

Urban Agenda for the EU

Food Partnership

Draft
Action Plan
Consultation
Report



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¹ Pact of Amsterdam, chapter 4, clause 19.

Food Partnership



Draft Action Plan Consultation Report

A. Introduction

The consultation process for the Draft Action Plan of the Urban Agenda for the EU Partnership on Food was conducted in May-June 2025 to gather feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, including EU institutions, Member States, urban authorities, EU networks, research institutions, private organisations, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders.

The goal of the consultation was to ensure that the Action Plan reflects the needs and priorities of stakeholders at local, regional, and national levels, while supporting the broader objective to promote sustainable and equitable food systems in Europe.

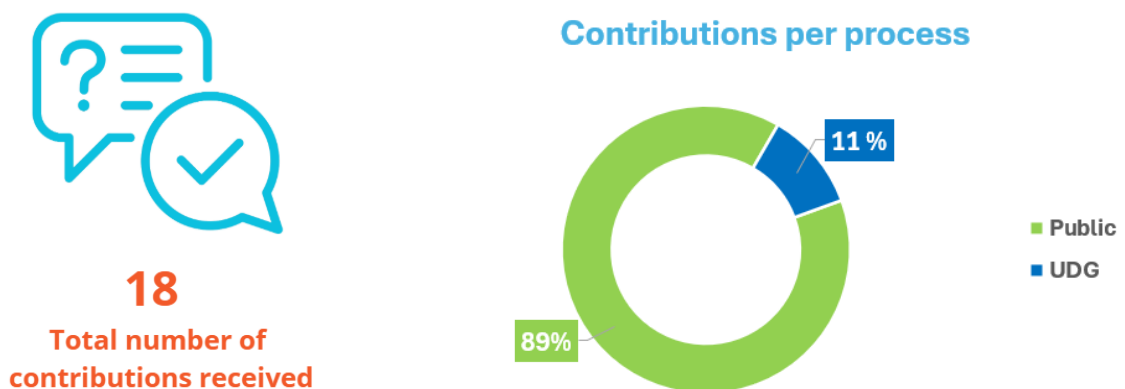
The public consultation, held from May 6 to June 13, 2025, collected responses from UDG Member States and a broad range of stakeholders. The feedback gathered during this process has been analysed to refine the Food Partnership draft Action Plan and ensure its successful implementation. Additionally, comments from the European Commission Interservice Consultation process were received and also incorporated into the document to further refine and strengthen the Action Plan.

This report summarises the key themes addressed, stakeholder perspectives, and proposed revisions based on the feedback received and how those revisions have been integrated into the final Action Plan document.

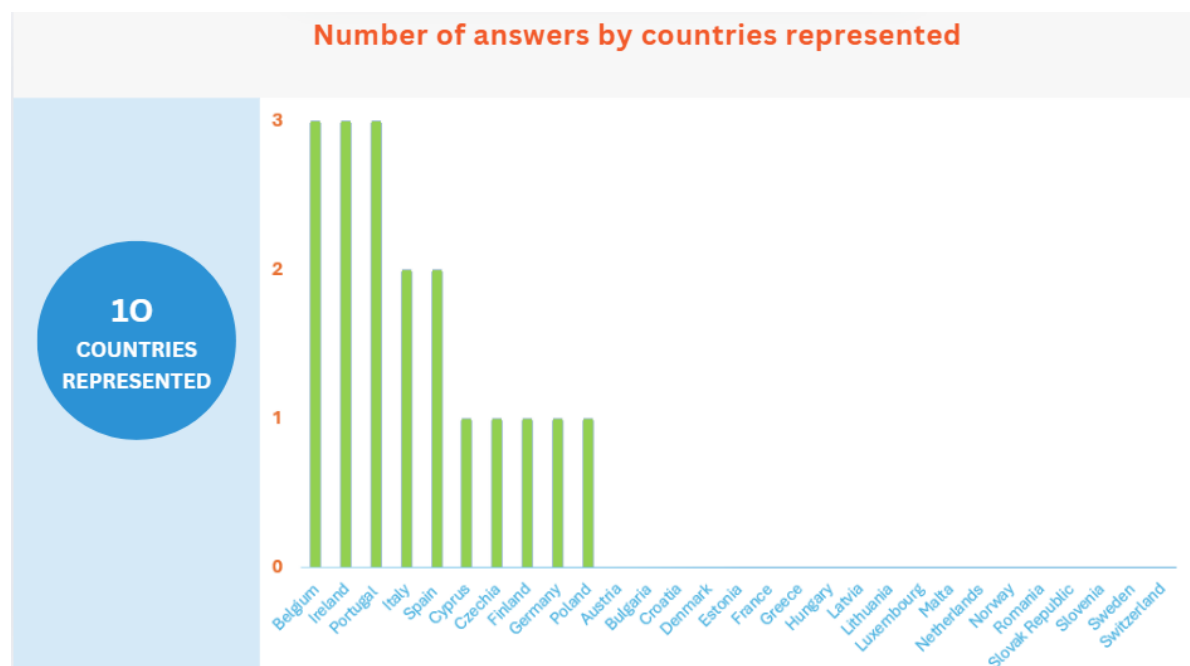


A.1 Overview of the Consultation Process Results

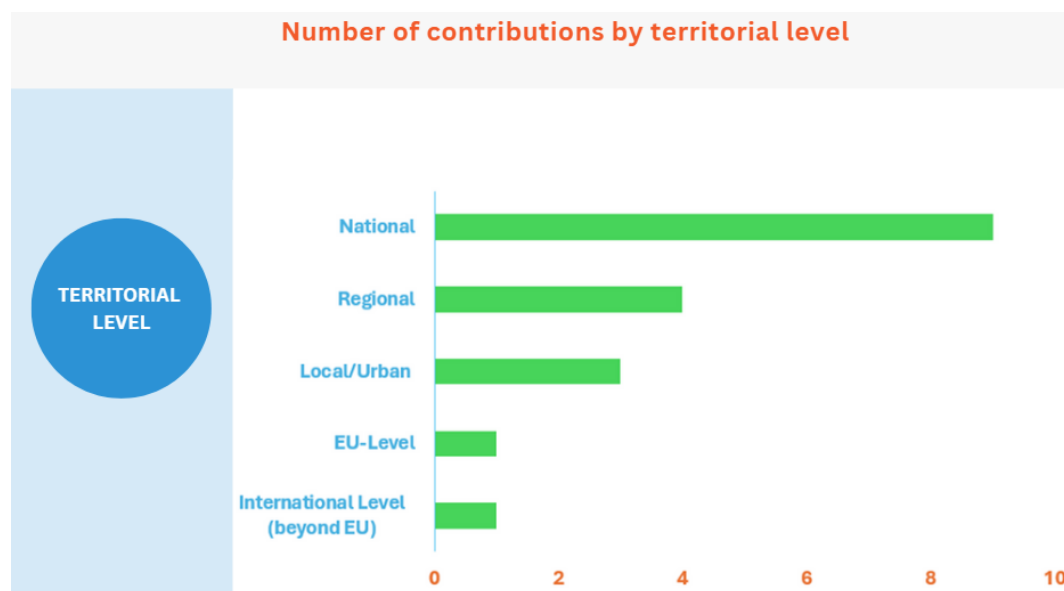
The public consultation collected insights from a diverse range of stakeholders across multiple member states. The following diagrams illustrate the number and type of stakeholder groups who participated.



The following diagram displays the distribution of responses received from each country, highlighting the level of engagement across represented member states.



The diagrams below illustrate the distribution of contributions by territorial level and by stakeholder type providing insight into the diversity of perspectives gathered during the consultation.



B. Addressing the Feedback of the Consultation Process

B.1 Overall Feedback on the Action Plan

The Food Partnership Action Plan received a range of insightful comments. While the overall feedback expressed support for the proposed Actions, several key areas for improvement were highlighted, leading to some revisions and integrations.

Key topics raised and revisions

1. Limited focus on the social justice component, food poverty and affordability

One key recommendation was to better reflect the **social justice dimension** of food systems in the Action Plan, emphasising **social sustainability** across the entire food chain — including fair prices for producers, decent wages, and good working conditions both locally and globally. Additionally, issues of access and affordability for marginalised populations (e.g., migrants, low-income households) are currently underrepresented.

✚ **Revision:** These aspects were considered in the Orientation Paper; however, due to limited resources and time for the implementation of the Action Plan, the Partnership decided to focus on a limited number of actions. While social justice, food poverty, and affordability are not the primary focus of the selected actions, will be treated as crosscutting issues addressed through various activities. Furthermore, Action 4 will specifically explore these aspects in a training module on the right to food and food aid.

2. Support for SMEs and small-scale producers

Another key recommendation for achieving full alignment with the Orientation Paper was to strengthen the Action Plan's focus on **SMEs support**. This includes facilitating small-scale producers' access to local procurement systems and relevant support mechanisms at EU, national, regional, and local levels.

It was also emphasised that regulation of the primary and secondary sectors within the agri-food system should reflect the **needs of family farmers**, rather than being shaped primarily by the requirements of industrial agriculture.

- ✚ **Revision:** Support for SMEs and small producers is indeed a topic of interest. Although there is no specific action dedicated solely to this issue, several actions will take it into account. In particular, Action 5 includes reflective work on public land, which involves the theme of access for local producers. Additionally, in Action 3, collaboration with SMEs will be addressed in the context of the study on Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3), especially focusing on small producers involved in ecosystem services.

3. Consideration of climate emergency and demographic challenges

Other topics included addressing the climate emergency and exploring the connection between the food urban agendas and demographic challenges.

- ✚ **Revision:** The Partnership acknowledges the relevance of the recommendation; however, due to limited resources and time available for the implementation of the Action Plan, there is no specific action that directly addresses these issues. Action 3 will consider climate change impacts in identifying weak and critical points in the coordination between risk management plans, urban planning, and food security.

4. Governance structures and inter-administrative coordination

A key consideration highlighted the **lack of governance structures aligned with the actual scale of territorial metabolism**. A suggestion emerging from the consultation is to overcome this limitation by moving toward the development and legal recognition of **city-regions or food bio-regions**. The need for greater inter-administrative coordination has also been emphasised, as certain issues require action and promotion across all levels of governance—local, regional, and national.

- ✚ **Revision:** The recommendation is reflected throughout the Action Plan, where several points address the topic of inter-administrative coordination, recognised as a key factor in the development and success of food policies. Action 2 and 3 specifically tackle this issue. The concept of the bio-regions has also been integrated into the final Action Plan, particularly in Action 2.

5. Adaptability and knowledge sharing across Member States

The Action Plan should recognise the varying contexts and capacities across Member States by incorporating adaptability and encouraging knowledge exchange, to ensure impactful implementation, avoid repeated mistakes, and build a strong evidence base and political support.



- ✚ **Revision:** The recommendation has been considered in several actions within the plan. Action 2 aims to further develop a comprehensive report on the different national contexts working on food systems, with a focus on identifying similarities within a diverse common ground where specific adaptation strategies are in place. Action 4 will concentrate on the different contexts in which cities operate, seeking to unlock solutions that can be adapted and tailored to their specific needs.

6. Consumer awareness and civic food resilience

Another suggestion was to strengthen efforts aimed at **raising awareness about sustainable food choices and stimulating consumer demand for such products**. A consumer-focused approach, promoting food literacy, ensuring inclusive access to sustainable food, and implementing behavioural change incentives within public institutions and communities should be considered. Another key suggestion was to introduce the concept of **civic food resilience**, i.e. "the ability of individuals in their daily lives to recognise food-related risks, develop skills to minimise unnecessary risks, and collaborate with others to ensure society remains well fed during and after crises." This resilience cannot rely on spontaneous or individual efforts alone; it requires structured processes of learning, capacity-building, and preparation.

- ✚ **Revision:** The Partnership acknowledges the relevance of this recommendation and aims to further develop and integrate this aspect into Action 4 with external support.

7. Further integration with EU fundings instruments:

Another key suggestion was to more clearly highlight and strengthen the connections with EU funding instruments across all Actions.

- ✚ **Revision:** During the implementation phase, monitoring of funding instruments will be carried out to identify potential funding sources aligned with the objectives of the various actions. Furthermore, Action 4 explicitly tackles the issue of funding instruments by planning, as a key output, a handbook on resourcing local food policies and strategies. This aims to equip local authorities with the appropriate tools to implement local food policies effectively.

8. Monitoring, evaluation and timeline coordination:

It was also suggested to establish a cross-cutting monitoring and evaluation framework to enhance coherence and comparability of outcomes across actions, and to develop a roadmap that aligns deliverables to avoid overlaps and sequencing bottlenecks across the various outputs.

- ✚ **Revision:** The final Action Plan includes a monitoring table of actions that is aligned with the information required in the new online Monitoring Table of Actions. This online tool will provide an overview of all actions, their implementation



status, and support reporting processes. The Monitoring Table of Actions will be publicly accessible on the Urban Agenda for the EU website. This monitoring framework will enable the collection and public sharing of information on the status of actions, along with their key outputs and outcomes. To support the alignment of timelines across the various actions, the final Action Plan includes a general timeline that highlights the sequencing and interconnections among their key outputs and deliverables.



B.2 Action-Specific Feedback

Action 1:

ADVOCACY - Advocating for an EU framework for local food policies

Action 1 received valuable feedback from the European Commission and the general public. Some of the key points raised during the consultation included the need to **broaden engagement** by involving direct representation from underserved and vulnerable urban communities, ensuring that grassroots voices help shape policy outcomes. Participants also emphasised the importance of **establishing accountability mechanisms** to monitor EU stakeholder commitments. Promoting policy coherence was another priority, with suggestions such as **developing toolkits or checklists to better align EU-level policies with local food strategies** and reduce fragmentation.

Another key recommendation concerned **dissemination strategies**. It included the suggestion to adopt **localised messaging** by translating key messages into multiple EU languages and tailoring content to regional contexts to enhance accessibility and relevance. Additionally, it emphasised the importance of **leveraging existing networks** and **engaging stakeholders** through webinars and roundtables with policymakers, civil society actors, and practitioners to share findings and encourage meaningful dialogue.

Incorporation into the Action Plan:

⇒**Broadening engagement:** The Partnership acknowledges this suggestion as a cross-cutting issue relevant to all the actions. In particular, for Action 1, when collecting inputs from cities, the Partnership will take this key aspect into consideration.

⇒**Accountability mechanisms:** Among the identified risks, the Action has included accountability challenges, especially concerning the uptake of results by EU stakeholders. Accountability mechanisms will be considered to address this challenge as the Action unfolds.

⇒**Promoting policy coherence:** The primary objective of this Action is to ensure cross-sectoral and multi-level policy coherence, extending from the EU level to local governance structures. The development of operative tools, such as toolkits or checklists to better align EU-level policies with local food strategies, is not an objective of the Action but will be discussed with the members to check its feasibility.



⇒**Dissemination strategies:** All the suggested dissemination strategies are valuable and will be considered in the dissemination of the policy statement to external audiences.

⇒**Leveraging existing networks:** The aim of the Partnership is to ensure the greatest impact of the policy statement by leveraging existing networks and engaging key stakeholders, starting with organisations that joined the public consultation and expressed interest in supporting the Action.

Action 2:

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

Action 2 received valuable feedback from the European Commission and the general public. One general recommendation was to better clarify the distinction between Action 2 and Action 3.

Another key recommendation was to incorporate **land, logistics, and infrastructure considerations** into regional and higher-level frameworks supporting territorial food policies. It also suggested **recognising the concept of food bio-regions** (or city-regions) as territorial frameworks for planning and coordinated action.

Stakeholders also emphasised the importance of ensuring that the outcomes of the Action **include initiatives at all levels**, not only government-led actions, but also regulations and policies that support citizen-led and private initiatives, such as food-sharing programs.

Another key point is to consider **the risk of shifting priorities across different governance levels and fluctuating interest in the topic**. It is suggested that the Action's goal should be to demonstrate the importance of maintaining consistent priorities, thereby establishing a foundation for strong regulations, supportive policies, and legal mandates that foster integrated and effective food policies.

It was also suggested to highlight the role of EU regulations and national legislation in shaping the food environment for infants.

Incorporation into the Action Plan:

⇒ **Clearer distinction between Action 2 and Action 3:** The distinction between the two Actions has been clarified in the final Action Plan. Attention will be given to create synergies and complementarities while avoid overlaps between the Actions. This will be done by taking in consideration different regional-national contexts, or by investigating different aspects in the same contexts. Furthermore, while Action 2 goes from regional to national, and targets institutional and governance frameworks, Action 3 is more oriented to investigate synergies between regional and the local, focusing on projects and strategies.

⇒ **Land, logistics and infrastructure considerations:** Action 2 will incorporate considerations related to land, logistics, and infrastructure within regional and higher-level frameworks that support territorial food policies. The action will also consider including bio-regional districts among the case studies.

⇒ **Concept of bio-regions:** The concept of bio-regions has now been integrated in the description of the Action. The investigation into the role of regional and national support frameworks will consider the significance of recognising bio-regions as an operational category, the need for their integration into legal and land-use planning at various levels, and the incorporation of food systems as a structural component of spatial planning.

⇒**Inclusion of citizen-led and private initiatives:** Regarding the practices to be included in the brief, the Action now also mentions citizen-led initiatives, particularly food-sharing initiatives. It will specifically consider the interaction between national entities and local initiatives, such as urban food sharing initiatives, looking at the role that regional and national actors could have in recognising the role and impact of these initiatives.

⇒**Risk of shifting priorities:** The Action now acknowledges the risk of policy shifts. The action will therefore reflect on how to keep priorities stable, setting the groundwork for strong regulation, supporting regional-national policies and legal mandates for integrated and impactful food action at the local level.

⇒**Role of EU regulations and national legislation in shaping the food environment for infants:** A consideration will be incorporated regarding the role of the national level in creating better food environments.

Action 3:

R&D - Building bridges and synergies between local authorities and relevant regional strategies

Stakeholders provided valuable input on Action 3. One key recommendation was to **highlight the Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)** among the existing EU policies, legislation, or instruments relevant to this Action.

Other key inputs included **reinforcing a systemic territorial vision** and addressing the challenges of **managing climate change impacts and flood risks** in both inhabited and agricultural areas, with guidance on integrating these issues into strategic documents and funding criteria. Furthermore, the **report's implications** for both local authorities and higher-level government bodies should be communicated more clearly.

Other inputs highlighted the importance of **ecosystem services provided by agroecological food production practices**, which can enhance the profitability of small farms.

Other valuable inputs and suggestions included enhancing governance collaboration by establishing or strengthening **platforms for dialogue between local and regional levels** focused on food production, processing, and consumption as well as dialogue **between NGOs and municipalities**.

Incorporation into the Action Plan:

⇒ **Community-Led Local Development:** CLLD (Community-Led Local Development) will be considered where possible for the cases addressed in this Action, particularly in relation to rural areas and smaller-scale cities. This will be done while acknowledging that the Partnership primarily focuses on the urban dimension and larger cities.

⇒ **Clarification of the report's implications:** The Action now better clarifies the implications of the report for local authorities.

⇒ **Systemic territorial vision:** The concept of intermediate structures— between the regional and municipal levels— has been integrated, as the Partnership acknowledges their importance in articulating strategies and aligning policies and plans across different levels. Metropolitan areas, functional urban areas, agglomerations, city-regions, bio-districts, and Territorial Food Plans will also be brought into the discussions.

⇒ **Climate change impacts and flood risks:** Although it is not possible to focus on these challenges in this Action, considering these issues allows for the identification of weak and critical points in the coordination between risk management plans, urban planning, and food security.

⇒**Ecosystem services and agroecological food production practices:** The importance of these aspects will be taken into account in the process of analysis, diagnosis, and formulation of recommendations related to Action 3.

⇒**Platforms for dialogue:** This suggestion will be discussed during the implementation phase with various stakeholders. It aligns well with the objectives of the Action, which will incorporate the concept of intermediate structures and create spaces for multistakeholder dialogue, involving not only NGOs but also the private sector.



Action 4:

FOOD POLICY - Urban Food Policy Training

Action 4 received constructive feedback during the public consultation, with particular emphasis on incorporating training focused on: **promoting changes in eating habits** driven by current food models; **supporting the emergence of new farmers** and shepherds through the transmission of local knowledge and traditional techniques; sharing best practices and advancing agroecology; and providing **specialised technical training for public administration staff and independent professionals** on topics such as territorial metabolism, agroecology, local food logistics, and inter-municipal governance.

Another important feedback was **to measure the impact of the training**. It was suggested to hold follow-up meetings a few months after the training to assess the changes prompted, gather feedback, and understand any resistance and its causes.

Incorporation into the Action Plan:

⇒ **Promotion of behavioural changes:** Among the areas of interest of many cities involved in the Partnership lies the one on shifting consumers behaviours towards a more sustainable and healthy food consumption, this will stay as key topic for discussion about food policy goals to be developed and or integrated by Partnership members.

⇒ **Agroecology and local farmers:** The importance of these aspects will be taken into account in the development of contents for the training, also in connection with the work of Action 5 on Public Land.

⇒ **Training for public administration staff:** The heart of Action 4 is aimed at the training of civil servants working especially in local authorities (urban and metropolitan).

⇒ **Impact of trainings:** Following the training sessions, follow-up meetings and assessment surveys will be conducted to evaluate the progress achieved, gather feedback, and collect input to further refine the policy recommendations and the Handbook on Resourcing Local Food Policies, which will constitute the final outputs of the Action.

Action 5:

LAND USE - Public Land for Local Food Policies

Key recommendations concerning Action 5 included the request to **explicitly recognise rural inhabitants and their representatives** (e.g. rural organisations) as part of the target groups. Additionally, it was suggested to **reference the Bioeconomy Strategy as a relevant policy framework**, given that land-use competition is one of the associated risks.

Furthermore, stakeholders suggested **strengthening legal frameworks and guidelines**, specifically by advocating for EU-level instruments that enable municipalities to prioritise land for food production within urban planning. They also recommended creating incentives to **encourage local action** and ensuring that the Interest Group **includes a diverse range of stakeholders**, particularly grassroots and marginalised communities.

Other valuable inputs included **aligning the Action with broader urban land-use and climate resilience strategies** and **mainstreaming land considerations into urban food strategies**, ensuring that land use is a central component of food policy planning.

Stakeholders also recommended **highlighting replicable models** that demonstrate effective integration of land in food systems. Finally, the inclusion of social and environmental impact indicators was encouraged to track tangible outcomes such as improved food access, enhanced biodiversity, and stronger social cohesion.

Furthermore, stakeholders suggested placing greater emphasis on **stakeholder management**. Specifically, they recommended engaging organisations and actors with experience and expertise in land use and public land management, as well as networks working on access to land, to help inform and support the Action.

Incorporation into the Action Plan:

⇒ **Rural inhabitants as target group:** Rural inhabitants have been mentioned in the Action description.

⇒ **References:** Both the Bioeconomy Strategy and the Water Resilience Strategy have been mentioned and will be reviewed to identify potential connections.

⇒ **Strengthening legal frameworks and guidelines:** The Action will take this suggestion into consideration and will explore how the EU could support cities in better managing public land for food production.

⇒ **Expanding the group of stakeholders:** The Partnership agrees with the suggestion to expand the Interest Group on Public Land to include a diverse range of stakeholders, especially grassroots organisations, marginalised communities, and land access groups.



⇒ **Alignment with broader urban land-use and climate resilience strategies and mainstreaming land in urban Food Strategies:** The Partnership fully acknowledges this recommendation. Specifically, this Action will be aligned with broader urban land-use strategies and, among its goals, will include integrating land use into urban food strategies.

⇒ **Replicable models:** The Partnership fully acknowledges this recommendation, and, during the implementation phase, the Action will explore the replicability of sustainable land management models.

⇒ **Stakeholder management:** The Partnership fully agrees with this suggestion and will involve organisations and actors with experience and expertise in land use and public land management in the Interest Group.



Action 6:

INDICATORS - Selecting indicators for urban food systems

A key recommendation for Action 6 was to **expand the “City Statistics”** (formerly Urban Audit) by adding a module on food. Including this in the Action Plan would provide a more concrete outcome in terms of improving data availability. Additionally, it was advised to **liaise with the JRC** regarding their new work on the EU Food Systems Monitoring Framework, which addresses knowledge gaps and develops new indicators that could prove highly valuable.

Recommendations also highlighted the importance of **establishing a baseline for ongoing reporting** and defining what data should be collected, how it should be gathered, by whom, and which proxy indicators could be used.

Another valuable input was to encourage municipalities to **integrate food-related indicators into their municipal Climate Action Plans**.

A useful suggestion also concerned the **feasibility aspects to be considered**, such as identifying who will use the indicators and who will be involved in the process, as well as establishing clear reporting requirements.

Incorporation into the Action Plan:

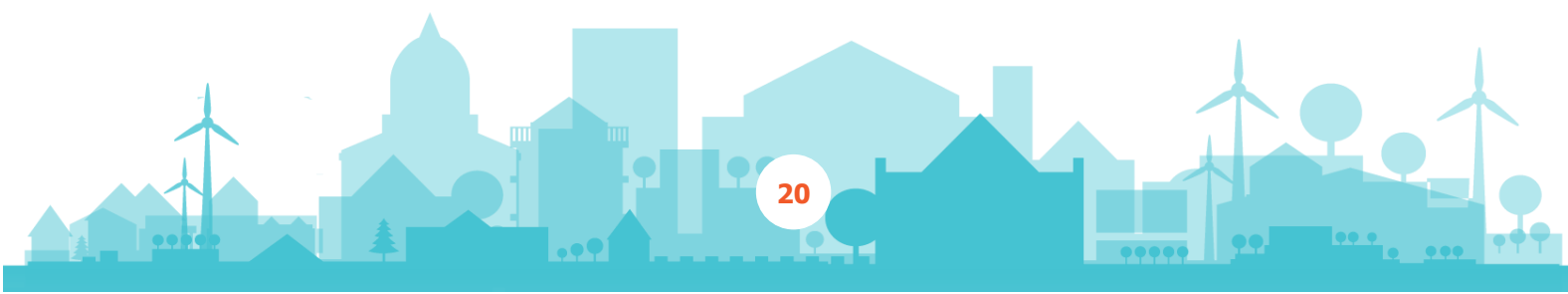
⇒ **Expanding the “City Statistics”:** The Partnership fully acknowledges and agrees with this recommendation, as it directly addresses the key objectives and outcomes the Partnership aims to achieve. Among the key expected impacts at the EU level, the Action now mentions the expansion of “City Statistics” (formerly Urban Audit) to include a module on food, which would improve data availability and enhance the capacity for local-level monitoring.

⇒ **Liaising with JRC:** The Action now explicitly highlights its collaboration with the Joint Research Centre (JRC), which recently released the EU Food System Monitoring Dashboard. As a result, the JRC will be involved in discussions on monitoring indicators at the urban level.

⇒ **Baseline for ongoing report:** The Action will take this recommendation into account, as it highlights the significance of the Action and provides valuable insight into which key indicators should be included, how they should be integrated, and who should be responsible.

⇒ **Integration of food-related indicators into municipal climate action plans:** The Partnership fully acknowledges this valuable input. The Action acknowledges other initiatives across different EU geographical contexts and explicitly highlights the case of Portugal, where organisations are advocating for the creation of a national observatory on urban food systems, with the involvement of municipalities, academia, and NGOs, and encouraging municipalities to integrate food indicators into their Municipal Climate Action Plans.

⇒ **Feasibility aspects:** All feasibility aspects highlighted in the feedback received (e.g., who will be using the indicators and who is involved) will be duly taken into account in the brief.



Action 7:

PROCUREMENT - Promoting sustainable Public Food Procurement

A key recommendation was to include in the Action's output an assessment of **public authorities' needs concerning the review of public procurement legislation.**

A valuable suggestion involved **encouraging organisations to adopt environmental, sustainability, and governance standards in procurement practices**, complementing the minimum procurement requirements and spending thresholds established by the EU (e.g. green public procurement policies in some public sector organisations which set additional eligibility criteria for suppliers).

Another key point highlighted the need to address the problem of the **proliferation of certification and labelling for ecologically sound and socially fair food.**

Additional valuable input **highlighted good practices aimed at preventing the use of the lowest-price criteria** as the sole basis for procurement decisions.

Incorporation into the Action Plan:

⇒ **Needs of public authorities:** The Action now includes a survey to identify their specific needs and priorities regarding the review of public procurement legislation.

⇒ **Procurement practices:** The input is relevant to Actions 7 and 4. This recommendation will be taken into consideration during the training sessions focused on developing urban food policies, which should also include specific sustainable food procurement policies.

⇒ **Proliferation of labelling:** The Action will consider this recommendation on the unification of standards when elaborating the position paper.

⇒ **Preventing the use of lowest-price criteria:** The recommendations on this matter will be considered and appropriately reflected in the position paper.

B.3 Synergies and alignment with other initiatives

The Food Partnership received numerous synergy proposals from a wide range of stakeholders, including UDG Member States, national governments, urban authorities, EU programmes and initiatives, research institutions, civil society groups, and the private. Many stakeholders offered direct contact points and suggested ideas and proposals to support the implementation and dissemination of both the Action Plan and its individual Actions.

Key suggestions included experience and knowledge exchanges, result dissemination, survey participation, and targeted support for specific Actions. Stakeholders also expressed interest in contributing technical expertise to the implementation of selected Actions and in enhancing their impact at the national level.

The Partnership has already defined a stakeholder list, starting with those who participated in the public consultation. This list will be continuously updated, and stakeholders will be engaged to support the implementation of specific Actions, according to their interests and areas of expertise, as well as the dissemination of the entire Action Plan.



C. Conclusion

The public consultation process for the Food Action Plan demonstrated strong support for its objectives while also identifying several key areas for improvement.

Stakeholder feedback highlighted important aspects to consider during the implementation of the actions and dissemination of key outputs, providing valuable input and suggestions to enhance the impact of each Action and the Action Plan as a whole.

After finalising the Action Plan, the Food Partnership will launch the implementation phase, establishing collaboration frameworks with ongoing initiatives, involving key stakeholders, and ensuring constant monitoring and communication on the progress of the Action Plan.

