URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EU

Food Partnership

Draft Action Plan

April 2025

Disclaimer:

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Definitions

An Action Plan is a document that (1) lists the specific Actions that need to be taken, as well as (2) the relationships between these Actions in order to achieve predefined goals in an integrated way. How the Actions complement and support each other to create synergy is an important part of the Action Plan.

General Definitions

Actions should address a real need, have real and visible impact and concern a larger number of Member States and cities. Actions should be new: no reiterated elements which have already been done, or which would be done anyway. Actions should be ready to be implemented: clear, detailed and feasible; a study or a working group or a network is not considered an Action.

Deadline refers to the moment where the Action should take place to be meaningful.
A deadline refers to a specific day and time.

Recommendations are meant to suggest good policies, good governance or good practices examples which could be used for inspiration. For instance, these can be projects that have already been implemented and that are considered successful. The aim of such recommendations is to encourage their mainstreaming (implementation at a wider scale) and transfer (implementation across more Member States and cities).

Targeted stakeholders/governance level is meant as the type of stakeholders or the level of governance (EU/ national/ local) to whom the Action is addressed, and where the results and outcomes of an Action should be implemented and used. To describe why a stakeholder/governance level should be involved means that the partnership evaluated the Action and reached the conclusion that an Action fits the purpose.

Action Leader is member of the UAEU Thematic Partnership who accepted to take the leading role in a certain group of members (of the Thematic Partnership) and guide them in the process of defining, drafting, developing and in the end implementing a specific Action of this Action Plan.

Timeline means a graphical representation of a period of time, on which important events are marked.

Definitions specific for the topic of the partnership

Food System embraces the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal (loss or waste) of food products that originate from agriculture (incl. livestock), forestry, fisheries, and food industries, and the broader economic, societal, and natural environments in which they are embedded (*FAO, 2018*) and the 'food system' is central in food policy and governance discourses as a response to the challenge of understanding the complexity around food *(De Schutter, 2020).*

Sustainable Food System is one that: provides and promotes safe, nutritious and healthy food of low environmental impact for all current and future EU citizens in a manner that itself also protects and restores the natural environment and its ecosystem services, is robust and resilient, economically dynamic, just and fair, and socially acceptable and inclusive. It does so without compromising the availability of nutritious and healthy food for people living outside the EU, nor impairing their natural environment (*SAPEA Report, 2020*).

Food System Transformation has been linked to the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda and refers to the objective of pursuing fundamental change of food systems, for instance, to aim for climate neutrality and achieving the SDGs. The Global Sustainable Development Report defined transformation as "a profound and intentional departure from business as usual" with the intentional departure being specified as "transformation toward sustainable development" (*United Nations, 2019*).

Food environment is the consumer interface with the food system that encompasses the availability, affordability, convenience, promotion and quality, and sustainability of foods and beverages in wild, cultivated, and built spaces that are influenced by the sociocultural and political environment and ecosystems within which they are embedded (*Downs et al. Report "Food systems, food environments and their drivers", 2020*).

Sustainability refers to the long-term ability of food systems to provide food security and nutrition in ways that do not compromise the economic, social and environmental foundations that create food security and nutrition for future generations (*FAO, 2022*).

Inclusive food systems Inclusive food systems reach, benefit, and empower all people, especially socially and economically disadvantaged individuals and groups in society. Inclusive food systems reach vulnerable people by way of reducing barriers that currently prevent them from participating in food system activities, for example, by enabling them to gain the skills needed to work within evolving food value chains. (*Global Food Policy Report, IFPRI, 2020*).

Food 2030 is the EU's research and innovation policy framework supporting the transition towards sustainable, healthy and inclusive food systems, that respect planetary boundaries, based on four pillars: nutrition, climate, circularity and communities.

Farm to Fork Strategy is at the heart of the European Green Deal aiming to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally friendly. It addresses comprehensively the challenges of sustainable

food systems and recognises the inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet. The strategy is also central to the Commission's agenda to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

EU Child Guarantee is an initiative of the European Commission which aims to ensure that the most vulnerable children in the European Union have access to healthcare, education, childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition, ultimately aiming to ensure progressive realisation of child's rights in Europe. Particularly relevant is the link with school meals programmes to ensure access to healthy and nutritious food.

EU School Scheme is an initiative of the European Commission that supports the distribution of milk, fruit & vegetables to millions of children, from nursery to secondary school, across the EU. It is applicable since 2017 and in 2022 the Commission has launched a review of this scheme as part of the Farm to Fork strategy.

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact MUFPP is an international agreement signed in 2015 among 280 cities from all over the world, committed "*to develop sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework, that minimize waste and conserve biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change*". It is composed by a preamble and a Framework for Action listing 37 recommended actions, clustered in 6 categories, here explained:

1. Governance The recommended actions falling into the "Governance category" are all those actions aimed at ensuring an enabling environment for effective action in cities, such as: to facilitate collaboration across city agencies and departments, to strengthen urban stakeholder participation, to identify, map and support local and grassroots initiatives, to develop or revise urban food policies and plans and to develop a disaster risk reduction strategy.

2. Sustainable Diets and Nutrition Cities that want to promote sustainable diets, better consumptions and nutrition can be inspired by the recommended actions falling into this category of the MUFPP, for example: to address non-communicable diseases associated with poor diets, to develop sustainable dietary guidelines for urban environment, to explore regulatory and voluntary instruments to promote sustainable diets in cities and public facilities, to commit to achieving universal access to safe drinking water in urban and peri-urban areas.

3. Social and economic Equity City leaders that want to address inequality and poverty related to food systems, can undertake different recommended actions of this MUFPP category, such as: to use forms of social protection systems such as cash and food transfers, food banks, community food kitchens, emergency food pantries etc. to provide access to healthy food for all citizens, to encourage and support social and solidarity activities, to promote networks and support grassroots activities, to promote participatory education, training and research.

4. Food Production The recommended actions falling into this category are all those actions aimed at strengthening sustainable food production, stressing the importance of rural-urban linkages, such as: to promote and strengthen urban and peri-urban sustainable food production, to apply an ecosystem approach to guide holistic and integrated land use planning and management enabling secure access to land for sustainable food production, to provide services to food producers in and around cities, to support short food chains, to improve waste and water management and reuse in agriculture.

5. Food Supply and Distribution There is a variety of actions and measures that can be adopted by cities that want to ensure a sustainable, safe, fair, continuous and efficient supply and distribution of food into and within cities. For example: to review and strengthen food control systems, to ensure seasonal and local food consumption by linking peri-urban and near rural areas transport and logistics, to develop sustainable public procurement and trade policy to facilitate short food supply chains, to support for municipal public markets, to support for municipal public markets.

6. Food Waste City leaders and policy makers that want to reduce food waste, as well as manage it in a more sustainable way, adopting a circular economy approach, can use the recommended actions of this category that lists down actions such as raising awareness of food waste, recovering and redistributing food, etc.

Whole School Food Approach (WSFA) is a method used to achieve a healthy and sustainable food culture in and around school meals. It is an evidence-based intervention that contributes to community-wide systemic change and positively affects education, sustainability, inequalities, communities and health. *(A Whole School Food Approach, SchoolFood4Change, 2022)*

Right to food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement. (*General Comment No. 12 of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*)

Food Justice is a holistic and structural view of the food system that sees healthy food as a human right and addresses structural barriers to that right

Food Security A situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Based on this definition, four food security dimensions can be identified: food availability, economic and physical access to food, food utilization, and stability over time (*FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE WORLD, FAO-Unicef-IFAD, 2020*)

Food supply chain encompasses all those activities that help ensure the delivery of finished products to the consumer from the primary producer. Such activities can include storage, transport and distribution, processing, wholesale, retail and consumption (*Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems, A report by The High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, 2014*)

Food Policy is the area of public policy concerning how food is produced, processed, distributed, and purchased. (*Drake University Agricultural Law Center, 2011*) Since this definition the concept has evolved, referring now to the wider range of actions, initiatives, societal issues linked to food systems and regulated by formal acts approved by public authorities.

Food Council (Food Policy Council, FPC) is a formalised or informal governance structure that brings together different stakeholders of the food system to diagnose and improve the local food environment.

Public Food Procurement relates to both the purchasing of (raw) food and the contracting out of catering services fully or in parts by public bodies. (*Public Procurement of Food for Health, EU Commission, 2017*)

Planning urban food systems consists of organising the food system in biophysical, spatial and functional terms, through a spatial planning exercise that allows for sustainable and resilient ways of supplying healthy and accessible food to a given city or city-region, including 3 phases: (i) definition of a strategy based on a vision for a given time horizon; (ii) definition of a strategic framework and action plan, which embody the objectives to be achieved and their operationalisation through interaction between the public, private, governmental and non-governmental sectors; (iii) integration of the guiding principles into territorial management instruments or other public policies, based on the articulation between policy, knowledge and action.

Food Resilience is the capacity over time of a food system and its units at multiple levels to provide sufficient, appropriate and accessible food to all, in the face of various and even unforeseen disturbances. This definition emphasizes the ability of food systems to adapt and sustain food security despite challenges or disruptions. (*Tendall et al. (2015). "Food system resilience: Defining the concept." Global Food Security, 6, 17–23.*)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objectives of the Partnership

The main objective of the Partnership is to foster coordination and collaboration among partners and food related initiatives, leveraging their combined efforts to drive transformative changes in food systems and position cities as catalysts for this change.

As stated in the Orientation Paper the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU) Partnership on Food operates based on core values that guide its activities. These values include maintaining a food system perspective, supporting multilevel governance and recognising food as a human right and a common good.

To promote sustainable and equitable food systems in Europe, the Partnership will address key themes such as food policy implementation, food related local public services, innovative fundings, public procurement, the use of public land for food sovereignty, health of soils and agriculture, rural-urban interdependencies, urban agriculture and farmers' markets, globalized supply chains. It emphasises the importance of localising food systems, incorporating all these dimensions in broader urban strategies to achieve sustainable and inclusive local food systems.

The vision this Partnership is willing to bring on is linked to the development of a policy shift on food systems. The change needed in the European policy landscape will be at the centre of the Food Partnership work, focusing on the definition of a policy domain dedicated to European food systems.
The actions outlined in the Action Plan translate the vision, values, and objectives of the Partnership into concrete steps. They are closely aligned with the key thematic areas of focus presented in the Orientation Paper.

Specifically, the Food Action Plan consists of seven complementary actions designed to drive the transformation of food systems through a systemic approach, with a particular emphasis on cities as key leaders in this process. It combines knowledge-sharing and capacity-building initiatives to support cities in developing, implementing, monitoring, and financing local food strategies. The Action Plan also advocates for an empowering EU framework for local food policies, ensuring cross-sectoral and multi-level policy alignment from the EU to the local level.

1.2 Governance of the Partnership

Figure: Part of the Members of the Partnership during the in-person meeting held in Milan (IT) on 21-22 Oct.2024

1.2.1 Coordinator(-s) of the Partnership

The UAEU Partnership on Food is coordinated by two urban authorities:
1. City of Milan
2. Metropolitan Area of Lisbon

1.2.3 Members of the Partnership

The UAEU Partnership on Food includes partners representing 2 national authorities, 10 urban authorities (including the two Coordinators), 2 European umbrella organisations, the European Commission represented by 6 DGs, as well as 6 other stakeholders. The full list of partners is presented below.

Table: List of Food Thematic Partnership members

National authorities	Urban authorities	Umbrella organisation	Other stakeholders	EU institutions
Food Systems Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture of Malta (MT)	City of Milan (IT)	Eurocities (BE)	Ellinogermaniki Agogi (EL)	EC - Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO)
French National Council for Food Resilience (CNRA) (FR)	Municipality of Mouans-Sartoux (FR)	ICLEI European Secretariat (DE)	University of Barcelona (ES)	EC - Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE)
	City of Ghent(BE)		AESOP Sustainable Food Planning (IT)	EC Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE)
	City of Zory(PL)		Metropolitan Area of Lisbon (PT)	EC Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI)
	City of Kranj(SL)		Metropolitan Area of Lille (FR)	EC DG Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD)
	City of Vantaa (FI)		Metropolitan area of Cagliari(IT)	EC Joint Research Centre (JRC)
	Dublin City Council (IR)		Brasov Metropolitan Agency (RO)	
	Municipality of Kristiansand (NO)			
	Environmental Studies Centre, Vitoria-Gasteiz City Council (ES)			

Figure: Food Partnership - Map of Members
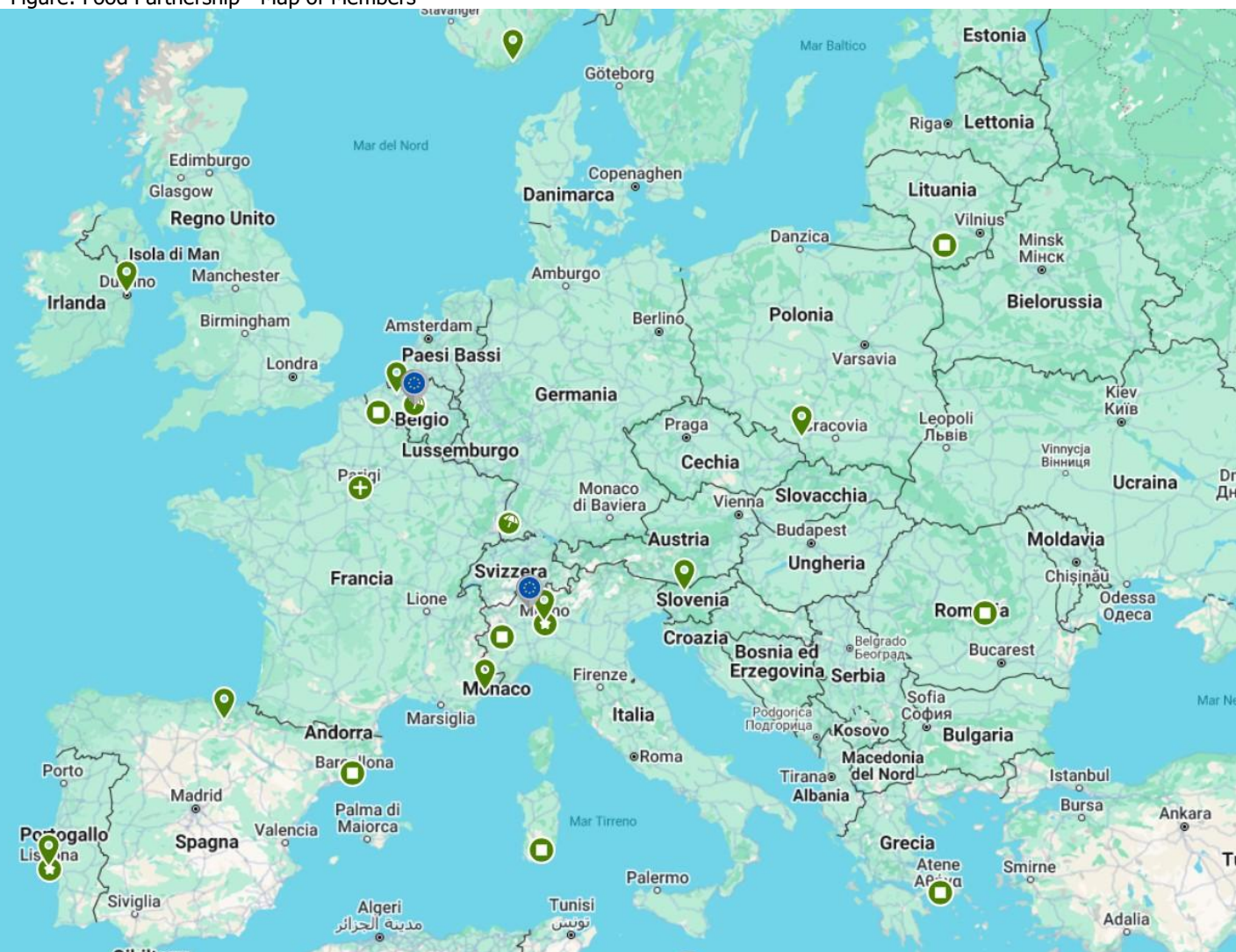
1.2.4 Working method, process and timeline of the Partnership in defining the Action Plan

The first six months of the Partnership, from January to June 2024, were dedicated to the Orientation Paper preparation, through an articulated process of brainstorming and narrowing down the topics of interest, starting with the analysis of the priority themes identified in the Food Ex-Ante Assessment. The final Orientation Paper was delivered in August 2024 and officially presented at the Urban Development Group meeting, held in Budapest on September 25, 2024.

Throughout the preparation of the Orientation Paper, Partnership members held multiple meetings, both online and in person:
- 1st Partnership meeting, online – 30 January 2024
- 2nd Partnership meeting, online – 21 February 2024
- 3rd Partnership meeting, in-person, Brussels (BE) – 7 March 2024
- 4th Partnership meeting, online – 25 March 2024
- 5th Partnership meeting, online – 16 April 2024
- 6th Partnership meeting, in-person, Liège (BE) – 28 May 2024
- 7th Partnership meeting, online – 26 June 2024
- 8th Partnership meeting, online – 9 July 2024

Following the completion of the Orientation Paper, the partners moved on to identifying and defining actions for the Draft Action Plan. A preliminary list of actions was established during the in-person meeting in Milan (IT) on 21-22 October 2024, and then further discussed and refined. The final list of actions was proposed and approved during the in-person meeting in Lille (FR) on 24-25 March 2025, as well as the last on-line meeting held on 7 April 2025.

Overall, during the second phase, which aimed to draft the Action Plan, the Partnership met a total of eight times, both in person and online:
- 9th Partnership meeting, online – 12 September 2024
- 10th Partnership meeting, in-person, Milan (IT) – 21/22 October 2024
- 11th Partnership meeting, online – 21 November 2024
- 12th Partnership meeting, online – 12 December 2024
- 13th Partnership meeting, online – 15 January 2025
- 14th Partnership meeting, online – 12 February 2024
- 15th Partnership meeting, in-person, Lille (FR) – 24/25 March 2025
- 8th Partnership meeting, online – 7 April 2025

The Partnership also organized three public webinars on November 21, December 12, and February 20.

The process related to the second phase is represented in the Food Timeline below.

FOOD Partnership
Timeline for drafting the Action Plan

Q3 2024		Q4 2024			Q1 2025			Q2 2025
Aug	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**March**	**Apr**

Phase 2
Stocktaking
1. Preliminary **identification of actions**
2. Definition of **objectives** and **deliverables** per action

Scoping Fiches

- Sept. 12 — Partnership Online Meeting
- Sep.25 — Orientation Paper to be presented in UDG (Budapest)
- Oct. 21-22 — TP in-person meeting (Milan)
- Oct. 23/24 — FYI 3rd Food Lab (Milan, organised URBACT & EUI)
- November 14 or 15 — UDG meeting
- Nov. 21 — Partnership online meeting + PUBLIC WEBINAR
- Dec. 12 — Partnership online meeting + PUBLIC WEBINAR

Phase 3
Selection of Actions and drafting the Action Plan
1. Finalise **selection of actions**
2. Draft Action Plan

Selection of Actions

- Jan. 15 — Partnership online meeting
- Feb. 13 — Partnership online meeting
- March 12-13 — UDG meeting Bydgoszcz State of play of the DRAFT Action Plan
- March 24-25 — Partnership in-person meeting LILLE — Finalise the Draft Action Plan
- April 1 (all day) — CALM meeting Brussels
- April 7 — Partnership online meeting
- April 24-25 — DGUM Warsaw — Draft Action Plan Presentation

1.2.5 Consultations carried out during the development of the Action Plan

As per due process, the Draft Action Plan will undergo public consultation from May 6 to June 6, 2025. The partners developed a set of draft questions that will be presented at the DGUM meeting in Warsaw on April 24-25, alongside the draft Action Plan.

Following the DGUM meeting, the draft Action Plan will be published on the UAEU website, and the public consultation will begin on May 6, 2025. Each partner will help identify stakeholders at various levels (local/regional, national, EU) who will be invited to participate in the consultation. Feedback gathered will be incorporated into the draft Action Plan, with the goal of delivering the final version by 15 July 2025.

2. ACTIONS

Overview table of Actions

N°	Title	Short Description
1	**ADVOCACY - Advocating for a EU framework for local food policies**	The action aims to develop policy recommendations based on the Partnership's work across various actions and based on feedback from European cities on the EC's Vision for Agriculture and Food. A policy document (statement or brief) will be published, and key messages will be shared at a final event in Brussels to engage EU institutions and hold them accountable.
2	**REGULATION - Showcasing the role of regional and national actors in supporting local food policies**	The action aims to provide a synthesis of inspiring models highlighting how regional and national actors, initiatives, or institutional frameworks (can) operate for collaborative governance, capacity building, and networking of local food policies. Key insights will be integrated in the policy recommendations of action 1.
3	**R&D - Building bridges and synergies between local authorities and relevant regional strategies**	The action aims to assess the role of local authorities in current regional programs (i.e. agrifood RIS3, S3s), as well as their potential involvement in shaping new relevant funding opportunities. The goal is to identify inspiring practices and develop a protocol or roadmap with recommendations to enhance synergies between local food strategies, urban agendas, and regional programs.
4	**FOOD POLICY - Urban Food Policy Training**	Starting from existing resources developed by the Food Trails Horizon 2020 project, the action will create an online and in-person training on how to set up and implement Local Food Policies for partner cities. The learning programme will also lead to the formulation of recommendations for local authorities to be shared at the EU level.
5	**LAND USE - Public Land for Local Food Policies**	The action will foresee the creation of an Interest Group on public land and use of such land for food sovereignty, health of soils and agriculture. It will develop knowledge sharing, advocacy and capacity building activities such as organising webinars for exchange of best-practices and policy briefs.
6	**INDICATORS - Selecting indicators for urban food systems**	The action aims to identify few common indicators to monitor urban food systems that can be widely used to track progress and compare conditions and trends across European cities. The goal is to discuss indicators with cities and EC stakeholders, and to propose one or a set of indicators on urban food systems to be introduced at the EU level- EUROSTAT.
7	**PROCUREMENT - Promoting sustainable Public Food Procurement**	The action seeks to clarify the Food Partnership's position on public food procurement, offering a position paper that includes key data, strong arguments, best practices, and recommendations. This will serve as a crucial resource for the Partnership's advocacy efforts. Additionally, it will develop relevant materials to be used for Action n.4 by gathering approaches from various contexts and projects.

Integration

The actions in the present document have a common goal: **to increase the power of cities in transforming food systems for sustainability, greater resilience, and equity**.

To do this, the multilevel governance and multi-stakeholder approaches were used, ensuring that the actions touch the main levels of food systems governance and that the partners in each action consider the complexity of actors as an overall target. These approaches are essential to creating systemic change, as they promote inclusive participation, shared accountability, and the alignment of local, regional, and national policies.

This collaborative framework enables cities to act not only as implementers but also as innovators and leaders in sustainable food system transformation.

The actions also start from concrete results and methodologies from several EU projects (Food Trails, SchoolFood4Change, Cleverfood) that ensure consistency among actions. This foundation of tested methodologies provides both a solid knowledge base and replicable tools that reduce fragmentation and increase the effectiveness of implementation.

Building on these EU-wide experiences also promotes mutual learning and scalability, empowering cities to contextualize and upscale proven practices in their unique local settings. By embedding communication strategies within each action—targeting both institutional stakeholders and the public—the initiative ensures transparency, fosters stakeholder engagement, and amplifies the visibility of results.

Below you can see a visual representation of the Food Action Plan and the key relationships between its actions.
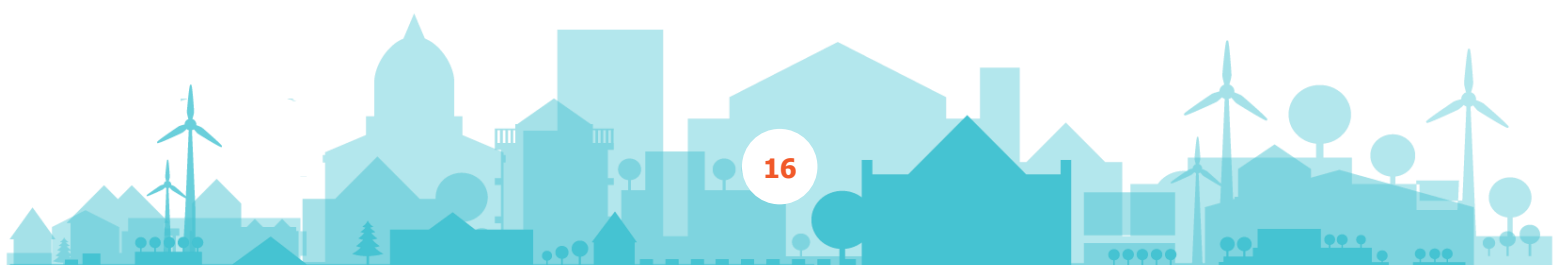
Food Partnership
Constellation of Actions

Action 1
ADVOCACY
Advocating for a EU framework for local food policies

Action 2
REGULATION
Showcasing the role of regional and national actors in supporting local food policies

Action 3
R&D
Building bridges between local authorities and relevant regional strategies

Action 4
FOOD POLICY
Urban Food Policy Training

Action 5
PUBLIC LAND
Public land for local food policies

Action 6
INDICATORS
Selecting indicators for urban food systems

Action 7
PROCUREMENT
Promoting Sustainable Food Procurement

BETTER REGULATION

BETTER FUNDING

BETTER KNOWLEDGE

supporting the implementation

providing content

providing content

providing content

providing content & supporting implementation

supporting the implementation

2.1 Action N° 01 – Advocating for a EU Framework for Local Food Policies

The action aims at formulating policy recommendations based on the Partnership's key results across the different actions and based on feedback from European cities on the EC Vision for Agriculture and Food. Recommendations will be included in a policy document (statement, brief) and disseminated, among others, through an exchange during a final event in Brussels reaching EU institutions and policy makers.

Targeted stakeholders/governance level:
EU Commission (decision-makers and officials of different Units touching upon food); European Parliament, European Committee of the Regions, European Economic and Social Committee, and other EU decision makers and political stakeholders

Deadline: Q4 2026 – Final event in Brussels

Intermediary deadlines:

* Q4 2025 - Collection of inputs from cities and the Partnership
* Q1 2026 - Draft policy document
* Q2 2026 - Endorsement and update
* Q3 2026 - Finalised policy output
* Q4 2026 – Final policy event in Brussels

2.1.1 Which of the three pillars is this Action contributing to?

Better regulation

The action recognises the lack of a proper EU level framework that enables, legitimates, and empowers local food actions. As such, it highlights key policy levers through which urban food agendas can be empowered and shows how cities can be better represented in EU food governance structures.

2.1.2. What is the specific problem this Action is aiming to address?

As it emerges from the Food Ex-Ante assessment and Orientation Paper, there is a lack of EU commitment to an integrated Food Policy that ensures cross-sectoral and multi-level policy coherence from the EU down to the local level – particularly the level of city-regions, addressed by this Partnership, while empowering local authorities to take effective action. This results in many inconsistencies between EU food policies and the EU research framework on food systems, and in barriers to fully realizing the potential of sustainable food systems, despite cities' growing commitment to food policy.

Action 1

2.1.3 Which existing EU policies, legislations or instruments are relevant for this Action?

The basis for this action is the newly launched "EU Vision for the Future of Agriculture and Food", which marks a shift from the Farm to Fork Strategy's food systems approach towards a focus on agricultural policy. The "EU Vision for the Future of Agriculture and Food" acknowledges the important role of local authorities play in shaping food environments and fostering dialogue on enhancing the affordability and availability of healthy, high-quality food. EU action-research frameworks such as Food2030 do contribute to activate territorial agendas on food systems. However, the risks are to generate further fragmentation and incoherence in absence of an overarching framework that targets real needs of cities.

2.1.4 Why is this Action needed?

The action is essential to pursue an evidence-based advocacy for an integrated EU policy framework that supports the local level, even more urgent given current political shifts. It is essential to provide clear and coherent messages to the EU and to have cities and cities' networks more integrated and powerfully represented in the EU food governance.

2.1.5 How will the Action be implemented?

Phase 1
Collection of policy recommendations emerging from the actions of the Urban Agenda Food Partnership, complemented with inputs from partner cities including ICLEI and Eurocities' membership.
Key output:
Set of recommendations
Timeline: from Summer 2025 to End 2025

Phase 2
Drafting of a policy statement based on inputs collected in phase 1 from cities and Partnership partners.
Key output:
Policy statement advocating for a role for cities in EU food systems decision-making and including recommendations resulting from other Partnership workstreams.
Timeline: from End 2025 to end of February 2026

Phase 3
Endorsement of the statement and update by cities outside the Partnership (Eurocities and ICLEI members).
Key output:
Finalised statement with policy recommendations
Timeline: from March 2026 to end-May 2026

Phase 4
Publication and dissemination of the statement outside the Partnership (EUROCITIES and ICLEI+ their networks).
Timeline: from June 2026 to September 2026

Phase 5
Organisation of a policy event in Brussels addressed to EU Institution representatives to share the Partnership's policy recommendations.

Key output:
An event in which partnership members and local authority representatives including political figures discuss key policy recommendations with EU stakeholders.
Timeline: from September 2026 to November 2026.

Action 1 - Timeline

ACTIVITIES	Q2 (2025)		Q3 (2025)		Q4 (2025)			Q1 (2026)			Q2 (2026)			Q3 (2026)			Q4 (2026)	
	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Phase 1 Collection of inputs from cities and the Partnership
- Collection of inputs from cities and the Partnership — 12/2025 — **Set of recommendations**

Phase 2 Draft policy statement
- Draft policy statement

Phase 3 Endorsement of statement and update
- Endorsement of the statement and update by cities outside the Partnership — 05/2026 — **Statement with policy recommendations**

Phase 4 Publication and dissemination of the statement
- Publication and dissemination of the statement outside the Partnership — To do

Phase 5 Final policy event in Brussels
- Organisation of a policy event in Brussels — 11/2026 — **Final event**

2.1.6 What resources are needed?

Action Leaders Eurocities and ICLEI will suffice to gather cities views, draft a communication/statement and organise the event in 2026, with the help of Partnership members. Additional financial resources will be identified to cover the event's costs (a possible link could be made with the Cleverfood resources for European roundtable, part of the advocacy tasks of the project and managed by Eurocities).

2.1.7 Are there any foreseen risks?

Key risks are:
- Challenges to find a suitable location for the event and to gather relevant EU stakeholders such as MEPs and EC members;
- Challenges to find the financial resources to cover the event's costs
- Challenges to synthesise various insights from Partnership members into an overarching and coherent set of recommendations;
- Accountability challenges in terms of how the results will be up taken by EU stakeholders;
- Unpredictable circumstances such as crises that may delay the completion of the action.

Modalities to address each of these challenges, in case needed, will be adopted as the action unfolds.

2.1.8 Which members of the UAEU Partnership will be involved in implementation of the Action?

Action leaders:
EUROCITIES and ICLEI

Contributors:
1. Environmental Studies Centre, Vitoria-Gasteiz
2. City of Milan
3. City of Kranj
4. Lille Metropole
5. Metropolitan Area of Cagliari
6. City of Mouans-Sartoux
7. MAFA (Malta)

Action N° 02 – Showcasing the Role of Regional and National actors in Supporting Local food Policies

The action aims to provide a synthesis of inspiring models highlighting how regional and national frameworks operate for collaborative governance, capacity building, and networking of local food policies. Drawing from the work of the CLEVERFOOD project, the action will update the understanding of the current environment of food policies.

Targeted stakeholders/governance level: EU Commission; National, Regional and Local authorities

Deadline: Q4 2026
Intermediate deadlines:

* Q2 2025 - Establishment of methodology and key steps

* Q4 2025 – Updated report and CLEVERFOOD conference

* Q1 2026 - Brief with inspiring practices, guidelines, and recommendations

* Q2 2026 - Dissemination through different channels

* Q4 2026 Final event (connection to Action 1)

2.2.1 Which of the three pillars is this Action contributing to?

Better knowledge Better regulation

The action will enhance knowledge and awareness about the important role of multi-level governance and the need for regional and national cooperation with local practices to support and upscale promising innovations emerging from the local level (i.e. the level of urban areas, tackled by this Partnership). Knowledge and awareness will provide the basis for shaping better policy initiatives, thus connecting with the pillar on 'better regulation'.

2.2.2 What is the specific problem this Action is aiming to address?

While numerous food actions and initiatives have been emerging from urban areas, there is a limited understanding of the role of intermediate levels, such as regional or national actors, networks, and policy framework in contributing to the food system change agenda (i.e. by empowering local authorities with funding or networking opportunities; by developing supporting policy or monitoring frameworks for food security; by providing incentives for school food programs, and so on). Looking at the role of these frameworks for the empowerment and support

Action 2

of urban food innovations and policies is therefore essential. Without an understanding on the role of different governance levels, local initiatives risk remaining disconnected and isolated niches.

2.2.3 Which existing EU policies, legislations or instruments are relevant for this Action?

This action speaks to EU frameworks such as the "EU Vision for the future of Agriculture and Food". It also addresses governing bodies and forum recently established by the EC, such as the European Board on Agriculture and Food (EBAF) as well as the Strategic Dialogue(s) on the Future of Agriculture. It also sheds light on national-regional level actors and initiatives active in different Member States (Italian Network on Local Food Policies; Italian Observatory on Local Food Policies; the Spanish Municipal Agro-ecology Network; Terres en Ville in France, etc.), and other relevant initiatives and actors, raising awareness on the necessity to build linkages between different levels for a more powerful and networked action.

2.2.4 Why is this Action needed?

Urban food actions (i.e. the range of local food policies, food strategies, actions, interventions, and initiatives tailored to improve the sustainability and equity of local food systems) have largely emerged because of the scarce commitment of national and higher-level authorities to the cause of food system change. Over time, these urban actions have developed, demonstrating a remarkable capacity to create governance innovations and, in the best cases, integrated local food governance between municipal and higher-level governance institutions. Yet, local action risks not exploiting its full potential if not empowered by supportive multi-level frameworks. For instance, municipal authorities enabling food security initiatives would benefit from the connection to policy frameworks at the national level; urban food strategies would be potentiated by turning them from informal and voluntary frameworks to legitimised policies with an empowering EU mandate. Food system action would be more effective if local initiatives and regional-national frameworks work in synergy. There is therefore a need for a territorially empowered and joint multi-level action (or, as stated, for an action which is 'locally embedded and globally engaged'). By showcasing how emerging practices work and the ways in which they can be further leveraged and empowered, the proposed action addresses this need.

2.2.5 How will the Action be implemented?

Phase 1
Establish a methodology and criteria to carry out the analysis of supportive regional-national framework emerging in Europe and connect with relevant platforms for synergies and dissemination actions (e.g. FutureFoodS and others).
Key output:
Methodology document
Timeline: from Spring 2025 to Summer 2025

Phase 2
Update of the report "Comparative analysis of existing urban food policies" published by the CLEVERFOOD project, with the aim of including the most recent updates coming from EU cities, regional and national frameworks, and launch at the project conference of CLEVERFOOD.
Key output:
Updated report "Comparative analysis of existing urban food policies"
Timeline: from Summer 2025 to End 2025

Phase 3
Develop inspiring cases and policy recommendations to integrate in the policy brief of Action 1.
Key output:
A document with guidelines and recommendations on collaborative governance, capacity building and networking (better regulations).
Timeline: from end 2025 to February 2026

Phase 4
Publication and dissemination of the report and statement outside the Partnership as well as in the final event.
Key outputs:
Dissemination materials
Timeline: from Spring 2026 to end 2026

Action 2 - Timeline

ACTIVITIES	Q2 (2025)		Q3 (2025)			Q4 (2025)			Q1 (2026)			Q2 (2026)			Q3 (2026)			Q4 (2026)		
	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Phase 1
Establish methodology and criteria

08/2025
Methodology and criteria to carry out the analysis of supportive regional-national framework emerging in Europe and connect with relevant platforms

Methodology document

Phase 2
Update the report of CleverFood project

Update the report on "Comparative analysis of existing urban food policies" of CleverFood project with most recent updates from cities

Phase 3
Inspiring cases and policy recommendations

02/2026
Develop inspiring cases, policy recomm. to integrate in the policy brief of action n°1

Guidelines and recommendations

Phase 4
Publication and dissemination

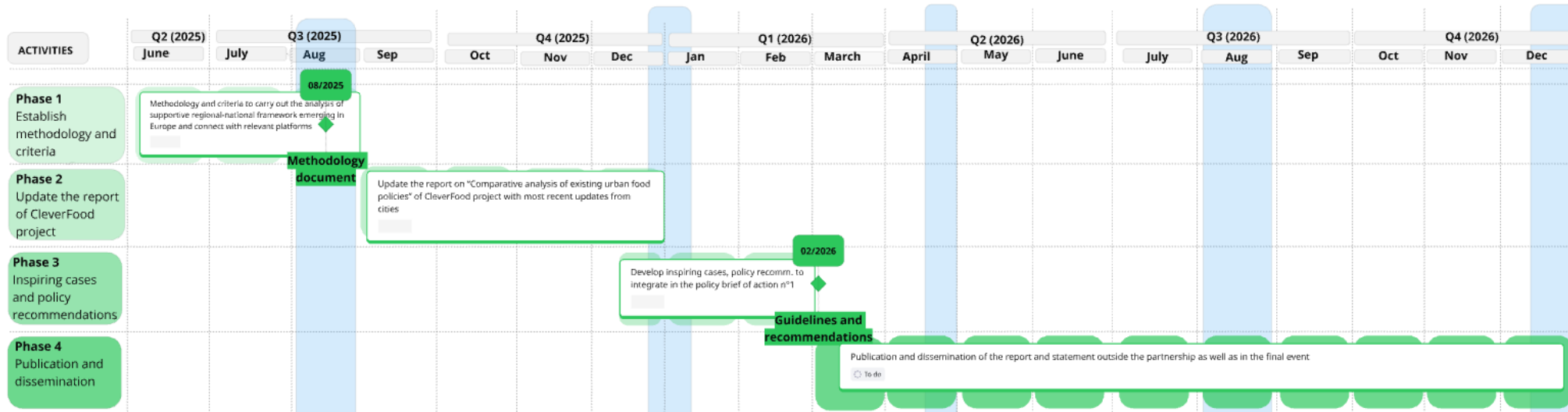Publication and dissemination of the report and statement outside the partnership as well as in the final event
To do

2.2.6 What resources are needed?

This action essentially needs dedicated human resources (2 to 3 leading individuals committed to agree on methodology, collect information through desk analysis and, potentially, pilot interviews, and to shape reporting and policy guidelines). These resources can be found within the Partnership with potential small share of external help. The action will also leverage existing knowledge produced by institutions such as the JRC, the University of Barcelona, the AESOP Sustainable Food Planning network.

2.2.7 Are there any foreseen risks?

Key risks are:
- Stakeholder misalignment or limited engagement;
- Insufficient data or access to updated policies;
- Coordination and communication challenges;
- Delays in deliverables could cascade and compress timelines later;
- Shifts in priorities at the EU, national, or local levels could affect the relevance or support for the work.

Modalities to address each of these challenges, in case needed, will be adopted as the action unfolds.

2.2.8 Which members of the UAEU Partnership are involved in implementation of the Action?

Action leaders:
City of Milan
AESOP Sustainable Food Planning
ICLEI

Contributors:
1. Eurocities
2. Environmental Studies Centre, Vitoria-Gasteiz
3. City of Mouans-Sartoux
4. University of Barcelona
5. Lille Metropole

Action N° 03 – Building Bridges between Local Authorities and Relevant Regional Strategies

Understand the (potential) role of local authorities in current regional agrifood related strategies and their implication in the definition of new regional programs. The action aims to assess the role of local authorities in relevant regional programs with a food system connection (i.e. agrifood S3), as well as their potential involvement in shaping future strategies. The final goal is to identify inspiring practices and develop a roadmap with recommendations to enhance synergies between local food strategies, urban agendas, and regional programs such as S3.

Targeted stakeholders/governance level:
EU Commission, regions (and the Committee of Regions), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, and Local authorities

Deadline: Q4 December 2026

Intermediary deadlines:

Q3/Q4 2025: Consultation and analysis
Q4 2025/ Q1 2026: Report and proposal
Q2 2026: Discussion
Q4 2026: Dissemination and presentation in Brussels

2.3.1 Which of the three pillars is this Action contributing to?

Better regulation   Better funding   Better knowledge

Better Knowledge: identifying gaps and ways to strengthen the links between cities and their hinterlands based on food.

Better Policy: align policies at local and regional levels to increase food security and the resilience of cities and villages, understanding mutual needs.

Better Funding: provide guidelines to allocate resources that strategizes food resilience.

Action 3

2.3.2 What is the specific problem this Action is aiming to address?

Although place-based approaches stress the importance of coordinated multi-level governance, in practice local governments have a very low profile in S3 and other relevant regional programs with high potential for making progress towards sustainable food systems. Vice versa local food strategies or Urban agendas are not connected to S3 and the regional level. Altogether it means that opportunities to reinforce resilient food systems are missed due to the disconnection between policies at different levels.

2.3.3 Which existing EU policies, legislations or instruments are relevant for this Action?

This action is strongly influenced by the new EU Vision for the Future of Agriculture and Food.
The Just Transition Fund and the Smart Specialization Strategy Initiative enable regions to size strengths as assets through a place-based approach has resulted in several Agrifood S3 that provide a foundation for learning and improvement. The S3 Community of Practice (CoP) Observatory can serve as a valuable resource, offering insights and support to enhance the effectiveness of these initiatives.
The European Climate Law and the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 are of special relevance when addressing the interaction between local authorities and regional programs.
Additionally, the signatories of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and the networks created around food within the URBACT program can play a significant role in fostering collaborative efforts and knowledge sharing in this area.

2.3.4 Why is this Action needed?

We need to better understand how to deal with the division of responsibilities and the complementarity of objectives at different scales. Achieving goals related to food security, climate, etc., requires coordinating the efforts of different levels of government. A recurring problem is working in silos, where departments within the same institution (e.g. cities) dealing with issues closely related to the food system (health, economic development, environment, etc.) do not work in a coordinated way. Potential synergies at the regional level are also lost. For example, we know that agriculture is not the responsibility of cities, but different urban policies would have a potentially significant impact on the viability of territorial agricultural systems. Meanwhile, the objectives of sustainable food systems in cities cannot be achieved without the involvement of territories.
All this leads to the conclusion that we need to better understand the spaces for interaction and synergies between policies and plans at different levels.

2.3.5 How will the Action be implemented?

Phase 1:
Consultation to cities and regions. Analysis of the role of cities in current agrifood strategies (Selection of case studies with different situations).
Analysis of food urban innovation networks, local food strategies/policies and how they deal with the territorial level (Selection of case studies with different situations)
Showcase good practices (based on deskwork and interviews)
Key output:
Report
Timeline: Q1 2026

Phase 2:
Feedback from cities, regions, networks and DGs and validating a shared vision on recommendations to the S3 and/or relevant regional strategies strengthening the role of local authorities in the process and on recommendations to local authorities to connecting their food strategies and Urban Agendas with S3 and regional strategies.
Key output:
Symposium or webinars
Training materials to feed Action 4
Explore an open data system to visualize overlapping policies/plans.
Timeline:
Q2 2026

Phase 3:
Documenting the design and decision-making process to build synergies between relevant regional strategies and local plans. Guidelines with recommendations to local authorities on connecting their food strategies and Urban Agendas with S3 and regional strategies.
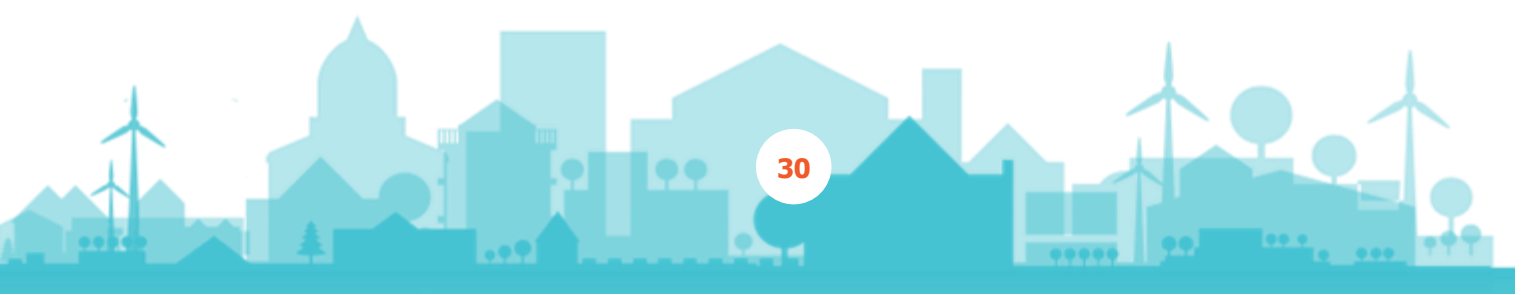*Key output:*
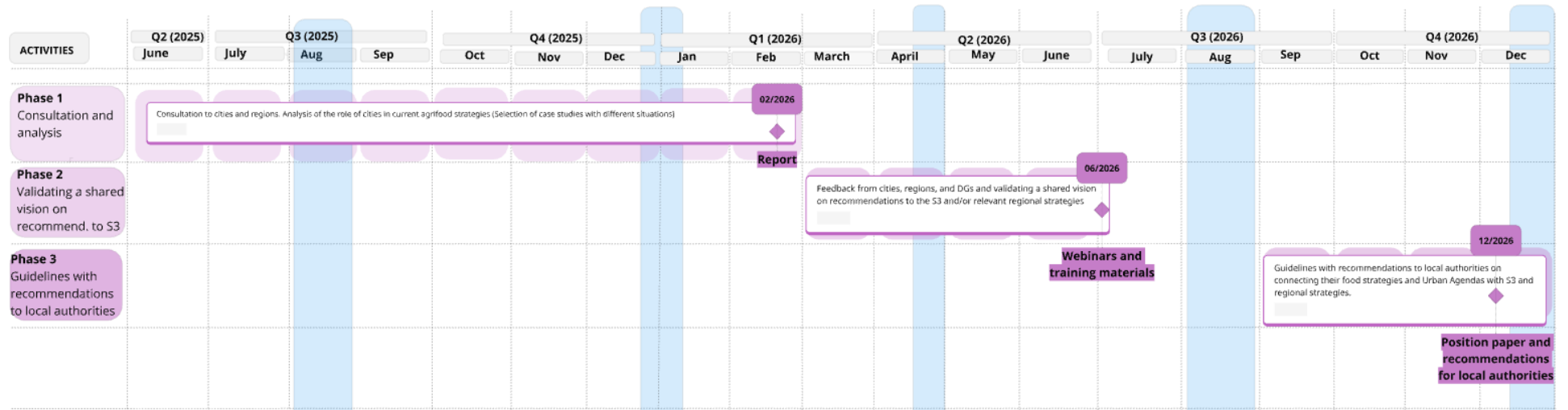Position Paper/Addendum for the new programming period
Recommendations for local authorities
Timeline:
Q4 2026

Action 3 - Timeline

ACTIVITIES	Q2 (2025)		Q3 (2025)		Q4 (2025)			Q1 (2026)				Q2 (2026)			Q3 (2026)			Q4 (2026)	
	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Phase 1
Consultation and analysis

Consultation to cities and regions. Analysis of the role of cities in current agrifood strategies (Selection of case studies with different situations)

02/2026

Report

Phase 2
Validating a shared vision on recommend. to S3

Feedback from cities, regions, and DGs and validating a shared vision on recommendations to the S3 and/or relevant regional strategies

06/2026

Webinars and training materials

Phase 3
Guidelines with recommendations to local authorities

Guidelines with recommendations to local authorities on connecting their food strategies and Urban Agendas with S3 and regional strategies.

12/2026

Position paper and recommendations for local authorities

2.3.6 What resources are needed?

This action essentially needs dedicated human resources which mostly can be found within the Partnership, although for specific tasks (especially for the first phase of analysis) an external support is needed.

Support in the interaction with cities – regions and communication support for online seminar invitations and other communication-dissemination activities would be also needed.

2.3.7 Are there any foreseen risks?

Key risks are:
- Stakeholder misalignment or limited engagement.
- Insufficient data or access to updated policies.
- Coordination and communication challenges.
- Delays in deliverables could cascade and compress timelines later.
- Shifts in priorities at the EU, national, or local levels could affect the relevance or support for the work.

2.3.8 Which members of the UAEU Partnership will be involved in implementation of the Action?

Action leader:
AESOP Sustainable Food Planning

Contributors:
3. City of Milan
4. Brasov Metropolitan Agency

Action N° 04 – Urban Food Policy Training

Starting from existing resources developed by the Food Trails Horizon 2020 project, the action will create an online and in-person training on how to set up and implement Local Food Policies for partner cities. The learning programme will also lead to the formulation of recommendations for local authorities to be shared at the EU level.

Targeted stakeholders/governance level:
EU Commission; Local authorities; urban-regional stakeholders

Deadline: Q4 2026 – Final event & training results

Intermediary deadlines:

- Q2 2025 – First Training Module
- Q4 2025 – Second Training Module and policy recommendations definition
- Q1 2026 – Third Training Module and first draft of the Handbook
- Q3 2026 – Presentation of the Training results (policy recommendations and Handbook) to the final event

2.4.1 Which of the three pillars is this Action contributing to?

Better regulation   Better funding   Better knowledge

Better Regulation: empowering local authorities to establish local food policies contribute to a wider reach of effective policies by the EU.

Better Funding: the action directly addresses better funding, by proposing the establishment of a food funding agenda, with the contribution of local, regional and national authorities and umbrella organisations.

Better Knowledge: increasing knowledge and awareness on actions at different levels and thus reducing knowledge gaps, and for the accent on monitoring.

2.4.2 What is the specific problem this Action is aiming to address?

By introducing standardised methodologies for setting up and implementing food policies, such training ensures that municipalities/local authorities, regardless of size or capacity, can build frameworks tailored to their communities. It also emphasizes the importance to engage diverse stakeholders and foster collaboration across sectors at local level. Without such a holistic approach, food initiatives may fall short of their potential impact. In addition to that, identifying relevant funding and financing

schemes available and making them accessible to cities is also key, given the lack of dedicated resources at national or subnational level.

Funding and financing must consider a systemic and integrated approach, the opportunity posed by more localised food systems, and the different roles cities, regions and national authorities can play in this context: from direct beneficiaries and project promoters in the case of public projects, to facilitators and promoters of food topics and innovation, or partners in public-private partnerships, co-creation or innovation processes.

2.4.5 Which existing EU policies, legislations or instruments are relevant for this Action?

The main existing EU frameworks to be taken into account in developing this action are: Food 2030 – strategic framework launched by DG RTD in 2015 that oriented Horizon fundings for cities, the "Visions for the future of Agriculture and Food" launched in 2025 as guiding document of the action of the European Commission for the current mandate, and EU Directive on Procurement and Directive on Food Waste, particularly relevant when dealing with thematic actions in local contexts.

2.4.6 Why is this Action needed?

Activating training opportunities on sustainable food systems is essential to empower more cities with the knowledge and tools needed to establish and implement local food policies. The action will meet learning needs of partner cities in the Food Partnership that currently lack the practical knowledge and strategic guidance to develop effective food policies.

Without support, they may struggle to design initiatives that are comprehensive, equitable, and aligned with evidence-based sustainability goals. Inadequate or fragmented policies often fail to address the challenges of food insecurity and environmental sustainability. The development of policy recommendation for fellow EU cities interested to follow a similar pathway will add key insights after the development of the action.

Additionally, as the demand for funding is increasing, cities need to be equipped to navigate complex funding and financing landscapes and build strong arguments to establish more dedicated funding streams. The action provides a significant foundation to bridge these gaps, ensuring that local food policies are impactful, inclusive, and eventually well-resourced.

2.4.7 How will the Action be implemented?

Phase 1
Elaboration with a core team of stakeholders of the training structure, selection of contents, coherent with the MUFPP Framework for Action, and involvement of external lecturers, either experts or cities with existing good practices.
Key output:
Programme of the training and logistic requirements
Timeline: from April 2025 to May 2025

Phase 2
Delivery of the first Training Module, based on the topics identified in Phase 1 and start of the urban food policy journey for partner cities.
Key output:

First Training Module
Timeline: June 2025

Phase 3
Delivery of the second Training Module, based on the topics identified in Phase 1, workshop on the level of advancement of the urban food policy journey for partner cities and preliminary definition of the policy recommendations coming from cities on the topic.
Key output:
Second Training Module and preliminary list of policy recommendations
Timeline: from October 2025 to December 2025

Phase 4
Delivery of the third Training Module, based on the topics identified in Phase 1, collection of input for the development of the Handbook and workshop on the level of advancement of the urban food policy journey for partner cities.
Key output:
Third Training Module and Handbook on resourcing local food policies and strategies
Timeline: from February 2026 to April 2026

Phase 5
Presentation of the results of the training to the public and networks of cities (MUFPP, Eurocities, ICLEI), through the final event developed under Action 1 and dissemination channels.
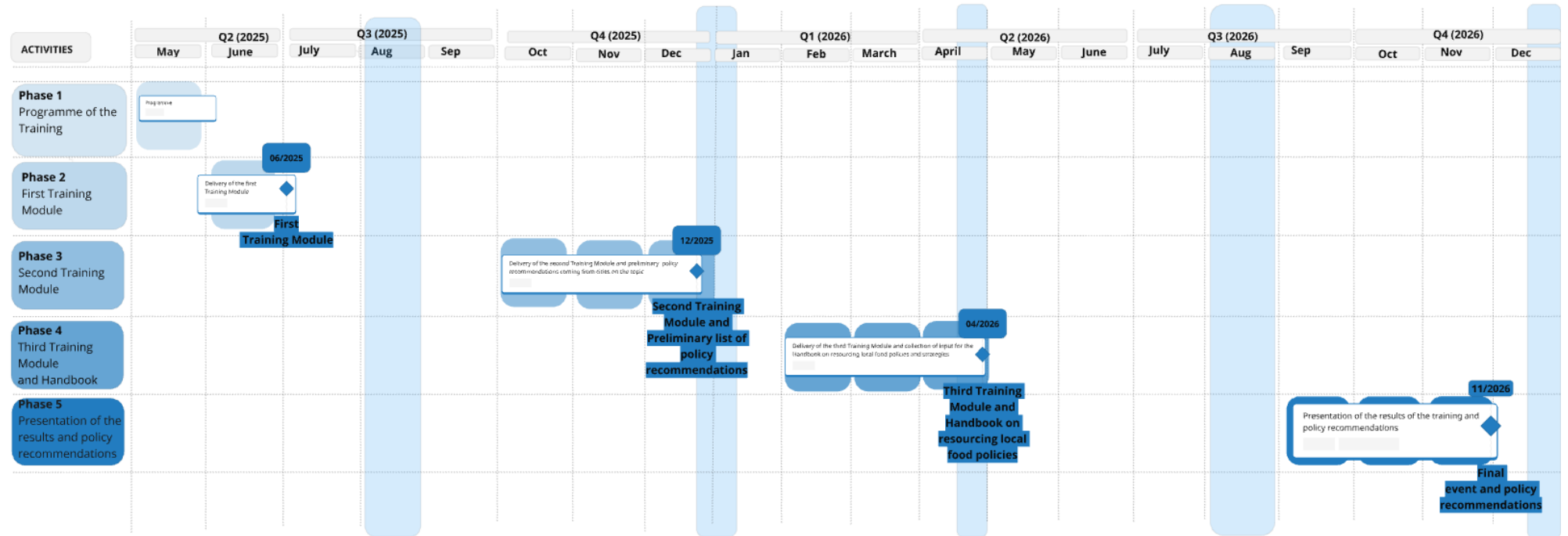**Key output:**
Final version of Policy recommendations and Handbook on resourcing local food policies and strategies
Timeline: from September 2026 to December 2026

Action 4 - Timeline

ACTIVITIES	Q2 (2025)		Q3 (2025)			Q4 (2025)			Q1 (2026)			Q2 (2026)			Q3 (2026)			Q4 (2026)		
	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Phase 1
Programme of the Training

Programme

Phase 2
First Training Module

06/2025

Delivery of the first Training Module

First Training Module

Phase 3
Second Training Module

12/2025

Delivery of the second Training Module and preliminary policy recommendations coming from cities on the topic

Second Training Module and Preliminary list of policy recommendations

Phase 4
Third Training Module and Handbook

04/2026

Delivery of the third Training Module and collection of input for the Handbook on resourcing local food policies and strategies

Third Training Module and Handbook on resourcing local food policies

Phase 5
Presentation of the results and policy recommendations

11/2026

Presentation of the results of the training and policy recommendations

Final event and policy recommendations

2.4.8 What resources are needed?

Being the action one of the most participated in the Action Plan, the establishment of a training and the development of the two key outputs (policy recommendations and Handbook on resourcing local food policies and strategies) will require a collaborative effort.

The City of Milan, based on knowledge developed under the Food Trails project, will coordinate the logistics and involvement of "lecturers" for the sessions, among which some of the contributing partners will be stakeholders of the Partnership. Eurocities and ICLEI will support the definition of policy recommendations. The Brasov Metropolitan Agency will lead the work aimed at developing and launching the Handbook.

Additional expertise will be needed based on the Phase 1 identification of topics and for the preparation of the Handbook.

2.4.9 Are there any foreseen risks?

Key risks are:
- Generic approach passing the message that one kind of solution can be adopted without adaptation to specific contexts;
- Insufficient follow-up support for participants;
- Limited resources both human and economic to follow through for cities;
- Delays in the implementation of the training;
- Reduced quality of the outputs due to lack of contribution by partners.

Modalities to address each of these challenges, in case needed, will be adopted as the action unfolds.

2.4.10 Which members of the UAEU Partnership are involved in implementation of the Action?

Action leader:
City of Milan

Contributors:
1. AESOP-SFP
2. Eurocities
3. Brasov Metropolitan Agency
4. City of Vantaa
5. Environmental Studies Centre, Vitoria-Gasteiz
6. Dublin City Council
7. City of Mouans-Sartoux
8. Ellinogermaniki Agogi
9. City of Ghent
10. ICLEI
11. City of Kranj
12. City of Kristiansand
13. City of Zory
14. Lisbon Metropolitan Area (Municipality of Setùbal)
15. Cagliari Metropolitan Area
16. CNRA

Action N° 05 – Public Land for Local Food Policies

The action will foresee the creation of an Interest Group on public land and use of such land for food sovereignty, health of soils and agriculture. It will essentially develop knowledge sharing internally, advocacy and capacity building activities such as organising webinars for exchange of best-practices and policy briefs.

Targeted stakeholders/governance level:
EU Commission; Local authorities; urban-regional stakeholders

Deadline: Q4 2026

Intermediary deadlines:
- Q1 2026 – Internal meeting UAP Food to set up the IG Public Land
- Q1 2026 – First online meeting IG Public Land with presentation and Q&A
- Q2 2026 – Second online meeting IG Public Land with presentation and Q&A
- Q3 2026 – Third online meeting IG Public Land with presentation and Q&A
- Q4 2026 – Fourth online meeting IG Public Land with presentation and Q&A

2.5.1 Which of the three pillars is this Action contributing to?

Better regulation   **Better knowledge**

Better Knowledge: increasing knowledge and awareness on actions at different levels and thus reducing knowledge gaps, and for the accent on monitoring.

Better Regulation: taking all the important levels into account contributes to shape more powerful and effective policies by the EU.

2.5.2 What is the specific problem this Action is aiming to address?

The core issue this action aims to address is that of access to land for sustainable food systems. Although a paramount resource for food and agriculture, land in Europe is both becoming a less accessible and increasingly degraded. In Europe, 3% of farms control 50% of farmland while the remaining 80% of farms own only 12% of farmland (EP 2017). Between 2005 and 2020, the EU has lost 36% of farms, which corresponds to 5.3 million farms, the vast majority of which were small-farms or less than 5ha (Eurostat 2022). Urban sprawling is another cause for agricultural land reduction and land artificialisation, which is hindering on the development of more local and resilient food systems (EEA Report 2016). Additionally, the lack of land for urban agriculture is also hindering the potentialities of community-led initiatives in promoting food literacy, food security, and solidarity economy. Local governments can play a role in addressing this issue through their sustainable management of public land. Yet, many lack the awareness, knowledge and skills to deploy land management capable of favouring fair and sustainable food systems.

Action 5

2.5.3 Which existing EU policies, legislations or instruments are relevant for this Action?

First, the **Common Agricultural Policy** (CAP) impacts the access to and use of agricultural land. The **Strategic Dialogue Report** represents a key document stressing the importance of access to land and soil health, which has resulted from a long and participated dialogue where several food systems stakeholders, sometimes with divergent views, have agreed upon. In addition to this, the recently published **Vision for the Future of Agriculture and Food** acknowledges the issue of access to land and has proposed the launching of the EU Land Observatory. On top of this, there is the Research Paper by the Belgian Presidency on **The Impact of EU Regulations and Policies on Land Use in Cities** and the still actual **land directive proposal** by the European Coordination La Via Campesina (ECVS) and the valuable work of the **Access to Land Network** that has been raising research, raising awareness and advocating on the matter for a long time.

2.5.4 Why is this Action needed?

Local governments have great potential when it comes to addressing access to land, bridging the urban-rural divide, supporting local food systems and improving the food environment in urban areas. This power derives from the – direct and indirect – control they can exercise over public land, be it within densely inhabited urban areas or in the rural surrounding the cities. However, most local governments remain unaware of the several possibilities linked to public land, what kind of actions can a local government take and the untapped potential of some of them. For this reason, it is it is crucial to address the issue by creating an interest group of local authorities curious to discover how public land can be harnessed for improving fair and sustainable food systems.

2.5.6 How will the Action be implemented?

Phase 1
Setting up of the Interest Group on Public Land and identification of the participating parties, both internal and external to the Partnership.
Key output:
List of participants to the Interest Group, timeline of the meetings (4 over a span of 12 months)
Timeline: from January 2026 to March 2026

Phase 2
Establishment of the Interest Group, with the first three interactive meetings, during which the main outputs will be identified between policy briefs or best practices repository, as well as knowledge exchange among participants and public webinars to present the work to a general audience.
Key output:
Policy brief and/or best practices repository
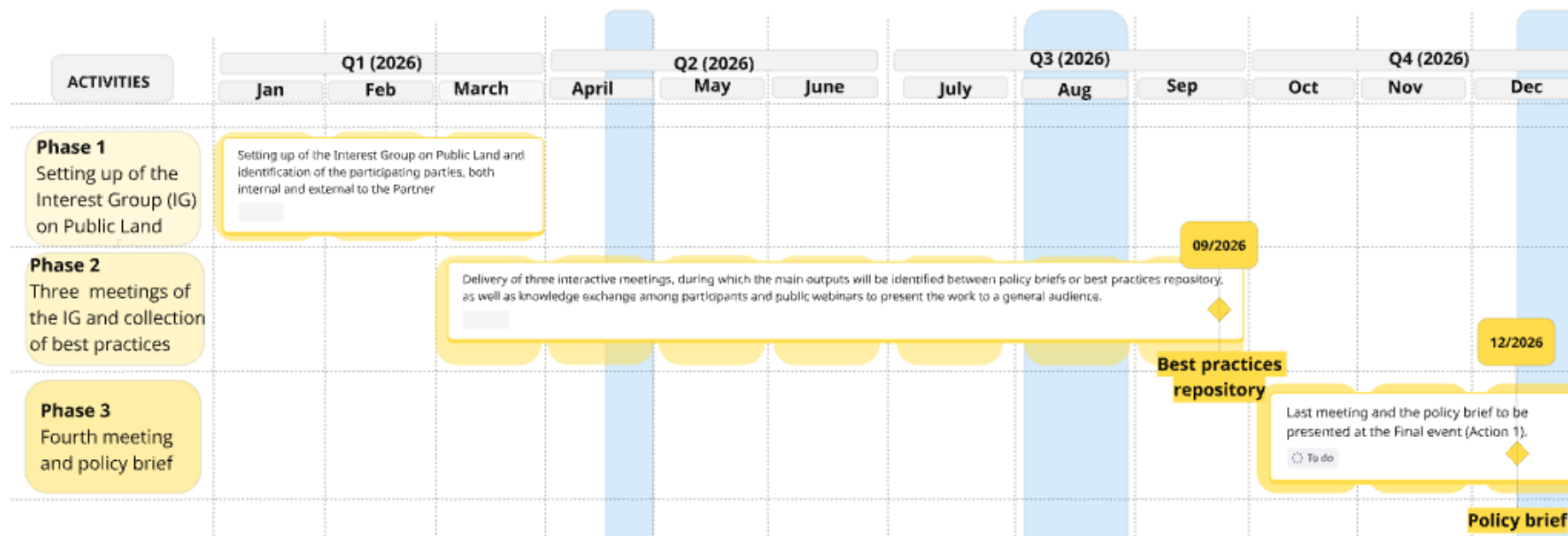***Timeline:*** from March 2026 to September 2026

Phase 3
Conclusion of the work with the fourth interactive meeting and preparation of the results to be presented at the Final event (Action 1).
Key output:
Report on the IG meetings and final version of the policy brief
Timeline: from October 2026 to December 2026

Action 5 - Timeline

ACTIVITIES	Q1 (2026)			Q2 (2026)			Q3 (2026)			Q4 (2026)		
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Phase 1
Setting up of the Interest Group (IG) on Public Land

Setting up of the Interest Group on Public Land and identification of the participating parties, both internal and external to the Partner

Phase 2
Three meetings of the IG and collection of best practices

09/2026

Delivery of three interactive meetings, during which the main outputs will be identified between policy briefs or best practices repository, as well as knowledge exchange among participants and public webinars to present the work to a general audience.

Best practices repository

12/2026

Phase 3
Fourth meeting and policy brief

Last meeting and the policy brief to be presented at the Final event (Action 1).

To do

Policy brief

2.5.7 What resources are needed?

This action essentially needs dedicated human resources for management of the steps and practical conduction of the work (1-2 leading individuals who can devote time to manage and carry out the different steps of the action). Communication support for online seminar invitations and other communication-dissemination activities would be also needed.

2.5.8 Are there any foreseen risks?

Key risks are:
- Stakeholder misalignment or limited engagement.
- Coordination and communication challenges.
- Delays in deliverables could cascade and compress timelines later.
- Quality of the main outputs.

2.5.9 Which members of the UAEU Partnership will be involved in implementation of the Action?

Action leader:
ICLEI

Contributors:
1. City of Ghent
2. City of Vantaa
3. Environmental Studies Centre, Vitoria-GasteizVitoria-Gasteiz
4. AESOP-SFP
5. City of Milan
6. Dublin City Council
7. City of Mouans-Sartoux

Action N° 06 – Selecting Indicators for Urban food Systems

The action aims to identify few common indicators to monitor urban food systems that can be widely used to track progress and compare conditions and trends across European cities. The goal is to discuss indicators with cities and EC stakeholders, and to propose one or a set of indicators on urban food systems to be introduced at the EU level- EUROSTAT.

Targeted stakeholders/governance level:

EU Commission; Local authorities; urban-regional stakeholders; JRC

Deadline: Q4 2026

Intermediary deadlines:

- Q4 2025 - Presenting and discussing key indicators with stakeholders
- Q1 2026 - Meetings with DGs to strategize about indicators
- Q1 2026 - Draft of a position paper presenting indicators based on previous steps
- Q3 2026 - Discussions and feedback from Partnership and discussion on next steps with EC stakeholders
- Q4 2026 Dissemination through different channels and in the final event (connection to Action 1)

2.6.1 Which of the three pillars is this Action contributing to?

Better regulation   **Better funding**   **Better knowledge**

Better Knowledge and Better Regulation: increasing knowledge and awareness about urban food systems and their relationship with urban systems; shedding light on actions and practices at different levels and thus reducing knowledge gaps; putting accent on monitoring and evidence-based policy for delivering food security and sustainability outcomes. Consequently, identifying and measuring these indicators will contribute to develop better policies and regulations by being able to identify key challenges and define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as well as better funding, by facilitating the prioritization of interventions needed.

2.6.2 What is the specific problem this Action is aiming to address?

Despite the recent development of monitoring frameworks, such as the recently published EU Food System Monitoring Dashboard (see https://datam.jrc.ec.europa.eu/datam/mashup/EU_FOOD_SYSTEM_MONITORING/index.html), a shared framework that targets the specificity of the urban food systems and their sustainability dimensions is lacking. This action aims at establishing priority indicators that serve to guide local authorities in shaping and orienting urban food system policies; it also aims to break knowledge gaps across levels. In fact, with a deeper awareness about territorialised food system, the EU level can use indicators to observe local conditions and trends, thus developing better policies.

2.6.3 Which existing EU policies, legislations or instruments are relevant for this Action?

This action targets different levels and spaces of intervention:

It builds on the work carried out by the action-research project **FoodTransitions** (see https://digital.csic.es/cris/project/pj00297). It speaks at city networks such as the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact that has built a framework for urban-level action on food systems
It dialogues with science-to-policy agencies such as the JRC that has recently published the **EU Food System Monitoring Dashboard**.
It connects to spaces and networks such as the **EU Food Policy Coalition** working towards policy integration and alignment at the EU-level to facilitate the transition to sustainable food systems (see Food Policy Coalition website).
It connects to EU action-research projects such as **FoodCLIC** that seek to develop integrated approaches to transform urban food environments and food systems.

2.6.4 Why is this Action need?

This action is essentially devoted to build knowledge for better informed action and policy-making. Despite the essential need for an integrated and systemic urban food system action, urban food strategies often struggle to go beyond siloed approaches. Such approaches do not look at the relevant interaction of food with other urban dynamics. Identifying key indicators can therefore help to focus on the linkages between food security action and wider urban systems. For instance, indicators related to key socio-economic dynamics (e.g. food insecurity prevalence in an urban area, share of housing costs over other costs), can help to assess key determinants of food insecurity; while indicators on socio-ecological dynamics such as the impact of tourism on the city´s economy allow to assess how tourism and hospitality economy impact on urban food environments, and so on. Rather than merely quantitative measures or statistics, these indicators should be considered as political instruments that allow urban food policy actors to legitimize their engagement in urban food system action, connect to broader sustainability need of the city, and dialogue with other stakeholders. In tandem with other actions of the partnership, this action aims to engage EC stakeholders and build awareness at that level on key urban food system dynamics.

2.6.5 How will the Action be implemented?

Phase 1
Review current indicators on food system and monitoring in Europe, particularly in relation to urban food systems issues; select key indicators adapted to urban food systems and carry out a first exploratory analysis on a sample of European cities.
Output:
A visual/written synthesis of first results of phase 1
Timeline: from Spring 2025 to September 2025

Phase 2
Present and discuss relevant indicators with stakeholders, in particular cities belonging to the partnership and others, to receive feedback;
Presentation at the MUFPP Regional Forum (October, Milan) and discussions with JRC stakeholders are also considered for an integration with their work;
Methodology: an online meeting with city partners followed by a short survey.
Key Output:
A visual/written synthesis of first result of Step 2.
Timeline:
October-December 2025

Phase 3
Based on the previous steps, carry out meetings with DGs / EC stakeholders to strategise on what is possible (e.g. what are the key priorities for the EU? How to embed 1-2 core indicators in EU statistics?)
Key outputs: Draft report with a first selection of indicators
Timeline: Q1 2026

Phase 4
Out of the previous steps, develop a position paper with policy recommendations
Key output:
A document with guidelines and recommendations on urban food systems 'monitoring for European cities
Timeline: Spring-Summer 2026

Phase 5
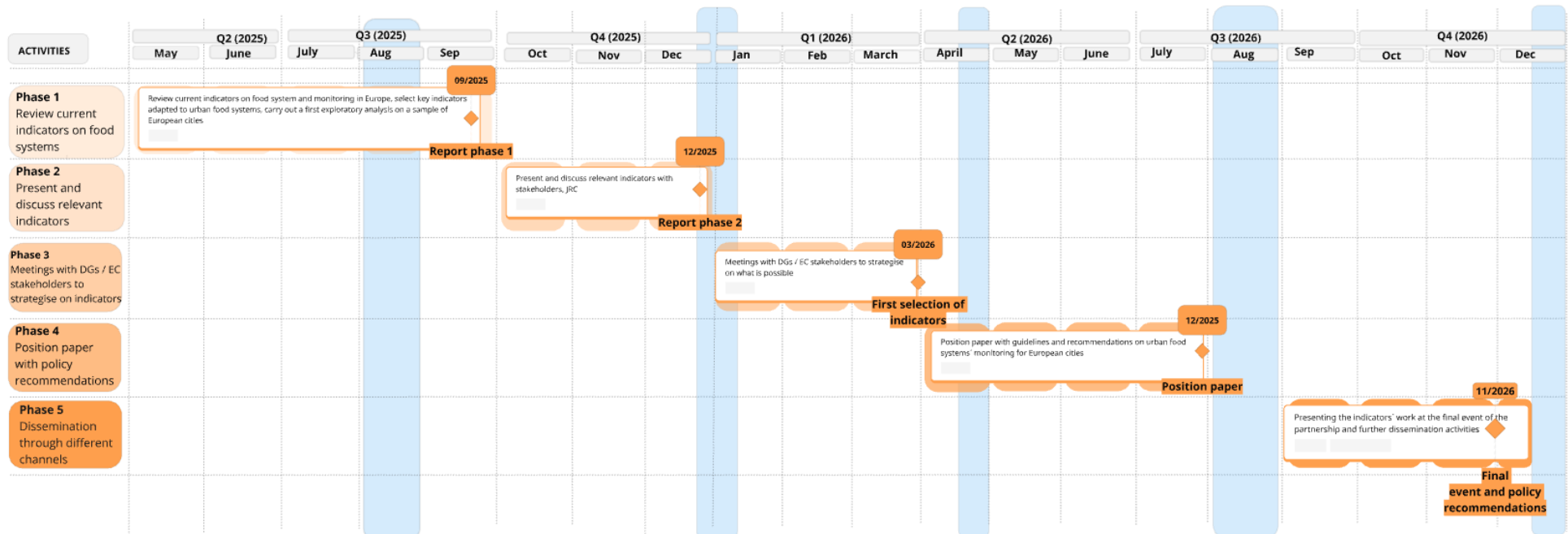Presenting the indicators' work at the final event of the partnership + further dissemination activities
Key output:
Presentation of the results
Timeline: Fall 2026

Action 6 - Timeline

ACTIVITIES	Q2 (2025)		Q3 (2025)			Q4 (2025)			Q1 (2026)			Q2 (2026)			Q3 (2026)			Q4 (2026)		
	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Phase 1
Review current indicators on food systems

09/2025
Review current indicators on food system and monitoring in Europe, select key indicators adapted to urban food systems, carry out a first exploratory analysis on a sample of European cities
Report phase 1

Phase 2
Present and discuss relevant indicators

12/2025
Present and discuss relevant indicators with stakeholders, JRC
Report phase 2

Phase 3
Meetings with DGs / EC stakeholders to strategise on indicators

03/2026
Meetings with DGs / EC stakeholders to strategise on what is possible
First selection of indicators

Phase 4
Position paper with policy recommendations

12/2025
Position paper with guidelines and recommendations on urban food systems' monitoring for European cities
Position paper

Phase 5
Dissemination through different channels

11/2026
Presenting the indicators' work at the final event of the partnership and further dissemination activities
Final event and policy recommendations

2.6.6 What resources are needed?

This action essentially needs dedicated human resources for management of the steps and practical conduction of the work (1-2 leading individuals who can devote time to manage and carry out the different steps of the action); it will need the support of the Partnership and Partnership coordinators in organising a potential survey to city partners and in connecting with actors and bodies such as the JRC and members the European Commission. Communication support for online seminar invitations and other communication-dissemination activities would be also needed.

2.6.7 Are there any foreseen risks?

The action is rather ambitious and achieving its overarching aims could be challenging. Possible risks could be, for instance, having to revise indicators because of difficulties in retrieving information; or lack of agreement about core indicators by cities involved in the partnership; or difficulties to reach out the overarching objective of embedding core indicators in EU statistics. Furthermore, achieving aspired objectives could take longer than the formal duration of the Partnership. Leaders of the action will put into place necessary provisions to manage the risks. Steps 1 to 3 of this action (see section 2.6.5) provide a margin of flexibility to re-work and discuss indicators with stakeholders, reaching a consensus about at least some core indicators.
We are also confident that the format of the Partnership will work in providing direct access to EC Stakeholders, involving them in the conversation.

2.6.8 Which members of the UAEU Partnership will be involved in implementation of the Action?

Action leader:
University of Barcelona

Contributors:
1. AESOP Sustainable Food Planning
2. Lisbon Metropolitan Area (Municipality of Setùbal)
3. Dublin City Council

Action N° 07 – Promoting sustainable Public Food Procurement

The action seeks to clarify the Food Partnership's position on public food procurement, offering a position paper that includes key data, strong arguments, best practices, and recommendations from cities perspective. This will serve as a crucial resource for the Partnership's advocacy efforts. Additionally, it will contribute relevant materials for Action n.4 by gathering approaches from various contexts and projects.

Targeted stakeholders/governance level:

EU Commission; MEPs; policy makers at the national level

Deadline: Q1 2026 Position Paper

Intermediary deadlines:

- Q2 2025 – Development of materials and contents for the training (Action 4)
- Q3 2025 – Feedback to the List of voluntary sustainability criteria developed by the JRC
- Q4 2026 – Expected publication date of the EC Directive on Procurement

2.7.1 Which of the three pillars is this Action contributing to?

Better regulation   Better funding

The action starts from the need expressed on many occasions by cities and local authorities for a clear legislative framework to public food procurement that addresses the challenges of bringing quality, healthy and sustainable food into key services: schools, hospitals, etc. In addition, developing new criteria for public food procurement requires time and knowledge exchange that is not funded at the moment.

2.7.2 What is the specific problem this Action is aiming to address?

Public food procurement is still an undervalued policy lever for food systems transformation that needs to be harnessed through better legislation. The current barriers include harmonizing the different legislative frameworks affecting food procurement and simplifying procurement procedures to ensure the inclusion of small-scale farmers and businesses. Additionally, there is a lack of awareness regarding the potential gains of public food procurement and insufficient support in terms of knowledge, expertise, and skills for local authorities and procurers in implementing sustainability criteria. Similarly, training for kitchen staffs is lacking. Moreover, there is a need for a solid monitoring system to ensure compliance with these criteria measure effectiveness of these actions.

Action 7

Public food procurement is a powerful yet often undervalue policy leaver for food systems transformation that can bring about great benefits ranging from promotion of sustainable agriculture, reduction of GHG emissions, promotion of biodiversity, revitalisation of rural areas, promotion of healthy and nutritious diets greatly improving public health. Local authorities across Europe keep demonstrating. While some local governments have understood and harnessed the benefits of sustainable food procurement, the current EU regulation keeps falling short in not only allowing but also supporting sustainable food procurement practices: from regulatory dissonances between governance levels, legal uncertainties and barriers, to the lack of knowledge and skills to develop food tenders wired towards healthy diets and sustainable food systems. To unleash the power of public food procurement, however, it is key to both raise awareness on the topic and advocate for a better regulatory framework at the EU level capable of not only allowing but being supportive of sustainable food procurement.

2.7.3 Which existing EU policies, legislations or instruments are relevant for this Action?

The overarching piece of legislation relevant for this action is the **EU Directive 2014/24** on public procurement, currently under revision. Secondly, both the **Strategic Dialogues Report** and the EC **Vision for the Future of Agriculture and Food** have highlighted the key role of public food procurement to address a wide range of food systems issues. Secondly, the **Green Public Procurement** (GPP) Criteria are a important tool for promoting and embedding sustainability within food procurement. Another key document is the **Manifesto for the Establishment of Minimum Mandatory Standards in Public Canteens Across the EU**, published by the EU Food Policy Coalition, which also links to some Member States procurement legislation that already include minimum sustainable standards for food procurement. Soon, will come the evaluation of minimum criteria for sustainable food procurement by the European Commission, which will follow the JRC report on **Sustainable Food Procurement**. On top of this, there exists several interests and experts' groups on sustainable (food) procurement and the newly set up EU Board on Agriculture and Food, will also play a key role in considering the potential of sustainable food procurement.

2.7.4 Why is this Action needed?

Public Food Procurement is a powerful lever for transforming local food systems towards sustainability. As major purchasers, cities have the capacity to influence agricultural practices, support local and regional producers, reduce environmental footprints, and promote healthy, accessible diets for all. A coordinated position paper would allow the Partnership to articulate shared principles, best practices, and policy recommendations to bring to EU Institutions. It is also aimed at strengthening the voice of urban stakeholders in EU-level decision-making processes.

2.7.5 How will the Action be implemented?

Phase 1
Development and gathering of materials and contents on the topic of Public Food Procurement, coordinated by ICLEI, to be shared among Partnership's members and used in the food policy training.
Key output:
Resource package and available speakers for the training (Action 4)
Timeline:
From May 2025 to July 2025

Phase 2

Feedback to the List of voluntary sustainability criteria to be developed by the Joint Research Center

Key output:

List of recommendations to the JRC document

Timeline:

From July 2025 to December 2025

Phase 3

Development of the first draft of the position paper to gather feedback from participating partners.

Key output:

First draft of the position paper
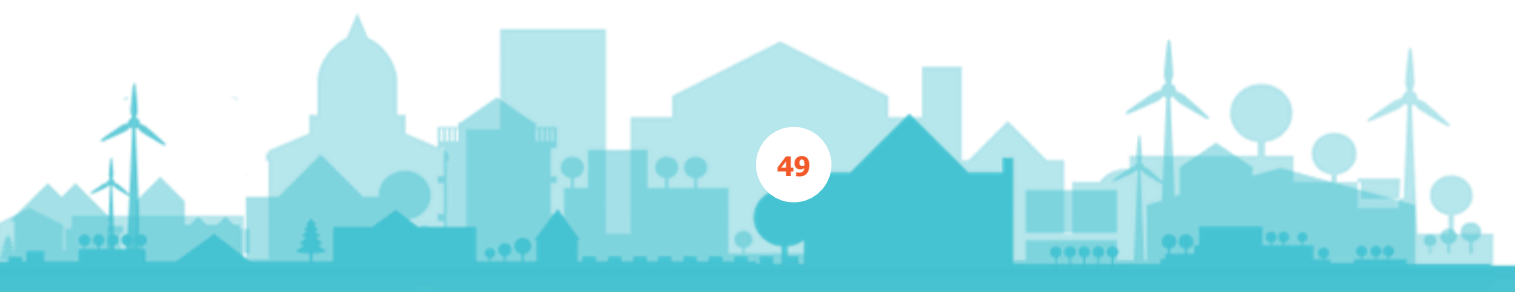
Timeline:

October 2025

Phase 4

Publication of the Position Paper on the Partnership channels and dissemination to EU Institutions and relevant stakeholders, after the publication of a first proposal from the EU Commission in the pathway for the new Public Procurement Directive.

Key output:

Position paper on Public Food Procurement

Timeline:

Q1 2026

Action 7

ACTIVITIES	Q2 (2025)		Q3 (2025)			Q4 (2025)			Q1 (2026)			Q2 (2026)			Q3 (2026)			Q4 (2026)		
	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Phase 1 Development of materials for the training

07/2025

Development and gathering of materials and content on the topic of Public Food Procurement - Resource package and available speakers for training (Action 4)

Resource package

Phase 2 Feedback to the list of voluntary sust. criteria

12/2025

Feedback to the list of voluntary sustainability criteria to be developed by JRC

List of recommendations to the JRC document

Phase 3 First draft of the position paper

10/2025

First draft of the position paper

First draft of the position paper

Phase 4 Publication of the Position Paper & dissemination

03/2026

Publication of the Position Paper on the Partnership channels and dissemination to EU Institutions and relevant stakeholders, after the publication of a first proposal from the EU Commission in the pathway for the new Public Procurement Directive

Position paper

2.7.6 What resources are needed?

Action Leader ICLEI will suffice to gather stakeholders view cities views, draft a communication/statement and organise the event in 2026, with the help of Partnership members.

2.7.7 Are there any foreseen risks?

Key risks are:
- Coordination and communication challenges;
- Lack of interest from stakeholders;
- Shifts in priorities at the EU, national, or local levels could affect the relevance or support for the work.

Modalities to address each of these challenges, in case needed, will be adopted as the action unfolds.

2.7.8 Which members of the UAEU Partnership are involved in implementation of the Action?

Action leader:
ICLEI

Contributors:
1. Eurocities
2. City of Ghent
3. City of Mouans-Sartoux
4. City of Vantaa
5. City of Milan
6. DG SANTE

3. CONTRIBUTION OF THE ACTION PLAN TO EU COMMITMENTS AND GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 European dimension

3.1.1 Cross-cutting issues

The complexity of urban challenges requires integrating different policy aspects to avoid contradictory consequences and make interventions in Urban Areas more effective (Pact of Amsterdam clause 12). Cross-cutting Issues represent key aspects to be considered in the overall work of the Urban Agenda for the EU and its Partnerships. Each Partnership shall therefore consider the relevance of the Cross-cutting Issues (Gijon Agreement clause 5).

The Cross-cutting issues are:

1. Promoting urban policy for the common good, inclusiveness, accessibility, security and equality.
2. Enhancing integrated and innovative approaches, notably through financing and in correlation to the green, digital and just transitions.
3. Supporting effective urban governance, participation, and co-creation.
4. Promoting multi-level governance and cooperation across administrative boundaries.
5. Harmonising measures at different spatial levels and implementing place-based policies and strategies.
6. Supporting sound and strategic sustainable urban planning, and balanced territorial development.
7. Contributing to the acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and Habitat III principles.

Cross-cutting issues are crucial to achieving sustainable and resilient food systems in urban areas.

Good urban governance is essential for ensuring that food policies and programs are integrated, coordinated, and effective. It is important to involve diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes and to ensure that food policies are aligned with broader urban development goals. Food is not a traditional competency of cities; therefore, it needs to be developed along with appropriate participatory mechanisms like Food councils.

Urban-rural, urban-urban, and cross-border cooperation are also critical for sustainable food systems. Collaboration between urban and rural areas can help to ensure a reliable and diverse supply of fresh and nutritious food. Meanwhile, cooperation between urban areas can help to promote knowledge sharing and best practices.

Sound and strategic urban planning is also necessary for promoting sustainable and resilient food systems. Urban planners should consider the potential for urban agriculture, green infrastructure, and sustainable food procurement policies in their plans.

An integrated approach is essential for addressing the complex challenges facing urban food systems. This includes considering social, economic, and environmental factors and promoting a systems approach to food policy and planning.

Innovative approaches, including the use of new technologies and business models, can help to promote sustainable and resilient food systems in urban areas. Moreover, the impact of food policies and programs on societal change, including behavioural change, should be considered.
Small- and medium-sized cities face unique challenges and opportunities in promoting sustainable and resilient food systems. Strategies should be tailored to their specific needs and opportunities.

Urban regeneration can provide opportunities for promoting sustainable and resilient food systems. Urban regeneration projects can incorporate urban agriculture, green infrastructure, and sustainable food procurement policies.

Adaptation to demographic change is also necessary for promoting sustainable and resilient food systems. This includes considering the needs and preferences of diverse populations and ensuring equitable access to food.

The availability and quality of public services of general interest, including food retail and distribution services, should be considered in promoting sustainable and resilient food systems.
The **international dimension of sustainable and resilient food systems**, as highlighted in Habitat III and the Sustainable Development Goals, should be considered. This includes promoting international cooperation and knowledge sharing on sustainable food policies and programs.

The table below shows the relevance of cross-cutting issues (established under the Gijón Agreement on 14 November 2023, Gijón), to the actions of the Food Partnership.

Table: Relevance of cross-cutting issues to the actions of the Food Partnership

Food Partnership – Actions							
	Action n.1	Action n.2	Action n.3	Action n.4	Action n.5	Action n.6	Action n.7
a. Promoting urban policy for the common good, inclusiveness, accessibility, security and equality.				■	■		■
b. Enhancing integrated and innovative approaches, notably through financing and in correlation to the green, digital and just transitions.				■	■		■
c. Supporting effective urban governance, participation, and co-creation.		■	■	■			
d. Promoting multi-level governance and cooperation across administrative boundaries.	■	■	■				
e. Harmonising measures at different spatial levels and implementing place-based policies and strategies.	■	■	■				
f. Supporting sound and strategic sustainable urban planning, and balanced territorial development.			■				■
g. Contributing to the acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and Habitat III principles.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

3.1.2 Link to the New Leipzig Charter

The New Leipzig Charter (adopted on 30 November 2020 under German Presidency of the Council of the European Union) provides a key policy framework document for sustainable urban development in Europe. The Charter highlights that cities need to establish integrated and sustainable urban development strategies and ensure their implementation for the city, from its functional areas to its neighbourhoods. The document is strongly aligned with the Cohesion Policy and its framework for sustainable urban development. Member States agreed to implement the Charter in their national or regional urban policies. The New Leipzig Charter is also accompanied by an Implementing document about the Urban Agenda for the EU.

Source: New Leipzig Charter- The transformative power of cities for the common good (2020). https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/whats-new/newsroom/12-08-2020-new-leipzig-charter-the-transformative-power-of-cities-for-the-common-good_en (Accessed: February 16, 2024).

The Food Action Plan aligns with the principles of the New Leipzig Charter by **promoting sustainable, fair, and resilient food systems**. Central to the Action Plan is the definition of a" Sustainable Food System "as outlined in the SAPEA evidence review report:

"*A sustainable food system for the EU is one that provides and promotes safe, nutritious, and healthy food of low environmental impact for all EU citizens—both current and future—while protecting and restoring the natural environment and its ecosystem services. It is resilient, economically dynamic, socially inclusive, just, and fair. Importantly, it does not compromise the availability of nutritious food for non-EU populations, nor does it damage their natural environment.*"

The Action Plan aims to drive **transformative changes in food systems, making them more sustainable, equitable, and resilient**. It supports multilevel governance, recognising food as a fundamental human right and a common good. It emphasises localising food systems within broader urban strategies, ensuring that **cities integrate sustainability and inclusivity into their food practices**.

The Food Action Plan directly supports the Charter's vision of a "**green city**", representing a crucial step toward achieving sustainable urban development across Europe. Specifically, the Action on "Public Land for Local Food Policies" aims to address the decline of farms and farmers, combat urban sprawl, and foster the growth of city-region food systems by promoting the use of public land for sustainable food production. Additionally, the "Promotion of Public Procurement" Action will encourage the demand for local and organic products, thereby advancing the Charter's objective of creating sustainable urban development strategies that benefit all areas of the city and its diverse communities.

The Action Plan also strongly aligns with the "**just city**" dimension of the New Leipzig Charter. By advocating for policies that promote healthier diets, reduce food waste in public canteens, and prioritise sustainably sourced ingredients that fairly remunerate farmers and respect workers' rights, the Action Plan seeks to **foster social justice in urban food systems**. Moreover, it supports opportunities for local, small-scale farmers and food businesses to thrive, ensuring that **food systems are inclusive and equitable**.

Although not directly stated, digitalization is implicitly supported by the Action Plan's focus on selecting and validating key indicators for monitoring urban food systems. This process depends on data collection and analysis, highlighting the crucial role that digital tools and technologies can play in effectively monitoring and managing local food strategies.

In fostering a "**productive city**," the Action Plan will provide recommendations to enhance local authorities' role in Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3), focusing particularly on strengthening local food

systems as an avenue for regional innovation. Further, the Action Plan aims to increase local, regional, and national authorities' capacity to support entrepreneurship and small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) growth within the food sector. This includes improving targeted funding, raising awareness about agri-food entrepreneurship, and expanding support for food sector SMEs.

Through the adoption of an integrated food policy approach, the Action Plan strengthens food resilience by taking a **comprehensive view of the food system**. It recognizes the necessity for coordinated, coherent policies across various levels of governance, aiming to maximise their positive effects on food resilience while minimising any negative impacts on other areas. The Action Plan's alignment with the New Leipzig Charter highlights its commitment to a holistic urban development approach.
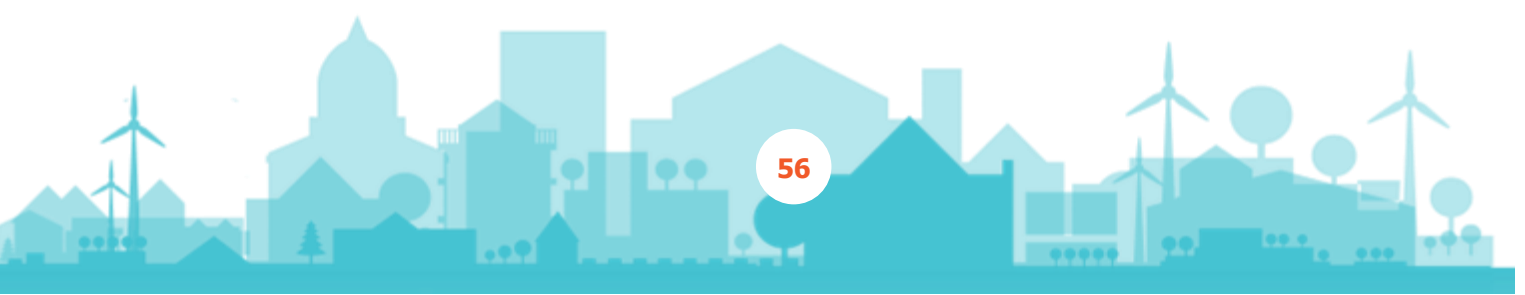
3.2 Global (International) dimension

3.2 1 New Urban Agenda (Habitat III)

The New Urban Agenda was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, on 20 October 2016. It was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-eighth plenary meeting of the seventy-first session on 23 December 2016. The New Urban Agenda represents a shared vision for a better and more sustainable future. If well-planned and well-managed, urbanization can be a powerful tool for sustainable development for both developing and developed countries.

Source: The New Urban Agenda (2016). https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/ (Accessed: February 16, 2024).

The New Urban Agenda (Habitat III) and the UAEU are interlinked instruments at global and macroregional levels which foster a shared approach to sustainable urban development. The core of the NUA is its Implementation Plan, which is divided into two sections: A. Transformative Commitments (NUA paragraphs 23 to 80); and B. Effective Implementation (NUA paragraphs 81 to 160).

The Food Action Plan contributes to the New Urban Agenda (NUA) adopted at Habitat III. Through its integrated approach to urban food systems, the Action Plan embodies a global vision for sustainable urban development, aligning with and actively supporting the NUA's transformative commitments and pillars of effective implementation.

Transformative Commitments

• **Sustainable Urban Development for Social Inclusion and Ending Poverty:** The Food Action Plan advocates for food systems that are socially inclusive and ensure access to healthy food for all, including marginalized groups. This includes policies for supporting local small-scale farmers and food businesses, promoting food as a human right and common good, and prioritising food security in urban planning. The Action Plan encourages the use of public land for urban agriculture, which provides direct access to fresh food for urban populations, particularly in underserved areas.

• **Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Prosperity and Opportunities for All:** The Food Action Plan directly addresses the principle of inclusive urban prosperity by ensuring that all urban residents, regardless of socioeconomic status, have access to healthier food choices. The initiatives of the Plan will foster economic opportunities for all, especially small-scale farmers who are often overlooked in urban food systems. By prioritising sustainably sourced ingredients that fairly remunerate farmers and respect workers' rights, the Action Plan ensures that the economic benefits of food production are more equitably distributed, directly supporting the principle of social justice in urban food systems.

• **Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient Urban Development:** At the heart of the Action Plan is its emphasis on creating sustainable and resilient local food systems. By promoting local food production, the Plan supports biodiversity in urban agriculture, contributing to the development of more resilient urban ecosystems that can better withstand disruptions from climate-related events. Additionally, by encouraging the use of local, seasonal, and organic ingredients, the Plan helps reduce the environmental impact of food production.

Effective Implementation

The Action Plan contributes to the NUA's pillars of effective implementation through:

Building the Urban Governance Structure: The Food Action Plan aligns with this pillar in several ways, particularly by fostering collaborative governance, creating capacity-building opportunities, and promoting policy coherence at multiple levels. By supporting the alignment of food policies across local, regional, and national levels the Plan ensures that urban food governance is consistent, coherent, and mutually reinforcing. It encourages integration between food, agriculture, environmental, health, and economic policies, thus building a more comprehensive governance framework.

Planning and Managing Urban Spatial Development: Actions such as "Public Land for Local Food Policies" contribute to planning and managing urban spatial development by promoting sustainable land use and helping to combat urban sprawl and the loss of biodiversity.

Means of Implementation: Different actions will focus on promoting more sustainable and resilient local food systems through capacity building, knowledge sharing, and stakeholder engagement, thus supporting the effective execution of the NUA. Action No. 4, "Local Food Strategies Training," will focus on capacity-building initiatives aimed at local and regional authorities, helping them to design, implement, monitor, and resource local food strategies.

3.2.2 The Sustainable Developments Goals of the UN

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. Central in the document are the
17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
Source: THE 17 GOALS. https://sdgs.un.org/goals (Accessed: February 16, 2024).

The Food Action Plan, strategically aligns with several of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), offering a robust framework for advancing sustainable urban development and contributing to global objectives for a sustainable future.
Specifically, it aligns with the following goals:

SDG 2: Zero Hunger
The Action Plan promotes sustainable food systems that ensure access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food for all people. By supporting food sovereignty, organic farming, and local food systems, the plan aims to reduce hunger and ensure food security, especially in vulnerable populations.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being

The Action Plan advocates for healthier diets, particularly by promoting food that is nutritious and produced sustainably. This aligns with SDG 3's goal of improving public health and well-being, addressing issues such as food-related diseases, and encouraging better eating habits.
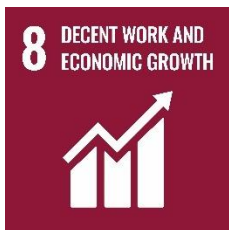
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

The Food Action Plan fosters the growth of local food economies and prioritise sustainably sourced ingredients that fairly remunerate farmers and respect workers' rights.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

The Food Action Plan emphasizes social inclusion, fair remuneration for farmers, and access to healthy food for all, especially marginalized communities. By focusing on equitable food systems and supporting small-scale food businesses, the plan aligns with SDG 10's goal of reducing inequalities within and among countries.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

By integrating food systems into broader urban strategies, the plan supports the creation of sustainable and resilient cities. The promotion of urban agriculture, local food markets, and sustainable urban development aligns with SDG 11, focusing on creating cities that are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

By supporting sustainable food production methods, reducing food waste, and advocating for sustainable agricultural practices, the Food Action Plan contributes to SDG 12's target of ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. This includes focusing on more sustainable food procurement and reducing environmental impacts of the food system.

SDG 13: Climate Action

The plan encourages environmentally responsible practices within food systems, such as organic farming and the use of nature-based solutions. These actions can reduce the carbon footprint of food production and contribute to climate change mitigation efforts, aligning with SDG 13's aim to combat climate change.
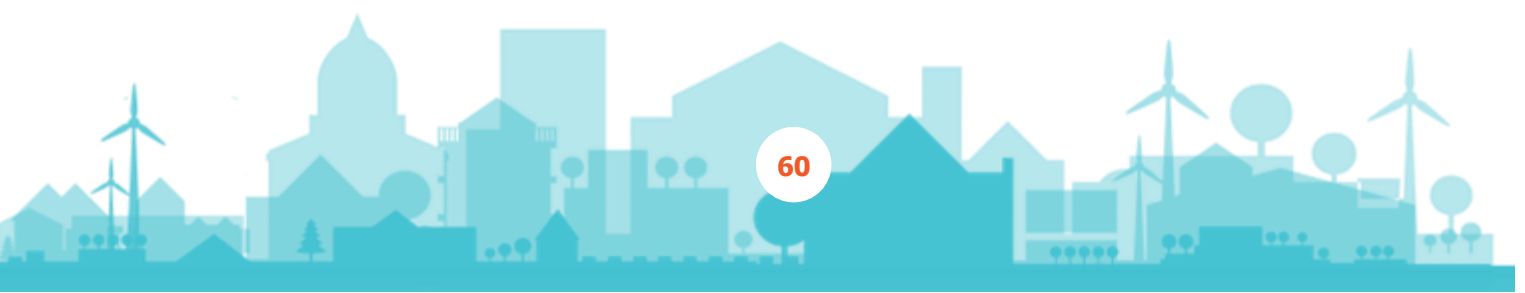
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

The UAEU Partnership on Food, with its emphasis on multilevel governance and collaboration between local, regional, and national authorities, contributes to SDG 17's goal of strengthening global partnerships for sustainable development. It fosters cooperation across various sectors to achieve sustainable food systems.

3.2.3 The Paris Agreement adopted at COP21

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on 12 December 2015. Its overarching goal is to hold' the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels' and pursue efforts 'to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.'

Since 2020, countries have been submitting their national climate Action plans, known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Each successive NDC is meant to reflect an increasingly higher degree of ambition compared to the previous version.

Source: The Paris Agreement (2015). What is the Paris agreement? https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement (Accessed: February 16, 2024).

The Food Action Plan aligns with the Paris Agreement, adopted at COP21, by contributing to several key objectives related to climate action and sustainability.

Mitigation of Climate Change

The Food Action Plan contributes to climate change mitigation by promoting sustainable food systems and organic farming, which have lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions compared to conventional agricultural practices. By supporting farming practices that focus on environmental sustainability, such as agroecology and regenerative agriculture, the plan helps reduce emissions from food production.
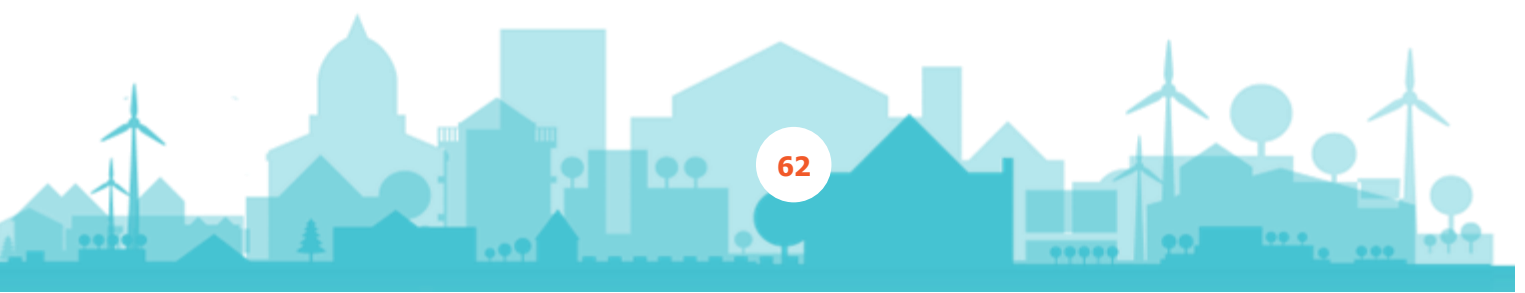
Adaptation to Climate Change

The Food Action Plan emphasises the importance of resilient food systems that can withstand and recover from climate impacts. By promoting practices such as diversified farming systems, local food production, and urban agriculture, the plan supports food security and resilience in the face of climate variability.

Integration of Climate Considerations in Urban Development

The Plan promotes urban agriculture, local food markets, and the inclusion of food systems in broader sustainable urban development strategies. These efforts reduce emissions and environmental degradation, promote sustainable consumption, and help create low-carbon cities that are better prepared for the impacts of climate change.

Supporting Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

The Action Plan's focus on implementing sustainable local food strategies aligns with countries' efforts to enhance the ambition of their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) over time. By implementing measures outlined in the Action Plan, cities and regions can contribute to achieving the targets set out in their respective NDCs, thereby supporting the overall objectives of the Paris Agreement.

MONITORING

Action	Action Leaders	Targeted stakeholders/ governance level	Deadline	State of Play
Action 1 ADVOCACY Advocating for a EU framework for local food policies	Eurocities, ICLEI	EU Commission (decision-makers and officials of different Units touching upon food); European Parliament, European Committee of the Regions, European Economic and Social Committee, and other EU decision makers and political stakeholders	Q4 2025 - Collection of inputs from cities and the Partnership Q1 2026 - Draft policy document Q2 2026 - Endorsement and update Q3 2026 - Finalized policy output Q4 2026 – final policy event in Brussels	
Action 2 REGULATION Showcasing the role of regional and national actors in supporting local food policies	City of Milan AESOP ICLEI	EU Commission; National, Regional and Local authorities	Q2 2025 - Establishment of methodology and key steps Q4 2025 - Case-study document elaboration Q1 2026 - Brief with inspiring practices, guidelines, and recommendations Q2 2026 - Dissemination through different channels Q4 2026 Final event (connection to Action 1)	
Action 3 R&D Building bridges between local authorities and relevant regional strategies	AESOP	EU Commision, regions (and the Committee of Regions) and Local authorities	Q3/Q4 2025: Consultation and analysis. Q4 2025/ Q1 2026: Report and proposal Q2 2026: Discussion Q4 2026: Dissemination and presentation in Brussels	
Action 4 FOOD POLICY Urban Food Policy Training	City of Milan	EU Commission; Local authorities; urban-regional stakeholders	Q2 2025 – First Training Module Q4 2025 – Second Training Module and policy recommendations definition Q1 2026 – Third Training Module and first draft of the Handbook	

			Q3 2026 – Presentation of the Training results (policy recommendations and Handbook) to the final event	
Action 5 **PUBLIC LAND** **Public land for local food policies**	ICLEI	EU Commission; Local authorities; urban-regional stakeholders	Q1 2026 – Internal meeting UAP Food to set up the IG Public Land Q1 2026 – First online meeting IG Public Land with presentation and Q&A Q2 2026 – Second online meeting IG Public Land with presentation and Q&A Q3 2026 – Third online meeting IG Public Land with presentation and Q&A Q4 2026 – Fourth online meeting IG Public Land with presentation and Q&A	
Action 6 **INDICATORS** **Selecting indicators for urban food systems**	University of Barcelona	EU Commission; Local authorities; urban-regional stakeholders; JRC	Q4 2025 - Presenting and discussing key indicators with stakeholders Q1 2026 - Meetings with DGs to strategize about indicators Q1 2026 - Draft of a position paper presenting indicators based on previous steps Q3 2026 - Discussions and feedback from Partnership and discussion on next steps with EC stakeholders Q4 2026 Dissemination through different channels and in the final event (connection to Action 1)	
Action 7 **PROCUREMENT** **Promoting Sustainable Food Procurement**	ICLEI	EU Commission; MEPs; policy makers at the national level	Q2 2025 – Development of materials and contents for the training (Action 4) Q3 2025 – Feedback to the List of voluntary sustainability criteria developed by the JRC Q4 2026 – Expected publication date of the EC Directive on Procurement	

ANNEX 1
TABLE OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Full Name in English
CAP	Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies
CFP	Common fisheries policy
CEMR	Council of the European Municipalities and Regions
CLLD	Community-led local development
COR	Committee of the Regions
DG	European Commission's Directorate General
DG AGRI	European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
DG EMPL	Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
DG MARE	European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
DG REGIO	European Commission Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
DG RTD	European Commission DG Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
DG SANTE	European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety
DGUM	Directors General on Urban Matters
EAA	Ex-Ante assessment
EC	European Commission
EIB	European Investment Bank
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EUI	European Urban Initiative
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
F2F	Farm to Fork Strategy
FPC	Food Policy Council
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investments
JRC	European Commission Joint Research Centre
MMS	Minimum mandatory standards
MUFPP	Milan Urban Food Policy Pact
PPPs	Public-private partnerships
NGO	Non-governmental organization
R&D	Research & Development
RIS3	Research and Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategy
S3	Smart Specialisation Strategies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium sized Enterprises

UAEU	Urban Agenda for the EU
TA	Thematic Area
TP	Thematic Partnership
TPM	Thematic Partnership Meeting
TPO	Thematic Partnership Officer
UDG	Urban Development Group
UATPG	Urban Agenda Technical Preparatory Group
WGs	Working groups

ANNEX 2 REFERENCES

The previous key documents of the Food Partnership (Ex-Ante Assessment and Orientation Paper), along with the current Draft Action Plan, highlight a strong relevance and connection to the following policies:

- UN Sustainable Development Goals
- UN New Urban Agenda
- EU Green Deal
- Mission Soil
- EU Child Guarantee
- Cohesion Policy
- Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies (CAP and CFP)
- Biodiversity Strategy
- The EU Procurement directive
- The EU Directive on Food Waste
- The Horizon Europe Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change (focusing on supporting EU regions, cities, and local authorities in their efforts to build resilience against the impacts of climate change)
- Food 2030: the EU's research and innovation (R&I) policy to support food system transformation
- The EU Vision for the Future of Agriculture and Food
- Future Foods

The Food Thematic Partnership adopts, as a conceptual reference framework, the following definition of a "**Sustainable Food system**" , proposed in the evidence review report of SAPEA: '*A sustainable food system for the EU is one that: provides and promotes safe, nutritious and healthy food of low environmental impact for all current and future EU citizens in a manner that itself also protects and restores the natural environment and its ecosystem services, is robust and resilient, economically dynamic, just and fair, and socially acceptable and inclusive. It does so without compromising the availability of nutritious and healthy food for people living outside the EU, nor impairing their natural environment.*' [1]

Other Specific References:

- Food Ex-Ante Assessment, https://www.urbanagenda.urban-initiative.eu/sites/default/files/2023-07/EAA%20report%20Food_0.pdf
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- Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union, IPES Food Report, 2019
- Milan Urban Food Policy Pact MUFPP
- Global Food Policy Report, IFPRI, 2020
- Downs et al. Report "Food systems, food environments and their drivers", 2020
- A Whole School Food Approach, SchoolFood4Change, 2022
- Food Security and Nutrition in the Worls, FAO-Unicef-IFAD, 2020
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- Public Procurement of Food for Health, EU Commission, 2017
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[1] A Sustainable Food System for the EU, SAPEA, 2020