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Cascade learning report

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Executive summary

The programme: objectives and methodology

Food Trails is a four-year EU-funded Horizon 2020 project, with the aim of enabling cities to reimagine, develop and implement sustainable, healthy and inclusive food policies. The Cascade Learning Programme, initiated in the project's final year, aimed to disseminate best practices and experiences developed within the consortium to external cities. This initiative utilised diverse methods, including in-person exchanges, webinars, and workshops, to maximise the reach and impact of the shared knowledge. Key activities included:

- **11 cascade visits** hosted by the project cities, engaging officers from 26 cities in hands-on exchanges;
- **a series of 8 webinars** discussing urban food policy topics with experts and city officers from the Food Trails project;
- **a replication workshop**, organised during the Eurocities Food Working Group and Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Regional Forum, to foster deeper peer interactions.

The programme successfully facilitated discussions on sustainable food systems and urban food policies among city officers from both European and non-European cities, leveraging various formats to overcome geographical and logistical limitations. The different activities organised benefited from the close collaboration between Eurocities officer and the project's researchers, combining scientific expertise with practical logistics management.

During each of the two-and-a-half-day study visits to Food Trails cities, participants observed activities, exchanged feedback, and formulated practical insights for adopting best practices. On the final day of each visit, participants were introduced to the Food Policy Action Canvas (FPAC) to strategise actionable implementations. Post-visit, cities developed action plans based on these insights, culminating in an online follow-up meeting to reflect on their learnings, address remaining questions, and present their updated FPAC for peer feedback. This structured approach ensured that participants could tailor and implement the observed practices within their unique city contexts.

Webinars facilitated by Eurocities featured expert insights and local experiences from Food Trails cities, designed to inspire and inform participants on urban food policies. These eight one-hour sessions distilled four years of project results, addressing the diverse needs of cities at various stages of their food systems transformation journey. The topics were chosen based on cascade cities' applications, highlighting their areas of focus and desired knowledge.

The replication workshop, strategically planned after the 11 visits, emphasised the continued exchange of experiences and the planning of pilot actions. It fostered deeper collaboration through platforms like Eurocities Working Group Food and the Milan Pact, promoting mutual learning and international cooperation in addressing urban food challenges.

Outcomes of the learning activities

Due to the short time between the programme activities and the writing of the report, the overall impact of the programme cannot be fully observed yet. However, through a close collaboration between the organisers and the participants as well as thoroughly collected feedback from the different involved parties, the following conclusions on the outcomes can be formulated.

The Cascade Learning Programme has resulted in significant outcomes through the visits, webinars, and workshops. The cascade visits were highly valued for their intimate and focused format, fostering detailed discussions and trust-building among participants. These in-person interactions allowed for open conversations about shared challenges, enhancing mutual understanding and collaboration. Hosting cities also benefited by reflecting on their progress and articulating their achievements, leading to a deeper understanding and improved communication of their initiatives. The Food Policy Action Canvas (FPAC) emerged as a crucial tool, aiding cities in developing food policy actions and effectively communicating their importance to colleagues and politicians, thereby gaining either broader support for these initiatives or showing its relevance.

The webinars were well-received for their concise and targeted knowledge-sharing format. Participants appreciated the structured and engaging sessions, which facilitated the easy assimilation of information without causing overload. Despite lower participation from cascade cities, the webinars achieved significant outreach to other city officers in and beyond Europe, addressing timely topics in urban food policies and attracting a diverse global audience. The proactive outreach and effective dissemination strategies, including targeted communications and leveraging digital platforms, contributed to this success.

The replication workshop held during the Eurocities Food Working Group and MUFPP Regional Forum in May 2024, further strengthened the programme's impact. This larger, international setup provided a broader context for collaboration, enabling meaningful exchanges among cities and laying a solid foundation for future cooperation. The workshop facilitated collective consideration of common goals and strategies, promoting ongoing learning and cooperation.

A peer-learning programme to foster collaboration and empower city officers

Overall, the peer-learning programme significantly strengthened connections and fostered collaborative efforts among participating cities. Cities deepened their relationships within their clusters, leading to valuable exchanges of knowledge and practices. Several participating cities have indicated their ambitions to continue its work by organizing extensive meetings and working groups with other Italian cities to further exchange information and replicate successful practices. This programme has been instrumental in pushing for sustained exchanges and the replication of good practices across participating cities.

Many cascade cities were at the beginning of their food policy journeys, often struggling to convince other departments and stakeholders of the need to incorporate food

considerations across various sectors. Through the programme's activities, these cities gained valuable knowledge, experience, and connections, which provided them with arguments and evidence to highlight the cross-sectoral importance of food issues and the need for comprehensive approaches. It is however important to stress that for the participants to be fully able to implement the programme's learnings, structural, financial and most importantly political support is crucial. The programme and this report both aim to highlight the critical need for this support.

1. Introduction

Food Trails is a Horizon 2020 four-year project that unites a Consortium of 19 partners, comprising 11 European cities, 4 universities, and 5 prominent food system stakeholders. The project aims to enable cities to reimagine, develop and implement sustainable, healthy and inclusive food policies. These narratives are collaboratively developed and validated through the activities of 11 multi-objective and multi-actor Living Labs, which are dedicated to addressing the priority areas outlined in the flagship FOOD 2030 framework. The project focuses on fostering sustainable food systems through innovative policy solutions and practical interventions.

The Cascade Learning Programme was organised at the culmination of the Food Trails project with a clear objective: to disseminate the knowledge and best practices generated by researchers and participating cities. This initiative aimed to extend the impact of the project beyond its immediate consortium, facilitating knowledge sharing through three key activities: cascade visits hosted by Food Trails cities, a series of eight webinars connecting Food Trails cities with experts, and a replication workshop held during the Eurocities Working Group and Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Regional Forum. By engaging numerous cities across the EU and beyond, alongside diverse stakeholders including NGOs, researchers and network organisations, the programme sought to leverage collective expertise and experience in advancing urban food policies globally.

Throughout the programme, cities actively participated in sharing insights, challenges and successes related to their respective food policy initiatives. The cascade visits provided opportunities for direct exchanges and site visits, offering first-hand experiences of successful practices implemented by host cities. The webinars served as platforms for targeted discussions and knowledge transfer between Food Trails cities and experts in various fields relevant to sustainable food systems. Meanwhile, the replication workshop gathered stakeholders to collaboratively explore strategies for adapting and scaling successful practices in different urban contexts.

This report focuses on providing a comprehensive overview of how each activity within the Cascade Learning Programme was organised and executed which can be read in Chapter 2 and 3. More importantly, it will highlight the key results and outcomes achieved during this intensive six-month period, as thoroughly developed in Chapter 4 and 5. This report provides project officers and programme organisers with practical insights and proven methodologies to effectively design and implement peer learning programmes. For funding officers and grant authorities, it provides evidences for the impact of such learning programmes, offering a strong case for investing in similar initiatives. Additionally, it highlights the strategic importance of peer learning for political entities, illustrating how these programmes foster collaboration, innovation, and improved governance among city officers. By documenting the successes, challenges and lessons learnt, the report aims to showcase the impact of the programme in advancing urban food policies and contributing to the broader movement towards sustainable food systems worldwide.

2. Organising the programme

2.1 How are the cascade visits, webinars and replication workshop connected?

Following the project definition, the Cascade Learning Programme was established as part of the dissemination activities for the project's final year. The aim of these activities was to disseminate, or to **cascade**, the experiences and best practices developed during the project to cities outside of the consortium in an interactive way. The key component of these activities was their diversity in both content and format. Ultimately, these activities aimed to combine different learning methods to extend the impact of the disseminated knowledge and experiences.

Three main activities were organised:

- **11 cascade visits:** Each of the 11 cities of the Food Trails project hosted a visit inviting officers from up to three other cities. These two and a half day, in-person exchanges aimed to share on-the-ground experiences and best practices fostering genuine interactions among city officers.
- **A series of 8 webinars:** Eight one-hour online sessions focusing on one specific topic on urban food policy were organised during the programme. Moderated by Eurocities, each session featured an expert from the project in conversation with city officers from two Food Trails cities. These webinars aimed to provide a concise yet insightful exploration of urban food system challenges, supported by concrete real-life examples.
- **A replication workshop:** organised during the Eurocities Food Working Group and Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) Regional Forum in May 2024, the replication workshop gathered both Food Trails and cascade cities together as a follow-up to the cascade visits. The aim was to encourage city officers to deepen their exchanges and focus with peers on topics of mutual interest.

This programme aimed to transfer the innovative approaches and knowledge generated within the project to cities outside the consortium. The three types of activities successfully gathered city officers from both European and non-European cities to discuss key topics on sustainable food systems and urban food policies. While the visits and replication workshops were more selective due to limited spots and geographical constraints, the webinars reached a broader audience, extending the geographical scope.

The question of geographical scope was also thoroughly thought through when planning the programme and thinking about its reach. Before the launch of the Food Trails project, together with the **MUFPP Secretariat**, a list of cities worldwide was identified and a letter of support for the Food Trails project was requested. These are cited as follower cities, in addition to those defined as cascade cities.

While the programme aimed first at further involving these cities in their activities, the MUFPP strategies evolved since the beginning of the project and now are aiming to implement a **process of regionalisation at a global level**. Based on the assumption that cities face similar challenges and seek appropriate solutions for their specific geographical and socio-economic contexts, the Milan Pact has created dedicated spaces to promote regionalisation process. Based on this, the MUFPP involved Food Trails partners and experts to participate in different worldwide events and initiatives with the same aim conceived during the project presentation phase but therefore changing the way of interacting with the cities considered most interesting in collaborating with Food Trails. This happened on the side of the cascade programme and more information on it can be read on Annex I and in the revised exploitation plan.

The organisation of the Cascade Learning Programme involved a close collaboration between Eurocities and the project's researchers. The planning and execution of visits, webinars, and workshop were heavily supported by the researchers' scientific expertise and methodology. This collaboration was crucial in fostering high-quality learning, as their insights and knowledge ensured the content was both relevant and impactful. Concurrently, Eurocities managed the logistics, facilitation and coordination, utilising their extensive experience in working with European cities to ensure smooth execution and engagement across the programme and with its different participants.

2.2 The Cascade Visits

2.2.1 Objectives of the peer-learning programme

The cascade visits aimed to facilitate the transfer of expertise and experiences from the Food Trails cities to the cascade cities, thereby enhancing their capacity to tackle food challenges and develop long-term strategies for transforming food systems. Through an open call for applications shared through multiple platforms, interested cities applied, detailing their learning needs and interests and selecting a Food Trails Living Lab for peer-learning exchanges.

Each visit was structured around peer-to-peer mentoring, where individuals working on similar issues shared experiences and learned from one another. This mentoring involved one-to-one relationships between a mentor (a Food Trails city with specific expertise) and a mentee (a Cascade city eager to learn and apply new insights). From both entities, the officers participating in the programme were skilled professionals responsible for the development and/or implementation of sustainable strategies in the city, with an extra focus on food and urban food policies. This turned out to be crucial for facilitating effective and proficient exchanges. Eurocities acted as the facilitator, supporting interactions and providing overall guidance throughout the programme. These visits also followed a similar peer learning exchange structure organised between the Food Trails cities earlier in the project (read D6.4 and D6.5). While the methodology for learning differed slightly, the

content and structure of the visit was quite similar, therefore preparing better the Food Trails city in hosting and presenting their activities to city officers from outside the project.

2.2.2 Selection process and clustering

The selection process for the cascade visits involved a comprehensive evaluation of applications based on the following criteria:

- **Overall Quality of the Application:** Applications were assessed for clarity, completeness, detail, and consistency in the answers provided.
- **Interest and Experience in the Thematic Area:** Alignment with the thematic focus of the Food Trails Living Lab was considered.
- **Common Challenges:** The presence of shared challenges among the cities was evaluated.
- **Population Size and Geographical Similarities:** Applications were reviewed for similarities in population size and geographical circumstances.
- **Role of Participants:** The roles of participants (e.g., technicians, members of the international department, policymakers) were considered to ensure appropriate match for the exchanges.

The applicants provided details information about their city's learning needs through the application form: an extensive survey tailored to assess the above-mentioned criteria. Food Trails partners reviewed and assessed each application to effectively pair cascade cities with the appropriate Living Labs and to ensure a relevant and impactful learning experience. After selection, the participants were grouped into 11 clusters, each aligned with a specific Food Trails Living Lab and tailored to address specific food system challenges. To better understand the activities and thematic areas of the Living Labs, applicants were encouraged to explore presentation videos and factsheets.

Food Trails City	Cascade Cities	Focus of the Visit
Bergamo	Almere Ostend Nice Cote d'Azur	Urban agriculture and short supply chains Connections with local stakeholders and producers Food education and healthy food environments Food waste reduction
Birmingham	Helsinki Bristol	Local governance for food strategy implementation Food insecurity Creation of local food ecosystem for innovation and new business models Urban planning for food production
Bordeaux Metropole	Nantes Metropole Padua Sarajevo	Stakeholders' engagement and food council Rural-urban connections, agricultural land and support to local farmers Public procurement and short supply chains for collective catering
Copenhagen	Bury (Manchester) Bologna**	Public procurement for decarbonisation of collective catering

	Hounslow (Greater London Area)*	Short supply chains Access to healthy food for all (canteens, markets etc). Foster local political engagement to develop an integrated action on food
Funchal	Matosinhos Lambeth (Greater London Area)	Food literacy and food education/ awareness raising on healthy and sustainable diets Gastronomy as a leverage for integrate action on food Stakeholders' engagement Local and urban food production Access to good and local food for all
Grenoble Alpes Metropole	Gdansk Budapest	Local food production and short supply chains Local food governance and food council Food procurement in public catering Food waste reduction
Groningen	Glasgow Bradford	Urban food production Stakeholders' engagement Implementation of strategy Connecting scattered actors, decision-makers and policy to foster systemic change
Milan	Rennes Metropole Aix-Marseille Metropole Lisbon Metropolitan Area	Local food production and agriculture Procurement and school canteens circularity Developing an integrated local action on food Food aid and recovery
Thessaloniki	Antalya Roeselare	Food council and stakeholders' engagement Gastronomy city as leverage for integrated food policy Food waste prevention and valorisation
Tirana	Campobasso Taranto	Urban food production and connections with local producers and farmers Building a network of stakeholders at the local and regional level Developing an integrated approach to food
Warsaw	Cagliari Metropolitan Area Livorno	Food waste management solutions and optimisation of food surplus distribution for food aid Young people engagement and food education Food innovation

Table 1- Cascade visits clusters overview and focus of the visit

* This cascade city was selected for the visit and followed the preparation meetings. Due to unforeseen event, they were not able to join the visit.

** This cascade city was selected for the visit and followed the preparation meetings. Due to unforeseen event, they were not able to join the visit. Officers from this city however did participate in the replication workshop.

2.2.3 Outline of the programme for the cascade cities

The Cascade Learning Programme involved a structured collaboration between two to three cascade cities and one Food Trails city over six months as summarised in Table 2. This collaboration was designed to build upon the earlier selection and clustering phases. It began with one or two online preparatory meetings where the cities discussed the Living Lab, shared learning needs, and evaluated the transferability of innovative practices. These meetings required preparation from both the cascade and Food Trails cities. The cascade presented during the meetings their learning needs and current state of activities. The Food Trails cities then could use these as inputs for organising the visit and provided extra information in preparation of the visit.

The core of the programme was a two-and-a-half-day study visit to a Food Trails city, allowing cascade cities to observe activities, exchange feedback and gain practical insights to facilitate the adoption of good practices. During the last day of the visit, the participants were introduced to the Food Policy Action Canva (FPAC) (see section 2.2.4) to strategise on the implementation of concrete actions, based on the learnings of the visit.

Following the study visit, cascade cities developed an action plan to implement the observed practices in their own contexts through developing further the firstly drafted FPAC of the visit. The programme concluded with an online follow-up meeting to reflect on the knowledge gained, address any remaining questions and assess the feasibility of replication based on each city's unique circumstances. The cities therefore presented their updated FPAC and could receive direct feedback from their peers. A more extended version of the agenda can be found in the Annex II.



Table 2 - Outline of the programme for the cascade cities

2.2.4 The Food Policy Action Canvas

Directly inspired from the well-known Business Model Canvas, the Food Policy Action Canvas (FPAC) has been developed as part of the Food Trails project to help the 11 partner cities develop their Living Labs activities. The FPAC acts as a guiding tool for the implementation of food actions and policies in cities. The objective of this tool is to help cities assess their local context, map barriers and drivers for food policies, to develop feasible and relevant food policies and actions.

Similar to business models, policy actors need to define what the desired change is going to be and how the solution will look like. The FPAC offers 4 stages to support the drafting of effective and inclusive food policies:

1. Identifying food policy needs (value proposition)
2. Identifying citizens, communities, and stakeholders (value creation)
3. Creating food policy ideas (value creation)
4. Developing food policy ideas (value capture)

Concretely, the FPACs supports the implementation of food policy actions by outlining which stakeholders need to be involved, which resources need to be mobilized, which activities need to be undertaken, which channels should be used to reach the beneficiary, which co-creation methods need to be deployed, and which drivers and barriers need to be considered. The figure below further explains the structure of the FPAC.

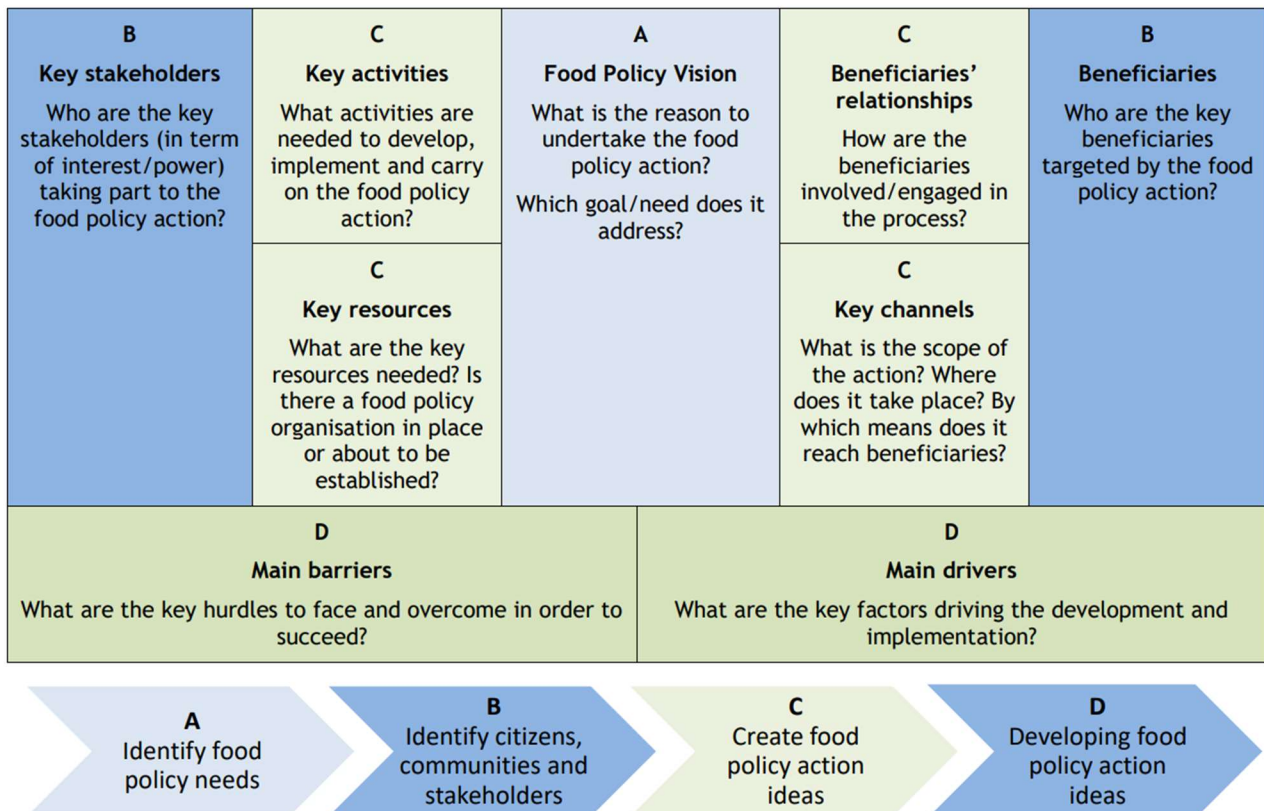


Figure 1- The Food Policy Action Canvas

During the last day of the visit, cascade cities developed their own FPAC based on the visit's learnings and inspiration. The aim of this workshop was to identify potential actions and concrete steps to replicate the good practices or inspiring approaches explored with the Food Trails city, assess levers for replication and foster the development of food actions or policies. Cascade cities were supported in by the Food Trails partners and their respective host city during the workshop.

Upon their return, the cascade cities were encouraged to go further in the framework through assessing it with their colleagues and therefore go further in detailing feasible and more concrete actions. During the follow up meeting after the visit, each cascade city officer presented their 'improved' FPAC. This meeting was also the opportunity to receive extra feedback and advice from the Food Trails officer, host city and fellow cascade city officers. An anonymised example of a FPAC filled in by one of the participants can be found in Annex III.

2.3 The Webinar Series

2.3.1 Context and objectives

The 8 episodes of the webinar series 'Midday Munchies on Urban Food Policy' aimed to disseminate project results and encourage the replication of successful solutions from the Food Trails cities. The primary audience for these interactive discussions included European cities, cascade cities, Eurocities' Working Group Food cities and MUFPP signatory cities. Secondary participants encompassed EU decision-makers, food networks, organisations, and research institutions and cities worldwide.

Facilitated by Eurocities, each webinar included perspectives from one expert, either from Food Trails partners or Think Tank members, alongside representatives from two Food Trails cities providing local insights and experiences. These interactive online sessions were designed to facilitate cross-pollination of ideas, share practical knowledge and inspire cities to adopt innovative approaches in their efforts towards food systems transformation.

It was important for ensuring a good organisation and inspiring series to collect feedback throughout each episode. To the speakers, an informal 5-minute session was organised after the webinar to reflect on the episode and gather their recommendations for improvement. Similar feedback was requested to the audience by asking them to fill in a short form after the webinar. This feedback helped in continuously improve each episode and were crucial in assessing the overall impact of the series.

2.3.2 Selected topics and speakers

Summarising four years of project results into eight one-hour sessions presented a significant challenge. It was crucial to cater to the interests of the target audience: cities seeking insights into urban food policies, whether they were starting out or looking to deepen their initiatives. The selection of these eight topics was informed by the applications submitted by cascade cities for the cascade visits, where they outlined their current areas of focus and desired areas for further knowledge. This information, combined with the expertise and activities of the 11 Food Trails cities, guided the choice of the following eight topics:

1. *Why develop urban food policies?*
2. *Putting food on the local agenda: how to engage citizens and foster behavioural changes?*
3. *Which tools support cities in developing and implementing an urban food policy?*
4. *How to work on food waste prevention and reduction?*
5. *How do we use food procurement to foster more sustainable and inclusive cities?*
6. *How can a city foster local and quality food production?*
7. *How to finance cities' food ambitions?*
8. *How to ensure access to healthy and quality food for all?*

The selection of speakers for each topic was based on their specific areas of expertise. Similarly, cities were chosen based on their ongoing activities and achievements related to the respective webinar topics. It was essential to align each city with a session where they could effectively showcase compelling and innovative initiatives during the webinar.

2.3.3 Promoting and disseminating the webinar series

Effective promotion and communication were crucial to reaching cities beyond the usual Food Trails network and ensuring steady participation in each episode. The Food Trails communications officers, with support from partner platforms, played a key role in this effort. Before the series began, an introductory article was shared on the project's social media and in the various newsletters of the partners (Eurocities Working Group Food, MUFPP and Slow Food channels). Each webinar was promoted in advance, initially announcing the topic and later introducing the speakers.

After the final episode of the series, a summary article was posted on the Food Trails website, where participants could also access recordings of the sessions. This article was reshared by multiple partners. Throughout the summer, these recordings were also advertised to ensure they remained accessible to everyone interested. The link to each of the recordings can be found in Annex IV.

2.4 The Replication Workshop

2.4.1 Objectives and replication aspect

The workshop was strategically scheduled following the cascade visits and during the regional forum, thereby embedding it within an international cooperation framework. This context enriched the workshop by fostering deeper collaboration and exchange among cities from different regions and backgrounds. By leveraging insights gained during the cascade visits and webinars, the session aimed to amplify the impact of shared experiences and best practices across diverse urban contexts.

Emphasising the replication of successful initiatives among cascade cities, participants were encouraged to continue exchanging experiences beyond the session and programme to promote ongoing learning and cooperation. The workshop therefore focused on discussing how cascade cities planned to replicate practices and identifying potential pilot actions and relevant opportunities offered by other projects such as the upcoming Cleverfood peer-learning programme. The in-person session aimed to deepen collaboration through platforms such as Eurocities Working Group Food and the Milan Pact, identifying cities interested in collaborative projects and working groups. Overall, the session aimed to enhance mutual learning and collective action in addressing urban food challenges through international cooperation and shared expertise.

2.4.2 Participants and topics discussed

The workshop comprised five breakout sessions, each centred on a specific topic. Participants were grouped according to their chosen focus areas identified during the last day of the cascade visit when completing their food policy action plans. The topics selected were the following:

- Localised Food Systems
- Food Waste Management
- Canteens and Public Procurement
- Stakeholder Engagement and Governance
- Food Education

Each group consisted of representatives from two Food Trails cities and between three to six cascade cities. Additionally, cities not involved in the cascade visits but attending the workshop were encouraged to join the group discussing the topic most relevant to them. This structured approach allowed for in-depth discussions and collaborative problem-solving tailored to each thematic area, fostering comprehensive exploration and sharing of insights among diverse city stakeholders.

Group	Topic	Food Trails Cities	Cascade Cities
A	Localized food system	Thessaloniki, Groningen	Almere, Taranto
B	Food waste	Milan, Warsaw	Livorno, Cagliari

C	Canteens and Public Procurement	Copenhagen, Bordeaux Metropole	Sarajevo, Helsinki, Bologna
D	Stakeholder Engagement and Governance	Grenoble, Tirana, Birmingham	Nantes, Lambeth, Antalya – Muratpasa, Roeselare, Padua, Budapest
E	Food Education	Funchal, Bergamo	Matosinhos, Nice, Oostende

Table 3 - Thematic groups for the replication workshop

3. Timeline of the activities

The three activities (visits, webinars and the replication workshop) were closely aligned in their objectives and organised as integral parts of the same programme. Their interconnectedness ensured synergies among them. The topics explored during each visit, webinar and session of the replication workshop complemented one another, providing participants with both theoretical knowledge and practical tools to advance sustainable urban food policies.

To effectively analyse the programme's outcomes, it was crucial to visualise the timeline of each activity and their interconnections, including the specific topics discussed. This section presents a comprehensive timeline (Figure 2), showcasing how each activity was connected. The MUFPP framework was utilised to streamline this overview, offering a structured approach to understanding how each activity contributed to the overall goal of enhancing urban food sustainability initiatives.

To this timeline, the table below (Table 4) can be added to emphasise the outcomes of the 8 webinars organised throughout the program. The views of the YouTube recording however will still evolve as the videos aimed to be available permanently on the platform. The numbers of the table were lastly updated on the 13/08/2024. A deeper analysis of the numbers can be read in the next section of the report.

Webinar	Date	Number of signups	Number of participants /unique viewers	YouTube recording views	Cascade City officers attended	all City officers
1	26/03/24	158	72	264	5	29
2	30/04/24	179	79	154	3	19
3	07/05/24	103	42	74	2	15
4	28/05/24	119	59	62	5	21
5	04/06/24	98	35	88	1	4
6	11/06/24	77	27	57	1	18
7	18/06/24	97	32	45	0	9
8	25/06/24	105	36	46	0	9

Table 4 - Webinars analytics

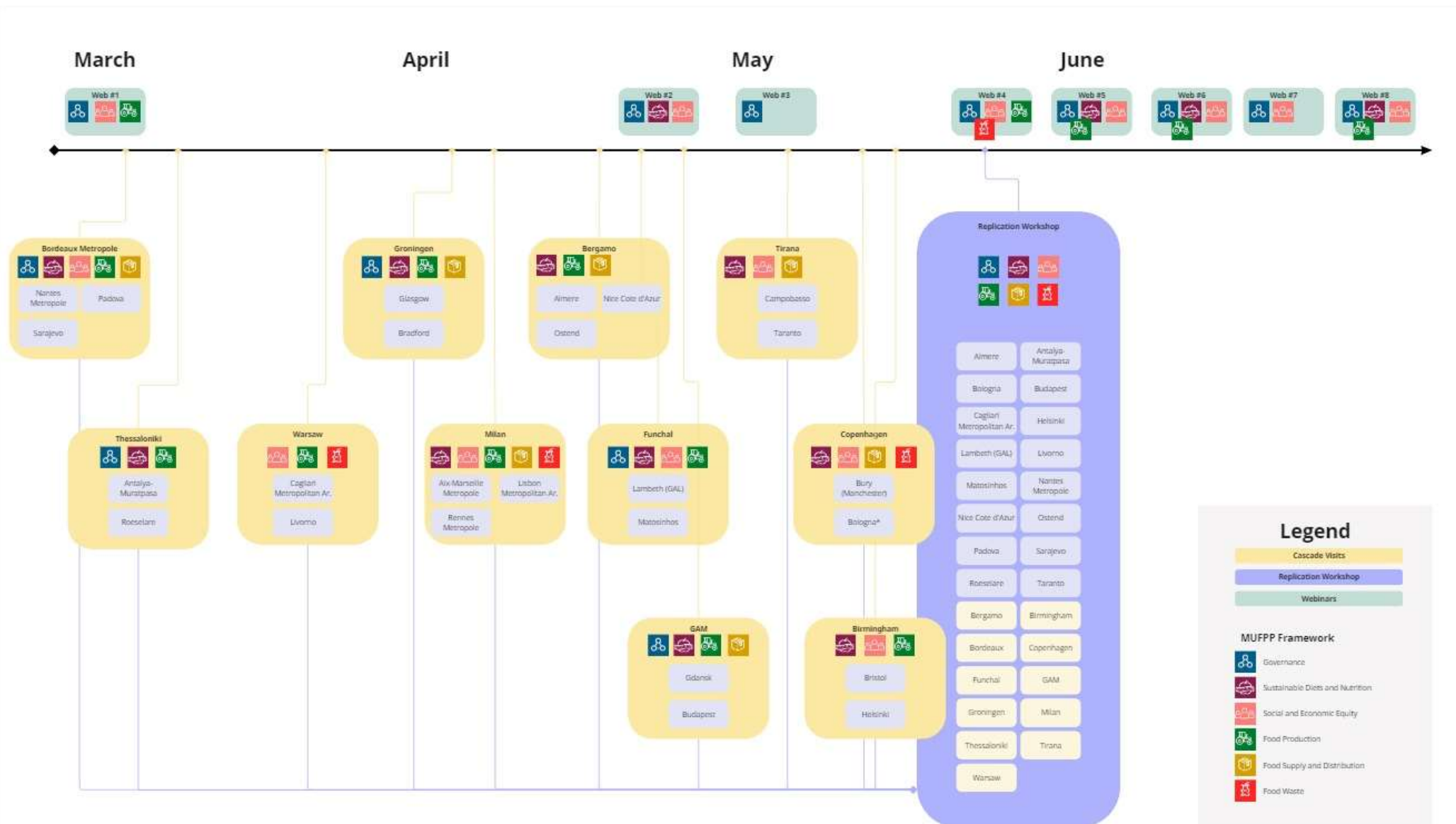


Figure 2 - Timeline of the activities

4. Outcomes of the cascade learning

4.1 Outcomes of the activities: gathering extensive qualitative feedback

During and after each of the activities, feedback was collected thoroughly from both direct notes of the facilitators and follow-up surveys sent to the participants. Regarding the cascade visits, each participant was asked to fill in a short form following up the meeting after the visit gathering 22 answers (out of 25 participants). The notes from the visits and the follow-up meetings with each cluster were also used to feed on the results. After the replication workshop, the cascade cities have all been asked to answer a more extended survey on the overall Cascade Learning Programme which gathered 24 answers (out of 25 participants). This survey helped assessing the overall experience of the cities in all three activities as well as their planned next steps after the programme. The notes from the facilitators of the replication workshop were also gathered for additional insights on the workshop and the breakout sessions. An additional form was sent during each of the 8 webinars and gathered 43 answers.

The close collaboration between the different stakeholders and participants of the programme allowed for genuine and direct exchange during and after the programme, therefore fostering the sharing of honest and direct feedback from the participants to the facilitators. This section presents a nuanced summary of the different outcomes for each of the programme's activities.

4.2 Cascade visits: In-person deep-dive for a genuine exchange

4.2.1 Preparing and following up on the visits

Before the cascade visits, online meetings helped set the stage and logistics between the participants. These initial meetings allowed participants to better understand the topics at hand and to begin building connections with one another. It also provided a platform for the host to gain insight into the specific interests and needs of the cascade participants and thereby better tailor the cascade visits to effectively address the concerns and goals of each participant, fostering a more engaging and productive experience.

“It was good that there was a process of preparation, actual meeting, homework and follow-up” (Cascade city officer 1)

Following the visits, a follow-up online meeting was equally important to sustain momentum and ensure continuity and having allowed participants to reflect on the visit in the meantime. This meeting served as a platform for participants to discuss the insights and feedback gathered during the visits and to strategize on next steps. The cascade participants, upon returning to their respective colleagues with the Food Policy Action Canva (FPAC), emphasised the value of maintaining these connections. The follow-up

helped solidify the collaborative spirit fostered during the visits and ensured that the ideas and suggestions generated were put into actionable plans, reinforcing the commitment to ongoing collaboration.

The 11 cascade visits took place in 9 different countries and hosted officers from 25 cities out of 11 different countries – representing a total of 14 nationalities. From a logistical perspective, the organisation of the visits therefore demanded considerable efforts from the participants, the hosts and the facilitators of each visit. Prior to the visit itself the exact date needed to be set up between the participants. The hosts needed to coordinate with their different partners the planning of the visit to best balance the content-focused moments and the field-visits. After the visit, follow-ups on the post-visit meeting, reimbursement procedure and surveys were also crucial to ensure a proper wrapping-up of the programme. These different activities required strong coordination skills from the facilitators as well as tight collaboration between the hosts, the facilitators, and the cascade cities officers. The experience of the Food Trails partners in organising field-visits was here a key success factor in organising so smoothly the 11 visits.

4.2.2 The importance of in-person exchanges

“You learn mainly by seeing what you know in theory also applied in practice. It's about hearing, feeling, smelling, seeing... The experiences during our trip to Thessaloniki are therefore top moments in terms of learning opportunities” (Cascade city officer 2)

The cascade visits themselves were highly valued for their depth and intimacy, allowing for detailed discussions and the exchange of targeted ideas and suggestions. This small group format facilitated a more focused dialogue, where participants could delve deeper into specific challenges and opportunities. Additionally, informal exchanges, such as sharing meals and bilateral chats played a significant role in building trust among participants. These in-person interactions allowed for open conversations about shared challenges, greatly enhancing the overall effectiveness of the visits through a stronger sense of mutual understanding and collaboration.

Meeting in person, engaging in in-depth discussions, and participating in field visits created the perfect combination for deep learning. City officers from the cascade cities were encouraged to think beyond their routine activities and consider broader perspectives. As one participant noted, **“Working with other cities is always useful because it makes you realise the common challenges and that some difficulties can be overcome with appropriate means and projects that you may not have imagined in your own area” (Cascade city officer 3)**. This collaborative environment not only highlighted shared challenges but also showcased innovative solutions that could be adapted and implemented in different contexts. In several cases, participants expressed the visit allowed them to realise they were not alone in facing these challenges and gave them motivation knowing they were part of a wider movement towards sustainable urban food systems. This was the case for the city officers from Gdansk (Poland) and Osmangazi (Turkey) who do not have many colleagues working on food policy.

Beyond meeting with fellow city officers, it was also the occasion for the cascade cities to meet with other stakeholders working with the host city. These interactions were not always held in the native language of all participants, but a translation was always made possible thanks to the host or the Eurocities facilitator. One example is the visit of smallholder farmer working on Community Supported Agriculture around Bordeaux Metropole. This visit not only gave a concrete example of an alternative way for sustainable and fair farming, but also allowed deeper exchanges on the challenges farmers currently face, and the importance of structural support from public bodies and the potential consumers have when considered as a community.

“The diverse topics and sessions during the visit were not only engaging and thought provoking: it gave real life examples of how we can improve our food systems both locally and nationally.” (Cascade city officer 4)

Finally, the hosting cities also gained valuable insights from the experience. Organising and structuring the visit prompted them to reflect on their progress over the past year as they practiced articulating their achievements and explaining their initiatives. The city officers noted how the visit really allowed them to take a step back on the work done the past few years, and to learn on how to explain and transfer the knowledge and experiences acquired.

“We just hosted Bury. For me, it helped give me time to reflect on what we are doing as a city. It's like a mirror when we describe what we are doing and see reactions from other cities. It makes us think - what are we doing? How does it work? Is it enough?” (Food Trails City officer 1)

Most importantly, the exchange with the cascade cities also allowed the hosts to learn from their peers' best practices. Cascade cities bringing their experiences in the exchanges transformed the interactions from a simple mentor-mentee exchange into a genuine peer-to-peer learning experience. This mutually beneficial environment enabled both the host and visiting cities to share knowledge and innovative approaches, enhancing the overall impact of each visit and pushing for further collaboration after the visit.

“We just hosted Helsinki & Bristol: it was a fantastic experience. It allowed us to pause and reflect on what we do as a team. We also brought together colleagues from different parts of the city. Great way of being reminded of how we can, and do, work with our colleagues.” (Food Trails City officer 2)

4.3 Beyond the cascade cities, reaching more cities through the webinars

4.3.1 Good format for exchange and targeted learning

The series of eight webinars provided concrete examples from Food Trails cities that were greatly appreciated. These webinars showcased a variety of different and interesting projects, offering valuable opportunities for sharing experiences and practices, as well as proposing solutions to common challenges. The diverse range of topics highlighted the innovative approaches being implemented, allowing participants to gain practical insights that could be adapted to their own contexts.

“If I have the time, I will join the next ones, because I think the format is really smooth and nice to follow: not too much [or not too little] information at once.” (Webinar participant 1)

The format of shorter but more targeted knowledge-sharing activities proved to be highly effective, receiving positive feedback from participants. This approach ensured that the information was concise and easily digestible, preventing information overload. Participants noted that the smooth and well-structured format made it easy to follow, with the moderator and speakers maintaining an engaging pace. The time dedicated to presentations was just right, ensuring that the content was comprehensive yet concise. The combination of brief theoretical overviews followed by practical examples was particularly well-received. The way each speaker conveyed their knowledge, experience and enthusiasm proved to enhance the overall learning experience. Additionally, the opportunity for participants to ask precise questions was deemed useful, fostering interactive and dynamic discussions.

“Great to have brief theory and then practice examples. All of them were good communicators, experienced, and passionate” (Webinar participant 2)

It is also useful to note that the webinars allowed connections between peers during but also after the webinars. Multiple cities reached out to the speakers after the session to go more in depth on dedicated topics, and therefore extending the benefits of the knowledge-sharing activities beyond the sessions themselves. For example, the city of Liège (Belgium) which learned about the webinar series through the MUFPP, reached out to the webinar organisers to learn more about Food Policy Councils and express interest in further developing their urban food policy and being involved in future opportunities. As a direct outcome, they applied to participate in the Cleverfood peer-learning programme on Food Policy Councils and Food Policy Labs.

“Thank you so much, this is such a brilliant series of webinars!” (Webinar participant 3)

4.3.2 A look at the participants: few cascade cities, a lot of other cities

Despite a notably low cascade city participation, the webinar series achieved significant outreach beyond the consortium. This success can be attributed to several key factors. Firstly, the webinars addressed timely and relevant topics in urban food policies, drawing interest from a diverse global audience eager to learn from the experiences and insights shared. Secondly, proactive outreach efforts and effective dissemination strategies ensured broad visibility. These efforts included targeted communications through networks, partnerships with relevant organizations, and leveraging digital platforms and social media to maximize engagement. This broad reach underscores the series' effectiveness in disseminating knowledge, sharing best practices, and fostering international collaboration to advance sustainable urban food systems globally.

Reflecting on the webinars' timeline, some adjustments could be made for a potential future similar series. Most of the episodes were happening simultaneously with the cascade visits and the replication workshop. While this already added some organisational challenges for the facilitators who oversaw both the visits and the webinars, it also could explain the low participation of the cascade cities in the webinars. Adding to this, it is also worth noting that May and June are usually busy professional months, which translated into a lower attendance level. These learnings are important to take into consideration when organising another similar series.

4.4 Replication Workshop

4.4.1 Key Outcomes of the workshop

The replication workshop, held during the Eurocities Food Working Group and MUFPP Regional Forum in May 2024, produced significant outcomes for the Cascade Learning Programme. Since cascade cities and Food Trails cities participated in this larger and more international setup, it provided a broader context for collaboration on food-related initiatives. This not only laid foundation for future cooperation but also created more opportunities for learning and exchange. Participants engaged in meaningful exchanges, also with cities they did not specifically engage with prior to this meeting. This interaction enabled cities to collectively consider common goals and strategies.

The session was organised in five thematic groups, each representing different cities. The primary themes included food education, stakeholder engagement and governance, public procurement, food waste reduction, and the development of localized food systems. Discussions focused on sharing best practices, identifying challenges, and setting future goals for collaborative improvement.

Food Education

Cities Involved: Funchal, Bergamo, Matosinhos, Ostend, Nice Metropole

- **Initiatives and Community Engagement:** Cities shared successful school canteen initiatives and community activities such as vegetable gardening and cooking classes.
- **Challenges and Collaboration:** They faced difficulties in stakeholder engagement and governance but explored collaborative opportunities to share resources and best practices. Struggles like the absence of competencies cities have on food and/or education came back the most often.
- **Recommendations and Future Goals:** Key recommendations included improving communication, involving experts and using a nudging approach to change dietary behaviours. Great examples came from using a positive and engaging way to phrase sustainable (and plant-based) diets. Future goals focused on enhancing food education programs, reducing plastic use, developing community gardens, and creating digital tools for food literacy.

Stakeholders Engagement and Governance

Cities Involved: Grenoble Alpes Metropole, Tirana, Birmingham, Lambeth, Antalya, Roeselare, Padua, Budapest

- **Pilot Actions and Engagement Strategies:** Cities implemented pilot actions like food transition events and developed strategies such as living labs and forums to engage stakeholders. These activities were implemented both in Food Trails and cascade cities but at different level of maturity.
- **Challenges and Best Practices:** Challenges included achieving coherence among diverse stakeholders and navigating complex governance structures. Best practices emphasised building on existing networks and clear communication.
- **Future Goals:** Goals included clarifying actions for effectiveness, enhancing citizen involvement, and integrating food strategies into broader municipal plans.

Public Procurement

Cities Involved: Copenhagen, Bordeaux Metropole, Bristol, Sarajevo, Bologna, Helsinki

- **Innovative Strategies and Stakeholder Engagement:** Cities shared innovative procurement strategies, such as Copenhagen's organic food goals without extra budget, and emphasized involving stakeholders through market dialogues and food policy councils. For cities starting up the work on food procurement, this gave them great first steps and advice to go further in their work.
- **Challenges and Tools:** Common challenges included navigating inflexible regulations and managing diverse procurement systems. Tools like Copenhagen's feedback app and Bordeaux's staff training were discussed.
- **Future Goals:** Goals included enhancing stakeholder engagement, improving contract management, and leveraging collaborations for procurement innovations and sustainability.

Food Waste

Cities Involved: Milan, Warsaw, Livorno, Cagliari

- **Approach and Innovative Actions:** Efforts focused on reducing food waste through school canteens, food donation and awareness campaigns. Digital platforms and food charity hubs supported these initiatives.
- **Challenges and Compliance:** Key challenges involved overcoming regulatory and cultural barriers and ensuring safety and compliance in food donation processes.
- **Future Goals:** Emphasis was on enhancing local supply chains, increasing food donations, renovating markets as food labs, and fostering a culture of food waste reduction through awareness and engagement.

Localized Food Systems

Cities Involved: Almere, Taranto, Groningen, Thessaloniki

- **Pilot Actions and Success Factors:** Cities promoted healthy, sustainable, and plant-based food, supported by political ambition and cross-departmental task forces.
- **Challenges and Strategies:** Maintaining focus during political transitions and the lack of dedicated food policy teams were key challenges. Strategies included keeping food policy activities on the agenda and promoting local gardens and urban agriculture.
- **Future Goals:** Future efforts aimed at addressing the convenience mindset favouring supermarkets, tackling challenges from conservative local governments, and drawing inspiration from successful models to establish municipal task forces.

“We are all facing similar challenges. It was very inspiring to be able to come here and see how the Food Trails project is moving towards wrapping up. Cascade cities are just starting out. We all have similar challenges. As a cascade city, we can see what you [the Food Trails cities] have achieved in your time in the project, and go back to colleagues and say 'they had similar challenges and this is what they did'.”

Overall, the cascade cities valued the larger get-together event and the deeper discussions during the replication workshop. The opportunity to exchange ideas with other

Food Trails cities was well-received, though there were suggestions to provide more opportunities for cascade cities to take the spotlight. This could be an option to consider for potential further activities with the cascade cities in the future. The workshop and event were successful in inspiring participants, an event was inspiring, with participants motivated by seeing so many cities united in their efforts to improve food systems.

4.5 The Food Policy Action Canvas: a commitment to working holistically

The Food Policy Action Canvas (FPAC) was used both during the cascade visits' workshop and follow-up meeting, as well as during the replication workshop. This tool has proven to be an effective tool for cities developing food policy actions as portrayed by the work of the Food Trails cities who themselves used the FPAC earlier in the project. This was greatly explained by the city of Bergamo in their participation to the third webinar episode focusing on the tools for urban food policy development and implementation (see Annex IV for link to the episode). The FPAC provides a comprehensive overview of selected activities and ambitions, facilitating a structured approach to planning and implementation. The iterative exercise encouraged the cities to reflect on the practical application of new knowledge, such as the logistics of distributing doggy bags to children and managing associated challenges or implementing food waste reduction initiatives in school canteens. This tool has made it easier for the participants to identify both the challenging and straightforward aspects of structuring and mapping actions or projects, helping to determine clear starting points. Moreover, the framework has proven to be an interesting tool to guide cities through their next steps, identifying key stakeholders, and strengthening strategies for future development.

“The tools and visits helped us set out the next steps for the City, who to involve, how to strengthen activities and further develop strategy”

The FPAC is not only an effective tool for developing food policy actions but also for convincing colleagues and higher-level authorities of the importance of these initiatives. In Padova (Italy), the FPAC has been instrumental in helping colleagues understand the critical role of food policies. The clear and structured layout of the canvas makes it easier to communicate complex ideas, which is essential for gaining support from politicians. For example, in Bury (United Kingdom), the FPAC was used as a basis to develop a comprehensive political note that successfully conveyed the importance of food policy initiatives to local politicians. This tool facilitates better communication and understanding, ensuring broader support for food policy actions.

“The food policy action canvas helps the other colleagues to understand the importance of food [policies] “

While the FPAC exercise provided valuable time for city officers to reflect on how to apply new knowledge, it sometimes proved to be challenging for some city officers to translate strategies into practical actions. The tool occasionally remained too theoretical, making it

difficult for participants to envision concrete implementations. Effective facilitation is crucial during these exercises, as it helps guide participants in narrowing down their ideas and visions into actionable steps. As one participant noted, there is a need for more practical and operational information to make the exercise more directly applicable, such as specific examples of how initiatives can be implemented and are managed daily.

“[The] exercise is useful to take time to think about how to use/apply new knowledge. But I would need more practical/operational information. “

Finally, the framework also ensured sustained engagement through a structured process that includes preparation, meetings, homework, and follow-up. This approach kept participants continuously involved and committed to the development and implementation of their chosen food policy actions through continuously coming back to their FPAC and revise it. The preparatory work prior to the visit and follow-up meeting afterwards topped-up with the replication workshop held in Warsaw reinforced the importance of the work and maintain momentum, ensuring that participants stay engaged throughout the process, and that they understand the importance of engaging colleagues and higher-level authorities. This comprehensive engagement strategy helps to solidify support and drive the successful adoption of food policies.

“It was good that there was a process of preparation, actual meeting, homework and follow-up”

4.6 Going further together, after the programme

As directly retrieved from the cities' feedback, all the activities of the peer-learning programme have created connections and fostered collaborative efforts among participating cities. Cascade cities have deepened their relationships with other cities in their clusters, leading to valuable exchanges of knowledge and practices. For instance, Padova plans to continue its work by creating exchanges of information on the processes that led to the realization of their food policy and replicating successful practices. They are organizing a more extensive meeting and working group with other Italian cities to further this goal. As Padova emphasized, **“[The programme helped us in] creating exchanges of information on the processes that led to the realisation of food policy and replicating, as far as possible, good practices.”**

Roeselare highlighted the potential of further developing a new project to build stronger ties, such as the exchange of chefs between Thessaloniki and Roeselare. Given Thessaloniki's status as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, this relationship is pivotal for Roeselare's aspirations. **“We hope to use a low-threshold project [...] to further forge ties. Considering Thessaloniki is a UNESCO creative city of gastronomy, and we want to become one, our relationship is very important.”** Similarly, Campobasso intends to sustain collaboration through new opportunities under the South Adriatic programs.

The programme also facilitated new connections and sparked interest in cross-city initiatives. The visit between Bury and Copenhagen led to an increased interest from Copenhagen in Bury's market and the potential to develop farmers markets in Copenhagen. In addition, during the online follow-up meeting, participants from Bury expressed that the visit, which included presentations on, and a visit to Copenhagen's "Food schools" had "given them the confidence" to reach out to London to exchange about school meals and London's free School Food Programme and offered to establish the connection with Copenhagen. This type of exchange is particularly interesting as Copenhagen has developed an approach focused on increasing the part of organic food served in schools whilst the United Kingdom's approach is to increase access to universal free school meals. These peer-learning exchanges have thus been instrumental in forging new partnerships and enhancing urban food policies across cities.

However, the programme would have benefited from fostering more concrete actions for post-programme collaboration opportunities such as informal agreements, the establishment of a network or the creation of joint projects. Additionally, there was a desire for more co-creation sessions, particularly during the replication workshop, which would benefit from advanced facilitation techniques to encourage deeper engagement and collaboration. Lastly, the limited budget restricted the number of municipal employees who could participate, highlighting the need to offer more opportunities for broader involvement. While this feedback clearly shows the motivation of the participants to go further in their work, it also suggests an improved design for such peer-learning programme, where concrete next steps can be formulated and, most importantly, supported.

"It would be useful if the programme could be combined with more action research/operational tools i.e. not just learning, but something more tangible." (Cascade city officer 6)

5. Discussion and recommendations

Given the short time frame between the completion of activities and the writing of this report, there was limited opportunity to fully assess the broader impact of the visits. However, this section provides some points for reflection on the programme's impact, discussing recommendations for future initiatives and highlighting key barriers in empowering cities to implement sustainable and effective urban food policies. Through these reflections and insights, we aim to offer an understanding of the programme's influence and potential areas for improvement.

5.1 Extended learning for all

The peer-learning programme proved to be an enriching experience for cascade cities with varying levels of experience in food policies. For cities that had little to no prior experience, the programme offered insights and practical knowledge, inspiring them to develop and implement effective food policies. This exposure helped these cities build a foundational understanding and establish initial steps towards robust food governance.

The programme was equally beneficial for more experienced cities. Nantes Metropole, which has been engaged in an ambitious food strategy and related actions for six years, found the programme valuable in refining specific aspects of their existing policies and drawing inspiration for new initiatives. They noted how the Cascade Learning Programme allowed them to **“consider just specific aspects or certain corrections or inspire some new ideas to put in practice”** (Cascade city officer 7). This dual benefit underscores the program's effectiveness in catering to cities at different stages of food policy development, fostering a comprehensive and inclusive peer-learning environment.

On a similar note, efficient clustering of cities working within similar contexts showed to be crucial for direct applicability of shared experiences and strategies. When cities face comparable challenges and operate on the same scale, like the suggestion from Nice to pair cities accordingly, they can more effectively implement best practices in their own contexts. However, learning from cities in completely different contexts also brings valuable insights. These cross-contextual exchanges foster innovation and provide fresh perspectives that can inspire new approaches to urban food policy. The exercise of replication plays a pivotal role here, helping cities translate successful actions from diverse settings to suit their unique circumstances. For example, Lambeth's suggestion for Eurocities to engage directly with London's 32 council boroughs highlights the importance of localised adaptations to enhance the effectiveness of broader initiatives.

Facilitators play a critical role in this process by guiding cities through the complexities of adaptation. Their support ensures that while cities may not replicate examples verbatim due to administrative differences and varying challenges, they can extract relevant principles and apply them effectively. This approach is timely and beneficial, particularly for cities in early stages of food policy development, as it equips them with the tools to integrate best practices from a range of contexts into their own strategies, fostering a robust framework for sustainable urban food policies.

5.2 Developing arguments to foster political ambition and structural support after the programme

Participating in the programme has provided cities without strong structural support for food policy implementation with valuable tools to advocate for change: knowledge, experience, and connections. Many cascade cities were in the early stages of their food policy efforts, facing the common challenge of convincing other departments and stakeholders of the importance of integrating food considerations across sectors. The programme equipped them with arguments and evidence, demonstrating the cross-sectoral nature of food issues and the necessity of comprehensive approaches.

“Certainly, the programme brought a technical boost to what was being done although clearly the political boost is also important. In this sense, the contact made with other cities will also serve to connect political representatives from other areas with ours so that they understand the importance and necessity of working on these issues.” (Cascade city officer 3)

Moreover, the programme has bolstered the confidence of cascade cities, encouraging them to expand their activities and pursue new projects. This built confidence has empowered cities to take bold steps in implementing lessons learned from the program. While specific examples of implementation are still emerging due to the recent nature of the program, the visits and exchanges have undoubtedly sparked momentum in cities, catalysing them to apply newfound knowledge and strategies back home. As these cities continue to develop their food policies, the program's impact could expect to yield tangible improvements in urban food systems across participating regions.

We have included the creation of a food council as well as the urban gardening project in our city's future note, but ultimately the decision will depend on politics. (Cascade city officer 2)

It is however important to note the presence of challenges to food system interventions that are beyond the remit of project participants to address. The main obstacles shared by the participants were financial, and/or lack of wider political support for this type of work. This was portrayed both during the programme and after. For example, one Cascade City participant began the project with a lack of wider municipal support but showed great enthusiasm and capacity for work on the topics of their FPAC. They benefited greatly from the shared learning on the Cascade City visit. However, upon return to their city, municipal restructuring has resulted in their being moved to another department. This shows a lost opportunity to maximise the benefit of their visit. Another city had to cancel their visit at the last minute, while another city who had been chosen to participate in the project withdrew very early after initial selection; both cases were due to wider pressures on staff resources. Although participation in the Cascade City programme was funded by Food Trails, without wider political and structural support, city representatives may struggle to engage with the project and implement follow-up activities.

“Well, one visit inspired us and gave us new ideas (and "munition" to take back home), but I doubt whether this will be the reason for transformation. In the end, transformation is influenced by many factors and [long-term] efforts, but also luck and political will (as we saw in many cases).” (Cascade city officer 8)

6. Conclusion

While the long-term impact of each activity is yet to be observed, the Cascade Learning Programme demonstrated its potential for fostering effective and meaningful exchanges and learning among city officers. Combined, the visits, the webinar series, and the replication workshop have offered a great blend of online, offline, extensive and targeted learning opportunities for city officers and other stakeholders to deepen their understanding of implementing sustainable urban food policies. Cities have a wealth of knowledge and experience to offer in developing sustainable food systems, and such a peer learning programme has empowered them to realise this potential.

The importance of in-person visits cannot be overstated, as they facilitate informal interactions where trust and lasting connections are built. The facilitators and hosts of the visits and workshop have had here a great role to play in efficiently fostering a space for genuine exchange and collaboration. Adding to this, it is important to recognise the considerate preparation work required for each visit, webinars and workshops. For the visit, it was crucial to make efficient pairs of cities to ensure a relevant experience for all. The webinar series required a good alignment between all speakers to ensure a sharp and enthusiastic session. Finally, the replication workshop greatly benefited from being organised in the context of the regional forum of the MUFPP and Eurocities Working Group Food.

The exchanges with the many cities who participated in the programme showed that consequent work still needs to be done to empower city officers working on food in their city. Such a peer learning programme is important for city officers to get out of their day-to-day activities to listen and learn what is being done elsewhere. These experiences have proven to be interesting for both cities at a very early stage in their work on food or for very advanced ones: the importance here is on fostering a mindset that is open to new learnings.

Lastly, beyond participating to further similar activities, a strong emphasis needs to be placed on the importance of political ambition and structural support that city officers need to efficiently engage with stakeholders in the city and create collaborative, efficient, and sustainable food policies. Implementing a food policy in a city is a long and challenging journey for any city officer and the many other stakeholders working on it, making structural, financial, and political support crucial—something that a peer learning programme alone cannot replace.

Annexes

Annex I – Regionalisation of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and impact on the participation of follower cities in the programme

Before the launch of the Food Trails project, together with the **Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) Secretariat**, a list of cities worldwide was identified and a letter of support for the Food Trails project was requested. In fact, the cities worldwide are cited as follower cities, in addition to those defined as cascade cities.

During the implementation of the project, the MUFPP strategies have evolved and have aimed at a **process of regionalisation at a global level**. Based on the assumption that cities face similar challenges and seek appropriate solutions for their specific geographical and socio-economic contexts, the Milan Pact has created dedicated spaces to promote regionalisation process. The first task of the new Steering Committee, elected in September 2023, was to draft the leadership plan. This action plan aims to identify joint activities, challenges and goals to be achieved during the mandate. The 6 leadership plans converge in the MUFPP Regionalisation Process Action Plan, which has the aim of providing a general overview of the regional processes that the MUFPP Secretariat and the Steering Committee representative aim to develop over the 2023-2025 mandate. In the meantime, several cities had elections and the local political situation changed rapidly.

Based on this new regionalization process, MUFPP involved Food Trails partners and experts to participate in different worldwide events and initiatives with the same aim conceived during the project presentation phase but therefore changing the way of interacting with the cities considered most interesting in collaborating with Food Trails.

The MUFPP launched the **5th MUFPP Regional Forum in Africa**, held from 17th to 19th July 2023, hosted by the city of Dakar, under the theme “Empowering City Officers for the Development of Food Strategies in Africa”. The training tools have been developed with the scientific support of Politecnico of Milan, as part of Food Trails, a Horizon 2020 project, led by the city of Milan. Participants gained valuable insights into identifying priorities and implementing actions to enhance their city’s food system.

Another important event was the **Milan Pact Awards Retreat** that took place in Milan from 13th to 16th June 2023. Only in 2022, the Milan Pact Awards received 251 practices from 133 cities in 47 countries. An international evaluation committee composed of 20 experts from prominent organizations of the United Nations, the European Commission, universities, and stakeholders active in food system transformation selected the six winning cities that have been invited to participate in the first MPA Retreat in Milan: New York (USA), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Rourkela (India), Rosario (Argentina), Yeosu (South Korea), London (UK). Of particular relevance, the workshop on transferability strategies, led by the team of the Horizon 2020 Food Trails project, where the six cities awarded with the Milan Pact Awards had the opportunity to discuss and plan the transfer and sharing of their practices with the MUFPP international community of over 265 cities.

There have been several **exchange activities with other world regions**, where different tools developed with Food Trails such as the Food Policy Action Canvas and the stakeholder

mapping tools have been further used by Asian cities on different occasions: **Capacity building in Seberang Perai** (Malaysia) in December 2022, **Bilateral exchange between Milan and Bangkok** (Thailand) in May 2023, **Food Waste Hub Study Tour** in Milan in June 2023 with Bloomberg, C40 and a delegation of ten cities from both the United States and the European Union participated in the tour (Austin, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Barcelona, Madrid, Paris, Amsterdam and Oslo).

These activities have been a sort of test that took place during the implementation of Food Trails and represent an action to be further expanded beyond the end of the project by MUFPP Secretariat as also indicated in the updated Food Trails Exploitation Plan.

Annex II – Agenda of a cascade visit : example from Groningen



Peer- learning visit in Groningen

Bradford and Glasgow

Date: April 8 – April 11

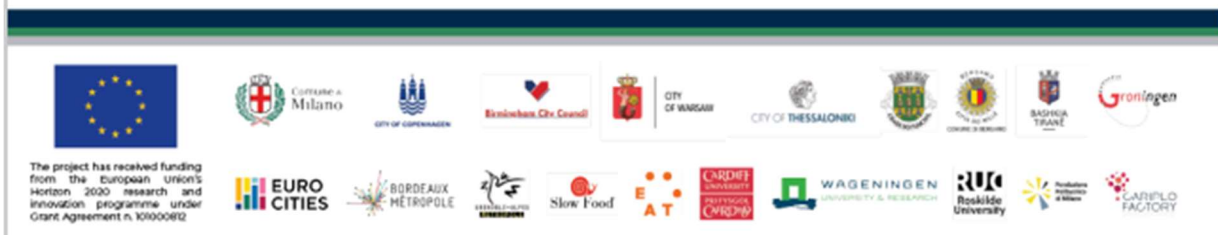
2024 – venue: Restaurant

Pronk at Vismarkt (TBC)

Twitter: @EUROCITIESweet @MUFPP
#MUFPP #EUFoodCities #Food2030

Objectives of the collaboration

- Sharing knowledge on the urban food transition in Groningen – Bradford - Glasgow
- Showing Groningen's best practices – field visits & talks with food initiatives
- Understanding which activities/approaches are replicable



Participants

- **Eurocities:** Madeleine Coste (Head of Food)
8 April: Train arriving in Groningen at 18h11. Departure on 11 April at 16.49. Staying at Social Hub hotel.
- **Groningen:** Renske Stumpel, Dewi Eshuis, Hiltje van der Wal
- **Bradford:** Ben Fletcher (arrival time between 8 and 9pm, and departure time approximately 2/3pm (to get back to Amsterdam airport for 5.30pm) and Tim Howells (arrival time between 8 and 9pm, and departure time approximately 2/3pm (to get back to Amsterdam airport for 5.30pm)
- **Glasgow:** David Lyon - On Monday the 8th I'll land in Amsterdam at 12:40 and then get the train to Groningen, so should arrive at around 4:00pm. I'm staying at the Hotel Halbert (Hotel De Ville), Oude Boteringestraat 43 Groningen, Netherlands, 9712 GD. I can walk to The Social Hub where Madeleine is staying to make it easier to meet – Google Maps says that it's an 8 minute walk. On Thursday my flight from Amsterdam is at 18:40.
- **Cardiff University:** TBC

Draft Agenda

ARRIVAL DAY – MONDAY APRIL 8

Dinner at (TBD)

DAY 1 TUESDAY APRIL 9 : LOCAL CONTEXT AND WORK ON FOOD

INTRODUCTION GRONINGEN AND FIELD VISIT

09:15 – 10.15	City Walk with Hiltje – getting the feel of Groningen	Hiltje
10:15-10:45	Coffee break at typical Dutch café (Kroeg) Huis de Beurs - with apple pie	
10:45-12:30	Introduction to the Peer Learning Visit – what the cities want to learn	Eurocities and Glasgow and Bradford
12:30-13:30	Lunch at Vegan restaurant Pernikkel	

FIELD VISITS

13:30-17:00	Field visit Westpark – by bike Meeting all local initiatives at Westpark (Tuin in de Stad, Plukn, Blije Bodem and School Gardens)	People from the Groningen local initiatives tell about their role in the Living Lab
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CONCLUSIONS

17:00-18:00	Back to the city centre on bike followed by free time	
18.30	Dinner at restaurant Pomphuis	

DAY 2 WEDNESDAY APRIL 10: FURTHER EXCHANGE AND TALKS WITH GRONINGEN EXPERTS/POLICY MAKERS

INTRODUCTION OF THE DAY AND WORKING SESSION		
9:15-10:00	Objectives of the visit – reflection on the field visit	Mentor city, mentee city, Eurocities as facilitator,
10:00-11:00	Talk on Groningen’s place based approach with Peter Wijnsma	Peter
11:00-11:30	Coffee break	
11:30-12:00	Meeting with the vice mayor (depending on agenda availability)	
	Walk to lunch venue	
12:30-13:30	<i>Lunch at Wadapartje (TBC)</i>	
FIELD VISITS		
13.30-14.30	Talk on Groningen’s protein transition policy	Hilde
14.30 – 17.00	Field visit to Graanrepubliek Nieuweschans http://www.graanrepubliek.nl..... (Tbc)	
18:00	Dinner In Groningen province special location (TBD)	

DAY 3 THURSDAY APRIL 11: CONCLUSIONS AND ACTION PLANNING

INTRODUCTION OF THE DAY AND WORKING SESSION – AT ZUIDERDIEP (TBC)		
9:15- 9:30	Review of the visit/ questions	Mentor city, mentee city, Eurocities as facilitator,
9:30-11:00	Discussion on transferability potential of solutions explored and evaluation of the collaboration.	Mentor city, mentee city, Eurocities as facilitator.
11:00-11:15	Coffee break	
11:15-12:00	Workshop and next steps: presentation of the Food Policy Action Canvas exercise and different tools likely to support Cascade cities in replication and action planning.	Mentor city, mentee city, Eurocities as facilitator,
12:00-13:30	Lunch at Folkingerstraat (TBC)	

DEPARTURE

Hotel suggestions:

- <https://themarkethotel.com/> (very central at 'Grote Markt')
- <https://www.hotelhalbert.nl/en/> (also in the city centre)
- https://www.thesocialhub.co/groningen/?utm_source=googlemybusiness&utm_medium=organic&y_source=1_Mjc4Nzl2MDUfNzE1LWxvY2F0aW9uLndiYnNpdGU%3D (cheaper and trendy hotel) – 5 minutes walk from city centre

Annex III – anonymised Food Policy Action Canvas

<p>Key stakeholders</p> <p>The city residents and communities.</p> <p>Community organisations at neighbourhood level and city wide.</p> <p>Food Community Services at city and neighbourhood levels.</p> <p>Faith and church organisations neighbourhood and city wide.</p> <p>Education providers (schools, academies, universities, training institutions).</p> <p>Food growing organisations both local and national.</p> <p>Food markets and surplus food providers.</p> <p>Food businesses operating in the borough, small, medium, and national supermarket chains.</p> <p>Corporate and private organisations with an interest in food.</p> <p>Statutory organisations with responsibilities for health and wellbeing (NHS, council teams, PCNs).</p> <p>Charity organisations and funders.</p>	<p>Key activities</p> <p>The activities include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Piloting a neighbourhood-level food system project. 2) Informing a city Food Strategy. <p>Some of the key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understanding and mapping needs and provision including at neighbourhood level. - engaging with residents, stakeholders, and community groups and agreeing priorities for action. - monitoring delivery and implementation. - evaluation with a circular loop. <p>Key resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People resource such as capacity and expertise. - Funding to deliver on the priority actions, collate learning, and sharing through evaluation. - Spaces for meetings 	<p>Value proposition / policy action</p> <p>Learning from a neighbourhood Food System Model:</p> <p>To apply a city Food System model using a place-based neighbourhood approach. Currently a pilot programme known as Food Five Ways is being implemented in a city neighbourhood.</p> <p>Why? The reasons for this Food Policy Action. Which goal/need does it address?:</p> <p>The approach and model of the pilot project will help inform actions that can be taken into other city neighbourhoods as part of the wider borough food strategy.</p> <p>Builds local capacity, resilience and food security in areas with high levels of poverty.</p>	<p>Relationships with beneficiaries. How are they involved/engaged in the process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - through members of the city Food Partnership. - using council's communication channels. - communication channels created through the Food Five Ways pilot. - proactively reaching out to groups, stakeholders, and residents that might otherwise not engage with established communication channels through public / community activities. - Training and paying community representatives to gather information about community needs. <p>Communication channels- by which means does it reach beneficiaries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newsletters, press releases, word of mouth, engaging with community leaders and other local champions, attending community events, through faith groups, formal local consultation processes, using school settings as well as other opportunistic community events. - Social media (Instagram, X), project website, etc. 	<p>Beneficiaries (who are the key beneficiaries targeted by the food policy action?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - families, infants, and young children. - school age children. - residents with diet related conditions. - children with overweight and obesity. - local residents who are at risk of food insecurity and poverty such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals aged 45-64. • Black and 'other ethnicity individuals' • People with disabilities. • Homeless individuals. • People living in social housing. • Unemployed and under-employed individuals. • Households with children.
<p>Main barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational barriers and difference in working practices and expectations between statutory organisation and community groups. • Operational and funding differences between different organisations. • Different levels of funding available to different organisations. • Addressing the food system is not a quick fix approach it takes time. • Many of the factors affecting the local food system are impacted by regional and national-wide policies, funding, and priorities. 		<p>Main drivers – what are the key factors driving the development and implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borough-wide policies and strategies identifying diet and food related needs and priorities for action. • The city has very high health and wellbeing needs including diet related conditions and food insecurity and poverty. This means that there is a need to work in partnership across different community organisations that are in touch with residents and statutory organisations whose remit is to address the needs of residents. • The COVID-19 emergency, cost of living crisis, and cuts to statutory organisations budgets means that a partnership approach is essential. • Utilising the skills, experience and networks of the city Food Partnership whose membership includes organisations from the food growing community such as Incredible Edible city, statutory organisations such as education, council teams (public health, climate change, food waste, planning etc), local hospitals (NHS), local food businesses, and residents. 		

Annex IV – Links to the webinars’ recordings

<i>Link to the playlist</i>	Link
<i>Why develop urban food policies?</i>	Link
<i>Putting food on the local agenda: how to engage citizens and foster behavioural changes?</i>	Link
<i>Which tools support cities in developing and implementing an urban food policy?</i>	Link
<i>How to work on food waste prevention and reduction?</i>	Link
<i>How do we use food procurement to foster more sustainable and inclusive cities?</i>	Link
<i>How can a city foster local and quality food production?</i>	Link
<i>How to finance cities’ food ambitions?</i>	Link
<i>How to ensure access to healthy and quality food for all?</i>	Link