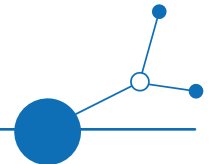




POTENTIAL FOR FOOD COOPERATION AND ITS GOVERNANCE NETWORK IN THE BRNO METROPOLITAN AREA



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Table of content

A. Potential for food cooperation and its governance network in the Brno Metropolitan Area.....	2
1. Initial information about the pilot action	2
2. The importance of pilot action	2
3. The core of pilot action	3
4. Strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance	5
5. Results	6
6. Subsequent activities.....	8
7. Project management of pilot action	9
8. Joint development and cooperation with partners.....	10
9. Summary of the pilot action	12



A. Potential for food cooperation and its governance network in the Brno Metropolitan Area

1. Initial information about the pilot action

Metropolitan area executing pilot action	The City of Brno is responsible for the pilot action which covers the Brno Metropolitan Area.
Study cluster and tool chosen	Engagement of metropolitan stakeholders in the agri-food sector through Food Districts led by the Metropolitan City of Turin as a lighthouse metropolitan area. This metropolitan area developed the tool called Food Districts which was chosen for the testing by the City of Brno.
The pilot action	Potential for food cooperation and its governance network in the Brno Metropolitan Area: The City of Brno analysed the potential for food cooperation at the level of the Brno Metropolitan Area (BMA). It included the identification of the most important stakeholders on the supply and demand side of this cooperation, the benefits and impacts of food cooperation for BMA, and the application of Turin’s food districts tool in the context of BMA. Furthermore, it proposed the food governance network, the goals of this cooperation and possible specific activities.

2. The importance of pilot action

The justification for the choice of the selected tool	Food Districts were chosen by metropolitan stakeholders of BMA due to anticipated benefits for this area. The metropolitan level proves to be a useful level to address the topic of local production, distribution, and consumption in other metropolitan areas. However, this topic has not been addressed by the metropolitan area yet. Therefore, the tool developed in the Metropolitan City of Turin was seen as an inspiration for addressing food cooperation in BMA and a good example of promoting bottom-up cooperation between the local producers, municipalities, region. The anticipated benefits are related to economic, environmental, health, or social aspects. The chosen tool is beneficial in terms of improved land management, environment protection, climate change adaptation, identification of agriculture/food industry stakeholders in BMA, opportunity to establish/enhance the economic system and support the EU strategy Farm to fork. Therefore, this tool received the most votes from the
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	metropolitan stakeholders in BMA during the regional stakeholder meeting (RSM) in January 2024. The goal of the RSM was to select and prioritise the tools for strengthening metropolitan cooperation - Food districts ranked first.
The justification for the selection of the pilot action	The topic of food cooperation is completely new for the BMA and the City of Brno. There are several initiatives in the territory, but they are focused on smaller areas and do not include Brno as the centre of demand. Furthermore, there is no coordinating body which would address this topic in a systematic and complex way. Thus, as the initial step before the start of the proper cooperation, the analysis of the potential for food cooperation and the proposal of its governance network were chosen as the pilot action which will also demonstrate the possibility of applying Food Districts into the BMA context. This initial step serves as a basis for further steps in the food cooperation which include delimitation of goals, more detailed topics of cooperation and specific activities to focus on. The following steps have to be done in cooperation with relevant stakeholders which were identified during the development of analysis. They will form a governance network. Pilot action will also provide a basis for future policy decisions and strategic planning in the field of food cooperation.

3. The core of pilot action

Description of the pilot action	<p>The main part of the pilot action is the analysis of the potential for food cooperation at the level of the Brno Metropolitan Area. This analysis consists of the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Analysis of current strategic and other conceptual documents reflecting the topic of food cooperation in BMA - this includes national, regional, and local level. In terms of the local level, the City of Brno, municipalities with extended powers and Local Action Groups were involved.■ Identification of the benefits and impacts of food cooperation at the BMA level - includes the explanation of why the topic of food cooperation is important and provides benefits and impacts in several areas, e.g. local economy, tourism, businesses and employment, land use, environment, health and well-being of the residents and interrelationships between the actors in the BMA.■ Identification of the potential of the Brno Metropolitan Area in the framework of food cooperation - it consists of natural
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	<p>characteristics of BMA and conditions for agriculture, land use, crops and livestock farming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Analysis of the most important stakeholders on the supply and demand side of food cooperation in the Brno Metropolitan Area - e.g. economic entities in agriculture, potential actors of food cooperation among farmers, identification of demand side, intersection of supply and demand, identification of other actors, evaluation of existing food cooperation including SWOT analysis.■ Possibilities of food cooperation at the level of the Brno Metropolitan Area - this part includes at first the description of the Food Districts concept and then, the proposal for food cooperation in BMA. Voluntary cooperation in the form of food networks would be the most appropriate type of applying Food Districts based on the information about this tool and the context of the BMA as the legal framework does not allow for establishing the same structure as in the case of Italy. The proposal includes the approach to food cooperation, possible food networks in the territory focused on selected topics and main activities for the next years. At the end, there is also the proposal for the composition of working groups addressing the topic of food cooperation.
Innovativeness of pilot action	<p>Dealing with the topic of local production, distribution, and consumption at the metropolitan level with the involvement of stakeholders from different sectors is completely innovative in BMA as this topic is not coordinated in a systematic and complex way throughout the territory. Therefore, the pilot action aims to establish a coordination body which would address this topic at the level of BMA in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders. Thanks to the pilot action, BMA will be able to enhance local production, distribution and consumption which will bring benefits in terms of local economy, environment or health and increase the well-being of residents.</p>
Demonstration and test of the selected tool	<p>This pilot action and Food Districts are interconnected through the overall concept of enhancement of local production, distribution, and consumption. The pilot action focused on demonstrating and testing how to apply the concept of food cooperation to address related topics. As it was adapted to the local context, it was not possible to test the legal framework of the Food Districts and related aspects. Therefore, voluntary cooperation and its aspects were the main concept to be applied during the testing of the studied tool and resulted in the proposal of food networks as the voluntary and adapted form of food districts.</p>



4. Strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance

<p>Impact on metropolitan cooperation and governance</p>	<p>Pilot action has a significant impact on metropolitan cooperation as it aims to connect several metropolitan stakeholders from different sectors (public authorities, private/agri-food sector, academic sector, NGOs). They will together work on enhancing the local production, distribution, and consumption in the whole metropolitan area. The given activities will have a positive impact on the local economy, employment, health of the local population and more sustainable land use. The established food networks will have a positive impact on the enhancement of urban-rural cooperation, and it will also build trust in the territory.</p> <p>Furthermore, the topic of food cooperation represents a new theme for the metropolitan level as the activities focused on enhancing this cooperation on a metropolitan scale did not exist and BMA focused mainly on the Integrated Territorial Investments tool which does not cover the topic of food cooperation. Therefore, BMA will be able to concentrate on the innovative metropolitan solutions in this area and this pilot action served as a starting point for these activities which will connect several metropolitan stakeholders and enhance metropolitan cooperation. This topic can also be included in the Integrated Development Strategy of the Brno Metropolitan Area, if stakeholders agree on it, as this document represents the main strategic framework of the BMA.</p>
<p>Involvement of metropolitan stakeholders</p>	<p>There are several metropolitan stakeholders involved in the process of pilot action and its further steps. At first, the members of the Steering Committee of BMA and its Working Group Horizontal (local and regional authorities, academic and innovation sector, private sector) are regularly informed about the progress of pilot action and have the opportunity to shape its process by providing their views. Furthermore, local politicians, Local Action Groups, NGOs, destination management organisations or sustainable school nutrition programme are and will be involved in several discussions on the course of food cooperation in the territory and its possible steps. This process ensures a multilateral approach to the complex topic which is addressed by pilot action. Many of these stakeholders will also be involved in the governance network proposed in the analysis and will together work on the enhancement of this topic.</p>



5. Results

<p>Results of the pilot action</p>	<p>The analysis provided crucial information about different aspects of the topic of food cooperation in the BMA. The main findings of the analysis include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Analysis of current strategic and other conceptual documents reflecting the topic of food cooperation in BMA - Food cooperation is not mentioned, but the themes of local production, organic farming and short supply chains are present in many documents, mostly in the strategies of the Local Action Groups.■ Identification of the benefits and impacts of food cooperation at the BMA level - several benefits and impacts were identified in the proposed areas and showed that solutions to the topic of food cooperation have the potential to strengthen local production, distribution, and consumption.■ Identification of the potential of the Brno Metropolitan Area in the framework of food cooperation - the analysis of natural characteristics presented that the most important part of BMA for agriculture is the south-eastern with a high proportion of agricultural land. 53 % of the land is used for agricultural purposes, from which 84 % is arable land. However, the territory is facing drought, and it is intensively used. In this part, it was also found that there is a predominance of crop production over livestock production. Favourable conditions are mainly for cereals (68 % of arable land), but half of the production is for non-food use. In the end, the identified ideal commodities for developing short supply chains are fruit and vegetables, milk, dairy products, meat, and bakery products.■ Analysis of the most important stakeholders on the supply and demand side of food cooperation in the Brno Metropolitan Area - in terms of the supply side, there are almost 7400 agricultural entities, of which approximately half are farmers, operating in the BMA (but there is a lot of big conglomerates, and the number of small ones is decreasing). Only 83 farmers focus on organic farming, and their figures are developing slowly. Furthermore, institutions representing these farmers are not very involved or active in cooperation with other stakeholders in the BMA (contrary to the situation in Turin, where farmers cooperate within these institutions). Based on the internal calculation, the BMA is not sufficient in food production and relies on the import of goods from different territories and global markets. The
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analysis then focused on the methods of sales for farmers and the most common are via distributor, processor, and retail chain, but also directly to the customers. The most significant shops and markets with local products were also identified. In terms of the demand side, the potential of food public catering was analysed. There are hundreds of school canteens, hospital kitchens, universities and municipal canteens which require a large amount of food production, therefore, there is a strong potential for local production to be distributed to these facilities. This part included the identification of other stakeholders which represent local coordinators, interest organisations, NGOs, or academic sector. Within this part, the existing cooperation on this topic in the territory of BMA was identified. There are dozens of initiatives which are developed by the NGOs or Local Action Groups, e.g. Živý region, Slavkov Marketplace, local brands of products or community-based agriculture. At the end of this section, the SWOT analysis of the current state of the was provided and each part identified several aspects which should be considered.

- **Possibilities of food cooperation at the level of the Brno Metropolitan Area** - the concept of Food Districts can be adapted to the Czech context in the form of food networks. They will represent voluntary cooperation without the binding instruments and direct financial mechanisms in comparison to the Food Districts. Among these networks, there can be the main one which would focus on information and coordination activities. Then, there can be networks dedicated to the concrete topic, e.g. public catering, local distribution chains, or the adaptation to climate change. The analysis also suggested possible main activities for the near future which can be done (e.g. creation of an initial working group on information and coordination, formulation of the concept, discussion with political level, coordination of existing activities, and proposal of concrete activities and projects). The proposal of actors constituting the initial working group was provided. These include the public sector (the City of Brno, South-Moravian region, Tourism Centre, National Rural Network, or universities), non-profit sector (representatives of Local Action Groups, sustainable school nutrition programme, environmental organisation, associations of farmers including the organic ones), business sector (concrete farmers and producers which are the most active in the territory).

The results of this analysis provided comprehensive information about the current state of the food cooperation in the BMA and proposed several initial steps which should be established to start



	<p>proper food cooperation at the metropolitan level. The analysis met the objectives set at the beginning of the creation of the pilot action and will serve for the subsequent activities which are described below.</p> <p>The whole document in Czech and the executive summary in English can be found in Annex 6.</p>
Transferability	<p>The transferability of Food Districts was thoroughly considered during the creation of the analysis. Food Districts served as a major inspiration for the development of the proposals for food networks. It was found that the Food Districts cannot be transferred completely, mainly due to different legal frameworks, the interests of stakeholders and lacking competencies of Czech metropolitan level. However, there were several aspects which were seen as transferable, e.g. the main concept of cooperation in the topic of local production, distribution or consumption, and governance structure regardless of legal framework. Therefore, the Food Districts can be transferred to the BMA in the form of food networks which will represent a voluntary cooperation without the binding instruments and direct financial mechanisms in comparison to the Food Districts. The food networks can represent a starting point for solving this issue in Czechia and in the future, there can be a potential for further development of this topic using frameworks like the ones in other parts of Europe.</p>

6. Subsequent activities

Subsequent activities	<p>The first step after the end of the pilot action focused on the presentation of the results of the above-mentioned analysis and its proposals to the relevant stakeholders on 5 November 2024. At first, they agreed that one topic would be fundamental: coordination and information activities focused on food cooperation. Then, they prioritised three topics which should be addressed by further food cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ food network for public catering,▪ local distribution networks,▪ network for adaptation to climate change and sustainable farming. <p>Based on this selection, the corresponding working group will be established, and it will propose more concrete steps and projects which should be done in the following months or years. Therefore,</p>
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	<p>one of the outcomes of the working group should be the Action plan for the food cooperation in BMA, approximately in the first quarter of 2025. Moreover, starting in December 2024, the new solution will be thoroughly discussed among stakeholders in BMA and members of the study cluster so that it can be developed by March 2025.</p>
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7. Project management of pilot action

<p>The process of pilot action</p>	<p>The pilot action was done through the development of analysis. The concept of pilot action was developed within the team of the Department of ITI and Metropolitan Cooperation, the City of Brno. It was then shared with members of the cluster and experts in the territory. After the finalisation of the concept, the whole analysis was developed by two external suppliers, GaREP (regional economic consultancy) developed all parts except for the part related to benefits and impacts which was created by Friends of the Earth Czech Republic. The development of the analysis lasted for 4 months, from June to September 2024, and final modifications were made in October 2024.</p>
<p>Methods of work in the metropolitan area</p>	<p>The analysis was created in the form of a document using quantitative and qualitative approaches, which included not only texts but also useful maps and charts showing several aspects of food cooperation in the territory of BMA. For the analysis, several resources were used, mainly publicly available data from local, regional, or national level, but also from websites of private entities. All collected data were then analysed and interpreted. Based on these processes, the part with suggestions and proposals was created. During the creation of the analysis, there were several separate consultations (9 in total) between external suppliers and the above-mentioned team to ensure that the process was on the right track and the needs of the City of Brno were met. Suppliers also regularly provided the current state of the document so that Brno's team could provide feedback. In addition, the suppliers and the sustainable school nutrition programme verified the course of analysis during two of these consultations. The results of the analysis were presented to members of the Steering Committee of BMA, and they also had the opportunity to provide their remarks on the analysis.</p>
<p>The reflection of the initial work setup and time plan</p>	<p>In terms of pilot action, the necessary steps stated in the initial work set-up and time plan were fulfilled. The City of Brno developed the pilot action until the end of October 2024, regularly informed</p>



	<p>partners and stakeholders about its course via electronic correspondence and meetings, and stuck to the responsibilities set in the plan. The stated possible study visit in Brno was not held as the final outcome of the pilot action is a document, so the peer-review process was held online. Furthermore, there was no need to organise a peer-review meeting in November as the pilot action was completed earlier and partners organised this type of meeting in October.</p>
<p>Problems and deviations</p>	<p>There were no problems or deviations during the development of the pilot action which would cause delays in the execution of the pilot action and the whole project. The regular meetings between suppliers and the City of Brno ensured thorough and timely development of analysis.</p>

8. Joint development and cooperation with partners

<p>Processes of co-design and peer-review</p>	<p>In terms of the co-design process, the City of Brno created a concept of pilot action based on the information about Food Districts provided by Turin partners during the online meetings and study visit. Then, this concept was shared with all members of the cluster, and they provided remarks and comments which were discussed during the online meeting. The City of Brno reflected and incorporated these comments into the final version of the pilot action.</p> <p>In terms of the peer-review process, the City of Brno presented the course of the pilot action to partners three times during online and transnational meetings. The City of Brno presented the current state of pilot action, then the issues they would like to discuss and then partners provided their feedback, remarks, and comments. This approach ensured a proper peer-review process as there was a mutual exchange of opinions on the pilot action. Furthermore, before the last online meeting, partners from Brno provided a complete Czech analysis with an excerpt in English (part with SWOT analysis, proposals and suggestions, and conclusions) so that other members of the cluster could prepare for the discussion and share their views.</p> <p>Therefore, all cluster members jointly developed the pilot action of the City of Brno thanks to their participation in these processes and their contribution was important for the course of pilot action.</p>
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<p>The guidance provided by the lighthouse metropolitan area</p>	<p>At first, the Metropolitan City of Turin provided their expertise related to the studied tool, Food Districts. The lighthouse metropolitan area provided both in-person and written answers to the questions that were asked by the piloting metropolitan area, concerning the tool and its functioning. Thanks to their information, the City of Brno was able to develop the initial concept. Then, they provided valuable remarks (such as the inclusion of SWOT analysis, modification of the structure, and organizing workshops with stakeholders on the analysis) on this concept which were incorporated by the Brno team. During further online meetings, they provided their opinions and suggestions on discussed topics and helped Brno partners with the development of pilot action. In conclusion, the guidance provided by the Metropolitan City of Turin was seen as valuable and beneficial for the execution of the pilot action.</p>
<p>Meetings and study visits</p>	<p>The joint development of pilot action was done not only via sharing documents, written correspondence or comments but also through online meetings and one study visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 29 May 2024: Study visit in the Metropolitan City of Turin - Turin partners organised this event which was dedicated to further in-depth learning about Food Districts, this information also contributed to the further development of the concept of pilot action as the initial version of it was shared before this study visit.■ 25 July 2024: Online meeting - the City of Brno presented the remarks on the concept and their incorporation, and partners also discussed several of them. Then, the initial findings were presented and some issues, mainly related to the lack of data at the local level, were discussed among partners.■ 11 September 2024: Transnational meeting in Ostrava - partners from Brno presented the interim results of their pilot action and other partners provided their views and opinions on them.■ 30 October 2024: Online meeting - the City of Brno introduced the final version of the analysis and possible activities for the near future. Then, members of the cluster as part of the peer-review process provided their remarks and comments on the analysis and possible further steps.



9. Summary of the pilot action

<p>Summary</p>	<p>The pilot action by the City of Brno, Potential for food cooperation and its governance network in the Brno Metropolitan Area, provided crucial initial steps towards the enhancement of the topic of food cooperation at the metropolitan level. The analysis of this potential consisted of several important findings. The strategic and conceptual documents in the territory do not mention food cooperation but include the topic of local production, distribution, and consumption. Then, the main benefits and impacts of this cooperation for the Brno Metropolitan Area were identified. The natural characteristics of this area and data about crops and livestock farming served for the understanding of the current potential of the topic. Identification of the main stakeholders on the supply and demand sides provided not only information on the producers and their structure and production but also on the forms of the sales of their products and the potential of public catering which could be one type of consumers. The current activities in the territory presented an overview of what is being done in the area about the topic of local production, distribution, and consumption. All the findings were put in the SWOT analysis which served as a summary of the current potential of food cooperation. On this basis, the concept of food networks, established on the principle of voluntary cooperation, was proposed with several options which can be in the centre of the corresponding network. This concept also reflected the application of Food Districts in the Czech context. Furthermore, possible steps for the near future were listed, e.g. establishment of a working group on information and coordination activities including possible members, creation of specific food networks, development of the concept for food cooperation which would be supported by political level, or possible concrete activities that can be done by different levels.</p> <p>The whole analysis is seen as the first part of the food cooperation at the metropolitan level where there is currently no coordination of activities connected to the topic of local production, distribution, and consumption in the whole territory. Moreover, Brno as the main market centre is not involved in these activities. Therefore, the pilot action has a significant potential for the establishment of a structure which would deal with this topic. These activities would strengthen metropolitan cooperation and governance in the Brno Metropolitan Area as they would aim to connect several metropolitan stakeholders from different sectors. They will together work on enhancing the</p>
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local production, distribution and consumption, and activities will have a positive impact on the local economy, employment, health of the local population and more sustainable land use.

The first steps after the completion of pilot action included: the workshop with stakeholders on prioritization of the main topics to be solved in the following months and years. On this basis, corresponding working groups (WGs) will be established, and they will prepare an Action plan for food cooperation in the Brno Metropolitan Area. The WGs will also propose further steps and concrete projects to be implemented.

Overall, the pilot action fulfilled predefined objectives and it was jointly developed with project partners as their guidance, remarks and opinions were valuable for its execution and transnational cooperation proved to be useful for the development of this topic and sharing the necessary know-how.