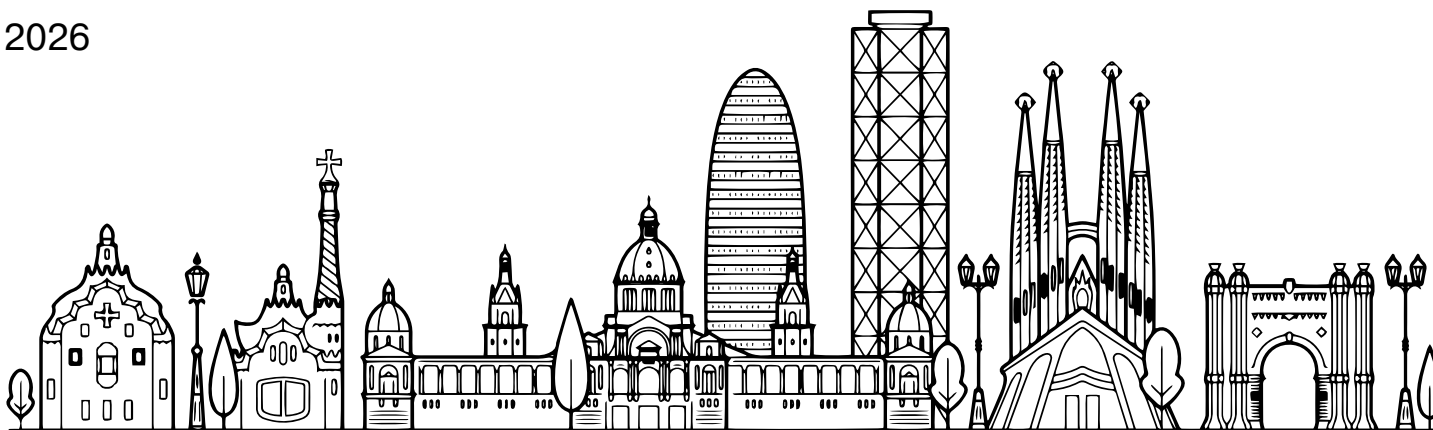
METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A TERRITORIAL FOOD POLICY THROUGH PEER LEARNING

For European local
authorities

Erasmus+ EuroFoodXchange project -
Empowering local governments: Building
sustainable territorial food systems

2026



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Partners



- **Let's Food** is a French-based NGO supporting territories in building sustainable and resilient food systems by relying on territorial cooperation and the exchange of good practices at local, national and international levels. 3 areas of intervention:
 - Providing support to local authorities in building food policies and territorial cooperations
 - Sharing initiatives and good practices and publishing comparative analyzes studies
 - Training and building capacities towards local elected officials and students

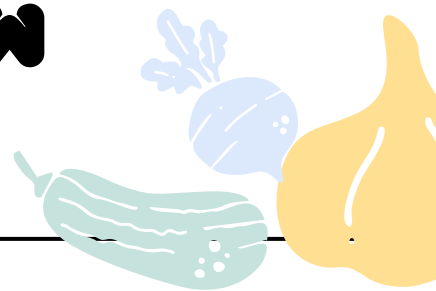


- **Prague Innovation Institute (PII)** : Founded by the City of Prague, PII promotes urban sustainability and education. Leading the Circular Prague 2030 Strategy, it has worked on food policy and urban agriculture.



- **Climato Sfera** is a Romanian NGO dedicated to the ecological transition through community engagement. It raises awareness about climate change and implements sustainable food system projects, such as:
 - Compost Academy: Educating communities on composting to reduce organic waste.
 - ReGreenation: Transforming urban spaces into green areas for urban agriculture and biodiversity

INTRODUCTION & HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



Why this guide?

This methodological guide has been developed within the framework of the EuroFoodXchange project, funded by the European Union's programme. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of local governments to design and implement territorial food strategies by fostering the exchange of practices and peer-to-peer cooperation.

This guide draws on lessons learned from the experiments carried out by the cities of Prague (Czech Republic) and Galati (Romania), as well as on the experience of several French local authorities engaged in food policies. Its objective is to disseminate the methods developed through the project so that they can be adapted and replicated by other territories.



[Find out more about the EuroFoodXchange project by watching the dedicated video](#)

Who is this guide for?

This guide is primarily intended for local government officers and elected representatives wishing to initiate or strengthen a territorial food strategy. As food is a cross-cutting issue, it is particularly relevant for departments responsible for urban planning, agriculture, economic development, social policies, public catering, health, and ecological transition. It is also aimed at departments in charge of international cooperation that wish to integrate food-related issues into their decentralised cooperation projects.

How to use this guide?

The guide is structured into five modules corresponding to the main stages in the development and implementation of a territorial food strategy. Each module can be consulted independently, depending on the level of progress of your local authority:



Module #1 - Understanding food systems and the role of local governments



Module #2 - Assessing your local food system



Module #3 - Developing a territorial food strategy



Module #4 - Cooperating and learning from other local governments



Module #5 - Sustaining and evaluating the policy

MODULE #1

Understanding food systems and the role of local governments

1.1 What is a territorial food system?

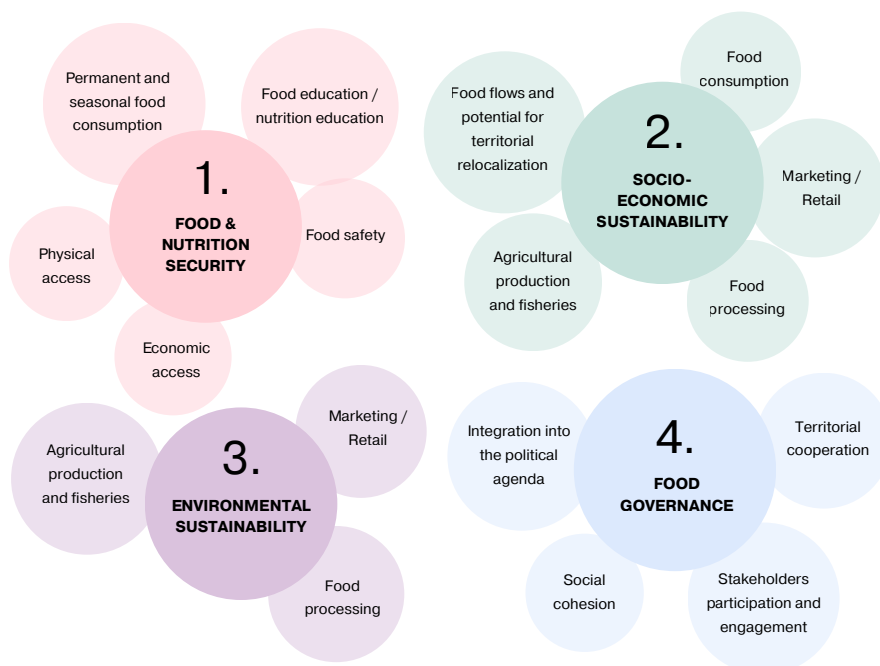
A territorial food system encompasses all the interdependent activities related to the production, distribution, processing, consumption and disposal of food products, as well as the resources required for these activities (Malassis, 1983; Rastoin and Gherzi, 2010).

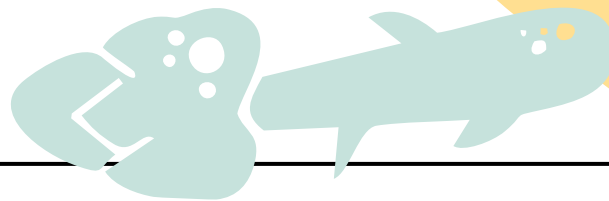
DEFINITION

The definition of a sustainable food system used in this guide is based on Nicolas Bricas' work, drawing from definitions proposed by FAO, Biodiversity International and IPES Food (Brand et al., 2017).

"Sustainable food systems:

- protect the environment and biodiversity without depleting non-renewable resources and biodiversity, and without causing pollution;
- ensure access for all to sufficient, healthy, nutritious and culturally acceptable food;
- rely on an inclusive economic system that promotes job creation for all and reduces power inequalities between companies and within value chains, ensuring a fairer distribution of added value;
- foster social cohesion and respect for cultural diversity and dynamics;
- restore trust in the food system and enable citizens to participate in its evolution."





In the context of profound transformations affecting global food systems, local and regional authorities appear as key actors in the transition towards sustainable food systems, for two main reasons (Let's Food, 2026):

- They have unique knowledge of their territory and are directly connected to local stakeholders, enabling them to design policies that are aligned with local needs.
- They have the capacity to act through their dedicated areas of responsibility.

1.2 Why do local governments have a role to play and how can they act?

A role structured by different levels of competencies

Due to its cross-cutting nature, food is generally not a single and exclusive area of responsibility assigned to one specific level of governance. It is transversal: it relates to agriculture, urban planning, public health, social action, waste management, education, and many other areas. While food involves a wide range of sectors, it also engages multiple territorial levels, from regions to municipalities, each intervening on specific issues that directly or indirectly affect the food system (ANCT – French National Agency for Territorial Cohesion, n.d.).

THE ARCHITECTURE OF RESPONSIBILITIES: FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



Territorial food policies are embedded within a framework of shared responsibilities between the European Union, Member States and local governments.

At European level, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been the main instrument for action in the fields of agriculture and food since 1962. It aims to ensure food security, guarantee fair incomes for farmers and support the transition of agricultural systems. Its first pillar, dedicated to direct payments to farmers, represents approximately three quarters of the CAP budget. The second pillar, funded in particular through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), supports rural development, agri-environmental measures and territorial projects (Toute l'Europe, n.d.).

Since 2019, the European Green Deal and the "Farm to Fork" Strategy have strengthened European ambitions towards more sustainable food systems. Among the initial objectives were a 50% reduction in pesticide use and 25% of agricultural land under organic farming by 2030, although some ambitions have since been revised (Toute l'Europe, n.d.).

Member States then translate these orientations through their CAP Strategic Plans and their own agricultural, food, health and education policies. They also define the responsibilities of the different levels of local government (Regulation (EU) 2021/2115; Vie publique, 2023; Sonnino & Spayde, 2024).

It is at the local level – regions, counties/departments, municipalities and intermunicipal authorities, depending on each country's administrative organisation – that these orientations are concretely implemented. Local governments therefore have numerous levers to design and implement territorial food policies adapted to the needs of their territories.

The main action levers available to local governments

The levers presented below are those most frequently used by European local governments to act on their food systems (Let's Food, 2026).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Local governments can drive food transitions through economic development initiatives: supporting agri-food sectors (logistics, processing, slaughterhouses, etc.), promoting the social and solidarity economy, facilitating community gardens and agricultural activities, creating direct sales spaces, or financing agricultural cooperatives (Let's Food, 2021; Bodiguel et al., 2021; Vie Publique, 2022).

Example: Strasbourg and Grenoble (France) – A territorial brand and a public slaughterhouse supporting local food sectors

The Eurometropolis of Strasbourg supports the territorial brand “**Savourez l’Alsace avec l’Agriculture Locale®**”, which promotes agricultural and processed products mainly sourced from the territory. Meanwhile, Grenoble Alpes Métropole is co-owner of a **public slaughterhouse** operated under a public service delegation model. More than 86% of slaughtered animals are raised in the region and 90% of carcasses are marketed through local supply chains. These two initiatives contribute to structuring local food sectors (Grenoble Alpes Métropole, 2023; Let's Food, 2021).

SPATIAL PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT



Local governments can also integrate food-related objectives into urban planning documents and territorial strategies: promoting urban agriculture, protecting agricultural land, or developing educational gardens in schools (Banque des Territoires, 2020).

Example: Wrocław (Poland) – A municipal organic urban farm

In Wrocław (Poland), the municipality created a 2.5-hectare organic urban farm in partnership with a university, an NGO and private companies. During its first season, the farm supplied fresh vegetables to 16 municipal nurseries, benefiting more than 2,500 children. The project is part of a food resilience strategy aimed at strengthening local production and short supply chains (Let's Food, 2026).

PUBLIC CATERING



Responsible for school and institutional catering, local governments can promote organic and local sourcing, nutrition-oriented menus and food waste reduction programmes (Bodiguel et al., 2021).

Example: Turin (Italy) **– Organic and local school catering**

The city of **Turin (Italy)** serves more than 6 million meals per year across 335 schools. Procurement is largely based on organic, local and seasonal products (90 to 100% of food served), while vegetarian menus are offered daily. This policy combines nutritional objectives, support for local producers and equitable access to quality food for all students (Let's Food, 2026).

ENVIRONMENT, WATER AND WASTE MANAGEMENT



Environmental management responsibilities enable local governments to act on food waste, organic waste recovery, ecosystem protection and the preservation of natural resources. Municipalities can raise awareness among residents, establish collection and recycling systems, and increase the presence of vegetation in public spaces (Bodiguel et al., 2021).

Example: Lyon Metropolitan Area (France) **– Food waste recovery**

The Lyon Metropolitan Area deployed an extensive food waste collection network from 2021 onwards, now comprising around 2,600 collection points. Waste is recovered through various composting solutions, and more than three quarters of the compost produced is reused locally, contributing to the territory's food autonomy (Métropole de Lyon, n.d.).

SOCIAL ACTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Local governments can tackle food insecurity and strengthen social cohesion by supporting, for example, solidarity grocery stores, community gardens with an inclusion focus, food vouchers or citizen cooperatives. As actors responsible for public health, they can also implement local nutrition programmes and awareness campaigns (Let's Food, 2021).

Example: Tampere (Finland) **– The Vegemi method for food education**

In **Tampere (Finland)**, the Vegemi method raises awareness among children aged 3 to 8 about healthy eating through a playful character, a mobile application and educational tools. Implemented in pilot schools since 2024, this initiative has increased children's curiosity about fruits and vegetables and encouraged their consumption from an early age (Let's Food, 2026).



Some local governments use their responsibilities in the fields of training and employment to accelerate food system transitions: agroecology training in agricultural schools, support for professional sectors in artisanal food processing, or assistance to innovative entrepreneurs in the food sector (Let's Food, 2021).

Example: Goussainville (France) – A culinary incubator for restaurant entrepreneurs

In Goussainville, a culinary incubator supports future restaurant entrepreneurs by combining gastronomic training and business development support. Participants are trained in culinary techniques, business management and communication in order to facilitate their establishment and diversify the local food offer in the Val-d'Oise department (Let's Food, 2020).

Three national contexts: France, Czech Republic and Romania

The three countries involved in the EuroFoodXchange project have different institutional frameworks, which shape the room for manoeuvre available to local governments in the field of food policies.

FRANCE



A favourable framework for territorial food policies

France has 18 regions, 101 departments, 1,254 intermunicipal authorities and more than 34,000 municipalities. Decentralisation has strengthened local responsibilities, although the State remains central in public policy-making (Vie publique, 2025). Food-related issues involve several levels of governance: regions (economic development, agriculture, European funds), departments (social action, land management), and above all municipalities and intermunicipal authorities (urban planning, public catering, waste, water management and local development) (Emploi-collectivites.fr, 2025; Toute l'Europe, 2025; Vie publique, 2024).



France is also distinguished by its Territorial Food Projects (Projets Alimentaires Territoriaux – PAT), created in 2014. This tool, unique in Europe, enables local governments to coordinate local stakeholders around a shared food strategy, with support from the State through a national label and dedicated funding (Géoconfluences, 2025).

CZECH REPUBLIC



An emerging local food governance framework

The Czech Republic has approximately 6,200 municipalities and 14 regions (Eurostat, 2023; Kopřivová et al., 2015). There is no dedicated competence for food policies. However, municipalities can take action through urban planning, land management or local initiatives. In large cities such as Prague, food policies are developing at both municipal level and through its districts, which implement local actions in cooperation with civil society organisations and residents (Let's Food, 2026). Regions focus mainly on economic development and the management of European funds. Food initiatives remain relatively fragmented (community gardens, food waste reduction), with few structural levers currently mobilised (Pixová & Plank, 2024).

ROMANIA



Local responsibilities in the process of being structured

Romania is organised into 41 counties (județe), 103 municipalities, 208 towns and 2,825 communes, grouped into 8 development regions (European Commission, n.d.).

Local governments intervene in areas such as markets, waste management, social action and land management (Let's Food, 2026). Agricultural Directorates (DAJ) support farmers and access to European funding, while regions manage structural funds (DevelopmentAid, n.d.). There is not yet a national territorial food policy, but initiatives such as the "Healthy Meal" programme are emerging in the school sector (Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, n.d.).

1.3 Common challenges faced by European local governments

Despite the diversity of national contexts and institutional responsibilities, European local governments face common challenges in making their food systems more sustainable. The challenges below were identified by Let's Food based on a wide range of bibliographic resources, including those from European networks and projects such as FoodShift2030, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and Eurocities (FoodShift2030, 2022; Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, 2023; Eurocities, n.d.).



CHALLENGE 1_ Ensuring equitable access to healthy and high-quality food

The rising cost of food is weakening an increasing share of the European population. In some territories, including within major cities, access to fresh, affordable and high-quality products remains limited, creating situations of food deserts or food swamps (Toute l'Europe, 2018; Let's Food, 2026).



CHALLENGE 2_ Preserving viable local agriculture and ensuring generational renewal

Difficulties in accessing land, low farm profitability and the ageing of the farming population weaken local food production. Without appropriate support, these trends limit territories' ability to maintain diversified agriculture that creates jobs and is capable of meeting local food needs (Let's Food, 2026).



CHALLENGE 3_ Reducing the environmental footprint of food systems

Production, processing, transport, consumption and waste management place significant pressure on natural resources and contribute to climate change. The agroecological transition is still progressing slowly, with only 9.9% of European agricultural land managed under organic farming (Eurostat, 2021; Ledroit, 2023; European Court of Auditors, 2024).



CHALLENGE 4_ Strengthening territorial food resilience and autonomy

Health, geopolitical and climate crises have highlighted the vulnerability of globalised supply chains. Local governments are now faced with the need to secure food supplies, support local food sectors and diversify production sources in order to strengthen the resilience of their territories (Les Greniers d'Abondance, 2020).



CHALLENGE 5_ Developing territorial food governance

Food involves a wide range of public, private and civil society actors, who often operate through sector-based approaches. In many territories, food strategies are still absent or under development, and some key stakeholders, particularly large-scale retailers, remain insufficiently involved in territorial approaches (Let's Food, 2026).



CHALLENGE 6_ Raising citizens' awareness and encouraging changes in food practices

Local governments play an increasingly important role in food education, reducing food waste and strengthening connections between producers and consumers. Community gardens, educational farms, public catering and awareness-raising initiatives contribute to long-term changes in food behaviours (Spizzichino et al., 2021).



CHALLENGE 7_ Moving from isolated initiatives to an integrated food strategy

Local initiatives are multiplying throughout Europe, but they often remain fragmented and insufficiently coordinated. The current challenge is to develop coherent territorial strategies capable of connecting different public policies and mobilising all stakeholders around a shared vision (Spizzichino et al., 2021).

MODULE #2

Assessing your local food system

2.1. The assessment : a foundational step in local food policy

The assessment constitutes the starting point of any local food policy. It enables the development of a shared understanding of the territory by bringing together objective data, knowledge from local stakeholders and existing initiatives. This stage encourages the emergence of a common language among the different sectors involved: agriculture, food, health, environment, economic development, education and social action (Let's Food, 2021).

The assessment pursues several objectives:

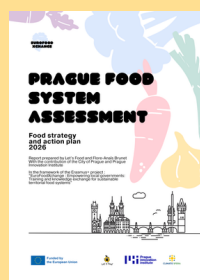
- **Identify the territory's priority challenges;**
- **Understand the local government's room for manoeuvre** and the responsibilities it can mobilise;
- **Identify existing initiatives** and solutions already developed locally;
- **Bring stakeholders together** around a shared understanding of the challenges to be addressed;
- **Convince and mobilise elected representatives** and internal departments;
- **Prepare a strategy based on actual needs rather than assumptions.**

The methodology developed by Let's Food is based on six complementary steps (Let's Food, 2021):

1. **Map the stakeholders** of the local food system and analyse their roles, responsibilities and interactions;
2. **Identify and prioritise sustainability challenges** based on data and interviews, and identify existing initiatives and solutions developed by local stakeholders;
3. **Discuss the assessment** during a multi-stakeholder participatory workshop;
4. **Present and share the results** in order to encourage collective ownership;
5. **Share experiences** in order to disseminate the approach and learn from other territories;
6. **Sustain and evaluate the policy** through dedicated governance and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Focus: Examples of food system sustainability assessments

Since 2017, Let's Food has supported more than 30 territories in carrying out territorial food system assessments, including Guanajuato (Mexico), Montpellier and Marseille (France), Chefchaouen (Morocco), etc., as well as Prague (Czech Republic) and Galati (Romania) within the framework of the EuroFoodXchange project.



2.2 Mapping the stakeholders of my food system

Why map stakeholders?

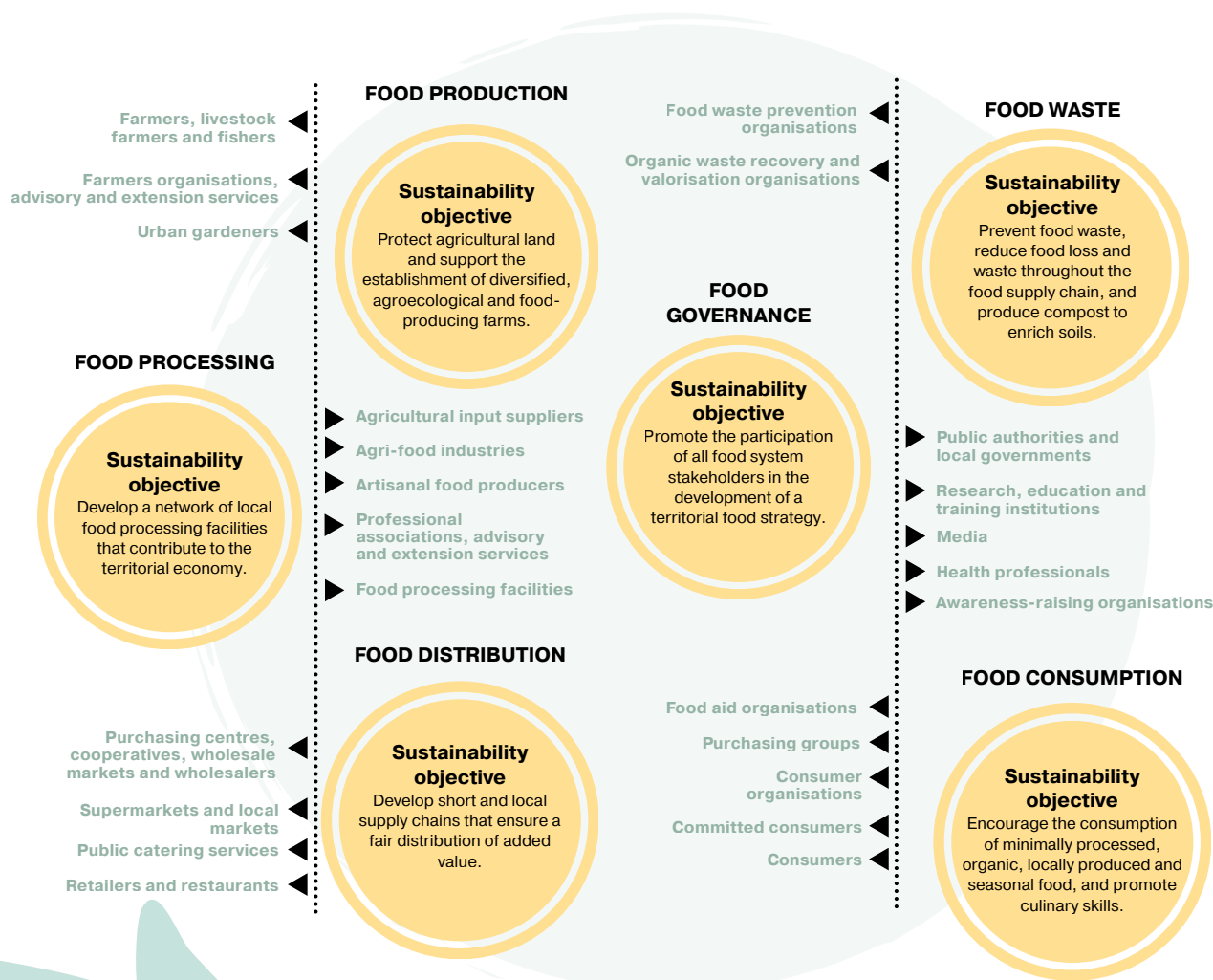
A food system is above all a human system. It brings together a wide range of actors whose decisions directly influence food production, distribution and consumption.

Stakeholder mapping enables local governments to:

- **identify key stakeholders**, particularly those on whom they can rely;
- **understand their interests and constraints**;
- **identify opportunities for cooperation**;
- **prepare the future governance** framework of the local food policy.

Involving stakeholders from the assessment phase also encourages their commitment to the future strategy.

Main categories of stakeholders to identify in a stakeholder mapping exercise



How to carry out stakeholder mapping?

The first step consists of identifying stakeholders based on: a literature and document review ; existing directories and networks ; exploratory interviews.

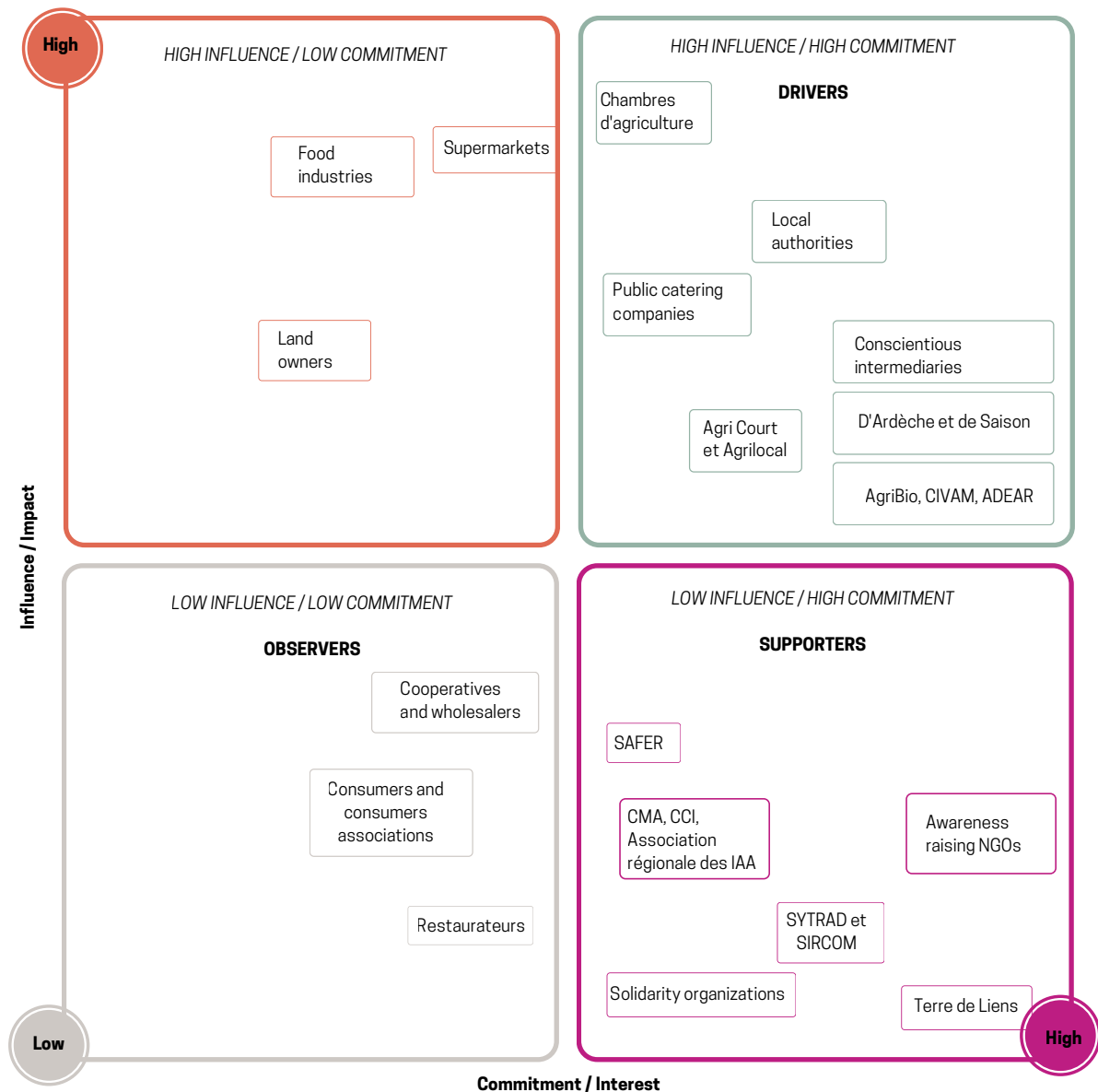
For each stakeholder, it is useful to collect information on:

- their main role;
- their objectives;
- their geographical scope of action;
- their partners;
- their level of commitment to sustainable food systems;
- their capacity to influence the territory.

How to carry out stakeholder mapping?

Not all stakeholders have the same influence on the transformation of the food system. A matrix crossing the level of commitment and the capacity for impact helps identify the driving actors to rely on, as well as stakeholders who remain reluctant and still need to be engaged (Let's Food, 2021).

Example of stakeholder positioning according to an impact/commitment matrix – case of the Community of Communes of ARCHE Agglo - Rhône Crussol (France) – developed by Let's Food in 2022



2.3 The assessment framework: 4 dimensions of sustainability

Following the stakeholder mapping exercise, the in-depth assessment of the food system is based on a sustainability assessment combining a literature review with interviews conducted among stakeholders (chambers of agriculture, social centres, environmental organisations, producers, processors, food aid organisations, etc.). The framework developed by Let's Food is structured around four complementary dimensions (Let's Food, 2021).

1. Food and nutrition security

Does the territory's food system ensure access to quality food for everyone?

- **Health status and dietary habits:** obesity, diet-related chronic diseases, level of nutrition literacy.
- **Physical access to food:** distribution of fresh food retail outlets and travel distances across neighbourhoods.
- **Economic access:** cost of a standard food basket, share of household expenditure devoted to food, poverty rate.
- **Availability and resilience of the food supply:** diversity of supply sources and the system's capacity to cope with climatic, economic and health crises.

2. Socio-economic sustainability

Does the food system rely on an inclusive economic model that promotes job creation and reduces power imbalances between stakeholders?

- **Agricultural production:** farmers' age profile, generational renewal and farm income.
- **Food processing:** share of added value retained locally, quality and stability of employment.
- **Distribution and marketing:** distribution of value among stakeholders, diversity of marketing channels (conventional supply chains, short supply chains, direct sales, markets) and producers' access to markets.

3. Environmental sustainability

Does the food system protect the environment and biodiversity without depleting non-renewable resources or causing pollution?

- **Agricultural production:** impacts on soils, water and biodiversity; share of organic farming; adoption of agroecological practices.
- **Food processing and distribution:** energy, water and packaging consumption; carbon footprint of logistics chains.
- **Consumption and waste management:** consumption of sustainable food products (organic, local and more plant-based), food waste, and the sorting and recovery of bio-waste.

4. Food governance

Does the food system provide the conditions necessary to foster social cohesion, trust, and the participation of local stakeholders and citizens?

- **Political integration of food issues:** existence of a territorial food strategy, dedicated budget, and integration into planning documents.
- **Stakeholder and citizen engagement:** diversity of stakeholders involved, consultation mechanisms and citizen participation.
- **Multi-level and territorial cooperation:** coordination between local, national and European levels, cooperation between territories, and participation in international networks and initiatives.

2.4 Facilitating a participatory assessment workshop

To identify common ground, each stakeholder must have the opportunity to express their views, present their activities, objectives and interests, as well as the constraints they face. A participatory workshop therefore enables participants to compare perspectives, complement the information collected and build a shared understanding of the key challenges (DREAL Occitanie & CEREMA, n.d.).

It also helps establish a collaborative dynamic that will facilitate the subsequent development of the territorial food strategy.



Focus: Participatory workshop to assess the food system

Recommended format

- Duration: Half a day
- Participants: 15 to 40 people
- Composition: A diversity of profiles and sectors

Typical agenda

1. Presentation of the assessment : Presentation of the main findings and the initial trends identified.
2. Group work : Participants are divided into groups to work successively on the different dimensions of the assessment (the four dimensions of the assessment framework can be used). For each dimension, participants analyse the priority issues, their causes and their consequences. Using problem tree templates can facilitate discussions and, above all, help capture the information generated by participants for subsequent integration into the assessment report.
3. Plenary feedback session : Each group presents its conclusions by sharing its completed problem tree.
4. Prioritisation : Participants collectively identify the issues considered most important for the future strategy by voting on the problem trees they consider to be the highest priorities.
5. Integration into the assessment : Following the workshop, participants' feedback can be incorporated into the final assessment report.

EXAMPLE : PRAGUE AND GALATI



As part of the EuroFoodXchange project, participatory workshops were organised in 2026 to enrich the assessments and identify potential courses of action. Fifteen participants took part in the workshop in Prague and twenty in Galati. In each workshop, participants developed seven problem trees to identify and discuss the issues they considered to be priorities.



Photos of the workshops organised in Prague (March 2026) and Galati (April 2026).

2.5 Producing a useful and accessible assessment report

A comprehensive assessment can easily exceed several dozen pages. However, decision-makers and partners often have limited time to review its findings.

It is therefore recommended to produce:

- a comprehensive report that retains the full analysis while remaining under 60 pages to facilitate its use;
- a 4–5 page executive summary highlighting the key findings.

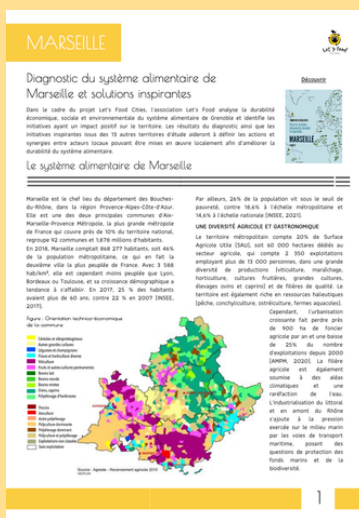
Three key messages should emerge clearly:

- **Why act?** (the identified challenges and risks)
- **Why now?** (the existing opportunities and ongoing dynamics)
- **How to act?** (initial ideas for practical levers available to the local government) (Let's Food, 2021).



Focus: Food system assessment summaries

Examples of assessment summaries (left: Marseille, France; right: Pays de l'Or, France).



MODULE #3

Developing a territorial food strategy

The assessment identifies the main challenges facing the local food system. This third module focuses on translating these findings into a territorial food strategy, that is, a shared roadmap structured around strategic objectives and operational actions.

This stage is based on five main phases:

1. **Identify**, through a participatory process, solutions that address the challenges identified in the assessment;
2. Collectively **prioritise** the actions to be implemented;
3. **Structure** the action plan by grouping the selected actions, together with existing initiatives, under strategic objectives;
4. **Formalise** each action through an action sheet describing its implementation arrangements;
5. **Compile** the entire strategy into a strategic document supported by a monitoring dashboard to facilitate implementation and follow-up.

3.1 Problem and solution trees : co-designing priorities with territorial stakeholders

Once the assessment has been completed, the next challenge is to collectively define the direction for future action.

This stage aims to develop:

- a **shared vision** of the desired food system in the short, medium and long term;
- **strategic objectives** addressing the territory's priority challenges;
- a **concrete action plan** mobilising the different stakeholders;
- an appropriate **governance** framework to support implementation.

The food strategy should build upon the knowledge generated by the assessment as well as the experience of those who produce, process, distribute and consume food within the territory. Involving stakeholders in defining priorities helps to:

- identify solutions adapted to local realities;
- encourage ownership of the strategy;
- prepare the mobilisation of partners who will contribute to its implementation (ANBDD, n.d.).



Focus: Participatory workshop for identifying and prioritising actions

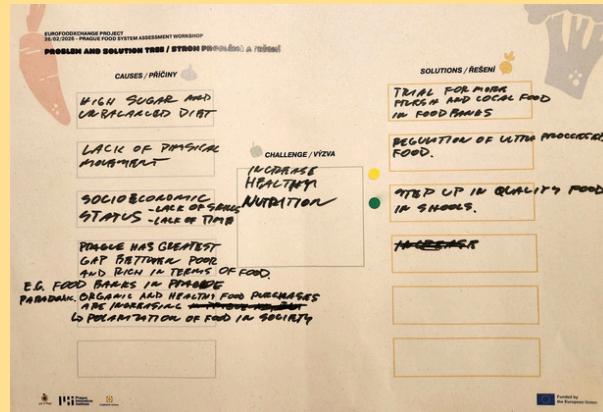
Recommended format

- 20 to 40 participants
- A diversity of stakeholder profiles
- Half a day to one full day (this workshop may be combined with the previous assessment workshop into a full-day event)

From problem trees to solution trees

Once the problem trees have been validated during the assessment phase, participants are invited to collectively identify solutions addressing the root causes that have been identified. For each underlying cause or barrier, the guiding question is: “What should be put in place to address this problem?” The proposed solutions are then grouped and organised into a solution tree, making it possible to visualise how several actions can contribute to addressing the same challenge.

Example of a problem tree and solution tree developed by stakeholders in Prague (March 2026).



Collectively prioritising actions

At the end of the workshop, actions should be prioritised through a collective voting or scoring exercise. The proposed actions are then positioned within a matrix crossing:

- Impact (expected benefits for residents; contribution to the sustainability of the food system);
- Feasibility (available human resources; required budget; political feasibility; implementation timeframe).

This analysis helps identify:

- priority actions that can be launched quickly;
- strategic actions requiring further preparation;
- actions requiring additional partnerships or external funding (LISODE, 2024).

3.2 Consolidating and prioritising actions: building the strategic framework

At the end of the workshops, participants generally produce a large number of proposals.

The first step consists of compiling all identified solutions:

- proposals emerging from the workshops;
- initiatives already implemented within the territory;
- inspiring practices observed in other local governments, or action proposals emerging from the assessment that may not have been identified by workshop participants.

The role of the project team is then to complement and structure these proposals without questioning the priorities collectively identified. To ensure that the strategy remains clear and coherent, actions are grouped under broad strategic objectives directly addressing the challenges identified in the assessment. This structure helps build a coherent strategy and facilitates its implementation and governance (Let's Food, 2021).

3.3 Action sheets and monitoring dashboard: making the strategy operational

Defining implementation arrangements: action sheets

A food strategy must be operational. Each selected action should therefore be formalised through an action sheet specifying who will do what, when and with which resources.

Each action sheet should include, at a minimum:

- Action title
- Objective
- Description
- Lead organisation
- Associated partners
- Timeline
- Estimated budget
- Funding sources
- Monitoring indicators

The objective is to make each action sufficiently precise to facilitate implementation while remaining accessible to all partners. The implementation arrangements may also be defined through a participatory workshop involving local stakeholders or through smaller working groups bringing together experts on the topics addressed by each action sheet (LISODE, 2024).

Example of an action sheet

The image shows a template for an action sheet titled "FICHE ACTION". It is a structured form with several sections: "OBJECTIFS" (Objectives), "DESCRIPTION", "PUBLIC CIBLE" (Public Target), "MISE EN ŒUVRE" (Implementation), "PILOTAGE" (Pilotage), "PARTENAIRES" (Partners), and "POLITIQUES PUBLIQUES ASSOCIÉES" (Associated Public Policies). Each section has a brief description of what to fill in. For example, "OBJECTIFS" is for "Formuler les objectifs de l'action" (Formulate the objectives of the action). The form also includes a header with "Action 1 - IS AP RLS" and a status section with "Statut" and "Date d'adoption".

At this stage, it is also important for stakeholders to begin reflecting on their level of commitment to each action. Although the food strategy is led by the local authority, it cannot be implemented by the municipality alone given the limits of its resources and formal responsibilities across the entire food system.



Focus: Participatory workshop for developing action sheets

Recommended format

- 20 to 40 participants: elected representatives and local government departments; businesses; civil society organisations; institutional partners; public agencies; chambers of commerce and agriculture; residents involved in the process, etc.
- Half a day
- Working groups of 2 to 5 participants bringing together complementary profiles

A “World Café” format

The workshop can be organised as a World Café. Following an initial working session (30–45 minutes) on the action sheets related to a first strategic objective, groups rotate between tables in order to enrich the action sheets developed by other participants. A final plenary session allows participants to share the main contributions and validate the proposed orientations.

EXAMPLE : PRAGUE AND GALATI



As part of the EuroFoodXchange project, the action plans developed in Prague and Galati were structured around common strategic objectives emerging from the assessment and participatory workshops. Each action was documented through a detailed action sheet specifying the lead organisations, partner organisations and monitoring indicators. This formalisation facilitated dialogue between local governments and local stakeholders during the implementation phase.

H.I.E. SUPPORT LOCAL AND MOBILE FOOD MARKETS IN UNDERSERVED DISTRICTS

Objectives
This action aims to improve access to fresh and affordable food products in districts having limited food accessibility.

Description
This action involves supporting the organisation of local food markets and mobile food markets in districts where access to fresh food options is low. Local authorities should be given a partnership with producers from Prague and the surrounding Central Bohemian Region.

Stakeholders
Potential stakeholders to lead: District municipalities.
Potential stakeholders to collaborate with: Local farmers and other actors from the region, social media for promotion, People in Need, Salvation Army, Noodle, Hops, etc., 1. consumer.

Implementation steps
1. Identify priority districts through the City of Prague, based on the findings of the food accessibility assessment (Action 1.1), with particular attention to underserved areas.
2. Identify suitable public spaces and facilities for temporary permits and authorisations through district administrations for the establishment of local food markets and the organisation of temporary food-related events.
3. Develop administrative procedures and support communication activities through district administrations to facilitate the organisation and mobility of food markets.
4. Develop a network of local food and regional producers through district administrations in order to strengthen short supply chains and diversify market offerings.
5. Support the practical organisation and operation of local markets through district administrations, in cooperation with producer organisations and market operators.
6. Use incentive measures to improve access to fresh and affordable food in underserved neighbourhoods through district administrations, including mobile food markets, in cooperation with relevant civil society organisations and community actors.

Approximate cost
(1: low cost; 5: high cost) 3

Priority regarding the assessment
(1: low priority; 5: high priority) 4

Monitoring indicators

- Number of supported markets.
- Number of participating districts.
- Number of producers involved.

Inspiring experiences

Healthy Pop-up store at Ede-Wageningen station - Ede The Netherlands
At Ede-Wageningen station, the municipality of Ede, together with Dutch Railways, Wageningen University & Research and the Dutch Food Hub, launched a pop-up store offering fresh, local and sustainable products. Customers choose the food and take it home or use it for catering. The store is open from Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm. Through an app, while products are sourced directly from regional farmers, ensuring full traceability and supporting the local economy. The pop-up store is open to all and provides easy access to nutritious food, the relative carbon footprint, sustainability and innovation. More information: <https://www.ede.nl/2024/04/04/healthy-pop-up-store-at-edelandschap-wageningen/>

Bringing affordable fresh food to underserved neighbourhoods - Toronto, Canada
Through its Mobile Food Market, FoodShare Toronto operates mobile markets that provide affordable fruits and vegetables to neighbourhoods with limited access to healthy food. Supported by Toronto's Food Bank, the initiative helps improve food access for low-income households while providing healthy eating and strengthening community connections. More information: <https://www.foodshare.ca/>

Developing an overall monitoring dashboard

Beyond individual action sheets, it is recommended to develop a summary monitoring dashboard bringing together all actions. This dashboard may take the form of an Excel spreadsheet, with one row per action and columns detailing the different implementation arrangements.

The dashboard makes it possible to monitor:

- the overall progress of the strategy;
- the responsibilities of each stakeholder;
- implementation deadlines;
- performance indicators.

It can serve as a steering tool for elected representatives, local government departments and partners (Let's Food, 2021).



Focus: Food strategy monitoring dashboard

Example of a food strategy monitoring dashboard – Saint-Paul (Réunion Island, France) – Let's Food, 2026.

Objectif Stratégique	Objectif Opérationnel	Nom de l'action	Activité	Origine	Prévu dans autre plan
OS 1. Permettre à tous les St Paulois de faire le choix d'une alimentation saine et de qualité	1.1 Accompagner les habitants de Saint-Paul à être acteur de leurs choix alimentaires	1.1.1 Déployer la KaravanSanté sur l'ensemble du territoire	Il s'agit de traverser d'un outil itinérant matérialisé par un bus, de sensibiliser la population autour de thématiques différentes telles que : l'alimentation, les conduites addictives, le cancer, les risques liés aux comportements sexuels, les maladies chroniques. Pour se faire, les dates d'interventions seront calées sur des actions des différents services de la ville (la jeunesse, la petite enfance, les seniors, les journées sportives).	PAT 1	Dans le cadre CLS 2e GEN
OS 1. Permettre à tous les St Paulois de faire le choix d'une alimentation saine et de qualité	1.1 Accompagner les habitants de Saint-Paul à être acteur de leurs choix alimentaires	1.1.2 Animer des ateliers de sensibilisation sur l'alimentation durable et saine dans les écoles et crèches des QPV	Éveil sensoriel en structure de petite enfance et dans 12 classes en QPV, et sensibilisation à une alimentation équilibrée et à la nutrition dans les écoles.	PAT 1	Dans le cadre CLS 2e GEN
OS 1. Permettre à tous les St Paulois de faire le choix d'une alimentation saine et de qualité	1.1 Accompagner les habitants de Saint-Paul à être acteur de leurs choix alimentaires	1.1.3 Animer des ateliers sur l'éducation sensorielle et l'équilibre alimentaire auprès des publics scolaires		PAT 1 COTECH	PAT Mafate PAT La Possession
OS 1. Permettre à tous les St Paulois de faire le choix d'une alimentation saine et de qualité	1.1 Accompagner les habitants de Saint-Paul à être acteur de leurs choix alimentaires	1.1.4 Agir sur l'offre alimentaire en restauration scolaire pour la rendre plus attractive tout en garantissant le respect de la réglementation relative à la qualité des repas servis	- RE-DONNER DU SENS à l'acte alimentaire en reliant la dimension nutritionnelle aux aspects de goût, de sociabilité et de ritualité alimentaire. - RESTAURER l'UNE COMPLÉTÉ souvent perdue entre l'aliment, celui qui le produit, celui qui le cuisine et celui qui le mange". - LUTTER CONTRE LE GASPILLAGE ALIMENTAIRE en associant tous les acteurs impliqués dans la restauration	PLS-DAAP	

MODULE #4

Cooperating and learning from other local governments

4.1 Why cooperate?

Cooperation between local governments is a powerful lever for accelerating the transition towards sustainable food systems. By promoting the exchange of experiences, the sharing of knowledge and the development of joint projects, cooperation enables territories to strengthen their food policies while becoming part of a broader European dynamic (Let's Food, 2026).

The main benefits are as follows (Let's Food, 2021):

- **Accelerating food system transitions** by sharing practical solutions to common challenges such as climate change, food resilience, the circular economy and natural resource conservation.
- **Learning from other territories** through the exchange of good practices, study visits and peer feedback. Cooperation acts as a mirror, helping local governments to question and improve their own strategies.
- **Strengthening local capacities** by discovering new governance methods, assessment tools and innovative approaches for developing territorial food policies.
- **Strengthening local cooperation** by mobilising elected representatives, local government departments, producers, businesses, civil society organisations and citizens around a shared project, thereby reinforcing food governance.
- **Increasing the visibility and influence of territories** by joining European and international networks. These partnerships also provide opportunities to develop joint advocacy towards European institutions on issues such as public procurement, short supply chains and food resilience.
- **Strengthening solidarity** between territories by fostering a better understanding of the interdependencies between food systems and promoting a sense of European citizenship based on exchange and cooperation.

EXAMPLE : PRAGUE AND GALATI

EuroFoodXchange: Mutual learning between Prague, Galati and French local authorities



The exchanges between the EuroFoodXchange partners demonstrated that some topics, such as food value chains and economic models, are particularly well suited to the sharing of experiences, whereas planning-related issues are often more dependent on national legal frameworks. The cooperation also created a space for advocacy by highlighting that European local governments share common ambitions regarding food system transition. Finally, it helped embed these issues within a broader European agenda, particularly concerning the evolution of public procurement rules to facilitate local and sustainable food sourcing.

4.2 How can local governments cooperate?

In practice, cooperation between local governments can take many forms, ranging from relatively light and flexible arrangements to more structured and long-term partnerships, depending on available resources and objectives.

Several cooperation mechanisms can be mobilised :

- **A town twinning partnership** is a structured and long-term partnership between two local governments, formalised through an agreement. It goes beyond occasional exchanges by establishing a lasting relationship of trust, enabling partners to carry out repeated joint activities and progressively deepen their cooperation over time (Toute l'Europe, 2019).
- **Decentralised cooperation projects** constitute a specific form of international action. In France, they refer to partnerships established between French local authorities and foreign local governments (French Ministry of the Interior et al., 2001).
- **European cooperation projects**, such as those funded through the Erasmus+ Programme, provide local governments with a practical instrument for developing European mobility projects and strategic partnerships (Erasmus+ France Agency, n.d.).
- **Participation in international networks**, including:



The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP)

a voluntary commitment launched in 2015 that now brings together 330 cities committed to developing more sustainable food systems for their citizens (MUFPP, n.d.).



Eurocities

one of Europe's largest city networks, bringing together more than 200 major cities representing around 150 million inhabitants. Its Food Working Group provides a privileged forum for exchanging knowledge and good practices on territorial food policies (Eurocities, 2025).



ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

a global network supporting more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to climate neutrality and the development of more resilient and equitable territories (ICLEI, n.d.).

Once a cooperation mechanism has been selected, several formats can be used to implement it :

- A **study visit** enables a delegation to visit another territory in order to directly observe a practice implemented by another local government. It combines site visits, meetings with local teams and exchanges with stakeholders, providing practical, experience-based learning (CEDEFOP, 2013; ECFL, n.d.).
- A **peer-learning webinar** is an online format bringing together elected representatives and local government officers around a common theme. It facilitates the rapid exchange of experiences and feedback between territories facing similar challenges without requiring travel (Trame, 2025).
- An **expert mission** mobilises an internal or external expert to support implementation, assist local teams and facilitate the long-term monitoring of actions (Let's Food, 2026).

4.3 Step-by-step guide to initiating cooperation and peer learning

STEP 1_ CONDUCT A SHARED ASSESSMENT

Partners begin by developing a shared understanding of their respective food systems in order to identify challenges, strengths and complementarities. The assessment framework presented in Module 2 can serve as a common reference (Let's Food, 2026).

STEP 2_ DEFINE COMMON OBJECTIVES

Partners clarify their respective expectations, priority themes and commitments in order to build a balanced and mutually beneficial cooperation.

STEP 3_ IDENTIFY EXISTING STAKEHOLDERS AND INITIATIVES

Mapping existing projects and stakeholders helps avoid duplication while strengthening synergies at both local and international levels.

STEP 4_ CHOOSE THE COOPERATION MODALITIES

Depending on the objectives, different cooperation formats may be mobilised, including study visits, peer exchanges, webinars, expert missions or European cooperation projects.

STEP 5_ CAPITALISE ON AND SUSTAIN THE COOPERATION

The results and lessons learned should be documented and disseminated in order to share knowledge and foster future cooperation initiatives.



Focus: Key success factors for an international cooperation project

Several factors contribute to the success of international cooperation projects:

- **Prepare the project in advance** by carrying out a feasibility assessment, defining shared objectives and clarifying partners' expectations (Let's Food, 2026).
- **Mobilise a diverse range of stakeholders** (local governments, civil society organisations, universities, economic actors and citizens) to strengthen the territorial anchoring of the cooperation (Let's Food, 2026).
- **Build on experienced partners** while combining a long-term vision with pilot actions in order to create lasting momentum (Let's Food, 2026).
- **Maintain cooperation over time** through regular exchanges, particularly face-to-face meetings, which help build trust between partners (Occitanie Coopération, 2024).
- **Capitalise on and promote the results** to disseminate lessons learned, increase the visibility of projects and facilitate their replication by other territories (Let's Food, 2026).

To learn more, consult the publication produced by Let's Food in 2026, with the support of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs:

"International cooperation between local governments and sustainable food systems: barriers and enabling factors" ("Coopération internationale des collectivités territoriales et systèmes alimentaires durables : freins et leviers").



MODULE #5

Sustaining and evaluating the policy

5.1 Embedding food policy into long-term political action and allocating adequate human and financial resources

A food policy is more robust when it does not rely on a single individual, a single department or a single political mandate. Its long-term sustainability depends on strong political commitment, adequate human and financial resources, and its integration into the local authority's routine operations. A systemic food policy requires long-term coordination, technical expertise to connect the different sectors involved, and the capacity to mobilise stakeholders across the territory.

Several levers can help institutionalise the strategy:

- **formally adopt the food strategy** through a resolution of the municipal council (or equivalent governing body) to strengthen political ownership;
- **identify political champions** and support their capacity-building on food-related issues in order to maintain long-term political commitment;
- **allocate dedicated human resources** (a dedicated department or officer, coordination time, governance facilitation) together with sufficient financial resources to implement the strategy;
- **integrate food-related actions into planning documents** (local development plans, spatial planning documents, climate plans, territorial development strategies, etc.) and into the local authority's budget;
- **maintain a long-term governance framework** involving territorial stakeholders;
- **establish a regular monitoring and evaluation system** to adjust actions and demonstrate the results achieved (Let's Food, 2026).



Checklist : Is my food policy likely to be sustained over time?

- ☐ The strategy has been formally adopted by elected representatives.
- ☐ A dedicated budget has been identified.
- ☐ A dedicated officer or team is responsible for coordination.
- ☐ A governance structure is in place.
- ☐ Partners remain engaged over the long term.
- ☐ Actions include monitoring indicators.
- ☐ Results are evaluated regularly.
- ☐ Communication activities are carried out every year.
- ☐ Additional funding opportunities are actively sought.
- ☐ The strategy is regularly updated to reflect emerging challenges.

5.2 Governing collectively

What is food governance?

“Territorial food governance refers to a new framework for cooperation between stakeholders and different geographical levels of intervention, with food as their common arena for action.” Réseau Rural & Terres en Villes (2011).

Because food cuts across many policy areas, local governments cannot act alone. Shared governance enables the co-ownership of the food strategy, strengthens stakeholder ownership and broadens the range of available action levers (Terres en Villes, 2020).

An effective food governance system includes five complementary forms of cooperation:

- **Interdepartmental cooperation**, between the different departments of the local authority;
- **Multi-level governance, between different administrative levels** (for example: municipalities, intermunicipal authorities, departments/counties, regions and national government);
- **Cooperation with socio-economic, public, private, civil society and academic stakeholders**;
- **Interterritorial cooperation**, with neighbouring territories facing similar challenges;
- **Citizen participation**, by involving residents in discussions and selected decision-making processes (Let's Food, 2021).

Beyond coordination, a structured governance framework clarifies decision-making processes, improves the circulation of information between stakeholders and elected representatives, and encourages the emergence of collective projects.

Building a governance model adapted to your territory

Governance should be tailored to the ambitions of the strategy, the available resources and existing local working practices. It is generally developed through three main steps:

1. **Assess existing governance bodies**, coordination needs and the stakeholders to be involved.
2. **Draw inspiration** from other territories by analysing governance models that have already proved successful.
3. **Design a governance model** suited to the territory by defining governance bodies, their roles, composition, decision-making processes and operating rules.

Example: The Municipal Food Council of Valencia (Spain)

The City of Valencia has established a Municipal Food Council bringing together more than fifty representatives from public institutions, the agricultural sector, businesses, civil society organisations, universities and citizens.

Its governance is structured around three complementary bodies:

- A plenary assembly, which defines the overall strategic direction and approves key decisions;
- A steering committee, responsible for monitoring the strategy and coordinating activities;
- Several thematic working groups, open to voluntary members, which develop operational proposals (Consell Alimentari de València, n.d.).

Video - Learn more



5.3 Ensuring long-term financing

The success of a territorial food strategy depends on the local authority's ability to mobilise multiple funding sources over time. Beyond its own financial resources, European, national and private funding opportunities can support projects related to agriculture, public catering, health, climate, cooperation, innovation and other areas.

Potential funding opportunities

The implementation of a territorial food strategy relies on the mobilisation of diverse funding sources over time. In addition to the local authority's own resources, European, national and private funding may be sought depending on the nature of the projects.

At European level, several programmes can support local governments (Horizon Europe, 2022; European Commission, n.d.):

- **EAFRD (CAP):** agriculture, short supply chains, rural development and the LEADER programme;
- **Interreg:** cooperation between European local authorities;
- **LIFE:** environment, biodiversity and the circular economy;
- **Horizon Europe:** research and innovation;
- **Erasmus+:** training, peer learning and capacity building.

At national level, funding mechanisms vary from one country to another. In France, local governments may notably access funding through the National Food Programme (PNA), ADEME, and regional authorities (MAASA, 2026).

In the Czech Republic and Romania, funding mainly comes from European funds managed at national level, particularly through the CAP Strategic Plan, Regional Operational Programmes and funds dedicated to environmental protection and territorial development. Ministries of Agriculture, Regional Development Agencies and Managing Authorities are the main contact points for local governments (DotaceEU, n.d.; Romanian Ministry of Investments and European Projects, 2023). Private funders may also complement public funding, particularly during pilot or facilitation phases (foundations, corporate philanthropy, etc.).



Focus: Five tips for preparing a European funding application (EuropelDF, n.d.)

- Identify the most appropriate funding programme before designing the project.
- Carefully analyse the call for proposals in order to align the project with its priorities.
- Build partnerships with stakeholders from your territory to strengthen the application.
- Prepare the funding proposal with a realistic timetable and measurable results.
- Anticipate administrative requirements and co-financing obligations.

5.4 Measuring the impact of your food policy

Monitoring the implementation of the food strategy and evaluating its effects are essential. Monitoring and evaluation enable local governments to steer implementation, adjust actions where necessary, report progress to elected representatives and partners, and demonstrate the benefits of the food policy to citizens and funders.

Distinguishing monitoring from evaluation

Monitoring is a continuous process used to assess the implementation of the action plan against the objectives initially defined. It helps answer questions such as:

- Are the planned actions being implemented?
- Have the necessary resources been mobilised?
- Are the first expected results being achieved?

Evaluation, by contrast, takes place at key moments throughout the process. Its purpose is to assess the results and impacts of the strategy, understand what works (or does not), and identify opportunities for improvement.

The two approaches are complementary: monitoring supports day-to-day management, while evaluation informs strategic decision-making (EVAL – Evaluation Resource Centre, n.d.).

Building a monitoring and evaluation framework

Monitoring and evaluation should be prepared from the assessment stage (through the preliminary identification of relevant territorial indicators) and further developed during the preparation of the action plan. For each action sheet, it is recommended to define:

- several **monitoring indicators** (activity and output indicators);
- the **person responsible** for collecting the data;
- the **frequency** of updates (Syalinnov, n.d.).

At the strategy level, outcome and impact indicators then make it possible to assess territorial changes against the objectives pursued.

The monitoring and evaluation framework may rely on:

- a **regularly updated monitoring dashboard** (BASIC et al., n.d.);
- a **steering committee** (as defined within the governance framework) responsible for reviewing results and proposing adjustments where necessary.



Example : Extract from a monitoring and evaluation dashboard

	Indicateur	Type d'indicateur	
Strategic Objective 1: Ensure access to healthy and sustainable food for all	Percentage of the population living in the target neighbourhoods whose dietary habits have improved	Impact indicator	Information to be provided: update frequency, data source, person responsible for updating, baseline value (T0) and target value
Action 1.1. Introduce a mobile fresh food market serving neighbourhoods	Volume of fresh products sold through the mobile market	Monitoring indicator	
Action 1.2. Facilitate the supply of local fruit and vegetables to food aid organisations	Number of local producers supplying food aid organisations	Monitoring indicator	

For further guidance on evaluating food policies in relation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), consult [the guide “Towards a Glocal Approach to Food”](#), published by Let's Food in 2021.



5.5 Communicating to embed the food policy over the long term

Regular communication helps mobilise stakeholders, strengthen citizens' support and ensure that food policy remains a long-term priority for the territory.

The communication strategy should combine different messages and communication channels tailored to each target audience:

- **Citizens**, by showcasing tangible changes (new services, events, public catering initiatives, support for local producers, etc.) and encouraging participation in events and decision-making processes;
- **Elected representatives**, by highlighting achievements in order to secure the long-term continuation of the strategy;
- **Partners and funders**, by promoting achievements, strengthening cooperation and encouraging the emergence of new projects (Person & Let's Food, 2025).

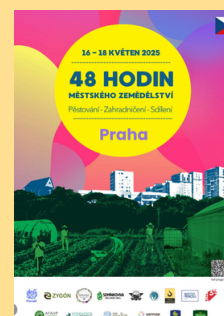
To maximise its effectiveness, communication should be integrated from the very beginning of the process. It is recommended to define:

- A **communication strategy**, including communication objectives, target audiences and tailored key messages;
- A **communication plan**, aligned with the different stages of the strategy (assessment, adoption of the action plan, launch of actions, annual review, etc.) (Person & Let's Food, 2025).



Examples of possible communication tools

- Dedicated events
 - Lyon Metropolitan Area (France): "À Table Lyon!" Sustainable Food Week
 - Prague (Czech Republic): 48 Hours of Urban Agriculture
 - Eurometropolis of Strasbourg (France): Food Meetings ("Les Rendez-vous de l'alimentation")



- Communication videos
 - City of Milan: Presentation of the results achieved through school catering initiatives.
 - City of Birmingham: Presentation of the city's food strategy through the concept of the "Birmingham Food Revolution."



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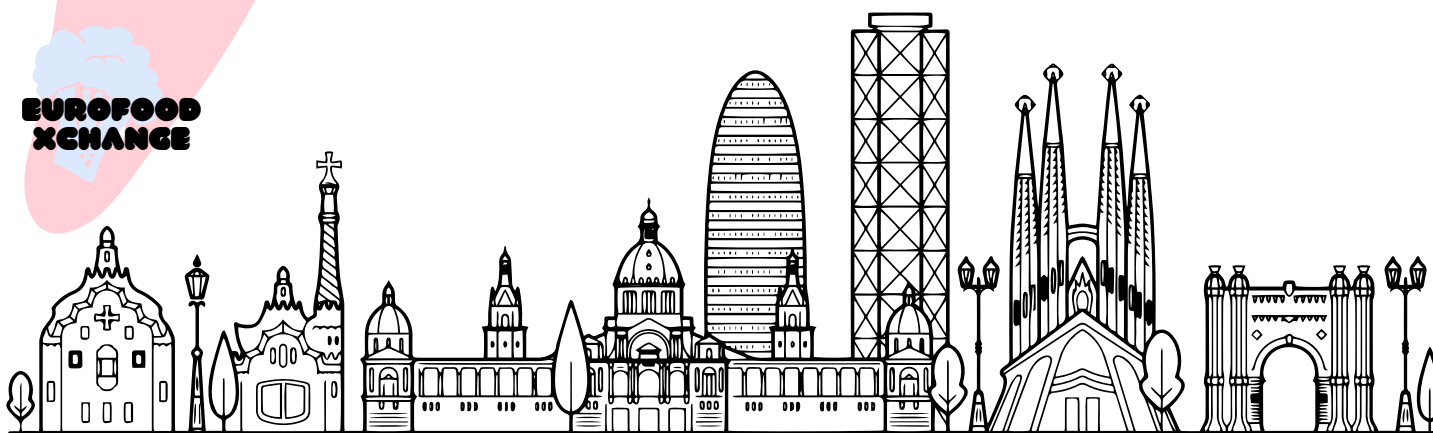
NOTES



Contacts

anna.faucher@letsfoodcities.org
louison.lancon@letsfoodcities.org

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