

# POLICY BRIEF #1

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## Key author(s)

Marta De Marchi, Maria Chiara Tosi.

## Contributors

Marta De Marchi, Maria Chiara Tosi,

Cristina Catalanotti, Raffaella Lioce,

Marie Shrestha

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CO-CREATING RESILIENT AND  
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS  
TOWARDS FOOD2030

The EU-funded Cities2030 project will bring together researchers, entrepreneurs, civil society leaders, cities and all agents of urban food systems and ecosystems (UFSE) to create a structure focused on the transformation of the way systems produce, transport, supply, recycle and reuse food.

## KEY MESSAGE

Set-up CRFS labs to develop sustainable, inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse food systems at City region level.

The purpose of this policy brief is to introduce to the target audience the urgency of urban issues related to food and the need to take the action outlined and therefore, serve as an impetus for action.

This policy brief is the first of a series of four that will be published periodically during the development of Cities2030 project.

## INTRODUCTION

The European Union is recognising food-related issues as urgent urban themes and, in recent years, it has promoted programmes to make the food system more compatible with the environment, more resilient to climate change and more equitable in relations between actors and between territories.

The Cities2030 project, financed by the European Horizon 2020 programme, brings together 40 partners involved in various ways in the food system. The main objective is to develop, in 8 cities and 2 regions, new food policies capable of reorienting existing systems towards more sustainable, resilient and fair models.

The methodology envisages the involvement of all interest groups and actors of the food system arena, through the installation of urban Policy and Living Labs, in order to work on the construction of new urban policies and pilot projects able to activate innovation processes in the food system.



# 1. European food policy framework

## The policy framework of European Union

### Common Agricultural Policy

In December 2021, the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform was formally adopted, covering the seven-year period 2023-2027. The new CAP supports a sustainable future for Europe's primary producers even more strongly than in the previous seven-year period. The CAP 2023-2027 is based on 9 specific objectives: to ensure a fair income to farmers; to increase competitiveness; to rebalance the power in the food chain; climate change action; environmental care; to preserve landscapes and biodiversity; to support generational renewal; vibrant rural areas; to protect food and health quality. The main aim of the CAP is to support the sector in the transition towards production systems that are more compatible with the environment, fairer to producers and, at the same time, more competitive on the European and global market.

### European Green Deal

The ultimate ambition of this policy is to make the European Community the first climate-neutral continent in the world, making it both resource-efficient and economically competitive. To do this, the European Green Deal aims to guarantee three criteria: no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050; economic growth decoupled from resource use; no person and no place left behind. The issue of food is central, both because it aims to guarantee healthy and accessible food for all European citizens, and because it intends to improve the resilience, sustainability and competitiveness of primary production. In particular, the Farm to Fork strategy is dedicated to accelerate the transition to a sustainable food system that should have a neutral or positive environmental impact, adapt to and mitigate climate change, combat biodiversity loss, ensure safe, healthy and accessible food for all, and guarantee justice for all workers in the relevant economic sector.

### Food2030

This is a specific European policy to guide research in all fields of knowledge that deal in various ways with food systems. The ambition is to make European food systems resilient, healthy, fair and environmentally friendly, as they are currently both the effect and cause of the impact of climate change, resource scarcity, pollution and waste, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, population growth, malnutrition and diet-related diseases. The policy therefore addresses all aspects of the food system, the various economic sectors involved throughout the supply chain and the different disciplines involved. The ambition of Food 2030 is to achieve four key outcomes, which in turn generate positive echoes: Nutrition for sustainable and healthy diets; Food systems supporting a healthy planet; Circularity and resource efficiency; Innovation and empowering communities.



## Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

From the MUFPP website: “The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is an international agreement of Mayors. It is more than a declaration; it is a concrete working tool for cities. It is composed by a preamble and a Framework for Action listing 37 recommended actions, clustered in 6 categories. For each recommended action there are specific indicators to monitor progress in implementing the Pact”.

The MUFPP is therefore an operational tool that cities can use to implement sustainable food policies, taking as an example the good practices already implemented by the first 100 signatory cities that signed the pact in 2015. The pact focuses on the fundamental role of cities and towns, which are the main destinations for food produced, processed and transported and the main sources of organic waste and food waste.

### MUFPP GOALS

The signatory mayors commit to developing ideas, programmes and policies to:

1. Work to develop sustainable, inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse food systems to ensure healthy and accessible food for all within a rights-based framework for action, with the aim of reducing food waste and preserving biodiversity while mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change;
2. Promote coordination between departments and sectors at municipal and territorial levels, encouraging the inclusion of urban food policy considerations within social, economic and environmental policies, programmes and initiatives, covering, inter alia, food distribution and supply, social protection, nutrition, equity, food production, education, food security and waste reduction;
3. Promote coherence between municipal food-related policies and programmes and relevant sub-national, national, regional and international policies and processes.
4. Involve all sectors of the food system (including local authorities, technical and academic institutions, civil society, small-scale producers and the private sector) in the development, implementation and evaluation of food-related policies, programmes and initiatives;
5. Review and amend existing urban policies, plans and regulations to support the creation of equitable, resilient and sustainable food systems;
6. Use the Framework for Action as a starting point for each city to develop its own urban food system and share progress among participating cities, relevant national governments and international organisations, when appropriate;
7. Promote the involvement of other cities in the framework of our Food Policy action. Food policies.



## 2. Cities Regions Food Systems Labs

Cities2030 partners provide a Prototyping Guidelines & Toolkit<sup>1</sup> that gives an overview of the main concepts and definition for the development of City Region Food Systems (CRFS) Labs and innovations as well as provides guidelines and tools for developing CRFS Policy & Living labs and mapping most prospective innovations.

<p><b><u>City Region Food Systems</u></b></p> <p>The complex network of actors, processes and relationships to do with food production, processing, marketing, and consumption that exist in a given geographical region.</p>	<p><b><u>Living labs</u></b></p> <p>User-centered, open innovation ecosystems based on systematic user co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real life communities and settings.</p>	<p><b><u>Policy Labs</u></b></p> <p>PLs contribute to the shaping and/or implementation of public policies, using a network-centered governance that focuses more on promoting, enabling and partnering.</p>
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CRFS Labs is an umbrella term for multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary collaboration that takes place to develop different types of innovation and increase the ability to tackle complexity and challenges in different environments. The goal of the CRFS Labs is to generate CRFS knowledge and make an impact by developing innovation in CRFS practices - new products, services, processes (CRFS Living labs) and sustainable policy frameworks (CRFS Policy labs) on a small scale and to find solutions that can be implemented on a larger scale.

The aim of CRFS Labs is to design solutions (actions or policies) not only for citizens but also design these solutions with them. This way, user involvement is not limited to passive feedback, gathered through different voice-of-the-customer methods.

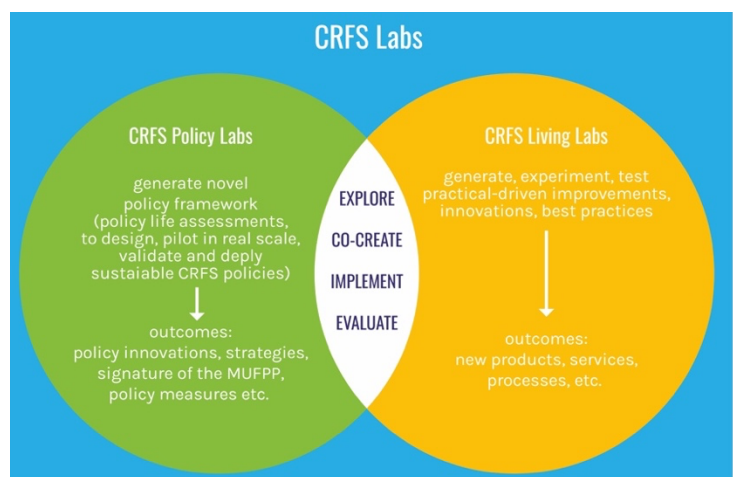


Figure 1. Aims and expected outcomes of CRFS Policy Labs and CRFS Living Labs.

<sup>1</sup> The Cities2030's Prototyping Guidelines & Toolkit is available in the project website at the link <https://cities2030.eu/results/>



The approach is rather co-creative and encourages all relevant stakeholders to work together. According to a site-specific case, CRFS Labs partners can develop different forms, roles, activities for Policy Labs and/or Living Labs.

CRFS Labs aim at generate novel policy framework and experiment, test and improve innovation and best practices through a process that include four phases: to understand and to explore CRFS recognising the paths of change; to set up CRFS Lab organising resources and time available; to co-create, to co-design, to experiment real-life testing of proposed innovative activities; to evaluate results, monitoring the experiments and learning from them.

One of the key elements for the open innovation ecosystem in CRFS Labs is the involvement of different stakeholders, because the innovation co-creation process in the Labs depends on which food systems actor drives their activities. Monitoring and evaluation are fundamental in the work of CRFS Labs, because all the experimentations and innovations must be not only put in place and tested locally, but also analysed in their potential effects on the food system.

**INNOVATION**

Within the Cities2030 project the innovation is used in the most comprehensive way applying to any innovative or already existing product, service, approach, policy, process, mechanism or system that is currently implemented with successful results to enhance and contribute to the sustainability of urban food systems.



Figure 2. Food System innovation (Source: <https://www.systemsinnovation.io>)



### 3. Recommendations for policy makers and stakeholders

In order to make the work of CRFS Labs useful for the territories in which they will be set, it is crucial to take into consideration a number of issues:

- | the existing situation for what concern the whole food system, from production to transformation, from transportation to purchase behaviours, from civil society composition to specific challenges between actors and/or sectors;
- | the involvement of all the potential groups of interest, both private and public, from public authorities to enterprises, from civil associations to professional ones; the starting point of CRFS Lab in terms of available people, priorities, social and economic resources, in order to make the ambitions of the Lab itself plausible and to plan the work on the basis of the resources actually available;
- | the maintenance of a systems approach to food-related issues because, although some experiments may concern a particular phase of the supply chain, the suggested methodology or innovation favours transversal interaction between the various actors and in different food supply chain phases;
- | the collaboration between the CRFS Labs' participants/ stakeholders in the construction of shared ideas and projects, in order to build and/or consolidate co-creative networks between food system actors and identify collaborative solutions to critical issues in the food system;
- | the planning and assessment of the feasibility of the co-creation activity, through the preliminary studies focus on the timing, costs and risks of the activity itself before the field test.

In terms of risks, it is also important to not underestimate the fact that the development and management of CRFS Labs is not an easy process, as it involves many different stakeholders who probably have not worked together so far, and innovations inherently are unpredictable, risky and time consuming.

The continuous and fruitful exchange between CRFS Labs of different case studies is certainly a valuable aid in the implementation of innovations at the local level. Similar territories or conditions can talk to each other to overcome obstacles and difficulties together or to devise innovative and original solutions that can be adapted to the different cases included in the Cities2030 project.

