EUROFOOD XCHANGE

GALATI FOOD SYSTEM ASSESSMENT, STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

2026

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With the contribution of the Market Administration of the City of Galati

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Context 3
List of figures 4
Methodology 5

I. Galati food system assessment 6
I.1. General presentation of the city 7
I.2. Food security and nutrition : Does the food system of Galati provide everyone with access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food? 9
I.3. Socioeconomic sustainability : Is the food system of Galati based on an inclusive economy that supports job creation and reduces power imbalances between stakeholders? 17
I.4. Environmental sustainability : Does the food system of Galati protect the environment and biodiversity without depleting non-renewable resources or generating pollution? 25
I.5. Food governance : Does the food system of Galati provide the information and conditions needed to foster social cohesion, trust, and citizen participation? 32
I.6. Conclusion of the food system assessment 40
I.7. Comparison table of cities 41

II. Galati food strategy and action plan 42
II.1. Strategic objective 1: Establish a legitimate coordination framework for food policy 44
II.2. Strategic objective 2: Reinforce local and sustainable food value chains by connecting Galati with farmers from Galati County and the Matca area 50
II.3. Strategic objective 3: Use municipal markets and the wholesale market a s food infrastructure 56
II.4.Strategic objective 4: Improve food access through coordinated social and public food services 62
II.5.Strategic objective 5: Build food education, consumer trust and food waste prevention 68

III. Towards a monitoring and implementation framework 73
Global conclusion 75
References 76

CONTEXT

Food systems are increasingly recognised as a strategic area for local action. Through their responsibilities in public catering, urban planning, social policies, environmental protection and local economic development, municipalities play a key role in improving access to healthy food, supporting territorial value chains, reducing food waste and fostering more sustainable consumption patterns. In a context marked by climate change, social inequalities and pressures on agricultural systems, food policies have become an important lever for strengthening urban and territorial resilience.

At the same time, food-related issues are often addressed through fragmented sectoral policies, making it difficult to develop coherent and integrated approaches. European cooperation programmes therefore provide valuable opportunities for cities to strengthen their capacities, exchange experiences and develop responses to shared challenges.
It is within this context that the project EuroFoodXchange – Empowering Local Governments was developed. Funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ programme and coordinated by Let's Food in partnership with the Prague Innovation Institute and Climato Sfera, the project aims to strengthen the capacities of municipalities to design and implement ambitious, participatory and sustainable local food policies. It brings together the cities of Prague (Czech Republic) and Galați (Romania) and promotes exchange between local authorities facing similar structural challenges.

Within this framework, Galați has been the subject of a comprehensive assessment of its food system, alongside Prague, in order to identify key challenges, assets and entry points for future action. While the city benefits from significant resources—such as municipal and wholesale markets, a strong agricultural hinterland (notably the Matca production area), food-related public services, and proximity to cross-border supply flows with Moldova and Ukraine—it is also facing a range of interconnected challenges related to food access, socio-economic inequalities, environmental pressures and fragmented governance. Existing initiatives by public institutions, civil society and private actors remain active but are not yet integrated into a shared food system approach.

This report provides an assessment of Galați's food system structured around four dimensions: food security and nutrition, socio-economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and food governance. It aims to identify key challenges and opportunities, highlight existing assets, and support the emergence of a more coherent local food policy framework, aligned with municipal competences and broader territorial dynamics.

These documents were jointly prepared by Let's Food, Roxana Triboi from Climato Sfera, in close collaboration with the Market Administration of the City of Galati and local stakeholders engaged throughout the EuroFoodXchange project.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Counties of Romania (Wikipedia, n.d)
Figure 2: Map of Galati (Google maps n.d)
Figure 3: Food inflation in Romania (2020-2026): Focus on peak months (Trading Economics, n.d)
Figure 4: Poverty Map in Romania - People at Risk of Poverty (Tomescu-Dumistrecu, 2020)
Figure 5: Map of Food stores (in orange) and Fast Food (in blue) in Galati (My Maps)
Figure 6: Issues and solutions tree, transcribed and produced during the study trip to Galați, April 2026
Figure 7: Comparison of employment in agriculture in the 27 EU countries between 2005 and 2020 (Eurostat, 2020)
Figure 8: Share of farm managers <35 years old by gender in Romania (Eurostat, 2021)
Figure 9: Number and average size of farms in Romania (Eurostat, 2021)
Figure 10: Issues and solutions trees, transcribed and produced during the study trip to Galați, April 2026
Figure 11: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) managed by farms with low, medium and high intensity per ha in Romania (Eurostat, 2021)
Figure 12: Total area under organic farming in ha in Romania (Eurostat, 2022)
Figure 13: Issues and solutions trees, transcribed and produced during the study trip to Galați, April 2026
Figure 14: Table of multi-level food governance architecture relevant to Galati
Figure 15: Issues and solutions trees, transcribed and produced during the study trip to Galați, April 2026
Figure 16: Comparaison table of cities (Territoires Fertiles, Eurostat, INSEE, Rádlová et al., 2025)

METHODOLOGY

The assessment, strategy and action plan were developed between 2025 and 2026 through a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach combining desk research, stakeholder consultations and exchanges of practices with European local authorities.

Food system assessment

The food system assessment was based on several complementary sources:

- **Desk research**, including a review of existing literature, statistical data, policy documents and previous studies ;
- **Three semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in food-related issues**, providing qualitative insights into local challenges, existing initiatives and opportunities for action;
- **A study visit and participatory workshop organised in Galați in March-April 2026**, bringing together representatives from the City of Galați and local stakeholders involved in agriculture, food production, research, NGOs and other food-related sectors. Through problem and solution trees, participants identified the main sustainability challenges affecting Galați's food system, analysed their root causes and prioritised possible areas for action.

Development of the strategy and action plan

Building on the findings of the assessment, the food strategy and action plan were developed through:

- **Bilateral exchanges with representatives from the City of Galați, researchers and food system stakeholders,** to discuss priorities, feasibility and implementation pathways;
- **Discussions held during EuroFoodXchange workshops,** focusing on food accessibility, public procurement, environmental sustainability, food waste reduction and food governance;
- **A review of food policies and practices implemented in other European cities,** including peer-learning activities involving Galați, Prague and French local authorities working on sustainable food systems.

This participatory approach aimed to ensure that the assessment and proposed actions reflect local priorities, build on existing initiatives and capacities, and foster shared ownership among public authorities and food system stakeholders.

1. GALATI FOOD SYSTEM ASSESSMENT

1.1. GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE CITY

Geography and demographics

Galați is located in Eastern Romania, in Galați County, and is the country's seventh largest city, with around 216,000 inhabitants (compared to 1.7 million in Bucharest). The city is governed by Mayor Ionuț-Florin Pucheanu (Social Democratic Party – PSD), in office since 2016.

Strategically positioned on the Danube and connected by road and rail to major European corridors, Galați is one of Romania's key commercial hubs and a major logistics gateway (Galați City Hall, 2024).

Its location near Ukraine and Moldova strongly influences regional trade dynamics. The war in Ukraine has disrupted supply chains and contributed to inflationary pressures in Eastern Europe, while Romania saw a 24.3% drop in cereal imports in 2024, largely due to reduced flows from Ukraine (-85%) (French Treasure, 2024).

At the same time, Romania maintains close economic ties with the Republic of Moldova, which represents over 21% of its external trade (€2.5 billion in 2024) and remains a key destination for Romanian investment. Agri-food exchanges—particularly in cereals, oilseeds, fruits and beverages—reflect the high level of integration between the two food economies (Cimpoieş, 2021; Toureau, 2025).

Figure 1: Counties of Romania (Wikipedia, n.d)



Figure 2: Map of Galati (Google maps n.d)



Economy

Romania's economy rests on three main sectors: services lead with 42.5% of employment, followed by industry at 26.8%, and agriculture at 12% (Eures, 2024). While services dominate in urban centres, agriculture retains a structurally significant role, particularly in rural areas where approximately 45% of the Romanian population resides (Galați County Council, 2021).

This rural weight is reflected in the scale of the agricultural sector: farmland covers 55% of Romania's total territory, and nearly 2.9 million farms were recorded across the country in 2020 (Eurostat, 2020). The average farm size in Romania is 3.4 hectares (Eurostat, 2025).

Agriculture

In Galați County, this agricultural presence is even more pronounced. Some 80.2% of the county's land is dedicated to agricultural use (World Bank, 2023), 45.7% of its population lives in rural areas, and 24.4% of its workforce is employed in agriculture (Manolache et al., 2024). The region also benefits from a favourable microclimate that further supports this activity (Manolache et al., 2024). Taken together, these figures suggest that farming weighs more heavily on the local economy in Galați than it does elsewhere in Romania, making food a particularly central issue for the territory.

History and governance

Understanding Galați's food system also requires acknowledging Romania's historical trajectory. Although it had limited popular support, the Communist Party came to power in 1945 with Soviet backing (Britannica, n.d.). The following decades were marked by political repression and severe food shortages. Under Ceaușescu's regime (1965–1989), food was heavily rationed, imports were drastically reduced, and much of the country's agricultural production was exported to repay foreign debt, leaving store shelves largely empty (Georgescu, 1991; Deletant, 2007; Deletant, 2019).

The regime collapsed during the Romanian Revolution of December 1989, which led to the fall of communism and the beginning of a democratic transition under President Ion Iliescu in 1990. Romania then progressively integrated into Western institutions, joining NATO in 2002 and the European Union in 2007.

Romania's post-socialist food transition

Galați's food system reflects Romania's transition from a state-controlled food system marked by shortages and rationing to a market-based economy. During the socialist period, many households relied on family networks, household production and farmers' markets to secure food, creating lasting forms of trust based on proximity and direct relationships with producers (Perianu, 2008; Nicolau, 1995; Verdery, 2003; Kligman and Verdery, 2011).

After 1989, market liberalisation transformed food production and consumption. Imported and processed foods became symbols of abundance and modernity, while supermarkets gradually replaced traditional trust networks with confidence in brands, labels and retail chains. As a result, rebuilding trust in local food today requires strong producer visibility, traceability and quality assurance (Huyge, 2019; Voinea et al., 2019; Voinea et al., 2020).

At the same time, household food production remains an important part of Romanian food culture. Family gardens continue to provide vegetables, fruit and animal products, offering social and nutritional benefits. However, their fragmented and seasonal nature makes integration into formal food markets challenging without dedicated support and coordination (European Commission, 2026; Eurostat, 2026; Verdery, 2003; Sabates, 2005).

I.2. FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Does the food system of Galați provide everyone with access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food?

In this section, we focus on food security and nutrition by examining dietary habits, access to healthy food, and the resilience of the local food system. We explore whether residents have the information and resources needed to adopt a balanced diet, as well as whether nutritious food is physically and economically accessible across all neighbourhoods. Finally, we assess the capacity of the food system to withstand current and future crises while ensuring a stable and reliable food supply.

I.2.1. Dietary habits reveal social inequalities

Diet-related health issues on the rise

In Romania, nutritional practices do not always align with international health recommendations, and the consequences are visible across multiple health indicators. In 2024, 32% of Romanian adults are considered obese (NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, 2024), while diabetes affects 7.5% of the adult population aged 20-79 (Perspective Monde, n.d.). But, the country is classified in the "low" score group (below 5) according to the 2024 Global Hunger Index (GHI): the prevalence of undernourishment stood at 2.5% in 2022 (Trading Economics, n.d.).

A diet shaped by Romania's history and food culture

These health challenges are deeply rooted in the historical and cultural fabric of Romanian food culture. Romanian cuisine has been shaped by successive waves of influence, Greek, Roman, Ottoman, Saxon, Slavic and Magyar, giving it a rich but often heavy character, built around meat, fat (Salanță et al., 2015). While Romania shares certain culinary similarities with Mediterranean countries, notably the use of vegetables, legumes and olive-based preparations, the dominant food culture remains centred on rich, hearty dishes, particularly in rural areas (European Commission, 2016).

It is also important to keep in mind that in the different regions of Romania, the culinary traditions may differ. For example, sour cream is used in almost every dish in the Moldavian region where Galați is located (Salanță et al., 2015). Another popular dish in Galați is sarmale, which consists of stuffed cabbage leaves filled with a mixture of minced meat, rice, and spices such as paprika and thyme (Typical Dish.com, n.d).



Photo : Aghenie_Gheorghe

Moreover, the legacy of the communist period has further shaped these habits. Following the fall of communism, Romania rapidly adopted the so-called Western diet, characterised by high consumption of sodium, red meat, fat, sugar, and processed foods, as a form of newfound freedom and modernity (Voinea et al., 2019). Today, unhealthy products such as industrial charcuterie, margarine, street pastries and cheap processed foods have become staples of the daily Romanian diet (National Institute of Statistics, 2016, in Voinea et al., 2019).

Unequal access to healthy diets: The role of socioeconomic factors

Beyond cultural and historical factors, social inequalities play a significant role in shaping access to adequate nutrition. This is particularly evident among children from disadvantaged households: 23% do not have enough food for dinner, and only 24% consume fresh fruits and vegetables daily (World Vision Romania, 2024). While Romania holds a strong culinary tradition grounded in local and seasonal produce, these figures suggest that nutritional disparities are less a matter of cultural food habits than a reflection of structural socioeconomic inequalities limiting access to sufficient and balanced diets.

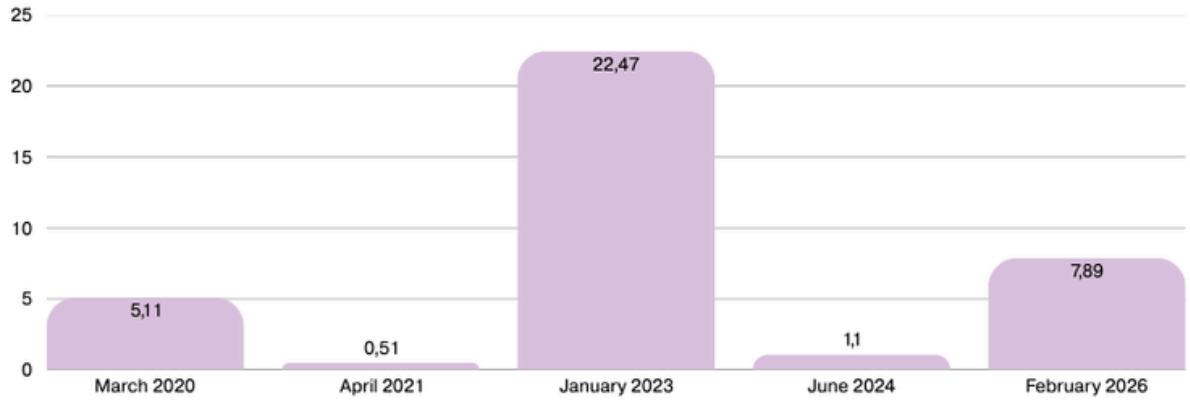
I.2.2. The high cost of healthy diets limits nutritional quality food in Romania

The growing cost of healthy eating

Beyond cultural habits, economic factors represent a major barrier to adequate nutrition in Romania. Healthy diets remain difficult to afford for a significant part of the population, due to the high prices and limited availability of fruits, vegetables, and fish (European Commission, 2016). This situation has been further aggravated by significant food price instability since COVID-19 crisis and the Ukrainian War: from March 2020 to February 2026, Romania experienced drastic swings in food inflation, making it increasingly difficult for vulnerable households to maintain a balanced diet (Trading Economics, n.d.).

For example, food inflation reached 5.11% in March 2020 before dropping sharply to 0.51% in April 2021. A similar but far more dramatic pattern occurred between January 2023 and June 2024, when inflation fell from a peak of 22.47% down to 1.1%, only to rise again to 7.89%, slightly above the levels recorded in early 2020.

Figure 3: Food inflation in Romania (2020-2026): Focus on peak months (Trading Economics, n.d)



Socioeconomic vulnerability concentrated in south-east Romania

Additionally, in 2024, Romania has one of the highest rates of poverty or social exclusion in the EU: 27.9% of its population is at risk of poverty or social exclusion, ranking 2nd highest in the EU behind Bulgaria (30.3%) and ahead of Greece (26.9%) (Eurostat, 2024).

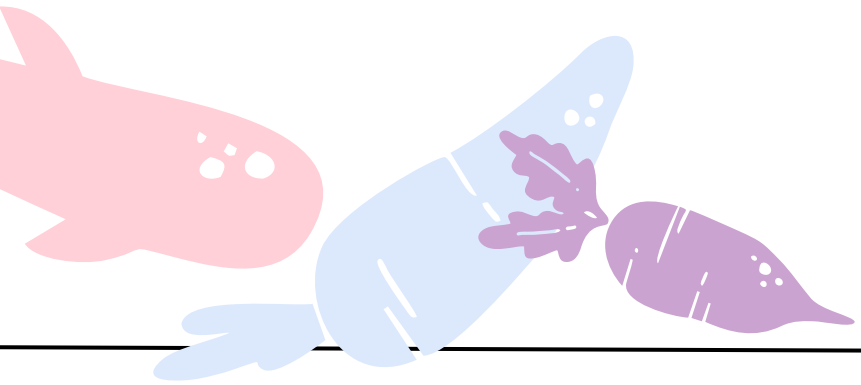
However, these economic pressures do not affect all regions equally. Strong territorial inequalities compound the issue, as Galați County and the Sud-Est region record among the highest poverty risk rates in the country, directly limiting residents' access to sufficient and nutritious food (Tomescu-Dumitrescu, 2020). In the Sud-Est region, where Galați County is located, this figure reaches 53.4%, more than half of the population. By comparison, the Nord-Vest region shows a significantly lower rate of 30.9%, roughly one third.

Figure 4: Poverty Map in Romania - % of people at risk of poverty per region (Tomescu-Dumistrecu, 2020)



These socioeconomic disparities are rooted in deeper structural weaknesses of the Romanian economy. The transition to a market economy in the 1990s led to massive job losses, with employment falling from 8.1 million in 1990 to 4.5 million by the mid-2000s. Subsequent economic growth did not fully translate into job creation: between 2000 and 2008, GDP increased by 50% while employment grew by only 10% (Stanescu & Dumitru, 2017). The 2008 financial crisis further weakened the economy, with GDP recovering to pre-crisis levels by 2014 while only half of the jobs lost had been restored (Georgescu, 2015).

As a result, Romania became the EU country with the highest income inequality from 2010 onwards (Stanescu & Dumitru, 2017), a situation reinforced by labour code reforms in 2010 that weakened collective bargaining and reduced workers' share of economic gains (Dumitru, 2015). Although unemployment remains close to the EU average (6.1% in March 2026 compared with 5.9% in December 2025), this indicator masks a persistent issue of in-work poverty, with 18–19% of employed people living below the poverty line in the mid-2010s (National Institute for Statistics, 2016; Tețliuc et al., 2003).



A significant share of household budgets devoted to food

The consequences for food access are direct and measurable: a healthy monthly diet costs approximately 128 euros per person, or 499 euros for a family of four (Voinea et al., 2019; European Commission, 2015). For a household which earns the average net wage, the food basket represents approximately 70% of the total income (European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, 2015).

As a result, purchasing power does not only determine the quantity of food consumed, but also its quality, widening nutritional disparities between wealthier urban areas and more deprived rural or peripheral regions.

Food aid is addressing strong needs and handled by NGOs

Food aid represents a key response to the growing food insecurity affecting vulnerable populations in Romania. In spring 2024, the national food collection campaign coordinated by Romanian Food Banks Federation provided assistance to 120,000 people in need (Banca Pentru Alimente, 2024). In Romania and also in Galati, the responsibility for ensuring food security for vulnerable populations is not often addressed by local authorities. Currently, access to food for marginalized groups is primarily facilitated by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social enterprises (Meeting local stakeholders, 2026).

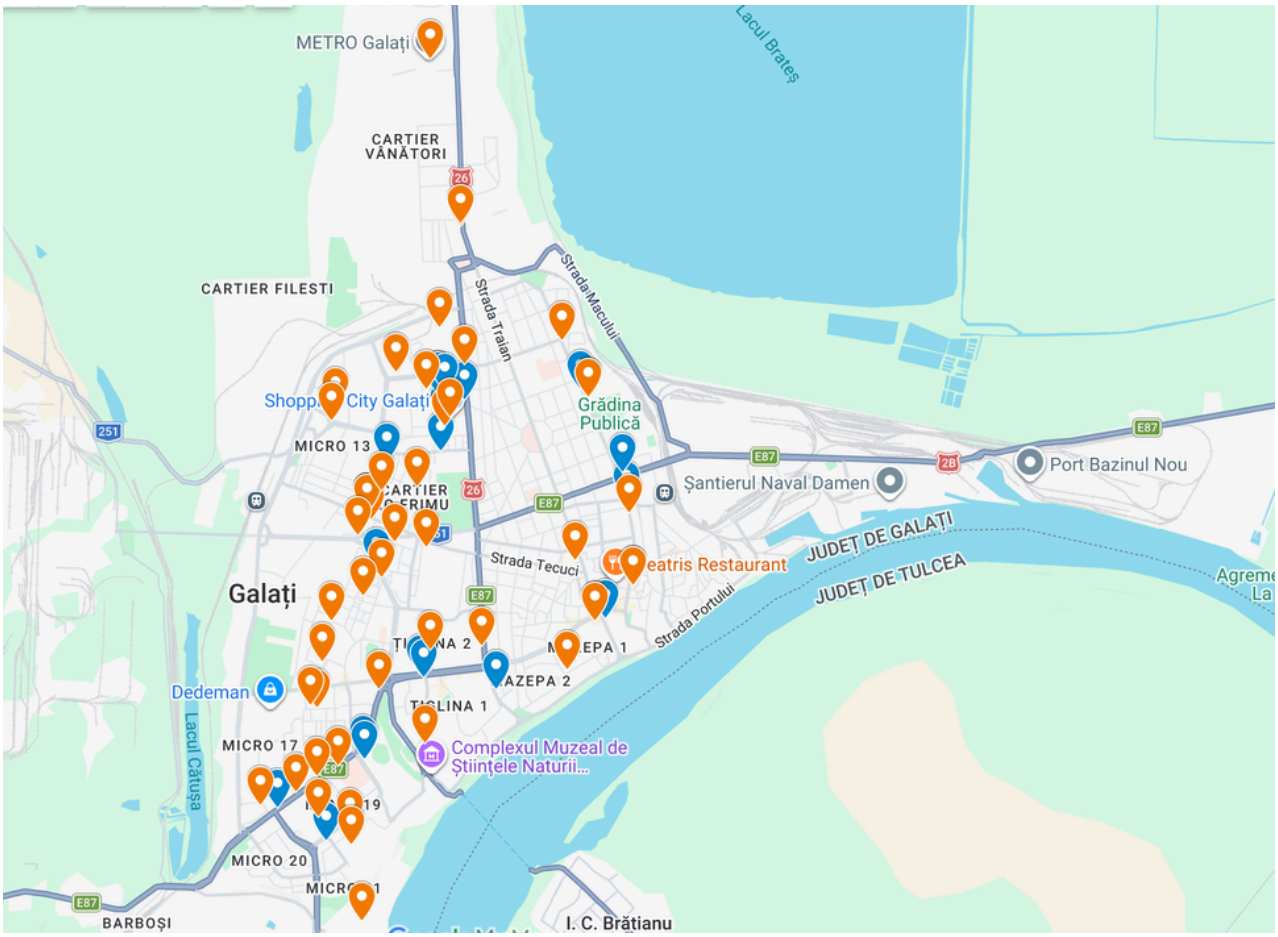
Among them, we can mention Caritas, Hilt, Comtim România, Romanian Food Banks Federation. The banks obtain food from food chains, food collections, the European food and material aid program, growers, producers, and individuals. Since the founding of Romanian Food Banks Federation in 2016 through the end of 2025, the network has collected more than 41,000 tonnes of products, transformed into over 76 million meal portions, distributed through more than 800 partner NGOs to 325,000 vulnerable people (Agerpes, 2026).

I.2.3. A well-served food market with persistent fresh food access challenges

A diverse retail landscape dominated by supermarkets

Galați benefits from a relatively diverse food retail landscape, offering residents multiple channels through which to access food. The city counts around 70 supermarkets, 20 markets, including 4 major ones, and approximately 10 specialty groceries and local-product shops (Galați municipal public domain inventory, 2026; Meeting with local stakeholders, 2025). The principal shop signs are Carrefour, Kaufland, Lidl and Profi. This variety suggests that, on paper, the supply infrastructure is sufficiently developed to meet the population's basic food needs The city also has a notable fast food presence, combining international chains such as McDonald's and KFC with local outlets offering dishes including kebabs and falafel sandwiches (Typical Dish.com, n.d).

Figure 5: Map of Food stores (in orange) and Fast Food (in blue) in Galati (My Maps)



Fresh food remains unevenly accessible

Furthermore, markets appear to be relatively evenly distributed across the city's neighbourhoods, which could theoretically support equitable access to fresh and local products. However, certain areas remain underserved, notably the Vânători district and Micro 17, which are both peripheral districts of Galați, where this distribution network is less present (Galați municipal public domain inventory, 2026). These exceptions point to localised gaps that may affect residents with limited mobility or purchasing power, and warrant attention when assessing true food accessibility across the city.

In areas where fresh food stores are scarce or distant, residents without motorized transport face a considerable barrier to maintaining a healthy diet. These areas can be described as food deserts, neighborhoods where inhabitants face a high risk of difficulty accessing nutritious food due to the absence of appropriate retail outlets (Vonthron, 2024).

Confronted with this lack of options, many residents do not simply travel further; they might adapt their consumption habits to what is locally available. This can mean turning to fast food chains or convenience stores, which sometimes don't sell fresh fruits and vegetables. In some cases, this leads to what researchers call a food swamp, a neighborhood that does technically have food access, but where healthy options are overwhelmed by an abundance of high-calorie, low-nutrient products (Vonthron, 2024).

Unlike food deserts, which are defined by an absence of food retail, food swamps are characterized by a distortion of the offer, where unhealthy choices dominate the landscape. Together, these two phenomena illustrate how spatial inequalities in urban food environments can directly shape the dietary habits of Galati's residents.

I.2.4. Exporting raw commodities, importing food: the missing middle of the food system

The dominance of export-oriented agriculture in Romania

At the national level, Romania presents a striking paradox between agricultural potential and food dependency. Farmland covers 55% of the country's territory, with nearly 2.9 million farms recorded in 2020 (Eurostat, 2020).

Romania exports large volumes of raw agricultural commodities while importing significant quantities of processed food. In 2017, 7 million tonnes of wheat and corn were exported, while around 800,000 tonnes of frozen bread were imported, representing half of domestic consumption (RFI, 2017). A similar pattern applies to livestock, with Romania exporting cattle, sheep, goats and pork while imports in these sectors continue to grow. The country is among Europe's leading sheep and goat producers (11.8 million heads), but production remains largely export-oriented, with limited domestic meat processing (77,000 tec) (Team France Export, n.d.).

Romania is also a major fruit and vegetable producer, ranking 6th among EU fruit producers in 2023 with 1.65 million tonnes. However, it remains highly dependent on imports, with fruit imports exceeding €1 billion in 2025 (INS, 2025). In the apple sector, insufficient collective organisation, storage capacity and preservation infrastructure contribute to the loss of locally produced fruit (Team France Export, n.d.).

Overall, Romanian agricultural exports reached €12.3 billion, mainly driven by cereals and oilseeds (€6.1 billion). Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Bulgaria and Spain are the country's main European trading partners for agricultural and agri-food products (Direction Générale du Trésor, 2024). This dynamic highlights a structural disconnect between Romania's agricultural production and domestic consumption, weakening food sovereignty and nutritional resilience.

Informal and cross-border food flows shaping the Galați food system

Galati's geographical position near the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine adds another layer to the food system. Formal and informal cross-border exchanges, including small-scale trade and movement of goods and people, are part of the wider food environment. These flows can contribute to food access and affordability, but they may remain invisible in formal food governance (Michalon, 2007; AP News, 2023; Reuters, 2024).

The war in Ukraine has also reinforced the strategic role of eastern Romania and Danube/Black Sea logistics for food, transport and humanitarian support. Galati has been affected by proximity to the conflict and by refugee movements, even if specific local food impacts require further documentation. This context makes food security, emergency food assistance, port logistics and cross-border cooperation more relevant for the diagnostic (AP News, 2023; Reuters, 2024).

Infrastructure bottlenecks hindering local food consumption

The issue is not only production. It is also the “missing middle” of the food system: aggregation, storage, cold chains, grading, processing, transformation, certification, marketing, logistics and national distribution. Without these intermediate functions, small producers often remain dependent on intermediaries, informal sales, local markets or bulk commodity channels. They may produce food, but they cannot easily access stable urban buyers, public procurement, supermarkets, restaurants or institutional markets.

Value is often captured outside the territory where food is produced. Raw products may leave the region or the country, while added value is created elsewhere through sorting, processing, packaging, branding and distribution. For Galati and Matca, this means that proximity to production does not automatically create a local food system. The strategic question is how to organise production, aggregation, processing and distribution so that the territory retains more value locally.

The case of Galați County: Productive agriculture with weak local food systems

Galați County illustrates the paradox of Romanian agriculture: a highly productive territory with limited local food system integration. Agricultural land covers 80.2% of the county’s surface, with production largely dominated by cereals (67%) and oil crops (23%). With 419,770 hectares of cultivated land, Galați ranks among Romania’s leading agricultural counties (INS, 2022).
However, agricultural production does not automatically translate into local food availability for residents, schools or public institutions. The key challenge lies in connecting production with local demand through processing, distribution and logistics systems.

A notable example is Matca, known as the “vegetable hub” of Galați County. Its producers supply both domestic and export markets, demonstrating the territory’s strong production potential, but local market integration remains limited (Agro TV, 2021).

Unlocking this potential requires strengthening local food chain functions: producer mapping, aggregation, storage, logistics, traceability and stable links with local buyers. Without these mechanisms, production risks remaining dependent on intermediaries and external markets.

At the same time, Galați’s productive capacity faces long-term challenges. Between 2012 and 2018, the cultivated area decreased by 7.6%, partly reflecting rural depopulation, generational renewal difficulties and the conversion of agricultural land to other uses (Manolache et al., 2024).


Photo : Let’s Food

CONCLUSION OF THE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION DIMENSION

These various elements have allowed us to draw the first key findings of this food security and nutrition axis. Romania faces significant nutritional and food security challenges: obesity affects nearly a third of the adult population and diabetes impacts 7.5% of adults. Despite relatively low undernourishment rates, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are particularly vulnerable, with many lacking access to sufficient and nutritious food on a daily basis.

Economic barriers play a central role in these disparities. Healthy food remains expensive and sometimes difficult to find, and price instability has made the situation worse for low-income households. These difficulties are not evenly distributed across the country.

As we saw, the South-East Region where Galati county is situated faced a high rate of risk of social exclusion and poverty. But due to this situation, Galați city has a relatively developed food retail network, but access remains unequal across neighborhoods. Finally, Romania's agricultural paradox, exporting raw commodities while importing processed food, further weakens national food sovereignty and limits the population's access to locally produced, quality food.

Figure 6: Issues and solutions tree, transcribed and produced during the study trip to Galați, April 2026

Causes	Challenges	Solutions
Insufficient nutrition education at home and in schools	Limited nutritional awareness and unequal access to healthy food, particularly among vulnerable populations	Strengthen nutrition education through schools, public institutions and media campaigns
Aggressive marketing of ultra-processed foods		Subsidize healthy and sustainable food to improve affordability
Ultra-processed foods are more affordable and accessible than healthy alternatives		Regulate and restrict the marketing of unhealthy food products
Price-driven purchasing and procurement practices favor low-quality food		Introduce fiscal measures, including higher taxation of unhealthy food products
Healthy food remains expensive and insufficiently available		Revise legislation and procurement rules that prioritize the lowest price over food quality
Low household incomes limit access to healthy food		Strengthen food traceability and controls on food origin and supply chains
		Increase household incomes and targeted financial support for vulnerable groups
		Improve public policies and their implementation to promote healthy diets
		Develop local food processing, storage and distribution infrastructure

I.3.SOCIOECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Is the food system of Galați based on an inclusive economy that supports job creation and reduces power imbalances between stakeholders?

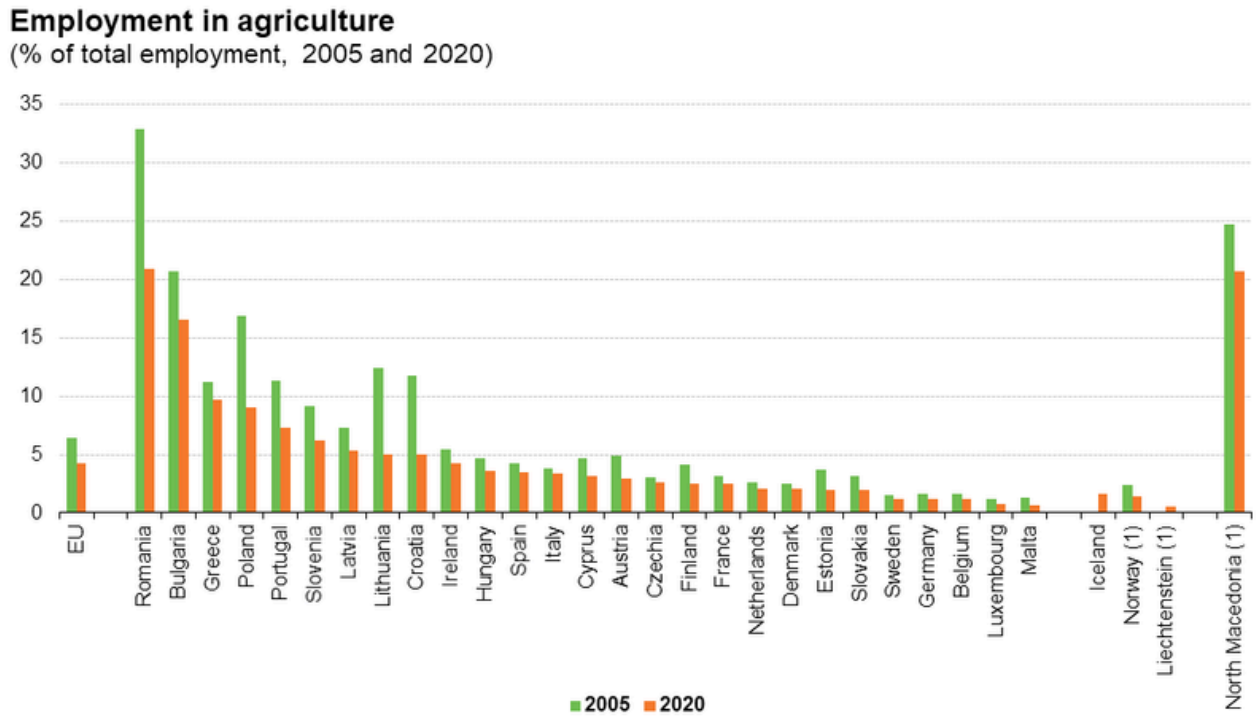
This section examines the socio-economic dimension of the Galați food system. It assesses whether agri-food production generates quality employment and contributes to strengthening the local economy, including the attractiveness of farming as a profession. It also explores whether food processing activities create added value for the territory and support decent, well-paid jobs. Finally, it considers whether the territory's food distribution infrastructure enables a fair distribution of value among food system actors.

I.3.1. A Fragmented, low-income sector with limited generational renewal

A Fragmented agricultural structure

Romania stands out within the European Union for the size of its agricultural workforce. With around 3.5 million farmers and 23% of its labour force employed in agriculture; the highest share in the Union (European Commission, 2024).

Figure 7: Comparison of employment in agriculture in the 27 EU countries between 2005 and 2020 (Eurostat, 2020)



Behind this numerical weight, however, lies a deeply divided landscape. Some 75% of Romanian farms cover less than two hectares, and the majority of these operate as subsistence farms. It means that production is primarily aimed at self-consumption rather than market activity (CCI International France, 2020). At the opposite end of the spectrum, large farms exceeding 100 hectares represent a mere 0.5% of all farms, yet they concentrate 49% of the total agricultural land area (CCI International France, 2020).

This fragmentation becomes particularly apparent when compared with other European countries. In the Czech Republic, for example, the average farm size is around 130 hectares - nearly 40 times larger than the Romanian average (Team France Export, n.d.). This contrast largely stems from Romania's post-communist land reform. Following the 1989 Revolution, the Land Law of 1991 dismantled approximately 3,700 collective farms and redistributed their land to former owners, enabling around 3.7 million households to reclaim agricultural plots (OECD, 2026). As a result, Romania's agricultural landscape is characterized by a large number of small family farms and household plots, which continue to play a key role in food production.

Ongoing farm modernisation through the CAP, but an agricultural sector still rooted in household production

Despite EU support policies, small subsistence farms remain a defining feature of Romanian agriculture. Through the CAP 2023–2027, Romania has introduced simplified support schemes and investment programmes for small farms, including the DR-14 programme providing up to €50,000 per project for farm modernisation (European Commission, 2023; Romanian Strategic Plan, 2023).

However, Romania's food system remains deeply rooted in household production, particularly in rural areas such as Galați. Vegetables, fruits, eggs, poultry, pork and dairy are often produced in family gardens and circulated through rural–urban networks. Beyond their economic role, these practices contribute to food security, cultural heritage and trust in local production (Perianu, 2008; Verdery, 2003; Sabates, 2005).

Yet, the fragmented and seasonal nature of small-scale production limits its integration into formal markets, highlighting the need for stronger aggregation, processing, traceability and producer support mechanisms.



Photo : Let's Food

An unattractive profession due to low incomes

This structural fragility shows up directly in income levels. Agricultural earnings in Romania average just 13,042 euros per year, less than half the EU average of 28,786 euros (European Commission, 2024). Most small farms produce little to no marketable surplus, which largely explains these low income levels (OECD, 2026).

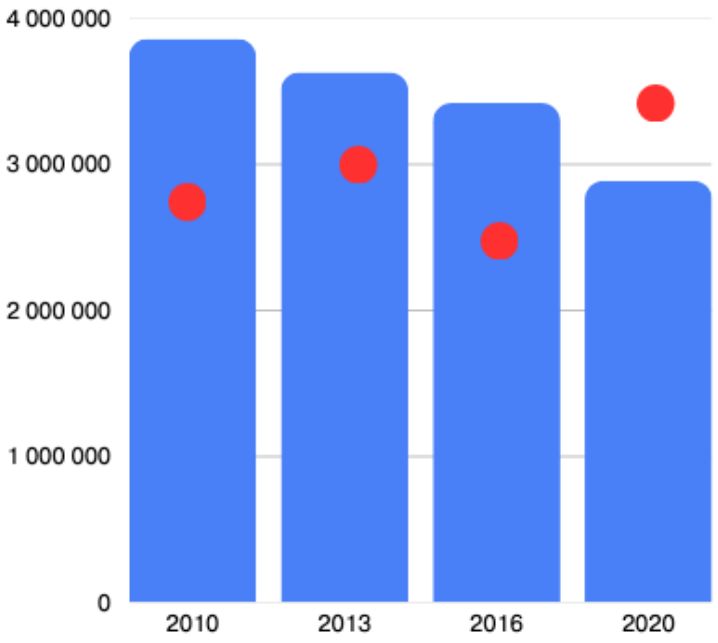
Figure 8: Share of farm managers <35 years old by gender in Romania (Eurostat, 2021)



Without the ability to benefit from economies of scale or to invest in modernisation, the great majority of Romanian farmers work in conditions that offer few prospects for growth. These farms continue to operate not out of economic choice, but because their owners have no alternative (Petrescu & Petrescu-Mag, 2017). This difficult situation is made worse by unequal access to EU support: in 2021, fewer than one third of Romanian farms received CAP direct payments, with the bulk of that support going to medium and large farms (OECD, 2026).

Low incomes naturally discourage new entrants into the sector. Around 44.3% of Romanian farmers are over 65 years old, one of the highest proportions in Europe (European Commission, 2024), while the share of farm managers under 35 remains very low, around 11% (Eurostat, 2021).

Figure 9: Number and average size of farms in Romania (Eurostat, 2021)



With such a large part of the workforce at or near retirement age, and with earnings offering little reason for younger people to take over, Romania faces a real risk of agricultural workforce collapse in the coming years. This trend is already visible in the numbers: the total number of farms has been decreasing since 2010, while average farm size has slowly grown, a sign of ongoing concentration rather than a generational renewal (Eurostat, 2021).

Unequal access to land, subsidies and infrastructure threatens farm renewal

Rising land prices are making entry into agriculture increasingly difficult. The average price of agricultural land rose from around €3,100/ha in 2012–2014 to over €8,000/ha in 2022, creating significant barriers for new farmers and generational renewal (Basta!, 2014; Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2023).

At the same time, Romania's fertile soils, CAP subsidies and export opportunities have attracted large investors, contributing to increasing land concentration. While large-scale farming can support productivity, unequal access to land, subsidies, infrastructure and market channels risks marginalising smaller producers (Kay, 2016; European Parliament, 2015).

Smaller farms often face difficulties accessing finance, storage, processing facilities and markets, limiting their ability to integrate into formal food chains and threatening the diversity and renewal of the agricultural sector.

I.3.2. Agricultural potential in Galati County, facing structural challenges

Galați County presents an agricultural profile that mirrors many of the broader Romanian dynamics. The county produces cereals, fruits and vegetables, and wine, and agriculture contributed 9.2% of its gross added value in 2016, a share that notably exceeds both the regional average of 7.9% and the national average of 4.5% (Manolache et al., 2024). These figures suggest that farming is a significant activity in Galați that weighs more heavily on the local economy than it does elsewhere in Romania.

Yet this relative importance of agriculture in the county's economic fabric has not translated into a modern or competitive sector. The farm structure in Galați closely echoes the national pattern of fragmentation: 13,967 farms fall within the 0 to 50 hectare range, compared to only 754 farms exceeding 50 hectares (Galați Municipal Public Domain Inventory, 2026).

As a result, this sector in Galati County is caught in a vicious cycle. Small farms lack the structural organisation needed to invest in mechanisation, irrigation, or professional training yet without these investments, they cannot generate enough income to grow or consolidate (Manolache et al., 2024).

Breaking this cycle would require a shift towards a more structured agricultural model, one that supports land consolidation, collective organisation among small producers, and targeted investment in infrastructure and training, in order to create the conditions for a viable and attractive farming sector in the long term.

These are, in fact, the recommendations and proposed courses of action highlighted during the workshop organized by Let's Food in March 2026 in Galati.

I.3.3. Food processing remains underdeveloped despite strong potential

Over recent decades, Romanian food consumption has shifted significantly, driven by the expansion of supermarkets, processed food availability and changing perceptions of convenience, safety and price (Voinea et al., 2019; Voinea et al., 2020; Huyge, 2019). Processed foods represent an important share of diets, particularly meat, dairy, bread and sugar-based products (European Commission, n.d.).

Despite this demand, food processing remains the weakest link of the agri-food chain, although it represents a major opportunity for value creation. Key sectors include meat and dairy processing, fruit and vegetable transformation, fish products and bakery (Huyge, 2019). While the sector has grown in recent years, productivity remains three times below the EU average, and some processing units operate far below their capacity (Ministerie van Landbouw, 2025).

In Galați County, limited processing infrastructure further constrains the development of local food chains (Meeting with local stakeholders, 2025). Given the region's strong cereal production, developing activities such as milling and bakery could represent a promising opportunity to retain more value locally and strengthen food system resilience.

I.3.4. Supermarkets and processed foods dominate Galati's food system

Growing reliance on supermarkets and evolving consumer trust

One of the major shifts in Romania's post-socialist food system has been the transition from informal, proximity-based food circuits to supermarket-led consumption. Food access previously relied on family ties to rural areas, local markets, direct sales and informal exchange networks, which played a key role in everyday provisioning. Modern retail has transformed not only shopping practices but also consumer trust, shifting it from personal relationships and product characteristics to labels, branding and retail standards (Perianu, 2008; Huyge, 2019; Voinea et al., 2019; Voinea et al., 2020).

For the first half of 2023, modern retail channels (hypermarkets, supermarkets and discounters combined) account for approximately 60 to 65% of the Romanian food market, with hypermarkets alone representing 23% and discounters 20%. Even if traditional markets (markets, small independent shops) remain an important part of the consumption habit, there is a rapid growth of supermarket chains (Huyge, 2019).

Galați reflects the national trend of a growth of processed food consumption, particularly well: between 2017 and 2022, purchases in discount stores increased by 12% and in convenience stores by 11%, while sales in other retail outlets declined by 3% (Galați municipal public domain inventory, 2026).

This shift points to a move away from traditional, local, and fresh food sources toward standardized, often imported products sold in large retail chains (Carrefour, Carrefour, Kaufland, Lidl and Profi).


Photo : Let's Food



Photo : Let's Food

Challenges for farmers in accessing modern retail markets

The dominance of supermarkets and imported products makes it increasingly difficult for local producers to remain competitive, as their goods are often more expensive than mass-produced imports (Meeting with local stakeholders, 2025).

The structure of the retail sector itself creates barriers to market access. Supermarkets rely on centralized purchasing systems and large supply volumes, requirements that many small family farms in Galați are unable to meet (Bienabe & Lemeilleur, 2011).

Beyond volume constraints, farmers face multiple challenges, including compliance costs, weak bargaining power, high transaction costs, limited financial resources, and exposure to market risks. These factors reduce their capacity to invest and integrate into commercial supply chains (Dixit, 1982; Barrett, 1997; Bijman, Ton et al., 2007).

The situation is further aggravated by the lack of effective support programmes connecting local producers to supermarket distribution networks (Meeting with local stakeholders, 2025). The removal in 2020 of the requirement for supermarkets to source 51% of selected food products from local producers also reduced incentives for retailers to purchase Romanian products.

As a result, local farmers remain largely excluded from modern retail markets, weakening short supply chains and limiting consumers' access to locally produced food.

The wholesale market of Galați : an opportunity to provide local food to the Galati's inhabitants

The wholesale market of Galați (Calea Basarabiei) is the city's only wholesale market, directly managed by the municipal authority through Piețe Agroalimentare Galați, which oversees 18 markets and micro-markets across the city (Piete-galati.ro, n.d.). With a surface area of 20,000 m², it represents a key food trade infrastructure for the city and surrounding territory.

However, the market mainly hosts wholesalers selling imported products or goods sourced from the Matca vegetable basin, rather than directly from local producers. The lack of producer coordination, product traceability and visibility of origin limits its contribution to a more locally integrated food system.

The wholesale market therefore represents a strategic opportunity to strengthen Galați's food system by supporting functions such as producer aggregation, storage, traceability, links with public institutions and better connections between regional producers, retailers, restaurants and consumers. Building on this existing infrastructure could enhance urban–rural cooperation and access to fresh, seasonal local products.



Photo : Let's Food

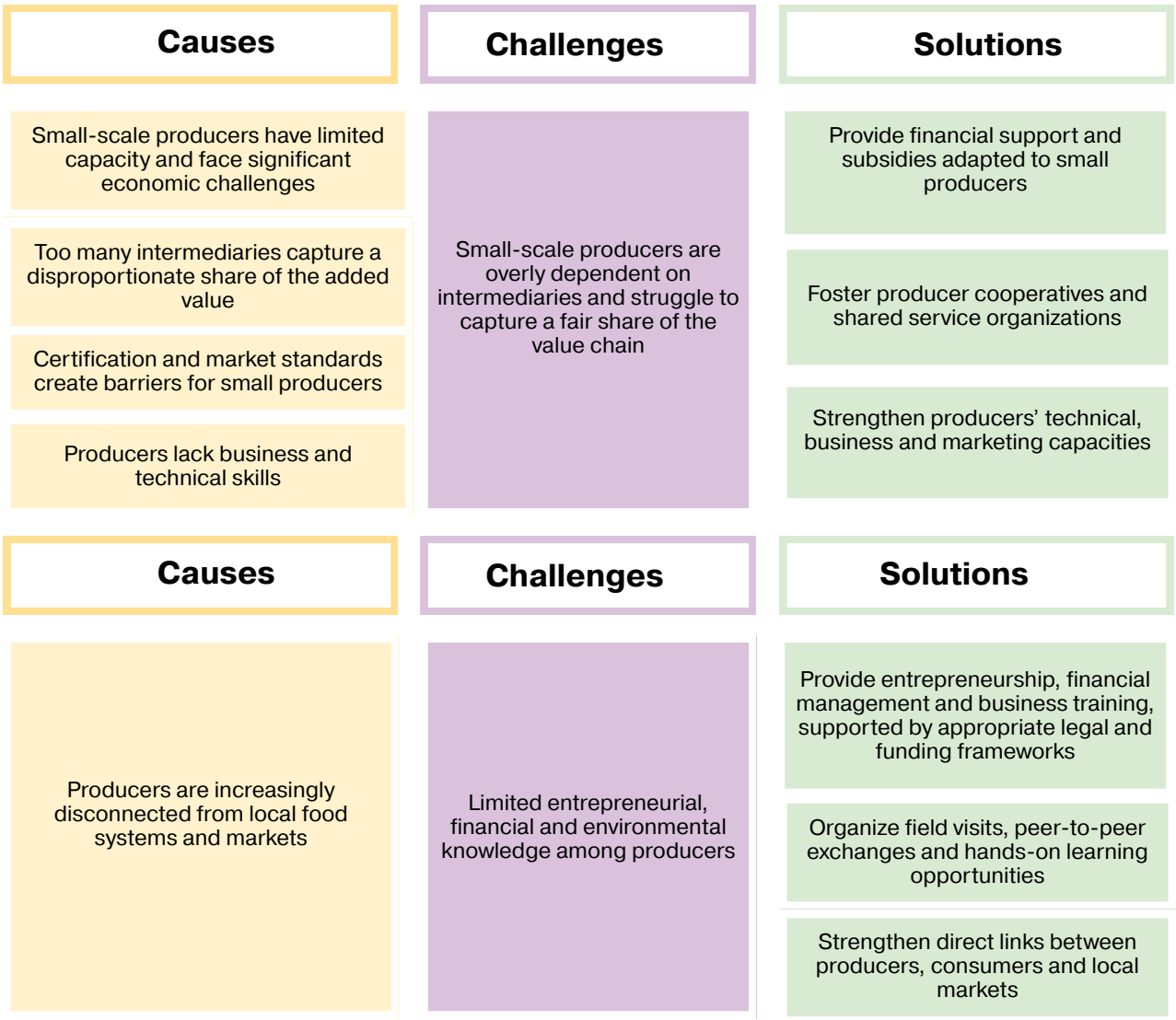
CONCLUSION OF THE SOCIOECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSION

To conclude, Romania's agricultural workforce is the largest in the EU, yet it remains trapped in low-income, fragmented, and ageing conditions that undermine its long-term viability. At the local level, Galați County mirrors this national pattern: despite a significant agricultural vocation, small farm holdings, limited mechanisation, and insufficient processing infrastructure prevent the sector from capturing the value it could generate. Food processing activities in the Galați area should be further developed to build more sustainable and locally sourced supply chains.

On the consumption side, the growing dominance of supermarkets and imported processed foods is progressively marginalising local producers, weakening short supply chains and reducing territorial food resilience. The wholesale market and the other agri-food markets in Galati offer a perspective to distribute local products in the city.

Taken together, these dynamics point to a food system in which agricultural capacity, processing potential, and consumer demand exist, but remain poorly connected.

Figure 10: Issues and solutions trees, transcribed and produced during the study trip to Galați, April 2026



I.4. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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

The environmental sustainability of the local food system depends on the practices and impacts of its different components. This section examines four dimensions: the effects of agricultural production on natural resources, the resource use of food processing and distribution activities, and consumer awareness and organic waste valorization practices.

I.4.1. Intensive agriculture threatens natural ecosystems

In Romania, the continental climate makes agriculture highly sensitive to weather fluctuations, and the country's vulnerability to climate change is constantly increasing (Direction Générale du Trésor, 2026). Pressures in natural ecosystems are rooted in an intensive farming model that has continued to expand in Romania in recent decades.

Water abstraction for agricultural activities increased dramatically between 2011 and 2021, rising from 325 million m^3 to 1,256 million m^3 (EU Emission Tracker, 2021), reflecting a deepening reliance on resource-intensive production methods. The agricultural sector was responsible for 20.87 Mt CO_2 eq of emissions in 2021, representing 18.1% of total national emissions that year(EU Emission Tracker, 2021). The use of fertilizers, intensive livestock farming, and deforestation linked to the expansion of farmland are the main causes (ADEME, n.d). At the local level, groundwater contamination by nitrates has been identified in the Galați municipal territory (Galați Municipal Public Domain Inventory, 2026), pointing to the direct environmental consequences of agrochemical runoff in the surrounding area.

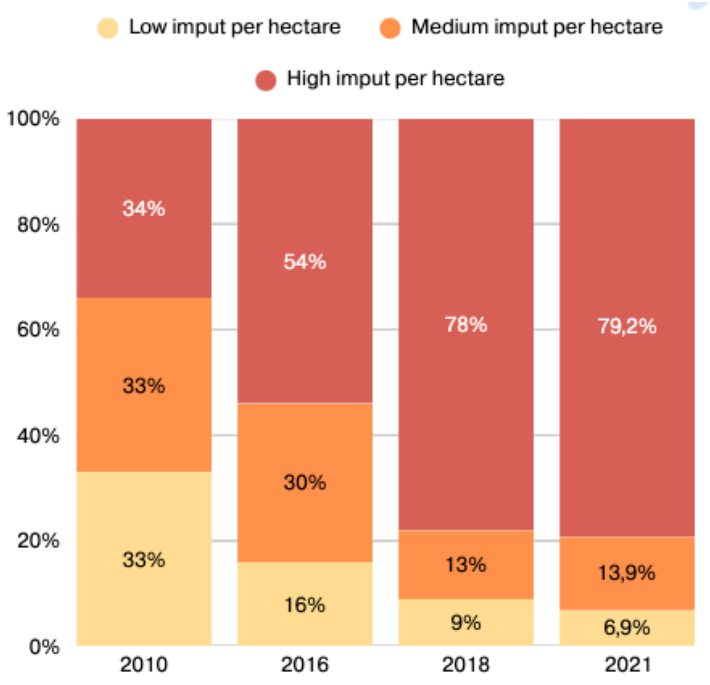


Figure 11: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) managed by farms with low, medium and high intensity per ha in Romania (Eurostat, 2021)

As being said above, the main crops cultivated around Galati, in Galati County are barley, wheat, and corn. Wheat and corn are known to be among the most intensively produced crops in agriculture, often requiring significant inputs such as pesticides and fertilizers . The predominance of these crops in the areas surrounding Galati therefore suggests that local agriculture is likely to generate considerable environmental pressure, particularly in terms of soil use and agrochemical inputs (Reau et al., 2017). This supports the hypothesis that agriculture around Galati may have a substantial environmental impact.

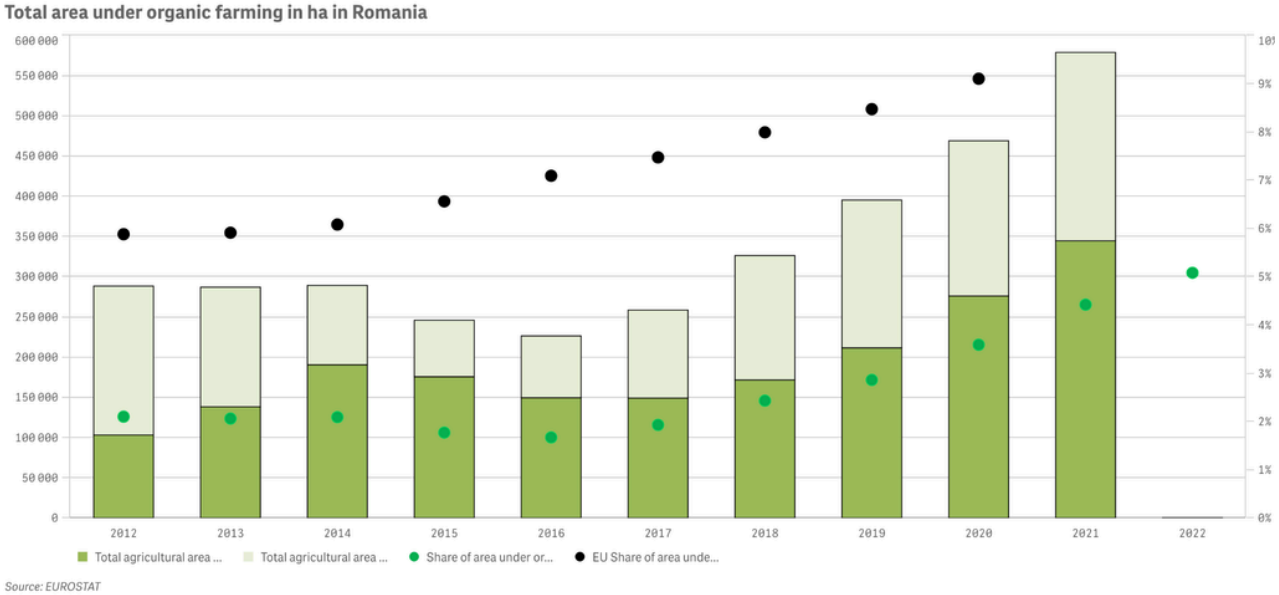
I.4.2. The emerging trend of organic farming

Despite these pressures, the transition toward more sustainable practices remains limited. In 2024, the total area under organic agriculture reached 780,000 ha, with organic pastures and hayfields covering almost 300,000 ha, organic cereals grown on 170,000 ha, and an additional 100,000 ha dedicated to other arable crops such as oilseeds.

Vegetables occupy less than 2,000 ha, while orchards and vineyards account for 22,000 ha. Organic livestock farming comprises around 30,000 cattle, of which 16,000 dairy cows, nearly 30,000 sheep, 6,000 goats, and 370,000 poultry (Ministerie van Landbouw, 2026). Organic farming covers only 6.2% of total Romanian agricultural land (French Ministry of Economy, 2024), a figure well below the European average of 9,9% (Eurostat, 2021).

Over the past decades, consumption habits in Romania have shifted considerably, shaped by the expansion of modern retail, the growing availability of packaged and processed foods, and changing consumer perceptions of convenience, safety and price. This trend should be understood alongside the decline of informal provisioning practices and the growing role of supermarkets and discount retail in everyday food access (Voinea et al., 2019; Voinea et al., 2020; Huyge, 2019; Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature, 2025).

Figure 12: Total area under organic farming in ha in Romania (Eurostat, 2022)



That said, the data reveals a more encouraging underlying dynamic. A growing number of farmers are moving toward more sustainable practices, even without having yet obtained official organic certification (Eurostat, 2022). These farms in transition suggest an emerging shift in agricultural culture, one that could contribute to a broader and more structural transformation in the years to come.

I.4.3. Food processing and distribution: an important environmental footprint

Food processing : significant impact and a lack of local processing

Beyond production itself, the environmental footprint of the local food system is also shaped by the roles of other actors, including food processors and distributors. As mentioned earlier, the main sub-sectors of food processing in Romania concern the processing of meat, milk and dairy products, fish and seafood, fruits and vegetables, as well as bread (Huyge, 2019).

The food processing industry has experienced rapid national development in recent years (Huyge, 2019). However, processing activities contribute significantly to energy consumption (Romania is at 63% dependent on fossil energies (French Treasury, 2026), packaging waste, and transport-related emissions, thereby amplifying the overall impact of the food system (Smith et al., 2020). Regarding organic products specifically, Romania mainly exports organic raw materials such as grains, seeds, or other unprocessed agricultural goods, while importing certified organic finished products with higher added value. This situation highlights the lack of adequate processing infrastructure at the national level (Ministerie van Landbouw, 2026).

Food distribution: significant environmental impact and limited local supply on organic product

Much like processing activities, distribution activities contribute significantly to energy consumption, packaging waste, and transport-related emissions, further amplifying the overall impact of the food system (Smith et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, since 2010, larger retailers have begun incorporating organic stands, and several dedicated organic stores have opened across Romania, including in the Galați region. This reflects a growing awareness of organic food among both consumers and retailers.
However, the sector faces significant limitations. Despite the presence of 328 certified organic producers around Galați, only 20% of organic products available in local markets are of autochthonous origin (Galați Municipal Public Domain Inventory, 2026; Core Organic, 2016), meaning that the vast majority of organic products are imported, which carries a non-negligible environmental cost, particularly in terms of transport emissions.

As for local product retail outlets in Galați, no precise data could be identified on this matter, yet it can reasonably be assumed that the 19 agri-food markets present in the city constitute, at least in part, a supply channel for local products.

I.4.4. Food habits in Romania are highly contrasted

To assess the environmental sustainability of food consumption in Galați, this section focuses on three indicators: meat consumption, due to its high environmental footprint; organic product consumption, which can support more sustainable farming practices; and food waste, which reflects the loss of resources used throughout the food production chain.

Meat consumption maintains a high environmental footprint

Meat consumption in Romania stands at approximately 72.8 kg per capita per year (Team France Export, n.d.), a level that remains below the EU average of 82 kg per capita annually (OCDE-FAO, 2021). While this positions Romania as comparatively moderate in its reliance on animal-based diets, overall consumption levels still generate significant environmental pressure in terms of land use, water demand, and greenhouse gas emissions associated with livestock production.



Photo : Let's Food

Limited uptake of organic food

On the demand side, uptake is equally marginal: just 1% of Romanian consumers purchase organic food on a daily basis, even though the majority expresses a broadly positive attitude toward such products (Radu & Alexe, 2018). This gap between stated preferences and actual purchasing behaviour suggests that structural barriers, including price, availability, and limited consumer information, continue to impede the transition.

Food waste remains a major challenge

Romania generates around 2.5 million tonnes of food waste annually, equivalent to approximately 150 kg per person, placing the country among the higher food waste producers in Europe (Business Review, 2025).

At the local level, Galați County has invested in waste management infrastructure through the Integrated Waste Management System launched in 2019 with support from the European Investment Bank. The project improved separate waste collection, transport, sorting, composting and treatment capacities, including the creation of a composting plant and an integrated mechanical-biological treatment facility (European Investment Bank, n.d.).

However, these actions remain focused on general waste management rather than food waste specifically. They do not yet address key food system issues such as food waste prevention, surplus food redistribution, or the separate collection of organic waste from markets, households and public catering services.

Existing infrastructure nevertheless provides a foundation for future initiatives on bio-waste valorisation, composting and stronger cooperation between municipalities, markets, food businesses and local producers.

CONCLUSION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSION

Overall, the Galați food system continues to face significant environmental challenges. Intensive farming practices, high agrochemical inputs, limited adoption of organic methods and persistent food waste contribute to a considerable environmental footprint. At the same time, long supply chains, reliance on imported processed organic products and limited local processing capacity reduce the potential for a more sustainable and territorially rooted food system.

However, positive dynamics are emerging, including the growth of farms in transition and the development of local retail initiatives. These remain insufficiently coordinated to generate systemic change, highlighting the need for stronger cooperation between actors, targeted policy support and improved access to technical assistance.

Among the opportunities identified during the workshop organised by Let's Food in March 2026, digital tools such as augmented virtual reality and e-learning could help address current gaps in agricultural advisory services and support the transition towards more sustainable practices.

Figure 13: Issues and solutions trees, transcribed and produced during the study trip to Galați, April 2026



CONCLUSION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSION

Causes	Challenges	Solutions
Individualistic attitudes and limited collective engagement	Limited awareness of the consequences of ecosystem degradation and its long-term impacts on society	Develop immersive awareness tools (e.g. virtual reality, augmented reality and e-learning) to demonstrate ecosystem restoration
Too few demonstration projects showcasing sustainable practices		Promote environmental education from an early age through schools and community activities
Staff shortages and limited capacity in public and social care institutions		Support NGOs and local initiatives that engage citizens directly in environmental action
		Foster a culture of volunteering and community participation
		Encourage mindset and behaviour change through awareness campaigns and hands-on experiences

I.5. FOOD GOVERNANCE

Does the food system of Galați provide the information and conditions needed to foster social cohesion, trust, and citizen participation?

Food governance is an evolving coordination process rooted in a territory and centred on food as a multidimensional issue, involving a diversity of public and private actors operating at different scales with unequal resources (Dau, 2014).

It depends on the ability of local institutions to engage stakeholders, build trust, and integrate food into broader political priorities. This analysis focuses on three dimensions: the integration of sustainable food into the municipal agenda, the mobilisation of local actors and citizens around food and agriculture, and the extent of cooperation across territorial, national, and international levels. Together, these dimensions help assess whether conditions for inclusive and effective food governance are in place in the city.

I.5.1. The early stages of a food policy dynamic in Galați: a growing network of actors

Food policy in Romania is not organised as a single administrative competence. It is spread across agriculture, food safety, public health, social assistance, education, markets, waste, regional development, innovation, logistics and territorial planning. Galati's food strategy needs to connect several levels of governance.

Galați City Hall: Existing food-related levers hindered by a lack of dedicated coordination

Galați City Hall holds several concrete levers that could support a local food policy. The municipality directly manages 18 agri-food markets and a wholesale market, shaping relationships with both large and small local farmers (Meeting with local stakeholders, 2025).

It also promotes local agriculture through public events such as farmers' fairs and street food activities, although earlier formats like live cooking shows had limited impact, suggesting a need to rethink outreach and engagement methods (Meeting with local stakeholders, 2025).
In public catering, the municipality is only indirectly involved in elderly care meal provision through procurement processes, but some links already exist, such as social canteens occasionally using storage space from the Markets Department, indicating untapped potential between municipal infrastructure and food services (Meeting with local stakeholders, 2025).

However, a major structural limitation is the absence of dedicated staff responsible for coordinating food policy at city level, which prevents these levers from being integrated into a coherent strategy (Meeting with local stakeholders, 2025). A few cross-cutting roles exist within procurement and social services, but they remain limited in scope and coordination capacity.

Multistakeholder workshop held in Galati on April 2nd 2026 (photos : Let's Food)







Multi-level governance shaping Galați's food system beyond the municipal scale

Beyond the municipal level, Galați's food system is shaped by a wider set of institutional actors.

At the county level, agricultural competences are not held by the County Council but by the deconcentrated state agency Direcția Pentru Agricultură Județeană Galați (DAJ Galați), under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. It implements national agricultural policy locally, including land protection, land transactions oversight, technical support to farmers (notably for EU funding access), and agricultural data collection (DAJ Galați, n.d).

Galați is also part of the Sud-Est Development Region, a non-administrative planning framework covering six counties and managed by the South-East Regional Development Agency (ADR Sud-Est). It focuses on regional planning and EU funds management, but no specific food-related initiatives have been identified at this level (Developmentaid, n.d).

In Eurostat/NUTS terms, Galati belongs to Macroregion Two and to the Sud-Est NUTS 2 region. This is mainly a statistical and planning classification, not a food governance level. It can be mentioned to clarify the territorial context, but it should not be overinterpreted as an operational food-policy structure (Eurostat, 2026; ADR Sud-Est, n.d.).

More broadly, national agricultural, subsidy, and public health policies, along with EU frameworks such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Farm to Fork Strategy, strongly shape local food governance. These instruments operate mainly through top-down mechanisms, yet remain decisive in structuring the local policy space.

This architecture below shows that Galati cannot build a food strategy through one department alone. The municipality can coordinate, but many relevant levers are located at other levels. A local food governance platform would help connect these levels and translate them into practical actions.

Level	Main actors	Food-related role	Relevant topics for Galati
National	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Environment; National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (ANSVSA); Ministry of Development; national programmes	Defines legislation, CAP implementation, food safety rules, school meal programmes, social support, waste policy and public procurement conditions	Small farmers; producer organisations; food safety; school meals; healthy eating; public procurement; food waste; rural development; support for processing and aggregation
Regional	South-East Regional Development Agency (ADR Sud-Est); South-East Development Region; regional innovation and funding structures	Supports regional development priorities, EU-funded programmes, smart specialisation, SME support and regional investment	Agri-food innovation; processing capacity; logistics; links between Galati, Braila, Constanta, Tulcea, Buzau and Vrancea
County	Galati County Council; County Agricultural Directorate; public health and veterinary authorities; county school inspectorate; county waste management structures	Coordinates county-level services, agriculture, rural infrastructure, education actors, public health, veterinary control, waste and territorial cooperation	Matca producers; rural communes; roads and logistics; school meal implementation; bio-waste infrastructure; links between Galati municipality and surrounding production areas
Municipal	Galati City Hall; municipal departments; Galati Agri-food Markets Administration; social services; Galati Social Aid Canteen; local schools and public institutions	Acts on municipal markets, social services, urban planning, local facilities, public institutions, community engagement and local coordination	Food governance platform; municipal markets; wholesale market; local product visibility; food aid; public food services; food education; food waste prevention
Functional food territory	Galati municipality; neighbouring communes; Matca vegetable basin; local producers; traders; port and logistics actors; cross-border actors from Moldova and Ukraine	Not a formal administrative level, but essential for understanding real food flows, urban-rural relations and territorial supply chains	Regional supply flows; producer mapping; aggregation; cross-border trade; Food Hub functions; access to fresh and seasonal products
Civic and private actors	Galati Food Bank; charitable organisations; Dunarea de Jos University; schools; producer groups; small processors; retailers; restaurants; community actors	Implements or supports initiatives outside formal public policy structures, often through experimentation, partnerships or direct action	Food redistribution; producer visibility; school education; food safety education; CSR food donations; local product promotion; community mobilisation

Figure 14: Table of multi-level food governance architecture relevant to Galati

Private, civic and community food-related initiatives : still limited but relevant

- Galati Food Bank (Banca Regionala pentru Alimente Galati) A key local civic actor, part of the Romanian Food Banks network, working on food redistribution and food waste prevention by connecting food surpluses with vulnerable households through partner organisations.

- Romanian Food Banks Federation (Federatia Bancilor pentru Alimente din Romania) : Provides the national framework for food bank activities, offering guidance, procedures and knowledge-sharing opportunities for local actors such as the Galati Food Bank.

- Caritas Romania : A national charitable organisation supporting vulnerable groups. In Galați, it contributes to the wider social assistance ecosystem and could support food aid initiatives and partnerships.

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- Hilt Mentioned in relation to food aid distribution programmes. It can be considered part of the broader ecosystem of actors supporting households facing food insecurity.

- Comtim Romania : A private food-sector company potentially relevant through food donations, CSR actions or partnerships with food redistribution organisations.

- Piatamatca.ro **:** A digital initiative linked to the Matca vegetable basin, providing information on local products, prices and availability. It illustrates the potential for improving visibility and direct connections between producers and consumers.

- Producer cooperation and processing initiatives in Matca : Emerging initiatives aiming to better organise producers and process surplus vegetables, with potential to reduce food losses and strengthen links between production and urban demand.

- I Also Eat Healthily (Si eu mananc sanatos) **:** A school-based initiative at Dan Barbilian Secondary School promoting healthier eating habits among pupils and families, demonstrating the potential of food education partnerships.



- SafeConsume / Dunarea de Jos University of Galati : The university's participation in the SafeConsume project highlights local expertise in food safety, research and education that could support future food system initiatives.

- Food-related events and seasonal fairs : Local fairs and food events contribute to producer visibility, community engagement and awareness around local food, although they remain limited as policy tools.

- Local shops, processors and producer visibility platforms Initiatives such as Bacania Dasano, Bacania Covurlui, Zimbria, Fabricat in RO, Agrobrates Cooperative and ProduseLocale.eu could represent examples of short supply chains and local product promotion, pending further verification.

- Agricultural education, research and technical institutions : Institutions such as Liceul Tehnologic Nr. 1 Cudalbi and ICDEAPA / ASAS could support vocational training, ecological agriculture, producer support and applied research.

- SMID Galați and bio-waste infrastructure : The county waste management system provides a basis for future work on organic waste valorisation and composting, although it is not currently a food waste policy.

Overall, these initiatives show that Galati does not start from zero, but the civic and community food ecosystem remains fragmented. A first diagnostic step should be to map private, civic and community actors more systematically, including NGOs, producers, schools, food aid organisations, small processors, retailers, restaurants and informal short supply chains.

Supermarkets : passive in the Galati's local food system

Beyond these networks of stakeholders, it is worth noting the presence of actors whose weight in the food system is considerable, yet whose role in shaping food policy remains largely passive and not solicited by public authorities. With 70 supermarkets recorded across the city (Galați municipal public domain inventory, 2026), large-scale retail represents a dominant force in Galati's food landscape.

The prevalence of supermarkets shapes consumer habits and food access in ways that often run counter to the goals of local, sustainable food systems, yet this sector remains largely absent from policy dialogues and multi-stakeholder processes (Faliès & Hulot, 2022). Their economic power and influence over supply chains make them difficult to ignore, but equally difficult to integrate into a governance framework built around public interest and sustainability objectives (Billion, 2018) .



Photo : Let's Food

I.5.2. Galati's food policy in a multi-level cooperation framework

Beyond the city's boundaries, territorial, national, and international cooperation on food governance remains similarly underdeveloped. At the territorial level, no formal joint strategy or shared framework on food policy has been identified between the county council and the city of Galati. This lack of structured cooperation between the city and its county represents a missed opportunity to build a coherent and inclusive local food system. At the national level, agricultural and food policies fall primarily under the responsibility of the Romanian state, with the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union playing a central role (European Commission, n.d). Coordination between these national frameworks and the specific needs of the Galati metropolitan area seems to remain limited.

At the European and international level, Galati operates within general urban cooperation programmes. For example; the city is a signatory of the Green City Accord (GCA), a European initiative bringing together mayors committed to making cities cleaner and healthier. The initiative aims to improve quality of life across Europe and to accelerate the implementation of EU environmental legislation (Europea.eu, n.d.). International exchanges tend to gravitate towards broader themes such as climate, mobility, or energy, with food rarely occupying a central place.



I.5.3. The level of engagement among local stakeholders remains limited

The construction of food policies does not rely only on institutional decisions, it also depends on the capacity of public authorities to involve a wide range of actors in the policymaking process. In the case of Galati, the engagement and the participation of local stakeholders remains at its beginning.

In March 2026, a workshop organised by Let's Food, as part of the Erasmus+ EurofoodXchange project, offered another illustration of emerging participatory practices.
Structured around two complementary formats, the event combined a knowledge exchange session, covering governance models, coordination mechanisms and the transversal dimensions of food policy across climate, biodiversity, land use and social inclusion; with a World Café-style working group session. The latter gathered Romanian-speaking participants around four sustainability axes: food security and nutrition, socioeconomic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and food governance. This format enabled structured dialogue and the identification of priority actions in a collaborative setting.

This initiative demonstrates that Galati is beginning to experiment with participatory mechanisms on food-related issues.

CONCLUSION
OF THE FOOD GOVERNANCE DIMENSION

To conclude, Galați presents an emerging but highly fragmented picture of food governance. The city already relies on concrete assets, including municipal and wholesale markets, social food services, school programmes, university expertise, and a strong agricultural hinterland, particularly the Matca production area. A range of civic and private actors—such as food banks, charities, vocational schools, research institutions, and local producer initiatives—also contribute to the food system and offer potential entry points for action.

However, these elements have not yet been translated into a coherent food governance framework. No dedicated municipal structure is in place to coordinate food policy, and responsibilities remain dispersed across services. As a result, existing initiatives operate in isolation, with limited strategic articulation and uneven visibility across the territory.

Three main tensions can be identified. First, there is a gap between existing operational levers and institutional coordination, as available tools are not integrated into a shared food strategy. Second, civic and sectoral initiatives exist but remain weakly structured and insufficiently connected to municipal action. Third, multi-level governance remains largely top-down, with limited integration of regional, national, cross-border and European dynamics into local food planning.

Overall, Galați's food governance is characterised less by a lack of resources than by a lack of coordination capacity, which currently prevents existing assets from forming a coherent and inclusive urban food policy.

Figure 15: Issues and solutions trees, transcribed and produced during the study trip to Galați, April 2026

Causes	Challenges	Solutions
Public procurement prioritizes the lowest price over food quality	Public institutions face barriers to integrating quality, sustainability and local sourcing into public food procurement	Prioritize quality alongside price in public procurement criteria
Restrictive public procurement procedures limit flexibility		Strengthen collaboration between public institutions and food suppliers throughout the procurement process
Insufficient collaboration with food safety and oversight authorities		Facilitate dialogue between public authorities and local producers to support local sourcing in public procurement
Limited political support for sustainable food procurement		

Causes	Challenges	Solutions
Lack of formal coordination and governance mechanisms among food system stakeholders	Insufficient collaboration and dialogue among food system stakeholders and with citizens	Engage all relevant decision-makers and capitalize on institutional expertise
Limited opportunities and tools for citizen participation and stakeholder dialogue		Establish a Food Council or multi-stakeholder food policy working group

1.7. CONCLUSION OF THE FOOD SYSTEM ASSESSMENT

The assessment of Galați's food system highlights a set of interconnected structural challenges across nutritional, socio-economic, environmental, and governance dimensions, which together limit the emergence of a coherent and inclusive food system.

From a food security and nutrition perspective, access to healthy diets remains unequal and closely linked to socio-economic conditions. While food availability is ensured through a diversified retail system dominated by supermarkets, access to fresh and nutritious food is uneven, particularly for vulnerable households facing rising food costs. Diet-related health issues are increasing, and food aid plays an important role in meeting basic needs. At the same time, Galați remains embedded in an export-oriented agricultural model, where strong regional production capacity does not fully translate into local food supply.

Socio-economically, the food system is characterised by fragmentation and limited value creation. Agriculture combines small-scale subsistence farming with partial modernisation supported by the CAP, but remains constrained by low incomes, limited generational renewal, and unequal access to land and subsidies. Food processing is underdeveloped despite strong agricultural potential, while distribution is increasingly dominated by large retail chains, restricting opportunities for local producers. The wholesale market represents a potential asset but is not yet fully mobilised to strengthen short supply chains or local economic development.

Environmentally, the system reflects the impacts of intensive agriculture and consumption patterns with a relatively high ecological footprint. Meat consumption remains significant, while organic food remains marginal. Food processing and long supply chains contribute to environmental pressures, and food waste remains a persistent challenge. Although organic farming is gradually emerging, it remains limited compared to dominant production models.

Finally, food governance in Galați is still at an early stage. The municipality has several operational levers —markets, social food services, and procurement—but lacks dedicated coordination capacity, preventing the development of an integrated food strategy. Civic and private initiatives exist but remain fragmented and weakly connected to public action. Multi-level governance frameworks, while influential through national and European policies, remain largely top-down and weakly articulated with local dynamics, limiting their translation into place-based strategies.

Overall, Galați's food system is not primarily constrained by a lack of resources, but by a lack of integration across sectors and governance levels. Strengthening coordination between existing actors and linking current initiatives into a shared strategic framework would be key to improving food system performance and unlocking the city's potential for a more sustainable and inclusive transition.

1.3 _COMPARISON TABLE OF CITIES

Figure 16: Comparaison table of cities
(sources: Territoires Fertiles, Eurostat, INSEE, Rádlová et al., 2025)

	Prague, Czech Republic	Galati, Romania	Dijon Métropole, France	Grenoble Métropole, France
Inhabitants	1,397,880	216	260,376	433
Total area of the city	496 km²	246 km2	240 km²	546 km2
Risk of poverty rate (1)	11.7%	39.7% (region)	14%	20%
Are of agricole surface	40%	54,90%	42%	22%
Number of farms	69 community gardens + 14 farms	14,721 (county)	110	200
Total area of organic surfaces	1,30%	11.3% (county)	13,40%	18%
Number of full-time positions dedicated to food strategy within the local government	0	0	3	1

(1) The at-risk-of-poverty rate measures the share of people living in a household whose disposable income (after taxes and benefits, adjusted for household size) is below 60% of the national median income. This threshold is calculated separately for each country, so it represents a different amount of money in the Czech Republic, Romania, and France. This means the rate shows relative poverty within each national context, it cannot be directly compared in monetary terms across Prague, Galați, Dijon, and Grenoble (Eurostat, 2026)

2. GALATI FOOD STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION OF GALATI FOOD STRATEGY

Building on the food system assessment and the exchanges conducted throughout the EuroFoodXchange project, this first food strategy and action plan provides an initial framework for addressing the main challenges identified in Galați's food system. It translates the assessment findings and stakeholder discussions into five strategic objectives and a set of practical actions designed to improve food accessibility, strengthen local food value chains, better connect the city with surrounding agricultural areas, and enhance cooperation among food system actors.

As Galați develops its first local food strategy, this document should be understood as a starting point for collective action rather than as a final adopted municipal policy. The proposed actions aim to provide a realistic and progressive framework that can be discussed and refined with the City of Galați, the Agri-food Markets Administration, the Social Assistance Directorate, the County Agricultural Directorate, producers, civil society organisations and other local stakeholders. Their implementation will depend on the confirmation of political commitment, the identification of responsible actors and the mobilisation of available resources.

Galați already benefits from important assets to support a more sustainable food system, including municipal markets, a wholesale market, social food services, schools, food expertise within the university and a strong agricultural production area nearby, particularly around Matca. The strategy adopts a gradual and pragmatic approach, aiming to better connect these existing resources, strengthen cooperation among stakeholders and build the foundations for a long-term food policy.

The five strategic objectives of the Galați food strategy are:

1. Establish a legitimate coordination framework for food policy
2. Reinforce local and sustainable food value chains by connecting Galați with regional producers
3. Use municipal markets and the wholesale market as key food infrastructures
4. Improve food access through coordinated social and public food services
5. Build food education, consumer trust and food waste prevention



Photo : Let's Food

II.1. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: ESTABLISH A LEGITIMATE COORDINATION FRAMEWORK FOR FOOD POLICY

Context

Food-related responsibilities in Galați are currently spread across different institutions and departments, including markets, social services, schools, agriculture, food safety and waste management. Without a coordination mechanism, the strategy risks remaining a document without implementation.
The first step is therefore to designate a municipal focal point responsible for coordinating stakeholders, monitoring progress and facilitating decision-making. Rather than creating a new department, this approach aims to build on existing institutions and provide the strategy with a clear local anchor beyond the EuroFoodXchange project.

Goal

Create a recognised municipal arrangement able to coordinate the first actions of the food strategy.

Role of public authorities

Galati City Hall should validate the mandate, designate the focal point, and invite the relevant actors. The Agri-food Markets Administration and social services should be involved from the beginning because markets and food access are two of the most immediate areas of action.

Actions

1. 1.1. Designate a municipal food focal point.
2. 1.2. Create the Galati Food Working Group.
3. 1.3. Formalise a Galati Food Council after a pilot year.

II.1.1. DESIGNATE A MUNICIPAL FOOD FOCAL POINT

Objectives

Give the strategy a person or small team responsible for coordination.

Description

The focal point should keep the strategy alive between meetings. The role includes preparing agendas, circulating notes, updating the action list, following pilots, collecting basic indicators and keeping contact with partners. The role can be light at the beginning, but it must be official enough to create trust among local actors. The focal point is not expected to implement every action alone. Its main role is to connect departments and partners, ensure follow-up and prepare decisions for City Hall. This role can be part-time at first, but it should be formalised through a short written mandate.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Galati City Hall, through a designated municipal food focal point. The role could be hosted by, or work very closely with, the Galati Agri-food Markets Administration and the Social Assistance Directorate.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with :** External support can accompany the transition and help prepare the first working documents.

Implementation steps

1. Confirm political agreement for a food coordination role.
2. Identify the person or small team responsible.
3. Define a short mandate and reporting line and minimum time allocation.
4. Prepare a one-page coordination note explaining the focal point's role, the first actions to follow and the relationship with the Food Working Group.
5. Create a shared action file with partners, deadlines and indicators.
6. Review the role after six months and adjust the mandate if needed.

Approximate cost

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

Priority regarding the assessment

(1: low priority ; 5: high priority): 5

Monitoring indicators

- **Focal point designated.**
- **Mandate agreed.**
- **Shared action file created.**

Inspiring experiences

Inter-territorial food governance - Grenoble Alpes Métropole, France

The food strategy of the Grenoble region is an inter-territorial food policy framework bringing together nine territories.. With 1.8 full-time equivalent positions dedicated to coordination, it demonstrates that effective food governance can be built around a small but clearly mandated coordination capacity rather than a dedicated department.
More info : https://www.grenoblealpesmetropole.fr/219-le-projet-alimentaire-inter-territorial-pait.htm

II.1.2. CREATE THE GALATI FOOD WORKING GROUP

Objectives

Continue the workshop dynamic started in Galati and turn it into a regular operational working format.

Description

The Food Working Group should be the first coordination body of the strategy, bringing together key actors involved in its implementation: City Hall, the Agri-food Markets Administration, social services, the Food Bank, schools, the university, agriculture representatives, producers and market representatives. Its role is to monitor priority actions, identify barriers, clarify responsibilities and support municipal decision-making. During the first year, it can serve as the technical foundation for a future Food Council. A short mandate note should define its objectives, members, meeting frequency and expected outputs.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Municipal food focal point, with support from City Hall.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with:** Agri-food Markets Administration; Social Assistance Directorate; Food Bank; University **“Dunărea de Jos”; producers; schools; NGOs; County Agricultural Directorate; market representatives.**

Implementation steps

1. Prepare a list of 12 to 20 core members, ensuring a balance between public institutions, producers, civic actors and knowledge actors.
2. Prepare and circulate a one-page mandate note explaining the purpose of the group, its first-year priorities and the expected commitment from members.
3. Invite members with a clear explanation of the purpose: to support implementation of the food strategy, not to create an additional administrative burden
4. Agree on a simple meeting rhythm: short online meetings every month or every two months, and one in-person meeting every two to three months.
5. Use each meeting to follow one or two actions only, with a clear focus on responsibilities, barriers, resources needed and next steps.
6. Create temporary thematic sub-groups only where there is a concrete action to follow, for example producer mapping, social food access, market pilots or food education.
7. Produce short minutes after each meeting, including decisions taken, responsible actors, deadlines and next steps.
8. Prepare a short six-month progress note to be shared with City Hall and participating institutions.

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

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

Monitoring indicators

- **Working Group created.**
- **Number of meetings held during the first year.**
- **Number of institutions represented.**

Inspiring experiences

Good Food Participatory Council - Brussels-Capital Region, Belgium

The Good Food Participatory Council supports the implementation and monitoring of the Brussels Good Food Strategy by bringing together representatives from different parts of the food system. It provides advice to public authorities, facilitates exchanges between stakeholders and helps identify challenges, priorities and opportunities for action. The Council is complemented by open thematic working groups, allowing a broader range of actors to contribute to the strategy's development and implementation.
More information: https://goodfood.brussels/fr/content/le-conseil-participatif-good-food

II.1.3. FORMALISE A GALATI FOOD COUNCIL AFTER A PILOT YEAR

Objectives

Create a legitimate public space for food policy once the Working Group has tested its role and demonstrated its usefulness.

Description

After the first year, the Food Working Group could evolve into a Galați Food Council if the municipality confirms its relevance. The Council would have an advisory and coordination role: monitoring the strategy, discussing progress, identifying priorities and maintaining dialogue between food system stakeholders. Galați could structure its Food Council around four complementary levels:

- Municipal validation level, composed of City Hall and relevant municipal structures, responsible for confirming priorities, political support and feasible actions.
- Technical coordination level, led by the food focal point and the Food Working Group, responsible for preparing meetings, monitoring the action plan and collecting information.
- Thematic working groups, created when needed around specific priorities such as markets and producers, food access, schools and food education, or food waste prevention.
- Annual Food Council or public food forum, bringing together a wider group of stakeholders to share progress, discuss priorities and encourage broader participation.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Galati City Hall.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with: F**ood Working Group members; City Council representatives if relevant; Agri-food Markets Administration; Social Assistance Directorate; County Agricultural Directorate; University “Dunărea de Jos”; Food Bank; producer representatives; schools; NGOs; civic and private actors.

Implementation steps

1. Evaluate the Food Working Group after one year, based on meetings held, actions followed, participation and practical results.
2. Decide whether to formalise the process as a Galati Food Council or extend the Working Group mandate for another year.
3. Define the Council’s role, membership, meeting frequency and advisory function.
4. Clarify the relationship between the Food Council, the municipal food focal point, the Food Working Group and City Hall.
5. Organise one public meeting per year to present progress, discuss barriers and identify priorities for the following year.
6. Use the Council to prepare the next version of the action plan and identify funding or partnership opportunities.
7. Publish or share a short annual progress note with members and relevant municipal services.

Approximate cost (1: low cost ; 5: high cost): 2

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

Monitoring indicators

- **Food Council created or Working Group mandate extended.**
- **Membership and advisory role defined.**
- **Public annual meeting organised.**

Inspiring experiences

Gent en Garde Food Council - Ghent, Belgium

Ghent's Gent en Garde Food Council brought together around 30 representatives from agriculture, distribution and trade, restaurants, civil society and knowledge institutions. It gave advice to the city, acted as a sounding board and was involved in defining objectives and priorities.
More information: https://stad.gent/en/city-governance-organisation/city-policy/ghents-climate-actions/sustainable-food ; https://foodactioncities.org/case-studies/ghent-en-garde-food-policy-council/

II.2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: REINFORCE LOCAL AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD VALUE CHAINS BY CONNECTING GALATI WITH FARMERS FROM GALATI COUNTY AND THE MATCA AREA

Context

Galați is located near one of Romania's main vegetable production areas, particularly around Matca, a nationally recognised hub for tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and eggplants. According to the Galați County Directorate for Agriculture, vegetable cultivation represents an important economic activity, with 4,401 hectares of field and greenhouse vegetables recorded in 2025.

However, geographical proximity does not automatically create a local food system. A significant share of Matca's production is sold through wholesale channels, other Romanian markets or export flows. The challenge is therefore to better connect local production with local demand by improving links between producers and buyers, access to market information, aggregation, storage and logistics solutions. This objective focuses on strengthening local and sustainable value chains by identifying available production, infrastructure needs, potential local outlets and opportunities to better promote sustainable practices.

Goal

Make the regional production base more visible, better organised and easier to connect with Galati's municipal markets, wholesale market, restaurants, small retailers, food aid organisations, social services, schools and public institutions.

Role of public authorities

The municipality cannot organise the agricultural sector alone, but it can play a key convening and enabling role. City Hall and the Agri-food Markets Administration can support producer mapping, provide market infrastructure, facilitate contacts between producers and buyers, and test simple coordination tools. The County Agricultural Directorate, Galati County Council, producer representatives and Matca actors are essential partners for identifying producers, understanding constraints and preparing future aggregation, logistics or processing projects.

Actions

2.1. Map producers and urban buyers.
2.2. Test a simple direct-order and exchange tool for producers and buyers.
2.3. Support aggregation, cooperation and small processing.

II.2.1. MAP PRODUCERS AND URBAN BUYERS

Objectives

Identify producers, products, production practices, infrastructure needs and potential buyers in order to prepare practical links between regional supply and urban demand.

Description

The mapping should cover a realistic sample of producers from Matca and Galati County, as well as potential urban buyers in Galati: municipal markets, restaurants, small shops, food aid organisations, social services, schools and public institutions. It should not start as a large study. A simple but well-structured database is enough if it records products, approximate quantities, seasonality, current sales channels, delivery possibilities, infrastructure needs, interest in cooperation and basic information on production practices.
The mapping should also help distinguish between different kinds of producers and products. It should not only ask “who produces what?”, but also “under what conditions?”, “for which buyers?” and “what is needed to sell more in Galați?”. This ensures future actions consider not only local origin, but also quality, food safety and logistics.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Municipal food focal point and County Agricultural Directorate.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with:** Galati Agri-food Markets Administration; Matca producers; producer groups; restaurants; schools; social services; Food Bank; University “Dunărea de Jos” if methodological support is needed.

Implementation steps

1. Define the area to be mapped, starting with Matca and a limited number of other production areas in Galati County.
2. Define a sample of producers to interview or survey, for example 30 to 40 producers covering different sizes, products and sales channels.
3. Prepare a short producer questionnaire including products, quantities, seasons, current buyers, delivery capacity, infrastructure needs, production practices and interest in a direct-order pilot.
4. Distribute the questionnaire through the County Agricultural Directorate, producer representatives and market contacts, with follow-up phone calls where needed.
5. Identify existing buyers in Galati through the Agri-food Markets Administration, social services, Food Bank, schools, restaurants and small retailers.
6. Create a shared database that can be updated by the focal point or Food Working Group.
7. Organise one producer-buyer exchange session, in a speed-meeting format, to discuss potential distribution channels, logistical needs and pilot opportunities.
8. Use the results to select participants for Action 2.2 and infrastructure priorities for Action 2.3.

Approximate cost (1: low cost ; 5: high cost): 2

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

Monitoring indicators

- **Number of producers mapped.**
- **Number and type of buyers mapped.**
- **First matching opportunities identified.**

Inspiring experiences

Rouen Métropole Farmer & Food Actor Map – Rouen, France

As part of its Territorial Food Strategy (adopted in 2019), Rouen Métropole built an interactive map identifying local farmers, processors, retailers and school canteens, helping spot potential outlets and synergies between them. The tool shows crop types and locates available agricultural plots. It is paired with a statistics dashboard classifying farms by activity and product type, organic or "eco-challenge" commitments, and individual farm profile sheets, plus a dedicated organic-farming dashboard.
More information: https://smart-origin.com/2024/01/19/outils-cartographiques-en-appui-du-projet-alimentaire-territorial-de-rouen-metropole/

II.2.2. TEST A DIRECT-ORDER AND EXCHANGE TOOL FOR PRODUCERS AND BUYERS

Objectives

Create a simple mechanism for exchange and ordering between regional producers and urban buyers, without starting with a complex digital platform.

Description

The tool should start small. In the first phase it can be an online form, a shared spreadsheet, a simple catalogue updated weekly, or even a moderated WhatsApp/Facebook group if that is more accessible for producers. Producers indicate products, quantities, prices, quality information and delivery options. Buyers can express interest, place direct orders or prepare grouped orders where feasible.
The first users could be restaurants, small shops, the Food Bank, social services or municipal institutions. The tool should be tested only with producers and buyers who expressed interest during the mapping exercise, so that the pilot responds to real demand and not to an abstract platform idea.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Galati Agri-food Markets Administration, with the municipal food focal point.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with:** Matca producers; County Agricultural Directorate; restaurants; social services; Food Bank; small retailers; University “Dunărea de Jos” if technical support is needed.

Implementation steps

1. Use Action 2.1 to identify producers and buyers interested in a practical test.
2. Select 10 to 15 producers and 5 to 10 buyers for a first pilot.
3. Define product categories, ordering rules, quality information and communication channels.
4. Choose the simplest tool adapted to users: shared spreadsheet, online form, catalogue, WhatsApp/Facebook group or a combination of these.
5. Assign animation of the tool to the Agri-food Markets Administration or the municipal food focal point during the pilot phase.
6. Test the tool for eight to twelve weeks.
7. Evaluate orders, problems, prices, logistics, buyer satisfaction and producer feedback.

Approximate cost

(1: low cost ; 5: high cost): 2

Priority regarding the assessment

(1: low priority ; 5: high priority): 5

Monitoring indicators

- **Number of producers using the tool.**
- **Number of buyers using the tool.**
- **Number of orders or contacts generated.**

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 Nutrition Centre, launched Pantry, an unmanned pop-up store offering healthy, local and sustainable products. Customers access the store and pay through an app, while products are sourced directly from regional farmers, ensuring fair remuneration and supporting the local economy. By promoting short supply chains and increasing access to nutritious food, the initiative combines health, sustainability and innovation. More information : https://www.p2.nl/actueel/pop-up-foodstore-op-station-als-visitekaartje-voor-ede-en-ns/

II.2.3. SUPPORT AGGREGATION, COOPERATION AND SMALL FOOD PROCESSING

Objectives

Identify the infrastructure needed for producers to sell more regularly and retain more value locally.

Description

Many producers cannot reach stable buyers because they lack aggregation, cold storage, sorting, delivery, packaging or small processing. This action would identify the most urgent needs and prepare small projects that can later be funded through regional, national or European programmes.
This action should build directly on the mapping from Action 2.1. It should avoid starting with a pre-defined building or investment. The first step is to understand which functions are missing: collection, sorting, temporary storage, cold storage, washing, packaging, transport coordination, small processing or producer cooperation.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Food Working Group and County Agricultural Directorate.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with:** ADR Sud-Est; Galati County Council; producer groups; Matca actors; Agri-food Markets Administration; possible processors; University “Dunărea de Jos”.

Implementation steps

1. Use the producer mapping to identify infrastructure gaps.
2. Discuss needs with producers and market actors.
3. Identify existing spaces that could support aggregation, temporary storage or pilot logistics before proposing new investments.
4. Prepare one or two small project concepts, for example a shared storage pilot, a packaging/sorting service or a small processing feasibility study.
5. Explore funding through ADR Sud-Est, rural development or other programmes.

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

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

Monitoring indicators

- **Infrastructure needs identified.**
- **Project concept prepared.**
- **Funding opportunities identified.**

Inspiring experiences

ProDij and the metropolitan légumerie - Dijon Métropole, France

Dijon Métropole's ProDij food transition strategy includes a "légumerie", a vegetable preparation facility opened in 2023 to wash, peel, cut and package vegetables for collective catering.
More information: https://www.dijon-metropole.fr/projets/transition-alimentaire-prodij/

II.3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: USE MUNICIPAL MARKETS AND THE WHOLESALE MARKET AS FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE

Context

The Galati Agri-food Markets Administration manages a network of markets and micro-markets. The Calea Basarabiei wholesale market already concentrates important food flows. These places are commercial spaces, but they can also support producer visibility, consumer trust, aggregation, logistics, food donation and food education.

Goal

Use markets as practical tools for local food policy, not only as retail spaces.

Role of public authorities

The Agri-food Markets Administration can provide spaces, rules and operational knowledge. City Hall can give political support and connect market action with social, education and environmental priorities.

Actions

3.1. Improve producer visibility in municipal markets.
3.2. Test Food Hub functions at Calea Basarabiei.
3.3. Use markets for seasonal public activities.

II.3.1. IMPROVE PRODUCER VISIBILITY IN MUNICIPAL MARKETS

Objectives

Make it easier for consumers to identify producers, product origin and seasonal regional food.

Description

The action should start with one or two markets. It can test simple signage, producer cards, origin information and clearer distinction between producers and intermediaries. This is not only communication. It is a trust-building measure.
The system should remain simple and verifiable. It should avoid creating a label that the municipality cannot control. A first version could use producer cards, origin signs, seasonal product boards and clear information on whether the product is sold directly by a producer or through an intermediary

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Galati Agri-food Markets Administration.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with:** Market managers; producers; consumer representatives; County Agricultural Directorate; University “Dunărea de Jos” for food information support; City Hall communication team.

Implementation steps

1. Select one pilot market.
2. Identify producers willing to participate.
3. Define simple information categories: producer identity, commune/county of origin, seasonal product, direct sale or short chain.
4. Design simple signage and producer information.
5. Test the system for one season.
6. Collect feedback from consumers and sellers.
7. Decide whether to extend the system to other markets.

Approximate cost

(1: low cost ; 5: high cost) : 2

Priority regarding the assessment

(1: low priority ; 5: high priority) : 4

Monitoring indicators

- **Number of participating producers.**
- **Number of stalls with origin information.**

Inspiring experiences

Ici.C.Local on food markets - Lyon and other French municipalities

The Ici.C.Local approach uses coloured labels on market stalls to make local, seasonal and short-chain products visible to consumers. In Lyon, the system helps distinguish products sold directly by producers from local products sold through short supply chains.
More information: https://www.lyon.fr/vie-pratique/commerces-locaux/ici-c-local

II.3.2. TEST FOOD HUB FUNCTIONS AT CALEA BASARABIEI WHOLESALE MARKET

Objectives

Use the wholesale market to test coordination, aggregation and links between producers and buyers.

Description

The Food Hub pilot should be developed as a phased process to identify the functions most needed in Galați and the most suitable location. These functions may include product listing, grouped orders, temporary storage, logistics coordination, links with food donation and connections with public, social and private buyers.

The pilot should build on existing municipal assets, particularly market spaces managed by the Galați Agri-food Markets Administration. A feasibility assessment should evaluate available infrastructure, technical requirements and operating costs before considering new investments. Based on the results, the Food Hub could start as a light and modular facility, with potential future development depending on demand and feasibility.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Galati Agri-food Markets Administration.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with:** City Hall; producers; Food Bank; social services; restaurants; small retailers; County Agricultural Directorate; existing wholesalers and market operators.

Implementation steps

1. Assess available spaces and current flows in the wholesale market.
2. Organise a meeting with market actors, producers, buyers, Food Bank and social services to identify concrete needs and constraints.
3. Use results from Actions 2.1 and 2.2 to identify which Food Hub functions can be tested without major investment.
4. Select a small group of producers and buyers.
5. Run a pilot linked to the direct-order tool.
6. Evaluate costs, logistics and governance needs and possible investment requirements.
7. Prepare a short scale-up project concept if the pilot shows a need for infrastructure investment.

Approximate cost

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

Priority regarding the assessment

(1: low priority ; 5: high priority): 5

Monitoring indicators

- **Food Hub functions tested.**
- **Number of producers and buyers involved.**

Inspiring experiences

Foody Zero Waste Hub at the wholesale market - Milan, Italy

Milan's Foody Zero Waste Hub is located at the city's general wholesale market and organises the recovery of surplus fresh fruit and vegetables from market operators for redistribution to people facing food insecurity. It shows how a wholesale market can become more than a commercial site: it can also support logistics, food donation and coordination across the food system.
More information: https://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/projects/foody-zero-food-waste-hub-at-the-general-wholesale-market/

II.3.3. STRENGTHEN EXISTING FOOD EVENTS AND USE MARKETS FOR SEASONAL PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

Objectives

Make markets visible as places of local food culture, education, producer-consumer dialogue and public engagement.

Description

Markets can host seasonal activities such as producer days, tasting sessions, school visits, cooking demonstrations with seasonal products, and food waste prevention initiatives. These activities should aim to increase trust in local products, improve producer visibility, promote healthy eating and strengthen connections between consumers and food actors.

Building on existing food-related events in Galați, such as seasonal fairs, local farmer events and traditional cooking activities, the city could develop a small seasonal programme hosted in municipal markets and, where relevant, at the Calea Basarabiei wholesale market. Rather than creating isolated events, each activity should be linked to a clear objective, such as promoting local products, supporting food education or preventing food waste.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Agri-food Markets Administration and City Hall communication team.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with:** Schools; University "Dunărea de Jos"; producers; Food Bank; local NGOs; cultural actors.

Implementation steps

1. Prepare a yearly calendar linked to seasons.
2. Select 3 or 4 market-based activities
3. Connect each activity to one action of the food strategy.
4. Invite schools and local actors.
5. Evaluate participation and feedback.

Approximate cost (1: low cost ; 5: high cost): 2

Priority regarding the assessment (1: low priority ; 5: high priority): 3

Monitoring indicators

- **Number of activities organised.**
- **Number of participants.**
- **Number of producers involved.**

Inspiring experiences

“Manger comme on sème”, Festival des 4 saisons - Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole, France

Montpellier’s “Manger comme on sème – Festival des 4 saisons de l’alimentation durable et de l’agroécologie” offers a useful reference. The festival is not only a communication event: it is used as a practical tool to connect residents with local producers, markets, food education, agroecology and waste prevention. Activities take place in different locations, including markets, the wholesale market, farms and public spaces, with workshops, tastings, visits, debates and activities for families and schools.
More information : https://www.civam-occitanie.fr/Manger-comme-on-seme-le-festival-des-4-saisons

II.4.STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: IMPROVE FOOD ACCESS THROUGH COORDINATED SOCIAL AND PUBLIC FOOD SERVICES

Context

FFood access in Galați is supported by social services, charitable organisations, the Food Bank and the Social Aid Canteen. These actors play an essential role in supporting vulnerable groups.
A first step is to better understand the types of food support currently provided and identify opportunities to improve their diversity, freshness and nutritional quality. Particular attention should be given to increasing access to fresh and seasonal products, which can be difficult to integrate due to cost, storage and supply constraints.

Strengthening links between social services, food aid actors, municipal markets and local or regional producers could help improve food quality and support local supply chains, provided that practical issues related to procurement, food safety and logistics are addressed. This work should be coordinated through the Food Working Group and, in the future, the Food Council, to integrate food access into a broader approach combining health, dignity and sustainability.

Goal

Strengthen the quality, diversity and freshness of food provided through social and public food services, where feasible, by improving coordination with food aid actors, municipal markets and local or regional producers.

Role of public authorities

The Social Assistance Directorate and City Hall can coordinate needs, identify vulnerable groups, and connect social services with markets, the Food Bank and producers.

Actions

4.1. Map public and social food demand
4.2. Coordinate food aid actors and social services under the Food Working Group / Food Council
4.3. Test a fresh seasonal food pilot.

II.4.1. MAP PUBLIC AND SOCIAL FOOD DEMAND

Objectives

Understand who provides meals or food support in Galati and what they need.

Description

The mapping should include the Social Aid Canteen, social services, nurseries, extended-day kindergartens, homes for older people, institutions for people with disabilities, schools where relevant and food aid actors. It should look at meals, quantities, budgets, procurement, storage and delivery constraints. The mapping should also identify the types of food currently used or distributed, especially the balance between dry products, processed food, fresh fruit and vegetables, dairy, meat and prepared meals. This will help clarify where nutritional quality and freshness could be improved.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Social Assistance Directorate, with the municipal food focal point.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with:** Social Aid Canteen; Food Bank; schools; public institutions; City Hall procurement staff; Agri-food Markets Administration; University “Dunărea de Jos” if data support is needed.

Implementation steps

1. List public and social food services.
2. Collect basic information on meals, products, budgets
3. Identify procurement, storage and delivery constraintand current procurement or donation sources.
4. Use the coordination space created in Action 4.2 to identify needs and opportunities collectively with food aid and social actors.
5. Use Actions 2.1 and 2.2 to identify where fresh products could be introduced from local or regional sources.
6. Discuss findings with the Food Working Group and select one pilot opportunity.

Approximate cost (1: low cost ; 5: high cost): 2

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

Monitoring indicators

- **Number of services mapped.**
- **Meals or food support volumes estimated.**
- **Main product types identified.**

Inspiring experiences

Liverpool "Queen of Greens" mapping tool - Liverpool, UK

As part of the UK's new national food strategy led by Defra, a University of Liverpool research project (funded by UKRI/ESRC) is mapping social food demand by identifying social housing areas where residents have limited access to affordable fresh fruit and vegetables. The tool is designed to guide the route of a mobile greengrocer, the Queen of Greens (running since 2022), so it prioritises social housing residents furthest from healthy food options - one of six national projects using data to target action on local food inequalities.
More information: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-mapping-tool-launched-to-help-bring-healthy-food-to-those-who-need-it-most

II.4.2. COORDINATE FOOD AID ACTORS AND SOCIAL SERVICES UNDER THE FOOD WORKING GROUP / FOOD COUNCIL

Objectives

Improve information sharing between the Food Bank, social services, charitable actors and municipal structures, and make this coordination part of the wider food governance process..

Description

This action should create a small coordination group on food aid and vulnerable groups under the Food Working Group, and later under the Food Council if it is formalised. It should identify overlaps, unmet needs, donation flows, storage problems and opportunities to improve nutritional quality and access to fresh food.
The coordination group should not be a separate permanent institution. It should remain connected to the strategy so that food aid, social services, markets and producer links are discussed together.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead: Social Assistance Directorate.**
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with: Galati Food Bank; Social Aid Canteen; charitable organisations; schools; local NGOs; Agri-food Markets Administration and municipal food focal point..**

Implementation steps

1. Invite food aid and social actors to a first meeting under the Food Working Group.
2. Map existing food donation and food support flows.
3. Identify gaps ,unmet needs and practical problems.
4. Agree on a simple coordination routine and information-sharing method.
5. Prepare a short note for the Food Working Group, including possible links with markets, producers and food waste prevention actions.

Approximate cost

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

Priority regarding the assessment

(1: low priority ; 5: high priority): 5

Monitoring indicators

- **Number of actors participating.**
- **Main gaps identified.**
- **Joint actions prepared.**

Inspiring experiences

Limerick Food Partnership - Limerick, Ireland

Limerick Food Partnership (LFP) is a strategic collaboration between community, voluntary and statutory organisations, launched in December 2020. It coordinates food aid and social services, bringing together health, education, local government and community development actors. During the first COVID-19 lockdown, LFP played a central role coordinating food supply to homeless people and vulnerable families, delivering 8,427 food packages across the city and county. It remains a standing partnership and recently published a food insecurity study now informing new digital planning tools.
More information: https://www.limerick.ie/council/newsroom/news/limerick-food-partnership-conference-building-sustainable-food-futures

More information : https://www.vegemi.uk/

II.4.3. TEST A FRESH SEASONAL FOOD PILOT FOR ONE SOCIAL OR PUBLIC SERVICE

Objectives

Connect one social or public food service with fresh seasonal products from local or regional sources.

Description

The pilot should be limited and realistic: one institution, one or two product categories, one season. The aim is to test feasibility, cost, logistics, menu use and administrative constraints. This could involve the Social Aid Canteen, a nursery, a social service or another public facility.
The pilot should be selected using the results of Actions 2.1, 2.2, 4.1 and 4.2. It should test a real match between available seasonal products and a concrete social or public food need.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead: S**ocial Assistance Directorate and Food Working Group.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with:** Agri-food Markets Administration; producers; Food Bank; County Agricultural Directorate; public procurement staff.

Implementation steps

1. Select one service and one product category.
2. Identify producers or market sources using Actions 2.1 and 2.2 .
3. Check legal, procurement, storage and delivery conditions.
4. Test supply during one season.
5. Evaluate cost, quality, logistics and user feedback.

Approximate cost

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

Priority regarding the assessment

(1: low priority ; 5: high priority): 4

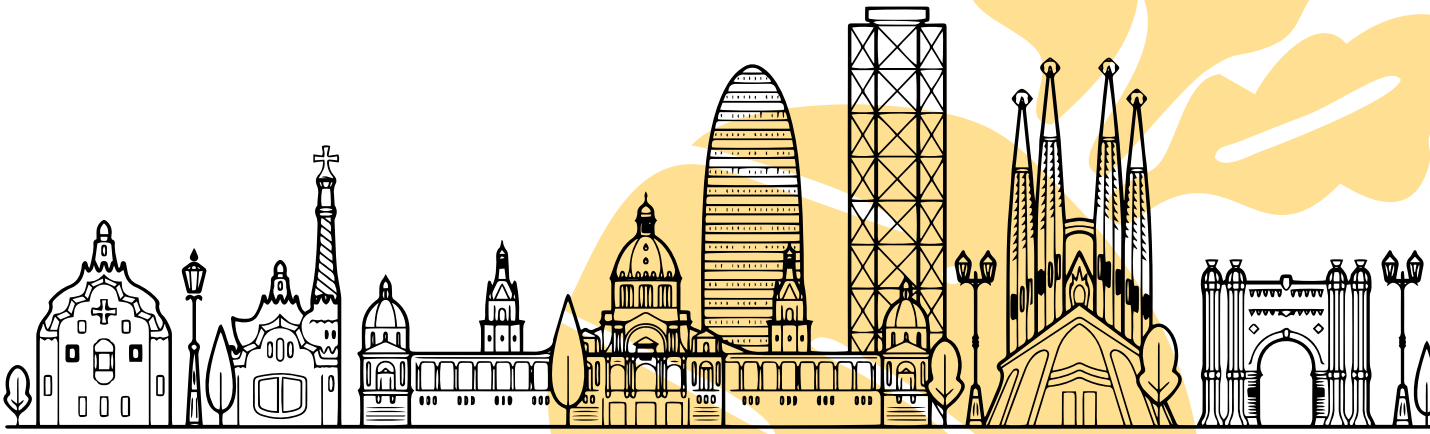
Monitoring indicators

- **Quantity of fresh products supplied.**
- **Cost and logistics documented.**
- **User feedback collected.**

Inspiring experiences

Healthy and sustainable school canteens - Mouans-Sartoux, France

Mouans-Sartoux shows the value of linking public meals with local production through a municipal farm and 100% organic school catering. Galati should not start at this scale, but the example is useful as a long-term reference. The first step in Galati should be a small feasibility pilot in one social or public food service.
More information: https://www.mouans-sartoux.net/la-ville/alimentation-durable/



II.5. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: BUILD FOOD EDUCATION, CONSUMER TRUST AND FOOD WASTE PREVENTION

Context

Consumer trust in Romania has been shaped by a long transition from informal provisioning and markets to supermarkets, packaging, brands and promotions. Rebuilding trust in local food requires education, origin information, clear institutional responsibilities on food safety, and practical experiences in markets, schools and public services.
This objective should not focus only on trust. The Galati assessment also highlights wider needs: food education, healthier eating habits, better understanding of seasonal food, and food waste prevention. These issues are connected. Markets can become places where residents learn who produces food, how to recognise seasonal products, how to reduce waste and why fresh local food matters.

Goal

Support food education , consumer trust and practical food waste prevention actions linked to schools, markets and community actors.

Role of public authorities

City Hall can connect schools, markets, the university and civic actors. The municipality does not need to run all activities, but it can give them visibility, coordination and continuity.

Actions

5.1. Start food education activities in schools and markets.
5.2. Clarify responsibilities on food safety information, origin transparency and consumer trust.
5.3. Test food waste prevention in one market or public service.

II.S.1. START FOOD EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOLS AND MARKETS

Objectives

Develop simple activities on healthy eating, seasonality, local products and food waste.

Description

The action should build on existing school initiatives and link them with municipal markets. Activities can include market and farm visits, seasonal product sessions, parent workshops and short classroom modules. Parents should be included where relevant, but not as a separate step. Their involvement can be integrated into school activities, market visits or communication materials.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** City Hall education liaison and local schools.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with:** Agri-food Markets Administration; University; producers; NGOs; school inspectorate.

Implementation steps

1. Identify two or three pilot schools.
2. Prepare short modules with teachers and partners, including where relevant a short activity or message for parents.
3. Organise one market visit, producer session or seasonal food workshop.
4. Link the activity to market-based actions, producer visibility or food waste prevention.
5. Review what can be replicated in other schools or markets.

Approximate cost

(1: low cost ; 5: high cost): 2

Priority regarding the assessment

(1: low priority ; 5: high priority): 4

Monitoring indicators

- **Number of schools involved.**
- **Number of pupils reached.**

Inspiring experiences

Vernetzungsstelle Kita - und Schulverpflegung Berlin - Berlin, Germany

Berlin runs a dedicated "networking office" (Vernetzungsstelle) supporting food education in schools alongside catering. All-day schools have legally mandated "lunch committees" bringing together school leadership, teachers, catering staff, students and parents to shape meal quality and food education. The office trains teachers through recurring workshops and provides cross-curricular materials, and ran the "Wo kommt Dein Essen her?" ("Where does your food come from?") project with Berlin primary schools to boost regional and organic food in meals while teaching children about food's ecological and social dimensions.
More information: vernetzungsstelle-berlin.de/projekt-schule/ernaehrungsbildung

II.S.2. CLARIFY RESPONSIBILITIES ON FOOD SAFETY INFORMATION, ORIGIN TRANSPARENCY AND CONSUMER TRUST

Objectives

Clarify which institutions are responsible for food safety controls, origin information and consumer trust, and identify how the university can provide technical support without replacing public authorities.

Description

The comment on this action raises an important distinction. If the issue is official food safety control, responsibility lies with competent public authorities and market administration, not with the university. If the issue is consumer trust, food literacy and better information, the university can act as a knowledge partner by helping prepare educational materials, basic training or monitoring tools.

This action should therefore clarify roles before launching activities. The Agri-food Markets Administration and relevant public authorities should lead on rules, verification and market information. The University “Dunărea de Jos” can support with food science expertise, educational content and methodological input, especially in connection with schools, markets and public food services.

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Agri-food Markets Administration and relevant public authorities responsible for food safety and market control.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with**: University “Dunărea de Jos”; schools; producers; Social Aid Canteen; Food Bank; City Hall; County Agricultural Directorate.

Implementation steps

1. Identify which institutions are responsible for food safety controls, market rules, origin information and consumer communication.
2. Clarify what can be addressed locally by markets and what belongs to county or national authorities.
3. Define a limited support role for the University “Dunărea de Jos”, focused on education, information materials and technical advice, not official control.
4. Prepare one simple information tool for markets or schools, for example a short guide on seasonality, origin information and safe handling of fresh products.
5. Test the tool in one market, school or social food service.
6. Include lessons learned in the Food Working Group monitoring note.

Approximate cost

(1: low cost ; 5: high cost): 2

Priority regarding the assessment

(1: low priority ; 5: high priority): 4

Monitoring indicators

- **Information tool produced.**
- **Number of actors trained or informed.**

II.S.2. TEST FOOD WASTE PREVENTION AND VALORISATION IN ONE MARKET OR PUBLIC SERVICE

Objectives

Move from general waste management to practical food waste prevention, redistribution where possible, and valorisation of unavoidable organic waste where collection exists.

Description

The pilot should focus on one place: a market, the Social Aid Canteen, a school or another public food service. It should first distinguish between avoidable food waste, edible surplus and unavoidable organic waste. Each category requires a different response: prevention through better planning, redistribution when food is still safe and edible, or separate collection and valorisation through composting or other organic waste treatment when appropriate.
The objective is pedagogical and practical. The pilot should show local actors how to measure food waste, understand why it happens and test one feasible response before expanding to other sites

Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders to lead:** Agri-food Markets Administration or Social Assistance Directorate, depending on the pilot site.
- **Potential stakeholders to collaborate with:** SMID Galati actors; Food Bank; schools; University “Dunărea de Jos”; waste operators; market vendors; NGOs.

Implementation steps

1. Select one pilot site.
2. Measure the type and quantity of food waste for a short period.
3. Classify what is avoidable, what is edible surplus and what is unavoidable organic waste.
4. Identify avoidable waste, donation, separate collection or valorisation possibilities.
5. Test one prevention or valorisation measure.
6. Evaluate and decide whether to repeat or expand the pilot.

Approximate cost

(1: low cost ; 5: high cost): 2

Priority regarding the assessment

(1: low priority ; 5: high priority): 4

Monitoring indicators

- **Quantity of food waste measured.**
- **Quantity reduced, redistributed or separately collected where possible.**

Inspiring experiences

Reducing food waste in school canteens - Lille Métropole, France

Lille Métropole supports municipalities in reducing food waste in school canteens through calls for applications and technical support. The approach encourages schools to measure waste, raise awareness among pupils and improve catering practices. For Galati, this is a relevant concrete example because it starts with measurement and practical changes rather than with general awareness only.
More information: https://www.lillemetropole.fr/actualites/cantines-scolaires-et-reduction-du-gaspillage-alimentaire-appel-candidatures

3. TOWARDS A MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The first implementation period should last 18 months. It should focus on setting up coordination, testing producer links and selecting a small number of pilots. A short monitoring table should be updated every six months by the food focal point and discussed with the Food Working Group.

Period	Main tasks
First 3 months	Designate the focal point; prepare the mandate note; confirm core partners; create the Food Working Group; select first actions.
Months 4-6	Map producers and buyers; map social/public food demand; select pilot markets and institutions; organise the first producer-buyer exchange session.
Months 7-12	Test the direct-order tool; test producer visibility in one market; launch food aid coordination; prepare education activities; select one waste prevention pilot.
Months 13-18	Evaluate pilots; decide on Food Council formalisation; prepare funding applications or project concepts for scale-up; update the action plan.

A simple monitoring note should include only what is useful: actions completed, actors involved, difficulties, costs, indicators and decisions needed. The note should be public or at least shared with partners once a year.

The monitoring framework should follow the same logic as the Prague report: a limited set of implementation indicators, combined with a few outcome indicators where data are available. It should remain simple at first and be coordinated by the focal point and the Food Working Group.

GLOBAL CONCLUSION

Galati has important assets for building a more sustainable and resilient local food system : municipal markets, a wholesale market, food aid actors, social food services, schools, a university with food expertise and a strong vegetable production area nearby, especially around Matca. These elements provide a realistic starting point for action.

At the same time, the strategy should not overstate the city's current capacity. Galati does not yet have a dedicated food policy team, a formal coordination space, a monitoring system or structured links between producers, markets, social services and public food demand. For this reason, the first priority is institutional and practical: designate a municipal food focal point, create a Food Working Group and test a small number of actions before moving towards a more formal Food Council.

The strategy also highlights a key territorial paradox. Galați County has strong agricultural potential and Matca is recognised as a major vegetable hub supplying domestic and export markets, yet this proximity does not automatically benefit Galati's public food services, social food actors or residents. Strengthening local value chains requires intermediary functions: producer and buyer mapping, clearer information on products and production practices, aggregation, storage, delivery, simple ordering tools and cooperation with market infrastructure.

Municipal markets and the wholesale market can play a central role in this process. They should be understood not only as retail spaces, but as public food infrastructure able to support producer visibility, consumer trust, local supply, food donation, education and waste prevention. Small pilots can help test what is feasible before larger investments are considered.

Food access remains a transversal priority. Social services, food aid actors and public food services already support vulnerable groups, but coordination can be improved and links with fresh, seasonal and locally available products should be tested carefully. The objective is not only to increase quantities of food, but also to improve dignity, quality, freshness and nutritional value where feasible.

Finally, food education, trust and waste prevention should be treated together. Reconnecting residents with markets and producers, clarifying origin information, involving schools and testing measurable waste prevention actions can help make the strategy visible to the public. If implemented gradually, the Galati Food Strategy can become a practical tool for connecting health, social inclusion, local economy, environmental responsibility and territorial cooperation.

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