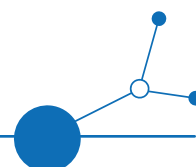


# FOOD COOPERATION FOR METROPOLITAN AREAS



Version 1  
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## A. Food cooperation for metropolitan areas

### 1. Initial information about the new solution

Study cluster and the members developing a new solution	<b>Engagement of metropolitan stakeholders in the agri-food sector through Food Districts</b> , its members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ City of Brno;</li><li>■ Metropolitan City of Turin;</li><li>■ City of Ostrava;</li><li>■ Stuttgart Region Association;</li><li>■ GZM Metropolis;</li><li>■ the Charles University;</li><li>■ the University of Silesia in Katowice;</li><li>■ Metropolitan Research Institute.</li></ul>
The pilot action tested, and the tool chosen	Pilot action: <b>Potential for food cooperation and its governance network in the Brno Metropolitan Area</b> Tool chosen and improved: <b>Food Districts (Metropolitan City of Turin)</b>
The new solution	<b>Food cooperation for metropolitan areas</b>

### 2. The concept of new solution

Description of new solution	The topic of local production, distribution, and consumption is becoming increasingly important for territories as it has positive impacts on the local economy, environment, health and well-being of the residents. The metropolitan level seems to be appropriate to address this topic as it strengthens urban and rural relations. Cities represent the centres of consumption whereas rural areas in their hinterland play a significant role in production. Therefore, a strong partnership at the metropolitan level is needed to properly enhance food cooperation. A possible lack of competencies and legal framework however cannot support the potential partnership. In that case, the <b>establishment of voluntary cooperation</b> is a suitable option which will reinforce the local production, distribution, and consumption in the territory. The goal of this cooperation should be
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	to support the local economy, increase the involvement of local farmers and producers, reduce environmental burdens through short supply chains, and strengthen the sustainability and efficiency of the production, distribution and consumption of local food. The solution outlines the steps that can be taken to establish this cooperation and possible stakeholders to be involved.
Main elements	<p>The overall concept of the new solution <b>“Food cooperation for metropolitan areas:”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The process of establishment of cooperation:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The recommended precondition for the establishment of cooperation is the analysis of the territory. This analysis should include the natural characteristics of the territory, local production in terms of crops and livestock farming and identification of stakeholders from different sectors (both supply and demand side). It should also contain a description of current strategic and conceptual documents, an identification of the benefits and impacts of food cooperation for the territory, and an analysis of the current initiatives in the territory aimed at the topic. Finally, the analysis should propose possible steps and topics of food cooperation. All this data is important for several reasons. Based on the data, relevant stakeholders for the cooperation are defined, initiatives to be further coordinated are identified, and possible steps are outlined. Analysis shall include a SWOT analysis describing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Thus, the decisions of food cooperation are data-driven.</li> <li>2. Once the analysis is finalised, there should be an initial larger event (e.g. workshop, conference). The most active identified stakeholders from all sectors should be invited to discuss the results of the analysis, and then, to outline possible steps and prioritize the proposed topics of food cooperation (or they can suggest another topic). Besides the topics, stakeholders should also discuss their possible involvement in the structure of informal food cooperation. This event should provide valuable inputs for the further establishment of informal cooperation.</li> <li>3. Thus, it is necessary to open a process of listening and animation of the territory (public and private stakeholders) that will culminate in the establishment of voluntary cooperation. It is important to continuously monitor the views</li> </ol> </li> </ul>



and activities of these stakeholders (e.g. through their meetings, events, communication with them, or desk-top research). The main goal is to build trust between stakeholders and the metropolitan entity.

4. The results of the initial event and listening/animation phase should be processed and the proposal for an informal structure of cooperation should be made. It is recommended to have one information and coordination working group (WG) and then separate groups for each selected topic. The WG Information and coordination should focus on the coordination of all activities in the territory related to the topic. It will therefore serve as a main body of cooperation. Stakeholders will inform each other about their planned activities and together decide on possible actions. Then, separate WGs for each topic should be established to move forward activities related to the theme of the WG. It is recommended to have around three WGs focusing on selected topics. Each WG shall define the goals of cooperation and 2-3 year-long action plan describing concrete activities to be elaborated by mutual collaboration. The food cooperation is complex so it should include stakeholders from different sectors:

- > metropolitan authority;
- > local (municipalities, municipal associations) and regional public authorities;
- > local action groups (institutions combining public and private sectors in smaller and rural territories, only if they are active in the metropolitan area);
- > NGOs (various interest organisations in the field of education, and environmental protection);
- > private sector (mainly professional agricultural organisations representing agricultural and agro-industrial enterprises);
- > chambers of commerce, industry, crafts and agriculture;
- > research institutions and universities.

This approach allows for balanced interests of all sectors, also from the demand and supply sides. Each WG should include relevant stakeholders for each topic, e.g. representatives of schools for the topic of public catering or association of organic farmers for the topic of sustainable agriculture. The selection of



stakeholders and their number in WGs also depend on the local context of the metropolitan area as the establishment of cooperation should reflect a bottom-up approach.

■ Topics of cooperation:

Stakeholders should agree on the most important topics for their territory according to the needs and objectives of each area (identified in the analysis). However, the essential topic should be information and coordination which serves as an overarching theme for other ones. The objective is to build and consolidate network and promote cooperation between the proposed system of actors. The other topics depend on the selection by actors.

The proposed topics for cooperation include:

- Support for the promotion of local production in public catering,
- Protection, development and promotion of the production and local supply chains,
- Adaptation to climate change and sustainable agriculture,
- Promotion of innovations and technological infrastructure,
- The social dimension of the agri-food sector (inclusion of disadvantaged groups in food cooperation, development of social enterprises in agriculture, or support for beginning farmers),
- Food security,
- Reduction of food waste,
- Territory and landscape preservation through agriculture, agribusiness and food,
- Marketing and promotion of local production and farmers,
- Focus on specific food category which would be the centre of food cooperation (e.g. meat, cereals, vegetables, wine).

■ Possible ways to the further formalisation of the cooperation:

The formalisation of the cooperation can be a further step in the metropolitan areas with favourable conditions and stakeholder support. This formalised cooperation should include:

- establishment of governing bodies, their structure and members;



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ creation and approval of the strategic plan, guidelines and rules of the cooperation;</li> <li>▫ introduction of financial mechanisms, e.g. membership fees, and resources from other levels;</li> <li>▫ the regular setting of the budget and annual reports on activities;</li> <li>▫ implementation of activities from the approved strategic plan.</li> </ul>
Innovativeness and uniqueness of new solution	<p>The new solution aimed at voluntary and informal food cooperation represents an innovative and unique approach for several metropolitan areas where this type of cooperation does not exist, and a formalised and institutionalised cooperation structure is not possible/favoured due to legal bases. It outlines steps and aspects which should be considered during the establishment of cooperation. Even though several metropolitan areas do not have sufficient competencies to solve this issue, thanks to informal voluntary cooperation they can strengthen the local economy, improve the environment, positively influence the health and well-being of residents, support tourism, or ensure food security.</p>
Improvement of the selected tool	<p>The new solution is thoroughly based on the results of the pilot action and improves the Food Districts tool in several ways. The pilot action showed that there is a need for a governance structure focusing on food cooperation, but a formal structure based on a legal framework as in Turin is not possible. Therefore, the pilot action proposed to establish some type of voluntary governance network. The new solution builds on these results and outlines concretely the establishment of such a voluntary cooperation structure. The major redesign and improvement of the Turin's tool lies in the fact that the new solution represents voluntary cooperation and does not require a legal framework. Therefore, it can be implemented in many metropolitan areas interested in the establishment of such cooperation. Among other improvements, there is an inclusion of the demand side in the cooperation (e.g. institutions of public authorities, school or municipality canteens) or an outline of more detailed topics for cooperation.</p>



### 3. Joint development and project management

The process of development of new solution	The new solution was jointly developed between the members of the cluster. The City of Brno served as the main creator because it was the executor of the pilot action. Therefore, it drafted the concept of new solution and sent it to the partners on 29 January 2025. Other members of the cluster had the opportunity to raise questions online and prepare further ones for the transnational partner meeting in Berlin which took place on 26-28 February 2025. This meeting was crucial for the joint development. Metropolitan partners presented their proposal of new solutions and then, all of them discussed the proposals during the interactive session. Based on the outcomes of this meeting, the City of Brno finalised the solution in the first half of March 2025.
Methods of work	The City of Brno drafted the solution based on the results of the pilot action which showed that there is a need for an informal governance structure. The proposal was created internally by the Department of ITI Management and Metropolitan Cooperation. The methods of joint development included world café during a transnational partner meeting in Berlin, sharing the documents online and providing written comments and remarks on them.
The reflection of the initial work set-up and time plan	In terms of the new solution, the initial work set-up and time plan were achieved with small changes such as a month delay in the development. However, these changes did not affect the overall development of the new solution and its timely submission.
Problems and deviations	There were no problems or deviations during the development of the new solution which would cause delays in its finalisation and the whole project.

### 4. Strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance

Impact on metropolitan cooperation and governance	The new solution has a significant impact on metropolitan cooperation as it aims to connect several metropolitan stakeholders from different sectors (public authorities, local action groups, private/agri-food sector, academic sector, NGOs) and establish voluntary governance of food cooperation among them. They shall collaborate on enhancing the local production, distribution, and consumption in the whole metropolitan area. The given activities
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	will have a positive impact on the local economy, employment, health of the local population and more sustainable land use. Furthermore, voluntary food cooperation governance will have a positive impact on the enhancement of urban-rural cooperation, and it will also build trust in the territory. The new solution also outlines further formalisation of cooperation which could strengthen metropolitan cooperation and governance in the long term.
Involvement of metropolitan stakeholders	The nature of food cooperation itself is about the inclusion and connection of metropolitan stakeholders in the territory. At first, relevant stakeholders are identified through analysis of the territory. Then, they are involved in the larger event, the process of listening and animation, and finally in the working groups. Within WGs, they will together create and implement solutions aiming at addressing selected topics through food cooperation. The thorough involvement of metropolitan stakeholders is therefore crucial for the proper implementation of this new solution.
Contribution to the Common Metropolitan Vision	<p>Food cooperation for metropolitan areas is in line with the Common Metropolitan Vision and contributes to its fulfilment. There can be found linkages to almost every part of the vision, the strongest ones are to the Metropolitan Partnership and Identity; Balanced, Inclusive and Sustainable; Diverse and Complex Community; Recognition and Appreciation as the food cooperation focuses on building sustainable, cooperative, functionally integrated and diverse metropolitan areas through metropolitan solutions.</p> <p>New solution aimed at food cooperation also demonstrates the metropolitan strengths stated in the Common Metropolitan Vision, for example, metropolitan areas as Hubs and Societies show that they are an appropriate level for solving the topic of food cooperation as they are home to a significant number of citizens and businesses creating a complex ecosystem. Moreover, metropolitan areas offer Solutions for enhancing local production, distribution, and consumption in a spatially collaborative way at the metropolitan dimension.</p> <p>The establishment of voluntary governance of food cooperation contributes to Metropolitan empowerment as it highlights the importance of the metropolitan level so that they are more emancipated and recognised. Metropolitan Institutionalization is enhanced thanks to the soft form of cooperation and food cooperation is also built on expertise and capacity as it requires thorough analysis, smart data-driven policies and knowledge sharing among diverse groups of actors.</p>



## 5. Replicability to other metropolitan areas

Replicability to metropolitan territories	<p>The concept of food cooperation for metropolitan areas is replicable to other territories as it can be tailored to different contexts and needs. It is important to consider the level of agriculture production as the areas without significant agriculture industry may not be appropriate for this solution.</p> <p>The concrete elements of the solution which should be considered for its replication by other metropolitan territories:</p> <p>Values and topics - The cooperation aims at enhancing local production, consumption, and production with positive impacts on several aspects. Concrete topics are based on the interest of metropolitan stakeholders, solution outlines several of them, but the final selection is on them and reflects the context and needs of the territory.</p> <p>Financial and organisational aspects - The solution and the establishment of the cooperation do not require extensive financial or organisational resources at the level of the metropolitan area or its core city. The following activities and long-term projects which are not part of the solution will require more resources.</p> <p>Management structure and involvement of stakeholders - The structure of cooperation relies on the involvement of stakeholders. The identified stakeholders should be based on the analysis, process of listening and animation of the territory, or larger event as there can be identified stakeholders missed in the analysis. The responsibilities of each stakeholder, the number of WGs, and the frequency of meetings are up to the agreement between stakeholders.</p> <p>Legislative framework - Voluntary food cooperation for metropolitan areas represents an option which does not rely on the legal framework or regulations. Therefore, it should be highly transferable to other metropolitan areas. Moreover, if the legal framework favours the establishment of a more formal structure, the solution suggests possible steps. The solution can also be an input for legal changes in the future.</p>
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## 6. Uptake of new solution

Uptake of new solution	<p>The City of Brno as the executor of the pilot action and the main creator of the subsequent new solution is currently implementing the suggested steps. At first, it <b>analysed the territory</b> of the Brno Metropolitan Area (part of the pilot action). This analysis provided essential information about natural characteristics, crops and livestock farming, stakeholders, strategic and conceptual documents, and current initiatives. It also identified benefits and impacts on the territory, included a SWOT analysis, and proposed possible steps and topics of food cooperation. The analysis was finalised in October 2024.</p> <p>On the basis of this analysis, the City of Brno <b>organised a larger workshop</b> for interested stakeholders. These included the representatives of local and regional public authorities, local action groups, NGOs, the private sector (agricultural organisations and most active farmers), and universities. Metropolitan authorities do not formally exist in Czechia, but representatives of the City of Brno and its Department of Metropolitan Cooperation responsible for activities of the Brno Metropolitan Area attended and organised the event. Participants agreed that one topic would be fundamental: <b>coordination and information activities focused on food cooperation</b>. Then, they prioritised three topics which should be addressed by further food cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>support for the promotion of local production in public catering,</b></li><li>▪ <b>development and promotion of local supply chains,</b></li><li>▪ <b>adaptation to climate change and sustainable agriculture.</b></li></ul> <p>Participants also discussed possible steps like the establishment of working groups or the creation of an action plan. This event provided valuable inputs for the further establishment of informal cooperation.</p> <p>After the event, the City of Brno communicated with the most active participants and monitored their views, opinions, planned activities, and willingness to cooperate. Thus, the <b>process of listening and animation</b> of the territory was conducted and helped to prepare the proposal of the initial working group aimed at coordination and information activities.</p> <p>Based on the previous steps, the City of Brno prepared the proposal for the structure of the <b>initial working group focusing on</b></p>
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	<p><b>coordination and information activities.</b> This group includes local and regional public authorities, local action groups, NGOs, and the private sector (agricultural organisations and most active farmers). Among the first tasks of this WG will be the creation of an action plan for 2025-2026. There will also be <b>separate WGs</b> for each selected topic. The City of Brno will regularly organise the one focused on public catering. The other ones will be held by relevant stakeholders for these topics.</p> <p>The legal framework of Czechia does not currently allow the establishment of a formal governance structure as outlined in this solution. Therefore, the cooperation in the Brno Metropolitan Area is voluntary and may positively influence the legislation in the long term.</p> <p>The stakeholders across the sectors in the Brno Metropolitan Area showed their strong interest in the topic of food cooperation. Therefore, they plan to focus on it in the long term and jointly implement activities enhancing local production, distribution, and consumption. The proposed structure is important for the proper implementation and the action plan will outline concrete activities to support the topics.</p>
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## 7. Summary of new solution

Summary	<p>The new solution “<b>Food cooperation for Metropolitan Areas</b>” establishes a voluntary governance structure focusing on the topic of food cooperation and enhancement of local production, distribution, and consumption. It suggests important steps leading to the informal structure, which include analysis of the territory, organisation of larger event for different stakeholders, process of listening and animation of the territory, and the final establishment of the working groups with concrete types of actors. The solution also proposes the topics of cooperation or its possible formalisation. This approach is innovative for metropolitan areas without such cooperation and is highly replicable due to its voluntary nature independent of the legal framework which represents the main improvement of the Food Districts tool. It also has positive impacts on the local economy, environment, tourism, and health and well-being of residents. Food cooperation strengthens urban and rural relations and enhances overall metropolitan cooperation and governance thanks to the joint planning and implementation of concrete activities.</p>
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	<p>The uptake of this solution is currently ongoing in the Brno Metropolitan Area which has already analysed the territory, organised the workshops with stakeholders, and established the main working groups. The area will focus on the creation of an action plan and implementation of concrete activities in the following months and years. The goal is to maintain this cooperation structure in the long term.</p>
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